

of Economic Affairs. It is essential that you be a good listener so that you get to know the officials' perspectives, their ideas, priorities and needs. Work out a broad agreement on the objectives and work schedule, without emphasizing specifics. A letter in advance to the Government of India, which includes a one-page summary of the project and its objectives, will facilitate matters. Provide copies to all concerned.

If you require field visits, ask the Government of India to inform state governments and their relevant institutions about your intended visit, so as to improve your chances of assistance from key officials. Take with you copies of your correspondence with central government officials and other relevant individuals. Lower level officials generally need written documents to initiate action.

At the state government/organization level it is often easier to reach a consensus on specific objectives and action plans than it is at higher levels. If you cannot reach an agreement on certain issues with the Government of India, try for an agreement at the state level, and vice versa. Document the outcome of your discussions in a brief memorandum and circulate it to reach an agreement.

Negotiating to reach mutually acceptable solutions is vital. At times you may think your Indian partner is irrational. You may require a particular approach to funding, planning or implementing that runs contrary to the Indian way of doing things. You may encounter a partner with a conflict of interest. Don't compromise your interests, but try to accommodate your partner's reasonable requests.

At the end of the mission, arrange for a debriefing session with senior department officials and the Department of Economic Affairs. It would be helpful to get the Government of India to invite key state government officials to this meeting so that decisions can be made collectively. At least one day in advance, circulate a brief note of your assessment of the situation and your recommendations, indicating the specific points on which you require agreement. At the meeting, try to arrive at specific agreements. After the meeting, follow up with confirmation letters. Your objective should be to secure firm commitment to the policy or program at the highest level. You want to arrive at clearly defined and mutually acceptable objectives and a good action plan. In subsequent visits, you should review the progress made and suggest new inputs.