

Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Response
Office of Civilian Response

Mission and Capabilities Statement

The National Security Strategy calls on the United States to:

“[build] the capacity to strengthen the foundations of our common security, and modernize our capabilities in order to ensure that we are agile in the face of change. We have already begun to reorient and strengthen our development agenda; to take stock of and enhance our capabilities; and to forge new and more effective means of applying the skills of our military, diplomats, and development experts.”

USAID has a unique role in responding to crises abroad through a number of specialized capabilities for humanitarian response, political transitions, stabilization operations and reconstruction. Within USAID’s Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), the Office of Civilian Response (OCR) maintains a cadre of direct hire development professionals to augment USG civilian capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from crisis and conflict. This office reflects the full array of USAID technical specialties and helps to ensure USAID’s response is robust and fully integrated both internally and in conjunction with other USG and international actors. As home to USAID’s component of the Civilian Response Corps (CRC), OCR also plays a role in supporting, liaising, and coordinating with State Department’s Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (State/CSO) and the interagency in whole of government approaches to preventing or responding to conflict or civil strife and enabling transition from such strife.

OCR Mission

To rapidly mobilize highly qualified technical experts providing critical development skillsets in support of USAID and USG civilian operations essential to crisis prevention, response, recovery and transition efforts, and to help the agency prepare for such action. To accomplish this Mission OCR will:

- a. Make available a cadre of USDH experts in critical core development and foreign assistance-related technical subject areas who are ready and rapidly deployable, and are trained to navigate the interagency and operate in crisis and conflict environments to augment USG, State/CSO, and USAID efforts overseas or in Washington (Civilian Response Corps – A);
- b. Facilitate access to the great depth of crisis, conflict, development, and foreign assistance expertise across USAID and from other sources to respond to critical, short-term needs (Civilian Response Corps – Standby); and
- c. Coordinate within DCHA and USAID, with State/CSO and with other interagency partners on the development of operational frameworks, policies, and training in support of conflict prevention and response and stabilization operations as well as specific priority country planning in advance of the outbreak of instability.

OCR Operating Principles

OCR assistance is focused to strengthen USAID's and the USG's prevention of, preparation for, or response to **crisis or transition situations**;

OCR assistance is **short to medium term**, generally 3-9 months; and

The planning, programming and management of OCR deployments are **directly supportive of USAID requirements and objectives**.

OCR Capabilities

With USAID Missions in most of the countries in crisis, OCR has a key role to enhance Mission capabilities to manage the surge in resources generally accompanying crisis response and provide coordination with other USG and international actors. OCR also contributes expertise and support to State/CSO-initiated diplomatic deployments to provide specialized technical expertise, administrative, logistical and procurement support, and strategic communications.

OCR capabilities to meet its mission include a cadre of experts in a broad range of fields specially trained to both understand and adapt USG response to the exigencies of a crisis as well as individually prepared and trained to operate in the austere conditions often encountered in conflict environments. This cadre is supported by a dedicated staff that ensures OCR capabilities are appropriately recruited, trained and equipped, able to rapidly respond, and supported logistically, administratively and programmatically. In order to meet its mission, OCR maintains and will further strengthen its capabilities along the following lines.

- 1. The recruitment, training and deployment of highly qualified Civilian Response Corps (CRC-A) staff** with capabilities to deploy rapidly and for extended periods of time, typically 3 -9 months, both overseas or to meet urgent requirements in Washington. In FY11, OCR deployed 38 staff to 27 countries providing over 6200 days of support. On average, each CRC staff person was deployed overseas 108 days last year. This staff is made up of multi-disciplinary technical specialists focused on the unique needs of crises such as engineering, conflict mitigation, rule of law, logistics and administration, etc. This cadre mirrors the typical USAID Mission, including both programmatic and administrative functions. This allows for both a surge in support when needed and specialized assistance capable of applying state of the art practices to conflict prevention and response. When not deployed overseas, CRC-A members provide critical time sensitive support in Washington to USAID and interagency Bureaus and Task Forces managing conflict-related crises overseas. For deployments directly supporting USAID, OCR will seek program funding from the countries assisted for the costs of CRC support. CRC

staff provide a surge capacity as well as a technical depth to manage planning, organization, and strategic communications during the golden hour following a crisis. OCR supports and helps integrate the USAID DCHA Bureau's crisis response and planning through a deployment platform that can provide staff and related resources where needed for immediate and medium term support to satisfy conflict-related crisis response needs in Washington and the field.

- 2. The recruitment, training, and deployment of non-CRC-A personnel** (Civilian Response Corps-Standby, CRC-S) from within USAID to meet conflict-related crisis needs. In order to draw upon the full depth and breadth of USAID technical and operational capabilities when needed, OCR has policies and methodologies to draw in highly specialized support that can broaden and deepen a surge response. The CRC-S provides a roster of USAID direct hire staff that have volunteered and can be tapped to provide assistance along with CRC-A first responders with medium term support to address conflict-related development challenges.
- 3. Limited core staff.** To support deployment, core staff coordinate training, reachback, and administrative assistance, policy and knowledge management, development of frameworks for monitoring and evaluation of deployments, outreach, recruitment, and planning for future OCR and CRC requirements. Core staff are also responsible, as the manager of the USAID component of the interagency CRC, for participating in planning and crisis response through participation USAID's processes and interagency structures managed by State's CSO Bureau.