



USAID
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Transition Strategy Guidance

Country Development Cooperation Strategies

I. Overview

Today an estimated 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by repeated cycles of violence and insecurity. Millions more struggle to live stable lives in countries characterized by extreme economic, social, or political fragility. USAID's support has historically played a catalytic role in these contexts, helping countries and regions throughout the world to address the underlying causes of conflict or fragility in order to make the transition from conflict to durable peace, from fragility to stability, and to progress toward sustainable development. Based on this Agency experience and the changing nature of global development, USAID's approach to strategic planning, project design, implementation and evaluation in these contexts is evolving. Moreover, there is an increased awareness of and attention to the unique requirements of effective responses in conflict-affected and fragile states. The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (2010), the Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review (2010), conclusions of the New Deal for International Engagement in Fragile States at the last High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, and an evaluation of progress toward the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals all point to the need for special approaches to strategic planning and implementation in these environments.

In response to this need, USAID is mandated to operationalize key elements of the PPD, QDDR, and USAID's Policy Framework to "build sustainable peace by resolving underlying grievances at both the individual and community levels and helping to build government institutions" that can provide "basic but effective services."¹ USAID's Transition Strategy Guidance operationalizes this mandate, and represents a new phase in the Agency's approach to strategic planning in conflict-affected and fragile states. It is explicitly designed for countries where full application of USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Guidance is not possible due to factors such as the lack of a legitimate host country government counterpart or rapidly evolving political, economic, or social dynamics that make it difficult or impossible to achieve sustainable development outcomes during a five year period. It is intended to assist USAID Missions and operating units in these contexts to develop and implement effective strategies that address the underlying causes of fragility or conflict to help create an environment in which sustainable development outcomes can be achieved.

Transition Strategies are a subset of USAID's CDCS, and are the basis for implementing USAID's Program Cycle, Agency-level policies and strategies, and budgeting. To this end, the Transition Strategy Guidance (TS Guidance) requires USAID Missions to define and focus on a measurable transition goal that can be either advanced or achieved through focused transition objectives during a 12 to 36 month timeframe. This goal should catalyze a transition from one set of circumstances to another with a view to creating the conditions for sustainable development. Ultimately a transition strategy (TS) should help create the conditions that allow legitimate host country governments and citizens to work together in achieving sustainable development objectives. At the TS mid-point and end of the TS period, the mission will review progress toward the TS goal and objectives, and will decide whether to extend the TS, revise it, develop a new TS, or move to a full five-year CDCS.

A TS explicitly defines the nature of a particular country's transition based on deeper political, economic, and social dynamics. It encourages missions to identify and apply the most useful and up-to-date tools to develop their TS and to inform one another using USAID's knowledge management systems and its new learning platform, [ProgramNet](#), which may be accessed from the [PPL Web site](#). Like the CDCS Guidance, it seeks to facilitate Agency-wide consensus on the nature of the transition, strategic focus, and budget alignment throughout the strategic planning, project implementation, and evaluation process. It helps USAID Missions effectively apply relevant USG and Agency policies, strategies, and guidelines such as the [National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security](#), the [USG Guidelines on Security Sector Reform](#), and [USAID's Policy on the Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency](#). To this end, the TS Guidance defines those policies and strategies

¹ For more information about 'Preventing and Responding to Crisis and Conflict,' please reference the QDDR: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf>.

that missions are *required to consider* while providing a framework for USAID Missions to make strategic choices together with key partners. It builds upon and operationalizes relevant USG policies and strategies including USAID's [Fragile States Strategy](#) and the *New Deal for International Engagement in Fragile States - Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (A list of current and future policies and strategies can be found at: <http://inside.usaid.gov/PPL/offices/p/psptt.cfm>). Finally, the TS Guidance is based on the premise that a strategic, dynamic combination of defense, diplomacy, and development interventions can help build peace, stability, state legitimacy, human capacity, and effective sustainable governance institutions and systems in each region of the world.

II. Transition Strategy Country Criteria

The following criteria will be applied at the outset of the strategic planning process to determine whether a CDCS or TS is suitable for a particular country, entity, or sub-national area. These criteria will be applied by the mission, regional bureau, Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL), Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM), Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau (DCHA), and other bureaus during the Phase I Consultation of the strategic planning process (please see below for more information on the two phases of the TS Process). A full application of the criteria should lead to a determination that the mission will develop either a TS or a CDCS. If consensus is not reached, the Assistant Administrator for the relevant regional bureau will decide whether a TS or CDCS will be implemented based on the criteria and any other relevant considerations.

A TS is *not* intended for those states on a stable development trajectory – these countries should complete the CDCS process. CDCS countries should note that the TS Guidance may be applied to sub-national areas of a country where a mission is implementing a CDCS. For CDCS countries that choose to include a Transition Objective in the CDCS RF, the TO timeframe may be the same as, or shorter than, the five year CDCS period. USAID has learned that TSs are appropriate in sub-national areas of otherwise stable countries. The Karamoja region of Uganda is an example of a sub-national region where a type of TS and program has been applied in the larger context of a CDCS.

In sum the TS Guidance is designed for conflict-affected or fragile states *in transition* from one set of circumstances to another. A TS should be developed if one or more of the following criteria apply:

(1) A five-year CDCS is not possible or does not make sense. A TS is more appropriate than a CDCS in environments where a viable host country partner does not exist due to conflict or state collapse, there is a lack of government legitimacy, the country is destabilizing rapidly, or the development context is expected to change dramatically.

(2) A change in conditions or circumstances on the ground is needed to create an enabling environment for sustainable development: the strategy therefore hinges on a transition from one set of conditions to another. A political, economic, social, or post-conflict transition is underway or could be catalyzed by USAID assistance in partnership with other actors. The transition goal may be *progress* toward a defined end-state, such as achieving the milestones in a peace or reconciliation process, a political transition plan, or set of targeted reforms (such as those applied in Kosovo in 2001), or *attainment* of the desired end state such as establishing a new country or unity government (for example, the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011).

(3) The environment requires a blend of immediate relief and stabilization assistance in combination with medium-term support for institutional, systems, and human capacity development to lay the groundwork for sustainable development. This approach recognizes that transition processes are not linear. Immediate humanitarian relief, community stabilization, security

sector reform, and medium term institutional and human capacity development efforts may all coexist in a TS environment. Peace-building, state-building interventions, or support for political transition efforts may be underway in different parts of the state simultaneously or sequentially. The overarching objective is often to simultaneously resolve conflict at the national or sub-national levels, consolidate peace, and strengthen or rebuild a legitimate, functioning, and increasingly effective state - accountable and responsive to its citizens. It is worth noting that for transition environments, the *process* and *outcome* may be equally important to advancing or achieving the transition goal. For example, *the process* of working with stakeholders in a peace negotiation to define the roles and responsibilities of a new transition government may itself be a conflict-resolution tool. Missions operating in this context should be cognizant of and responsive to Relief to Development Transition² (R2DT) guidance and requirements of the annual budget build as managed by BRM and the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F).

(4) The country context requires contingency or scenario planning due to the likelihood of a rapid change in the environment requiring resources to be redirected in response to new or renewed crisis, conflict, or rapid state deterioration (or improvement). A TS allows for explicit reference to two or more strategic planning scenarios and related contingency plans based on analysis of the evolving country (or sub-national area) context. Specific triggers or indicators that define a shift from one scenario to another must be defined if alternative scenarios are included in the TS including an explanation of how the mission would redirect resources and prioritize interventions in each scenario. Revised budgets and performance measures for each scenario are not required until the mission is in that scenario, although experience shows that it is good to have these on hand. Such environments require flexible implementation mechanisms and adaptive project approaches.

When considering a TS for complex crisis environments, missions must apply additional criteria. A TS will be effective in complex crisis environments when the following conditions are present:

- (1) The environment allows for USAID to have a mission presence on the ground;
- (2) A strategic planning time horizon exists whereby a TS – which is the basis for project design and budgeting – can be implemented;
- (3) There is *evidence* that a viable transition process from one set of conditions to another is underway or may be catalyzed by USAID assistance; and
- (4) USG and international policy is defined and allows for USAID to proceed in developing a meaningful Transition Goal that can be advanced or achieved.

In some environments a stabilization and/or recovery plan may be more appropriate for the following reasons:

- (1) The political, social, or economic environment remains so fluid that strategic planning for the minimum 12 month time frame would not be feasible;
- (2) Critical macro policy and security issues remain unresolved; or
- (3) USAID has no mission presence on the ground due to security issues or other concerns.

² For more information on the Relief to Development Transition (R2DT) guidance and the questions missions may consider when transitioning from a relief context to longer-term sustainable development, please reference the Mission Resource Request (MRR) Technical Guidance: http://rm.m.state.sbu/sites/bp/BP_Collaboration/PPE/Systems/MRR/Application%20Reference%20Library/FY%202014%20Mission%20Resource%20Request%20Guidance.pdf

III. USAID Lessons Learned: Considerations in Developing an Effective TS

The TS Guidance reflects two decades of USAID and USG experience designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating strategic plans and programs in conflict-affected and fragile states. USAID has supported a successful transition from conflict or crisis to peace and recovery in every region of the world. From Kosovo to Liberia, from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Nepal, and Timor-Leste to Colombia and Central America the Agency has provided assistance that made a critical difference in managing and resolving violent conflict and responding to crises at the regional, national, and sub-national levels.

Specifically, USAID has provided technical and logistical assistance to establish and implement viable peace accords, and enabled national actors to successfully consolidate the gains made through the peace process. USAID has also provided assistance to mitigate, manage and respond to natural and man-made disasters in each region of the world, supporting the transition from crisis to recovery in countries ranging from the Horn of Africa to Haiti. In these environments USAID has pre-positioned resources and collaborated closely with its partners to maintain the recovery process while simultaneously defining the next set of milestones to be achieved. USAID's experience also shows that the impact of repeated natural disasters can be mitigated by effective strategies and programs to improve resiliency and early warning systems, especially in fragile states where public infrastructure as well as disaster prevention and response systems are particularly weak. Moreover, through its successes and failures, USAID has gleaned significant lessons that the TS Guidance seeks to operationalize.³

Over time, by studying these lessons, three types of transitions distinguishable by their key characteristics have emerged that are instructive in developing effective assistance strategies in conflict-affected or fragile states. This guidance is not intended to oversimplify (or over complicate) the nature of a transition. Rather, this brief discussion of three types of transition is intended to facilitate a useful analytic process based on evidence to define the transition context and develop a meaningful, measurable TS Results Framework that can be either advanced or achieved within a specific period of time. This approach is intended to minimize the chances that strategic interventions will be ineffective because they are not targeted to resolving the key constraints to sustainable development that persist in the transition context. For example, by using this suggested and optional approach, a mission may decide not to invest in long-term institutional capacity development with national-level ministries in a state that is characterized by illegitimacy, insecurity, and social unrest without first addressing these constraints.

Transition Types: Key Characteristics and Effective Program Focus

- (1) Transitions from Conflict to Peace.** These transitions are characterized by the need for support to a peace process, peace-accord implementation, consolidation of gains made during the peace process (more than half of all peace agreements fail within the first 10 years of signature) and effective state building. A TS in these contexts will not be effective without a corollary focus on improving security through disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), as well as establishing a system of civilian control over the military and security forces that ensures adequate support including payment and appropriate training. The timing for strengthening or decreasing peacekeeping and development resources is equally critical: the “post-withdrawal” period as peacekeeping forces and international community resources scale-down must be carefully planned and managed.

- (2) Transitions in Fragile States that are Stabilizing/Improving.** These transitions include peaceful transitions from authoritarian rule or those that result from a sudden event that catalyzes long-desired political, social or economic reforms. They are characterized by a transformative political,

³ For detailed lessons and case studies, please see the PPL website: <http://inside.usaid.gov/PPL/offices/spp/index.cfm>.

social or economic reform process that has gained momentum or new sources of support. TSs in these states have proven effective when focused on supporting the reform process and sources of resiliency, including legitimate leaders, public officials, private interests and activists who can consolidate and build upon progress, democratic and economic institutions that enjoy credibility and are able to deliver on the promised reforms, and independent civil society and media that can hold government accountable.

- (3) **Transitions in Fragile States that are Deteriorating.** These transitions are characterized by evolving social, political, economic, and security dynamics that undermine stability and the social contract that exists between the government and citizens. Support to Transitions in these states requires sharp, objective analysis of the sources of fragility as well as an assessment of the drivers of rising conflict risks that likely accompany this type of deterioration - and options for preventing or slowing continued destabilization while simultaneously defining and implementing solutions to catalyze a transition process.

IV. The Transition Strategy Process

The strategic planning process for transition countries is similar to the CDCS process, but is shorter and designed to facilitate even sharper focus on the transition goal and objectives. The primary difference is an expedited strategic planning and review process and fewer, more specific requirements. The regional bureau, in consultation with the field-based operating unit, will determine the timeline for this process during the Initial TS Consultation including timelines for the required core analysis (e.g. Conflict Assessment or Democracy, Rights and Governance Assessment), the RF review, and strategy approval. This timeline must be appropriate to the transition context (e.g. a TS with a 12 month implementation timeframe should necessarily have a shorter planning process than a 36-month TS). All USAID stakeholders will be expected to prioritize engagement in the TS process to expedite review and approval and to ensure its continuing relevance in a dynamic country (or sub-national) context.

Overall, there are **two phases** to the TS process involving an iterative dialogue between the field and Washington. Like the CDCS process, each phase includes a DVC event and deliverable. It is anticipated that developing a TS will require a maximum of six months in order to be relevant in the country context.

Phase 0 Interagency Pre-briefing (optional)

A deliberate interagency approach to foreign assistance in the transition period will prevent mixed positions and messages that can lead to confusion with the host country government, the media, implementing partners, and other donors. A unified USG analysis and shared recommendations for foreign assistance may benefit all USG actors. Knowledge of all foreign assistance accounts that are active in the country, present and future funding levels that are likely, strategies or plans that inform the use of those resources, how those accounts can be applied to advance the transition, and knowledge of available USAID contingency resources should inform a USAID TS. For example, USAID may find that Department of Defense (DoD) resources can be used for analytical efforts such as a “governance and security survey” which combines a “3D” approach to data collection, economizes USAID funding, and allows for more regular surveys in a dynamic situation. Moreover, a pro-active approach to ensure USG platforms collect information of relevance to USAID decision-making and resource allocation may boost strategy effectiveness and responsiveness.

Phase 1 – Initial Consultations

Marking the start of the strategic planning process, the Phase 1 Consultation includes a dialogue between Washington and the field to define policy and resource parameters, the development context, required assessments, and the strategic planning timeline. During the Consultation Phase, the regional bureau and mission (or operating unit) will apply the TS criteria (see Section II) to determine whether a TS or CDCS is appropriate for the given country context. The regional bureau, PPL, BRM, pillar bureaus, and independent

offices will then define resource and policy parameters, and consider any relevant Presidential Initiatives or Congressional directives and interests as well as DoD activities and plans to decide whether and what additional country- (or region) specific resource guidance may be warranted. During Phase 1 of the TS development process, customized OE and staffing guidance will be discussed. The Bureau for Resource Management and Office of Human Resources must issue mission-specific guidance on operational and staffing requirements.

The primary event during this phase is a digital video conference (DVC) co-chaired by the Mission Director (or equivalent) and Regional Bureau AA or DAA that includes PPL and BRM as well as pillar bureaus. The mission makes a presentation that includes the following key elements:

- A review of the TS criteria and confirmation that a TS will be done rather than a CDCS. This review must be based on the TS Guidance criteria, and supported by relevant economic, financial, social, political, governance, demographic, and security indices that characterize the development context. If there is no consensus, the regional bureau AA will make the final decision within two weeks of the DVC;
- A review of applicable USG and USAID policies and strategies in the context of U.S. foreign assistance and national security policy considerations; including the [USAID Policy Framework for 2011-2015](#), [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#), the *Presidential Study Directive-10 on Mass Atrocities* (PSD-10), the *Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency Policy*, and the *National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security*;⁴
- The obstacles to sustainable development in the given country context. This may include specific challenges, priorities, and institutional strengths and weaknesses, and a preliminary assessment of the sources of fragility as well as resiliency;
- Resource parameters, and any policy or resource considerations such as earmarks and directives.
- The proposed core assessment tools (see below) such as the Conflict Assessment Framework or Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Assessment Framework. Supplemental analyses, assessments, evaluations, and other evidence that will inform the strategic planning process must also be defined, whether initiated or completed;
- A proposed timeline for completing the TS, including assessments; and
- Requests for guidance and/or technical assistance from Washington.

During the DVC, representatives from USAID and other Washington bureaus and offices, including Initiative owners, will respond to each of these points and raise any considerations such as closer alignment with an Agency policy or strategy. The Regional Bureau AA/DAA provides feedback and guides the discussion. BRM provides initial budget parameters. Interagency input and participation is strongly recommended. The dialogue is intended to establish a common context and timeframe for developing and reviewing the RF and full TS during Phase II. Once established, the TS process timeline must change as little as possible so that those involved in the process may plan their work, travel, consultation, and procurement schedules accordingly.

A TS requires a core conflict, fragile states, or political analysis: A TS must be primarily based on a core analysis that reflects Agency consensus on the underlying causes of fragility and sources of resiliency, as well as the primary actors and dynamics in the transition process. This analysis must be grounded in evidence and reliable data to the maximum extent possible. As required in the Automated Directives System (ADS), missions are also required to undertake gender, tropical rain forest, and bio-diversity assessments. The mission or OU may draw evidence from third-party assessments and/or evaluations, or conduct other analysis to complement the core analysis, including from government sources, civil society, the private sector,

⁴ Some TS Countries may already be designated as a priority for implementation of one or more of these policies, strategies, and action plans. This will be taken into account in developing the TS RF.

and other donors. Atrocities prevention must also be included and addressed, if relevant, in the TS. This does not preclude sector-based or other types of assessments and evaluation that may inform the TS. The core analysis is a tool to build consensus among all USAID stakeholders on the underlying sources of conflict or fragility so that resources and projects can be coordinated and focused accordingly. The type of analytic tool to be used will be determined during the Phase I Consultation.

Assessments and related tools include:

- *Core assessment tools (Required):* USAID's *Conflict Assessment Framework*; *Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Assessment Framework*; or similar strategic planning tool. This core analysis may be informed by the findings of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), or any of the toolkits from the series produced by DCHA's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) that provide guidance on conflict-sensitive programming across multiple sectors.⁵
- *Country-wide:* conflict vulnerability; democracy, human rights, and governance; economic constraints; political economy; institutional capacity; disaster risk; social soundness; human capital.
- *Sector-specific or sub-sector:* democracy and governance; human rights including trafficking in persons; economic growth; education; health; rule of law; climate change; food security.
- *Cross-cutting:* youth; vulnerable populations; marginalized populations; persons with disabilities.
- *Other:* donor engagement; aid effectiveness; private sector engagement.

Analytic tools and samples are available on ProgramNet (<http://programnet.usaid.gov>).

Consultation Note: The second deliverable of Phase I, in addition to the mission DVC presentation, is a TS Consultation Note that documents the DVC decisions, including country context (TS or CDCS), applicability of USG and Agency strategies or policies, the core analysis and any supplemental assessments, resource parameters, and the TS timeline. The regional bureau records the DVC dialogue and clears the resulting Consultation Note with the mission or field unit and PPL. The Consultation Note is distributed to the field and Washington bureaus and offices, and Phase 2 begins.

Phase 2 – TS Results Framework, Narrative, Review, and Approval

The second phase of the TS process requires an evidenced-based Results Framework with performance indicators, an RF narrative and a prioritized resource table. It allows for a streamlined review and approval process. This TS RF will serve as the development section of the Integrated Country Strategies. The final TS consists of a RF and narrative (15-20 pages not including annexes), including the eight sections described below in Section VI.

In order to develop the RF, a mission undertaking a TS will conduct a core analysis and is required to consult with partners and stakeholders to the maximum extent possible. At this stage, missions (and operating units) should think proactively about how women and girls can be engaged, empowered, and protected in order to promote better outcomes in countries and communities confronting crisis, conflict, or insecurity. Based on the resulting evidence and analysis, the mission develops and submits the completed TS RF and narrative to the regional bureau for review and distribution to appropriate bureaus and offices. From the submitted responses, the regional bureau prepares and submits to the mission a TS draft Issues Paper, cleared by PPL that prioritizes and summarizes significant issues only. The mission and Washington then hold a DVC to be co-chaired by the Mission Director and Regional Bureau AA or DAA, with participation from PPL, BRM, relevant pillar bureaus and other offices to discuss the draft TS Issues Paper. Following the DVC, the regional bureau prepares and transmits to the mission a final TS Issues Paper (cleared by PPL) to guide the mission in finalizing the TS.

⁵ http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/toolkits.html

Based on the final TS Issues Paper, the mission finalizes the TS RF and narrative. The mission submits the TS to the regional bureau for approval and PPL clearance. Additional review meetings will be held on a case-by-case basis to ensure all the significant issues are addressed adequately.

Disseminate Publicly: Within one month of TS approval, the mission prepares a public version that removes all budget, procurement, and sensitive information (such information could be included in Sensitive But Unclassified sections of the TS or in a TS annex). The mission submits both the final internal and public versions to the regional bureau, PPL, and the Development Experience Clearinghouse. The regional bureau will post the public version of the TS on USAID's website. The TS will be provided to Congress and should be made widely available to host country partners and other donors engaged in the Transition environment. The public version also provides the basis for dialogue with host country partners and other stakeholders as the mission moves forward rapidly in project design.

V. Transition Strategy Structure and Content

The TS should be between 10 and 30 pages including annexes, although the most important consideration is to be clear and concise. The TS must include the following key sections (executive summary is optional):

1. The Nature of the Transition (Context, Characteristics and Dynamics)
2. The Transition Goal and Objectives in Context
3. The Transition Hypothesis, which hinges on a theory of change or defined pathway from one set of circumstances to another; scenarios may be included here
4. The Results Framework - Transition Goal, Objectives, Intermediate Results, and Performance Indicators
5. A System for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
6. Program Resources and Priorities
7. Management Requirements
8. Timeline

1. The Nature of the Transition – Context, Characteristics and Dynamics: The transition context description is based on the core analysis (assessment), the type of transition and the definition of its characteristics. The typology above may be useful, but is not required. The mission defines the nature of the transition and its goal including goal-level performance measures, and explains how and why USAID assistance and interventions will support a transition from one set of circumstances to another leading toward an enabling environment for sustainable development. This section defines what the transition process will entail and the outcome or result that will be either advanced or achieved in collaboration with USAID partners. This section should also define the overarching U.S. foreign policy and national security considerations that will be either advanced or achieved by the TS.

2. The Transition Goal and Objectives in Context: This section explains the causal relationship between the Transition Goal and the Transition Objectives (TOs) that support the advancement or achievement of the TS goal. The TOs (and the entire RF) are based primarily on the core analysis (assessment). The TS TOs should define and explain the prioritized interventions. The TS should explicitly reference the evidence, evaluations, and completed analyses as these pertain to the TOs, IRs, sub-IRs and performance measures at each level. Using qualitative and quantitative data whenever possible, the mission may want to consider the following issues given the transition context:

Transition Contexts	Consider the Following Issues
Transitions in Conflict-Affected Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of crisis or drivers of conflict, destabilization or state fragility; • Sources of resiliency, conflict mitigation, management or resolution, and resources for recovery and/or stabilization; • Status of peace-building, state-building and/or or political transition processes; • Security status and the role of armed forces; • Institutional and governance system capacities at the national and sub-national levels, and how these affect state capacity to fulfill state functions and respond to public expectations or demand; • The role of women, youth, minorities and marginalized groups with respect to conflict drivers and resiliencies, and the nature and extent of USG and other support for these processes; • Current donor policy and division of labor; • Host country or transition authority’s contribution; • Facilitating factors and obstacles to equitable resource distribution, particularly as this relates to conflict or destabilization/instability; • Social and development indicators and trends; • Human rights violations and protection.
Transitions in Fragile States (Deteriorating or Improving)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating factors and obstacles to inclusive economic growth and democratic governance; the extent of “essential” governance; • Partnerships to advance the TS goals and development; • Opportunities to strengthen actors who will advance the transition goal and objectives, and to minimize the role of “spoilers”; • Constituencies for reform, or those who support the transition process and the actors who do not support the process (who “wins” and who “loses”) and the resources they have to advance the transition or create obstacles (depending on the type of transition); • The political economy of resource management and distribution (human, natural, and financial); • The status of security sector reform, rule of law, the justice system and law enforcement (Do all citizens enjoy physical security, and are human and civil rights equally protected?); • Social conditions including respect for human rights, social engagement or marginalization of different identity groups (religious, ethnic, socio-economic, etc.), and demographic dynamics which are often closely related to the drivers of conflict, instability and overall state fragility; • Role of women, youth, minorities and marginalized groups with respect to conflict drivers and resiliencies, and the nature and extent of USG and other support for these processes; • Enabling environment for civil society and the private sector including legal and policy frameworks and their application.
Chronic Crisis and Resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are aspects of resilience that missions might consider as they strategically plan in these contexts, including the ability of people, communities, countries and their systems to mitigate, adapt and recover from shocks and stresses so they can manage crisis and continue to develop. Missions may also want to consider how to most effectively layer, integrate and sequence humanitarian and development programs with the goal of creating long term resilience, while working in partnership with the international community to support country-led plans. Formal Agency policy and program guidance related to resilience is expected in October 2012.

A TS must focus on advancing or achieving a Transition Goal and Transition Objectives. Once the TS Goal is defined, supporting objectives and intermediate results may be designed to allow flexibility in determining the appropriate *means* of achieving the transition goal during project design and implementation, but the strategy should be very focused on either advancing or achieving the transition goal established by the core analysis. As outlined in the USAID Policy Framework for 2011-2015 and the PPD-6, USAID must be selective about where we invest our resources to maximize our impact. We also must ensure resources are large enough to have a meaningful, measurable impact. When focused effectively, experience shows that USAID and USG resources can make a critical difference between war or peace, a collapsed or functioning state, and political turmoil or stability. In developing the TS, the mission is therefore required to focus strategically at the level of the transition goal to ensure that all program interventions are aligned to advance this goal. Missions retain programmatic flexibility at the TO and IR levels to allow adaptability to changing circumstances. Please refer to the [CDCS Guidance Version 3](#) for more details on focus and selectivity.

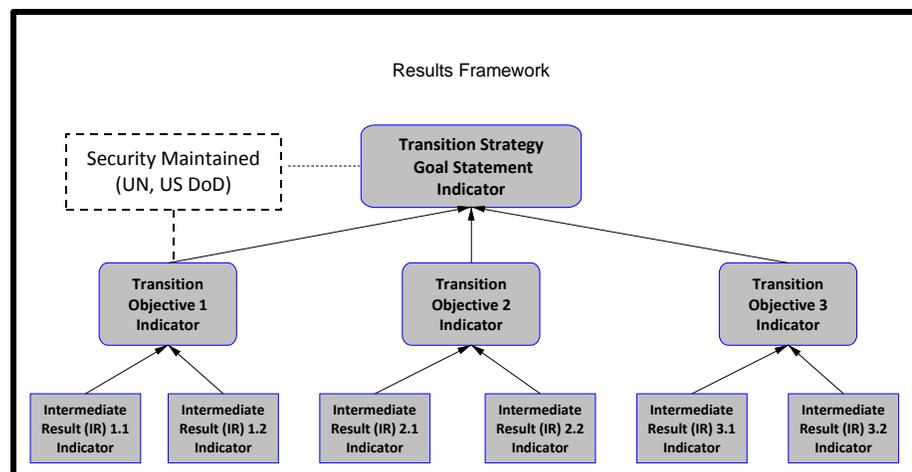
3. Transition Hypothesis: The TS is based upon a sound development hypothesis that describes the theory of change, logic, and causal relationships that will advance the Transition Goal and create the conditions for the country to move into a sustainable development trajectory. It is a short narrative that explains the causal relationships between each layer of results, upwards from the sub-Intermediate Results (sub-IR), to the IRs, the TOs, and the TS Goal. The hypothesis and its underlying assumptions should be periodically examined and evaluated to assess, learn, and adapt after TS approval during implementation.

4. Results Framework: The RF is a graphical representation of the transition hypothesis and includes the TS Goal, TOs, IRs, sub-IRs, and performance indicators. The RF should be presented based on the design format below and be supported by accompanying narrative that addresses how USAID, working closely with appropriate authorities and non-government actors (including the private sector, multilateral organizations, the Department of State (DoS), the DoD, and other USG agencies) can best resolve the specific development problem(s) to advance the transition process. The RF builds upon opportunities identified by the mission, based on evidence, to either advance or achieve its TOs and TS Goal. The TS should indicate how these results will be measured and over what timeframe. Results that are more short-term in nature (e.g. related to humanitarian and/or stabilization outcomes) should be clearly linked, as appropriate, with those aimed at sustaining longer-term progress and results (e.g. institution building/state-building outcomes). Assistance efforts aimed at atrocity prevention, protection, and supporting women’s engagement in transition processes should be built into the TS RF and the program cycle where possible.

Overall the TS RF should depict the transition hypothesis along with relevant assumptions – for example, the role of the transition authority or impact of negotiated settlements, and critical assumptions related to commitments that need to be fulfilled for the transition process to progress. A series of benchmarks or milestones should be identified to evaluate progress, as well as “triggers” that indicate a shift to an alternate scenario (e.g. dramatic backsliding toward renewed conflict or increased fragility).

A review will be held mid-way through TS implementation, at a minimum, to review and assess progress toward the TS Goal based on these benchmarks.

Finally, where applicable, the RF must illustrate how other USG agency efforts contribute to the results.



In the example below, the transition RF includes reference to a critical assumption (depicted at right in a box with dotted line). It also includes a Transition Objective necessary to achieve the Transition Goal that is carried out by a non-USAID actor (which could be the U.S. military or another critical partner in promoting stability).

TS Goal: The TS Goal is the highest-level impact to be advanced or achieved by USAID in partnership with other government or non-government actors and other development partners within the TS timeframe, and must reflect the unique circumstances of the transition. The roles of USAID and its partners in helping to achieve the TS Goal must be described in the RF narrative, including the specific contributions of government and non-government actors, the political opposition, if relevant, civil society, the private sector, DoS, the DoD, other USG agencies, and other donors as appropriate. The mission is responsible for progressing toward the TS Goal as it advances toward achieving the TOs.

Transition Strategy Goal Statements 2000-2012

The following examples show approved TS Goals linked to peace-building and state-building following implementation of a viable peace process, and those geared toward stabilizing and strengthening fragile states.

1. Peace-Building

Example *Peace-Building* TS Goal Statements 2000-2012

- “Adoption and Effective Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA)” (Sudan 2008-2011)
- “A Successful Transition to Peace and Stable, Democratic Governance” (DRC 2003-2007)

These examples illustrate that the TS Goal can be highly focused to advance the development, implementation, and consolidation of a peace process whose specific, measurable impact within a given timeframe is durable peace and its outcomes.

2. Peace-Consolidation and State-Building

Example *Peace-Consolidation and State-Building* TS Goal Statements

- “An Increasingly Stable South Sudan Post-CPA” (South Sudan 2011-2013)
- “Facilitate Emergence of Democracy” (Timor Leste 2000)

These examples illustrate that the TS Goal can be highly focused to support post-conflict, peace-consolidation and state-building as a specific, measurable impact within a given timeframe.

3. Fragility

Example *Supporting Stability and Progress in Fragile Political, Economic and Social Environment* TS Goal Statements

- “Yemen’s Stability Increased through Targeted Interventions in Vulnerable Areas” (Yemen 2010-2012) Note: this is a country where direct support to the government is not feasible.
- “Stability” (Haiti 2005)

These examples illustrate that the TS Goal can also be focused to achieve a specific, measurable impact within a given timeframe during a period of political, economic and social transition in a fragile state that is not emerging from conflict.

Source: USAID Transition Strategies, Mission Multi-year Strategic Plans and Integrated Strategic Plans (USAID Intranet Site and Development Clearing House)

Non-USAID Resources: For each TO, the TS should include assumptions about the results and impacts achieved through non-USAID resources, including other USG agencies, the host country government, other donors, multilateral development institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private sector organizations. This description should outline how efforts are coordinated to create a division of labor among development actors. The mission may also wish to reflect these roles graphically in the RF, if deemed useful. The TS should answer questions such as: How will USG diplomatic efforts and involvement from other USG agencies or donors support achievement of the TO? The TS should explicitly identify anticipated results that depend on policy decisions and diplomatic support from interagency partners (or the host country). The TS should include a discussion of how interagency and donor-coordinating mechanisms will ensure the necessary diplomatic support to achieve TOs and IRs, and identify triggers that would prompt diplomatic engagement (or disengagement).

Transition Objectives and Intermediate Results: A TO is the most ambitious result that a mission, together with its development partners, can materially affect, and for which USAID will be held accountable to demonstrate impact. The IRs are the set of results that together are sufficient to achieve the TOs. The IR should be the starting point for designing a “project,” but the mission may determine that a project should be a TO or sub-IR based on the country context and nature of the RF.

The TS should have no more than three TOs, but may have four under exceptional circumstance such as a complex operating environment. Missions should design TOs based on evidence that illustrates why an investment of USAID resources will result in targeted, priority development impacts. The TOs should be based on the strategic priorities defined by the mission, not solely on the size of the supporting or historic assistance programs. For example, building institutions for democratic governance could be a critical issue and therefore a TO, though the resources available for programming in this area may be relatively limited until the TS is submitted. The typical time horizon for achieving the TO and IR should be 12-36 months, coinciding with the lifetime of the TS. Supporting each TO should be a number of priority IRs and sub-IRs that describe the outcomes necessary to achieve the intended impact at the IR or TO levels.

In developing the TOs, with supporting IRs, missions should conduct analyses framed by the theory of change underlying the TS to clarify how the TS will change circumstances such that a sustainable development trajectory can be attained. This analysis will enable the mission to answer the following questions, which should be addressed as part of the RF narrative:

- How does the TO contribute to the TS Goal? What are the plausible causal relationships?
- Is the TO based on a clear development hypothesis related to the transition process and supported by strong evidence, including from evaluations conducted by the mission?
- Does the TO take into account the drivers of conflict and fragility as well as the sources of stabilization and resiliency that are unique to the transition environment?
- How does the TO focus USAID resources?
- What USG diplomatic efforts or other interagency support are needed to achieve the TO and Transition Goal?

A TS should include alternative scenarios if relevant, such as a protracted/stalled transition, deteriorating transition, and accelerating transition (moving forward positively). USAID experience shows that planning scenarios in fragile or transition environments generally fall into one of three categories: gradual implementation of a transition plan with hard-won progress (or despite persistent back-sliding); a sudden break-through scenario or significant acceleration of the transition plan; or a sudden relapse of the process backwards into conflict or crisis, possibly with the threat or outbreak of renewed conflict at the national or sub-national level. Due to the complexity and fluidity of these environments, these scenarios are simply meant as guidelines; actual TS scenarios may be much more complex or simpler depending on the

context. Appropriate USG agencies must be engaged in scenario and contingency planning during the TS planning process.

Sector-based Approaches in Transition Contexts: Sector-specific programming can be effective in transition contexts if it is fully integrated into the strategic planning process and addresses the underlying causes of conflict, crisis or fragility. USAID experience and lessons learned show that fragile and conflict-affected or crisis-affected states require interventions that focus on resolving the causes of fragility, conflict, or crisis in order for sector-based activities to achieve development outcomes and become sustainable. The mission's analysis of conflict, crisis and fragility dynamics should be used to determine whether sector-based interventions are appropriate to advance the goal of the transition process and its supporting transition objectives. Transition Objectives such as "Effective Service Delivery in Targeted Areas" is a means of integrating sector-based approaches.

Integrating Presidential Initiatives: The TS may be aligned with or integrate individual country-based Presidential Initiative plans and strategies. The TS should ensure that these investments promote transition. Missions have the flexibility to reflect country-team developed plans for the Global Health Initiative (GHI), Feed the Future (FTF), and Global Climate Change (GCC) at the TS Goal, TO or IR levels. Initiative indicators that support Initiative-specific RFs should be included in the TS.

Critical Assumptions, Game-changers and Risks: For each TO the TS must explain the most relevant critical assumptions or "game-changers" and risks associated with its successful achievement. A risk factor or critical assumption lies beyond USAID's control. For example, host country government collaboration may be a critical assumption. "Large-scale ethnic conflict surpassing the international community's current capacity to manage or contain the conflict" would be a risk factor. By contrast, "Weak Government Capacity to Manage Conflict" would not be a risk factor, but rather a constraint to be addressed in the TS. For each risk factor, the TS will assess the degree to which the country team can identify and control critical risks. The TS also explains how the identified assumptions and risks will be assessed periodically. If the TS includes one or more scenarios, it should explain whether the same or different critical assumptions and risks apply to the alternate scenarios.

Performance Indicators: The RF includes at least one, but no more than three performance indicators for the TS Goal and each TO, IR and sub-IR. As a group, the indicators should capture the intended impact of the TS and how this impact will be achieved. High-quality performance indicators have a clear connection to the causal logic expressed in the guiding theory of change for the TS. Baseline values for these indicators should be included if available. These indicators are an important means to measure and evaluate the impact of the TS and progress toward achieving the results, and will facilitate project design as well as development of the full Performance Management Plan (PMP) and future evaluations. The key consideration in selecting performance indicators should be their utility to the mission in monitoring progress toward achieving the transition goal.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: In these environments, there is an accelerated cycle for learning and adaptation based on continual monitoring and evaluation of strategy and project outcomes and impact. Given rapidly changing in-country dynamics in transition environments, missions and Washington should plan for an accelerated strategy development, review, and approval process to ensure that the strategy remains relevant to evolving conditions. Rolling assessments should be conducted to test assumptions, help to monitor the country context, and inform project implementation. Where strong evidence or quality baseline data does not already exist, missions should ground the strategy by investing in rigorous analysis, drawing on the best practices available, and incorporating a learning component for constant systematic feedback to keep up with the dynamic situation. In non-permissive environments where remote monitoring is necessary, missions are also encouraged to consider innovative approaches including monitoring and evaluation such as working with civil society or faith-based organizations to monitor and evaluate projects in non-accessible areas.

Example Evaluation Questions

1. Did our underlying hypothesis hold true that better provision of government services in this region would contribute to political stability? What factors other than our projects might have contributed to political stability? What are the most significant constraints to political stability?
2. To what extent did USAID's interventions impact women? What circumstances positively or negatively affected the degree to which women contributed to the transition process, or benefitted from it, for example, from improved human rights protection?

Monitoring: Missions are required to monitor progress toward achieving or advancing the TS Goal, TOs, IRs, and sub-IRs based on the Performance Indicators included in the TS. They are further required to monitor benchmarks or indicators that the country has entered a different strategic planning scenario, if the TS includes more than one planning scenario. A review must be held mid-way through TS implementation, at a minimum, to review and assess progress toward the TS Goal based on these benchmarks. These Performance Indicators will be further developed and refined, along with baselines and targets, in the mission's PMP, developed subsequent to the TS (timeframe determined during the Consultation Phase I).

Evaluation: Missions are required to include the following evaluation components, which are reflected in the Agency's Evaluation Policy, found at <http://www.usaid.gov/evaluation>:

- Identification of high priority evaluation questions for each TO that can address: (a) the development hypotheses and key assumptions underlying the program; (b) policy approach in a specific sector, and/or; (c) the efficiency of the USAID implementation approach (with attention to program costs).
- At least one opportunity for impact evaluation of a project or project component within each TO. Not every opportunity identified will be expected to be evaluated, but the TS process provides a chance for mission leadership and technical officers to consider impact evaluation opportunities that could be operationalized, if feasible, during project design stages.

Learning: Missions are encouraged to develop a plan to improve coordination and collaboration with development partners, test promising new approaches, build on what works and eliminate what does not during TS implementation. This approach should provide an analytic link between the TS Goal, TOs, and IRs and its supporting programs and projects, and ensure that the mission plans, over the course of the TS period, to address any gaps that may exist in the evidence that underlies the TOs and development hypothesis. Learning provides for an iterative review of external changes and lessons learned from TS implementation. The approach should ensure that progress toward transition objectives is guided by continuous learning, ongoing assessment of the causal pathway, revision to the theory of change guiding the program, and iterative adaptation of program implementation, and where relevant, within the strategy.

Learning approaches should provide for:

- Facilitating coordination, collaboration, and exchange of experiential knowledge internally and with external stakeholders;
- Testing the transition hypotheses, filling critical knowledge gaps, and addressing uncertainties in the hypotheses with new research and existing analyses;
- Ensuring that new learning, innovations, and performance information gained through monitoring and evaluation inform strategy implementation; and
- Identifying and monitoring game changers – the broad conditions that are beyond the mission's control but could evolve to impede strategy implementation – based on associated tripwires that may trigger programmatic and project contingencies or even changes in strategic direction.

One approach to consider is the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) model, developed by USAID/Uganda and other missions. More information about this model is available through the Learning Labs at: <http://kdid.org/kdid-lab/library>. Another useful option to consider is annual program strategic reviews or rolling assessments. For example, OTI conducts an annual Program Performance Review (PPR) on all OTI country programs to review strategic objectives and how those aims are met through the activities and implementation methods. Missions may contact OTI monitoring and evaluation staff for guidance.

6. Program Resources and Priorities: The TS informs overall assistance planning and resource allocation for missions or operating units in transition countries, including the relationship of planned resources to expected results. During the TS Phase I Consultation, proposed resource levels will be proposed by the regional bureau, which will work with PPL, BRM, F, pillar bureaus, and other appropriate offices to define resource levels that align budget resources to the proposed strategy. The Administrator's annual budget recommendations to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary are informed by the approved TS including required resources to the maximum extent possible.

The TS accounts for all projected program resources for fiscal years covered by the period of the TS that USAID plans to implement. Resources must be allocated by TO and cross-walked to the Foreign Assistance Framework (program element for Health and Education) as defined in F's Standard Program Structure. Missions must complete the Resource Template attached as Appendix 1.

TS apply to USAID-managed resources: TS must also reflect the specific contributions of other USG or Host-County actors necessary to achieve the TS Goal and Development Objectives. In most TS environments the DoS and DoD will play a critical role in shaping and implementing policy, security, and diplomatic measures necessary to implement the USAID TS. In Washington, contact the Military Liaison officer in the DCHA Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation. In the field, contact the military representatives at post or the USAID Senior Development Advisor at the appropriate Combatant Command to learn how to ensure DoD is aware of USAID efforts. Multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and regional political and economic regimes may also play a critical partnership role. The role of these actors should be reflected in the TS RF to the extent that their contributions are critical for the strategy to succeed.

Scenarios and Contingency Planning: TS missions may develop resource scenarios linked to the most likely transition scenario identified in the scenario planning process. These scenarios encompass a strategic planning range of programmatic responses that demonstrate the sensitivity of strategy and results to additional (or reduced) resources depending on the transition context and how it evolves. In any scenario, missions have the flexibility to reallocate resources for priority projects each year, including for Presidential Initiatives, as long as they do not exceed the annually adjusted country totals. Additional mission-specific resource guidance will be discussed during the Phase1 Consultation Phase, particularly for TS missions where overall USG policy considerations play an important role in determining resource allocations. Bureau budget offices (to include BRM and the regional bureau program office) should be explicit about projected earmark levels and where there may be room for flexibility. Missions with significant humanitarian assistance funding (either current or projected) must also indicate how those resources fit within the broader TS and how those programs will be phased out or integrated by other offices within the mission. In developing future year Mission Resource Requests (MRR, formerly the MSRP), missions should use the TS figures as the base and then increase or decrease budget planning levels based on the specific MRR resource guidance.

7. Management Requirements: The TS includes a brief description of the required management resources for each of the program resource level scenarios. This description should include:

- Anticipated overall Operating Expense (OE) requirements, particularly those related to the TS environment security needs, keeping in mind that the OE of the current year will implement the program levels (pipeline) of the prior two years. The base scenario will have OE implications from FYs 2012 through 2014;

- Anticipated overall program-funded operational costs (PFOC) requirements, which would be included in the total program levels; and
- Anticipated staffing requirements over the life of the TS, including U.S. Direct Hire by backstop, Personal Service Contractors and Foreign Service Nationals needed to implement the TS.

The Agency will use the TS process to help realign the workforce to support priorities, so regional bureaus and missions should consider their staffing needs as they propose broadening or narrowing programs. Specific issues regarding the transition environment and an appropriate match between the staff skill set and the programmatic priorities should be noted. Particular focus should be placed on OE and staffing requirements as these may evolve, including space, and the current mission staffing pattern including all positions (both filled and vacant). The operational resources requested in the TS should link to the data collected through USAID's Budget Formulation and Execution Manager (BFEM) as part of the annual operational budget submission.

Responding to fluid and transitional environments necessitates interagency coordination for an effective response. In some recent transitional countries, USAID has leveraged limited resources by working in collaboration with the DoS or DoD to coordinate programming efforts. A TS should be informed by all of the available resources from foreign assistance accounts and the implementing mechanisms available.

Procurement: For TS countries, all implementing mechanisms (whether assistance or acquisition) should include either (a) "crisis modifier" language that allows maximum budget flexibility at the project level for fluid and evolving environments, or (b) DCHA will coordinate with USAID/Washington regional bureau to identify contingency funds and other flexible resources to help ensure a specific rapid response when conditions change on the ground.

8. TS Timeline: The TS timeline will be determined during the Phase I Consultation. At the mid-way point and at the end of the TS period, missions will evaluate progress toward advancing or achieving the Transition Goal and Objectives in order to decide whether to extend the TS, revise it, develop a new TS or move to a CDCS. The timeline must be a minimum of 12 months and maximum of 36 months.

Appendix 1: Transition Strategy Guidance - Resources Template

DO-Specific	FY12 653a	FY13 CDCS*	FY14 CDCS*	FY15 CDCS**	FY16 CDCS**	FY17 CDCS**				
DO1:										
DO2:										
DO3:										
DO4:										
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-				
							FY14 Priority***			
All USAID Resources	FY12 653a	FY13 CDCS*	FY14 CDCS*	FY15 CDCS**	FY16 CDCS**	FY17 CDCS**	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4
1 Peace and Security	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
1.1 Counter-Terrorism										
1.2 Combating WMD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1.3 Security Sector Reform										
1.4 Alternative Development										
1.5 Transnational Crime										
1.6 Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation										
2 Governing Justly/Democratically	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights										
2.2 Good Governance										
2.3 Political Comp/Consensus-Building										
2.4 Civil Society										
3 Investing in People	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
3.1 Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
3.1.1 HIV/AIDS										
3.1.2 Tuberculosis										
3.1.3 Malaria										
3.1.4 Avian Influenza										
3.1.5 Other Public Health Threats										
3.1.6 Maternal & Child Health										
3.1.7 Family Planning/Repro Health										
3.1.8 Water Supply & Sanitation										
3.1.9 Nutrition										
3.2 Education	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
3.2.1 Basic Education										
3.2.2 Higher Education										
3.3 Services/Protecting Vulnerable Pops										
4 Economic Growth	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.1 Macro Foundation for Growth										
4.2 Trade and Investment										
4.3 Financial Sector										
4.4 Infrastructure										
4.5 Agriculture										
4.6 Private Sector Competitiveness										
4.7 Economic Opportunity										
4.8 Environment										
5 Humanitarian Assistance	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
5.1 Protection, Assistance and Solutions		-								
5.2 Disaster Readiness		-								
5.3 Migration Management		-								
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-				
* FY13 country total should reflect the FY 2013 CBJ country total. FY14 levels should be flat from FY13.										
** FY15 - FY17 country total should reflect a three percent annual cut over prior year.										
*** For each DO (listed in priority order), prioritize ALL program areas (elements for Health and Education) in rank order.										

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