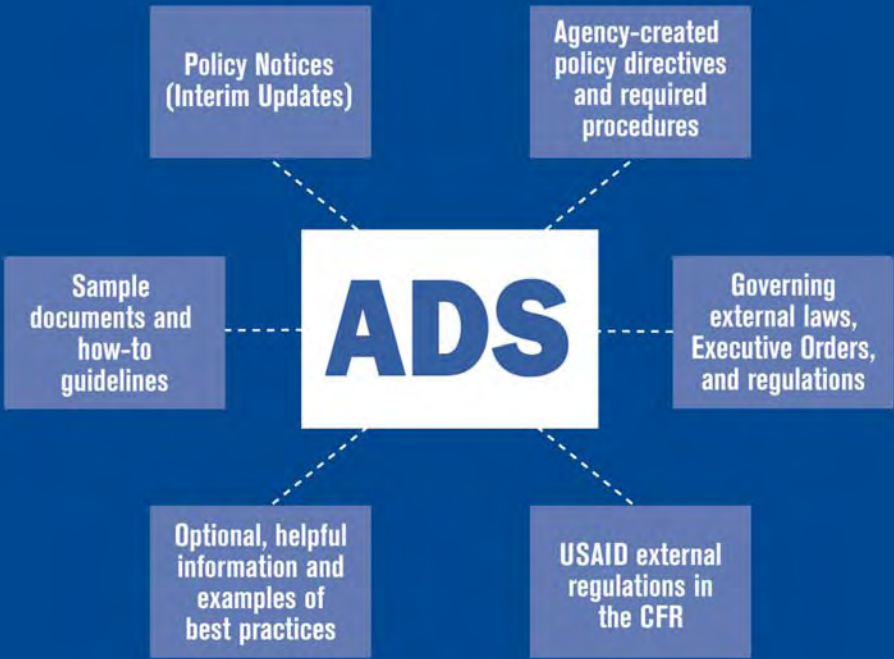




# THE ADS

A Guide to USAID's Automated Directives System



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# What Is the ADS?

Every Federal Government agency is required to have a directives program. The **Automated Directives System (ADS)** is USAID's directives program. The system provides the structure for managing USAID's internal directives. Internal directives encompass policy directives and required procedures.



USAID's policy directives and required procedures

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The system for organizing the information

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**= THE ADS**

This booklet will introduce you to the structure of the ADS and provide you with the tools to find and understand the information contained in the ADS. When you know how the information is written and organized, you'll be able to find everything that the ADS has to offer.

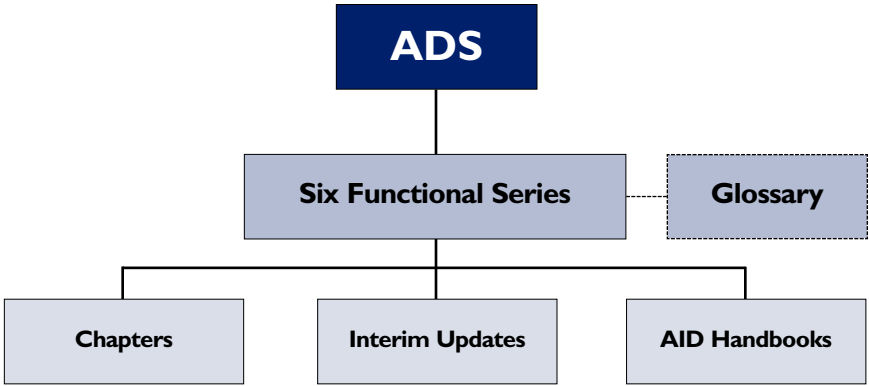
**The ADS is for everyone in USAID.** For example, when you need to find information on –

- ✓ **Security**... classified and unclassified information; your security responsibilities; building security...
- ✓ **Travel**...to and from assignments; TDY; to conferences...
- ✓ **Personnel**...telecommuting; leave; promotions; awards...
- ✓ **Programming**...annual reports; training for development...
- ✓ **Procurement**...grants; cooperative agreements; PASAs...
- ✓ **Records**...disposition schedules; Government forms...
- ✓ **Budget and Finance**...obligations; 401(k) contributions; accounting...

**– the ADS is where you look!**

# Structure of the ADS

The broad internal structure of the ADS is delineated in this chart:



**Chapters =**

- USAID policy directives and required procedures
- Mandatory References (external and internal)
- Additional Help documents

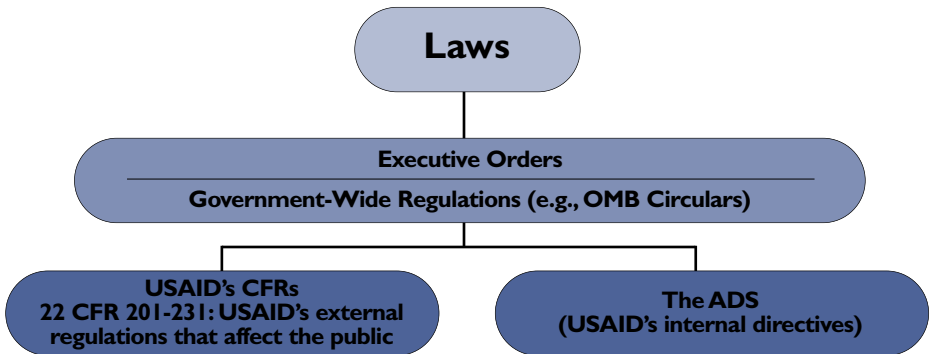
**Interim Updates =**

- Temporary policy directives and required procedures issued as Policy Notices

**AID Handbooks =**

- USAID directives in the old Handbook format

Outlined below is a simplified illustration of how the ADS fits into the hierarchy of laws, regulations, and policy:



The ADS encompasses the totality of USAID's directives body. Please note that it does not include internal office procedures.

## In the ADS You Will Find...

- 1. Regulations, policy directives, and required procedures** to help you understand your responsibilities and achieve the Agency's goals. USAID holds you accountable for knowing and complying with this mandatory guidance.
- 2. The ADS links to governing external regulations, relevant Federal statutes, and Executive Orders (EOs)** to eliminate the need to write duplicative directives. USAID incorporates these into the ADS as external mandatory references.
- 3. USAID codifies regulations that affect the public in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR);** these regulations are also incorporated into the ADS as external mandatory references.
- 4. ADS chapters, additional help items, and mandatory internal references** may also convey *optional, suggested procedures* and examples of best practices to assist you in carrying out your duties. USAID strongly encourages you to consider this information, but it cannot discipline you for not complying with it.
- 5. The ADS includes sample documents and how-to guidelines** as additional help items to further assist you in carrying out your duties.
- 6. Policy Notices** also form part of the ADS. They are issued with the nightly Notices (sent via e-mail to all employees), converted to Interim Updates (IUs), and posted to the ADS Web site. Interim Updates provide temporary guidance, usually on a single subject, that will either be incorporated into an ADS chapter or expire within a year.
- 7. Some old AID Handbook chapters** are still valid and they too are part of the ADS.

# The Functional Series

The ADS is divided into the following six series, organized by function:

Series 100 - Agency Organization and Legal Affairs

Series 200 - Programming Policy

Series 300 - Acquisition and Assistance

Series 400 - Personnel

Series 500 - Management Services

Series 600 - Budget and Finance

## The Chapters

Within each series you will find ADS chapters, references, and the Interim Updates associated with the series. An ADS chapter is designed to address a single policy area.

Chapters are constructed in a simple, standardized format:

- .1 Overview**
- .2 Primary Responsibilities**
- .3 Policy Directives and Required Procedures**
- .4 Mandatory References**
- .5 Additional Help**
- .6 Definitions**

### **.1 Overview**

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This section includes a brief statement of purpose, objective, or applicability.

### **.2 Primary Responsibilities**

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This section contains brief, broad statements about the offices and officials with key responsibilities for acting on the policy directives and required procedures in the chapter.

### .3 Policy Directives and Required Procedures

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Policy directives are clear, concise rules and mandates that USAID has identified as necessary for the proper conduct of its business. Required procedures identify more detailed courses of action that you must follow. Non-mandatory, helpful information may also be included in this section to clarify USAID policy and help you carry out your duties.

The distinction between mandatory and non-mandatory guidance is made through the use of plain language and standard directives terminology, as the following table (adapted from The ADS Authors Guide) illustrates.

<b>Must</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Mandatory.</li><li>■ Command, directive.</li><li>■ There <i>will</i> be adverse consequences for not complying.</li></ul>	<b>Should</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Not mandatory. Not a requirement.</li><li>■ Recommended course of action.</li><li>■ There <i>may</i> be adverse consequences for not complying.</li></ul>
<b>Shall</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Is not plain language.</li><li>■ DO NOT use this term in the ADS! (See <a href="http://www.plainlanguage.gov">http://www.plainlanguage.gov</a>)</li></ul>	<b>Will</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Signifies future action.</li><li>■ Can be used to indicate mandatory action in the future.</li><li>■ Specify the timeframe for the action, unless this is indicated by context.</li></ul>
<b>May</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Not mandatory.</li><li>■ Not a requirement.</li><li>■ When “may” is used to grant permission, ADS authors must list the choices or criteria they are presenting to the reader.</li></ul>	<b>May Not</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ When used in a directive sense, this means “must not.”</li><li>■ Caution – this term is open to misinterpretation! ADS authors must clearly signify their intent when they use this term.</li></ul>

### .4 Mandatory References

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There are two lists of references in this section of each chapter:

- (1) **External Mandatory References** – governing external statutes, Executive Orders, regulations, and authorities.
- (2) **Internal Mandatory References** – USAID-created mandatory policy directives and required procedures.

To access the documents in these lists, click on the [blue, bold, underlined hyperlink](#).

## **.5 Additional Help**

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This section lists documents containing optional, helpful information. To access the documents in this list, click on the [blue, bold, underlined hyperlink](#).

## **.6 Definitions**

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This section contains an alphabetical list of unique terms and their definitions that are applicable to the chapter. Each chapter's terms and definitions are also included in the ADS Glossary.

### **NOTE ON CHAPTER FORMAT:**

Some chapters are still in the old format, which is different from the current format. In the old format, policy was separated from “essential procedure”, which was indicated by the “E” subheading. The old format contains seven different sections, as opposed to the now standard six.

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**TIP:** The Table of Contents in a chapter links directly to each section of the chapter. On the Web, click on the hyperlink in the Table of Contents to go straight to the information you seek.

If you are responsible for writing or clearing Agency policy, you need to pay special attention to one particular chapter – ADS 501. This is the chapter that governs the ADS. It contains detailed information on the following.

## **Writing ADS Policy**

- **Writing ADS material**
- **The format and structure of ADS material**
- **The ADS clearance process**
- **Keeping the ADS current**
- **The annual ADS certification**

ADS 501 also contains a reference tool for authors – The ADS Authors' Guide to Style and Format (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/500/501mac.pdf>). It outlines the stylistic ground rules, based on the GPO Style Manual (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov>), for writing ADS material and shows you, with visual aids and tips, how to format a chapter .

# The ADS Web Site

**The ADS Web site** is a real-time online portal to ADS material and news. You can access it via the Internet or intranet. The ADS Web site is the official source for ADS material.

**Internet:** From the USAID home page, click on Policy, then click on The Automated Directives System (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/>).

**Intranet:** From the intranet home page, click on The ADS-USAID's Directives System under the Resources/Policies tab (<http://inside.usaid.gov/ADS>).

The ADS Web site houses the most recent versions of ADS chapters, internally created references, Interim Updates\*, and links to external references.

*[\*NOTE: The intranet houses SBU materials, which may include ADS chapters, references, and interim updates.]*

## Searching the ADS

From the ADS home page, you can search either the entire USAID external Web site or the ADS Web site only. You may also select a specific series to search by clicking on "Advanced Search." The "Help" link at the end of the search page leads to a search guide with tips and examples.

**TIP:** *To view PDF files on the Web, you must have the most recent version of Adobe Acrobat Reader, available free from Adobe at <http://www.adobe.com>*

*Be sure to check the box for "search Adobe PDF files" to obtain the full Search icon!*



# Links on the Series Page

From the ADS home page, you can click on any of the following buttons and each **series** page on the Internet also links to the following:

- **Chapters** for that series.
- **References:** an alphabetical list of all the reference titles for that series, along with an indication of whether they are mandatory references (MR) or additional help (AH). References are available in PDF format.
- **Interim Updates:** a list of the interim updates (converted Policy Notices) pertaining to that series.
- The AID Handbook status report.
- The ADS Glossary.
- The What's New in the ADS page.
- The ADS Booklet.
- About the ADS.
- External reference links.
- Who to contact.

Throughout each chapter there are hyperlinks, indicated in [blue, bold, underline](#). Click on these links and you will be transported to the designated document. To return to the chapter, click the back arrow on your browser.

When viewing a chapter in PDF format, you have two ways to navigate: (1) Click on the [blue, bold, underlined hyperlinks](#); or (2) click on the bookmarks on the left side of the screen if you prefer to go directly to a certain section within that chapter.



# Links on the ADS Internet Home Page

## Internet

- **What's New in the ADS:** Links to the What's New in the ADS summary page. USAID updates this page as new material is posted to the Web, and catalogs archived previous months' summary charts here. This page also highlights new ADS-related material and developments.

How do you find out what's new in the ADS and keep up with changes? There are two ways:

1. Check out the What's New page on the ADS Web site. USAID updates this page on a real-time basis as new information is posted to the ADS Web site. Each month's table lists the chapters, references, and IUs that were updated and released that month, along with a brief description of what is new or revised.
2. Monitor your nightly Notices e-mail for Policy Notices. Know that after Policy Notices are released, they are converted to IUs and posted to the Web. If you are looking for a Policy Notice that has not yet been converted, search the Notice database on the USAID intranet:  
<http://iapp1.usaid.gov/notices/notices.cfm>.

- **The ADS Booklet:** Links to a copy of this booklet.
- **About the ADS:** Links to a page that describes the structure of the ADS, the ADS Web site, and provides information on ADS training.
- **External Reference Links:** Links to external resources that the ADS references. These links will take you to the specific resource index page of the organization/agency responsible for the resource.
- **Who to Contact:** Links to a page that provides contact information for the ADS editors, and provides contact information for the ADS Web editor.
- **Six Functional Series:** There are six functional series that link to ADS Chapters, References, and IUs.
- **Handbook Series:** Links to a detailed status list of the AID Handbooks.
- **Glossary:** Links to the entire glossary of ADS terms.

# Links on the ADS Intranet Home Page

## Intranet

The ADS intranet Web site has all the information stated on the previous page, **plus** the following:

- **Series 500 IUs:** Links to ADS Series 500 Interim Updates, which, due to their sensitive nature, are considered SBU and are only available on the intranet.
- **SBU Documents for the ADS:** Links to any ADS documents, which, due to their sensitive nature, are considered SBU and are only available on the intranet.
- **The ADS Times:** Links to The ADS Times, which is a monthly newsletter about the ADS. It contains helpful informative pieces on the ADS. Previous issues of the newsletter are archived here.
- **ADS Training:** Links to the ADS training page. This page discusses the two types of training available, and provides dates, times, and locations of training for a year in advance.
- **Tips for ADS Authors:** Links to the latest Tips for ADS Authors, which provides explanatory essays and helpful hints for ADS authors and clearing officials. Previous issues of the Tips are archived here.
- **ADS Word Files:** These are only found on the USAID ADS intranet.

# ADS Contacts

Have ADS content and Web site questions?

Contact the Experts at the USAID ADS Directives Shop

By e-mail: [ads@usaid.gov](mailto:ads@usaid.gov)

By phone: (202) 355-7450

## **Sponsored by**

Bureau for Management  
Office of Administrative Services  
Information and Records Division (M/AS/IRD)

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