

## **POSITION: USAID DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST (IMPLEMENTING PARTNER REGISTRATION)**

### **BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION**

The IP Registration Specialist will work closely with USAID/Burma's program managers and implementation partners to develop Mission-wide systems and procedures for addressing implementation and registration challenges, e.g. in-country travel permits, getting tax exemptions on purchases, and receiving appropriate visas for expatriate staff. Toward that end, the incumbent will foster relationships and liaise regularly with senior officials in the appropriate branches of the Government of Burma (GoB), and facilitate engagement between implementing partners and the national, regional/state and local authorities. The incumbent must possess strong working knowledge of Government of Burma structure and operations, including its delegations of authorities, policy making process, relationship among the Ministries and national and regional/local authorities.

### **MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Facilitate Movement of People, Goods, and Services 60% of Time
1. Tax exemptions: The IP Registration Specialist will work to advocate for the GoB to consistently and transparently apply the terms of the USG-GoB bilateral agreement. This entails helping USAID implementing partners navigate the bureaucracy of GoB tax exemption procedures, including income tax and customs, among others. Responsibilities may include collecting and analyzing data on inappropriate levy of taxes, informing and educating GoB customs officials on the terms of bilateral agreement regarding tax exemptions, and in some cases, escalating the issues to appropriate authorities within USAID and/or the GoB.
  2. Visas: The process for issuing visas is slow and cumbersome, and creates a cost to the US government in order to obtain necessary visas for partners to accomplish program goals. Expatriate staffs working on USAID and other donor projects are required to travel out of the country every 70 days to get a new stamp, which raises project expenses and consumes valuable staff time. Similarly, temporary staff visas are limited to 3 months or less, and require travel out of the country for renewal. The IP Registration Specialist will work with the implementing partners, USAID, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and other senior-level GoB authorities to assess challenges to granting long-term visas, explore and identify options to ease the process for getting visas, and propose recommendations for actions that will expedite and simplify the process for requesting and receiving visas for staff working on USG-funded activities.
  3. In-country Travel Authorizations: The IP Registration Specialist will work with senior officials from GoB's national, regional and state governments, as well as local authorities, to advocate for greater freedom in travel and site-visits of implementing partner staff. Current procedures for securing travel approvals to conduct meetings at the state, district or regional level are unduly burdensome and difficult. Improvements may include developing clear guidelines, including required lead-times, for granting travel approvals and communicating this guidance widely to all local authorities and development agencies.
  4. Facilitate IP Registration for International/Local NGOs: Application and enforcement of NGO registration requirements have been varied and unclear. Although the GOB is moving in the right direction with the passage of the Association Law, which no longer requires local NGOs to register, implementing partners will still need assistance in its roll-out and application. The IP Specialist will work with implementing partners and the relevant GOB officials to understand the complex legal environment and clarify any applicable registration requirements, including requisite documents, and disseminate the information to all USAID implementing partners.
  5. Facilitate Access to Physical Space: Renting of offices and residences, as well as approval of meeting rooms at hotels and other conference venues is challenging. For example, the Democracy and Governance programs have been denied office space by proprietors in Nay Pyi Taw, which delays, if not debilitates, program operations and imposes undue burden on finding office space. The IP Specialist will work with implementing partners to secure offices, residences, meetings and conference space, and work to ensure that such restrictions are not arbitrary and are in accordance

with existing agreements. This may require working with law enforcement officials, property and hotel owners and business associations to ensure understanding of existing agreements by the appropriate government officials.

6. Enable or Facilitate Financial Transactions: Bank transfers in general and transfers from the city-center to the townships remain very slow, affecting the implementation timeline. Accounting systems need to be strengthened and move away from a cash based system. Additionally, lack of bank automation and interconnectivity between branch offices continues to impede the flow of cash to partner organizations. The IP Specialist will work with the subject matter experts in the GOB and the banking and financial sector to expedite financial transactions.

B. Facilitate Access to Information 20% of Time

1. Access to clear, comprehensive, and current information is a significant barrier to effective program implementation. The IP Registration Specialist will work to facilitate access to and understanding of information deemed core to operational or programmatic effectiveness.
  - a. Operational Requirements: IP Registration Specialist will work with GoB and its line ministries to clarify reporting and meeting requirements for implementing partners.
    - i. Program reporting requirements to various GOB entities, including format and substance requirements are not standardized. Consequently, implementing partners duplicate work to present the same data in different formats to various ministries and levels of government.
    - ii. Clear working relationships with line ministries, including need for a Memorandum of Understanding or Terms of Reference and frequency of in-person meetings and reporting is often inadequate. For example, the short notice time for official meetings requiring travel to Nay Pyi Taw is a constraint, as these requests frequently impact on other work and require considerable re-arrangements of other commitments.
  - b. Programmatic Requirements:
    - i. Access to draft legislation and other relevant GOB policies and regulations. Implementing partners have run into situations where there is a reluctance to share draft legislation that directly affect programs; in some cases, even unpublished regulations are enforced. As appropriate, the IP Specialist will work with and influence the GOB, the Embassy and implementing partners to lobby for timely sharing of (draft) legislation in an easily accessible format.
2. Labor Laws: The requirement for hiring and paying local staff relative to Burmese employment law has gotten clearer with the recent amendments to the Employment Law. However, the IP Registration Specialist will need to sustain support to implementing partners and continue to engage GOB to improve upon existing laws.

C. Training and Knowledge Sharing 10% of Time

As the subject matter expert, the IP Registration Specialist is responsible for educating Mission staff and Partners on various program implementation policy and procedures. The main tasks under this area of responsibility include the following:

1. Design and implementation of a training plan, and information dissemination plan for Mission staff and implementing partners.
2. Developing and implementing an on-going knowledge management strategy for Mission staff and implementing partners on various policy and procedures related to visas, tax exemptions, in-country travel authorizations, etc.
3. Create a platform to share lessons learned among implementing partners in order to accelerate development assistance for the people of Burma.

D. Other Core Duties 10% of Time

1. Review, understand, and facilitate appropriate application of the *Bilateral Agreement between the Government of U.S. and the Government of Burma* to all USAID funded programs;
2. Review, understand, and ensure appropriate application of USG policies, procedures, and guidance, including USAID's Automated Directive System in implementing activities;
3. Create a streamlined process for documenting GoB and implementing partner engagement, and saving appropriate memos to file;
4. Monitor and track USG engagement and advocacy efforts on implementation challenges with GoB, disaggregated by implementation issues among bilateral, regional and centrally-funded programs;
5. Work to clarify and resolve issues with the Program Officer and Legal Advisor, and where appropriate, escalate the issue to Senior Management to quickly address and/or rectify the situation;  
and