



Private Sector Working Group: Past and Present

The Private Sector Working Group (PSWG) is a membership group focused on private sector health programming in developing countries. The USAID-funded Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) project manages the PSWG. Under SHOPS, the PSWG has expanded its membership, broadened the technical areas, and updated its mandate.

Background

Originally, the purpose of the PSWG was to improve the implementation and coordination of private sector health programming in family planning and reproductive health. The PSWG initially consisted of a small core group of USAID staff and implementing partners primarily based in Washington. PSWG activities concentrated on sharing technical approaches and methodologies, collaborating on joint activities, and learning from private health sector experts outside of the USAID community. The PSWG built a foundation and structure for sharing lessons learned and best practices in working with the private health sector. Significant achievements were made in mainstreaming private sector health programming and encouraging more donors to work with the private health sector.

Since the establishment of the PSWG in 2005, the landscape of international agencies working with the private health sector has changed considerably. Increasingly, other international donors (both foundations and European governments) have begun working with the private health sector. With a changing donor landscape, there is a need to bring together all actors—old and new—to share technical approaches, to coordinate implementation in the field, and to leverage financial resources and technical expertise.

PSWG Members Agree to:

- Meet on a quarterly basis to facilitate networking and collaboration.
- Include technical presentations at meetings to promote new learning and sharing of technical expertise.
- Host an annual meeting to foster strategic thinking on current best practices and emerging trends.
- Use the PSWG page on the SHOPS website to integrate members outside of Washington and the SHOPS resource center to house tools, research, and presentations.

PSWG Mandate

Under the SHOPS project, the PSWG expanded its focus areas and enlarged its membership to include new actors funding and implementing activities with the private health sector. The technical areas moved beyond family planning and reproductive health to cover HIV/AIDS, mother and child health, water/sanitation, and health system strengthening. Broader membership consists of a wider range of USAID and other government staff and implementing partners both in Washington and in the field. Additionally, other international donor and foundation initiatives working with the private health sector have joined the PSWG, including the World Bank Group, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and a few European donors.

On October 26, 2010, the SHOPS project formally re-launched the PSWG. Through a collaborative process the group updated its mandate to reflect the needs of a growing membership.

The first priority is to improve communication between members to: a) share knowledge of current private health sector activities; b) distribute the latest research on best practices and results of working with the private sector; and c) exchange lessons learned from implementing private sector projects.

Second, the mandate calls for strengthening coordination of technical activities at the international, regional, and country level to avoid duplication of efforts; leverage members' technical expertise and capacity; and maximize donor funding to harness the private health sector.

Third, the PSWG facilitates collaboration between members to carry out joint activities by posting opportunities for members to work together on specific country programs, thus maximizing the private sector contribution to public health goals. It offers strategic thinking and thought leadership to the international health community on how to best to work with the private health sector.

The PSWG community of practice on the SHOPS website is expected to be launched in the fall of 2011.

For more information on the PSWG, visit www.shopsproject.org/pswg or contact

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To access the capabilities of SHOPS, USAID missions and bureaus can buy into the leader agreement or issue their own associate awards.

SHOPS is led by Abt Associates Inc., in collaboration with Banyan Global, Jhpiego, Marie Stopes International, Monitor Group, and O'Hanlon Health Consulting.

The views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.

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