



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Development Information Solution

Frequently Asked Questions

What is DIS?

The Development Information Solution (DIS) will be a suite of IT tools designed to harness the richness of USAID's data, improve efficiencies across the entire Program Cycle, and support the ability to tell one cohesive story about how well USAID's activities are achieving their goals.

Why DIS and why now?

USAID has a number of IT systems to support Agency work, but the lack of a unified and integrated system is a key constraint to all these systems. DIS will reduce the time spent managing multiple systems, lower the burden of data capture and organization, and reduce duplicative staff training and orientation on IT systems. In doing so, USAID staff will gain a corporate view of Agency activities across multiple sectors and geographic regions.

What are the anticipated benefits of DIS?

DIS will benefit all of USAID by aligning systems to policy, facilitating access to Agency data, improving USAID compliance to statutory requirements, and promoting a streamlined approach to Agency operations. There should be notable time and energy savings in executing regular activities such as PPRs, Budget planning, and Portfolio Reviews. Specific benefits include:

- *Support for adaptive management:* Improved use of real time data to identify under/over performing activities and react accordingly.
- *Time and cost savings:* Reduced staff time and energy required to maintain data in multiple systems, as well as budget savings from maintaining multiple cuff systems.
- *Improved reporting:* Faster and more targeted reporting for Washington leadership, as well as customizable reporting tools and interactive dashboards tailored toward individual user needs.

Who will have access to DIS?

DIS will be an Agency-wide system to be used by every Agency Mission, Bureau and Independent Office. USAID staff, both overseas and in Washington, will benefit from the functionalities within DIS.

Implementing partners will have access to a portal allowing for direct reporting into the system. Host country governments, Congress and the broader development community will also have limited access.

What are Work Streams?

DIS is envisioned to include four distinct Work Streams, each of which focuses on a key and distinct Agency business process. These include:

- Work Stream 1: Performance Management
- Work Stream 2: Budget Formulation and Execution
- Work Stream 3: Project Design and Procurement Planning
- Work Stream 4: Portfolio Viewer - A dashboard and reporting functionality, which enables integration of data drawn from the other three Work Streams

Once fully deployed, the four Work Streams will help USAID staff easily manage portfolios, reduce duplicative processes, minimize manual data entry points, and facilitate deeper analysis leading to better project design.

How will my work be affected by DIS?

DIS will help USAID staff manage data more effectively and require less time to do so. Information currently located in different systems will be accessible in DIS, to improve efficiency in reporting and increase use of evidence-based decision making.

Will I have to enter data into multiple systems?

No. DIS was created with users' needs in mind and to make portfolio management easier. Data will be entered once and will be pulled directly from other systems to minimize human error.

We are working closely with the system owners of GLAAS, Phoenix, and FACTS Info to ensure a seamless interface with DIS.

What are Business Requirements?

Building an IT system starts with an outline of Business Requirements, which are functions and features of a system. Business Requirements serve as the building blocks of the system, setting expectations and deliverable goals. There are three types of Business Requirements for any system, including DIS:

- **High-level** requirements are a broad outline of processes a system should be able to do and features it should have.
- **Non-functional** requirements cover system characteristics such as security of data, single sign-on capability, and USAID firewall compatibility.
- **Functional** requirements outline the specific processes and procedures for the system and give the system developers a roadmap for the design and building of the system.

It is difficult and costly to go back and rebuild an IT system, and as such getting the Business Requirements properly validated is critical.

Have the Business Requirements for DIS been completed?

The DIS team has collected the High-level Business Requirements for each Work Stream. These requirements were collected through extensive discussions and consultations with business users throughout the Agency.

Validation of the Business Requirements is ongoing. The goal is to ensure that the Business Requirements follow Agency policy and procedures, and to suggest additional or different needs which could be addressed within the scope of DIS.

Who has provided input on DIS so far?

The DIS Team has done extensive outreach to Agency staff. We have sought out Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) relevant for each Work Stream to define, clarify, and validate the Business Requirements. To date, the DIS Team has engaged with more than 140 stakeholders in 35 Field Missions and 15 Washington Bureaus and Independent Offices.

The online DIS Enthusiast Group, with over 70 members, continues to provide feedback on the design and development of DIS. If you would like to join the Enthusiasts' Group, please email us at AskDIS@usaid.gov.

What is an SME? How are they being used?

A DIS Subject Matter Expert (SME) is a USAID staff member with expertise in the Business Processes relevant to one or more of the DIS Work Streams. SMEs' knowledge and skills are critical in defining what kind of information and work flows should be included within DIS. SMEs are supporting DIS virtually and in person.

SMEs will continue to be critical in testing each Work Stream to ensure that user needs are being met and the system is functioning smoothly.

If you would like to be involved in the development of DIS, please email us at AskDIS@usaid.gov and tell us what your specific expertise is and how you would like to be engaged.

Where can I find information about DIS status and updates?

The DIS Team has a MyUSAID Subject with DIS information.

- MyUSAID Subject (<https://my.usaid.gov/tibbr/#!/subjects/42803>) has short posts, discussions and updates on DIS.

I have a question/comment/suggestion! Where do I send it?

Please email us at: AskDIS@usaid.gov