



HIGHLIGHTS OF USAID WORKSHOP:  
PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN A NEW ERA  
JUNE 28 – JULY 2 2004

**Making Policy Reform Happen**

This workshop breakout session was intended to share lessons that have been learned in diagnosing, designing, implementing, and assessing policy reforms over a decade of field-based policy reform experiences to enhance economic growth. It was also designed to allow policy practitioners to engage in discussion and share practical and pragmatic operational guidelines for broad or subject matter based policy reforms and development. One of the hypotheses – that practitioners have developed a growing appreciation for policy reform, development, and implementation, alone or in concert with traditional forms of technical assistance to obtain far greater, and more enduring, economic growth prospects – was validated.

Ken Baum, the moderator, presented two approaches to policy reform: (1) ad hoc; and (2) structured. He strongly urged the audience to consider using a structured approach using the “Policy Reform: Lessons Learned” monograph that was passed out to each of the participants. Russ Misheloff then presented a short explanation of the Policy Wheel presented in the document as an organized approach to increase the likelihood of success, to understand the policy process, and to establish a common framework for subsequent discussion points. Following this presentation, Betsy Marcotte presented an example of how the Policy Wheel approach could be effectively used from a recent extended consultancy involving trade policy development. Finally, Avrom Bendavid-Val presented additional examples of how trade policies could be incorporated into enterprise competitiveness activities.

During the 40 minutes left for discussion, the audience and presenters had a lively and quite intense discussion – with several of the attendees thanking the presenters for the information they had organized and presented. Many of the participants shared their own stories of policy reform successes and failures, and the difficulty in representing the complexity and complications of real world policy reform. There was also focused discussion on the difficulties involved in obtaining local and partner ownership of the policy reforms and finding policy champions. While the benefits of well-conceived policy reforms are substantial and easily recognized, policy changes, both at the macro or sector level often require institutional reforms and affect vested, politically well-connected economic interests. And, several presented stories about how policy reforms had failed because the other Policy Reform: Lessons Learned were not either well understood or conceptualized. Thus, the presentation and discussion became a very significant part of the conference as a means to break into smaller groups to share information and experiences among the “policy community.”