

The USAID Fragile States Assessment Framework

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This draft of the USAID Fragile States Assessment Framework was prepared to guide participants at an intensive two-day workshop to be held in Washington, DC on July 27 and 28, 2005, to develop program priorities in Burundi. This framework will be “field tested” during the workshop. The Fragile States Assessment Framework is still a work in progress and this draft is another step in its development. A widely based committee within USAID is working with DCHA/CMM to develop the final Fragile States Assessment Framework. The Committee members and others in USAID have contributed many ideas to the guidance in the framework, including features from other USAID assessment frameworks. An earlier version of the framework was field tested in Guinea.

USAID's Fragile States Assessment Framework

Goals of the Assessment Framework and the USAID Fragile States Strategy

USAID's fragile states assessment framework offers internal guidance to USAID for understanding fragility in selected countries. Its purpose is to identify program responses within fragile states that will promote improvements in their governance and establish a foundation for their transformational development. To achieve this purpose, USAID staff must understand the patterns of fragility and resilience within fragile states and how to change them. The framework is one part of FRAME, USAID's fragile states assessment methodology.¹

FRAME operationalizes USAID's "Fragile States Strategy,"² set out by the Administrator in May 2005. USAID's strategy sets out a vision for USAID's response to fragile states, where conditions do not provide sufficient foundation for long-term development. Given their clear differences from stable developing countries, fragile states require new ways of conceptualizing, delivering, and evaluating the impact of assistance. The goal of the USAID Fragile States Strategy is to prevent crisis and reverse decline in fragile states and advance their recovery to a stage where transformational development is possible (See Box 1).

Fragile states³ are those losing their capacity to govern. They are "failing, failed, and recovering states," including "vulnerable" states "unable or unwilling to adequately assure the provision of security and basic services...and where the legitimacy of the government is in question," as well as states in "crisis" – "where the central government does not exert effective control over its own territory...and where violent conflict is a reality or a great risk." (USAID Fragile States Strategy, 2005). Society, in these states, exhibits a breakdown of social coherence and the links and overlaps of the government and society weaken. Normal relationships between civil society, the private sector and government with respect to demands and responses atrophy and political processes for popular legitimization of governance efforts become tattered. (Zartman, 1995). Social capital is thin and society is likely to have little capacity to reconstitute missing state functions. As a result of these weakened relationships between those governing and the governed, conditions in these countries are not amenable to traditional development programming.

Box 1. Goal of USAID Fragile States Strategy

The strategy's overall goal is to guide USAID's efforts in reversing decline in fragile states and advancing their recovery to a stage where transformational development progress is possible.

¹ FRAME is a methodology under development and will include the fragile states assessment framework, a procedures guide for using the framework, and a variety of tools to support assessment and program development in fragile states.

² The Fragile States Strategy is available at http://usaid.gov/policy/2005_fragile_states_strategy.pdf.

³ The term "state" in the fragile states strategy has multiple meanings. It refers to the country as in its geography, people, location and culture. It also refers to the apparatus of rulership, the formal government. Finally, and most importantly for the fragile states strategy, it refers to the condition of the state—the interactions between those with political power who govern and the society. It is the latter definition that is emphasized in the fragile states strategy.

As a result of the unique conditions of fragile states, USAID’s strategy for them calls for a different approach. USAID needs new ways to address the difficult problems inherent in these states and better understanding of the problems of fragile states and their solutions, particularly which reform elements to modify. USAID needs to develop priority programs that involve it as an agent for change in dismantling patterns of fragility and strengthening patterns of resilience. USAID’s strategy must help shape a process of change in fragile states—to help prevent their crises, halt their decline and advance their recovery. To do this, USAID must see and understand key patterns of fragility and resilience and design sustained programs that address these patterns directly in the shorter run, but with the long run in view.

The fragile states assessment framework is designed to help USAID understand the principal dynamic that determines the situation in each fragile state. To do this, it examines the nature of the relationship between those who govern and the governed. In robust societies, these relationships are characterized by good outcomes—cooperation and productivity, responsibility and accountability—which lead to increasing prosperity and justice. In fragile states, these relationships are weak and frayed, and characterized by bad outcomes—lack of cooperation and accountability—which result in waning prosperity and justice. Structural conditions, governance arrangements, and society interact in each fragile state to produce outcomes. Key groups in society consider these outcomes, make judgments about the effectiveness and legitimacy of government, and guide their relationship with the state accordingly. These relationships between the state and society create the patterns of fragility or resilience that determine the condition of the country. The key output of the assessment framework is to determine and understand these patterns of fragility and resilience created by state-society relationships and which priority programs can change them.

How does the assessment framework operate?

The assessment framework guides the team in determining the relationships between state and society in a fragile state that produce fragility or resilience. The quality of these relationships between those with the power to govern and society creates patterns of fragility or resilience (see Figure 1).

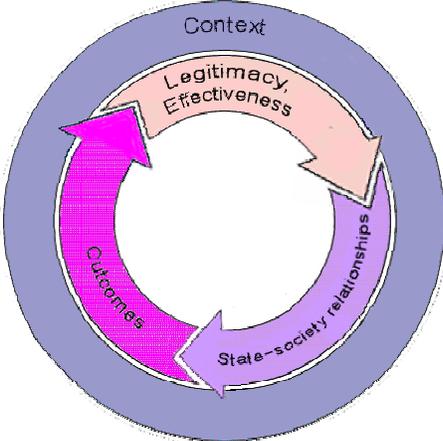


Figure 1 – Pattern of Fragility or Resilience

A pattern of fragility or resilience has three parts—relationships between the state and society, outcomes produced by those relationships, and effectiveness or legitimacy—all located in a country context. Patterns of fragility include factionalization, rising authoritarianism, conflict, and rent seeking. Patterns of resilience include traditional political or religious practices, reconciliation and other efforts to thicken social capital, and political reform. Each pattern produces observable outcomes in the political, economic, security, and social sectors of society that, in turn, influence how key actors and groups in society perceive the effectiveness and legitimacy of the government. These perceptions deeply influence how such actors relate to the government and therefore reinforce or undermine existing state-society relationships. When state-society relationships are positive and produce outcomes that enhance state effectiveness and legitimacy (see Box 2), the patterns of resilience created strengthen society and bolster tendencies for recovery. When patterns of fragility are created and reinforced by state-society relationships, deficits in state effectiveness and legitimacy increase and the fragile state becomes even more fragile.

Box 2. Effectiveness and Legitimacy

- **What is effectiveness?**

Effectiveness is, in brief, the ability of government to get things done. How well is the government able to translate resources into actions to achieve desired policy outcomes? To what degree does the state have and use administrative capability and resources to carry out the tasks of governance adequately? This includes having adequate resources to pay government employees, provide security and administration, identify threats and problems and address them effectively.

- **What is legitimacy?**

Legitimacy exists when a government's claims to authority, its goals, and the means used to pursue them are seen as reasonably fair, credible, and worthy of support by the population. It is strengthened by inclusion, participation, impartiality, transparency, and by universal provision of security, basic rights, and social services. It is diminished by exclusion, severe discrimination, indifference to or abuse of human rights, corruption and rent-seeking, cronyism, excessive or abusive use of authority and force, and violation of widely-held cultural symbols or norms.

Multiple patterns of fragility and resilience exist in a fragile state. Each pattern has its own combination of actors, motivations, state-society interaction, outcomes and perceived effectiveness and legitimacy. Outcomes are aggregates created by the multiple patterns. The team will examine a range of state-society relationships and the patterns they produce. It will select one or more of the most important patterns for analysis based mostly on the apparent significance of their impact on outcomes and on state effectiveness and legitimacy.

Countries deteriorate or recover in consistent ways, but the particulars or coloration of their fragility or resilience differ. Each pattern of fragility or resilience is inherently country-specific. The assessment team has to determine what outcomes are desired by various key actors and groups and whether their desires are being met. Outcomes considered unsatisfactory in one country may be accepted in others, or results accepted at one time may not be accepted now. Likewise, the team needs to determine whether these same actors and groups consider the outcomes produced to be fair and appropriate.

How then does the fragile states assessment framework work? It guides USAID’s understanding of the principal dynamic of the fragile state—the relationship between those who govern and those governed. It examines the outcomes produced by this relationship and identifies and analyzes how those outcomes impact the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state. It examines how perceptions of effectiveness and legitimacy by key actors and groups influence their relationship with the state and seeks to understand changes in the key state-society relationships stemming from such perceptions. It identifies specific patterns of fragility or resilience produced by the resulting state-society relationships, including principal reformers and spoilers involved in each pattern and particular periods of vulnerability or opportunity affecting each one. Building on this understanding, the framework helps USAID identify people and organizations in the fragile state it can work with to affect change.

Four linked tasks in the fragile states assessment framework

Box 4. The Four Linked Tasks of the Fragile States Assessment Framework

- Understand the most important patterns of fragility and resilience within a country
- Map key actors and their relationships, institutions and trends for the key patterns of fragility and resilience
- Identify windows of vulnerability and opportunity
- Recommend measures USAID could take to support stabilization or recovery efforts

The fragile states assessment framework has four linked tasks (see Box 3). The tasks are intended to move from a broad picture through patterns of relationships, actors and opportunities to programs. In **Task 1** we try to understand the dynamics at play in the fragile state. It may be useful to think of these dynamics as a game in which we want to understand the nature of the game, the players and the rules. We first identify and understand key relationships between those who govern and the governed, the nature of the game. We then document governance

arrangements in place, the rules of the game. Then we expand our understanding of the situation, considering relationships between the state and society, the outcomes these produce, and their impact on effectiveness and legitimacy in society—the results of the game. These results are the key patterns of fragility and resilience that we want to affect over time with our priority programs.

In **Task 2**, we try to understand who is playing the game. Who are reformers and spoilers, and which actors are most important in determining trends in fragility or resilience? We delve further into the roles of these key players because they are the ones we will have to engage when we join the game.

In **Task 3**, we try to understand where we are on the playing field and how much time remains to play. We identify windows of vulnerability to change and windows of opportunity for change. Both have specific positional features, time dimensions, and strategies. We identify events, processes or reforms that increase the country’s vulnerability to additional deterioration and crisis or that provide openings for local and donor actions to bolster resilience or recovery over time.

In **Task 4**, we devise our strategy and tactics to win the game, given our point in time, field location and resource allocation. We determine how USAID can help avert potential crisis, promote stabilization, and build a platform for transformational development in the fragile state and design priority programs to do so.

The USAID fragile states assessment framework, which provides guidance for completing these four tasks, is an integral part of FRAME, which is some things but not others (see Box 4).

Box 4. What FRAME Is . . . and Is Not

- **USAID’s Fragility Assessment Methodology *is*:**
 - The agency’s standard approach for analyzing the political, economic and social dynamics in fragile states.
 - Rigorous but flexible. FRAME is firmly grounded in the best available thinking on fragility and its causes but adaptable to the challenging implementing environments founding many fragile states.
 - Action-oriented. The purpose of analysis is solely to serve as the foundation for identifying appropriate and effective programs that will have an impact
 - A platform for an Agency-wide response. The assessment framework and other tools are intended provide the information that missions and headquarters’ regional and pillar bureaus need to craft an integrated response.
 - Consistent with—and serves as a foundation for—other USAID analytical tools, especially the Conflict Analysis Framework and the Democracy and Governance Assessment Framework.
 - Amenable to iterative use in the same country. FRAME tools are designed to be sensitive to the volatility characteristic of many fragile states and thus provide an effective means for monitoring evolving situations and providing a basis for programmatic adaptations.

- **USAID’s Fragility Assessment Methodology *is not*:**
 - Intended to classify a state as fragile. USAID uses other tools, including the Conflict/Fragility Alert, Consultation and Tracking System, to perform that task. Instead FRAME is used to deepen understanding of the patterns that give rise to classifications.
 - A comprehensive program design guide. While the purpose of FRAME is to identify programmatic options and priorities, it will generally be necessary to employ other technical expertise and approaches to design specific program elements.
 - A finished product. All of the FRAME tools, including this assessment framework, will be updated and modified as experience expands and understanding deepens.

Task 1: Identify Patterns of Fragility and Resilience

Task 1 has two parts, the nature and results of the game and its rules. In this big picture task, we examine both parts to determine the results of the game—the key patterns of fragility and resilience we want to affect with our priority programs. In the first part, we will understand the relationships between the state and society, the nature of the game, and the patterns of fragility and resilience they create, the results of the game. In the second part, we will understand the context for these patterns, how governance arrangements mediate structural factors and impact on society, the rules of the game. In part 1, we will examine perceptions of effectiveness and legitimacy, outcomes, and actors and their social interactions. In part 2, we will document the context, structural factors and institutional relationships; the rules of the game.

- **Part 1: Identify key patterns of fragility and resilience**
 - *Perceptions of Legitimacy and Effectiveness:* Reach conclusions about the populace’s subjective views of state performance in terms of legitimacy and effectiveness.
 - *Outcomes:* Measure the main results – or outcomes – of the state’s performance in the security, political, economic, and social-service realms.
 - *Key Actors:* Sketch the main political players and their social interactions.
- **Part 2: Understand the context of the patterns identified**
 - *Structural Factors:* Describe key “structural” socio-economic and political characteristics, including those that might promote (or inhibit) instability and/or conflict, as well as external influences, such as cross-border, regional, and/or global factors.
 - *Governance and Institutional Arrangements:* Develop an overview of the formal and informal institutions of governance.

Task 1 should identify the key patterns of fragility and resilience in the country. These patterns exist in a particular context, the major structural, institutional, and behavioral patterns fueling them. Task 1 guides the team in its principal aim—to identify patterns of fragility and resilience—by consideration of 1) the perceptions of effectiveness and legitimacy created by the outcomes produced, 2) outcomes produced by these state-society relationships, and 3) key actors and their relationships with the state as the source of patterns of fragility and resilience. It then guides the team to understand the context in which these patterns of fragility and resilience reside via consideration of 4) structural factors and 5) governance arrangements in the fragile state.

Part 1: Identify key patterns of fragility and resilience

Patterns of fragility and resilience (see Figure 1) result from relationships between key actors and groups in the state and society and create outcomes in many dimensions. These outcomes are assessed by key actors and groups in society. They make judgments about the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state based on how they perceive the desirability and appropriateness of these outcomes. These judgments guide their decisions about how to relate to the state, thus influencing state-society relationships in the future. If this cycle is virtuous, it will support resilience and improvement in the fragile state. If the cycle is vicious, it will deepen state fragility.

How should the team identify multiple patterns of fragility and resilience? How should it select the key patterns for further investigation? There are two fundamental approaches to developing the long-list of patterns. The first is to use C/FACTS and other data, to use desktop and field research to identify possible patterns, and to review idealized patterns of fragility or resilience.⁴ The second is to work more inductively—conduct field work to identify key actors and why their interaction with the state is a problem or an opportunity for change, review outcomes, examine perceptions created by these outcomes about state effectiveness and legitimacy, consider structural factors, and analyze governance arrangements—and see what patterns of fragility and resilience emerge as a result. Usually, the team will find it productive to work both ways simultaneously, letting the overview inform the details and vice versa. Patterns are made up of the state-society relationships involved, the outcomes produced and the effectiveness and legitimacy that result. The team can look for specific patterns beginning at any of these three points.

Effectiveness and Legitimacy

A regime may be more or less effective across the specific dimensions of the state performance matrix (see Table 1).

Table 1: State Effectiveness and Legitimacy

STATE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES MATRIX		
	Effectiveness	Legitimacy
Political	Well-functioning political institutions and processes that ensure accountability and timely allocation of resources to address citizen needs	Political institutions and processes are transparent, respect societal values, and do not favor particular groups
Security	Provision of military and police services that secures borders and limits crime	Military and police services are provided equitably and without violation of civil rights
Economic	Economic institutions that provide for economic growth (including jobs), shield the economy from external shocks, and ensure adaptability to economic change	Equitable distribution of the benefits and costs of economic growth and change
Social	Provision of legal protections and social services, in particular to meet the special needs of vulnerable and minority groups	Tolerance for diversity, including opportunities for groups to practice customs, cultures, and beliefs

Thus a regime is effective in providing *security* to the degree that people are secure in their persons and property from foreign or domestic violent individuals or groups. A regime has *political* effectiveness when the political system has smoothly working procedures for choosing officials and channeling political competition, adopting laws and policies, administering justice, raising revenues, and implementing policies throughout its territory. Regimes are effective with regard to *economic* performance when income levels and economic growth are rising, employment is strong, and inflation is moderate and stable. And they are effective in providing *social* services to the degree that the population has access to health services, primary and

⁴ Idealized patterns of fragility and recovery have been developed based on case studies and the literature on failed states to help with this process of identifying patterns of fragility and resilience. They may serve as guides or hypotheses about the patterns that exist in the country being assessed. Selected patterns are presented in Annex 1.

secondary education, clean water and sanitation, and communications and transportation. Conversely, effectiveness is impaired when government (or other agencies) is paralyzed by conflicts, suffers from inadequate resources or administrative capabilities, is hobbled by lack of necessary competencies, or is hampered by severe corruption.

Illustrative Questions:

- Is the state able to control and defend territory and provide internal security? If a state has routinely resorted to repression to maintain territorial integrity and/or internal security, are peace negotiations or reforms underway? Are particular segments of the population subject to large-scale violence, abuse, or exploitation?
- Is there a basic consensus on the parameters of the state, and do all significant population groups feel “included”? What is the regime “type,” and are there opportunities for genuine participation in competitive political processes and in policy debate? Do stable mechanisms exist for selecting officials and choosing policies? How capable is the state of collecting taxes and duties and controlling expenditures?
- What are the levels of income, employment, and inflation? Is the economy growing, and how fast? Are there vast discrepancies across regions or groups? Are economic institutions (banking system, markets) sound? Is infrastructure for energy, transport and communications adequate, and growing or deteriorating?
- How effectively does the state provide access to basic services such as education and health? What do key socio-economic data and statistics suggest about the effectiveness of state performance in these realms? If the state is not carrying out these activities, are other institutions or organizations stepping in?
- For each of the above, are things staying stable, getting better, or getting worse?

A state may also be more or less legitimate across the dimensions in Table 1. *Legitimacy* is a matter of *local* perceptions, and so must be analyzed with respect to the conditions, expectations, and desires of the population of the country. Objective levels of performance with regard to politics, economics, or services that would create severe problems of legitimacy in certain countries may be accepted as inevitable in others. This is not to excuse any failings of performance or behavior of governments or institutions; it is simply to observe that fragility or resilience is a matter of the *relationship* between a government, other social institutions, and the people of a country, and that in assessing fragility the nature and quality of these relationships must be assessed on a country-by-country basis.

Legitimacy generally turns upon the *acceptability* of the claims to authority, the decisions made, the means utilized to make and implement them, and the outcomes achieved. Legitimacy is society’s profit and loss statement regarding the social compact between the state and society. It “nets out” the benefits and burdens or pluses and minuses arising from the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. At bottom, it refers to the degree to which the governed accept the process of governance and therefore give it their assent and cooperation. Legitimacy is inherently subjective—like beauty, it exists in the eye of the perceiver. In general terms, legitimacy involves key aspects of state society linkages such as accountability, responsiveness, inclusion, participation, transparency, contestability, individual and group rights and other processes and institutional arrangements, such as governance checks and balances. Another key factor is equity, the fairness of what the government does.

If specific elite or popular groups are systematically and explicitly excluded from power or actively repressed, then there is likely to be a perception of low legitimacy along the *political* dimension. If the security apparatus works to favor or repress a specific social group, works erratically or indiscriminately against the population at large, or fails to predictably and adequately enforce property rights then there /is likely to be a perception of low legitimacy along the *security* dimension. If specific elite or popular groups are systematically excluded from economic roles or access to resources – or if specific groups are monopolizing economic gains – then there is likely to be a perception of low legitimacy along the *economic* dimension. If specific ethnic or social identity groups are explicitly excluded from publicly provided goods and services by the state or faced with systematic discrimination, or their cultures and customs are not respected or suppressed, then there is likely to be a perception of low legitimacy along the *social* dimension.

Illustrative Questions:

- What is the main ideology or set of organizing ideas underpinning the state and how the populace perceives it? Is nationalism based on shared history, geography, or culture? Ethnic identity? How broadly shared is this national ideology?
- What polling, opinion surveys, or other data might be available to indicate popular perceptions of the perceived legitimacy of the governance process across the political, security, economic, and social-service realms?
- How do people feel about their economic condition? Do they see their condition as reasonable, and subject to their own work and fortune? Or do they see their economic conditions as reduced by the actions of the government or other organizations or groups?
- How do people feel about their access to health care and education? Do they blame the government for lack of access?
- Are there any other individuals or organizations that appear to have legitimacy as high as or higher than the central government? If so, why, and in what domains to they operate (e.g. religion, providing social welfare, justice administration, etc.?)
- Is foreign intervention or relationships affecting perceptions of regime legitimacy? Why?

Outcomes

Outcomes are produced by state-society relationships, affect all the players in the game, and serve as a basis for other actions by these actors and groups. In particular, outcomes influence the desire and willingness of society to support the social compact in place. Key actors and groups assess outcomes and determine the effectiveness and legitimacy of governance. They then decide whether and how much to participate and cooperate with the state in achieving its objectives for society.

Given the significance of outcomes, it is important for the fragile states assessment framework to measure them. This measurement has two parts. First, the objective performance of the state needs to be measured. E.g., how many children were inoculated? Second, the perceived performance of the state needs to be measured. Did the government involve society sufficiently in shaping the inoculation program and in determining who would receive scarce vaccine?

The team can document the outcomes produced by state-society relationships by using a state performance matrix (see Figure 2). This matrix is a kind of scorecard that helps prioritize strengths and defects in the quality of institutions in society. It can be applied for one pattern of fragility or resilience, for all patterns combined, or in other ways. Typically, use of this matrix will draw on some of the information provided by C/FACTS. It should guide the team in documenting and understanding the *outcomes* of the state-social interactions in Figure 1 and in determining *effectiveness* and *legitimacy* also.

Knowledge of outcomes and deficiencies or strengths of state legitimacy or effectiveness of the state helps the team trace through patterns of fragility or resilience to see how they work and where entry points to affect them might lie.

	EFFECTIVENESS	LEGITIMACY
POLITICAL		
ECONOMIC		
SOCIAL		
SECURITY		

Figure 2 - The State Performance Matrix

Key Actors and Patterns of Fragility and Resilience

The team should identify the main holders of influence in society (political, economic, military, and cultural), their main attitudes and goals, and their relationships. It should also identify their relationships to popular groups, the basis for their influence, and what popular groups seek from them. A sketch of the main political game being played in the fragile state and the key players engaged in it is needed to determine how these actors and the state interact to produce key patterns observed.

It is important here to identify which groups or individuals are able to act effectively, and which have (or lack) legitimacy with the public or with specific groups. Reformers and spoilers with respect to key issues may emerge. Also, the team should try to identify bridge builders here--specific actors and groups that reach across divisions in society, overlap with different types and classes of leadership (community level, midrange, and high level), cross over between patterns of fragility and resilience, and have capacity to work formally and informally in society.

Illustrative Questions:

- Who are the major political leaders, and what is the basis for their claims to power and influence? What are their goals?
- What are the main political groupings or parties, and what are the relationships among them? What are their goals?
- What are the attitudes of leaders and popular groups toward the regime? Toward its policies?
- Who are the major economic and cultural leaders in society? How much influence or resources do they command? What leverage can they create? What is their relationship to the political leadership and institutions? Which of these leaders is a “bridge builder” or capable of becoming one? Which actors are reformers and spoilers for key issues?

- Is there any dominant pattern of behavior or relationships that guide political and social interactions (such as ethnic group rivalry/conflict/exclusion; corruption/patronage; party competition; urban/rural divisions)?
- What role is played in the society by foreign actors (other states, NGO's, aid agencies, foreign businesses, expatriates?) How do these affect relationships and attitudes among major actors within the society?

Part 2: Understand the context of the patterns identified

Part 1 of this task identified key patterns of fragility and resilience illustrated by the inner ring in Figure 1. These patterns take their energy from and are enabled by the larger context in which they occur. They cannot be understood well unless they are fitted into their larger context. This context is made up of structural factors and governance arrangements. Structural factors--demographics, socio-economic conditions and political relationships--shape the institutional arrangements of a society, i.e., the type of regime in place and the “rules of the game.” Governance arrangements mediate the structural factors in a country and influence state-society relationships.

Figure 3 adds two rings to the pattern of fragility and resilience presented in Figure 1. These rings are 1) structural factors and 2) governance arrangements. Patterns of fragility and resilience influence governance and governance arrangements influence these patterns. The analysis of fragility or resilience comes down to the relationships shown by the two-way arrows between governance arrangements and society, to the interaction and relationships between the state and society. Changing these relationships is the key. To reduce fragility or bolster resilience in fragile environments requires changes in the incentives of key actors and groups—those involved in state-society relationships. The principal way this is done is to create new governance arrangements. Likewise, to address a pattern of resiliency such as resource access for all, governance arrangements fostering such access can be strengthened. Direct advocacy for changes in governance can also be used in both cases.

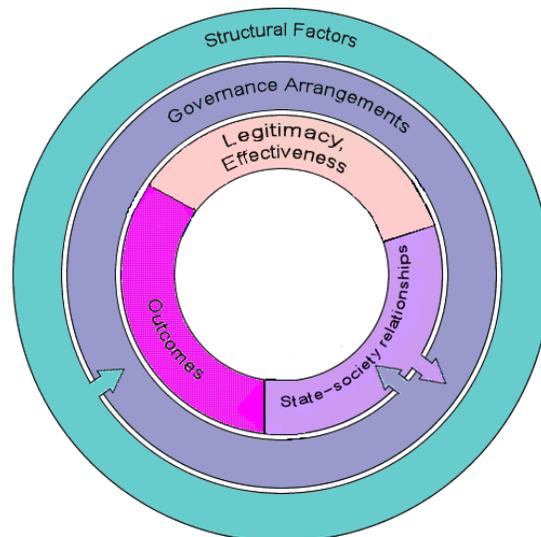


Figure 3: Relationships Between Structural Factors, Governance Arrangements, and Patterns of Fragility and Resilience

The fragile states assessment is designed to focus on the relationships of the state and key actors and groups that produce specific patterns of fragility or resilience. These patterns can be identified by working from deficits of effectiveness and legitimacy, to outcomes that cause these deficits, to the state-society relationships that produce the outcomes. The assessment then puts these patterns into their context, analyzing structural factors and how they are mediated by the governance arrangements affecting state-society relationships. The assessment is only a broad-stroke review of this picture, not a detailed one. It is intended to enable USAID to do just enough work to understand how it can participate effectively in the process of change in the fragile state. The assessment should focus on the changes in patterns of fragility or resilience USAID would like to bring about more than on the specifics of the activities it hopes to implement.

Structural Factors

An underlying assumption of the assessment process is that certain “structural” characteristics of a country’s economy, political system, and social make-up deeply shape the evolution of the state, including the emergence of different forms of fragility. Structural factors are those factors that are difficult or impossible to change substantially in the short term by reforms or policy changes (see Box 5).

As part of its analysis, the team can identify assets that form the foundation for resilience, unity or consensus, and economic and political development.

It should also seek to identify constraints on development, and cleavages that form fault lines for discrimination, exclusion, or conflict. Regional and global factors can also have a direct bearing on conflict and fragility. Widespread availability of arms in a sub-region enables violent groups to form at minimal cost.

Box 5. Structural Factors

- Natural resource endowments
- Geography (climate, topography)
- Human resources (human capital, social capital)
- Income level and distribution
- Demographic Structure
- Ethnic and Religious Divisions
- Culture, Symbols, and Belief Systems
- Historical Factors
- Available technology (including communication and transportation)
- Available markets for export

Illustrative Questions:

- Are there particular sectors which drive the economy? How are natural resources allocated and controlled within the economy?
- Are there any elements of income growth and distribution that could contribute to fragility and/or resilience within the country? Is there a large urban workforce for whom widespread employment could lead to political unrest? Does the society – or significant segments thereof – have effective social safety nets or other coping mechanisms outside of the state’s purview?
- Is there significant polarization or stratification within society on the basis of group identity or affiliation? How do such dynamics relate to the formation or control of the state?
- What other significant elements of political culture, traditions, values, and norms might affect the degree to which a society shows cohesion or vulnerability to division and polarization?
- Is the country located in a “good” or “bad” neighborhood affected by nearby conflict, refugee flows, and/or the availability of small arms? Is it vulnerable to invasion or

subversion by outside forces? By contrast, are there regional norms or inter-governmental mechanisms that promote “good” behavior?

- Is the country’s economy highly dependent on or vulnerable to external factors, such as commodity exports, capital flows, environmental degradation, and/or trade sanctions?
- Are there any especially salient events that have shaped current political or economic conditions, such as colonial experience, past violent conflicts, or periods of strong unity or leadership?

Governance and Institutional Arrangements

Sets of institutions and rules – both formal and informal – guide decision-making by key players over time. In particular, they mediate the relationships between structural factors and society. These governance arrangements include both formal and informal organizations (courts, political parties, patronage networks, criminal organizations, involvement in international organizations) and expected patterns of behavior (loyalty or independence, corruption or virtue, competence or spoils as a basis for office-holding). Furthermore, there is often a significant discrepancy between formal, *de jure* institutions and processes designed to provide order and allow for reform, on the one hand, and the actual ways in which things “get done,” on the other. This discrepancy itself can point to sources of fragility.

There are several reasons to identify key institutions. First, the rules of the game, both formal and informal, condition or constrain behavior. This is why state-society relationships are so important—the governance arrangements in place encourage certain behavior by routinizing and rewarding it, while discouraging other behavior by sanctioning or failing to provide a channel for it. Thus, those able to make and control the rules tend to support the outcomes of the game whether these results are patterns of fragility or resilience. Second, institutional arrangements are the principal means available to change behavior of actors and groups in patterns of fragility or resilience. This is the reason, for example, for the directional arrows between governance arrangements and state-society relationships in Figure 3. Third, institutions structure politics. How policy decisions are made and maintained, and whether they can be changed, depends on the informal and formal institutions that frame policy making. Fourth, institutions influence resource use, may be the locus of resources, and as such are themselves objects of the political game. Political and economic infighting over the “rules of the game” such as changes in the tax code or in existing uses of water flows are examples, as is competition for control of the tax collection or water resource regulatory agencies themselves.

Illustrative Questions:

- What are the formal and informal institutions that determine how leaders are chosen?
- What are the formal and informal institutions that guide the distribution of power and decision-making on which policies are adopted? Is the state administration impartial and professional or identity-based and discriminatory?
- Are there institutions that protect citizens and limit personal or arbitrary authority?
- What are the main institutions that guide economic behavior, and are they general or only active in certain regions (e.g. cities)?
- What are the major institutions for provision of security and administration of justice? Are the army and police professional? Are the courts competent and impartial?

- What are the major institutions through which people obtain education, health care, welfare assistance, and other services? Are they provided through the government or through non-government actors?

Task 2: Map Key Actors and Patterns of Fragility and Resilience

Task 1 identified key patterns of fragility and resilience, but to change these patterns we need to know about the specific actors and groups involved in them. Who are these actors? What are their incentives? Which ones will help change key patterns? Who will resist change? What process of change does this array of actors imply? Which actors will we target?

To answer these questions, in Task 2, the team will delve further into the roles of key actors and groups in the state-society relationships involved in each pattern and it will place the key patterns of fragility and resilience in a richer historical and dynamic context. This is not intended to be an exhaustive map, and it should only provide enough detail to ensure proper program direction. The team should identify reformers and spoilers, both actors and groups, for each pattern of fragility and resilience and estimate their strengths and weaknesses. It should identify the actors and groups most important to the future direction of different patterns of fragility and resilience.

The main steps in this task are as follows:

- Map the role of key reformers and spoilers in each important pattern of fragility or resilience, noting their interests, goals, attitudes, and behaviors that help shape or maintain the pattern. What is the key problem, constraint or opportunity for each one?
- Describe the ongoing state-society relationships among the key actors and groups, both domestic and foreign, and how they contribute to creating or maintaining the pattern(s).
- Map key reformers and spoilers and their state-society relationships across all patterns to identify linkages, overlaps, simultaneous involvement, and multiple or related impacts.
- Discuss whether the country appears to be stable in its current condition, might enter a vicious cycle of declining legitimacy and effectiveness, or might enter a virtuous cycle of improving effectiveness and legitimacy. Highlight what actors or relationships are most important to the future directions fragility might take.

To develop a program strategy, USAID should go beyond understanding the problem at the level enabled by the work in Task 1 and look at the how the political game is being played and who is playing it. Who are likely the key actors and what are likely the key future events or turning points that will be critical in improving current conditions? Thus, in Task 2 the team should develop a more finely-grained analysis of specific players involved in key patterns of fragility and resilience and more detailed information about the state-society relationships involved, and why, to what extent, and in what form these actors and groups affect the country's fragility or resilience. Box 9 provides an illustrative list of such actors and groups. This mapping exercise is not to be an exhaustive one. It should provide enough information to ensure programs will contain appropriate change processes and target or involve appropriate actors and groups. Particularly important here is the need to seek out information from sources, social groups, and institutions not usually funded or sought out by USAID and to identify key actors and groups able to influence reform or bolster resilience directly or by supporting USAID and other reform programs aimed at key patterns of fragility or resilience.

Box 6. Key Players

- **Political Leaders**
 - National Leaders
 - Local Leaders (chiefs and community leaders)
 - International Political Leaders
- **Military Leaders**
 - Generals
 - Mid-Level Officers
 - Enlisted Personnel
- **Private Sector Leaders**
 - National Private Sector Leaders
 - International Private Sector Leaders
 - Local Private Sector Leaders
 - Diasporas or Ethnic Private Sector Leaders
 - Businesspersons in the informal sector
- **Labor Groups**
- **Public Servants**
 - Civil servants/bureaucracy
- **Civil Society**
 - Non-profit organization
 - International Non-profit organization
 - National Non-profit organization
 - Local Non-profit organization
 - International Governmental Donors
- **Displaced people**
- **Rebel groups**
- **Intellectuals**
 - International Intellectuals
 - Domestic Intellectuals

**The list is only suggestive. It will vary depending on the country of application*

This mapping creates a more personalized view (emphasizing the attitudes, feelings, perceptions, and actions of the players in the game) of the structural factors, governance arrangements, state-society relationships, outcomes, legitimacy and effectiveness presented in the vortex of fragility in Figure 1. By delving into the key patterns of fragility flowing out of Task 1 the team will deepen its understanding of the situation in the fragile state being assessed. If the key actors for several patterns are mapped, it is the equivalent of using the analytic power of the vortex of fragility in Figures 1 and 3 multiple times. To the extent the several patterns exist simultaneously in the country, they will likely overlap and interact with each other as will the players in the game involved in each pattern. Analytically, it is easier to map one pattern of fragility or resilience at a time. While mapping one pattern will uncover only some of the relationships between multiple patterns of fragility or resilience, the separate maps can be overlaid or combined in a subsequent step. As will be shown in Task 4, this separate mapping also highlights a range of entry points for programming that a combined mapping makes it more difficult to identify.

The interests, goals, attitudes, and behaviors of key actors and groups that help shape or maintain the patterns should be documented briefly (See Figure 4). Ideas such as those in the Conflict Assessment and D&G Assessment are valuable in

this context. For example, the concepts of incentives, means and opportunity provide helpful guidance in Task 2 mapping. The conclusions identified in Task 1 about how the relationships and behavior of these key actors contribute to patterns of fragility or resilience can be validated or changed at this time.

This mapping should describe the relations among the key actors, both domestic and foreign, and how they contribute to creating or maintaining the patterns. It should identify the actors' interests, their resources, their goals and strategies, and their alliances with, or opposition to, other key players. The "players" themselves likely have diverse interests that might be coincidental or conflictive. Their interests might also not be monolithic but rather reveal differences between different factions or sub-groups. Identification of key players will vary from situation to situation, but typically include political elites, military, business interests, and social groups, particularly if organized or mobilized in some visible way. The assessment must then identify the specific actors and groups that can influence the political process, including bridge builders, and it must

determine who the potential allies for reform are, who the potential opponents or spoilers are, and the relative influence of these actors.

Relevant issues to consider here would be whether specific actors or groups, including both institutions and their leadership, are associated with vested interests militating against reform, could derive concrete benefits from certain changes, or otherwise face important constraints in their decision-making.

REFORMERS	INTERACTION → ←	SPOILERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Officials in Minority Positions of Power • Potential New Political Leaders • New Private Sector leaders • Military Leaders who Would Gain Power • International Donors • Non-profit organizations • Labor Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify main actors (who is involved) • What do they hope to achieve? • What are the resources at their disposal? • Who is benefiting? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incumbent Political Leaders and Party Members • Military Leaders who would lose rents and power • Incumbent Private Sector Leaders who have privileged positions

Figure 4: Key Actors—Reformers and Spoilers

Task 3: Identify Windows of Vulnerability and Windows of Opportunity

The Fragile States Strategy makes an important distinction between fragile states that are *vulnerable* to more acute unrest and those already swept up in *crisis*. The purpose of Task 3 is to introduce a temporal dimension to the analysis, to identify events, processes or reforms that increase the country's vulnerability to additional deterioration and crisis or that provide openings for local and donor actions to bolster resilience or recovery over time. The team will identify near- or medium-term events, political processes, or reforms that would make the state more susceptible to a full-blown crisis. Crisis, here, may be violent conflict, a humanitarian disaster, or other. The team will consider specific windows of vulnerability that could provoke or allow such crises. In addition, the team will look for windows of opportunity – such as reform processes mandated in a peace agreement – that could address major sources of fragility.

Task 1 identified patterns and placed them in the overall context of the fragile state. Task 2 set out key groups involved in these main patterns and identified those USAID should target. In this Task 3, the team should locate and evaluate windows of vulnerability and opportunity. Both create opportunities for intervention because they provide reasons and motivation for key political figures to take action. In this task we use the time dimension of vulnerability and opportunity to add momentum and focus to our action program yet to be developed in Task 4.

Windows of Vulnerability

Fragile states are generally vulnerable to additional deterioration, violence, and breakdown of normal relationships between the state and society. Many already have abnormal state-society relationships in several areas. Social coherence and the links and overlaps of government and society are weak and social capital is thin. In this context, change that alters the balance of power or benefits between the state and society or between specific groups in society can greatly increase the vulnerability of a fragile state to additional deterioration or crisis. A change may not have this effect, but if key actors and groups perceive it does, the change still opens up a window of vulnerability. A window of vulnerability is the elapsed time over which a change increases or extends the vulnerability of the state and society to increased fragility. Typically, the planning horizon of the state and society in a fragile state is quite short. If change occurs that shortens this planning horizon even more, such as a sharp increase in inflation or the sudden deterioration of a dictator's health, a window of vulnerability opens up. Elections, an episode of violence or an attempted coup all create windows of vulnerability of different intensity and length, depending on the country context in which they occur. Figure 5 provides some sample windows of vulnerability in fragile states.

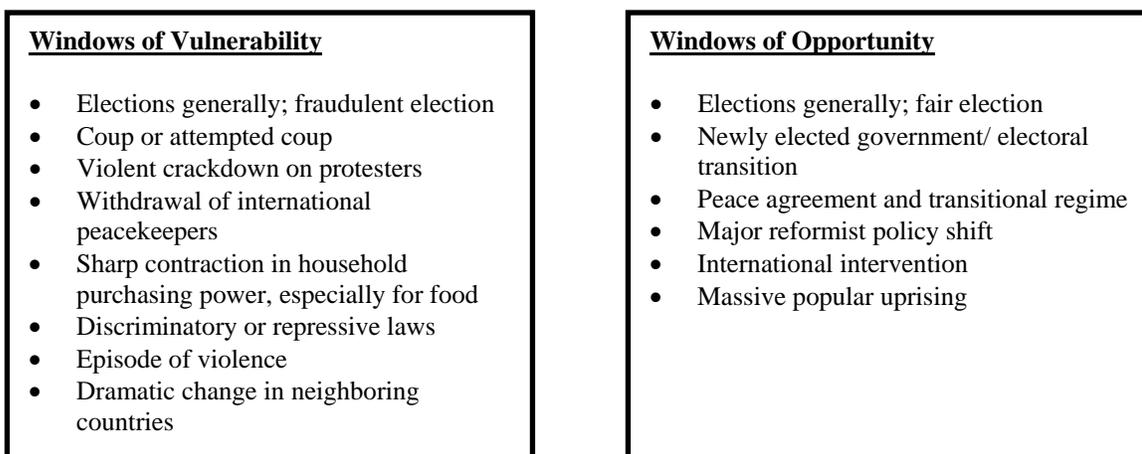


Figure 5: Windows of Vulnerability and Windows of Opportunity

Within a window of vulnerability some events or actions by individuals or groups can spark episodes of crisis. Some triggers are predictable. Triggers during a window of vulnerability that alter or appear to alter the balance of political and/or economic power generally elicit an intense response from those who enjoy special privileges. Political or civil leaders who perceive self-interest in fomenting instability (i.e. “spoilers”) and thereby attempt to radicalize and militarize their partisans against designated “enemy” groups within the population can be particularly effective triggers.

Windows of Opportunity

Windows of opportunity are periods in which key or large segments of society benefit or perceive they benefit from existing conditions or change. It may be a period in which external influence is at its greatest. Windows of opportunity may be long or short lived. However, fragile states are fluid environments and timing matters. Timely interventions in response to windows of opportunity may expand their duration.

Principal windows of opportunity are presented in Figure 5. These include elections generally and fair elections in particular. A new peace agreement and transitional regime, a massive population uprising and a major reformist policy shift are other windows of opportunity.

Windows of vulnerability or opportunity both present openings for donors because each window provides reason and opportunity for political and societal actors to “do something.” The team, in carrying out this Task 3, should identify and shape aspects of both temporal windows to encourage those with power to take appropriate action to diminish fragility.

Illustrative Questions:

- What are the main fissures in this society? Have any changes occurred to exacerbate or ameliorate tension in these fissures?
- Are contentious elections approaching or is the regime otherwise facing a succession crisis? What degree of contestability is in place?

- Are there any recent significant shifts in reformist policy?
- What is the recent history of violent conflict in this society?
- Are there radicalizing elements in the society playing up grievances and differences?
- Are there external influences subverting one ethnic or political group to the benefit of another?
- What is the potential for a rapidly escalating economic calamity? How stable are food prices?

Task 4: Define Program Priorities

The aim of Task 4 is to support effective reform in fragile states. The results of this Task should enable USAID to use its resources and capabilities effectively to address fragility in a specific fragile state. The team should consider how the full complement of USAID programming can contribute to the goals of averting potential crisis, promoting stabilizing factors, and supporting a platform for development. It should mesh this USAID response with the work of other donors. As a point of departure for this final task, the assessment should provide a brief reprise of the greatest fragility risks and resilience potentials within a state, in terms of their magnitude of impact and likely durability. It should identify the best windows of opportunity for addressing both. Two key questions to be answered are: What is the behavior of key development actors at the center of the patterns of fragility or resilience observed in Tasks 1, 2 and 3? How can USAID act to alter or reinforce that behavior favorably?

Following this reprise, there are four elements that should be used to define program priorities for redressing fragility:

- *Laying Out an Ideal Program:* In light of the patterns of fragility and resilience identified and analyzed in Tasks 1-2, this section should put forth a comprehensive set of prioritized programmatic responses to address both fragility and resilience. It should highlight specific points of entry and leverage (e.g., which groups are targets of our recommendations?), a timeline, and contingency planning for changes along the anticipated reform path. The program should account for windows of vulnerability and opportunity identified in Task 3. The program should emphasize short-term impact but with a view to the long-term.
- *Applying Multiple Filters:* Invariably, there will be multiple constraints limiting USAID's ability to advocate for or otherwise pursue the ideal set of program priorities. USAID should also account for work by other donors and mesh its activities with them. Actionable goals should emerge from this filtering process. (A key filter should be to consider what potential *harm* could come from USAID assistance and how to avoid or minimize it.)
- *Making Office-Specific Recommendations:* In light of these constraints, concrete recommendations should be made for the Mission (if a presence country), regional office, and all relevant bureaus and offices at USAID/W to direct programmatic responses towards redressing fragility and bolstering resilience. Specific timeframes should be included for each.
- *Advancing Recommendations for Inter-Agency Coherence:* USAID may in the end be a relatively minor player in directly implementing a successful response to fragility, but it should be able to bring concrete proposals for policy changes to the inter-agency process.

Specific consideration should also be given to the players and dynamics around reform and/or resistance to change identified in Task 2, and programs should be proposed to strengthen current stabilizing responses of local actors, to mitigate the influence of spoilers, or to support new responses that directly address sources of fragility. Windows of vulnerability and opportunity identified should be used to inform program prioritization, and any specific urgency – or danger of catastrophic outcomes – should be underscored in connection with vulnerabilities highlighted in Task 3.

Task 4 starts off with a reprise of Tasks 1, 2, and 3 that is central to the assessment. It is designed to ensure the team agrees on firm conclusions from its work in the earlier tasks and that the team uses those conclusions as a guide to set out the objective or objectives of USAID strategy for the fragile state. At this point the team must finally decide on what patterns of fragility and resilience are central and prioritize among them. This is the heart of the assessment. The assessment must reach a definitive conclusion as to the central patterns of fragility and resilience in the country at hand and identify, for policy makers and practitioners alike, the cause(s) of the country's fragility. Unless this becomes clear from the analysis, USAID's objective (see Box 10) of providing a focused response with programs strategically oriented to the sources and symptoms of fragility cannot be achieved.

This discussion and decision will be based on the vortex of fragility analysis of each principal pattern of fragility and resilience. Carried out in Task 1 and embellished in Tasks 2 and 3, each

Box 7. USAID Strategic Programming in Fragile States

- Engage Strategically
- Focus on the Sources of Stability
- Seek short-term impact linked to longer-term structural reform
- Establish appropriate measurement systems

principal pattern of fragility or resilience will be documented and understood in terms of the relationships between structural conditions, governance arrangements, and the inner circle of the vortex--state-societal interaction, outcomes and governance effectiveness and legitimacy. These patterns, because they co-exist, will overlap, be linked, and otherwise complement, supplement and conflict with each other. This nested or big picture is what the team usually will see in its first level of understanding (say during or at the end of Task 1). By the end of the analysis

(say at the beginning of this Task 4), the team will have separated and analyzed the important patterns of fragility and resilience and understand how they integrate to produce the big picture of fragility in the country being assessed.

For each important pattern of fragility and resilience the team must agree on the main governance arrangements, including the state of governance effectiveness and legitimacy. The team should also agree on the key actors and their interactions, windows of vulnerability and opportunity, and promising entry points to affect change for each pattern. The behaviors of actors or groups that need to be addressed should be identified. The net result of this reprise will be agreement on and prioritization of one or more patterns of fragility and resilience that require attention. A big picture view with focused priorities should be the end point after consideration of all the patterns.

As the above suggests, Task 4 is designed to make use of the results of Tasks 1, 2 and 3. Task 4, however, is different in that it requires the assessment team to review the results of the assessment to date, then “pivot” around and look forward through a different prism, that of a USAID strategy for the fragile state and interventions to achieve it. The team should frame a tentative strategy to guide program priorities, and it should orient specifically and clearly to treating the central fragility and resilience pattern or patterns identified. The strategy should eschew customary sector programming unless it is essential to dismantling the central pattern of fragility involved or supporting key patterns of resilience. The strategy, based on the prior analysis, should provide a framework for USAID’s program priorities based on the answers to key questions, for example: Will USAID align its efforts with the government? At the central level? Only at local levels? Or, should USAID avoid the government and center its activities more on civil society or the private sector? Does society have the resilience to address the many gaps created by the central patterns of fragility that exist? If civil society is the aid recipient of choice for USAID programs, when would the government be brought back into the fragility reduction strategy and at what level?

By their nature, this focused response and these programs move beyond “diagnosis” and business as usual into engagement to change sharply the status quo in a fragile state, a situation that by definition is laden with great need but customarily lacks the resources and capacities to address them effectively. Unlike transformational development, programming for fragile states is riskier, more difficult and less likely to be effective or even to succeed at all. Thus, the deep understanding of central patterns of fragility and resilience created in Tasks 1, 2 and 3 must now be combined with a carefully matched set of programs and resources sufficient to change them. Both this understanding and the programs must be intricately connected with the people whose

behavior is in question and with processes of change on the ground. Since we cannot bring solutions to the populace of a fragile state or impose change, we must get those involved in the key patterns of fragility and resilience to look for and adopt the solutions needed. For additional conceptual guidance on defining the strategy and content of program priorities, please see Annex 3.

Lay Out an Ideal Program

Box 8. USAID Priorities to Strengthen Fragile States

- Enhance Stability
- Improve Security
- Encourage Reform
- Develop the Capacity of Institutions

In crafting an ideal strategy and set of programmatic responses, the magnitude of the threat or the opportunity posed by key patterns of fragility or resilience should guide the prioritization of recommendations. An important consideration should be steps to avert a deepened crisis, help stabilize the country, and/or bolster a state’s capacity and commitment to govern well. These are USAID’s principal priorities to strengthen fragile states (see Box 11). These steps should create incentives to change behavior at the center of fragility or reinforce behavior fostering resilience.

The ideal intervention program will disrupt or change the bad behavior of important actors involved in the key patterns of fragility identified in the assessment. It will reinforce the good behavior of key actors involved in the main patterns of resilience identified. Such an ideal program will address the fundamental deficiencies identified—particularly security, legitimacy, and effectiveness gaps. The program will be about reform—reform of incentives and institutions shaping or governing the actions of key actors. Such actors, by the end of the intervention program, will volitionally be acting differently with respect to key patterns of fragility or resilience. Starting points for the program will be contextual, but should generally account for points of entry (see Figure 3), sequencing, comprehensiveness, and leverage.

The principal units of analysis at this stage of the assessment are two: important patterns of fragility and resilience and programs to affect them. These key patterns of fragility and resilience are very important because they will be the *only* focal point of USAID’s effort. Our strategy, including every one of our priority programs, will contribute directly, maximally and solely to diminishing these patterns of fragility and bolstering these patterns of resilience. The assessment team will create as part of the strategy an objective—say to arrest downward movement toward fragility—and identify the principal patterns of fragility and resilience the strategy and priority programs will address. For each pattern of fragility or resilience included in the strategy, based on the vortex of fragility analysis, one or more programs will be designed to be inserted through entry points into each pattern of fragility or resilience. The programs, taken together, will be necessary and sufficient to achieve the strategy objective. In creating sufficient programs, the greater difficulty of addressing legitimacy with USAID programs will be explicit. At the end of Task 4, the assessment team will detail the strategy: objective, programs, means for each program, a time frame, a monitoring and evaluation effort, and policy, lessons learned and knowledge management applications.

In devising an ideal program strategy for program priorities, the assessment team should consider questions such as those in Box 12. While the assessment team will select and recommend a strategy and priority programs in Task 4, this effort will be partially derived from its work during

the earlier parts of the assessment. As Tasks 1, 2 and 3 are carried out, the winnowing of ideas, patterns of fragility and resilience, actors and so forth, will cause possible program solutions to arise. These should be explored as the team moves along with the assessment, especially with key actors and change agents. Such exploration will facilitate the work of Task 4 and avoid the potential for surprise that comes from introduction of program solutions late in the assessment process.

Box 9. Questions for Country Strategy

- How can appropriate change be inserted or introduced into the fragile state?
- Can USAID help make the situation better or is there a possibility we can make it worse?
- Does a desired trajectory of change over time seem feasible? Can it be influenced and tracked?
- What processes of change seem appropriate?
- Will these change processes emphasize indirect (incentives) or direct (advocacy) approaches?
- How much linkage can be expected between different levels of society and governance and across different actors in implementing change?
- Is more assessment work needed?
- If legitimacy deficits are important, how can USAID influence them?
- If the government is to be bypassed, how and when will re-engagement with the government occur?
- What is being done and should be done by other US Government agencies or donors?
- Can USAID continue its existing program (if any) or must it be abandoned or substantially changed?

At this point in Task 4, with its strategy in hand, the assessment team will identify and review programs for inclusion in the strategy to address key patterns of fragility and resilience. Programs for each pattern will be suggested and briefly considered in light of the several questions in Box 13. From this portfolio of programs, those selected will be more.

Box 10. Questions for Program Priorities

- What is the purpose of the program? How does it address the central fragility problems of the country?
- What specific pattern(s) of fragility or resilience are being addressed?
- Are any windows of vulnerability or opportunity involved?
- What actor(s) and behavioral changes are targeted?
- What governance/institutional changes are sought to affect their behavior? What incentives are these expected to change?
- What process of institutional change is proposed? Who will implement and monitor it?
- What entry point(s) will the program use?
- Does this program principally address governance effectiveness or legitimacy? How?
- What outcomes (in the vortex of fragility) are expected to change?

In this process of creating a portfolio of programs to address the patterns identified, the assessment team will draw on the results of prior tasks. For key actors, for example, it may map them again using Figure 3 in Task 1 or revisit the analysis of the games being played set out in Table 2 of Task 2. From development and review of such a portfolio of programs, some will be selected and more completely prepared by briefly answering the questions in Box 13 or a similar set of questions. Annex 2, drawn from the Fragile States Strategy document, provides suggested program responses for different patterns of fragility.

The ideal program fashioned by the assessment team should account for several special factors:

Constraints—the program will incorporate and account for the very weakness in governance that causes patterns of fragility in the first instance. Priority programs should aim to achieve just good enough governance—good enough to promote stability and increase resilience, but not so sophisticated as to overwhelm the fragile state with more than it needs or can sustain.

The different focus needed in fragile states—accounting for the different institutional roles played by the military and other safety forces, by diplomatic organizations and by development organizations. Linkages between effectiveness and legitimacy across all sectors of a fragile society will likely be mirrored by the different in-country and donor organizations involved in addressing fragility.

Appropriate processes for reform—either through local institutions, including government, civil society and the private sector or by governance reforms aimed at the very government central to fragility. Challenging the state to change patterns of fragility sufficiently, for example, especially at the center, may produce its own instability.

Potential for new government process and structures—the team will shape governance improvements in light of the situation, not just rebuild or strengthen existing governance processes and structures. It will include minorities, ethnic groups, isolated regions, and otherwise extend liberties and political and economic power to those who are out of the mainstream.

Principles of good international engagement—the team will bear in mind the OECD Development Assistance Committee’s (DAC) “Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States”. These principles can be found at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/55/34700989.pdf>.

Apply Multiple Filters

Once articulated, this ideal should then be scrutinized by using the following questions in successive filters:

- What are USAID, and USG, interests in the country? What is the overall foreign policy context, and what policies are other USG agencies supporting?
- What are other donors doing? What are USAID’s relevant comparative advantages and weaknesses? What is USAID’s potential for a coordinating role in a comprehensive, multi-donor response? What obstacles would hinder or complicate such an approach?
- What is the host country’s absorptive capacity?
- What legal, policy, or other constraints does USAID face relevant to the ideal set of program priorities, including Congressional earmarks?
- What resources does USAID have to bring to bear, e.g. budget, staff, partners?
- What results can be expected given USAID resources levels? What magnitude of resources would be required to have significant impact? How likely is the recommended USAID programming to have a significant impact in addressing fragility or a specific dimension/element thereof?

- What is USAID's tolerance for failure, particularly for high-risk, untested, innovative programs? What is the potential for USAID to contribute to further harm, and what safeguards could help avert a deepened crisis or avoid other unintended (negative) consequences?

Make USAID Office Specific Recommendations

Once the filters above have been applied, the next step is to decide who in USAID should do what. There will be natural divisions of responsibility and interest among USAID offices for numerous of the programs selected. Some programs, however, will be cross-cutting and need special decisions to assign responsibility—which may be joint. Other programs may become orphans, being novel enough to lie outside the bounds of the existing programs and interests of USAID offices. These too will need special consideration.

The program needs of the situation in a fragile state may push one or more USAID offices to consider or undertake more by way of priority programs than they desire. It is likely, for example, that a certain pattern of fragility will need concentrated effort and resources or risky program efforts from one USAID office or another and that without such effort the strategy for the country cannot be effective. Once the necessity of such concentrated effort is considered thoroughly, a normal decision making process can be used to decide whether to diminish the effectiveness of the strategy or to press the reluctant USAID office into service beyond its comfort level.

Advance Recommendations for Inter-Agency Coherence

This aspect of Task 4 should point out links between policy levels and operations, especially ways USAID can convert its fragility responses into standard operating procedure rather than high intensity policy exercises. Ways to tighten the linkage between C/FACTS, assessment, response and monitoring and evaluation should be identified where possible. Lessons learned and knowledge management opportunities should also be identified in this part of Task 4.

In multiple fragile states situations, USAID will be a crucial source of knowledge to inform policy and practice in dealing with the fragile state. Typical organizational responsibilities or even “divisions” between US Government agencies tend to diminish the coherence of US Government policy and operational responses at the country team level and at home. In fragile states, the dimensions of governance involved may stretch beyond USAID’s normal development activities, although USAID’s abilities will usually be central to addressing fragility successfully. Likewise, USAID may depend more on other US Government agencies to deal with things like security and political processes. The fragile states strategy and assessment framework both point out the significance of these multiple dimensions—effectiveness and legitimacy in security, political, economic and social arenas. That security, diplomacy, and development need to work together is clear. It remains for USAID and other US Government agencies operating in fragile states to blend and coordinate their different missions across these sectors.

The fragile states assessment, especially the strategy and ideal program to be set out in Task 4, is likely to highlight many ways that military, diplomacy, and development agencies and activities must flow together to reverse the decline of a fragile state. USAID’s fragile states strategy is not

business as usual. Ensuring better policy coherence among these three important dimensions of fragility and among the major US Government and other donor players on the fragile states scene is a part of the new business needed.

ANNEX 1- Idealized Patterns of Fragility or Resilience

Identifying the Possible Patterns of Fragility or Resilience

The major patterns of fragility or resilience set out below present a range of options to help identify the main dynamics contributing to fragility or under girding resilience. For example, a state may be identified as suffering from widespread corruption. Still, one must sketch out this pattern in some detail to understand how it plays out in a specific country. Who, precisely, benefits from corruption? Is it mainly a few individuals, or many individuals, or entire groups? Does corruption act mainly to undermine effective government (that is, nothing gets done because resources are being diverted from public purposes to private purses), or to undermine legitimacy (creating strong grievances against the conduct of government and officials). How do people perceive corruption – is it a normal perquisite of power that supports expected patronage? Or is it a threat to the operation of the government and to fairness in society.

Patterns can highlight sources of resilience as well as fragility. For example, in the post-conflict pattern “rebels contained,” the ability of the regime to create secure regions and persuade people that the rebels have been marginalized reflects very positive performance that can enhance effectiveness and legitimacy. In the post-conflict pattern “clear winner,” if the winner is an elected leader with strong national support, that immediately boosts legitimacy and may form a basis for greater effectiveness as well.

While some states may have only one main pattern of fragility operative, others will have more. Some have many. For example, Nepal arguably has four patterns of fragility operating at once: a failed democracy (due to the King’s dissolution of parliament and taking personal power), a succession crisis (due to the current King coming to power under dubious circumstances that reduce his political legitimacy), a guerrilla rebellion (with Maoist guerrillas active in the countryside), and violent communal conflict (with the Maoists drawing support mainly from specific social groups, namely hill tribes and lower castes, who see themselves as excluded from economic and political opportunities by the upper-caste Nepali groups who rule from Katmandu). Each of these implicates specific players and relationships and creates problems that need to be resolved in order to reduce fragility and create the foundations for stability, good governance, and development.

I. Patterns for States that are Fragile, but not yet Failed States:

- “Democratic Change.” Where the country has a democratic regime that is floundering or recently overthrown, the team should identify the nature of the democratic institutions (presidential or parliamentary, federal or centralized, number and position of main political parties) and how and why the democracy failed (or appears to be failing). Was the democracy corrupt? Lacking in adequate revenues? Paralyzed by internal dissension? Overturned by military or political leaders? Taken over by a particular faction or communal group? Who were the main actors (leaders, parties) and whose actions were mainly responsible for the failure of democracy to function? What kind of new government has succeeded the failed democracy (or seems most likely to do so for democracies that are currently failing)?

- “Succession or Reform Crisis.” Where a country’s leader is either embarking on major reforms, or may soon depart from power without a clear successor (due to lack of effective procedures for selecting a new leader in the event of poor health or death of the current leader) a country faces a period of uncertainty, in which various individuals or groups will be positioning themselves for power under the new regime. The team should identify the leader and institutions facing succession and/or reform, the plausible contenders for power, and the most important supporters and opponents of reform. What are the aims of successors and/or reformers? Who will be helped or hurt by their succession and/or reforms?
- “Regional or Guerilla Rebellion, (or spill-over of rebellion in neighboring states).” In this pattern it is important to identify the main rebel groups, their goals, and their supporters and resources. The team should also make explore the government’s ability (or lack thereof) to win popular support and take effective military action against the rebels. It should note the ability of the rebels and the government to provide services and security to populations in regions they control.
- “High State Corruption.” Corruption or rent-seeking among officials can undermine the effectiveness of government by diverting resources to unproductive ends; it can also undermine legitimacy if corruption is seen as diverting resources to those who are undeserving or abusive. The team should identify the leaders or groups who are benefiting from corruption. Are there important and potent groups who are excluded or hurt by the corruption? Is the corruption distorting the economy and curtailing growth?
- “Violent Communal Conflict.” In these cases the team should identify the main ethnic/religious groups engaged in conflict, their leaders, the motives of the leaders and the grievances of their followers. It should also note the resources and fighting ability of the major organized ethnic militias and the state military forces.

PATTERNS	HOW TO IDENTIFY	MAIN ACTORS
1. Democratic Change	The country has a democratic regime that is floundering or recently overthrown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political leaders • Political parties • Military structure
2. Succession or Reform Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country’s leader is embarking on major reforms • Leader may soon depart from power without a clear successor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader and institutions facing succession and/or reform • Plausible contenders for power • Most important supporters and opponents of reform
3. Regional or Guerilla Rebellion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country faces an internal conflict, either in the form of a regional rebellion or guerilla uprising • The country faces a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main rebel groups • Government leaders/institutions and their relation to the military (i.e., why is government incapable

	spill-over of rebellion from neighboring states	of effective action/ winning popular support
4. High State Corruption	The effectiveness and/or legitimacy of the government is undermined by corruption or rent-seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials, leaders and groups that are benefiting • Important and potent groups who are excluded or hurt by the corruption
5. Violent Communal Conflict	Using ethnic or religious identification/ recruitment, violent conflict occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main ethnic/religious groups and their leaders who are engaged in conflict • Members/ followers of above ethnic/religious

2. Patterns for Failed States

States in ongoing failure are currently experiencing violent conflicts or lack central authority. Still, there are several distinct conditions that may develop in failed states:

In all of these cases of ongoing conflicts, it becomes enormously difficult to develop sound central authority. It is critical to identify the main actors, their relationships and resources, any groups that are profiting from ongoing conflict and would act as ‘spoilers,’ and any groups—including external regional or international actors—that have leverage to help end or resolve the ongoing conflict. It is also important to identify new problems – child soldiers, humanitarian crises, smuggling, drug trafficking – that have been created as a consequence of the conflict.

- “Anarchy” In this pattern of fragility there is a complete absence of significant central or regional authorities; it is thus necessary to identify some groups or actors who might serve as the basis for reestablishing some kind of central authority.
- “Warlordism.” In this pattern there is an absence of significant central authority, but there are effective regional overlords who have a degree of effectiveness and/or legitimacy sufficient to operate ‘mini-states.’ Such states generally have regular revenues and armed forces. In this case the team should identify the main warlords, their sources of support and resources, and whether there are possible bases for alliances or a specific actor capable of restoring national unity.
- “Civil War.” Where there is ongoing unstable and violent competition between competing groups, each in control of certain portions of national territory, population, it is crucial to identify means by which a cease fire might be arranged and maintained. In the absence of minimal stability, it is difficult to pursue any further policies to reduce fragility.

In such cases, it is likely that warring parties have great distrust of each other. It may therefore be useful to identify third parties or temporary institutions that can serve as ‘neutral ground’ through which parties can cooperate in laying the foundations for a new social order.

PATTERNS	HOW TO IDENTIFY	MAIN ACTORS
1. Anarchy	Complete absence of significant central or region	Groups or actors who might serve as the basis for reestablishing some kind of central authority
2. Warlordism	Absence of significant central authority, warlords operate ‘mini-states’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main warlords • Sources of support for warlords • Actor capable of restoring national unity
3. Civil War	Ongoing unstable and violent competition between competing groups, each in control of certain portions of national territory/ population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main competing groups and their constituencies/ sources of support • Groups/ actors who benefit from conflict • Actor capable of encouraging cease-fire

3. Patterns for Recovering States

States that are recovering from violent conflicts or sudden regime change are often (but not always) fragile. Their governments likely lack the resources of established regimes, their legitimacy may be questioned by some social groups, and the economy and provision of services often have to be built up from very low levels. Recovery may involve any of several different patterns depending on how conflicts ended.

PATTERNS	HOW TO IDENTIFY	MAIN ACTORS
1. External Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent conflict was interrupted through intervention from non-domestic forces • A regime was suddenly changed through intervention of external forces? • Sudden regime change introduced violent conflict, necessitating external forces?? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who intervened and who remains • Actors and groups allied with external forces • Actors and groups opposed to external forces • Actors and groups needed to cooperate and to establish domestic authority
2. Negotiated Settlement	Violent conflict recently resolved through a negotiated peace settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main parties to settlement • External actors
3. Clear Winner	Violent conflict resolved, a clear winner has emerged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main winners and losers • Newly emerged institutions

4. Rebels Contained	Conflict is ceased through a fairly stable stand-off, where rebels stay in one region and do not threaten areas controlled by central regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government parties and their constituencies/ sources of support • Rebel groups and their constituencies/ sources of support
5. New Regime	Revolution, protest or reform creates an essentially new regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actors in new government • Resources and bases of support for new regime • Groups and elites necessary for new regime to be effective and legitimate

ANNEX 2- From USAID Fragile States Strategy: Illustrative Programmatic Options for Vulnerable States and States in Crisis, Tables 2 and 3

Table 2. Illustrative Programmatic Options for Vulnerable States

Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, support reforms within government institutions, particularly those responsible for the rule of law, core social services, and food security. • Support reformers outside government, particularly those advocating improvements in security, human rights, core services, food security, natural resource management, and anticorruption. • Strengthen oversight institutions, such as legislative and parliamentary committees. • Encourage formal means of political competition, for example, by supporting free and fair elections and other political processes. • Encourage private sector/NGO/political party reform alliances that include the perspectives of traditional identity groups. • Develop the professionalism of the media, particularly in investigative journalism, and expand access to information.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster institutional and policy development that promotes economic growth and effective management of natural resources. • Improve revenue generation/tax systems and expenditure.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform and build the technical and administrative capacity of those parts of the civil service responsible for economic management, core services, and food security. • Assist the government to ensure the provision of public health and basic education.
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and strengthen civilian control of the military. • Establish a capable police force, particularly at the community level.* • Strengthen courts and other forums for resolving disputes.

* According to FAA Sec. 660 (b) (6), USAID may only do this type of work in a postconflict environment for the restoration of host-nation infrastructure. Other exceptions to 660 are fairly limited.

Table 3. Illustrative Programmatic Options for States in Crisis

<p>In crisis and conflict</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver humanitarian assistance that responds to basic needs, focuses aid on victims, and does not undercut local capacity or distort the local economy. • Establish basic security and protect human rights. • Support job creation, income generation, and school enrollment where possible, but with a special focus on underserved populations and IDPs. • Increase governance and peacemaking capacity within key groups to strengthen the likelihood of a shorter, more lasting recovery period.
<p>In early recovery and postconflict*</p>	<p><i>Political</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support transitional justice and transitional governance arrangements at all levels, as well as transitional elections and political processes. • Advance a national dialogue and tangible progress toward the country's future, the reconstitution of society, and implications for the future (new constitutions, legal reform, structure of government, symbols of national unity). • Support the establishment of a functional national government, as well as subnational and local-level governance entities. • Assist independent indigenous media outlets to provide unbiased reporting, expand access to information, and reinforce messages of peace and reconciliation. <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on reviving the economy, with particular attention to basic infrastructure, job creation, income generation, early market reform, natural resource management, independent central banks, and tax codes. • Distribute seeds, fertilizers, and tools, provide related training, and rehabilitate farm-to-market roads. • Advance transparency of resources, particularly in countries rich in natural resources and where profits from these resources are used to fuel conflict. <p><i>Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintegrate or resettle IDPs into viable communities, provide protection and care for children separated from their families, and reunite such families. • Establish basic health and education services, with particular attention to previously underserved populations. <p><i>Security</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the establishment of public security and security sector reform, including demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants and establishing civilian oversight and community-level policing. • Monitor respect for human rights and support abuse-prevention initiatives.

* The Center for Strategic International Studies' publication *Winning the Peace* provides a comprehensive framework of programmatic priorities and options for postconflict reconstruction. Robert C. Orr, ed., *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-conflict Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2004).

Annex 3: Conceptual Guidance on Defining Strategy and Content of Key Program Priorities (Task 4)

Defining the strategy and content for these key program priorities involves the steps in the text box for Task 4. Several conceptual points of guidance are involved. First, as noted in the text box, the principal target of programs is to change the behavior of key actors involved in the most important patterns of fragility and resilience. To change behavior we aim to change incentives—governance arrangements--affecting that behavior, something that involves important social processes and not so much technical content. Moreover, the process involved in creating this change will move over time, change general direction and perhaps even reverse direction for a time and, via interaction with all parts of the vortex of fragility, produce, respond to and change events as well as the behavior of target actors. We will be a part of the action. Thus, our strategy and programs will have to account for this dynamic with flexibility, resources, patience, and the absorption and application of continuous learning and insight. USAID will become involved in a continuous, nuanced learning process, from the inception of C/FACTS reporting on a country all the way through the program monitoring and evaluation phase of the implementation of a fragile states strategy and programs.

Second, although USAID and the US Government aim to support and reward countries with good development policies and performance, most specifically via the work of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID's fragile states strategy and program priorities embody a different relationship between governance and aid. Namely, that more, not less, aid will be used in these countries to improve their governance. We will have more of both governance and aid. Fragile states will get more aid because they are losing their capacity to govern, not because their governance performance is strong, or even satisfactory. Our strategy and program priorities are thus pressed to succeed—to improve governance and thus change key patterns of fragility or bolster patterns of resilience—even though we will be at work in some of the globe's weakest “development” environments. The challenge is, in our analysis of fragility and shaping of program responses, to know enough and do enough to improve governance sharply in these fragile settings.

Third, the crafting and implementation of programs to address fragility is freighted with extra requirements to ensure success. Of course, we want to ensure USAID programs do nothing that the weak, fragile state can do from within and that our efforts are clearly empowering of the resilience in the society. Even this may be a difficult goal when the absorptive capacity of the society is especially low and easily overwhelmed in some places just by the help we offer. When multiple patterns of fragility are in view, our programs will have to change the behavior of a number of key actors or groups simultaneously to gain traction in reversing fragility. The several program priorities in the fragile states strategy for this country will have to be calibrated over time, space, key actors and patterns of interaction to aggregate activities and results—i.e., to reinforce each other, to add momentum to changes in fragility or resilience, and to avoid inter-program conflicts. Thus, a time sequence, including monitoring impacts over time, is important. Likewise, coordination with internal champions and other donors will be needed to ensure transparency and sufficiency.

Fourth, our program priorities should reflect the divisions, connections and other high priority information developed in Tasks 1, 2 and 3. Where the mapping of key actors (see Figure 4) shows these divisions, USAID programs will need to account for them. If the divisions are not well enough understood, other assessments such as the CAF, may be needed. Likewise, connections between actors, groups and organizations across ethnic, income, or religious divisions or across groups in conflict are important to understand and may be crucial to programming. Other sensitive factors that need to be accounted for are also familiar to various USAID offices-- inappropriate legitimization of one group or actor, implicit distributional effects of USAID programs that conflict with processes of behavior change, processes or funding that inappropriately reinforce status quo patterns of fragility, processes that seriously destabilize geographic or population segments, actions that reduce protection of disadvantaged groups. At the same time the assessment team tries to avoid all these pitfalls in establishing program priorities, it is explicitly tasked with creating and supporting change (changes in behavior) sufficient to draw the country away from fragility and into transformational development. To try to catalyze and compress such change into a fragile environment will create a variety of unanticipated consequences, destabilizing changes among key actors and groups, and conflict between winners and losers. Because the current rules enabling the key patterns of fragility identified are usually embedded as norms of behavior and because political power frames most current rules, the process of changing the status quo exhibited in key patterns of fragility is likely to be fraught with resistance and even conflict. Both program priorities and how they are carried out will have to account carefully for both sides of this equation.

Fifth, as an in-country presence donor, USAID will become part of the inside story of change. This may be the principal value we can add in fostering the tough changes needed in a fragile state, the intelligent and sustained presence we bring that many other donors and interested parties do not. Our program priorities should reflect this attribute and enable us to draw effectively on local resources, knowledge, and key actors to fuel the process of change agreed on in our fragile states strategy and programs. Our presence should also ensure our flexibility in pursuing the change process—the different behavior of key actors at the heart of the country’s fragility.