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Country Transition Planning

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 201

New Edition Date: 09/07/2016
Responsible Office: PPL
File Name: 201mak_090716

Per the FY 2016 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, any bilateral country assistance strategy developed after the date of enactment of the Act must include a transition plan. Any CDCS begun after January 1, 2016, must therefore include a sub-section on country transition planning within the discussion of the development context (note: this does not apply to RDCSs). Opportunities to transition the nature of USAID's relationship with a partner country include, but are not limited to, transitioning out of specific sectors, shifting from programming to technical/policy assistance, and accounting for and/or leveraging other resources and development actors, among other options. These opportunities may arise out of promising developments in country context or growing capacity of local partners, or alternately, they may be identified as a necessity should the country context prove sufficiently unfavorable or counterproductive for USAID involvement.

For many USAID countries, transition planning may be long term. In other countries, opportunities or constraints in the development context may lead to a shorter transition timeline. There could also be cases in which USAID transitions out of a sector or multiple sectors during the CDCS period.

Transition planning consists of: 1) determining the conditions necessary for transition in light of the current country context; 2) determining what would be needed from USAID and other development actors to achieve these conditions; and 3) based on this, determining the proposed trajectory for USAID assistance in country. In cases of shorter term transition, this should include qualitative or quantitative benchmarks toward achievement of those conditions and options for transition once those conditions are met.

This Mandatory Reference outlines the process for transition planning in each phase of CDCS development.

PHASE 1

Early in the parameters-setting phase, there must be a discussion between the Regional Bureau, Mission, Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM), the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL), and other relevant stakeholders to determine what opportunities exist for transitioning in or out of one or more sectors, or changing the nature of the relationship with the host country over the course of the strategy. The outcome of this decision will determine to what extent transition planning factors into the CDCS, and will be documented in the Phase 1 Summary of Conclusions memo.

PHASE 2

The Results Framework and Results Framework paper should reflect the decisions made on transition in Phase 1, including specific language to indicate whether the Mission will be transitioning the country relationship, or other transitions. These might include any areas in which the Mission will be

transitioning in/out, transitioning to other donors or domestic resources, or transitioning from programmatic support to policy or technical assistance over the CDCS period.

PHASE 3

As part of the full CDCS narrative, as a sub-section of the Development Context section, the Mission must incorporate a description (of up to one page) of how the Mission will approach the transition opportunities identified. Depending on the length of the transition, this might include: USAID's historical and planned trajectory in country, end goals of USAID's work in country, benchmarks toward achievement of those goals, and options for transition. It may also describe specific efforts to build sustainability and transition USAID assistance. For countries in which transition is identified as a possibility in five years or fewer, transition must be addressed explicitly throughout the CDCS and must be reflected in the base budget scenario.

The Mission must describe how USAID will make progress in this overall trajectory over the life of the CDCS (e.g., what the end state should be in five years). As relevant, the concepts and determinations included in the country transition planning section may be referenced throughout the CDCS.

The final transition plan should inform the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS). The ICS should be updated to reflect any USAID transitions that will happen during its lifetime.