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# **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT** OF USAID'S BUILDING RESILIENCE TO RECURRENT CRISIS: POLICY AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE

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## ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AGIR	Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel
AO	Agreement Officer
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
AQ	Assessment Question
BFS	Bureau for Food Security
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
C4R	Center for Resilience
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategies
CDF	Community Development Fund
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CPS	Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization
DA	Development Assistance
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
DDI	Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DFSA	Development Food Security Activity
DO	Development Objective
DR	Document Review
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESF	Economic Support Funds
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Network
FSN	Foreign Service National
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
FtF	Feed the Future
GH	Bureau for Global Health
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HoA	Horn of Africa
HoRN	Horn of Africa Resilience Network
IDA	International Disaster Assistance
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IP	Implementing Partner

IR	Intermediate Result
JPC	Joint Planning Cells
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LAND	Land Administration and Nurture Development Program
L-FFP	Legacy Food for Peace
L-OFDA	Legacy Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OAA	Office of Acquisition and Assistance
OP	Operational Plan
OU	Operating Unit
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PBS	Population-Based Survey
PC	Program Cycle
PIA	Policy Implementation Assessment
POC	Point of Contact
PPL	Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning
PPR	Past Performance Report
PREG	Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth Activity
PRIME	Pastoralists' Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion Activity
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
R&I	Refine and Implement
RAIN	Revitalizing Agricultural/Pastoral Incomes and New Markets Program
RCI	Resilience Capacities Indices
RDCS	Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
REAL	Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning Activity
REGAL	Resilience and Economic Growth in Arid Lands
REGIS-AG	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth
REGIS-ER	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience
RF	Results Framework
RFC	Resilience Focus Country
RFS	Bureau for Resilience and Food Security
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
RFZ	Resilience Focus Zone
RISE	Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced
RLC	Resilience Leadership Council
RRF	Regional Resilience Framework
RTWG	Resilience Technical Working Group

SAREL	Sahel Resilience Learning Activity
SCC	Sahel Collaboration and Communication
SLI	Sequence, Layer, and Integrate
SRO	Sahel Regional Office
TCB	Trade Capacity Building
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDH	United States Direct Hire
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WATER	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience Program

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

In 2012, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) published a policy document titled *Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis: Policy and Program Guidance* (Resilience Policy) in response to two devastating humanitarian crises — catastrophic drought in the Horn of Africa (HoA) and compounding impacts of recurring drought and conflict plaguing the Sahel. The Resilience Policy defines this concept in the context of USAID and aims to build resilience by increasing the capacity of systems and people to reduce risk and better withstand shocks and stressors. The document articulates the Agency’s vision of using these aims to achieve a sustainable reduction in overall humanitarian need and recurrent crises, which often derail development efforts and outcomes. The policy includes a set of principles to apply across resilience programming. It also includes an operational agenda directed toward increasing effective, multi-sectoral collaboration across humanitarian assistance (HA) and development assistance (DA) actors through: 1) joint problem setting, 2) coordinated strategic planning, 3) mutually informed project design, and 4) robust learning. The agenda applies in a set of Resilience Focus Countries (RFCs), which receive ‘resilience funding’ through a variety of mechanisms (most notably Title II food assistance and agriculture DA), although there is no specific Congressional earmark for resilience.

## PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

This Policy Implementation Assessment (PIA) aims to examine to what extent the Agency has achieved the objectives laid out in this policy through shifts in processes and programs, collect evidence about measurement of outcomes, provide input into the revision of the 2012 Policy and strengthen its future implementation. The mixed-methods assessment was conducted between December 2020 and November 2021 and focused on six assessment questions examining: policy implementation in RFCs; the evidence base for progress toward policy goals; mainstreaming of resilience across the Agency; supportive institutional structures and recommendations for the Policy’s revision. The data collection included: 1) document review of approximately 400 documents, including in-depth scoring of Program Cycle (PC) documents and an overview of technical documents such as evaluations, trainings, and Agency resilience resources, 2) a survey administered to targeted listservs, eliciting 219 responses across USAID OUs, 3) 35 Key Informant Interviews with USAID staff members from Washington Bureaus, field Missions, and the Resilience Technical Working Group (RTWG), 4) mixed-methods deep dives to explore resilience-related work in a purposive sample of OUs and strategic planning processes, 5) analysis of Agency funding data by program area from 2012 to 2020, and 6) a recommendation co-creation workshop conducted with 15 USAID stakeholders to refine, ground-truth, and operationalize draft recommendations.

## KEY FINDINGS

### APPLICATION OF OPERATIONAL AGENDA THROUGH JOINT PLANNING CELLS

**In general, USAID’s operational agenda was robustly applied by two regional structures, called Joint Planning Cells (JPCs). JPCs consist of a group of USAID humanitarian and development**

experts from different disciplines who work together to analyze the root causes of vulnerability in a particular geographic area and develop a resilience strategy and related programming. A JPC was used to develop a regional strategy in the HoA, in response to the devastating 2011 drought, and the process was replicated in the Sahel in early 2012. The JPCs emphasized cross-team collaboration among HA and DA teams and had similar goals to a Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDSCS) team but operated outside of the PC and focused exclusively on resilience.

**The HoA JPC was an effective structure for implementing the Resilience Policy’s operational agenda and its legacy continues through the Horn of Resilience Network (HoRN).** It operationalized joint analysis and planning processes across HA and DA teams, designed mutually-informed projects, and adapted programming using robust learning, including evidence forums and workshops. Since its creation, it has expanded to include geographic zones in Uganda, Somalia, and DRC under the follow-on to the JPC, the HoRN, and has also been integrated into Program Cycle processes. The HoRN and resilience-focused activities in the region are currently fully aligned with the Resilience Policy, ensuring that HA and DA programs that make up the resilience portfolio in each country can flexibly respond to the needs of communities and systems during crises. The sequencing, layering, and integrating (SLI) of projects and activities across HA and DA portfolios is a direct result of joint analysis and planning that uses collective impact to promote synergistic effects on resilience in communities. Despite some challenges in data collection, telling the resilience story, and achieving full SLI as planned, the framework for the resilience approach is solidly in place.

**The Sahel JPC, established in 2012, was also an effective structure, bolstered by the creation of the Sahel Regional Office (SRO) and drawing on lessons in strategic planning and mutually-informed project design from the HoA.** The SRO was tasked with Sahel resilience implementation, coordination between HA and DA actors, and a multisectoral approach with participation of staff from different offices and activities in the field. The intention of this JPC was to develop a comprehensive approach to address the relief-recovery-development nexus(es), deliberately aligning HA with DA at household, community, and systems levels. Geographic choices thus started with the ecological and demographic review – reinforced by existing programming to enhance cooperation and coordination among the activities. The enabling environment included governance at multiple levels as well as regional organizations that already worked on humanitarian and development initiatives. The Sahel JPC also planned for and designed projects that robustly accounted for both HA and DA through the Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) I initiative and its follow-on RISE II. Despite joint strategic planning and SLI-centered design, procurement impediments led to some challenges in RISE I, and building a more open network of resilience implementers in each country required time and resources. However, RISE I implementation was well-documented, and lessons learned were integrated into the design of RISE II.

## **APPLICATION OF RESILIENCE POLICY IN RFCS THROUGH THE PROGRAM CYCLE AND IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

**USAID has applied aspects of the Operational Agenda throughout the PC and HA in RFCS, but experience varies across countries, between new and old RFCS, and among the four components of the operational agenda.** Document analysis showed stronger policy alignment at the strategic planning level and less alignment moving down the PC into project and activity design. Even in

RFCs, where the leadership support is strong and ties to the Resilience Policy's operational agenda are explicit, there are challenges to implementation. These include uneven collaboration and disjointed timelines for procurements between DA and HA, which in turn affects joint implementation of resilience programming through projects and activities.

**The first two components of the Operational Agenda, joint analysis and strategic planning, were relatively well reflected in the scoring of RFC CDCSs: averaging 2.5 out of 4 and 3.1 out of 4 respectively (with 4 mapping to full policy alignment).** Strengthening the resilience of populations or systems in some capacity was the primary focus of IRs in four out of 11 RFC CDCSs and a DO with supportive IRs in five of 11. Most RFC CDCSs have some alignment with the Resilience Policy and use its concepts and approaches, with newer RFCs scoring slightly higher than the original set.

**The third component of the Operational Agenda, mutually informed project design, was more challenging, while the fourth component, robust learning, is being included, emphasized, and planned for in RFCs as an overarching approach.** The resilience-focused PADs selected for analysis, representing half the RFCs, scored a 2 out of 4 on average for policy alignment, indicating coordination with HA stakeholders and a resilience focus within the Results Framework (RF), but not full coordination or evidence of SLI. The PADs were at times mutually designed by HA and DA teams, but implementation of the various activities was more challenging to SLI in practice. Robust learning for RFCs is standardized through performance indicators and includes a subset of indicators that add on to and align with those already established for FtF.

## EVIDENCE BASE FOR RESILIENCE

**USAID has been a thought leader in building an evidence base and generating guidance on resilience measurement, although much of this is still being executed and data collection on high-level impact is ongoing.** Evidence building has occurred primarily through baseline, midline, endline and recurrent monitoring surveys for impact evaluations, and population-based surveys (PBSs) for FtF and BHA. USAID has also utilized secondary, host-country, and other donor data, performance evaluations of activities, and special studies and qualitative reports. Many of these findings are housed on the ResilienceLinks knowledge management platform and/or the Development Experience Clearinghouse and presented through various fora. The Resilience Evidence forums in the HoA, Washington, and South/East Asia have been particularly successful in generating collaboration, presenting results, and discussing best practices and lessons learned.

**The team did not discover sufficient evidence to assess whether USAID's resilience work has reduced chronic vulnerability across RFCs but did find evidence from individual activities and RFC programs.** Capturing the impact of resilience funding remains difficult. It is challenging to develop an indicator set and data collection methodology sufficiently complex to capture the richness of resilience programming, but sufficiently practical to capture and analyze data in a timely manner and harmonize or compare across a wide range of countries. Additionally, the changing environments of the RFCs (sudden onset environmental shocks, expansion of conflict etc.) contribute to data collection challenges in areas where resilience programming is often located.

**The Center for Resilience (C4R) and its monitoring, evaluation, and learning contracts have worked to define and refine resilience measurement.** In collaboration with L-FFP, the C4R has developed several key metrics for resilience, together with guidance on how to use these tools. The basics of resilience metrics derive from the food security sector, which has developed an array of well-defined indicator and MEL requirements. Using these practices as the foundation, as well as work by other international organizations, these metrics have been refined and expanded since the policy's publication.

**The indicator “humanitarian assistance averted” shows promise but is not yet operational.** Although the data can be collected at the population level through the support of local governments, it cannot be collected at the micro level for an individual or community. USAID has been working with an implementing partner to develop a quantitative methodology to measure the extent to which investments in resilience programming funded by the U.S. Government, over time, effectively reduce the need for HA. USAID plans to make the method available to missions and partners once it is finalized.

## MAINSTREAMING RESILIENCE

**Resilience programming was initially targeted at increasing food security to withstand drought, with an emphasis on livelihoods and crisis response, but has expanded much further at USAID, manifesting in OUs focusing on global health; education; conflict prevention and stabilization; democracy, rights and governance; and even in non-RFC Missions.** Resilience programming first evolved and took on more comprehensive approaches to food security programs (focusing on utilization of knowledge and access to and availability of food) and then gained traction in other sectors. However, this emphasis on coordination is primarily, if not exclusively, among DA rather than HA teams. Generally, staff agree with the definition of resilience, but practically this translates into different approaches and activities in each sector. The assessment team analyzed approaches in global health, education, market systems and economic growth, examples of areas in which resilience has been mainstreamed at USAID over the past decade. Staff have worked to conceptualize resilience in these contexts, generate guidance and tools, and shape related policies, and are also strongly represented in technical and leadership bodies related to resilience. Some non-RFCs are also intentionally and successfully integrating resilience into strategic planning at the CDCS level, as well as into project and even activity design. Numerous examples of successful integration of resilience concepts and approaches were found in the non-RFC CDCSs, PADs, and solicitations that were manually reviewed, although alignment with the specifics of the policy (e.g., the Operational Agenda) was generally lacking.

## AGENCY SUPPORT FOR RESILIENCE

**Implementation of the Policy in RFCs and beyond has benefitted from various agency structures, capacity building efforts and knowledge-management tools.** The structures and individuals have included the Resilience Technical Working Group, which works across sectors and OUs, the Agency Resilience Coordinator, the cross-Agency Resilience Leadership Council (RLC), a few select high-level champions, and the C4R as an established and growing entity. The C4R has provided technical assistance for resilience programming to staff in RFCs, as well as others in the Agency engaged in applying resilience concepts. Resilience Learning Events or Workshops and platforms that staff and partners can access for more information (such as ResilienceLinks and FSNetwork) have also contributed to policy implementation.

**Leadership was identified as the most critical enabler needed to ensure understanding and integration of resilience both at USAID/Washington and at the Mission level.** In particular, the Mission and Deputy Mission Directors are key to supporting Resilience Coordinators (working-level staff designated in RFCs to facilitate policy implementation), who cannot build integration alone. High-level Mission management support is critical for any type of cross-cutting or multi-sectoral initiative because leadership can engage and enforce coordination among the specific technical sectors. This is particularly true for initiatives without dedicated funding streams. Resilience Coordinators can serve as the first line of information and technical assistance, but they can also be seen in the Mission as messengers of Washington-based initiatives that blur results from specific technical sectors, add a layer of coordination, and a ‘flavor of the month’ approach to ongoing development activities. As such, they can be a particular stress point for resilience programming.

**An overall disconnect remains between USAID HA and DA operational processes and there are higher-level implications for finding ways to integrate HA and DA more completely.** The personnel, resources, and timelines differ between DA and HA programs, even though in some places, operations may overlap geographically and involve the same beneficiaries. Flexibility mechanisms such as crisis modifiers (allowing for shifts between HA and DA) and Refine and Implement approaches (enabling year-long, post-award, co-creation processes and contingency planning) can provide a bridge between HA and DA. However, the mechanisms are not always well understood or utilized, and sometimes even the most well-laid plans fracture in implementation. A guidance document co-developed by the Office of Acquisitions and Assistance, C4R, and PPL has been a valuable resource for Missions looking to embed more flexibility in their programming awards.

## KEY ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS

The operational agenda articulated in the Resilience Policy has been implemented through JPCs and RFCs due to a set of circumstances and enablers unique to these situations. For RFCs, the most prominent enablers are supportive Mission and office leadership; funding allocated specifically to resilience programming; staff, such as Resilience Coordinators, dedicated to collaboration across technical teams (including humanitarian); support from the C4R; and the ability of staff to understand and apply what USAID means by resilience in planning, design, and implementation of programs. Additional enablers include the RTWG and RLC, concrete resources through learning events, and guidance on how to implement resilience programming in RFCs.

The disconnect between DA/HA processes, culture, and timelines are key impediments for coordination between DA and HA actors and ultimately for Resilience Policy implementation. The main internal constraints are the

ENABLERS	CONSTRAINTS
-C4R, RTWG, RLC	-DA/HA coordination
-Mission/Office leadership	-Resilience funding
-RFC resilience funding	-Location and understanding of roles for Resilience Coordinator
-Resilience Coordinators	-Technical silos and reporting requirements
-HA/DA collaboration in the field	-Agency of FSNs to provide support
-Proper use of crisis modifiers	-Staff understanding of resilience and contract mechanisms
-JPC mandate for HA/DA collaboration	-Evidence base
-Resources, learning events, workshops	

different mandates of HA and DA, as well as procurement and implementation timelines, country-specific Mission objectives, capacities of partners, limited local systems strengthening, and funding streams. An often overlooked facilitating or impeding factor is the agency and ability of FSNs to take ownership and have decision-making power to implement the policy within a Mission, given their more sustainable and long-standing positions between FSO rotations. Given the long-term nature of achieving resilience, limited procurement timelines are a common impediment to DA, especially in a portfolio that crosses so many sectors and actors. Finally, establishing an evidence base for these efforts and their collective impact is a challenge and it is still being built, although many data collection and methodology development exercises will soon be completed or have been recently.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **USAID leadership in DC and Missions should elevate their commitment to embedding a resilience approach into top-level Agency and Mission priorities and encourage the allocation of additional funding, or more strategic use of existing funding, for its implementation beyond Focus Countries.**
  - Review existing portfolios in non-RFCs and identify resilience projects and activities.
  - Develop a “second tier” focus country fund for priority non-RFCs with a clear need for resilience programming.
  - Assign the RLC a more active role to support resilience policy implementation.
  - Commit to embedding resilience across the CDCS and portfolio.
  - Utilize collaboration between C4R, the RLC, and RTWG to develop a Senior Management Team-Level Resilience Leadership Bootcamp for RFC and DC Leadership (also encouraged for non-RFCs).
  - Include resilience-specific guidance in USAID planning and reporting processes.
2. **USAID leadership at the Agency and OU levels should reduce internal structural barriers, increase incentives, and increase support to both USAID staff and IPs to conduct joint design, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation across technical silos within DA to support resilience programming.**
  - Invest in multisectoral programming in specific geographic zones in an organized, sequential, and complementary way to build individual and systemic resilience capacities.
  - Incorporate incentives, motives, and mandates for multisectoral planning and co-design into processes like performance reviews through HR, and through COs to incorporate the same into award language.
  - Integrate a resilience lens and strengthen coordination across key related sectors: agriculture, nutrition, education, health, livelihood diversification, empowerment of women and youth; and strengthen local safety nets and shock-responsive mechanisms.
  - Focus MEL systems on shared outcome tracking.
  - Increase collaboration to develop indicators and align reporting processes by DO teams.
3. **USAID should pursue ways to strengthen and operationalize coordination between HA and DA, ideally across the HDP nexus, and articulate how to practically facilitate this coordination in the new policy.**
  - Elaborate on the approach for DA/HA coordination for RFCs and Mission-level planning.

- Support governments to develop, implement, and mainstream national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and response policies and systems across sectors.
  - Develop benchmarks from national level sources to easily identify shifts between HA and DA, monitored by the Resilience Coordinator in RFCs.
  - Design and elaborate on the operationalization of BHA's Recovery, Risk Reduction and Resilience Framework in relation to resilience programming and synergies with DA.
  - Reinforce training and information provided to IPs, AORs/CORs, COs/AOs about shock responsive and adaptive management acquisition and assistance tools.
  - Assess local systems and structures that can be strengthened to support HA and DA.
  - Stress adaptive management, flexibility, and preparedness with IPs (e.g. DRM/disaster response).
  - Deploy relief teams from organizations with DA bases of operations in the region to facilitate quicker set-up and resource transition during times of crisis when feasible and beneficial.
4. **In the spirit of elevating Resilience as an Agency-wide priority, the Resilience Coordinators and cross-office structures in all RFCs should be further empowered and supported by Mission and USAID/Washington resources and leadership. Additionally, the Agency should consider appointing multi-sectoral integration Points of Contact in non-RFC Missions, who will focus on cross-sectoral connections across Agency programs using various lenses.**
- Increase support for the Resilience coordinator (for RFCs) or Multi-sectoral Integration POC (for non-RFCs) to bridge the gap across technical sectors for resilience integration.
5. **USAID's Resilience Policy should be revised to include most sectors and countries in its conceptual framework, while maintaining a set of RFCs (which could be expanded).**
- Ensure clarity in policy operationalization for the food security sector in emergency and development settings.
  - Ensure the policy is general enough for application across the Agency through a conceptual framework to illustrate how other sectors fit into resilience.
  - Address climate change, disease outbreaks and global health security, and violent conflict and peacebuilding in such a conceptual framework.
  - Develop accompanying guidance with sector-specific examples, emphasizing strengthening resilience and local systems across sectors.
6. **The C4R, RTWG, and associated Bureaus should make resilience more accessible and practical through guidance accompanying the revised Policy, which interprets existing sectoral concepts and approaches through a resilience lens.**
- Develop more guidance with examples and good practices for coordinating implementation of resilience broadly at the Agency level and for individual sectors (without being prescriptive) across HA and DA, and between different types of DA.
  - Identify opportunities for sequencing, layering, and integrating) DA and HA activities, considering the entire resilience-adjacent portfolio and contract mechanisms for resource shifts.

- Develop an online Resilience Toolkit with guidance for multisectoral coordination and sectoral sub-pages that include links to specific guidance, policies, examples, and platforms.
7. **The C4R and RTWG should support RFC Missions to develop an overarching Resilience RF for their portfolios and develop accompanying how-to guidance.**
- Capture the interrelationships between sectors and sectoral outcomes that come together to achieve overarching resilience objectives in these RFs.
  - Develop a Resilience RF and indicator handbook with sector-specific examples of activities that contribute to resilience for non-RFC and food security actors. This can be part of the Toolkit.
8. **USAID should develop or articulate clear definitions for how resilience is measured, including through both sector-specific and more general indicators, tied to the conceptual framework. This will allow portfolios to capture this nuanced concept at the Strategy, Project and Activity levels of the PC.**
- Use clear definitions and guidance at each level of the PC.
  - Develop multi-sectoral measurement that encourages adaptive management at the CDCS level, prioritizing the use of complexity-aware monitoring tools and data collection.
  - Promote collaboration within Missions for multi-sectoral measurement approaches.
  - Refresh and amplify existing measurement tools with guidance for addressing significant changes in population within the resilience zone.

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Nine years ago, in 2012, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) published a policy document titled *Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis: Policy and Program Guidance* (2012). This Policy Implementation Assessment (PIA) examines the extent to which the Resilience Policy has shaped USAID processes and programming, determines whether and how the Agency has achieved policy objectives, identifies gaps, collects lessons learned to strengthen implementation, and aims to contribute to the current revision of this policy. PIAs are commissioned five or more years after the release of a policy by USAID’s Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) although the Resilience Policy is nearing ten years old and is currently being revised. The assessments are based on the original content of the policies and designed to examine outcomes achieved, identify impediments and facilitating factors, and explore ways in which the policy’s implementation has evolved over time. This PIA will provide evidence and recommendations for the Agency’s Center for Resilience (C4R)<sup>1</sup> and policy drafting team’s consideration in their revision of the policy. For other broader Agency and partner stakeholders, this PIA provides an overview of the Resilience Policy’s implementation history and potential future in design and implementation.

**FIGURE 1: RESILIENCE AT USAID**

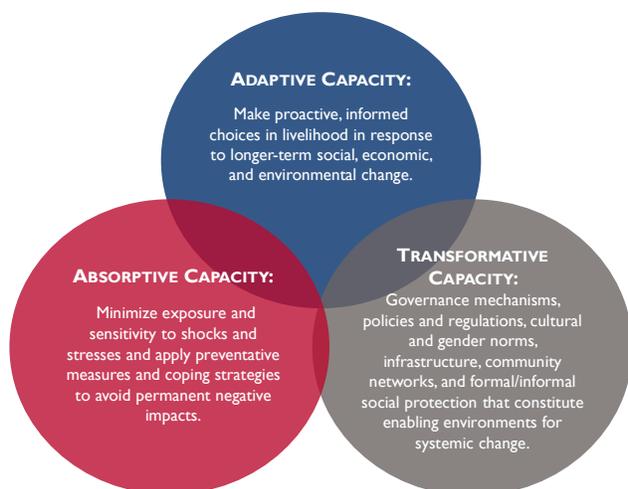
**RESILIENCE**

For USAID, **resilience** is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to **mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses** in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

In order to reach these goals, we must strengthen the way we work as an agency. Too often, our humanitarian development arms operate in separate geographic locations, to separate problems, with separate goals. To effectively build resilience we must unite our approaches.

-USAID Resilience Policy, 2012

**FIGURE 2: OVERLAPPING CAPACITIES REQUIRED TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE**



## RESILIENCE POLICY OVERVIEW

The Resilience Policy was written in response to two devastating humanitarian crises: the Horn of Africa (HoA)’s worst drought in sixty years in 2011; and the conflict and drought conditions that perennially plague the Sahel region. USAID defines resilience as the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. Put even more simply “resilience is the ability to manage through adversity and change without compromising future well-being<sup>2</sup>.” The policy was drafted to articulate USAID’s vision for a

<sup>1</sup> The Center for Resilience (C4R) was created in 2014 as a small team and is now a large Office inside the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS).

<sup>2</sup> Integrating Resilience into Activity Design and Implementation: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1drQrTbegXm6IBCKyLdgl9k9VhyetyOhXXG7FPvPOeOs/edit>.

sustainable reduction in humanitarian need and recurrent crises that often derail development outcomes. Through this policy, USAID has sought to improve the adaptive capacity, and social and economic conditions of vulnerable populations, to address and reduce their risk levels, and to ultimately decrease humanitarian need in the long term (see Figure 2). The policy aimed to tackle the issue of resilience to crises from all sides, building the capacity and resilience of both systems and people to better withstand shocks and stressors. It set a high-level goal of benefiting 10 million people and reducing the region’s emergency caseload by one million people within five years in the HoA. The implementation of the policy has been spearheaded by the C4R.

Just prior to the policy’s release, a Joint Planning Cell (JPC)<sup>3</sup> model for strategic planning and implementation to strengthen resilience was established. The goal was to coordinate development assistance (DA) and humanitarian assistance (HA) better and more efficiently in the HoA and reduce the impact of humanitarian crises. The following year, another JPC was created for the Sahel, integrating lessons learned from the HoA JPC to more effectively respond to the humanitarian crises that crossed country borders. The Sahel JPC spanned multiple funding streams and stretched the limits of “typical” DA. These JPCs operated outside of the Program Cycle (PC) due to the urgent needs of the populations being served by the expedited and collaborative joint planning and programming processes. One of the key intentions behind the JPCs and their operation outside of the PC was to provide a structure for the collaboration between HA and DA teams articulated in the policy. This structure was necessary because HA and DA operate under different Bureaus, funding streams, timelines, and core objectives. HA is now based in the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA); it was previously based in the Legacy office of Food for Peace (L-FFP) and Legacy Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (L-OFDA) in the former Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA). In the “typical” realm of USAID assistance, these separate structures allow HA teams to respond expeditiously to emergencies and DA teams to operate under longer-term planning horizons. However, in the multisectoral world of resilience as envisioned by the policy, there was a need for more collaborative structures between HA teams formerly in L-FFP and L-OFDA (now BHA) and DA teams within Missions (specifically bilateral and regional Missions in the HoA and the Sahel).

Though the JPCs themselves were temporary structures, the policy articulated a similar approach to joint planning and implementation in the PC in a subset of Missions designated to be Resilience Focus Countries (RFCs). These are countries and corresponding sub-national resilience focus zones (RFZs, which are the geographic zones identified as the most vulnerable to recurrent crises and most in need of resilience programming) that USAID Mission leadership and the Resilience Leadership Council (RLC) prioritize for support and investment to build resilience to recurrent and protracted crises and advance progress towards country-led sustainable development. Since the policy’s inception, there have been two rounds of RFCs selected: eight original (seven of which were part of the Horn and Sahel JPCs, plus Nepal) and seven new RFCs selected in 2019, primarily expanded to central and southern Africa (plus Haiti). RFCs were originally chosen from the countries that already had, or were planning for, L-FFP Title II food security activities, where Feed the Future (FtF) activities could also operate. These two funding streams still form the backbone of resilience

**TABLE 1: ORIGINAL AND NEW RFCS**

ORIGINAL RFCS	NEW RFCS
Burkina Faso	DRC
Ethiopia	Haiti
Kenya	Malawi
Mali	Mozambique
Nepal*	Nigeria
Niger	South Sudan
Somalia	Zimbabwe
Uganda	

\*Originally selected, later removed

<sup>3</sup> USAID created Joint Planning Cells (JPCs) in the HoA and the Sahel bringing together relief and development teams to identify ways to sequence, layer, and integrate (SLI) HA and development programs around the shared goal of building resilience. The HoA JPC consisted of staff in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Food for Peace (L-FFP). The Sahel JPC included staff in Niger, Burkina, Feed the Future (FtF), and L-FFP.

programming, but the criteria for selecting RFCs have expanded into a more structured list that was used to select the second set of countries.

The policy’s four-point operational agenda as shown in Figure 3 articulates a framework for the approach: joint analysis and strategic planning, mutually informed project design, and robust learning across HA and DA to adaptively manage and pivot programs in dynamic conditions where greater than usual flexibility is required. As an outcome of the Resilience Policy, a set of RFCs was designated by the RLC to receive prioritized funding and support from USAID/Washington. The RFC Missions use components of the operational agenda guided by the resilience principles listed in Figure 4 to design programming that strengthens resilience to shocks and stresses. Within RFZs, programming is designed to build the adaptive, transformative, and absorptive capacities<sup>4</sup> of people, communities, and systems, and to facilitate coordination among DA and HA teams.

**FIGURE 3: POLICY OPERATIONAL AGENDA**

OPERATIONAL AGENDA
• Joint Problem Setting
• Intensified, Coordinated Strategic Planning
• Mutually-Informed Project Design
• Robust Learning

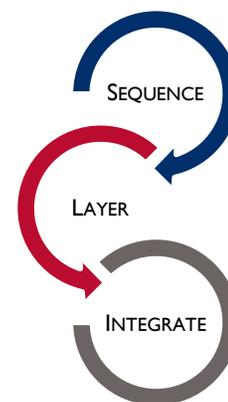
**FIGURE 4: POLICY RESILIENCE PRINCIPLES**

RESILIENCE PRINCIPLES
• Build Resilience as a Common Objective
• Create and Foster Linkages
• Enable Host Country/Regional Ownership
• Focus on the Long Term

One approach outlined in the operational agenda (see Figure 5) is to sequence, layer, and integrate (SLI) HA and DA based on context-driven needs of the geographic focus zone and target population. SLI includes the coordination, planning, and implementation of shifts from DA to HA in response to crises, and then back to DA as the shocks subside.

Since the policy’s inception, resilience as a concept and objective for programming has expanded to be used at the Agency in non-food security sectors, including global health, education, democracy, rights, and governance (DRG), and non-RFC Missions with an interest and need for resilience programming.

**FIGURE 5: APPROACH TO HA/DA COORDINATION**



Two entities that were created - the RLC in 2014 and the Resilience Technical Working Group (RTWG) in 2018 - are critical to providing cohesion and direction to the resilience sector at USAID. The RLC provides strategic oversight and is co-chaired by the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) and BHA, with participation from the Bureaus for Global Health (GH), Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and Asia. The RTWG is composed of representatives with equities related to the RLC and serves as the Secretariat for the RLC. For a continued introduction to

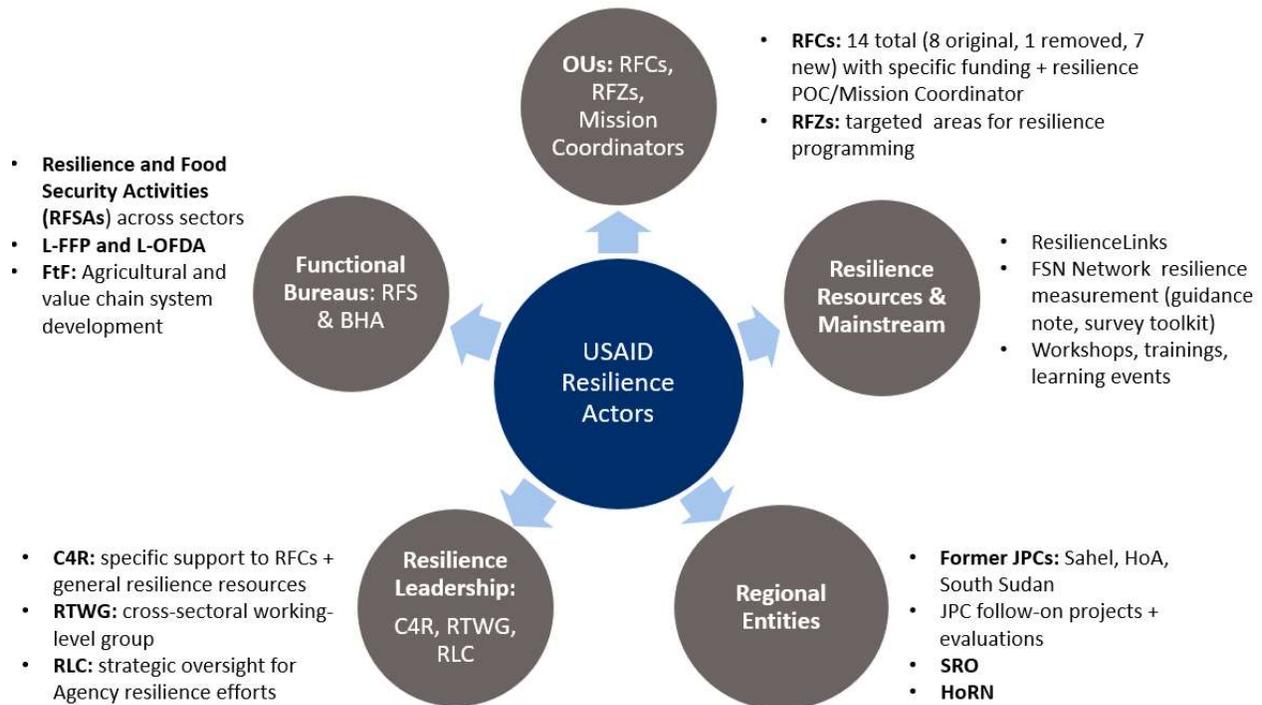
<sup>4</sup> For more information on resilience capacities and their measurement, see the Discussion Note on resilience in activity design (2021):

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1drQrTbegXm6lBCkyLdgJ9k9VhyetyOqXXG7FPvPQeQs/edit> and the RESILIENCE MEASUREMENT PRACTICAL GUIDANCE NOTE SERIES # 3: Resilience Capacity Measurement Guide produced under the REAL Associate Award: [https://resiliencelinks.org/system/files/download-count/documents/2019-08/gn03\\_resilience\\_capacity\\_measurement\\_final508\\_0.pdf](https://resiliencelinks.org/system/files/download-count/documents/2019-08/gn03_resilience_capacity_measurement_final508_0.pdf).

resilience, refer to the [Resilience 101](#) online course and this [video](#).<sup>5</sup> For more in-depth resilience resources, visit [ResilienceLinks](#) (the Agency’s knowledge sharing and resilience resource platform).

Figure 6 below provides a graphic overview of the different actors across USAID’s resilience landscape.

**FIGURE 6: USAID RESILIENCE LANDSCAPE**



## METHODOLOGY

### ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The assessment questions (AQs) were developed by PPL in coordination with the C4R and revised with the participation of the assessment team. The final AQ sub-questions were derived from a much larger set and refined to target the most salient lines of inquiry needed to understand the policy’s implementation to date. The questions address implementation in RFCs and technical areas like food security and drought response, which are typically associated with resilience, as well as mainstreaming in other Missions and sectors. The questions focus on existing evidence of impact and outcomes in RFCs and the early JPC process, the efforts to build an evidence base to track progress toward the policy’s goal, USAID’s institutional support structures for policy implementation, and recommendations for the policy’s revision.

- **AQ1:** How robustly was the agenda for operational change outlined in the 2012 Resilience Policy applied through the Joint Planning Cells (JPCs) across humanitarian and development assistance?
- **AQ2:** What is the evidence that USAID has applied the agenda for operational change through the Program Cycle (PC) and in HA in Resilience Focus Countries (RFC), and if so, how?

<sup>5</sup> View a longer version of the resilience overview [video](#).

- **AQ3:** What are the processes, methods, and data that USAID has employed to build an evidence base for tracking outcomes of programs with resilience-related components over time? To what degree have RFCs been able to demonstrate progress towards the policy’s goal of reducing chronic vulnerability and the need for HA?
- **AQ4:** How have the Agency at large and RFC Missions promoted implementation of USAID’s Resilience Policy through staffing and leadership structures, leadership support, staff skills, and staff incentives, and how have these evolved over time?
- **AQ5:** Have the concepts and approaches outlined in the Resilience Policy evolved and been utilized across the Agency beyond RFCs and the food security sector, and if so, how?
- **AQ6:** How should the content of USAID’s Resilience Policy and related implementation efforts evolve to better support USAID’s goal of building resilience to recurrent crises and potentially beyond areas of recurrent crisis?

## METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

The assessment team conducted a mixed methods assessment from December 2020 to November 2021. The assessment began with question refinement, concept note development, and methodology design through February; data collection through June; data analysis and writing through August; and final report writing and presentations through November 2021. The methodology included document review, a survey, key informant interviews (KIs), deep dives of Operating Units (OUs), analysis of resilience funding data, and a co-creation workshop.

**TABLE 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED ACROSS THE PC**

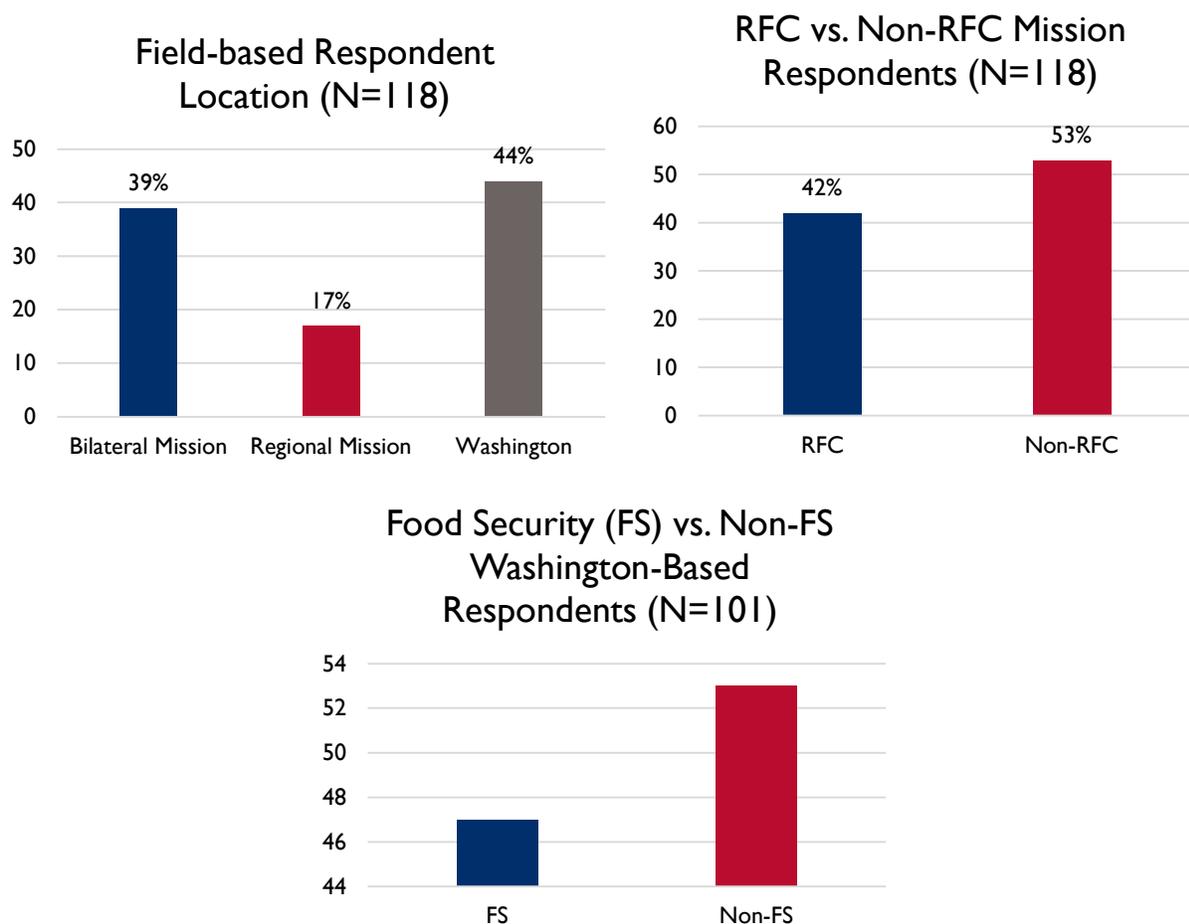
DOCUMENT	NVIVO AUTOMATED TEXT MINING			MANUAL CODING & SCORING			
	Type	RFCs	Non	Total	RFCs	Non	Total
CDCS/Strategic Framework		12	55	67	12	55	67
PAD		23	133	156	7	13	20
Solicitation		73	26	99	14	7	21
Total		115	207	322	33	75	108

**Document Review (DR):** The team reviewed and analyzed, to varying degrees of detail, approximately 400 documents covering the entire Agency over the period of 2013-2021. The document review included a more in-depth examination of PC documents for a sample of RFCs and non-RFCs, and a less in-depth review of documents related to non-food security Washington-based OUs (e.g., Health, Education), evaluations, training materials, monitoring and evaluation documents, and other resources found on ResilienceLinks. The team used NVivo software to undertake automated text mining (keyword searches) of 322 PC documents (see Table 2), including Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs), Project Appraisal Documents (PADs), and solicitations. The 67 CDCSs were collected from ProgramNet and publicly available USAID repositories; the 156 PADs were derived from the PAD repository on ProgramNet and from documents provided by USAID staff working on resilience; and the sample of 99 solicitations came from keyword searches related to resilience on sam.gov. The team stratified the universe of 322 resilience-focused PC documents by RFC vs. non-RFC, geographic zone, and sector and then manually coded and scored 108 of those PC documents for alignment with the policy. All 67 available CDCSs for both RFCs and non-RFCs were coded for resilience references in the Results Framework (RF) and broad resilience alignment, while the 11 RFC CDCSs and one Strategic Framework were manually coded and scored in-depth for policy alignment. The instruments used to score each of the PC documents

are located in Annex 2, along with a deeper analysis and presentation of results. The scoring instruments consisted of 12 questions with scaled options for the breadth and depth of alignment with the Resilience Policy’s operational agenda and principles.

**Survey (S):** The team created a survey intended to elicit information on the integration of Resilience Policy concepts both within and beyond RFCs. In coordination with the C4R and relevant OUs, it identified listservs for targeting respondents from RFCs, non-RFCs, food security sector stakeholders, and non-food security sector stakeholders. The survey elicited 219 responses across USAID OUs, with 118 staff located in the field (50 respondents from RFCs and 68 from non-RFCs) and 101 staff based in Washington (47 food security stakeholders and 54 non-food security stakeholders), as shown in Figure 7.

**FIGURE 7: SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE: DC VS MISSION RESPONDENT PROFILES**



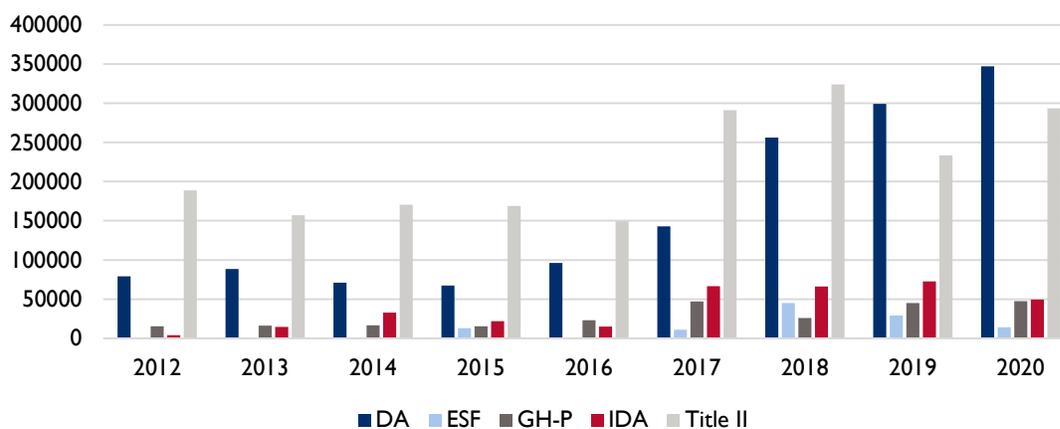
**Interviews (I):** The team conducted KIIs with 35 individuals including Washington-based staff in the C4R, BHA, and the RTWG; Mission staff from new and original RFCs as well as non-RFCs; Washington-based staff in GH, DDI’s Center for Education, and CPS; and staff on the Resilience Evaluation, Analysis, and Learning (REAL) Activity.

**Deep Dives:** The team used a mixed methods approach to explore the resilience-related work in a sample of OUs and strategic planning processes more deeply. To understand the JPC process outside of the PC for AQI, the team focused on the HoA JPC (Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia) and the Sahel

Regional Office (SRO) JPC (Burkina Faso and Niger) as case studies. To understand how RFCs, non-RFCs, and non-food security sectors operated within the PC for AQ2 and AQ5, the team explored RFCs (DRC, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Ethiopia), non-RFCs (Nepal, Bangladesh, Ghana, Senegal) and non-food security sectors (health, conflict prevention and stabilization, market systems and economic growth, and education).

**Resilience Funding Data:** The team conducted an analysis of resilience funding data at the Agency by program area to review the dollar amounts attributed to resilience programming from 2012-2020, as shown in Figure 8 below. Resilience programming requires the strategic and geographic convergence of various sector and humanitarian and development resources in RFZs, so resilience funding is not a specific Congressional earmark; it comes from various types of funding, each delivering on its own mandate and together helping build resilience to recurrent and protracted crises. The types of funding contributing to resilience are depicted in the Resilience Funding graphic below and include DA (which includes Agriculture, Education, WASH, and other types of funding); ESF: Economic Support Funds; GH-P: Global Health Programs; IDA: International Disaster Assistance; Title II: emergency and non-emergency food assistance. The largest sources of funding for RFZs have been Title II and DA EG.3 Agriculture.

**FIGURE 8: RESILIENCE FUNDING BY TYPE AND YEAR**



**Recommendations Co-Creation Workshop:** Once the analysis was done and findings and initial recommendations were developed, the team conducted a co-creation workshop with 15 participants from C4R, BHA, RFS, DDI, CPS, Missions, and PPL to refine, ground-truth, and operationalize recommendations for the report. The recommendations were first drafted by the assessment team based on the findings and initial analysis. After a brief presentation on the key findings, the group separated into three breakout sessions using working slides to focus on revising, deleting, amplifying, and prioritizing provisional recommendations within two key categories: (1) operationalizing resilience, and (2) the HA/DA nexus.

## LIMITATIONS

The inability to travel to conduct the deep dives in person due to the pandemic was an early limitation that required pivoting; however, given the availability of remote resources and virtual interviews, it did not affect the validity or representativeness of the findings as compared to an in-person exercise.

Due to the length of time that had passed, lack of formal documentation, and the fact that they operated outside the PC, institutional records and individual recall regarding the history of the JPCs was limited, which impacted the understanding of the historical outcomes and original challenges with the JPCs for

AQ1. To mitigate this recall limitation, the team had to fill in many details using documentation and institutional memory of long-serving C4R staff and annual reports from JPCs. This affected the team's ability to obtain fully objective data around the robustness of the JPC outcomes and perfectly capture challenges faced that have likely or potentially since been mitigated. Similarly, because of the rapid nature of emergency assistance processes, there is a lack of available documents for L-OFDA operations and some L-FFP activities, which affected the ability to obtain documented results from BHA activities therefore requiring reliance on peoples' memories.

With respect to AQs 1-4 and 6, the team had a 78 percent response rate to the initial list of key informants targeted for KIs because a few RFC points of contact were unavailable during the study period. To mitigate any non-response limitation for KIs, the team obtained responses from the missing interviewees via the survey using similar questions. The team did speak with a purposive sample of old and new RFC Resilience Coordinators to increase generalizability of the findings across the portfolio. Additionally, the team was only able to speak with one to two individuals in each RFC Mission, limiting the full understanding of the multisectoral nature of resilience and the challenges in implementation. For AQ2, the team leaned heavily on document review but in hindsight would have benefited from more interviews with key Mission stakeholders working within the portfolio (beyond Resilience Coordinators). To mitigate these limitations, all text was reviewed by multiple RFC and RTWG stakeholders to ground-truth findings and provide any missing details.

For the document review supporting AQ2, the team reviewed PADs posted to the internal project design site (on ProgramNet). However, the number of these from recent years is limited due to minimal uploads of these documents to the centralized repository. This limited database of PADs may lead to an unrepresentative sample or incomplete awareness of existing examples of resilience at the Agency, especially in conflict zones or sensitive environments. The extent of this problem is difficult to estimate because we do not know what we do not know. To mitigate issues with availability or awareness, the team asked survey respondents to include the names of any relevant PADs we should review or consider. Furthermore, the team did not have access to some of the annexes for PADs, CDCSs, and solicitations due to various security restrictions and knowledge management system limitations, which could affect the visibility into additional analyses or assessments completed alongside the document or more robust descriptions of resilience-specific Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA). Generally, these annexes are at least referenced in the body of the document or table of contents and the team's inability to access them likely does not have wide-reaching effects on broader findings. If done again, the team would ask for all relevant PADs and solicitations with full annexes from Resilience Coordinators early in the process rather than using document repositories that have inherent faults to populate the document review sample.

One limitation affecting AQ5 on mainstreaming of resilience at USAID was that the survey was sent to targeted listservs that were identified with the support of key OUs, but only some of the respondents replied, introducing self-selection bias. This could lead to a limited or unrepresentative view of resilience at USAID writ large and affect the generalizability of findings on staff familiarity with the Resilience Policy and resilience principles. This in turn could affect the full understanding of the depth and breadth of resilience integration at USAID. This was not the primary focus of the AQ however, and the final sample of respondents did represent a majority of Washington OUs and Missions from all regions, both RFCs and non-RFCs. Therefore, the team expects that some biases were mitigated and that those familiar with resilience responded, which was the aim. If done again, the assessment team would target specific points of contact (POCs) from identified offices in all Missions and Washington Bureaus, sending the survey directly (perhaps through Resilience Coordinators) to ensure representation across a purposive sample.

In sum, these combined limitations affect the team's awareness of all examples of resilience implementation across the agency as well as all challenges and outcomes in Policy implementation, but do not affect the

generalizability or validity of the findings presented in this assessment given that the team collected data from an interview sample of more than 75 percent of RFCs, held KIIs with all relevant OUs for the mainstreaming AQ, and reviewed a purposive sample of all pertinent documents for all RFCs and many non-RFCs across the PC for AQ2 on the PC.

## FINDINGS

The findings are organized by research question. The team derived the findings for each question using the following three standard methods: document review findings, survey findings, and interview findings. Supplemental data from each of the relevant data sources is provided underneath each high-level finding and the data source is indicated via acronym (DR for document review, S for survey, I for interview).

## OPERATIONAL AGENDA APPLICATION THROUGH JPCS IN THE SAHEL AND HOA

### JPCs OVERVIEW

A JPC is a group of USAID humanitarian and development experts from different disciplines who work together to analyze the root causes of vulnerability in a particular geographic area and develop a resilience strategy and programming. This structure was used to develop a regional strategy for resilience in key vulnerable areas in the HoA, in response to the devastating 2011 drought, and replicated in the Sahel in early 2012. The JPCs emphasized cross-team collaboration among HA and DA teams. The JPCs' objectives were similar to that of a Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCCS) but they operated outside of the PC and focused exclusively on resilience. The JPCs had four main objectives aligned with the (then forthcoming) operational agenda in the Resilience Policy: 1) joint problem analysis and objective setting to establish a common understanding of the underlying causes of recurrent crises; 2) intensified, coordinated strategic planning around resilience to ensure that risks, vulnerabilities, and probable humanitarian needs have been considered when developing strategies; 3) mutually informed project design and procurements that enable the sequencing, layering and integrating of HA and DA; and 4) robust learning to develop appropriate indicators, pivot activities based on evidence, and share lessons learned across the Agency to improve implementation elsewhere.

The HoA and Sahel JPCs were temporary in nature and phased out in 2013 and 2014, replaced by more permanent structures inside the PC for RFCs. The joint strategic planning, design, and implementation among the key stakeholders continue in the Horn through the Horn of Africa Resilience Network (HoRN) and in the Sahel through the SRO and Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) II Project. Subsequent resilience planning is now part of either a continuation of the JPC (e.g., the HoRN, RISE II and SRO), R/CDCS approaches, and/or has moved into the project-level planning for resilience-related activities with funding from RFS and BHA.

### HOA JPC: NOW THE HORN OF AFRICA RESILIENCE NETWORK (HORN)

**Overview:** The first JPC created by USAID or HoA JPC, now called the HoRN, was established in September 2011. It was coordinated through the FtF Program with the Africa Bureau, former Bureau for Food Security (BFS) (now RFS), and the former DCHA Bureau. It was a regional resilience planning structure with staff designated to the JPC from Kenya, Ethiopia, and East Africa Regional Missions, and former L-OFDA and L-FFP (now both BHA). The JPC expanded around 2016 to include Uganda, DRC, and Somalia. The objective was and still is to strengthen regional and cross-border collaboration for

stronger resilience and to improve evidence-based learning. While it included the East Africa Mission as a key stakeholder, it is not based in the East Africa Mission as a regional structure. The Regional Resilience Coordinator led the JPC process with support from individual appointed Resilience Advisors and Coordinators in the Missions; this structure continues through the HoRN today. The JPC met on a regular basis to plan and design responsive resilience programs targeted in the RFZs as shown in Figure 9. Since 2013, the HoRN has led the facilitating function in strategic planning for resilience in the region.

**TABLE 3: HOA JPC PLANNED TIMELINE<sup>6</sup>**

PHASE	TIMING	ACTIONS
Phase I	9/2011	Initial planning, scoping, prioritization, and focus
Phase II	12/2011 - 2/2012	Strategic Framework and Results Development
Phase III	4/2012	Project Design for new procurements and to adjust existing ones throughout the region (e.g., PRIME, REGAL, DFSAs, LAND, WATER, PSNP, RAIN, PEACE) <sup>7</sup>
Phase IV	2/2013	First JPC meeting in Ethiopia
Phase V	Late 2013-2016	Implementation, Management, Monitoring and Learning. Formerly JPC now called HoRN
Phase VI	6/2016-11/2016  10/2017	Develop Resilience Framework 2.0 2017-2021  Resilience Evidence Forum with 150 USAID, partners, donors, Non-governmental Organizations, United Nations, academia, private sector, country officials
Phase VII	2017-2021	Implementation Management, Monitoring, and Learning of RRF 2.0 (e.g., PRIME, PREG, RFSAs) <sup>8</sup>

According to the HoA JPC 2013 Annual Report, each USAID Mission that formed part of the original JPC (Kenya, Ethiopia, East Africa) received additional funding for resilience-related activities starting in 2011. This new funding totaled \$178 million over a five-year period and allowed an additional \$451 million of program activities to be leveraged from other USAID programs. The goal of the HoA JPC was to directly benefit 10 million people and reduce the region's emergency caseload by one million people during a drought of 2011 magnitude within five years<sup>9</sup>.

The structure of the HoA JPC was and still is effective for implementing the Resilience Policy's operational agenda. It operationalized joint analysis and planning processes across HA and DA teams, designed mutually informed projects, and adapted programming using robust learning, including evidence forums and workshops in the HoA (I, DR). Since creation, it has expanded to include geographic zones in Uganda, Somalia, and DRC under the HoRN.

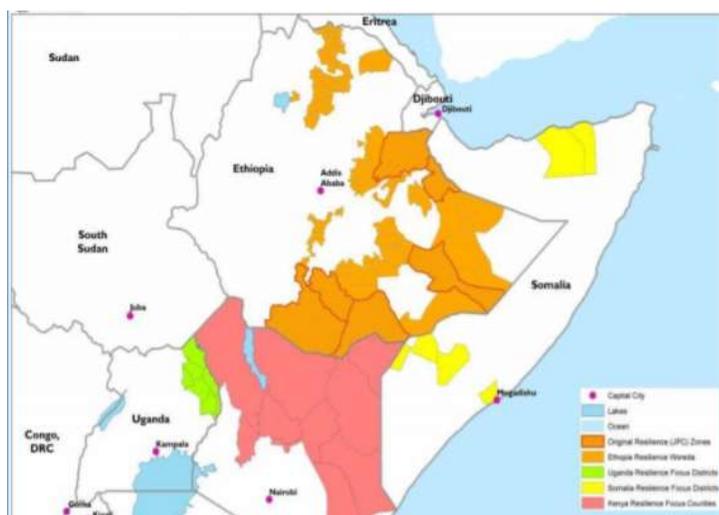
<sup>6</sup> For more information on the original JPC structure, activities, and achievements see the HoA JPC Annual Report 2013: [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Horn\\_of\\_Africa\\_JPC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2013\\_1.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Horn_of_Africa_JPC_Annual_Report_2013_1.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> PRIME: Pastoralists' Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion Activity; REGAL: Resilience and Economic Growth in Arid Lands; DFSA: Development Food Security Activity; LAND: Land Administration and Nurture Development Program; WATER: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Transformation for Enhanced Resilience Program; PSNP: Productive Safety Net Program; RAIN (extended as RAIN+): Revitalizing Agricultural/Pastoral Incomes and New Markets Program.

<sup>8</sup> RRF: Regional Resilience Framework; PREG: Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth Activity; RFSAs: Resilience Food Security Activity.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

**FIGURE 9: MAP OF HOA JPC ZONE**



### **Joint Strategic Planning and Analysis:**

One outcome of the JPC was a cohesive and co-created strategic plan, also called the HoA Resilience and Growth Action Plan. The Plan involved the creation of a [Regional Resilience Framework \(RRF\)](#),<sup>10</sup> which delineated the joint understanding of the resilience approach in the region. It was first created in 2012 (RRF 1.0), revised in 2016 (RRF 2.0) covering the 2017-2021 period, and still forms the foundation for resilience planning and programming in the region. The RRF was redesigned as part of the 2016 HoRN Annual Meeting, the agenda for which can be found [here](#). It was drafted by USAID staff with key stakeholder consultations to guide

resilience investments<sup>11</sup> in the HoA and facilitate collaboration towards a common resilience objective. It also designated HoRN RFZs, shown in Figure 9 in orange with a border, as well as country-level RFZs in Kenya (pink), Ethiopia (orange), Uganda (green), and Somalia (yellow). Somalia, also now part of the HoRN, has its own Resilience Framework that is complementary to its Strategic Framework given its unique environment.

Aligned with the principles of CLA, the HoRN also includes USAID implementing partners (IPs) with programs operating in the resilience-focused and -aligned zones of influence. In line with the Resilience Policy and evolution of resilience thinking at the Agency, the HoA RRF<sup>12</sup> explicitly recognizes that shocks and stresses are a persistent feature of the drylands of the HoA. The RRF 2.0 is structured around three primary objectives that align with the Resilience Policy's evolution at the Agency. In particular, its approach represents a move away from a focus on rare mega-crises to a recognition that constant, smaller-scale shocks and stresses are keeping communities locked in a chronic cycle of poverty.<sup>13</sup>

Resilience remains central to strategic planning documents (both the broader R/CDCSs and resilience-specific HoRN documents). While no longer called a JPC by the Agency, it continues the mandate and processes instituted by that original planning cell. There is still strong evidence of joint strategic planning and analysis between HA and DA in HoA countries.

**Mutually Informed Project Design.** The project designs in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda (I, DR) were informed by both DA and HA actors within the scope of the resilience framework and the geography of the RFZ. The key activities under the HoRN JPC are the Ethiopia Pastoralists' Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME) Activity,<sup>14</sup> Kenya's Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) Activity, Ethiopia Livelihoods for Resilience Learning (L4R) Activity, and L-FFP Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs) in Ethiopia, Uganda, and DRC.

<sup>10</sup> Regional Resilience Framework Report. <https://whatworks.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Regional-Resilience-Framework-report.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Regional\\_Resilience\\_Framework\\_2.0.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Regional_Resilience_Framework_2.0.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Regional\\_Resilience\\_Framework\\_2.0.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Regional_Resilience_Framework_2.0.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.prime-ethiopia.org/>.

Aligned with the operational agenda, an essential component of the HoRN resilience approach is ensuring that humanitarian and development programs that make up the resilience portfolio in each country have the flexibility to respond to the needs of communities and systems during crises. The SLI of projects and activities across HA and DA portfolios is a direct result of joint analysis and planning that utilizes collective impact to promote synergistic effects on resilience in communities.

USAID/Kenya strategically layered new development-funded resilience and economic growth investments in Kenya's arid lands on top of existing, humanitarian-funded World Food Program Food for Asset programs. The new USAID/Kenya Arid Lands Disaster Risk Reduction – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Program was jointly funded by integrated humanitarian and development investments. In Ethiopia, USAID's FtF DA-funded PRIME Program was planned to sequence with the successful humanitarian-funded Revitalizing Agricultural/Pastoral Incomes and New Markets (RAIN) Program. Humanitarian funds were used to extend RAIN activities by 12 months until February 2014, to allow them to be expanded into additional chronically vulnerable areas in the Somali and Oromia regions until PRIME could assume responsibility.

A key enabler of this joint resilience programming design and implementation during the 2012-2013 period was the allowance of multi-year funding for emergency food security programs overseen by senior managers in USAID/Washington and the field (DR). Multi-year funding facilitated longer-term planning horizons for HA funding that could mirror those of DA, enabled smoother HA/DA joint design processes that translated into feasible implementation goals, allowed more efficient shifts between emergency assistance and DA, and aligned operational processes.

One of the facilitating factors for the shifts between DA and HA was the crisis modifier, an adaptive programming contractual mechanism that allows for shifting funding between DA and HA in response to shocks and stressors without a laborious formal contract modification period that requires Contracting Officer (CO) approval. The crisis modifier mechanism can help to layer HA responses to protect continuous DA investments, facilitating shifts from DA to HA funding when shocks and stressors occur and shifts back to DA when the crises end.<sup>15</sup> Its origin and use can be traced to before the Resilience Policy in the Horn in Ethiopia in 2005 and 2009. The original model shifted funding from DA activities to respond to shocks and stressors, while a 2009 revision *added* funding for shocks rather than depleting funding assigned to DA. These enabled USAID development programs to also respond to humanitarian needs, while at the same time adjusting their development activities to further moderate the impact of the drought. For example, livestock value chain programs increased the quantity and frequency of loans to livestock traders to facilitate commercial destocking, as well as to fodder providers. As another example, nutrition programs adjusted behavioral change messaging to advise households how to manage through the drought episode<sup>16</sup>.

This evolution of the crisis modifiers in the Horn, based on iterative learning and practical application, was a lasting outcome that has expanded to more countries outside of the region and more sectors outside of food security (DR, I). Crisis modifiers, however, are not without challenges. While they are cited frequently as a supportive and positive way to shift funding and pivot activities when they work, there are still delays due to the varied bureaucratic structures of HA and DA, and the comfort level of individual team members with the rapid pace involved in moving from DA to HA. DA teams and IPs are used to longer planning horizons, more approval processes, and more time to plan and process, while HA teams are designed to make quick decisions because of the urgent needs in the country. The implementation of crisis modifiers during a crisis can be an uncertain or intimidating process for any organization, Agreement

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<sup>15</sup> <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/11861.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/Quick\\_Facts\\_-\\_Resilience\\_in\\_the\\_Horn\\_of\\_Africa\\_May\\_2017.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/Quick_Facts_-_Resilience_in_the_Horn_of_Africa_May_2017.pdf).

Officer Representatives (AORs)/Contracting Officer Representatives (COR), or CO/Agreement Officer (AO) that has not yet used them.

**Robust Learning.** Each HoA Mission had its own contracting mechanism and partners for supporting baseline and endline surveys, evaluations, and learning and knowledge management support. In Ethiopia, it was the Knowledge Learning and Dissemination Program; in Kenya the FEEDBACK Activity supported baseline surveys and Kenya Program Support provided overarching MEL support. Africa Lead (2013-2019), followed by the Resilience Learning Activity (2020-2025), have supported robust learning in the Horn, through facilitation of regional learning for adaptive management, building local capacity, improving knowledge management and communications, establishing and strengthening systems and networks, and producing research and filling gaps in evidence to strengthen the HoA's capacity. In recent years, the Government of Kenya has collected data consistently from communities on humanitarian caseloads, which has helped USAID to collect data on its *Humanitarian Needs Averted* indicator and pilot it in the region. To share best practices, lessons learned, and emerging evidence the HoA hosted its "JPC" Annual Meeting in Ethiopia in 2016 (hosted by USAID/Ethiopia) and in Nairobi in 2018 (hosted by Kenya/East Africa and Africa Lead), and the C4R hosted a Resilience Evidence Forum in Washington, D.C. in 2017<sup>17</sup>. There were a number of regional workshops organized by the JPC/HoRN, as well as regional resilience trainings and learning events organized by C4R with the REAL, including one in 2019 in Uganda.<sup>18</sup> USAID initiatives complement regional resilience strategies developed by regional partners like Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), who continue to drive the resilience agenda in the region under the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability framework<sup>19</sup>.

Overall, the HoRN and implementation of activities for strengthened resilience in the region are fully aligned with the Resilience Policy and approach that the Agency intended to execute. Despite experiencing some challenges in data collection, telling the resilience story, and achieving full SLI as planned, the framework for the resilience approach is solidly in place.

## THE SAHEL JPC

**Overview:** The Sahel JPC was established in 2012, followed by the creation of the SRO. The JPC's structure included staff from Washington offices (L-FFP<sup>20</sup>, former BFS); staff from country posts in Senegal, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso; and others from the SRO based in Dakar and Senegal. The Sahel JPC provided a vehicle for the integration of HA and DA in the Sahel, emphasizing a strong, intersectoral approach that amplified the potential connections and overlaps between the different funding streams at USAID. Establishing the SRO was useful for garnering more regional and dedicated technical assistance and support. The SRO was the lead for the resilience portfolio in the region — which crossed various regional teams. It aligned with the JPC, drawing on lessons in strategic planning and mutually-informed project design in the HoA. These were embodied in the RISE project<sup>21</sup>, which committed more than \$300 million in new assistance to build resilience in targeted zones in Niger and Burkina Faso to help communities get ahead of the next shock. The RISE project included only the RFZ in Niger and Burkina Faso depicted in Figure 10.

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<sup>17</sup> Resilience Evidence Forum report:

[https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/0717118\\_Resilience.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/0717118_Resilience.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/resource/horn-africa-resilience-workshop-summary-brief>.

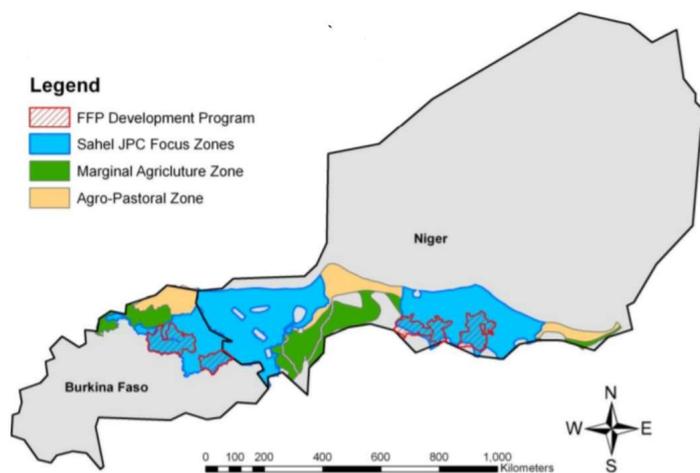
<sup>19</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/east-africa-regional/resilience>.

<sup>20</sup> FFP is now an outdated or "legacy" name, but it was still used by all respondents, rather than the current name BHA (under which both L-OFDA and L-FFP operations are now located).

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/RISE\\_resilience\\_in\\_the\\_sahel\\_enhanced\\_pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/RISE_resilience_in_the_sahel_enhanced_pdf)

Due to the non-presence of USAID Missions at the time in Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania, the SRO allowed more direct management of the resilience portfolio in the RFC RFZs. However, it was not an entirely independent office. The SRO was physically co-located with the Senegal bilateral Mission, so there were still contractual and legal functions covered by the Senegal Mission, staff from which were often not included in the Sahel resilience planning. According to interviews, this led to some confusion and conflicting interpretations of roles and responsibilities among the SRO and Senegal teams, as well as among non-presence country offices at times. Some regional functions for the Sahelian countries, such as relationships with regional organizations like ECOWAS<sup>22</sup>, remained in the West Africa Regional Mission in Accra. Much of the regional oversight for programming (as well as many of the administrative and management responsibilities) for non-presence countries in the Sahel had previously been within the purview of the Senegal Mission and the West Africa Regional Mission in Accra. With the establishment of the Sahel JPC and the SRO to manage it, the six Sahelian countries (Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Senegal) changed in organizational structure.

**FIGURE 10: MAP OF SAHEL RISE FOCUS ZONE**



**Joint Strategic Planning and Analysis:** The timeframe for planning started in May 2012 and continued through (planned) procurement and implementation beginning in May 2013 (see Table 4 for more details). While the formal JPC no longer exists in name, the jointly designed resilience portfolio exists through RISE II (the follow-on project to RISE) and is still managed through the SRO.

**TABLE 4: SAHEL JPC PLANNED TIMELINE**

PHASE	TIMING	ACTIONS
Phase I	5-7/2012	Initial planning, scoping, prioritization and focus
Phase II	8-10/2012	Strategic Framework and Results Development
Phase III	11-12/2012	Project Design for new procurements and to adjust existing ones throughout the region
Phase IV	1-4/2013	Procurement
Phase V	5/2013 onwards	Implementation, Management, Monitoring and Learning.

By FY 2012, HA in the six countries of the Sahel had exceeded \$400 million, affecting just over 10 million people in 2009 to almost doubling HA cases by 2012. There were numerous causes for the dramatic rise in HA, including existing conditions exacerbated by global economic and ecological changes, sudden environmental shocks (pests, drought, floods), the rise of violent conflict/political unrest, and the increased activity/presence of violent extremist organizations throughout the region.

The Sahel JPC was robust in planning for and designing projects within the operational agenda through RISE I and continues to do so through RISE II. Due to procurement impediments discussed below, the implementation of that strategic planning and SLI-centered design was challenging in RISE I. However, its

<sup>22</sup> Economic Community of West African States.

implementation was well documented, and those lessons were eventually integrated into the design of RISE II.

The intention of the JPC was to develop a comprehensive approach to address the relief-recovery-development nexus(es), deliberately aligning HA with DA at household, community, and systems levels. The JPC operated under several specific objectives that drove both strategic geographic and sectoral choices:

- Provide life-saving HA
- Promote resilience of vulnerable populations
- Reduce vulnerability to violent extremism
- Oversee bilateral staff and programs

Some key factors contributed to its success in strategic planning and subsequent mutually-informed project design. The Sahel team conducted detailed analyses of the geographic and sectoral coverage throughout the initial vulnerable band (where rainfall was between 200 and 600 isohyets/annually<sup>23</sup>). This entailed reviews of the FEWS NET<sup>24</sup> data, as the patterns have been changing for millennia but increasingly so. In addition, the JPC considered the activities where USAID had a comparative advantage in terms of existing programming that could be leveraged for additional impact, and where ‘fill in the gap’ programming would create a more comprehensive resilience strategy tied with their strategic framework.

Geographic choices thus started with the ecological and demographic review – reinforced by existing programming in those geographic zones so that there could be enhanced cooperation and coordination among the various activities. There were already numerous activities funded not only by the U.S. (including L-FFP, L-OFDA, and U.S. Department of Agriculture bilateral and regional programs), but also by other international and regional donor agencies throughout the Sahel, with a growing emphasis on re-greening and sustainable agriculture.

In addition to research on rainfall, the strategic design included research on population density, humanitarian caseloads, average annual rainfall deficits (e.g., the length of the rainy season), and general household food insecurity. The strategic sectoral choices also mirrored both the existing portfolios and the Sahel strategic framework, emphasizing vulnerability, comparative advantage (i.e., leveragability) and the enabling environment. This enabling environment included governance at multiple levels as well as regional organizations that already worked on humanitarian and development initiatives. Among the regional organizations, perhaps the most important ones for resilience have been the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (the French acronym is CILSS), and the Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel (AGIR), along with different ECOWAS entities.

With this geographic focus and the underpinning strategy development, the general strategic framework for RISE I became the graphic depiction delineated in Figure 11.

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<sup>23</sup> An isohyet is a line of annual rainfall on a chart, such as a weather map. 250 mms. (10 inches) of rain is considered the dividing line between desert and viable agriculture. The range for the Sahel thus includes both a desert border and one where different types of agriculture would be possible, depending on rainfall.

<sup>24</sup>The Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) Data Center provides access to important data related to food security, including food security classification, administrative boundaries, livelihood zones, remote sensing imagery, prices, and cross-border trade. FEWS NET has consolidated these datasets over many years of work in collaboration with our extensive network of food security partners and stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and global levels. <https://fews.net/data>.

**FIGURE 11: RISE I STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**



**Mutually-Informed Project Design.** RISE I funding was \$330 million from 2013-2018 much of it via L-FFP and then FtF (including L-FFP’s five activities in Niger and Burkina Faso). While there were bilateral programs also included in this portfolio, many of these were both bilaterally-funded and outside the RFZ – although that did not mean that they could not access the resources developed and/or curated by the RISE I MEL activity. The L-FFP activities in both countries started prior to the other three main RISE activities (the two REGIS<sup>25</sup> activities and the Sahel Resilience Learning Activity/SAREL), which all came on-line over the next two years of operation.

SRO developed a regional RFZ using predefined criteria rather than creating individual RFZs in each country because the environmental crises that plague the region do not consider geographic borders in their impact. Some of the activities continued single-country operations (L-FFP development programs), while others (FtF resilience activities of REGIS-ER, REGIS-AG, and SAREL) operated across both countries and provided additional capacity-building activities. These activities included development of value chains and market systems.

The timings of various activity life cycles were not well aligned with each other and posed a challenge to layering and integrating in implementing the RISE I strategic framework as originally planned; some L-FFP activities were already at a midpoint, REGIS-AG was delayed in starting (I, DR). This mistiming was also an issue for most other IP activities in the RFZ, further compounded by delays in funding SAREL. As a result, coordination and collaboration among the IPs in each country and across both RFCs took additional time to build and develop, as many of the individual country activities had not included this consultation even on a more robust national scale, much less on a regional one. RISE I was innovative in building a network of resilience implementers (and government entities), but this network took time and other resources to develop. This created difficulties for the RISE I baseline implementation, as many of the activities in the RFZs were at different stages of operation. At the same time, the planned resilience network (funded through the SAREL Activity) generated several useful and interesting collaborations among the IPs, enabled through a series of marketplace exercises where the partners presented their approaches. Lessons from one country percolated to another country, including, for example, the use of DVDs as training tools. The content of the DVDs consisted of footage of local farmers, filmed in local languages, displaying the techniques they had been taught. The DVDs provided an easy way to disseminate information in context and allowed for a considerable expansion in outreach coverage.

<sup>25</sup> Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience (REGIS-ER), Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth (REGIS-AG).

**Robust Learning.** In addition to activities planned regionally to complement existing L-FFP and FtF activities, the JPC under the RISE PAD funded a contract for a MEL/CLA mechanism, Sahel Resilience Learning activity (SAREL), for both countries in the RFZs (Niger and Burkina Faso). According to interviews, SAREL’s design was overly ambitious, understaffed, and underfunded for its scope of work. The SAREL Activity included not only the establishment of a resilience network and a heavy concentration on CLA, but also responsibility for the RISE I impact evaluation and MEL tasks associated with the RISE I activities. The Activity was further hampered by a late start and the need to cover two different countries with only minimal staffing in Burkina Faso. These factors contributed to significant delays in baseline survey implementation and in subsequent monitoring and reporting of outcome-level results (due to the delayed baseline and the still-delayed endline surveys, now contracted to a third party). Despite these challenges, the SAREL provided a very useful forum for collaboration and coordination among the resilience IPs in the RFZ (I, DR). The current CLA support mechanism for the Sahel region (Sahel Collaboration and Communication, or SCC) is focused on collaboration and coordination. A separate mechanism for MEL is currently being procured based on lessons learned with SAREL and RISE II.

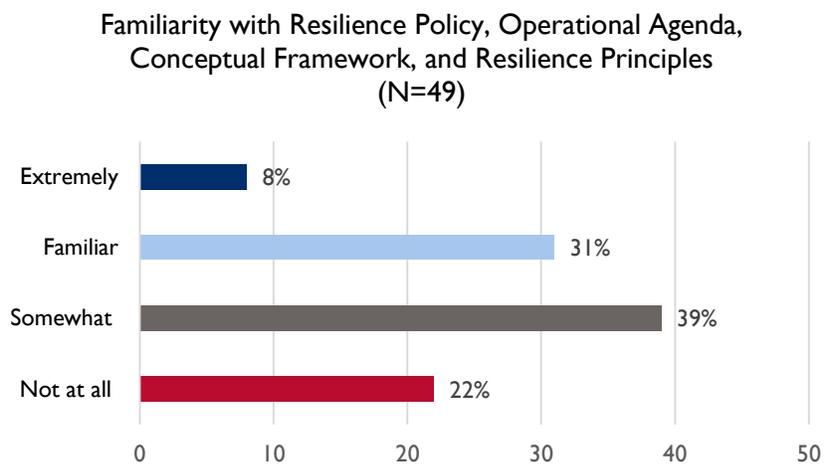
## APPLICATION OF THE OPERATIONAL AGENDA THROUGH THE PC AND HA IN RESILIENCE FOCUS COUNTRIES

### OVERALL

USAID has applied aspects of the four component operational agenda throughout the PC and in HA in RFCs, but experience varies across focus countries, between new and old RFCs, and among the components of the operational agenda (I, DR). To understand how robustly RFCs have aligned with the policy’s concepts and approaches, operational agenda, and resilience principles across the PC, the team used scoring instruments for each PC document type (CDCS, PADs, solicitations) with approximately 20 scaled, scored, or closed-ended questions (these instruments can be found in Annex 2). The team also analyzed data from the survey and staff interviews to triangulate with the document analysis.

Seventy-eight percent of all staff who completed the survey indicated familiarity with the Resilience Policy, operational agenda, conceptual framework, and resilience principles (see Figure 12), of which eight percent were extremely familiar. Twenty-two percent were not at all familiar with the Policy. While the survey found that many staff are relatively familiar with the policy, the findings from the PC document analysis were more varied. Table 5 shows the RFC’s average alignment across the PC with the Resilience Policy, its principles, and the operational agenda. There is higher alignment in CDCS documents and less alignment moving down the PC into PADs and solicitations (with samples of both of the latter document types being selected for their resilience focus). Regardless of location or generation of focus

**FIGURE 12: RFC RESPONDENT FAMILIARITY WITH RESILIENCE POLICY**



country, success in implementing the operational agenda at the strategic planning level has been primarily in joint planning and analysis, and planning for mutually-informed project design, with evidence of multisectoral DA planning and analysis, and less robust coordination and implementation of SLI between HA and DA in project design in practice, no matter how well laid the plans at the strategic planning level (DR, I).

The PIA team conducted a close examination of 11 RFC R/CDCSs and the South Sudan Strategic Framework.<sup>26</sup> As noted above, the CDCSs were given an overall score of 0-4, with 1 translating to little alignment and 4 to full alignment with the policy; a score for each individual component of the operational agenda; and a score for resilience placement in the RF. The scoresheets also noted the inclusion of Resilience Policy principles, concepts, and approaches. As shown in Table 5, the RFC sample of 11 CDCSs (including West Africa Regional which covered two RFCs: Burkina Faso and Niger) and one Strategic Framework (SR) for South Sudan from the 2014-2020 period scored an average of 3 out of 4 for alignment with the Policy overall, including evidence of joint planning and programming with HA teams<sup>27</sup>. Ten of 11 available RFC CDCSs reviewed in depth included resilience within the RF, with an average score of 3.2 out of 4<sup>28</sup> (resilience was generally either its own Intermediate Result/IR or is included at the Development Objective/DO level with a supportive IRs), signaling high alignment at the strategic planning level with the policy. These scores, which demonstrate alignment with various facets of the Policy across the PC, are shown in Table 5.

**TABLE 5: INTEGRATION OF RESILIENCE POLICY CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES IN RFCs ACROSS THE PC**

PC Document	Overall Policy Alignment (0-4)	Conceptual Framework	RF Focus (0-4)	OAI: HA/DA Joint Analysis	OA2: HA/DA Strategic Planning	OA3: HA/DA Project Design	OA4: Robust Learning	Multi-Sectoral with HA	All Actors
<b>CDCS + SR (12)</b>	3	N/A	3.2	2.5	3.14	1.5	2	Some, but less HA	Most RFCs
<b>PADs (7)</b>	2.14	71% Yes 29% Somewhat	2.86	N/A	N/A	14%	43%	43%	Most RFCs
<b>Solicitations (14)</b>	1.14	43% Yes 57% Somewhat	1.07	N/A	N/A	36%	64%	36%	Most RFCs

Even in RFCs, where the leadership support is strong and ties to the Resilience Policy’s operational agenda are explicit, there are challenges to implementation. These include uneven collaboration and disjointed timelines for procurements between DA and HA, which in turn affects joint implementation of resilience programming through projects and activities. The majority of RFC CDCSs discuss the coordination that occurs between HA and DA in strategic planning, but moving through the PC to implementation, the

<sup>26</sup> For more information on the document review, including the approach to scoring, the instrument, and an overview of the data by PC component, see Annex 2. Document Review.

<sup>27</sup> The document was scored for policy alignment with 0 meaning no alignment and 4 signaling full alignment. It was assessed for its alignment with the Policy’s conceptual framework with a Yes/No/Somewhat designation. The Results Focus score is broken down as follows: 0 for no focus; 1 for a mention at the goal level; 2 for a mention only at the DO level or weakly as a cross-cutting Intermediate Result (IR); 3 for resilience in its own IR; 4 for resilience as its own DO with supporting IRs, or more fully integrated across the RF. The four operational agenda scores are out of 4, with 0 signaling no alignment and 4 signaling full alignment. Full scales and scoring can be found in the Desk Review annex.

<sup>28</sup> The Strategic Framework did not include a RF and is not included in this count.

robustness lessens. RFCs are much more likely than non-RFCs to include HA in multisectoral planning through CDCS processes and PADs.

Original RFCs in the HoA (Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia) and Sahel (Burkina Faso, Niger) implemented the operational agenda more robustly to date than the new RFCs, due to their early mandate, joint planning processes outside of the PC with teams focused on resilience, as well as dedicated support structures, funding, inclusion of Foreign Service National (FSN) staff or longer-term Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), and other enabling factors (I, DR). Other original RFCs, like Mali and Somalia, have struggled. One of the impediments in those Missions was the perception that USAID had not clearly defined or explained the concept of resilience, and therefore planning and execution had faltered, especially in HA and DA coordination during implementation. For some newer RFCs (e.g., Zimbabwe), there is clarity regarding resilience concepts, buy-in from Mission leadership, and some positive examples of strategic planning; but the portfolios are new and still in the early stages of implementation, so execution of the strategic planning and its impact is forthcoming and thus cannot be judged. For other newer RFCs (e.g., DRC), which were designated as such prior to the strategic planning cycle, the CDCS was designed so that all activities were layered and coordinated, but the situation is so complex and ever evolving that implementation has not always occurred as planned.

## OPERATIONAL AGENDA: JOINT ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

For all RFC CDCSs, the first two components of the operational agenda — joint analysis and strategic planning, including both multisectoral and HA actors — were more prevalent and scored as significantly more robust than the rest of the operational agenda — mutually-informed project design and robust learning (DR). Most RFC CDCSs have some alignment with the Resilience Policy and use its concepts and approaches, with newer RFCs scoring slightly higher than the original set (DR).

As shown in Table 5, for the joint analysis component of the operational agenda, RFC CDCSs averaged 2.5 out of 4; for joint strategic planning, RFC CDCS averaged 3.1 out of 4. Strengthening the resilience of populations or systems in some capacity was the primary focus of some CDCS IRs (four of 11 RFC CDCSs) and was a DO with supportive IRs in five of 11 RFC CDCSs. Most RFC CDCSs have some alignment with the Resilience Policy, with newer RFCs scoring slightly higher than the original set. The CDCSs frequently use resilience terminology, but there is often little substance operationally behind the references. Strategies include joint planning and some mentions of planned mutually-informed design, but it is difficult to break down the silos in implementation of the planned design (I). One of the key challenges in scoring the HA/DA coordination specifically was that the humanitarian challenges are generally referenced separately in other strategic documents.

While some of the original RFCs are grandfathered through 2021 with older versions of their strategy (and thus represent the earliest applications of the policy in those frameworks), some new CDCSs of more recent RFCs show the clear evolution of how the Resilience Policy has been operationalized. Our sample comprised both older

**FIGURE 13: PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

DA and HA teams conduct **joint problem analysis** to have a common understanding of the underlying causes of recurrent crisis.

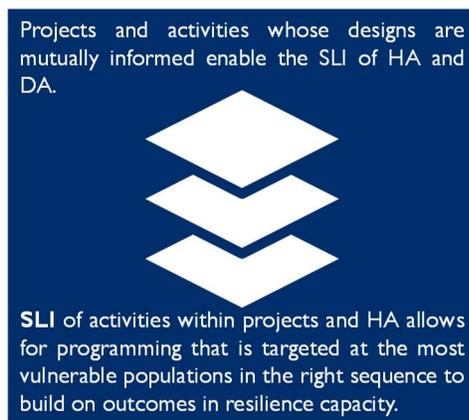


**Strategic planning** around resilience that is intensified and coordinated helps to anticipate risks, vulnerabilities, and humanitarian needs when developing strategies.

CDCSs (n=7) for the 2015-2020 period and newer CDCSs for the 2020-2025 period (n=4). One example of an original RFC is Mali, which had a strong FSN Resilience Coordinator, a separate DO focused on resilience in its framework, and a separate, special objective for transition aimed at stabilization of conflict-affected areas with the intention to merge with the resilience DO and its activities when transition programming ceased (DR). The Mali Mission generally found co-creation between HA and DA difficult because of the short-term timelines for HA. Other objectives remained siloed, although geographic co-location of IPs and donors (especially in the RFZ) led to the creation of a resilience community of practice that met to share lessons learned and information about emerging situations. Newer CDCS frameworks (Ethiopia, Mozambique, and DRC, for example) generally had resilience as a separate DO and included information in the narrative about how resilience programming operated across the other objectives (note: for DRC, which developed its CDCS before being named an RFC, this meant inclusion of annexes regarding the role of resilience for the CDCS) (I, DR).

## OPERATIONAL AGENDA: MUTUALLY-INFORMED PROJECT DESIGN AND SLI

**FIGURE 14: MUTUALLY INFORMED PROJECT DESIGN AND SLI**



The sample of seven RFC resilience-related PADs selected from the full USAID PAD sample (n=156) that were scored in detail (one each from half the RFC countries because each RFC typically has one relevant PAD) showed some alignment with the Resilience Policy (scoring a 2 out of 4, which is defined as including some coordination with HA stakeholders and a resilience focus in the RF, but not full coordination or evidence of SLI). The PADs were at times mutually designed by HA and DA teams (see Figure 14 for note), but implementation of the various activities was more challenging to SLI in practice (DR, I). Fewer than one-third, or 46 of the 156 PADs analyzed via keyword searches (the full universe available on ProgramNet), included some reference to HA although more than half referenced the term resilience very frequently. There were some high-count outliers in climate change-focused PADs, but generally this finding signals a

stronger emphasis on the broader umbrella definition of resilience that has come to pass in recent years than on resilience more narrowly related to HA and SLI. One example of the evolution of resilience programming is demonstrated in the comparison of the RISE I and RISE II RFs. The initial RF focuses on agriculture and economic growth (production, markets, value chains, livelihoods), governance, and health/nutrition. RISE II uses the same categories, expands them, and adds risk management and social agency for women and youth to the objective levels. In addition, all the IRs under each objective are considerably expanded and nuanced for specific activities that could be implemented by funding streams other than BHA or RFS.

Solicitations from RFC countries across any sector with a mention of resilience as a focus scored relatively low for policy alignment (scoring 1 out of 4, defined as little alignment with the operational agenda) but higher for RF focus (2 out of 4, with resilience mentioned at the goal or objective level but without supportive IRs and sub-IRs) (DR).<sup>29</sup> At the solicitation levels, there were more discussions than at the PAD level about how to operate in case of a sudden onset disaster or how to shift resources depending on the context (DR). Respondents noted that HA and DA are managed by different actors and have different funding streams, congressional reporting requirements, and triggers for funding (I).

<sup>29</sup> The instruments and more on the scoring approach and scale as well as additional data are located in Annex 2.

Based on interviews and survey responses, SLI of HA/DA activities is said to be occurring in some RFCs (S, I), but it is not always apparent in PC documents (DR). Since FY 2016, L-FFP (now BHA) has awarded most of its RFSAs under a year-long, post-award, co-creation process known as Refine and Implement (R&I). The purpose of R&I is to enable IPs to improve collaboration, activity design and focus, fit to context, and implementation planning in partnership with BHA. Importantly, the refinement year is not only about conducting studies or reviewing evidence. It provides this year for work planning, adjusting the theory of change, and refining approaches based on additional studies, baselines, and final site selection before implementation. During this time IPs should be doing all start-up activities including hiring staff and setting up offices, and may also begin to implement the interventions that are known to work, have a robust evidence base and are adapted to the operational context. Most RFSAs are funded for five years, but the first year of implementing on-the-ground activities starts in the second year after the first year of R&I. This allows for an intentional pause and reflection to revisit approaches from a technical proposal that may be somewhat outdated by the time of its award rather than expedite implementation. RFSAs with strong evaluations and sustainability planning may be given an additional two years of implementation.

## OPERATIONAL AGENDA: ROBUST LEARNING

Resilience measurement through performance indicators is standardized for RFCs by the C4R and includes a subset of indicators that add on to and align with the FtF program standard indicators. Robust learning to date has occurred primarily through baseline, midline, endline and recurrent monitoring surveys for impact evaluations and population-based surveys (PBSs) for FtF and BHA. There are approaches under development, including the *humanitarian assistance averted* indicator, that some stakeholders believe hold promise for addressing the difficulty in measuring the complexity of resilience at the goal level. Robust learning as an overarching approach, for the most part, is being included, emphasized, and planned for. RFC CDCSs scored a 2 out of 4 for robust learning, meaning there was some discussion of learning related specifically to resilience. Four out of the seven RFC resilience PADs analyzed in detail included robust learning approaches, as did 10 of 14 RFC resilience solicitations. Resilience programming undergoes impact evaluations and collects data on standard indicators. It also benefits from regional and Washington-based evidence forums and learning events hosted nearly annually by the C4R, the HoRN, IPs, or BHA. However, the definition of resilience measurement tools and indicators that capture the depth of programmatic outcomes continues to be challenging.

## THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR RESILIENCE

### THE PROCESS OF EVIDENCE DATA COLLECTION

The processes, methods, and data that USAID has employed to build an evidence base for tracking outcomes of resilience programs include recurrent monitoring surveys, PBSs, impact evaluations, RFC resilience indicators, secondary, host-country, and other donor data, performance evaluations of activities, and special studies and qualitative reports. Many of these are housed on the ResilienceLinks knowledge management platform and/or the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) and presented through various fora. The team did not discover sufficient evidence to provide answers about the extent to which USAID's resilience work has reduced chronic vulnerability across RFCs but found evidence and results from individual activities and RFC programs (I, DR). The basics of resilience metrics derive from the food security sector, which had (and continues to have) an array of well-defined indicator and MEL requirements. Resilience metrics use these practices as a foundation, along with international work (such as that done by the World Food Program, the World Bank, and the [Food Security Information Network](#) that was supported by L-FFP/BHA and RFS), and have been refined and expanded since the policy's publication.

The C4R, in collaboration with L-FFP, developed several key metrics for resilience, together with guidance on how to use these tools. For L-FFP programming, data were collected over each year to assess months of food insecurity and stakeholders could proactively check more historical data on harvest outcomes and weather patterns so that stockpiles of food assistance could be readied for approximate needs in the activity area during sudden onset disasters. Note that historical data refers to both the life of the activity and of its predecessors because FEWS NET has operated for decades. This indicator "months of food security (assessing adequacy of food security)," was discontinued due to its lack of validity and reliability, according to USAID OUs. It remains challenging to collect reliable sub-national harvest data from small plots. Using lessons learned on methodologies and sources, RFS and BHA have been working with organizations to develop and test methods to collect more reliable harvest data from the target areas. RFS and BHA are also collaborating with NASA<sup>30</sup> to use earth observation data to measure the resilience of agricultural production systems within the context of drought.

The growing importance throughout the development community of monitoring psychosocial effects of crisis on the target populations has contributed to the development of a wellness indicator, as well as other metrics that focus more on shocks. The additional emphasis on climate change and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has put not only resilience programming, but resilience metrics, at the forefront. Among the most complex are the Resilience Capacities Indices (RCI). There are three indices, one for each category of the resilience capacities (adaptive, absorptive, transformative), which are intended to capture the multi-dimensional nature of building resilience. Resilience is multivariate, very challenging to measure in full, and heavily dependent on context. Each of the variables in the indices has its own measurement, so that change is nuanced to the particular context. Like any other index, interpreting RCI is challenging. It is meaningful when it compares across time periods from baseline to endline or across groups (treatment vs control).

The effects of conflict and climate change increase vulnerabilities and underscore the need for continued DA, and determine how those measurements fit across the DA, emergency, and HA portfolios. At the same time, other parts of USAID, especially in BHA, have parallel requirements with respect to the provision of HA and the role of measuring resilience in emergency response. Two recent publications outline the requirements for monitoring HA: the Emergency M&E Guidance (December 2020/January 2021), which details requirements for emergency assistance and the new BHA Framework for Early Recovery, Risk Reduction and Resilience (ER4) (December 2020), which articulates how the early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience programs contribute to BHA's HA mission.

There is still difficulty in capturing the impact of resilience funding, specifically in developing an indicator set and methodology for data collection that are sufficiently complex to capture the richness of what resilience programming means, but sufficiently practical to capture and analyze data in a timely manner with a protocol for harmonization or comparison across a wide range of countries (DR, I). Although the changing environments of the RFCs (sudden onset environmental shocks, or expansion of conflict) contribute to the challenges of data collection, they are fundamental characteristics of the zones where resilience programming is located.

The indicator "humanitarian assistance averted" shows promise but is not yet operational (I). Although the data can be collected at the population level through the support of local governments, it cannot be collected at the micro level for an individual or community. USAID has been working with their implementing partner on REAL Activity to develop a method for measuring HA averted. This quantitative methodology will measure the extent to which investments in resilience programming funded by the U.S.

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<sup>30</sup> National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Government, over time, effectively reduce the need for HA. USAID plans to make the method available to USAID Missions and partners once it is finalized.

Resilience measurement for the more multisectoral interpretation of resilience within DA will remain a challenge to both IP MEL specialists and Chiefs of Party tasked with developing activity-level MEL systems as well as to USAID Resilience Coordinators, AORs, CORs, and C4R attempting to make sense of the evidence across the entire portfolio of individual activities within an RFC. Resilience measurement guidance takes this into account and has identified different levels of measurement for the RCIs (DR), such as “full” and “light,” to account for the various types of interventions an activity implements to build resilience. Resilience measurement adds the burden of data collection to implementation and the light module was developed to minimize the burden on activities which were not designed as a comprehensive resilience activity. This allows for customization in the RCI to match both the operating context and donor intervention. Additionally, PAD MEL plans, population-based surveys, and IEs have been utilized to measure resilience across a portfolio.

Requiring a single set of standard indicators for resilience could dilute the varied nature of resilience’s multi-sectoral approach because no one indicator could capture the complexity. However, defining harmonized indicators for each contributing technical sector has been suggested as a way to capture all facets of resilience and demonstrate the full spectrum of outcomes in a single country. The Resilience Policy drafters initially considered including examples of how resilience would function in the different discrete technical sectors but determined that this would defeat the concept of resilience as a multisectoral approach (I).

## OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE BASE FOR RESILIENCE

Some RFCs have demonstrated some progress towards the policy's goal of reducing chronic vulnerability and the need for HA, but with varying degrees of robustness (I, DR). Recurrent monitoring surveys, performance, and impact evaluations, and routine quarterly and annual reports that collate monitoring data from IPs, are the most frequently employed methods for capturing evidence. However, many endline PBSs are still pending for the older RFCs, while newer RFCs are in the process of conducting baseline PBSs (I, DR). COVID-19 and/or conflict have contributed to the delays. In general, these surveys, evaluations, and programmatic reports note many positive changes, as well as challenges, in resilience-related programming (DR).

The most concrete data that exists comes from Ethiopia and shows that households in the RFZ have become resilient over time (livestock retention, keeping children in school) (DR, I). However, after ten years, this example is both dated and overused (I). The RFZ has operated in the region of Ethiopia that includes Tigray, where civil war in 2021 has resulted not only in suspended operations, but also the likelihood of decreases in resilience capacities across the board, and subsequent surveys would allow for an analysis of the effects of conflict on the existing values for their resilience metrics. Newer information from other country programs could provide not only additional data, but allow the development of comparative case studies, as well as the possibility of more longitudinal analysis in communities where resilience programming has continued beyond one funding cycle.

USAID has been a global leader in building an evidence base and generating guidance on measurement. The Resilience Evidence forums in the HoA, Washington, and Asia have been particularly successful in generating collaboration, presenting results, and discussing best practices and lessons learned (DR, I). The SAREL evaluation noted the increased collaboration among and coordination between IPs in sharing good practices and documenting successes.

## CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS

A key challenge for building an evidence base is that the evidence generally speaks to a particular context (and not necessarily to a specific development challenge, like drought), making it difficult to aggregate or harmonize. Due to this, the survey data, while using the same basic instrument across regions and countries, were not aggregable beyond their specific population base. Individual indicators can be compiled (with sufficient caveats about population variability), as this is how FtF and L-FFP have reported on standard indicators. Therefore, the balance between collecting new data, using existing data, and generating a reasonable and useful body of evidence remains an ongoing challenge.

The C4R and its MEL/CLA contracts have worked on defining and refining this balance from the inception of the Resilience Policy. Some of the recommendations stemming from this exercise have included amplifying the use of the recurrent monitoring survey (a standardized panel survey module used across RFCs) to be more community-based and conducted more frequently than it is currently. This would provide a more nuanced contextual information base that would help with activity- and portfolio-level adaptive management, although this approach would face challenges with respect to data robustness and validity due to its collection protocols.

Given the existing efforts by host country governments to digitize existing databases, manage information and national ID systems, and create social registries (many of which collect socio-economic data on 50 percent or more of the population), there may be an opportunity to assist national and sub-national government and other actors to assess the needs of different ministries and services, and streamline and harmonize data collection to increase efficiencies and interoperability of the same data used for multiple purposes. In some countries there could be limited positive added value in USAID commissioning independent surveys or PBS, augmenting existing data collection efforts. Alternatively, national or other international data collection procedures could be enhanced (such as the recent Kenya agro-pastoralist survey, the World Bank survey in Malawi, or the health information system in Uganda) to produce more comparable data on both the population as a whole and the sub-national population within the RFZs if sub-national data is collected.

If secondary data are used to inform USAID's work and outcomes, more targeted in-country exploration needs to occur to ensure that like is compared with like, as there is considerable variation in the populations analyzed in studies for each donor or government initiative. These approaches are not without additional challenges since the national-level data collection may not align with the sub-national focus of the RFZ and there are additional indicators required for reporting to USAID regardless.

There have been two key challenges with the data collection for the RISE I impact evaluation: (1) the time lag between data collection and analysis, so that information is no longer as useful for ongoing programming, and (2) the household population movements due to conflict and climate change (DR, I). For example, the RISE I baseline started and stopped numerous times with different survey approaches and firms, so that baseline data were unavailable, incomparable (or completely absent) for the first three years of the SAREL activity (DR).

Additional means of conveying the complex outcomes of resilience activities include case studies, special studies, success stories, lessons from the field, learning events, marketplace events, and other qualitative approaches. These are valid social science methods with the distinction that they do not provide evidence of causality or higher-order statistical analyses. The C4R, Missions, and IPs all use these qualitative methods already as part of their narrative.

## MAINSTREAMING RESILIENCE AT USAID

Initially, resilience programming was targeted at increasing food security to withstand drought, with an emphasis on livelihoods and crisis response. It evolved and took on more comprehensive approaches to food security programs. These approaches include *utilization* of knowledge (about nutrition and safe, healthy, and sanitary storage); *availability* of food (productivity); *access* to food (storage, markets, finance); paired with risk management and stronger elements of community and economic development, eventually expanding into institutional capacity-building. As it gained traction in development approaches, the manifestation of resilience at USAID has expanded further, with OUs focusing on global health, education, conflict prevention and stabilization, and DRG. Even non-RFC Missions have integrated and emphasized resilience as a focus in programs and strategic planning. This emphasis is primarily, if not exclusively, among DA rather than HA teams, which is one of the defining characteristics of mainstreaming. Generally speaking, staff agree with the definition of resilience, but practically this translates into different approaches and activities in each sector.

In general, the Resilience Policy principles align with other locally-led development and sustainability priorities, including USAID's 2017-2020 policy focus on the Journey to Self-Reliance, and emphasis on building the capacities of local actors and systems (USAID's Local Systems Framework and forthcoming Local Capacity Development Policy). This alignment has facilitated broader mainstreaming, but also obscures what shifts have been propelled by the Resilience Policy itself.

Due to COVID-19, some of the portfolios the team reviewed, particularly in Missions, had shifted to emphasize resilience to global pandemics beyond a connection to the Resilience Policy. The change of administration in 2021 caused a resurgence of climate change as a USAID policy priority. Before this shift (2016-2020), resilience terminology was often used to reframe disfavored climate-change related actions in the Natural Resource Management sector that were not as elevated or encouraged in many of the OUs explored.

### MAINSTREAMING IN NON-RFCs

There are non-RFCs that are intentionally and successfully integrating resilience into strategic planning at the CDCS level, project design, and even activities. Even if not a goal of the Policy nor attributable to it, there is some inherent alignment. Numerous examples of successful integration of resilience *concepts and approaches* were found in the non-RFC CDCSs, PADs, and solicitations that were manually reviewed, although alignment with the operational agenda was generally lacking (DR). Examples can be found in Bangladesh (Figure 15), Cambodia, Philippines, and Eastern Caribbean where both the CDCS and the subsequent project designs emphasize resilience as a focus, largely aligning with the Policy articulation. It should be noted that while not RFCs, all of these countries have received C4R support at some point. Some of the PADs and solicitations, as well as CDCSs, that the team reviewed included resilience capacities, discussion of shocks and stressors, risk reduction and disaster management, and system strengthening. Fifty-three percent of the resilience survey respondents stated that they strive to strengthen the adaptive capacity of beneficiaries (i.e., alternative livelihoods and ability to respond to shocks and stressors) and to improve the social and economic conditions of beneficiaries through their

**FIGURE 15: NON-RFC EXAMPLE – BANGLADESH**

While not in an RFC, the 'Resilient Bangladesh' project focuses on food security and natural resource management in line with the policy's original focus. It also targets coordination between HA/DA, identifies RFZs, and uses and cites the policy's definition of resilience.

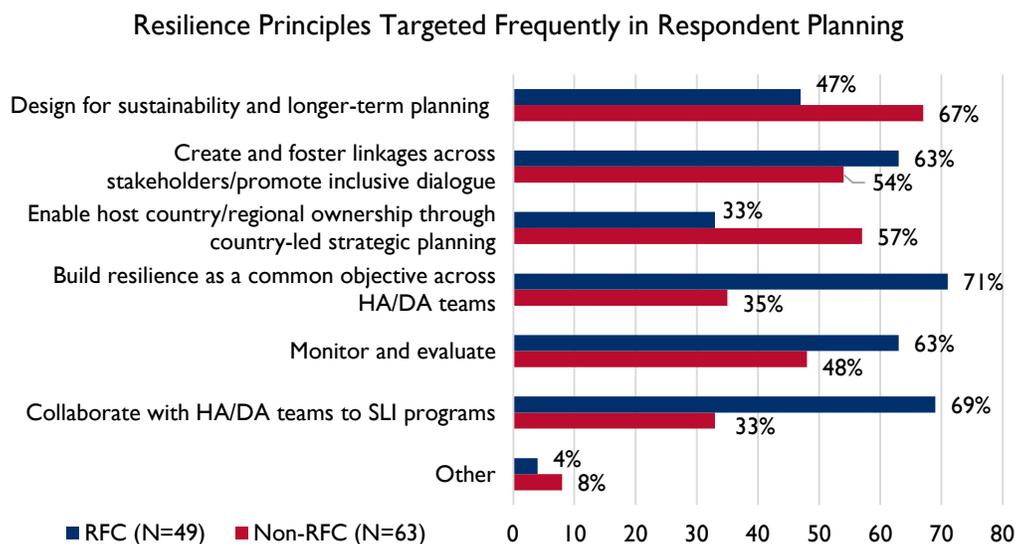


existing programming. Thirty-nine percent of resilience survey respondents stated that they have sequenced, layered, and integrated HA and DA into planning and/or programming; an additional 21 percent noted that they prioritize it in planning, but it does not work in practice.

Broadly speaking, a CDCS analysis of all available documents found that more than half of the 57 non-RFC USAID Missions are integrating some concepts and approaches outlined in the Resilience Policy, typically in joint problem analysis and objective setting and multisectoral approaches with local and international development actors at the national, community, and household levels. These CDCSs scored very low for policy alignment with the operational agenda and strategic planning that included HA actors, but higher for having a resilience focus in their RF. None of these CDCSs referenced the policy or the Agency’s resilience definition. When references to resilience and related concepts in the CDCS documents are unpacked through interviews and survey responses, there is often little operational substance revealed, suggesting the term is being used sometimes as a development “buzzword” to mean capacity more broadly. Additionally, CDCSs generally outline intended planning processes, which do not always translate into action through PADs and solicitations.

While non-RFCs are integrating some resilience-related principles into their CDCSs, they tend to focus on different principles than the RFC countries (see Figure 16 for the breakdown of resilience principles by RFC vs non-RFC). Non-RFC respondents cited *less frequently* the resilience principles of collaboration between DA/HA and building resilience as a common objective but did cite designing for sustainability and enabling host country ownership. Additionally, even when DA/HA actors coordinate as part of strategic planning in non-RFCs, it is not apparent that these actors coordinate in implementation, due to the difficulty in breaking down the silos (DR, I, S). An important distinction noted in the CDCS review was the difference between using the operational agenda and the principles in the policy as opposed to using the broader resilience vocabulary as a catch-all for more general adaptive behaviors (I).

**FIGURE 16: RFC VS NON-RFC TARGETING OF RESILIENCE POLICY PRINCIPLES**



However, this does not necessarily signal a lack of sincere Mission stakeholder interest in more strongly adopting a resilience lens aligned with the policy (I). There is often a disconnect between the policy, budgeting, and coordination needed for HA and DA; most non-RFC Missions that emphasize resilience in their CDCS or have a PAD or solicitation with resilience integrated in an IR do not have specific funding for resilience work in the same way that RFCs do (I, S).

The team selected 13 non-RFC PADs from a universe of 45 that had a mention of resilience in the title or abstract to review in more depth for their interpretation of resilience concepts and approaches. The average score for a non-RFC, manually-coded PAD's resilience placement in the RF was 2.4 out of 4, but eight out of 13 included either an IR dedicated to resilience or both a DO and supportive IRs. PAD objectives are typically based on the CDCS RF's IRs, but the underlying framework is developed by the PAD team. Sixty percent of the PADs aligned with the resilience conceptual framework but had an average score of less than 1 for Resilience Policy alignment (little to no alignment with the operational agenda) signaling that non-RFCs are focusing on resilience as an objective, but not on alignment with the policy.

The team also selected seven non-RFC resilience solicitations from 48 that were found using keyword searches for terms related to resilience on sam.gov. The solicitation universe started with 99 and was reduced to a sample of 48 documents that cited a priority to build resilience, 43 that somewhat included a priority to build resilience, and nine that did not have a resilience focus. The solicitations coded manually had an average score of 3 out of 4 for resilience placement in the logical framework or RF (a dedicated IR or DO with supporting IRs), signaling a resilience focus even in non-RFCs. The majority of those solicitations aligned with the Resilience Policy's conceptual framework in some way but did not strongly emphasize DA and HA integration or the operational agenda.

## MAINSTREAMING IN TECHNICAL AREAS

In addition to analyzing CDCSs, PADs, and solicitations and surveying staff from non-RFCs, the team also analyzed how resilience has been mainstreamed across several technical sectors. Global health, education, market systems (which is in RFS, but not part of the C4R), and economic growth exemplify sectors in which resilience has been mainstreamed at USAID over the past decade. These sectors are strongly represented in the RTWG and the RLC.

The GH Bureau is not only an integral part of the RTWG but has its own Resilience Technical Working Group that aims to address resilience as it aligns with health. The Bureau also released its *Blueprint for Global Health Resilience* for operating in the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>31</sup> GH defines resilience broadly in line with the policy but makes it practical and concrete for health systems strengthening, and for building resilience to myriad crises, including COVID-19 and other global pandemics (e.g., Ebola). The GH RTWG aims to translate guidance and approaches from the bottom up within its own OU and top down from the C4R's RTWG to ensure alignment. In 2019, the MEASURE Evaluation<sup>32</sup> hosted an event titled "From Fragile to Resilient Health Systems," which explored the state of health systems resilience across the globe.<sup>33</sup> Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID has been emphasizing the importance of resilient health systems that can support populations through health crises, environmental crises, and other health system overloads.

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<sup>31</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Blueprint\\_for\\_Global\\_Health\\_Resilience.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Blueprint_for_Global_Health_Resilience.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> Project funded by USAID and U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/From\\_Fragile\\_to\\_Resilient\\_Health\\_Systems-Meeting\\_Report\\_TR-19-362.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/From_Fragile_to_Resilient_Health_Systems-Meeting_Report_TR-19-362.pdf).

## FIGURE 17: RESILIENCE AND EDUCATION IN DRC

**EXAMPLE FROM DRC**

The resilience approach in the DRC CDCS not only focuses on food security, but on the resilience of the education sector.



The DO: “Community Resilience Increased” captures expanded access to health and WASH services, education, early warning, and trafficking in persons. Its planned Foundational Literacy for Improved Educational Resilience (FLIER) Activity will emphasize educational resilience in select marginalized and underserved zones across DRC.

The USAID education sector embraced resilience concepts and approaches in both non-RFCs and RFCs (an example from an RFC, DRC, can be seen in Figure 17). In 2019 USAID’s Center for Education in the DDI Bureau released a White Paper called “[Transforming Systems in Times of Adversity: Education and Resilience](#)”<sup>34</sup> in collaboration with the C4R. The White Paper discusses the role of education in building individual, household, community, and institutional resilience capacities. It defines resilience as it pertains to education systems, articulates the relevance of resilience capacities, discusses the threat of perennial shocks and stressors, and outlines a programmatic model for the education sector. This paper aligned with the Agency’s focus on resilience in the context of the 2018 Policy Framework and other Agency cross-sectoral priorities. The Education in Crisis and Conflict Network website has a variety of educational resilience resources alongside the White Paper, including [a guide for developing a RE](#), [a map of resilience capacities](#), [impacts of shocks and stressors](#) among others. In the context of the 2020

COVID-19 Global Pandemic, the Education Team used resilience as a conceptual framing and objective of USAID’s COVID-19 response in the education sector<sup>35</sup>. This framework has two main objectives: 1) a safe return to learning especially for the most marginalized; and 2) more resilient and equitable education systems and societies with the capacity to better manage future shocks and prevent development backsliding. It applied the principles of the Resilience Policy, including an emphasis on the interplay between HA and DA, engaging actors at all levels, strengthening the sustainability of systems, and focusing on supporting marginalized and underserved populations through the complex effects of the pandemic. One critical component of these objectives is an emphasis on psychosocial impacts that can undermine resilience. To this end, USAID created a Return to Learning Toolkit to provide resources for safe, equitable, and inclusive education and training programs for field-based education staff and implementers. For more examples on how this has been applied in practice, see pages five through six of the [COVID-19 and Education Sector Fact Sheet](#)

The concepts and approaches from the Resilience Policy also manifest in USAID’s market systems and economic growth work. USAID aims to make strengthening the resilience of market systems actors and activities more practical and accessible. It defines resilience specific to market systems, key shocks and stresses, relevant capacities, and structural characteristics of resilience, and includes a replicable theory of change for market systems resilience. Complementarily, there exists a framework to support USAID staff and IPs in measuring market systems resilience at the individual and systemic level. USAID’s Economic Growth Policy addresses resilience by emphasizing the reality of individuals escaping, but then falling back into, poverty in the face of shocks and stresses, underscoring the broader relevance of USAID’s resilience

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.eccnetwork.net/resources/transforming-systems-times-adversity-education-and-resilience-white-paper>.

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USAID\\_Covid\\_factsheet\\_v5c-508.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USAID_Covid_factsheet_v5c-508.pdf).

programming. The policy then goes on to enumerate an extensive and diverse list of sources of household-level resilience, highlighting how the concept has broadened beyond food security and evolved over time.<sup>36</sup>

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR RESILIENCE

Implementation of USAID's Resilience Policy in RFCs and beyond has benefitted from several critical enabling factors. These factors have included the RTWG working across sectors and OUs, the Agency Resilience Coordinator, the Resilience Leadership Council, a few select high-level champions, the C4R as an established and growing entity, Resilience Learning Events or Workshops, and [FSNetwork](#) and [ResilienceLinks](#), both platforms staff and partners can access for more information (I, S). The C4R has provided backstopping and technical assistance for resilience programming to staff in RFCs, as well as others in the Agency engaged in applying resilience concepts. It has accomplished this through virtual and in-person technical assistance and training, as well as managing key institutional contracts designed to conduct PBSs, capture and report on resilience programming developments, and create a platform that IPs and USAID staff can use as a technical resource.

The C4R has managed outreach to other technical sectors and OUs within USAID by regularly convening the RTWG, which consists of approximately 20 individuals focusing on a range of sectors and topics including education, global health, food security, disaster and emergency response, peacebuilding, and conflict. This group provides a collegial platform for dissemination and discussion of ideas, especially with respect to operationalizing resilience programming outside the food security arena. The C4R and RTWG work extensively with Missions, primarily through the Resilience Coordinators, to support implementation and mainstreaming of resilience.

In-person events, such as the learning and evidence fora, have facilitated sharing of results, experiences, case studies and general networking among Missions and IPs. Individual Missions have conducted learning and technical assistance events for resilience, allowing for discussion and understanding of resilience measurement and the potential scope for implementing resilience activities outside an RFZ. Uganda provided an important example of this type of dissemination and learning event, which was held at approximately the same time as the development of the Resilience DO's project MEL plan.

Leadership was identified as the most critical enabler needed to ensure understanding and integration of resilience both from USAID/Washington and at the Mission level (I, S). As shown in Figure 19, RFC Mission staff felt very supported by Leadership both in Washington and their Mission (S). In particular, the Mission and Deputy Mission Directors are key to supporting Resilience Coordinators, who cannot build integration alone (I). High-level Mission management support is critical for any type of cross-cutting or multisectoral initiative because leadership can engage and enforce coordination among the specific technical sectors. This is particularly true when cross-cutting initiatives do not have dedicated funding and resources; leadership support is needed to allow staff to allocate time and effort.

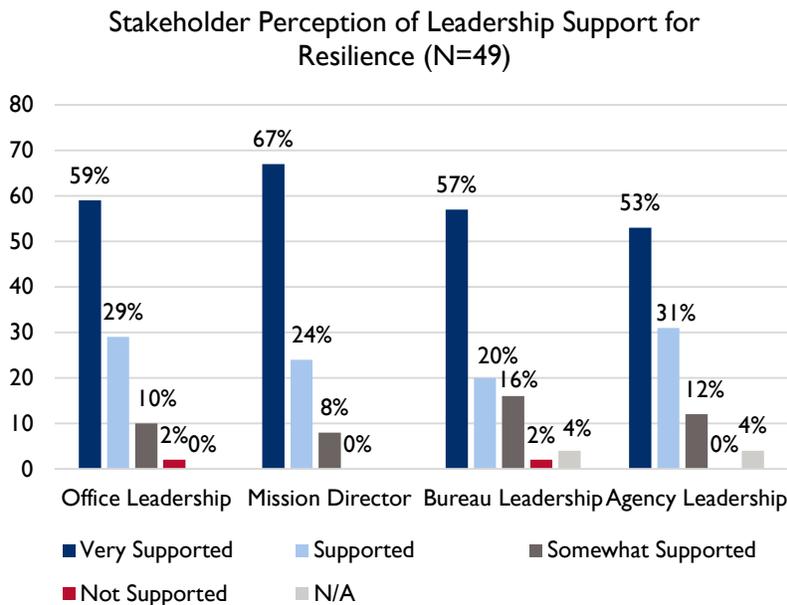
**FIGURE 18: SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE**

- (1) Social capital (the ability to access community support);
- (2) Financial inclusion that builds household assets and savings;
- (3) Gender equity within the family;
- (4) Diversification of livelihoods;
- (5) Sustainability of the natural resource base for development;
- (6) Investments for better adaptation to current weather and future climate risks;
- (7) Enabling access to markets, allowing greater opportunity to sell household goods and services; and
- (8) Training to help people adopt positive coping strategies to better adapt.

*-USAID Economic Growth Policy*

<sup>36</sup> Economic Growth Policy, 2019.

**FIGURE 19: LEADERSHIP SUPPORT FOR RESILIENCE IN RFCs**



In addition, the Policy had to be supported institutionally beyond leadership, as further elaborated in the following findings. The core of resilience funding in BHA and RFS included CLA activities, and these could be merged with other Mission CLA initiatives, as well as ongoing Mission MEL platforms. Funding these separately was not necessary but redirecting resources to further advance the Resilience Policy’s operational agenda needed additional ‘push’ factors from Mission leadership.

The first Director of C4R and USAID Resilience Coordinator (who has since moved on from USAID) was vital in communicating what resilience is and how it works in-country, as well as what role it can play in the various technical sectors and Bureaus in Washington (I). The former Director led the creation of the C4R’s initial staff of five and the RLC in 2014. The creation of the Bureau for RFS as part of USAID’s 2019 reorganization elevated the position of resilience within USAID as a whole and increased the profile of the C4R, which now has a staff of more than 20 people. The former Director (who became a Deputy Assistant Administrator for RFS prior to leaving) was credited in numerous interviews as being a major reason for the general understanding of, and support for, resilience in both the RFCs and the wider USAID community. This active leadership support and deep technical understanding of the mechanics and utility of resilience helped to open the door for this approach, and then kept the door open as resilience programming and guidance developed over the last decade.

The first Director of C4R and USAID Resilience Coordinator (who has since moved on from USAID) was vital in

All RFCs appoint a Resilience Coordinator whose function is to coordinate resilience programming across technical silos and Bureaus. These individuals occupy different positions in individual Missions; some are based in the HA team and others in the Program Office, or in the Agricultural and Food Security team. This generally means that they have other responsibilities, most often in that technical office, and operating outside their home office requires access to other offices and leadership support. The coordinators’ effectiveness varies due to varying degrees of Mission support, but they are generally seen as helpful for resilience programming (I). However, some Resilience Coordinators appeared to have less clarity about their role than others. When the Resilience Coordinator is a U.S.-Direct-Hire (USDH), the role lasts only as long as their posting, even with considerable support (and additional technical reinforcement from C4R). Individuals may or may not be posted to other RFCs or to Missions with portfolios that have potential for a resilience focus. Missions with FSNs as Resilience Coordinators did not have the same ‘changing of the guard’ problem as those with USDH staff but were more dependent on leadership support and a personal approach that enabled collaboration across technical sectors.

Resilience Coordinators embody a particular stress point for resilience programming. These Coordinators can serve as the first line of information and technical assistance about resilience, but they can also be seen as messengers of Washington-based initiatives that blur results from specific technical sectors, add a layer of coordination (another term for oversight), and a sort of ‘flavor of the month’ approach to ongoing

development activities. When the Coordinators operate without Mission leadership support, and when they do not control specific programmatic resources, they may ‘check the resilience box’ without the underpinning restructuring and operational analysis (I).

A disconnect remains between the USAID HA and DA operational processes and missions, and the team found through interviews across OUs that the perception is that the BHA reorganization has exacerbated that disconnect, but this warrants more exploration (I). The funding and reporting landscape for emergency or disaster response HA varies from that of both Early Recovery, and Risk Reduction HA and DA resilience activities through different funding streams, so there are also higher-level implications for finding ways to integrate HA and DA more completely (I). Humanitarian or disaster response is funded with International Disaster Assistance (IDA). Early Recovery, and Risk Reduction activities are funded with IDA and Title II emergency funds. Resilience activities in BHA (RFSAs) are funded with Title II development and Community Development Fund (CDF) funds supplemented by IDA funds based on need. Development funding for resilience programming comes from a number of different funding streams, including, but not limited to, agriculture, health, education, and WASH.

Disaster response is typically fielded within 24 hours of the event and typically does not last for more than a few months. Emergency responses (from BHA) tend to initiate around the three-month mark and can sustain operations for up to three years through periodic renewals and extensions. By contrast, the DA operations throughout USAID (and not limited to BHA) typically operate on a multi-year contracting and funding cycle ranging from two to five years, with possibilities for extension or renewal (DR)<sup>37</sup>.

The personnel, resources, and timelines differ for DA and HA programs, even though in some places, operations could overlap geographically and involve the same beneficiaries. While there is sometimes a perception that DA IPs do not have the appropriate personnel or established systems in place for disaster or relief operations (I), there are some IPs that conduct both relief and development programming even if the internal structures and technical capacity for each vary widely within the organization. Furthermore, an organization which has the internal capacity for both may not implement both in the same country.

The [Shock Responsive Programming and Adaptive Management](#) guidance document<sup>38</sup> co-developed by the Office of Acquisitions and Assistance (OAA), C4R, and PPL has been a valuable resource to complement the Resilience Policy specifically for Missions that are looking to embed more flexibility in their acquisition and assistance awards for programming. Crisis modifiers and other award flexibilities like R&I and contingency planning have been used by respondents in both RFCs and non-RFCs (see Figure 20) to help build a bridge between HA and DA and enable quicker responses and more flexibility by development programs but the mechanisms are not always well-understood or utilized, and sometimes even the most well-laid plans fracture in implementation (I). The Crisis Modifier, as discussed, is built into awards, enabling faster revision and therefore avoiding or reducing the approvals and reviews needed when the urgent crisis demands use of the modifier. Crisis modifiers are an initial means of enabling humanitarian response through development programs and have been used in shock-prone environments to inject emergency funds through existing development programs to quickly address humanitarian needs. A Crisis Modifier, especially when linked to contingency plans, can be an important tool for shock responsive development; however, in the case of a severe shock a more robust response beyond the scope and funding of the Crisis Modifier may be needed. There are many examples of shock responsive language written into USAID awards. For some BHA awards, when there is a significant event (e.g., drought), an IP can divert 10 percent of the award to address the emerging needs; additional diversion and/or additional funds require donor

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<sup>37</sup> There are some single-year awards, e.g., Single-Year Assistance Programs.

<sup>38</sup> [https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/shock\\_responsive\\_programming\\_guidance\\_compliant.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/shock_responsive_programming_guidance_compliant.pdf).

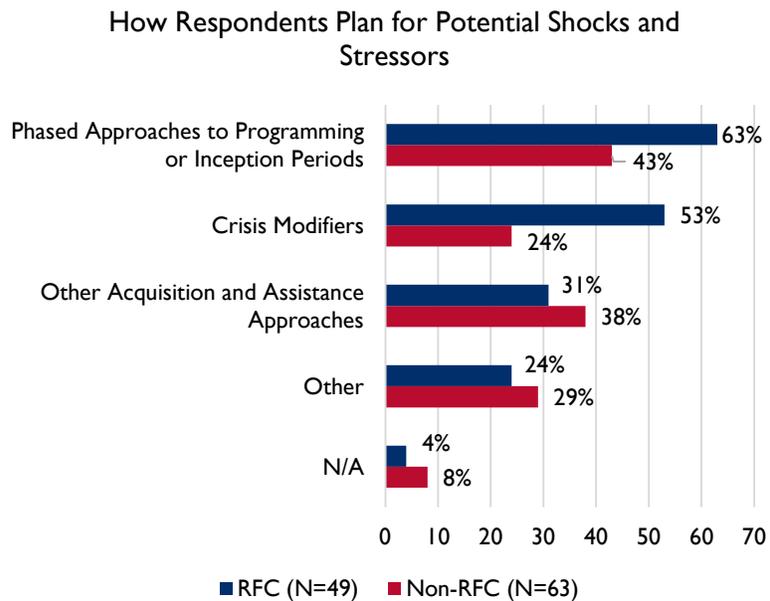
review and approval (DR, I). The R&I post-award co-creation period for RFSA's does not bridge HA and DA but rather ensures the proposed award is fit to context and allows for both updates and modifications based on contextual changes from the initial proposal design.

Even with the benefit of these award flexibilities, the shift from DA to HA (and back again as the situation stabilizes) poses institutional and management challenges for resilience operations. The operations for HA and DA can overlap both geographically and temporally, with resilience terminology and definitions being employed for

both shorter-term and longer-term activities. IPs and USAID often lack clear indicators and/or instructions for: when to shift to an HA footing; when to return to DA operations; how to measure the outcomes of HA activities; how to offset, compensate, or otherwise document the decreases in targeted results due to the shift in resources to the HA footing, and the loss of 'ground' already covered in communities due to the crisis. All of these points require frequent communication, reliable information, documentation, flexible and updated MEL plans, and both management and supervision from partners and USAID. In addition, changes to funding levels, types of activities, and targeted results all have implications for results reporting and overall auditability.

USAID staff are aware of the many challenges around HA/DA/Peace Nexus issues and, in 2019 in response to COVID-19, the RTWG developed the *Programming Considerations for Humanitarian and Development Assistance Coherence During the COVID-19 Pandemic* document. This internal document is intended to help USAID Mission and other development staff make the most of the expertise, tools, funding sources, and program options available within the Agency in responding to COVID-19. It also synthesized lessons learned on how to: (1) improve coherence between HA, DA, and peace assistance, in pursuit of collective outcomes when possible, and (2) pivot programming in a way that can mitigate the short, medium, and long-term impacts of COVID-19. After consultations with partners, USAID is planning to release in late 2021 a public document from the RTWG entitled *Programming Considerations for Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Coherence: A Note for USAID's Resilience Implementing Partners*<sup>39</sup>. This document will share USAID's core principles on HDP coherence and share programming examples and takeaways that may be helpful for USAID staff and partners to learn from and apply themselves

**FIGURE 20: PLANNING FOR SHOCKS AND STRESSORS**



<sup>39</sup> Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Coherence: Promoting complementarity and collaboration across humanitarian, development, and peace actors towards a common agenda. We also refer to the HDP nexus, which carries the same meaning.

## STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESILIENCE POLICY REFRESH

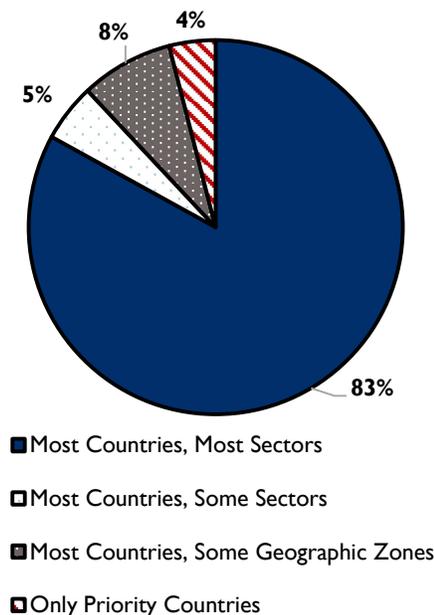
Stakeholders across OUs and data collection methods felt that the Policy’s content is still relevant and useful. Most stakeholders also agreed with the Agency’s current definition of resilience in the policy. Stakeholders in RFCs and non-RFCs (nearly equal for RFC or food security survey respondents as well as for non-RFC or non-food security survey respondents) responded overwhelmingly that strengthening resilience should be a focus for most sectors in most countries (see Figure 21 for survey respondent’s perspectives), recognizing that resilience is multifaceted, multisectoral, not exclusively focused on drought, and not specific to a few geographic zones in a few countries with recurrent crises. However, stakeholders noted that having designated RFCs helps facilitate targeting assistance to critical needs.

To improve the Policy, stakeholders felt it should be made more concrete and practical for the existing target audiences in RFCs, then broadened through accompanying guidance across sectors and countries with a heavy emphasis on implementation, dissemination, and socialization (I). The recent 2021 release of the Activity Design guidance for Resilience was cited by many interviewees as necessary and helpful. However, there remains a gap regarding sectoral guidance about how to design and report on resilience. Current guidance on project design for conflict mitigation/peacebuilding, displacement, and climate change has been appreciated and has key implications for resilience programming, as do COVID-19 pandemic concerns, suggesting that they should be included in the new Policy’s conceptual framework. Specific sectoral directives were not included in the previous policy to avoid restricting or being prescriptive in the broader application of resilience as an approach- but it is perceived as needed now so that resilience does not become a vague, umbrella term. Stakeholders expressed a desire to see explicitly that they fit - and how they fit - into the resilience conceptual framework. At the same time, there is also resistance to providing specific, stand-alone guidelines for technical sectors without clear connection to the Policy document, which interviewees felt would not align with the intentional multisectoral focus of resilience (I).

Existing resilience training currently only covers the 101 or basic level. To further supplement the 101 training for both project or activity design, implementation, and MEL for resilience, the training could be developed, refreshed, and expanded to address how resilience manifests in technical sectors and above the foundational level in RFCs. According to findings, the most effective training was delivered in person, often with a composite team (C4R, technical assistance provider, Mission staff) and tailored to the specific country (or regional) context. However, the virtual self-guided training<sup>40</sup> available on ResilienceLinks is a well-valued resource. Expanding this training so that it focuses on the HDP nexus, case studies, and the use of the crisis modifier or similar approaches could fill current gaps.

**FIGURE 21: USAID RESILIENCE FOCUS**

Strengthening Resilience Should Be an Emphasis



<sup>40</sup> Resilience 101: <https://resiliencelinks.org/building-resilience/training/resilience-101>; Measuring Resilience: <https://resiliencelinks.org/building-resilience/training/measuring-resilience>.

## KEY ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS

### KEY ENABLING FACTORS

The operational agenda articulated in the Resilience Policy has been implemented through JPCs and RFCs due to a set of circumstances and enablers unique to these structures. For RFCs, the most prominent enablers are supportive Mission and office leadership; funding allocated specifically to resilience programming; staff, such as Resilience Coordinators, dedicated to collaboration across technical teams (including humanitarian); support from the C4R; and the ability of staff to understand and apply what USAID means by resilience in planning, design, and implementation of programs. Additional enablers include the RTWVG and RLC, concrete resources via learning events, and guidance on how to implement resilience programming in RFCs.

In the beginning, the original JPCs in the HoA and the Sahel established separate offices or had dedicated staff for resilience, funding, joint strategies, and a mandate to coordinate across HA and DA; this gave them the ability to operate outside of the PC and think outside of the typical development “box.” The JPCs also established relationships and networks with host country actors and other USAID entities, which are critical factors in facilitating the rapid programmatic and strategic decisions often necessary in resilience portfolios.

**FIGURE 22: KEY ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS**

<b>ENABLERS</b>	<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>
-C4R, RTWVG, RLC	-DA/HA coordination
-Mission/Office leadership	-Resilience funding
-RFC resilience funding	-Location + understanding of roles for Resilience Coordinator
-Resilience Coordinators	-Technical silos + reporting requirements
-HA/DA collaboration in the field	-Agency of FSNs to provide support
-Proper use of crisis modifiers	-Staff understanding of resilience + contract mechanisms
-JPC mandate for HA/DA collaboration	-Evidence base
-Resources, learning events, workshops	

### KEY CONSTRAINTS

The disconnect between DA/HA processes, culture, and timelines are key impediments for coordination between DA and HA actors and ultimately for Resilience Policy implementation. The main internal constraints are the different mandates of HA and DA as well as procurement and implementation timelines, country-specific Mission objectives, capacities of partners, limited local systems strengthening, and funding streams. For example, BHA recently released a comprehensive overview of the Bureau’s approach to Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience (known as the ER4 Framework), but it does not explicitly describe planned coordination with the C4R despite using the same terminology, while the original Resilience Policy is explicit about the relationship.

Another factor affecting the implementation of the policy and operational agenda in the RFCs is the varied placement of the Resilience Coordinator whether in a Mission’s HA office, the agriculture team, or within the DA arm’s Program Office. Placement affects the individual’s ability to coordinate resilience activities across teams and to facilitate collaboration, and each location has advantages and disadvantages in terms of purview, access to individuals and information, and existing relationships or networks at the Mission. Placement of a DA staff member inside the HA team could help to bridge the divides between HA and DA but runs the risk that they will be treated as an outsider. The Resilience Coordinator’s understanding of their role and their ability to facilitate coordination is paramount to success.

An often overlooked facilitating or impeding factor is the agency and ability of FSNs to take ownership and have decision-making power to implement the policy within a Mission, given their more sustainable and long-standing positions between FSO rotations. FSN ability to take the lead in resilience programming decisions affects whether resilience portfolios have effective continuation across project designs through iterations of activities.

Given the long-term nature of achieving resilience, limited procurement timelines are a common impediment to DA, especially in a portfolio that crosses so many sectors and actors. Furthermore, true SLI of portfolios across HA and DA is constrained by the misunderstanding by both HA and DA staff regarding available procurement options for award and timeline flexibility.

Finally, establishing an evidence base for these efforts and their collective impact is a challenge and it is still being built, but many data collection and methodology development exercises will soon be completed or have been recently, including endlines for the previous round of resilience programming in the Sahel, the HoA, and other RFCs; baselines for the next generation of activities; and methods for measuring the “humanitarian needs averted” indicator. Given the decade-long duration of resilience programming, the amount of available concrete data for the portfolio is lacking (with the exception of Ethiopia), but the approaches and anecdotal evidence are widely shared and documented among key stakeholders.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. **USAID leadership in DC and Missions should elevate their commitment to embedding a resilience approach into top-level Agency and Mission priorities and encourage the allocation of additional funding, or more strategic use of existing funding, for its implementation beyond Focus Countries.** Resilience funding in RFCs appears to be adequate and clearly demarcated based on stakeholder discussions, but for non-RFCs, existing portfolios should be reviewed to identify which projects and activities already contribute to resilience. For non-RFCs that have a clear need for a resilience focus due to ongoing or impending crises, we recommend a “second tier” focus-country fund. This will facilitate allocation of funding to priority non-RFCs that have consciously and intentionally elevated resilience as a priority at all levels of the PC, from the CDCS to activities.
  - a. The RLC should play an active role in supporting Resilience Policy implementation at the broader Agency level. This is needed due to a continuing prevalence of resilience concepts in Mission and Pillar Bureau priorities, as well as natural alignment of the approach with Agency priorities related to sustainability, locally-led development, capacity-building, systems thinking, and the need to address climate change, global pandemics, and continuing crises.
  - b. Mission leadership, especially in RFCs, should commit to embedding resilience across the CDCS and Mission portfolio to ensure its multisectoral implementation from co-design

to integrated implementation and outcome tracking, with non-RFCs highly encouraged to do this as well. Leadership must be engaged for this approach to be successful and to incentivize staff to work across technical silos. To achieve this, the C4R, with RLC and RTWG support, should develop a Senior Management Team-level Resilience Leadership Bootcamp that is required for all RFC Leadership, all DC Leadership, and encouraged for non-RFCs (especially those with a critical need for resilience approaches).

- c. In practice, elevating resilience might include adding resilience-specific instructions in USAID planning and reporting processes, such as the Operational Plan (OP) and Performance Plan and Reports (PPRs). It might also include advocating for Bureaus (e.g., GH, DDI) to set aside funding to help generate evidence for targeted learning about resilience to fill sector-specific gaps.
2. **USAID leadership at the Agency and OU levels should reduce internal structural barriers, increase incentives, and increase support to both USAID staff and IPs to conduct joint design, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation across technical silos within DA to support resilience programming.** The multisectoral nature of resilience as a lens for programming and the synergies needed among various activities to simultaneously target different facets of resilience are key to achieving sustainable resilience of populations and systems. Investing in multisectoral programming in specific geographic zones or vulnerable communities in an organized, sequential, and complementary way can build resilience through both individual and systemic capacities in a way that is mutually reinforcing and helps prevent backsliding into poverty or risk of insecurity. For example, multisectoral USAID programming can support national and local policy development and implementation to foster inter-ministerial coordination, and engagement of the private sector, civil society, and local communities.
- a. Incentives and motivation can also be built into USAID staff performance reviews and job descriptions, mandated in the Automated Directives System (ADS) for USAID staff, and embedded into award language for IPs.
  - b. Support can strengthen programs and mechanisms for coordinating among key sectors that affect resilience: agriculture, nutrition, education, health, livelihoods diversification, and empowerment of women and youth, while also integrating a resilience lens and strengthening safety nets and shock-responsive mechanisms. Key investments also include strengthening local systems and structures to enable coordination, policy implementation, resilience measurement, and learning. Using shared RFs for co-located mechanisms from different sectors, for example, can help define and track multisectoral outcomes that could more effectively and sustainably support households and communities to escape economic or health insecurity than focusing on sector-specific results.
  - c. To support and track this, MEL systems for activities and portfolios in Missions or DC OUs should focus on tracking shared outcomes across sectors through multisectoral indicators or co-designed evaluations rather than incentivizing stove-piped reporting to capture DO or sectoral attribution. Collaboration across Mission DO teams to develop MEL planning and align reporting processes (OP, PPR) could facilitate this multi-sectorality. Programmatic decisions are often driven by what can be measured; hence measurement for resilience should reflect the principles of multi-sectorality and co-design. This approach will require increased internal USAID investments in efforts to coordinate monitoring through performance indicators and evaluation. While some work has been done to break down the stove-piped nature of DA, Congressional directives related to

funding streams and office organization stifle collaboration around both planning and implementation.

3. **USAID should pursue ways to strengthen and operationalize coordination between HA and DA, ideally across the HDP nexus, which is likely to be a growing imperative given current global trends (especially in RFCs) and articulate how to practically facilitate this coordination in the new policy.** The DA, HA, and peacebuilding worlds still operate largely in parallel, yet USAID programs must often shift from DA to HA and back again in the most vulnerable areas in which USAID operates. The recent BHA ER4 Framework references and cites the Resilience Policy but does not address how its approach should interface with the existing resilience portfolio or its potential expansion. The DA/HA coordination for RFCs should be elaborated so that there is a plan in place at the Mission level to be reviewed annually. For example, climate-related disasters will continue to occur at increasing rates, especially in the fragile environments where resilience programming operates. To mitigate the need for HA and to better plan for DA to HA shifts, USAID can support governments to develop, implement, and mainstream national multi-hazard Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and response policies and strategies across sectors. Sector programs can then support these national efforts at both the national and community level. Conflict is also likely to increase in many of these environments, elevating the criticality of the HDP nexus. Hence, it will be particularly important to determine how to operationalize this nexus within both RFCs and non-RFCs. An operational needs assessment is beyond the scope of this PIA, but the team recommends further analysis about the intersection of resilience and conflict that is specific to each RFC (and beyond as appropriate). The RTWG's forthcoming (public release expected end 2021) *Programming Considerations for Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Coherence: A Note for USAID's Resilience Implementing Partners* can serve as a resource for informing and guiding future work on the HDP nexus.

Key considerations and options for strengthening coordination include:

- a. Develop benchmarks to more easily identify when to shift the approach from DA to HA, and back again to be monitored by the Resilience Coordinator in RFCs, with data from national-level sources, USAID context monitoring, and activity IPs via COR/AORs. Context monitoring should be a tool used consistently across resilience portfolios to track crises.
- b. Design and elaborate the operationalization of BHA's ER4 Framework with consideration of resilience programming and synergies with DA.
- c. Reinforce the training and information sharing with IPs and relevant AORs/CORs, COs/AOs about the shock responsive and adaptive management acquisition and assistance tools and how those can be used to shift programming from DA to HA.
- d. Assess local systems and structure, such as safety nets, social protection systems and registries that can be strengthened and serve as key building blocks of HA and DA programming. For example, strengthening local and national DRM and response policies, programs and systems can contribute to these efforts.
- e. Stressing adaptive management and flexibility, mandate a DRM and disaster response plan from IPs including preparedness planning, transition, and recovery, and including discussion of staffing, types of response, potential funding streams, and logistics.
- f. Consider deploying a relief team from the same organization that currently has a DA base of operations in that country. While requiring strong internal and external collaboration, this would mean far less initial 'set-up', as basic logistics (translators, banking, housing, transportation, etc.) would already be on the ground and available to the relief team when DA operations are suspended due to the crisis. That said, this approach may also lead to

a smaller, less diverse pool of potential partners with both DA and HA capabilities, and partners strong in one area may have more limited capacity and range in the other. The pros of continuity should be carefully weighed against these cons.

4. **In the spirit of elevating Resilience as an Agency-wide priority, the Resilience Coordinators and cross-office structures in all RFCs should be further empowered and supported by Mission and USAID/Washington resources and leadership. Additionally, the Agency should consider appointing multi-sectoral integration Points of Contact in non-RFC Missions, who will focus on cross-sectoral connections across Agency programs using various lenses (including resilience).** Resilience Coordinators should be supported by Mission leadership and the RLC, RTWG, and C4R to bridge the gap across technical sectors to achieve resilience integration. In non-RFCs, the multi-sectoral integration POC would focus on working across sectors to integrate resilience principles as well as other multisectoral topics, such as sustainability, locally-led development, pandemic preparedness and natural disasters. Various Washington technical OUs may be best placed to support these POCs, depending on the multisectoral needs of the Missions. Both types of POCs could be part of the management team, Program Office, or one of the technical directorates, but must have senior leadership support regardless of office designation. Additionally, this work cannot be done without leadership support to allocate and protect staff bandwidth and ideally resources for training, technical support, and additional staff. While C4R backstops have been beneficial for Missions, that role must be supported and augmented in the field.
5. **USAID’s Resilience Policy should be revised to include most sectors and countries in its conceptual framework, while maintaining a set of RFCs (which could potentially be expanded).** First, it should be clear what the policy means for the food security sector in emergency and development settings. Additionally, the policy should be general enough to apply to the entire Agency with a conceptual framework that allows other sectors and OUs to see how their sector reflects the resilience lens. The policy should address climate change, disease outbreaks, and global health security, violent conflict, and peacebuilding in its conceptual framework. To further elucidate how this could translate from policy to practice, there should be accompanying guidance with examples for specific sectors such as education, health, economic growth, and DRG, among others. These should emphasize the ways in which USAID bolsters resilience across all sectors, including through local systems strengthening. This is not meant to be a “catch-all” policy approach, but a recognition that in the most vulnerable areas there are a multitude of reasons for a system’s or target population’s lack of capacity for resilience. Therefore, emphasizing only one aspect of resilience capacity will fail to reduce an individual’s risk for adverse reactions to crisis. Missions who are willing and able to SLI *all* programming in targeted, geographic zones most at-risk for crises should have access to guidance on building resilience holistically.
6. **The C4R, RTWG, and associated Bureaus should make resilience more accessible and practical through guidance accompanying the revised Policy, which interprets existing sectoral concepts and approaches through a resilience lens.** The C4R, the RTWG, and associated Pillar Bureaus should continue to develop guidance about what it means to implement a resilience focus both broadly, at the Agency level, and for individual sectors (without strictly prescribing how to do this, as it should be contextual and needs based). The guidance should provide concrete examples and good practices for implementing programs jointly between different types of DA (not just food security), and coordinating DA and HA, including identifying how to SLI activities through coordinated, strategic planning that considers the entire resilience-adjacent portfolio and embedded contract mechanisms to rapidly shift resources, such as crisis modifiers. The policy should not position resilience as an umbrella term for tangentially

related concepts, rather it should be concrete and practical in its articulation and guidance for staff members and IPs attempting implementation.

- a. To supplement the policy and to package the guidance in an easily accessible location, the RTWG should develop an online Resilience Toolkit, perhaps through the existing ResilienceLinks website, delineating how to work better multi-sectorally within and across activities or projects. It should include sectoral sub-pages with links to their specific guidance, policies, examples, and their own platforms, if they exist.
7. **The C4R and RTWG should support RFC Missions to develop an overarching Resilience RF for their portfolios and develop accompanying guidance on how to do this well.** This country-specific framework would capture the interrelationships between sectors and articulate how sectoral outcomes would come together to achieve the overarching objectives of USAID’s resilience work. This type of design heuristic should then be applied in the RFZs to include additional precision, ground truth, and expand the roles and activities of IPs, stakeholders, and, most importantly, beneficiary communities. The PC level at which this is most appropriate depends on the specific Mission context. For Missions where Resilience is a high-level objective embedded in the CDCS, a new RF may be less necessary since the CDCS RF should show the linkages between lower-level results and the higher-level resilience outcomes. If it does not clearly show this, effort should be made to elucidate those development hypotheses more concretely. In RFCs where there is not a goal-level or DO-level resilience objective, for which the linkages throughout the portfolio are clear, a visual depiction of the overarching theory of change for strengthening resilience should be developed. Additionally, it would be helpful for resilience actors outside of RFCs and the food security sector if the RTWG and C4R developed a broader Resilience RF with sector-specific examples of activities that contribute to resilience in education, health, climate change and others, depicting how the various facets of DA affect resilience, and including an accompanying indicator handbook. For staff not as steeped in resilience concepts, simpler visuals can help improve understanding. For an examples see the USAID [Trade Capacity Building \(TCB\) RF](#) and [TCB Indicators Handbook](#), the older but comprehensive and still useful [DRG Indicators Handbook](#), or the more comprehensive [Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit](#), which includes an [overarching framework](#), [illustrative indicators](#), and a [discussion of their application](#) at each phase of implementation. USAID staff members working on resilience outside of RFCs could then see the broader relevance of their efforts. The existing work of sectors like education, health, and economic growth should be used to inform this exercise to avoid reinventing the wheel.
8. **USAID should develop or articulate clear definitions for how resilience is measured, including through both sector-specific and more general indicators, tied to the conceptual framework. This will allow portfolios to capture the nuanced concept at the Activity, Project, and Strategic levels of the PC.** Multi-sectoral measurement methods that can capture the overall resilience approach require collaboration within Missions, led by Leadership (Mission Director, Deputy Mission Director, Office Directors). In essence, resilience measurement should be constructed in a way that encourages adaptive management in its data collection and analysis approach at the CDCS level (especially for RFCs). Clear definitions and guidance at each of these levels are critical to capturing the multi-sectorality of resilience across technical silos. As part of the Resilience Toolkit described above, the existing measurement tools and guidance should be refreshed and amplified with guidance on how to address significant changes in the population within the resilience zone footprint. The use of complexity-aware monitoring tools such as indices, sentinel indicators, outcome harvesting, most significant change, and other qualitative methodologies should be prioritized. Measurement should not be confined to the quantitative outputs typically found in standard indicators, but rather expanded

methodologically to allow staff to capture the complexity and nuances of outcomes in an ever-changing environment.

**ANNEX 1: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT**

**ANNEX 2: DOCUMENT REVIEW INSTRUMENT AND ANALYSIS**

**ANNEX 3: SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND ANALYSIS**

**ANNEX 4: RESILIENCE RESOURCES**