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Process for Developing and Approving a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 201

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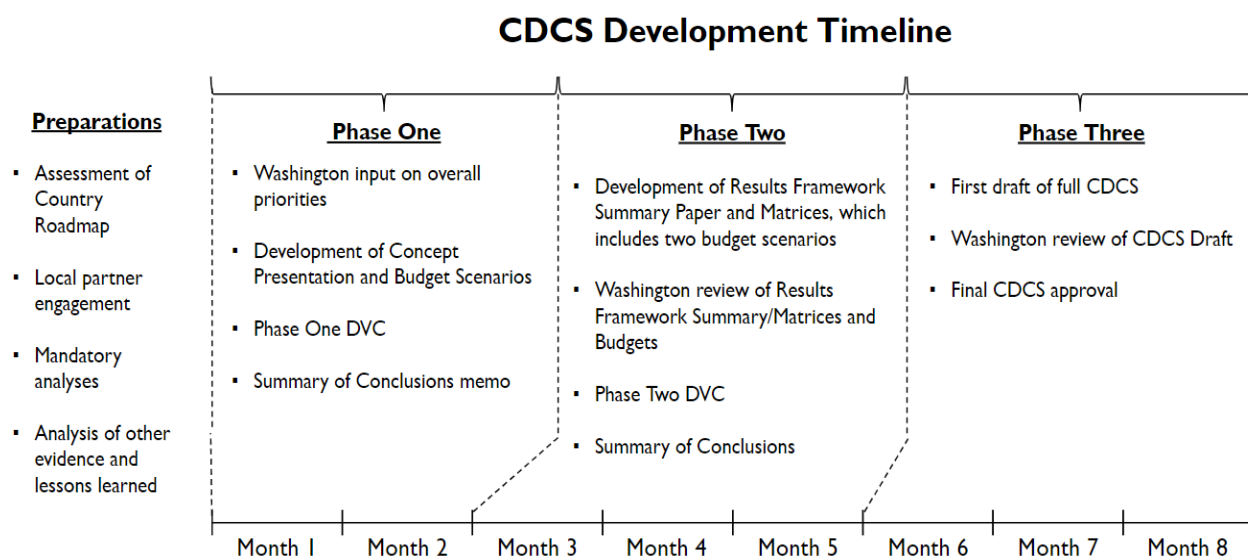
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I. Overview

This Mandatory Reference to Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter [ADS 201.3.2](#) describes the process for preparing for, developing, and approving a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). This process is designed to facilitate an iterative dialogue between each Mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and USAID/Washington that results in clear decisions and the Agency's endorsement of a Mission's CDCS within a total time frame of eight months. To achieve this timeline, this process includes a series of milestones with requirements for Missions to submit deliverables to USAID/Washington within a certain number of days, as well as time-bound review periods for USAID/Washington. It also places emphasis on early collaboration and proactive dialogue so that when a Mission submits each deliverable for review, the number of substantive issues are limited to those around which the interested parties have not been able to reach agreement. Missions should initiate preparations prior to launching Phase One (see **Section II** for additional guidance). The process consists of three phases:

- Phase One – Initial Consultations and Parameter-Setting (see **Section III**);
- Phase Two – Development of a Results Framework (see **Section IV**); and
- Phase Three – Preparation and Approval of the CDCS (see **Section V**).

The graphic below illustrates the major milestones and time frames associated with each phase of the CDCS process:



As described in [ADS 201.3.2.3](#), this guidance articulates principles and requirements

that Missions can customize to all country contexts, including those with factors that contribute to a non-permissive environment. However, certain variations are appropriate, particularly for designated Missions that are operating in countries with relatively advanced levels of self-reliance that will undertake a “strategic transition” during the strategy period. (See [ADS 201.3.2.8](#) and [ADS 201mak](#) for additional guidance on this subset of countries.) This Mandatory Reference describes variations applicable to Missions that will undertake a strategic transition in **Section VIII**. The Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) must consult with Regional Bureaus to identify and designate countries that have relatively advanced levels of self-reliance and in which a strategic transition will take place.

II. Preparation for the CDCS Process

As described in **Section I**, the official CDCS process takes place on a prescribed timeline that should last no more than eight months. To maximize this compact process, Missions should initiate preparations prior to its official launch. Ideally, Missions should start preparing for the CDCS planning process after they conduct the Mid-Course Stocktaking and/or the last portfolio review under their current CDCS.

During the preparation phase, which is sometimes called “Phase Zero,” Missions should do the following:

A. Analyze Their Country Roadmap and Establish Approaches for Building Self-Reliance

Missions should use the most recent version of their Journey to Self-Reliance Country Roadmap as an entry point to inform their understanding of a nation’s degree of self-reliance, including its self-reliance strengths and challenges, to inform strategic approaches in their CDCSs. Updated annually, the Country Roadmap is USAID’s standardized analytical tool for visualizing country progress across the dimensions of commitment and capacity based on a set of third-party, publicly available metrics. Since the Country Roadmap metrics are high-level and provide a starting point for deeper analysis, Missions are also encouraged to supplement their Roadmaps with additional data and deeper analyses by applying secondary and country-specific data sources and other evaluations to understand the country’s underlying self-reliance story better. To find Country Roadmaps for all low- and middle-income countries, see [USAID’s Journey to Self-Reliance Country Roadmaps web portal](#). For guidance on how to use the Country Roadmap during the CDCS process, see [Technical Note: Applying the Country Roadmap to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy \(CDCS\)](#).

Since the Country Roadmaps provide a high-level snapshot of each nation’s degree of self-reliance, Missions should use the Country Roadmaps to engage partner governments, civil society, the private sector, and other local stakeholders to help understand their perspectives on overarching national needs, opportunities, and constraints. Missions should identify points of convergence among development

needs, national priorities, U.S. policy imperatives, and USAID's strengths and comparative advantages, framed around the Roadmaps. Missions must also balance their understanding of the specific challenges a country faces for building self-reliance with local partners' own plans and priorities; the larger U.S. national-security, economic, and foreign-policy objectives that USAID assistance helps advance; and the Agency's unique capabilities and constraints as a development agency relative to other donors and U.S. departments and agencies.

For additional guidance on USAID's goal to put self-reliance at the center of all CDCSs, see [ADS 201.3.2.8](#). In addition, Missions should review the [USAID Policy Framework](#) and the following papers that describe practices for building self-reliance: the USAID Policy Framework, [Financing Self-Reliance](#), [Private-Sector Engagement Policy](#), [Redefining Our Relationships with Partner Governments](#), and the [Acquisition and Assistance Strategy](#).

B. Engage Local Actors and Partners

A core tenet of the self-reliance vision is building the commitment and capacity of local partners to chart their own development paths and implement and fund their own development solutions. To this end, Missions should collaborate meaningfully with local stakeholders in preparation for, and throughout, the CDCS process to develop a shared vision of self-reliance and to create a CDCS that reflects a shared commitment to change. This engagement should include dialogue with the partner-country government, the private sector, civil society, faith-based organizations, and others. As part of this engagement process, Missions should also make efforts to look beyond their traditional group of local partners to new collaborators, especially those with deep roots in the communities they support and who are committed to fostering self-reliance.

C. Begin to Conduct the Three Mandatory Analyses

Missions should begin to conduct the following mandatory analyses before the launch of the CDCS process so they can ensure their completion as early in the process as possible, but no later than **the beginning of** Phase Two:

- **Gender Analysis:** Missions must conduct a strategic-level gender analysis to provide insights about gaps between women and men and identify entry points and opportunities for improving gender equality in their CDCSs. Missions will later build upon and/or update this analysis in the subsequent processes to design projects (see [ADS 201.3.3.13](#) regarding gender analysis during the project-design process). For additional guidance on the strategic-level and other gender analyses during the Program Cycle, see [ADS 205, Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#).

- **Tropical Forests and Biodiversity Analysis:** According to Sections 118 and 119 of the [Foreign Assistance Act \(FAA\)](#), as amended, Missions must assess the actions necessary to conserve tropical forests and biodiversity in their country/region, and the extent to which actions proposed by USAID address threats to them. For additional guidance on the analyses of tropical forest and biodiversity, see [ADS 201mav, Foreign Assistance Act Sections 118 and 119 Tropical Forests and Biodiversity Analysis](#); and [Foreign Assistance Act Sections 118/119, Tropical Forests and Biodiversity Analysis Best Practices Guide](#).
- **Climate Change:** According to [Executive Order 13677](#), Missions must assess climate-related risks and vulnerabilities in all strategies and related funding decisions, and address them as appropriate. Missions will later build upon and/or update the strategic-level screening, as appropriate, in the subsequent processes to design projects and activities (see [ADS 201.3.3.13](#) and [ADS 201.3.4.5](#) regarding climate-related risk-assessments during the design of projects and activities, respectively). At the strategy level, Missions must also assess opportunities to mitigate emissions of greenhouse gases and incorporate them as appropriate. Missions that receive funds attributable to Congressional directives for Adaptation, Clean/Renewable Energy, or Sustainable Landscapes have additional requirements. For supplemental guidance, see [ADS 201mat, Climate Change in USAID Country/Regional Strategies](#).

D. Assess Evidence and Lessons-Learned

Analyses play a significant role in ensuring CDCSs are evidence-based, and in helping Missions make strategic choices. Missions should plan analysis strategically and consider when information is needed in the context of USAID's Program Cycle, but they should not perform all analysis prior to the development of a CDCS. Missions should be strategic when planning analyses and set a clear analytic agenda for completing the mandatory analyses and other critical assessments to inform decision-making during the CDCS process. Because of the compact timeline associated with the development and approval of a CDCS, Missions should identify and use available analyses and evaluations in lieu of new analyses whenever feasible. However, if Missions must conduct new analyses, they should answer critical questions and address information gaps that need answers to develop the CDCS. This agenda should include the following:

- Undertaking work to consolidate and synthesize evidence and lessons-learned from a) the implementation of prior CDCSs (or other strategic plans, such as Integrated Country Strategies (ICS) and interagency strategic plans); b) available analyses and evaluations, including those commissioned by other donors or organizations; and c) past portfolio reviews, CDCS stocktaking exercises, and the monitoring and evaluation of existing projects and activities;

- Collecting and analyzing data on the activities of malign actors in the partner country that counter progress on its Journey to Self-Reliance, and evaluating how USAID could counter this malign influence through strategic messaging, programming, and partnership under the USAID Clear Choice Framework and the Agency's [Development Framework on Countering Malign Kremlin Influence](#); and
- Reviewing the latest reports from the U.S. Department of State on [Fiscal Transparency](#), [Trafficking in Persons \(TIP\)](#), and [International Religious Freedom](#) and the [Annual Report](#) of the United States Commission on Religious Freedom (USCRF) to determine their relevance for the new Strategy. Missions that are operating in countries listed on the Tier 2 Watchlist or Tier 3 in the [TIP Report](#) must address trafficking in persons in their CDCS Missions that are operating in countries listed on Tier 1 (Countries of Particular Concern) and Tier 2 of USCRF's Annual Report and/or the Department of State's Report on International Freedom must address religious freedom in their CDCS.
- Reviewing the President's [National Security Strategy \(NSS\)](#); the [Department of State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan \(JSP\)](#); Administration-approved Regional and Sectoral Strategies; relevant Integrated Country Strategies; and [USAID's Policy Framework](#), [Private-Sector-Engagement Policy](#), and [Risk-Appetite Statement](#).
- Reviewing USAID's [Acquisition and Assistance Strategy](#) to plan how to use co-creation and innovative procurement vehicles and engage with local systems and new and underutilized organizations to advance sustainability under the CDCS.
- Conducting a Public Financial Management Risk-Assessment Framework (PFMRAF) Rapid Appraisal, if the Mission is considering the possible use of direct assistance to a partner government (G2G) over \$750,000, to provide a high-level, country-wide snapshot of the public financial-management, governance, and public-accountability systems of that government. Missions should use the Rapid Appraisal to inform whether they should undertake a more rigorous, institution-level Stage 2 Risk-Assessment during relevant subsequent project-design process(es). (See [ADS 201.3.13](#) regarding the PFMRAF Stage 2 Risk-Assessment during the project-design process.) For additional guidance on the PFMRAF Rapid Appraisal and associated processes, see [ADS 220, Use and Strengthening of Reliable Partner Government Systems for Implementation of Direct Assistance](#). [ADS 201](#) will be updated to conform to [ADS 220](#) when it is available.

III. Phase One: Initial Consultations and Parameter-Setting

A. Overview of Phase One

Phase One marks the official start of the process to develop a CDCS. Responsible Missions and Regional Bureaus should therefore initiate this process approximately eight months before they expect the approval of a CDCS. The objective of Phase One is to enable a formal dialogue between Missions, relevant USAID Bureaus and Independent Offices in Washington (hereinafter referred to as B/IOs), and interagency stakeholders, as relevant, that results in clear parameters for the process for developing a CDCS in Phase Two and Phase Three. The guiding questions of this parameter-setting phase are the following: 1) What does the Mission need to know to invest its time wisely to prepare the CDCS?; and 2) What do Washington Operating Units (OUs) need to know to support the development of the Mission's CDCS? Phase One should take approximately two months.

Phase One has five major milestones:

- 1) Washington input on overall priorities (see **Section III.B**);
- 2) Development of a Concept Presentation, which includes two budget scenarios (see **Section III.C** on the Concept Presentation and **Section III.D** on the budget scenarios);
- 3) Washington review of the Concept Presentation (see **Section III.E**);
- 4) Delivery of the Concept Presentation via Digital Video Conference (hereinafter referred to as the Phase One DVC) (see **Section III.F**); and
- 5) A Summary of Conclusions memo (see **Section III.G**).

During Phase One, the Mission – through the responsible Regional Bureau – should collaborate with designated Points of Contact (POCs) from all Pillar Bureaus, the Bureau for Management, the Office of Budget and Resource-Management (BRM) and any other relevant B/IOs, in addition to the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL). POCs are responsible for coordinating input or feedback within their B/IO and ensuring that feedback submitted to the Regional Bureau reflects the B/IO's corporate position and not that of individual perspectives.

Phase One culminates in agreement between USAID/Washington and the Mission on resource parameters, priorities, and sectoral focus for the CDCS, and the Mission's plan for developing the CDCS, including expectations for Washington support. USAID/Washington's engagement in Phase One is essential to the process for developing and approving a CDCS. In particular, it is important to note the following:

- Phase One presents the primary opportunity for Washington OUs, interagency stakeholders as relevant, and the Mission to engage and make decisions on issues of mutual interest.
- Concurrence reached in Phase One represents the Agency's endorsement of the Mission's parameters for the CDCS. The Regional Bureau documents this agreement in the Phase One SOC memo.
- While there will be an opportunity for further refinement during Phase Two, discussion of new sectors or priorities will not be possible absent significant changes in country context, policy, or funding levels.

B. Washington Input on Overall Priorities

Phase One officially begins when the responsible Regional Bureau issues a [mandatory questionnaire](#) to relevant B/IOs (via the POC email list described in **Section III.A**) to solicit their priorities for developing a CDCS. B/IOs must respond to the questionnaire within five (5) business days. The launch date of the eight-month CDCS process is the date the Regional Bureau issues the questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather input on USAID/Washington's priorities and expectations for Missions to take into consideration throughout the development of a CDCS. In some cases, the Regional Bureau may also convene a meeting to further discuss priorities with the Mission and relevant B/IOs. **The Regional Bureau must schedule the Phase One DVC within two months after issuing the questionnaire.**

C. Development of the Concept Presentation

Based on the Mission's analysis of the Country Roadmap, supplemental data and analyses, evidence and learning from implementation, input from the partner government and local stakeholders about priorities, and USAID/Washington's input on overall priorities, Missions must prepare a Concept Presentation and submit the slide deck to the responsible Regional Bureau ten (10) business days in advance of the Phase One DVC.

The Concept Presentation slide deck must cover the following:

- A description of the most-salient country context features that informed the Mission's strategic choices, including a donor snapshot, an assessment of the country's self-reliance profile, a summary of the partner government's priorities, and other features critical to understanding the strategic operating environment;
- Priority choices or focus areas for the new strategy and how they will advance self-reliance;

- The Mission’s preliminary strategic approach and notional or illustrative programming the Mission could undertake under each strategic choice, as well as a discussion of how these strategic choices align with the Mission’s allocations of resources;
- A description of how the vision and priorities for the new strategy will advance the overall foreign-policy, economic, and development priorities of the U.S. Government (USG);
- A description of what is different about the new strategy versus the current CDCS, and how other core elements of the Journey to Self-Reliance come into play;
- A description of key lessons learned from the implementation of the current CDCS (e.g., from evaluations, stock-taking, learning activities, etc.), and how this evidence helped inform the Mission’s vision for the new strategy;
- A description of opportunities that exist for transition-planning (see [ADS 201.3.2.8](#) and [ADS 201mak](#) for additional guidance) and what broadly is possible to achieve during the implementation of the strategy;
- The two budget scenarios (see **Section D** below), in addition to staffing considerations for the strategy;
- A short narrative regarding the two budget scenarios annexed to the presentation;
- Input from USAID/Washington and the Mission’s response;
- Any requests for support from USAID/Washington;
- The Mission’s timeline for preparing the CDCS; and
- The status of the mandatory analyses and plans for any supplementary analyses.

See this required Phase One [slide deck template](#) for additional guidance on the presentation. Also see **Section D** below for additional guidance on the two budget scenarios and associated narrative.

D. Development of Budget Scenarios

As described in **Section C**, Missions must develop two budget scenarios and an associated narrative for their Phase One Concept Presentation. Missions must develop these scenarios in alignment with Administration priorities and the Agency’s

goals, based on parameters from BRM. (Note: This collaboration between Missions, Regional Bureaus, and BRM begins in this phase and continues throughout the CDCS process as budgetary issues or questions arise.)

BRM's Parameters for Budget Scenarios: The Mission must contact BRM to request resource parameters for its two required budget scenarios. BRM must then provide historical funding levels for the Mission that include top-line and sector allocations. BRM must base these historical numbers on a rolling average of budgets for three (3) years calculated in one of two ways: either 1) the levels for a Mission in the three (3) most-recent reports required by Section 653(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended; or 2) the levels for a Mission in the two most-recent reports under Section 653(a) and the most-recent Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ). The second method is typically appropriate in cases in which the most recent CBJ significantly increased or decreased a Mission's allocation. Once BRM, the Mission, and the responsible Regional Bureau reach agreement on which method to use, BRM must send the parameters to the Mission, with a copy to the Regional Bureau.

Budget Scenario One: Using the BRM-provided budget parameters, the Mission must then construct a "Scenario-One" budget. This scenario should be consistent with BRM-provided historical levels and reflect Congressional Directives. In exceptional cases in which a Mission expects an extreme shift in budget resources during the lifetime of the CDCS, the Mission should work with BRM, PPL, and the responsible Regional Bureau to establish a budget scenario appropriate to its context.

Budget Scenario Two: Using the same BRM-provided parameters, the Mission must also develop a second budget scenario that reflects its optimal distribution of funding to address the strategic priorities of its CDCS and advance self-reliance in the partner country. If the Mission is planning to transition out of one or more sectors, the Mission must reflect the resources associated with this transition in its second budget scenario. This budget must embody the principles of a Zero-Based-Budgeting (ZBB) approach and therefore be irrespective of budget history, previous directives, mortgages, and pipeline. This scenario does not need to reflect current or anticipated Congressional Directives, as required for Scenario One.

Associated Budget Narrative: In addition to the two budget tables, the Mission must also develop a short budget narrative in one or two paragraphs that describes the differences between the two scenarios, how each scenario reflects the Mission's objectives, and the trade-offs made in each. Missions must include this narrative as an annex to the Concept Presentation.

E. Washington Review of Concept Presentation

The responsible Regional Bureau must share the Mission's draft Concept Presentation and two budget scenarios, along with an Issues Matrix/feedback tracker, to all relevant B/IO POCs via the CDCS Working Group email listserv, an

email list maintained by PPL. The Regional Bureau must ensure that the Concept Presentation complies with the requirements for Phase One prior to sending this email. These POCs should then distribute these documents within their B/IO and gather/consolidate internal responses. Feedback from Washington B/IOs should reflect the B/IO's corporate position and not that of individual perspectives. Washington B/IOs must provide input within five (5) business days and provide no more than five (5) comments total that represent the most-critical feedback in the Issues Matrix created by the Regional Bureau. If a B/IO does not provide feedback within five (5) business days, it is presumed to have no comments.

The Regional Bureau must then collate and prioritize feedback on the Concept Presentation and, if necessary, coordinate discussions with relevant B/IOs to resolve any outstanding questions or issues. The Regional Bureau must share B/IO feedback on the Concept Presentation with the Mission at least three (3) business days prior to the DVC.

Wherever possible, the Mission should discuss and/or resolve any comments submitted by B/IOs prior to the DVC. In the event that a Mission is unable to address or resolve a comment with the relevant B/IO during this period, the Mission should seek resolution during the DVC.

F. Phase One DVC

The objective of the Phase One DVC is to achieve agreement on the parameters for the CDCS discussed during the Phase One process. The Mission Director (or designee) and the Assistant Administrator (AA) (or designee) for the responsible Regional Bureau must co-chair the DVC. The Regional Bureau must invite POCs from relevant B/IOs, as well as other stakeholders as relevant (which could include stakeholders from the U.S. Embassy and/or the U.S. Department of State).

During the DVC, the Mission must address required content described in **Section III.C**, which includes a summary of comments raised during consultations with B/IOs and the Mission's initial response. If the Mission was unable to resolve any comments prior to the DVC, it should seek resolution during the DVC.

G. Phase One Summary of Conclusions Memo

The final step of Phase One is the drafting, dissemination and approval of the SOC memo. The cleared SOC represents the Agency's endorsement of the parameters that will govern the CDCS process. Final approval should occur no more than ten (10) business days following the Phase One DVC.

The Regional Bureau must draft the SOC and obtain input from the Mission before it circulates the memo to B/IO stakeholders for clearance. The memo must discuss key decisions made during Phase One, including during the DVC. The SOC should be approximately three (3) pages, excluding annexes, and should not be a transcript

of the meeting, but reflect key decisions and follow-up actions. Specifically, the memo must address the following:

- Country Context and Journey to Self-Reliance Assessment: Describe briefly the most salient features in the country context and the Mission's assessment of the Country Roadmap, including implications for the new strategy.
- Mission's Vision and Strategic Priorities/Choices: Recap agreement on the Mission's vision for the Strategy, including the strategic choices/priorities to advance self-reliance, as agreed to during the Phase One DVC.
- Washington Priorities and Feedback: Summarize agreement on Washington priorities from the questionnaire, review of the Concept Presentation, and Phase One DVC.
- Budget Scenarios: Summarize the Mission's two budget scenarios, including any discussions about **shifts in strategic resources**.
- Transition Plan: Discuss agreement on the Mission's plan to evolve – or transition – its approach as the government, civil society, and private sector in the partner country build self-reliance. (See [ADS 201.3.7](#) on Country Transition-Planning.)
- Strategic Alignment and Policy/Strategy Considerations: Describe briefly how the Mission's strategic vision and priorities advance the USG's overall foreign policy, economic, and development priorities.
- Timeline and Duration of Strategy: Recap agreement on the duration of the strategy and preliminary timeline for completing each phase of the process for developing the CDCS.
- Support from USAID/Washington: Document agreement on critical support B/IOs have pledged to provide to the Mission, including with regards to analyses/assessments and the development of the RF.

The Regional Bureau must circulate the SOC to PPL, BRM, and relevant B/IO stakeholders for clearance. The Regional Bureau, in consultation with PPL, should determine which B/IOs should clear the memo as well. All stakeholder B/IOs should receive an informational copy.

Clearing B/IOs must provide their clearance or offer any substantive comments within three (3) business days. If a B/IO does not respond within three (3) business days, the B/IO is presumed to have provided clearance by default. Once cleared, a Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) in the Regional Bureau or his or her designee provides final approval of the SOC and sends it to the Mission.

IV. Phase Two: Development of the Results Framework

A. Overview of Phase Two

The objective of Phase Two is to gain Agency agreement on the approaches the Mission will use to advance the Journey to Self-Reliance in its partner country given the parameters identified during Phase One. During Phase Two, the Mission finalizes its mandatory analyses; reviews other types of evidence and information, including from monitoring and evaluation; establishes its initial development hypotheses; **finalizes the budget scenarios**; prepares its RF Summary Paper and Matrices based on these hypotheses; and outlines the next steps to prepare the full CDCS. During this phase, Missions also engage with stakeholders to discuss strategic choices and priorities with a view to ensure the CDCS reflects alignment with local priorities.

This phase includes four milestones:

- 1) Development of the RF Summary Paper and Matrices (see **Section IV.B**);
- 2) Washington review of the RF Summary Paper and Matrices (see **Section IV.C**);
- 3) The Phase Two DVC (see **Section IV.E**); and
- 4) The SOC memo (see **Section IV.F**).

During Phase Two, the Mission and responsible Regional Bureau should collaborate with relevant stakeholder B/IO POCs that have critical equities in the subject CDCS (in addition to PPL). The Mission should also consult with BRM and relevant B/IOs during Phase Two after drafting its RF to discuss any budgetary questions or concerns regarding the budget parameters identified in the SOC from Phase One.

During this phase, there should be no additional questions about the main priorities or sectors of focus in which the Mission is expected to work, since these decisions were approved in the Phase One SOC.

B. Development of the Results Framework Summary Paper and Matrices

The Mission must develop an RF Summary Paper and a set of RF Matrices (about 10 to 15 pages total). The Mission must submit these documents to the responsible Regional Bureau for circulation within two months after the approval of the SOC from Phase One.

The RF Summary Paper and associated Matrices define the Mission's highest-order Goal and DOs that it, in collaboration with its development partners, will work to address during the period of the strategy. They also outline the Mission's initial

development hypotheses regarding how and why, and under what conditions, it believes – based on the given parameters and best available information – that it will be successful in advancing each of its DOs. The RF Summary Paper and Matrices are the basis for the final draft of the CDCS. They also provide the organizing framework for the Mission-wide Performance-Management Plan (PMP) the Mission must develop following the CDCS process (see **ADS 201.3.2.14** on the PMP) and learning and adapting that occurs throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

The RF Summary Paper must include the following:

- Articulation of the Goal of the CDCS in support of the Journey to Self-Reliance;
- A high-level summary of the country context, including an assessment of **the country's overall level of self-reliance**, and how priorities of the government, civil society, and the private sector in the partner country align with or diverge from the **Country Roadmap**;
- The rationale for selected DOs and Intermediate Results (IRs), including how each DO links to the Goal of the CDCS and will increase self-reliance, how the DOs differ from the previous CDCS, and other factors as relevant that influenced their selection;
- An update to the Phase One schedule for completing planned analyses and evaluations; and
- An RF diagram that follows the guidance in [ADS 201.3.2.12](#).

The RF Matrices are DO-specific tables that include the following:

- Results statements;
- Development Hypothesis statement and narrative;
- Illustrative indicators for IRs and Sub-IRs;
- Linkages between results (e.g., among IRs and between the IRs and the DO);
- Relationships to the Country Roadmap;
- Evidence sources, including evidence from implementation;
- Identification of strategic partners, including **local actors that are critical to helping USAID achieve the stated results or that either advance or impede the country's Journey to Self-Reliance**;

- Identification of donors and other development actors;
- A preliminary learning agenda with notional questions that arise from gaps in knowledge and evidence in the Development Hypotheses;
- Critical assumptions and risk factors;
- An annex that includes a draft Goal-Mission Objective structure for inclusion in the relevant U.S. Embassy's ICS, as described in [ADS 201.3.2.6](#); and
- An annex that includes an [Index of Existing and Planned Projects](#).

See the RF [Summary and Matrices Template](#) for additional guidance on both of these documents.

C. Washington Review of Results Framework Paper and Matrices

The Mission must submit its RF Summary Paper and Matrices to the responsible Regional Bureau for review at least one month before the Phase Two DVC. The Regional Bureau must review these documents to ensure compliance with the requirements for Phase Two. The Regional Bureau must then circulate these documents, along with an Issues Matrix, to B/IO POCs for feedback via the CDCS Working Group listserv.

These B/IOs must then gather internal feedback and submit comments (cleared at the B/IO-level) to the Regional Bureau via the Issues Matrix. B/IOs must conduct this review within seven (7) business days. If a B/IO does not provide comments within seven (7) business days, the B/IO is presumed to have provided concurrence by default. The Mission should also consult with BRM to revalidate the budget scenarios. The Regional Bureau may wish to convene a meeting to review comments, or to ensure the comments submitted represent the B/IO's corporate position.

Key questions Washington B/IOs should consider in their review include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Does the Goal of the CDCS align with national priorities and support the USG's policy interests, and will it advance and/or contribute to the country's overall Journey to Self-Reliance?
- Does the CDCS Development Hypothesis present a plausible and feasible approach for advancing the Goal? Are the Development Hypothesis and narrative based on development theory, practice, literature, and experience? Does the narrative of the Development Hypothesis explain why and how the

proposed investments from USAID and others will collectively contribute to, or lead to, achieving the DOs?

- Has the Mission provided a rationale and management plan for any proposed integrated DOs?
- Do the IRs and sub-IRs logically contribute to the achievement of the DOs? Are the IRs focused, feasible, and measurable?
- Does the budget scenario reflect the strategic vision and priorities for the CDCS?
- Is the RF based on evidence and best practice?
- Do the learning questions reflect key knowledge and/or evidence gaps in the Development Hypotheses that underpin each DO?
- Do the identified assumptions and/or risks reflect factors that may affect the success of the Development Hypotheses that underpin each DO?

All reviewing B/IOs are required to classify their feedback as a “significant issue,” a “concern,” or a “general comment”:

- 1) “Significant issues” are issues a Mission must address for the Agency to approve the strategy (*e.g.*, a serious concern regarding the logic or feasibility of a proposed strategic or technical approach, the alignment of the proposed approach with an Administration or Agency policy or strategy, or compliance with the guidance). Significant issues must include a recommended resolution and support that Washington B/IOs can offer, if appropriate, to address the issue.
- 2) “Concerns” reflect suggestions that would improve the clarity of the strategy (*e.g.*, an important technical clarification).
- 3) “General Comments” reflect positive feedback to commend Missions.

B/IOs may provide no more than five (5) comments total, including General Comments. Regional Bureaus, in consultation with PPL, may also choose to reclassify their feedback if the content does not align with the definitions above. The Regional Bureau must inform reviewing B/IOs of any reclassification. PPL will mediate any disagreements.

The Regional Bureau should consolidate and review comments from Washington B/IO stakeholders within three (3) business days and flag any concerns regarding issues raised or the classification of issues as necessary. If needed, the Regional Bureau may have an extra ten (10) business days to facilitate further consultations

between the Mission and relevant B/IOs. The Regional Bureau should work with the Mission to document responses to Washington B/IO feedback in the Issues Matrix in advance of the DVC. This best practice enables all parties to focus the Phase Two DVC on unresolved issues.

Occasionally, disagreements between the Regional Bureau and other B/IOs can persist at the working level over a particular significant issue. In these cases, the B/IO that submitted the issue may re-submit it after obtaining the endorsement of the responsible DAA (or Director, if an Independent Office), who must affirm that the issue represents a significant priority of the B/IO. If, after this, agreement is still not possible, the Regional Bureau should add the issue to the agenda for the Phase Two DVC. Review of the RF Summary and Matrices, the consolidation of Washington inputs, and the resolution of issues should therefore take up to 20 business days (e.g., seven (7) days for review, three (3) days to consolidate comments, and ten (10) days to resolve outstanding issues, if necessary).

D. Phase Two DVC

The objective of the Phase Two DVC is to achieve agreement on the approaches the Mission will use to advance its strategic Goal and the Journey to Self-Reliance. The Mission Director (or designee) and the AA (or designee) for the responsible Regional Bureau must co-chair the DVC. The Regional Bureau must invite B/IO POCs identified in the SOC from Phase One, in addition to PPL, BRM, and other stakeholders as relevant (which could include stakeholders from the U.S. Embassy and/or the U.S. Department of State). As resources permit, Mission leadership may opt to travel to Washington for the Phase Two DVC.

During the DVC, the Mission must present high-level information from the RF Summary Paper and Matrices, including the following:

- A summary of the parameters identified in Phase One that informed the Mission's approach;
- The Goal of the CDCS and how it aligns with national priorities, supports USG policy interests, and relies on Country Roadmap sub-dimensions and/or metrics;
- The overall RF, including what is new in terms of focus, partners, approaches, and/or responses to changes in context;
- DO-specific presentations that include the Development Hypothesis for each DO, how the selected approach will contribute to and advance the country's Journey to Self-Reliance, how other stakeholders will contribute to this DO, and critical assumptions and/or risks;
- USAID/Washington's significant issues and the Mission's responses; and

- The planned completion date for the CDCS, next steps, and any additional support needed to complete the CDCS in a timely manner.

See the required [slide deck template](#) for additional guidance.

The Mission and B/IOs should endeavor to resolve outstanding issues following the DVC. The Regional Bureau must submit issues that cannot be resolved through discussions between the Mission, Regional Bureau, and B/IO stakeholders within ten (10) business days following the DVC to the formal Issues-Resolution process described in **Section VIII** of this Mandatory Reference.

E. Phase Two Summary of Conclusions Memo

The Regional Bureau must prepare the SOC for Phase Two within **ten (10) business days** from the date of the DVC. The cleared SOC represents the Agency's endorsement of the Mission's focus and chosen strategic approach and authorizes the Mission to proceed with developing the final CDCS. The SOC should be approximately four pages, excluding annexes, and should not be a transcript of the meeting, but reflect key decisions and follow-up actions.

The Phase Two SOC must address the following decision points succinctly:

- Goal, Strategic Priorities, and Development Objectives: Summarize agreement on the draft Goal, DOs, and strategic priorities.
- Shifts in Strategic Approach/Programming: Document agreement on final decisions on major shifts in strategic approaches and programming, including transitioning in or out of sectors, if applicable.
- Significant Issues and Resolution: Summarize the Mission's responses to, and agreement on, any significant issues raised during Phase Two (including during the DVC) and record agreed-upon resolutions and key decisions.
- Budget Parameters: Summarize the budget parameters, including discussions regarding relief from Congressional Directives, if applicable.
- Timeline: Discuss agreement on updates to the schedule of tasks for completion of the CDCS agreed upon in the DVC.
- USAID/Washington Clearance in Subsequent Phases: State agreement on which B/IOs will clear products during Phase Three.

The Regional Bureau must obtain input from the Mission before it circulates the draft SOC to B/IO stakeholders for clearance. After receiving and incorporating feedback from the Mission, the Regional Bureau must send the SOC to PPL, BRM, and

relevant B/IOs that raised significant issues during the Phase Two review for clearance. The Regional Bureau, in consultation with PPL, should determine if any other B/IOs should clear the memo as well. **The Regional Bureau must also share the cleared SOC with the CDCS Working Group listserv for information purposes.**

Clearing B/IOs must provide clearance or offer any substantive comments within three (3) business days. If a B/IO or designee does not provide clearance or offer substantive comments within three (3) business days, the B/IO is presumed to have provided clearance by default. Once cleared, the Regional Bureau DAA provides final approval of the SOC and sends it to the Mission. Generally, final approval should occur no more than ten (10) business days following the Phase Two DVC, absent an Issues-Resolution process outlined in **Section VIII**.

Barring significant changes in the country context between Phases Two and Three, Phase Two is USAID/Washington's last opportunity to raise significant issues. Significant issues not raised during Phase Two will not be considered during Phase Three, except for any significant issues that arise related to compliance with Phase Three requirements.

V. Phase Three: Preparation and Approval of a CDCS

A. Overview of Phase Three

The objective of Phase Three is to prepare and approve the full CDCS, which represents the Agency's endorsement of the Mission's focus and chosen strategic approach. During Phase Three, the Mission applies findings from additional analyses and consultations, further refines its overall Development Hypothesis and associated RF, and submits the full CDCS to the Regional Bureau under Chief of Mission authority. Phase Three culminates in the final approval of a Mission's CDCS by the responsible Regional Bureau AA and PPL's Assistant to the Administrator (AtA), and subsequent dissemination of the CDCS. Phase Three should begin approximately three (3) months prior to the expected approval of the CDCS.

Phase Three includes the following milestones:

- 1)** Development of the first draft of the full CDCS (see **Section V.B**);
- 2)** Washington review of the draft CDCS (see **Section V.C**);
- 3)** Submission of the final CDCS (see **Section V.D**); and
- 4)** Final approval of the CDCS (see **Section V.E**).

During Phase Three, the Mission and responsible Regional Bureau should collaborate with POCs from B/IOs that raised significant issues during Phase Two, in

addition to PPL. The Mission should also work with BRM to discuss any remaining budgetary questions or concerns and review the draft CDCS budget.

During this phase, the review is focused on ensuring the Mission has addressed adequately any significant issues raised during Phase Two. No new significant issues may be raised, except those related to compliance with Phase Three requirements.

B. Development of the First Draft of the Full CDCS

The Mission must develop a first draft of the full CDCS that further refines and expands upon the RF Summary Paper and Matrices. This draft must include all content of the CDCS as described in the [CDCS Outline Template](#), including all required annexes and any optional annexes. The full CDCS should be no more than 35 pages. The Mission must submit the full draft to the responsible Regional Bureau at least six (6) weeks before the expected approval of the CDCS.

C. Washington Review of the Draft CDCS

Once the Mission has submitted its first draft of the full CDCS, the Regional Bureau must review it to ensure compliance with the requirements for Phase Three. The Mission must then circulate the draft, along with the Phase Two Issues Matrix, to the CDCS Working Group listserv. However, only PPL, BRM, and those B/IOs that raised significant issues during Phase Two will clear the final CDCS. B/IOs must then gather internal responses and submit feedback to the Regional Bureau within five (5) business days of receiving the draft CDCS. During this time, B/IOs should review the full CDCS to ensure the Mission has addressed adequately any significant issues raised previously in the process of developing the CDCS.

No new significant issues may be raised at this time unless they have to do with compliance with the guidance for Phase Three described herein. For example, if the draft is missing required content in the CDCS Outline, PPL or the Regional Bureau may flag the omission as a new significant issue. If a B/IO does not provide feedback within five (5) business days, the B/IO is presumed to have no comments.

The Regional Bureau must consolidate and review comments from B/IO stakeholders, flag any concerns regarding issues raised, and facilitate further consultations between the Mission and B/IOs as necessary. Occasionally, disagreements between the Regional Bureau and other B/IOs can persist at the working level over a particular significant issue. In these cases, the B/IO that submitted the issue may re-submit the significant issue after obtaining the endorsement of the responsible DAA (or Director, if an Independent Office) or designee, who must affirm that the issue represents a significant priority of the B/IO. If, after this, agreement still is not possible within five (5) business days of the Regional Bureaus receiving the Issues Matrix, then the Regional Bureau must

submit the issue for resolution through the Issues-Resolution process described in **Section VIII** of this Mandatory Reference.

Review of the draft CDCS and consolidation of Washington inputs should take approximately ten (10) business days.

D. Submission of the Final CDCS

The Mission has three (3) weeks to incorporate final comments, if any, and make necessary revisions to the draft CDCS. It must then submit the final CDCS to the Regional Bureau for approval.

E. Final Approval of a CDCS

The Regional Bureau must circulate the full CDCS along with an Action Memorandum to BRM and any other B/IOs that raised significant issues during Phase Two for clearance. The Action Memorandum must specify the expiration date of the CDCS, the date by which the final external and internal versions will be posted on USAID websites (see **Section VIII, Post Approval: Dissemination of the CDCS**), and the proposed timing of any expected check-ins with USAID/Washington during the implementation of the Strategy, including the Mid-Course Stocktaking exercise. Responsible B/IOs must provide clearance or offer any substantive comments within five (5) business days. If a B/IO does not provide clearance within five (5) business days, the B/IO is presumed to have provided clearance by default. After BRM and any responsible B/IOs have cleared the CDCS, the Regional Bureau must submit the package for final approval by the Regional Bureau AA followed by the PPL AtA.

VI. Guidance for Country Development Cooperation Strategies in Countries that Show Advanced Levels of Self-Reliance

A. Overview

As described in **Section I** and [ADS 201.3.2.8](#), designated Missions in countries with relatively advanced levels of self-reliance must develop strategies that describe opportunities to transition USAID's relationship in the partner country to reflect the relatively advanced level of self-reliance and outline what is achievable during the timeframe of the strategy. The Mission's vision for a "strategically transitioned" relationship should seek to accomplish the following:

- Move beyond the classic donor-recipient paradigm;
- Build upon and sustain development gains;
- Amplify a country's strengths and target only the remaining self-reliance challenges in key sectors;

- Leverage new forms of partnerships and new resources that are better reflective of the country’s advanced level of self-reliance; and/or
- Employ resources strategically to mitigate and effectively respond to backsliding.

The Mission’s vision for a “strategically transitioned” relationship can take different forms depending on the context, remaining challenges, USAID’s comparative advantage, and local priorities.

The process follows the same three phases and timeline for developing a CDCS, but uses a modified [Phase One slide deck template](#), [Phase Two RF Summary Paper and Matrices template](#), budget-scenario templates (see [here](#) and [here](#)), and [Phase Three CDCS Outline](#), all of which emphasize strategic transition in development planning. Missions must follow the guidance in **Sections I** through **V** above but take into account the key differences noted in this section.

B. Preparation for the CDCS Process

While the official launch of the CDCS process should occur approximately eight (8) months before Missions expect to have their strategy approved, Missions should initiate preparations for the CDCS process after conducting the Mid-Course Stocktaking and/or the last portfolio review under their current CDCS. See **Section II** for guidance on preparing for the CDCS process, but note the following differences:

1) Analyze their Country Roadmap

Designated Missions must use the data from the Country Roadmap and secondary analytics to assess the strong overall performance in capacity and commitment in their partner country. Missions should also consider trends in performance, outstanding areas of vulnerability to slippage, and any strengths the Mission could potentially leverage to address these vulnerabilities.

2) Critically Examine the Current Portfolio

Designated Missions must examine their current portfolios with respect to the following:

- Is the Mission strictly working only in sectors that remain relevant for “last-mile” self-reliance challenges/areas of vulnerability? What sectors are most relevant for the remaining self-reliance challenges?
- In these sectors or areas, is the Mission using models and approaches that are properly-reflective of the country’s relatively advanced level of self-

reliance? If not, why not?

3) Develop an Initial Vision for Transition

Designated Missions must consider what USAID's vision for transition should fundamentally entail and contemplate questions such as the following:

- What are the most critical last-mile challenges to self-reliance that will be the focus of the strategic transition?
- What is USAID's role in the next stage of the strategic transition?
- What is USAID's business model in the next stage of the strategic transition?
- How might USAID's footprint and resource envelope change?
- Realistically, how long will it take to get to the transition?

C. Phase One: Initial Consultations and Parameter-Setting

Phase One marks the official start of the CDCS development process, and Missions and responsible Regional Bureaus should initiate this process approximately eight (8) months before they expect the approval of a CDCS. Refer to **Section III** for guidance on the Phase One process, but note the following differences:

- Development of a Concept Presentation by using a modified slide deck (see **Section 1** below);
- No budget scenarios in Phase One (see **Section 2** below); and
- A SOC memo that captures questions and issues on the strategic transition (see **Section 3** below).

1) Development of the Concept Presentation

Based on Washington input on overall priorities, the Mission must prepare the Concept Presentation and submit it to the responsible Regional Bureau ten (10) days in advance of the Phase One DVC. Refer to **Section III.C** for guidance on the Phase One Concept Presentation, but note the following differences:

The Concept Presentation must cover the following:

- The Mission's vision for strategic transition that explicitly outlines priorities/choices and how USAID will evolve its business model in the partner country over the course of the strategy;

- An analysis of what advanced self-reliance means in this country, by using the Roadmap and related data as needed; and
- An assessment of the extent to which the Mission’s current strategic portfolio is addressing critical self-reliance challenges illustrated in the Roadmap, and the approach and modalities used to leverage the relatively advanced level of self-reliance in the country to strengthen commitment and capacity.

See this required **Phase One [slide deck template](#)** for specialized guidance.

2) Phase One Summary of Conclusions Memo

The final step of Phase One is the drafting, dissemination, and approval of the SOC memo. Refer to **Section III.G** for guidance on the Phase One SOC process, but note the following differences:

The SOC must summarize key decisions on strategic transition that were made during Phase One, including during the DVC, and address the following questions:

- Agreement on the Mission’s preliminary vision for strategic transition and how the vision is explicitly linked to chronic or last-mile self-reliance challenges (or areas vulnerable to slippage) and USAID priorities;
- Agreement on preliminary thoughts on USAID’s business model in the next stage of the strategic transition;
- Decisions about strategic shifts in programming or approaches;
- Amount of time to get to the transition. If covered during the DVC, Missions should address whether or not the Mission will be fully transitioned by the end of the strategy (e.g., across all sectors), or if the Mission anticipates that it will be a longer time horizon (if so, the Mission should justify its response); and
- Agreement on foreign policy priorities that have implications for the strategy.

D. Phase Two: Development of the Results Framework

The objective of Phase Two is to gain Agency consensus on the approaches the Mission will use to advance the achievement of its vision for strategic transition as the country reaches advanced levels of self-reliance. Refer to **Section IV** for guidance on the Phase Two process, but note the following differences:

- Development of an RF Summary Paper and Matrices oriented toward strategic transition (see **Section 1** below);

- Development of two budget scenarios, one of which reflects a visionary budget to support the strategic transition (see **Section 2** below);
- A Phase Two DVC, which includes the budget scenarios and is oriented toward strategic transition (see **Section 3** below); and
- A SOC memo oriented toward strategic transition (see **Section 4** below).

1) Development of the Results Framework Summary Paper and Matrices

The Mission must develop an RF Summary Paper and a set of RF Matrices, in addition to the two required budget scenarios (see **Section 2** below), all fundamentally oriented towards strategic transition. Refer to **Section IV.B** for guidance on developing the Phase Two RF Summary Paper and Matrices, but note the following differences:

The Results Framework Summary Paper must:

- Articulate a Goal for the CDCS that reflects the vision for the strategic transition;
- Provide a high-level summary of the country context, including an assessment of the country's overall level of self-reliance through the lens of the vision for the strategic transition; and
- Explain the rationale for the selected DOs and IRs as they relate to the vision for the strategic transition and the development goals of the government, civil society, and the private sector in the partner country.

The Mission must use this modified RF [Summary Paper and Matrices template](#). In addition, the Mission must attach its two budget scenarios as an annex to this paper.

2) Development of Budget Scenarios

As part of Phase Two, designated Missions must develop two budget scenarios – a Contextual Budget and a Visionary Budget – and an associated narrative based on parameters from BRM. Missions must submit the budget scenarios and narrative as annexes to the Phase Two RF Summary Paper and Matrices and include them in the agenda for the Phase Two DVC. For additional guidance, see this required guidance for the [budget scenarios](#).

3) Washington Review of Results Framework Summary Paper and Matrices

The Mission must submit its RF Summary Paper and Matrices to the responsible Regional Bureau for review at least one (1) month before the Phase Two DVC. Refer to **Section IV.C** for guidance on the Washington Review for RF Paper and Matrices.

Key questions that Washington B/IOs must consider in their review of the RF Summary Paper and Matrices include the following:

- Does the proposed Goal of the CDCS reflect the vision for the strategic transition?
- Do the DOs contribute to progress towards the strategic transition, or should the Mission propose a greater transition during the course of the strategy than the DOs reflect?

4) Phase Two DVC

The objective of the Phase Two DVC is to achieve consensus on the approaches the Mission will use to transition relationships and address any last-mile challenges associated with the Journey to Self-Reliance. Refer to **Section IV.D** for guidance on the Phase Two DVC process. During the DVC, the Mission must present high-level information from the RF Summary Paper and Matrices, including the following:

- A summary of the parameters identified in Phase One that informed its approach, including the vision for the strategic transition;
- An overview of the Mission's current portfolio and its proposed portfolio for the new CDCS based on its vision for the strategic transition;
- The proposed Goal of the CDCS and how it aligns with the vision for the strategic transition and national priorities, supports the USG's policy interests, and accounts for Country Roadmap sub-dimensions and/or metrics;
- The overall Results Framework, including what is new in terms of focus, partners, approaches and/or responses to changes in context; and
- DO-specific presentations that present the Development Hypothesis for each DO, including how the selected approach will contribute to the vision for the strategic transition in support of the overall Journey to Self-Reliance, how other stakeholders will contribute to each DO, and critical assumptions and/or risks.

See this modified [slide-deck template](#) for additional guidance.

5) Phase Two Summary of Conclusions Memo

The cleared SOC represents the Agency's endorsement of the Mission's focus and chosen strategic approach and enables the Mission to proceed with developing the final CDCS. In addition to the issues listed in **Section IV.D**, the Phase Two SOC must specifically address the following:

- **Goal, Strategic Priorities, and DOs:** Summarize agreement on the proposed Goal, strategic priorities, and DOs, and how they all support the overall vision for strategic transition;
- **Shifts in Strategic Approach/Programming:** Document agreement on major shifts in strategic approaches and programming, including transitioning in or out of sectors, and how the Mission will change its approach to leverage the country's relatively advanced level of self-reliance; and
- **Budget Parameters:** Summarize discussions about budget parameters for the Visionary Budget, including any decisions regarding relief from Congressional Directives. (See **Section 2** above.)

E. Phase Three: Preparation and Approval of the CDCS

The objective of Phase Three is to prepare and approve the full CDCS, which represents the Agency's endorsement of the Mission's focus and chosen strategic approach. Missions that follow this guidance should refer to **Section V** for general guidance on Phase Three, but prepare the final CDCS according to this [CDCS Outline Template](#).

VII. Post-Approval: Dissemination of the CDCS

A. Process for Posting Internal and External CDCSs to USAID Websites

Within 30 business days of **CDCS approval**, Missions must prepare and format final internal and external versions of their CDCSs for posting on USAID's websites in accordance with the requirements in **Section B** below. In addition, Missions must submit the external version for co-approval by the Regional Bureau AA, followed by the PPL AtA, prior to submitting these versions for posting.

- **Internal Version:** The internal version is posted on the USAID websites, [ProgramNet](#) and [USAID Pages](#). These websites are only viewable by USAID staff and can host CDCSs that contain information labeled as Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU).
- **External Version:** The external version is posted on the USAID websites, [USAID.gov](#) and the [Development Experience Clearinghouse \(DEC\)](#), in addition to [ProgramNet](#).

To post the CDCS on these websites, Missions must submit the final, approved versions to their Regional Bureaus, which must then coordinate with PPL and the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) to post them on the relevant websites. For additional guidance on the step-by-step process for posting these versions on internal and external USAID websites, see [R/CDCS Resource: Posting Internal and External Versions of an R/CDCS on USAID Websites](#).

B. Formatting Requirements for Internal and External CDCSs

Missions must format the internal and external versions of their final CDCS in accordance with these requirements:

Category	Internal Version	External Version
Content	The “internal” version is the full CDCS document, with all annexes, that is approved at the end of the CDCS process.	The “external” CDCS is a sanitized version of the internal CDCS that does not include any SBU information. In addition, this version must only include the annex with the Country Roadmap; all other annexes must be removed. (For additional tips on removing SBU information for the external version, see Annex 1 in R/CDCS Resource: Posting Internal and External Versions of an R/CDCS on USAID Websites.)
Header/Footer	Missions must mark the header and footer on all pages of the internal version as “Sensitive but Unclassified.”	Missions must mark the cover page of the external version as follows: 1) “Unclassified” in the header; and 2) “Approved for Public Release” in the footer.
Section 508 Compliance	Missions must ensure that internal and external versions of their CDCS are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d). See Annex III: Tips for Making a CDCS 508-Compliant for additional guidance.	
Cover Page	Missions must use one of the approved Cover Page templates in Annex II: Template Cover Pages . Word versions of these templates are on ProgramNet .	

Category	Internal Version	External Version
Overall Branding, including logo, colors, typeface, and photography	Missions must ensure that the USAID logo, colors, typeface and photography in both versions of its CDCS conform to standards established in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-Branding Guide .	
File Name	Missions must use the following naming convention: Internal-SBU-CDCS-Country-Month-Year of Expiration	Missions must use the following naming convention: CDCS-Country-Month-Year of Expiration

For additional guidance on the requirements for formatting final versions of an RDCS, see [R/CDCS Resource: Posting Internal and External Versions of an R/CDCS on USAID Websites](#).

VIII. Issues-Resolution Process

In the event that a Regional Bureau and a B/IO cannot come to agreement on a significant issue within ten (10) business days during **Phase Two or Phase Three** according to **Sections IV.C** or **V.C**, the issue owner’s AA must escalate the issue as described below:

- If, after ten (10) business days of negotiation between the DAAs, agreement has not been reached on the significant issue, the AA or designee of the B/IO that has the significant issue must contact the responsible Regional Bureau AA and the regional backstop in PPL to schedule a mediated discussion.
- PPL’s regional backstop must then schedule a meeting, mediated by PPL, no more than five (5) business days after the initial request; PPL may request position papers before the meeting.
- During the meeting, the Regional Bureau AA and the AA of the B/IO that has the significant issue will make recommendations on a resolution.
- If concurrence is achieved on a resolution, the PPL regional backstop should document the agreed-upon resolution in an Information Memorandum within five (5) business days. **This memo, which** the issue-owner’s AA, the Regional Bureau AA, and PPL’s AtA must clear, becomes part of the Mission’s CDCS file.
- If the Regional Bureau AA or the AA of the B/IO that has a significant issue does not concur on a resolution, they may alternatively draft a Split Memorandum to the Deputy Administrator, as outlined below:

- The issue owner B/IO and Regional Bureau should each draft their part of a Split Memorandum within five (5) business days of the mediated discussion.
- The PPL regional backstop must draft an annex to the Split Memorandum that documents the mediated discussion and recommends a resolution. The PPL AtA must approve this Annex.
- The PPL regional backstop must then submit the Split Memorandum to the Deputy Administrator for final decision. The Deputy Administrator should return a decision to the issue owner B/IO, Regional Bureau, and PPL within seven (7) business days. The Split Memorandum that contains the Deputy Administrator's decision becomes part of the Mission's CDCS file.

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