USAID KENYA
PARTNER LIAISON SECURITY OPERATION (PLSO)
DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

USAID KENYA

Partner Liaison Security Operation (PLSO)- Kenya

IMPLEMNTING PERIOD: 01 JULY 2016 – 30 JUNE 2021

Award No: AID-615-C-16-0003

FY 2019-2020 DEC REPORT

Prepared for USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse

Prepared by WS Insight (K) Ltd
2nd Floor Purshottam Place, Westlands Road
P.O Box 1202 – 00502
Nairobi, Kenya

Contents

I. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Contracting Office
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DSR	Daily Security Report
ERP	Emergency Response Planning
EXO	Executive Officer
FSA	Field Security Advisor
GOK	Government of Kenya
IO	Information Officer
IP	Implementing Partner
JA	Junior Analyst
OM	Operations Manager
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council
PLSO	Partner Liaison Security Operation
ROC	Regional Operations Centre
SA	Senior Analyst
SFP	Security Focal Point
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SIS	Security Information Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WAR	Weekly Activity Report
WIIR	Weekly IP Incident Report
WSR	Weekly Security Report

II. INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Kenya and East Africa (KEA) established the Partner Liaison Security Operation (PLSO) in July 2016 as a tool to enhance communication between USAID and its Implementing Partners (IPs) regarding safety and security. PLSO's basic function is therefore to provide nonprescriptive security advice, assistance, accountability and security information to USAID KEA and its Implementing Partners (IP) operating in Kenya. PLSO is not a replacement for an IP's security measures, or a primary source of security information for IPs.

This entails proactive engagement including meetings, site visits, and written and verbal communications. The security advice given by PLSO is non-prescriptive in nature with IPs retaining autonomy on how to best utilize the advice and information provided. All advice promulgated by PLSO is intended to be supplementary to existing IP policies and procedures.

III. PLSO PROGRAMMING

The PLSO program in Kenya is a USAID funded contract delivered by WS Insight Limited, a Risk Management Company with its Kenya head office in Nairobi. The PLSO program is voluntary for IPs and does not have the authority to order IP action or compliance to PLSO recommendations.

During its fourth year of implementation, PLSO has made significant progress in establishing itself in Kenya and building upon existing and new relationships with IPs. The process of IP enrolment is an important one and consists of a USAID verification process. IPs who express an interest to enroll must provide their program name, program award number, program start and end dates. This information is verified by USAID prior to the PLSO team engaging directly with the IP. The verification process avoids mistakes being made and organizations who are not in receipt of USAID funding being enrolled on the program. This process is facilitated by the standard operating procedures (SOP 01- Implementing Partners Engagement Meeting) attached to this report.

IV. PERSONNEL

The PLSO program is delivered through nine dedicated PLSO staff members: an Operations Manager (OM), five Field Security Advisors (FSAs), a Senior Analyst (SA), a Junior Analyst (JA) and an Information Officer (IO). Additionally, the designated PLSO team is supported by a 24/7 Regional Operations Centre (ROC), located within WS Insights headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The five regions covered across Kenya

are Central, Northern, North Eastern, Coast and Western.

Changeover of PLSO team personnel

The following are changes in personnel during the reporting period.

a) **Field Security Advisors**

The FSA for the Western region resigned in July 2020 to seek other opportunities and a replacement was selected in August 2020. The PLSO OM assisted by WS Insight Human Resource (HR) personnel conducted a series of interviews to ensure the most suitable candidate was selected and offered the position. (SOP 07- Recruitment Policy & Procedure)

V. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

During the period under review, two modifications of the PLSO contract were made for various reasons. In June 2020, USAID approved to exercise option year three of the award, thereby extending the period of performance by one year. In addition, it was to incrementally fund the award with $670,058.

In August 2020, WS Insight sent an Equitable Adjustment letter to USAID after the expiry of value added tax (VAT) exception certificate for the period of October-December 2019. USAID executed modification 06 of the contract to exercise an equitable adjustment worth $26,328.

VI. PLSO DELIVERABLES

PLSO provides a variety of services to USAID and its IPs, as explained in detail in the Project MAELEZO document attached to this report. They are.

PLSO-IP engagement

The five PLSO Field Security Advisors (FSAs) conduct a continuous program of face-to-face engagement meetings across most Kenya's 47 counties daily, to maintain a high level of security awareness and culture amongst IPs.

In April 2020, PLSO transitioned to telephone and video conferencing with IPs to ensure continuity of operations and the safety of IP staff, owing to the outbreak of Covid-19. As demonstrated by feedback

received from IPs, the quality and frequency of engagement meetings maintained a high standard set by PLSO.

Security Information Services (SIS)

PLSO continuously provides timely and accurate security advice and information to IPs through the PLSO Security Information Service (SIS). A list of SIS deliverables (examples of which are attached to this report) include.

- Real-time SMS alerts - sent to all IPs to inform on ongoing incidences likely to impact their operations.
- Incident reports - these are a follow up to SMS alerts and are sent by email to all IPs to inform on ongoing incidences likely to impact their operations.
- Advice notes (AN) - sent by email 24-48 hours in advance of an anticipated significant event.
- Daily Security Report (DSR) - sent by email to all IPs at 0900hrs every weekday.
- Weekly Security Report (WSR) - sent by email to all IPs at 1800hrs every Wednesday.
- Weekly IP Incident Report (WIIR) - sent by email to all IPs at 1000hrs every Wednesday.
- Weekly activity Report (WAR) - sent by email to USAID personnel at 1000hrs every Wednesday.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak in Kenya, PLSO launched the Covid-19 Daily Update Report on Thursday 19 March 2020, to ensure that IPs are kept informed on the developments regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The report includes local and global statistics, as well as security trends and advisory measures. The report is sent to all IPs and USAID before 1800hrs every weekday.

Risk Management Meetings

Quarterly Security and Risk Management Meetings are organized every three months and are designed to update IPs on the prevailing security and political situation in Kenya. PLSO also sources for guest speakers from different organizations to give presentations on relevant topics.

Regional Roundtable Meetings are organized every month on a rotational basis to cover all five regions. FSAs brief IPs on the security situation in the relevant region and discuss IP concerns and other issues. Further to this it provides a platform for IP security focal points to intermingle and network with each other as well as offering an additional forum for PLSO to interact with IPs and receive feedback on PLSO deliverables.

During the period under review, PLSO postponed all physical meetings after the government banned large gatherings as a preventative measure during the Covid-19 pandemic in April 2020. To ensure the safety of PLSO staff and IP staff, PLSO adapted video conferencing to share security-related information with IP SFPs. Since April 2020, monthly security meetings have been conducted virtually via Zoom Communications to brief IPs on security and Covid-19 developments, with relevant advisory and mitigation measures being provided.

Cascade alerting- accounting for all IP staff

PLSO accounts for all IP employees in the event of a serious incident or as requested by the USAID EXO. This is conducted through the 24/7 Regional Operations Centre, supported by the OM and five FSAs.

In November 2019, PLSO initiated the development of a mobile accountability app in collaboration with a local IT company. This came after it was noted that the existing cascade system had several challenges, necessitating the need for a robust system to assist in the accountability process. In December 2019, PLSO concluded the development of the Partner Count (P-COUNT) accountability app to be used for accounting for personnel in the event of a major security incident. The app was launched to IPs during meetings held in Coast, Nairobi, Western and Northern regions between January and March 2020.
The functionality of the new system and the role of the security focal points (SFP) was highlighted, and SFPs encouraged to register for trials. Feedback and comments received through satisfaction questionnaires were of a positive nature, indicating that the launch was successful and well received by IPs.

Maintenance of databases

PLSO maintains a database of security incidents in Kenya; collected from IPs, PLSO staff or through existing information networks. A database of all IPs and personnel enrolled on PLSO is also maintained, along with a database of security training providers in Kenya. These databases are managed by the SA and IO.

Security briefings

PLSO provides customized security and safety briefings for all IPs, as well as security and safety briefings for IP staff newly arrived in Kenya. All PLSO staff are involved in delivering security briefings.

During the reporting period, PLSO developed and delivered several presentations to IP staff as requested, covering Covid-19 prevention measures to be observed during the phased resumption of optimal IP

operations. FSAs presented on the criteria, requirements, and considerations necessary to deal with high risk patients at IP sites located within informal settlements in various towns countrywide. The presentations were shared with IP personnel for implementation.

Security advice

In the period under review, FSAs assisted IPs to review and improve their security plans, including emergency and contingency planning. Several IPs requested for threat assessment reports for different counties prior to engaging in operations in high risk areas. The OM and FSAs also assist IPs to record and report security incidents, as well as providing security risk management advice.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak, FSAs remained proactive to provide security guidance and best recommendations to IPs despite the challenges to travel arising from the restrictions imposed by the government to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Liaison

PLSO conducts liaison with Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), United Nations (UN) entities and the Government of Kenya (GoK).

Changes in deliverables

PLSO launched the Covid-19 Daily Update Report on Thursday 19 March 2020, to ensure that IPs are kept informed on the developments regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

VII. ACTIVITY ADMINISTRATION

PLSO developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that describe the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of PLSO activities (as attached to this report). The various subjects include.

1. SOP 01- Implementing Partners Engagement Meetings
2. SOP 02- PLSO Personnel Conduct
3. SOP 03- FSA Travel Procedures
4. SOP 04- Expenses, Vehicle, Phone and Purchasing Policy
5. SOP 05- PLSO Mobile Phones
6. SOP 06- Preventive and Corrective Actions

7. SOP 07- Recruitment Policy & Procedure
8. SOP 08- PLSO-IP Quarterly & Roundtable Meetings
9. SOP 09- Issuance of Alerts
10. SOP 10- Quality Assurance

VIII. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

PLSO conducts a variety of internal surveys to establish and improve its functioning, as well as external reviews from private consultants and USAID. These include.

Quality assurance surveys

PLSO conducts assurance surveys to identify whether PLSO is of benefit and what areas of improvement are required. These are sent to IPs via email and conducted physically during quarterly and regional roundtables, as well as conduction of surveys. Feedback received assists PLSO to better understand and manage IP expectations and requirements. (SOP 10- Quality Assurance Policy)

FSA Daily Security and IP Engagement reports

FSAs produce a Daily Security Report and IP Engagement reports for each IP engagement meeting. These reports are reviewed daily by the OM and analysts to identify IP concerns and areas to focus on during the coming period. These reports are held on file for audit purposes and enable continuity within the team during any periods of absence, such as leave. (Examples of both reports are attached)

PLSO OM regional trips

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, the OM conducted regular trips around each region to meet up with IPs and discuss their security concerns, in addition to conduction of quality assurance on FSAs performance and delivery, ensuring IPs are receiving industry best practice security advice and assistance in line with their requirements.

Periodic phone calls to IPs

General feedback is received often from IPs on the performance of FSAs and PLSO team which enables PLSO to maintain a database on IP feedback for record and audit purposes.

IX. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

During the 2019-20 period, cash outflows were even being that the contract is a fixed value obligation. The program has been using Sage accounting software since its inception in July 2016.

X.   SUSTAINABILITY

This section outlines the measures undertaken by PLSO Kenya to ensure its relevance to IPs. With the outbreak of Covid-19 having affected IP programming and resulted in scaling down of operations for most of 2020, the measures outlined below are focused on initiatives that were adopted by PLSO to minimize the effect of the disruptions hence ensuring USAID partners' operations are delivered in a smooth manner.

Following the breakout of Covid-19 disease in Kenya in March 2020 and the subsequent measures announced by the government of Kenya to slow the spread, all physical meetings including the roundtable and quarterly meetings were postponed until further notice. To ensure information is still disseminated to SFPs, PLSO conducts virtual meetings from the Nairobi headquarters and shares the PowerPoint slides along with an audio or video recording of the briefing with the attendees. In line with the previous trend, guest speakers are invited to present on the trending issues of concerns. The attendance of the virtual roundtables have remained considerable, supported by participation of between 40-60 IPs each meeting. As the coronavirus infections continue to decline in Kenya, PLSO will continue monitoring the situation and government directives with a view of making an informed decision on whether to resume physical meeting or delay.

PLSO also continues to offer regular updates on the coronavirus situation in Kenya through the dissemination of Covid-19 Daily Report along with best practices and advice. Furthermore, PLSO FSAs have remained proactive to provide security guidance and best recommendations to USAID Implementing Partners in Kenya despite the challenges to travel arising from the restrictions imposed by the government to slow the spread of coronavirus. Although most FSAs have been working remotely with IP Security Focal Points since April 2020, the levels of engagement conducted using telephone and video conferencing remains at par with those conducted physically in the past. On average, 25 remote meetings are conducted between the FSAs and SFPs. In these meetings, the FSAs focus on provide Covid-19 situation updates for their specific regions and offering best advice regarding emerging concerns. As the Covid-19 curve continues to flatten in Kenya, the government has been relaxing some of the containment measures such as the removal of the cessation of movement order for Nairobi, Mombasa, Mandera and Kilifi. This has in return seen several IPs express intent to review their operational schedule. The FSAs have remained in touch with SFPs and program managers helping them to develop transition plans. The aim of such plans at

this period remains to assist IPs transition to optimal operations. It is envisioned that full IP operations will only be possible with the successful discovery of a Covid-19 vaccine.

With political activities heightening ahead of the 2022 general elections, PLSO Kenya has been keeping abreast with the changing political trends and developments and has in return disseminated detailed information to IPs to prewarn them on the changing political environment and the possible risk posed during campaigning and the electioneering period. In line with the increasing political risk (as evidenced by increased debate on a proposal to change the constitution as guided by the Building Bridges Initiative {BBI}, PLSO has invited National Democratic Institute (NDI) as one of the guest speakers to share the findings of its recent survey on the topic. Going forward, PLSO plans to come up with customized reports on elections to assist IPs mitigate the effect of potential disruptions such as those arising from politically motivate disorders.

Finally, PLSO continues with devising innovative ways of strengthening partnerships between IPs and security stakeholders through providing avenues for real time-sharing security information. This reporting period, PLSO outsourced an external app developer for development of P-COUNT App. This application has been tested and successfully launched with IPs and remains in place to account for partners' personnel who may be involved in an emergency or a serious security incident. In addition, PLSO has completed the first training session with IPs for Protected Internet eXchange (PiX)-another online mapping and information sharing application. The rollout of these applications underlines the creativity of the program in meeting the changing IP demands in Kenya.