



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# THE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND INSURGENCY

Putting Principles  
into Practice

USAID POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2011

**USAID**  
**THE DEVELOPMENT**  
**RESPONSE TO**  
**VIOLENT EXTREMISM**  
**AND INSURGENCY**  
**POLICY**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

President Obama's National Security Strategy and Global Development Policy both stress that successful development is essential to advancing our national security objectives.

Consistent with these broader strategic frameworks, this policy provides USAID with a clear mandate and specific guidance on the development response to violent extremism and insurgency. This policy comes at a critical time; development assistance is increasingly called upon as an integral component of the interagency response to complex national security and development challenges.

In line with our *USAID Forward* reform effort, this policy represents an ongoing drive to use our long experience and vast knowledge base to provide crucial thought leadership to the development field. The policy is not defined simply by our involvement in recent conflicts like Afghanistan and Iraq. It builds upon the Agency's experience in countries seized with violent extremism and insurgency in other parts of Asia and the Middle East, as well as Africa and Latin America.

Clarifying USAID's role in the context of violent extremism and insurgency does not come without controversy. Some hold strong views on whether development agencies generally—and USAID in particular—should engage on these issues. Programming resources to respond to violent extremism and insurgency requires the Agency to assume greater institutional and operational risk.

But as the World Bank's recent 2011 World Development Report made clear, the costs of conflict—developmentally, economic and human—are simply too costly to ignore. By not confronting where we can those development related factors that drive conflict and, specific to this policy, violent extremism and insurgency, we will ignore the plight of many around the world in great need.

Already today, close to 60 percent of State and USAID's foreign assistance goes to 50 countries that are in the midst of, or trying to prevent conflict or state failure. This policy is critical to supporting our staff on the frontlines of our greatest national security and development challenges. Our Agency's renewed emphasis on learning, innovation and risk-taking means we will study and improve our work in exactly those areas that have proven most difficult.

With this policy, the Agency and its field Missions can now rely on a clear set of common concepts and definitions, engagement criteria, and programming principles to support and guide our work, enhance its impact and ensure we deliver sustainable results. Most importantly, its implementation will be characterized by close cooperation with interagency, international, and local partners as we continue to address these pressing global challenges while learning from ongoing efforts.



**Rajiv Shah**  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Policy Task Team (PTT), chaired by Melissa Brown from the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL), produced USAID's Policy on *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*. The PTT consisted of seven individuals selected from across the Agency for their recognized knowledge and expertise on these issues:

- Brian Bacon (Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning),
- Lisa Chandonnet-Bedoya (Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)/Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management),
- Stacia George (DCHA/Office of Transition Initiatives),
- Angela Martin (Africa Bureau),
- Craig Mullaney (Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs),
- Leah Werchick (DCHA/Office of Transition Initiatives), and
- Oliver Wilcox (Middle East and Asia Bureaus).

These USAID staff worked intensively and collaboratively in service to this critical policy work, and will continue to serve as important resources in the policy's implementation.

The PTT was launched in September 2010 with a USAID Evidence Summit that brought together representatives from the interagency, donor, and academic communities who specialize in violent extremism and insurgency-related research and evaluation. The PTT consulted with USAID experts serving both in Washington and the field. Outside of USAID, the PTT conducted consultations and briefings with key interagency partners, interested Congressional staff, and external experts. Their contributions substantially improved and informed the final policy.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy on *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency* is the first of its kind produced by USAID. Its purpose is to provide a policy framework that USAID can use to improve the effectiveness of its development tools in responding to violent extremism and insurgency, as well as its capacity to interact constructively with its interagency and other partners in these challenging environments. The policy will also help USAID focus more tightly on capacity building and sustainability which are critical to our long-term security and development goals.

The policy defines terms necessary for a shared understanding within USAID of these challenges and differentiates at a general level between a development response to violent extremism and a development response to insurgency. At the same time, it acknowledges that each situation is different and that these terms and the development response will need to be defined and understood in their particular context and guided by U.S. foreign policy.

Building on a growing knowledge base, the policy identifies those factors, or drivers, that can favor the rise of violent extremism or insurgency as well as those that can influence the radicalization of individuals. Broadly speaking, these include structural “push” factors, including high levels of social marginalization and fragmentation; poorly governed or ungoverned areas; government repression and human rights violations; endemic corruption and elite impunity; and cultural threat perceptions. Simultaneously, “pull” factors that have a direct influence on individual level radicalization and recruitment include access to material resources, social status and respect from peers; a sense of belonging, adventure, and self-esteem or personal empowerment that individuals and groups that have long viewed themselves as victimized and marginalized can derive from the feeling that they are making history; and the prospect of achieving glory and fame. The policy identifies what USAID has learned strategically and programmatically about the role of development assistance to counter these drivers and affect a country’s development.

In the context of the U.S. Global Development Policy and the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) on enhancing civilian power; the policy identifies ways that USAID can work with its interagency partners and amplify the development voice within the USG. It also emphasizes the importance of local partnership with committed stakeholders and enhanced engagement with bilateral counterparts and multilateral institutions.

The policy affirms the importance of the development discipline to, and USAID’s distinct and critical role in, addressing these critical national security and development challenges. This includes USAID’s focus on sustainability and building ownership and capacity at all levels. If applied correctly, a development response can serve as an effective tool to address these issues.

## Specifically, the policy directs the Agency to:

- (1) **Consider key engagement criteria** at the earliest stage of program development, recognizing that the development response is part of a broader USG effort. These criteria include:
  - an assessment of the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency, host country (government and population) commitment, and potential development responses;
  - a determination of an appropriate and critical role for development assistance;
  - a determination that an adequate level of security exists to permit implementing partners to operate and communicate with USAID;
  - identification of risks to the Agency, our partners and related development investments, as well as a plan to mitigate risk; and,
  - consideration of program, management, and resource plans.

**(2) Apply a core body of program principles** at all stages of the programming cycle. The following principles will guide USAID's design and implementation of development programming targeted at violent extremism and insurgency. These are informed by our knowledge base as well as USAID's broader stabilization experience.

#### **For Analysis, Planning, and Design**

- **Focus on the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency.** USAID will identify and prioritize drivers, set clear objectives, design a focused set of interventions, and systematically evaluate related measures of progress and impact.
- **Promote inclusive country ownership.** USAID will engage a wide range of country stakeholders committed to addressing these issues.
- **Exercise selectivity.** USAID will invest where it can achieve the greatest impact, avoid programs that could have a destabilizing effect, and target resources demographically, sectorally, and geographically.
- **Take a coordinated and integrated approach.** In close coordination with interagency and other partners, USAID will coordinate and integrate such programs with other assistance efforts.
- **Tailor and coordinate communications.** USAID will effectively communicate local ownership and partnership to achieve program objectives.
- **Think locally and bring an entrepreneurial approach.** USAID will specifically tailor programming to the local environment, scale up successful approaches, and discontinue ineffective investments.
- **Consider transnational strategies.** USAID will take advantage of appropriate opportunities for cross-border or regional programming and coordination, as the dynamics driving extremism and insurgency often cross national boundaries.

#### **For Operational and Management Responsiveness**

- **Flexibility, agility and procurement speed.** USAID will increase its capability to procure rapidly, adjust as conditions change, and expand its work with and through local partners.
- **Intensive program management.** USAID will ensure staff are trained and equipped to provide hands-on management and oversight required for results.
- **Innovation, evaluation, and learning.** USAID will promote innovation, create mechanisms for on-going review and adaptation, and actively share lessons learned.
- **Informed risk-taking and experimentation.** USAID will encourage staff to take risks, informed by the best available information and mitigation practices.

**(3) Establish and empower a Steering Committee** to oversee the policy's implementation, provide technical leadership and support, particularly to Missions, drive USAID knowledge management, and support Agency and interagency planning, strategy and coordination.

This policy will be followed by implementation guidelines and a systematic approach for knowledge management, staff training and mentorship.

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

*“Where governments are incapable of meeting their citizens’ basic needs and fulfilling their responsibilities to provide security within their borders, the consequences are often global and may directly threaten the American people. To advance our common security, we must address the underlying political and economic deficits that foster instability, enable radicalization and extremism, and ultimately undermine the ability of governments to manage threats within their borders and to be our partners in addressing common challenges.”*

*-2010 National Security Strategy<sup>3</sup>*

*“Through development, we seek to invest in countries’ efforts to achieve sustained and broad-based economic growth, which creates opportunities for people to lift themselves out of poverty, away from violent extremism and instability, and toward a more prosperous future.”*

*-2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review<sup>4</sup>*

The events, and aftermath, of September 11, 2001 brought into sharp relief the importance of violent extremism and insurgency practiced by al-Qa’ida and its affiliates. These phenomena continue to impact parts of the Middle East, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, among other regions. While al-Qa’ida and its affiliates pose the greatest direct threat to the United States, violent extremism and insurgency practiced by other actors and motivated by other ideologies – such as the FARC in Colombia – are challenges in numerous developing countries. The drivers and effects of violent extremism and insurgency vary across context.

While intertwined with political and security dynamics, many of the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency are development challenges. Indeed, factors such as socioeconomic inequalities, repression, corruption, and poor governance often create an enabling environment for radicalization and violent extremism.

Informed by USAID’s decades of experience in conflict-affected countries, a growing body of knowledge, evidence, and practice is emerging from USAID’s development efforts to counter violent extremism and insurgency. It affirms that effective development

responses to these phenomena target *specific* factors in *specific* settings based on sound development principles and in a manner consistent with the USG’s broader promotion of universal values, including democracy and human rights.

This policy, consistent with *USAID Forward* principles, provides USAID with guidance on the development response to violent extremism and insurgency by:

- outlining key concepts, drivers, and development responses;
- elaborating specific engagement criteria and programming principles; and
- identifying institutional enhancements to support USAID’s development role.

**The policy’s intended result is that USAID designs and implements effective, evidence-based development programming targeting drivers of violent extremism and insurgency while systematically learning from and adapting its approaches.**

Development is one of several tools of U.S. national power. As the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism states, “We are engaged in a broad, sustained and integrated campaign that harnesses every tool of American power—military, civilian, and the power of our values—together with the concerted efforts of allies, partners and multilateral institutions. These efforts must also be complemented by broader capabilities, such as diplomacy, development, strategic communications, and the power of the private sector.”<sup>5</sup> Implementing this policy should also serve to strengthen USAID’s interagency voice on development’s contribution to addressing these critical national security issues.

<sup>3</sup> 2010 National Security Strategy, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf), p. 26

<sup>4</sup> Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, [http://www.usaid.gov/qddr/QDDR\\_FullReportLo.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/qddr/QDDR_FullReportLo.pdf), Executive Summary, p. ix

<sup>5</sup> National Strategy for Counterterrorism, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf), p. 2

## 2 KEY CONCEPTS

While precise definitions have eluded many experts, this policy draws on USG elaborated terminology and USAID's own engagement with experts to define violent extremism and insurgency. Defining terms is necessary for a shared understanding within USAID of these challenges and potential development responses to them. At the same time, each situation is different, and these terms will need to be defined and understood in their particular context and guided by U.S. foreign policy.

- **Violent extremism** refers to advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.
- **Insurgency** is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region. It is primarily a political and territorial struggle, in which both sides use armed force to create space for their political, economic, and influence activities to be effective. Insurgency is not always conducted by a single group with a centralized, military-style command structure, but may involve different actors with various aims, loosely connected in networks.<sup>6</sup>

While violent extremism and insurgency share many of the same drivers, they differ in their degree of organization, support base, and use of violence. Violent extremism, for example, often manifests itself at the individual level and in highly informal, diffuse networks. Such networks are often transnational in character, while insurgencies are often delimited by geography. Also, violent extremism can exist in quite stable environments, as well as in semi-permissive and non-permissive contexts associated with insurgencies. In certain cases, violent extremism and insurgency can overlap.

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, January 2009, p. 2.



# 3 KNOWLEDGE BASE

## Understanding Violent Extremism and Insurgency

The nature and range of possible drivers of violent extremism and insurgency, variety of local contexts, and nascent evidence around responses make defining USAID's role in these environments particularly challenging. Multiple drivers often work in concert in the same setting, and their significance may change over time. They can fuel individual-level radicalization in different ways, and the pathways to violent extremism are multiple. Some may be long-standing grievances, while others can be more recent developments. The importance of understanding the local context cannot be underestimated, and rarely will only one driver be identified for programming.

Though knowledge gaps exist, USAID has developed a more nuanced understanding of such factors from its research efforts and their field application. For example, USAID has learned that frustrated expectations of new elites for economic improvement and social mobility are far more significant drivers than poverty. USAID has also learned that unmet socioeconomic needs may be significant not because of actual material deprivation, but because of the related perception of those marginalized populations that state and society have abandoned them and left a governance gap.<sup>7</sup>

Broadly, structural “push” factors are important in creating the conditions that favor the rise or spread in appeal of violent extremism or insurgency. Push factors are socioeconomic, political, and cultural in nature.<sup>8</sup> For example:

- **High levels of social marginalization and fragmentation**—particularly among first and second-generation, rural-to-urban migrants—increase the appeal of violent extremist groups. Social isolation and disconnectedness from society, community, and family may trigger a personal search for identity, meaning, and purpose. In the

absence of positive alternatives, membership in a cell or extremist network may help to fulfill those needs.

- **Poorly governed or ungoverned areas** may enable violent extremists to establish sanctuaries or safe havens. Poorly governed areas may create passive or active support for such groups by communities who feel marginalized or neglected by a lack of government reach. First, a lack of services can create opportunities for service provision by extremist groups. Second, a lack of security or rule of law can allow violent extremists to operate and possibly impose their own order, and may propel individuals to join armed groups as the perceived strongest actor.
- **Government repression and human rights violations.** Cruel, degrading treatment by police or security forces, or being closely connected to someone who suffered at their hands, for example, can be significant risk factors. They can lead to a desire for revenge. The harsher and more widespread the repression (especially if concentrated in common locales such as prisons), the greater the push to embrace violent extremism.
- **Endemic corruption and elite impunity.** The more corrupt the environment, the easier it is for violent extremists to establish themselves as a righteous alternative and lash out at “immoral” ruling elites. Endemic corruption can also provide such groups the enabling environment in which to establish geographic footholds and connections with organized crime.

<sup>7</sup> *Guide to the Drivers of violent Extremism*, February 2009 and *Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming*, October 2009, Management Systems International. [http://dec.usaid.gov/index.cfm?p=search.getCitation&CFID=17345733&CFTOKEN=45183428&id=s\\_0E83963F-D566-FC5C-D27D90A974394024&rec\\_no=164032](http://dec.usaid.gov/index.cfm?p=search.getCitation&CFID=17345733&CFTOKEN=45183428&id=s_0E83963F-D566-FC5C-D27D90A974394024&rec_no=164032)

<sup>8</sup> *IBID.*

- **Cultural threat perceptions.** This includes the often deeply held, existential perception of domination by another group, the West, or an oppressive international order. Cultural drivers also include more broadly perceived threats to related customs and values, including gender roles and education.

Simultaneously, USAID has seen that **“pull” factors** are necessary for push factors to have a direct influence on individual-level radicalization and recruitment. Pull factors are associated with the personal rewards which membership in a group or movement, and participation in its activities, may confer. Such potential benefits include:

- access to material resources, social status and respect from peers;
- a sense of belonging, adventure, and self-esteem or personal empowerment that individuals and groups that have long viewed themselves as victimized and marginalized can derive from the feeling that they are making history; and,
- the prospect of achieving glory and fame.

Social networks comprised of relatives, friends, or neighbors can also draw others similarly affected by social marginalization or frustrated expectations into the orbit of violent extremist ideas and networks. Other pull factors include: the presence of radical institutions or venues, service provision by extremist groups, and extremist involvement in illegal economic activity.

Gaps remain in USAID’s understanding of violent extremism and insurgency. This includes the role of gender: Women may act as both a potential brake on, as well as a driver of, violent extremism. Some suggest that family ties, and women’s roles in families, create psychological barriers for husbands, sons, or other male relatives to join violent extremist groups. Others have asserted that women may serve as motivators for male family members to join. Understanding the role of gender at the local level is fundamental.

## Responding to Violent Extremism and Insurgency<sup>9</sup>

USAID’s responses to violent extremism are often preventive – aimed at preempting radicalization by mitigating specific drivers. Programming usually targets specific geographic areas and/or sub-populations deemed vulnerable to the extremist appeal. In many contexts, USAID programming in this area is small-scale

and distinct, and often accompanies a larger, ongoing development portfolio.

Development programming directed at countering insurgency, on the other hand, tends to be reactive in nature, seeking to contain and reduce active support for an ongoing insurgency. Such efforts tend to be larger-scale, more comprehensive, and multi-sectoral. They often are undertaken as part of a broader, interagency stabilization effort.

***Our current understanding of drivers, and existing development responses, has yielded some strategic lessons.*** At a general level, not all drivers of violent extremism and insurgency are appropriately addressed through a development response. These broad lessons echo what USAID already knows about sound development principles, and refine the development response to violent extremism and insurgency. While preliminary, key lessons include:

- **Development assistance can directly address socioeconomic drivers.** Push factors, such as marginalization, frustrated expectations, and unmet basic needs, often have specific development responses that can address concrete underlying grievances. Pull factors, particularly social networks, can also be addressed, particularly when they include facilitating access to economic opportunity and services, as well as enhancing the voice of marginalized populations in their communities or societies. USAID’s experience with integrated youth programming offers examples of cross-cutting approaches that include vocational and technical training, life skills, employment-search support, and positive, peer-group, civic engagement.
- **Political drivers are also responsive to development assistance.** While general democracy and governance (DG) approaches may have indirect effects on countering violent extremism, DG interventions targeting at-risk communities can be more directly effective. For example, police harassment and intimidation can impact at-risk urban and peri-urban communities. This can be mitigated by activities such as community policing, NGO advocacy, and media coverage. DG and other activities can also directly address poorly or un-governed areas by building

<sup>9</sup>This policy does not directly address counter-terrorism (CT) approaches based on intelligence, law enforcement and military assets; other USG departments and agencies are generally better placed to engage in such CT programming. However, USAID’s development response to violent extremism and insurgency contributes to CT goals by mitigating the specific drivers that encourage the use, advocacy of, and support for violence.

confidence between local communities and government. For example, assisting legitimate government actors to organize “town-hall” meetings and conduct small-scale infrastructure projects, as in some parts of Afghanistan, can increase such interaction and demonstrate government responsiveness.

- **Cultural drivers should not be ignored.** While less amenable to influence by development assistance, there are principles that should be considered to address cultural drivers, for example, by respecting indigenous and/or religious customs. These might be addressed, in part, by engaging indigenous religious leaders or other groups and supporting alternative voices. (Missions should consult with USAID’s Regional Legal Advisor (RLA) or General Counsel (GC) in advance of programming to ensure compliance with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment concerning separation of church and state.)
- **Prevention is essential and more effective than mitigation of active drivers.** Institutions, actors, and processes relevant to at-risk populations can be sources of resilience against the influence of violent extremist narratives and provide youth, in particular, with a positive role and voice in community governance—an important option for turning a potential source of instability into an asset. One example is the widespread existence of *fadas*, informal associations of young people in Niger. *Fadas* provide a non-violent outlet for expressing grievances, a network for addressing needs, and a positive mechanism for social relationships and collective action. In some cases, there will be tensions between supporting the status quo of more tolerant, but hierarchical traditions, and empowering youthful voices for change.
- **Local, customary authorities are key partners.** Given the instability in insurgency environments in particular, working with existing local authorities that play governance roles (e.g. dispute resolution and security) is important. A common approach in such a context is to build the effectiveness and legitimacy of state institutions. How-

ever, supporting the projection of central government presence in places where it has been historically weak or non-existent may be destabilizing. It may actually weaken customary, local authorities (i.e. tribal leaders) by affecting their ability and/or desire to stand against insurgents.<sup>10</sup>

■ **Communications is a development assistance priority.**

Given the role of perceptions in radicalization and recruitment, media and communications are central to development responses to the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency. This includes support for local media development to foster independent voices as a counterweight to extremist ones. For example, USAID provided an initial grant to *Tolo TV* in Afghanistan in 2002. *Tolo* has since become a highly influential moderate voice in Afghanistan and, with 45% market share, is Afghanistan’s most popular television station.<sup>11</sup> Providing information about development activities, which is more effectively done by local communications networks, is another approach. USAID’s programming experience in West Africa indicates that community radio can be a particularly cost-effective medium with significant reach.

<sup>10</sup> *Tribalism, Governance and Development*, September 2010, Management Systems International

<sup>11</sup> *Afghan Media in 2010*, pp. 111–113, Altai Consulting, research conducted from March to August 2010

# 4 USAID'S DISTINCT AND CRITICAL ROLE

One USG agency alone cannot achieve critical U.S. national security objectives. The Department of State (DOS), Department of Defense (DOD), USAID, and other agencies draw on their respective strengths to create an integrated response. USAID applies the development discipline to its worldwide development efforts as well as to its responses to violent extremism and insurgency. Its strengths include:

**Development and technical expertise.** USAID has development expertise in areas such as democratic governance, health, education, economic growth, agriculture, and other sectors. Many USAID staff are serving, or have served, in countries dealing with violent extremism and/or insurgency. The Agency has developed expertise in community-based, multi-sectoral stabilization programming. USAID is increasingly drawing lessons from such experience to apply to longer-term initiatives. For example, USAID applied its stabilization expertise in a pilot program to help the Colombian government consolidate its territorial gains against the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)*, and reduce coca cultivation. The program resulted in a significant consolidation of state presence in targeted municipalities, which saw, for example, an 85% reduction in coca and a 56% increase in electoral participation. This approach has now been adopted more broadly by the U.S. Embassy's Colombia Strategic Development Initiative as well as the Colombian government's National Consolidation Plan.

**Research, assessment and program development tools.** USAID has developed assessment frameworks and programming guides related to conflict management and mitigation and political transition that are also applicable to violent extremist and insurgency environments. More recently, USAID has developed *The Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism and Development Assistance* and *Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming*, as well as the District Stabilization Framework (DSF), an integrated civilian-military tool now used in parts of

Afghanistan. These and other tools offer systematic ways of analyzing issues related to violent extremism and insurgency as well as crafting development responses based on local conditions.

**Field presence, local staff, and partners.** USAID Missions are local platforms for U.S., international, and local staff with contextual knowledge and language skills, who monitor on-the-ground developments and engage governmental and direct non-governmental counterparts in program implementation. With local expertise and long institutional memories, Foreign Service National staff is a particularly strong Agency field asset. Finally, our implementing partners add depth to our knowledge base and reach outside capitals.

**Mobilization mechanisms.** USAID has unique capabilities for targeted, rapid-response field analysis, program design and implementation. This has proven particularly advantageous in volatile insurgency contexts. Recent procurement reforms giving USAID Missions added flexibility will facilitate smaller grants for locally-specific development responses to violent extremism and insurgency.

**Focus on sustainability.** Even as it manages both short-term stabilization and long-term assistance, USAID focuses on sustainability. Although not all stabilization impacts will require sustained program support, many will, particularly to build capacity and systems to strengthen resiliency to violent extremism and insurgency. This focus on longer-term commitment has helped USAID to forge wide-ranging, lasting partnerships critical to effective development programming in these and other settings.

# 5 INTERAGENCY INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION

A development response is only one component of broader USG efforts to counter violent extremism and insurgency. In some cases, the success of development assistance is contingent on other USG assets, such as security assistance, which can create greater stability for development programs to take hold.

In the field, interagency integration is increasingly the norm under Chief of Mission authority. USAID, DOD, and DOS develop strategies and coordinate programs; each brings different assets to a common mission. While perhaps most robustly developed in settings such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Colombia, such integration is also happening in largely stable contexts, such as West Africa. The benefits of integration, particularly field-based, apply not just to larger-scale, well-resourced Mis-

sions countering insurgency, but also to small, finitely-resourced efforts countering violent extremism in largely stable settings.

USAID Missions have developed close relationships with DOD country-level counterparts to jointly plan and coordinate. In Afghanistan, joint interventions have been effective when USAID is involved in pre-operation planning for quick mobilization of development resources alongside military operations. In many cases, coordinating while identifying distinct roles that maximize interagency comparative advantages is key. Moreover, as USAID builds up its learning capacity, our interagency partners will be significant resources for lessons learned, which can continue to inform effective integration, coordination and/or differentiation.

## PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS (PRTs): INTERAGENCY FIELD INTEGRATION

Designed to operate in semi-permissive environments, a PRT helps to stabilize an area through its integrated civilian-military approach. It combines the diplomatic, military, and developmental components of USG agencies involved in local stabilization and reconstruction efforts. The PRT aims to improve stability by building host nation capacity to govern; enhancing economic viability; and delivering essential public services, such as security, law and order, justice, health care, and education. USAID will work with its interagency partners to assess the lessons and best practices associated with PRTs.



# 6 POLICY GUIDANCE

## Engagement Criteria

Recognizing that the development response is one part of a broader USG effort to address these national security concerns, the following serve as engagement criteria that USAID will consider prior to, and reassess in designing, implementing and, if needed, adjusting programming in these areas. Depending on context, decision-making may be field-based, Washington-based, or both.

- **Assessment of the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency and identification of potential development responses.** Analysis will be conducted in coordination with USAID regional and functional bureaus in Washington, using input from the Department of State, and the engagement of other interagency partners. It will be informed by USAID analytic and technical guides.
- **Consideration of host country (government and population) commitment and capacity** to address the development related drivers of violent extremism and insurgency and for possible program responses.
- **Determination that there is an appropriate and critical role for development assistance in preventing or mitigating drivers of violent extremism or insurgency.** This determination includes Country Team leadership, particularly the USAID Mission Director and Ambassador, as well as Washington-based interagency leadership.
- **Determination that an adequate level of security exists to permit implementing partners to operate, monitor programs, and communicate with USAID.**

- **Identification of risks to the Agency, its partners, and the development investment (i.e. that it could be undermined by destabilizing elements), and determination that reasonable steps can be taken to mitigate those risks.** Risks can be physical, programmatic, and financial.
- **Consideration of program, resource, and management plans required for implementation.** This will be conducted by Mission leadership, and other Agency and interagency stakeholders at Post and/or in Washington, and will often include USAID RLAs and/or GC, whom Missions will engage prior to program design for compliance with appropriate legal statutes and authorities.

## Programming Principles

The following principles will guide USAID's design and implementation of development programming targeting drivers of violent extremism and insurgency. These are informed by USAID's knowledge base, the U.S. Global Development Policy, including its focus on tailoring development strategies in stabilization and post-crisis situations, the *USAID Policy Framework 2011-2015*, as well as USAID's broader stabilization experience. Here, *stabilization* refers to the process of making a country or territory less likely to descend into, or return to, a state of conflict or instability and contributing to conditions that will advance sustainable development.<sup>12</sup>

USAID pursues stabilization where violence is recurrent and reaches significant levels – including where insurgency is manifest; stabilization also can apply in essentially stable settings where violent extremism is the issue. Stabilization is part of, and not separate from, an overall development response. Operationally,

<sup>12</sup>Stabilization is also used in conflict prevention, management, and mitigation, as well as post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction but is distinct from humanitarian assistance. Stabilization does not imply preserving the status quo. Political, social and economic transformation can be unstable, but may lead to more propitious conditions for development.

however, stabilization generally requires different objectives, beneficiaries, modalities, and measures than those more oriented to longer-term development. But linking both under the framework of an overall development response is critical for crafting effective, ultimately sustainable development programming to counter violent extremism and insurgency.

Because these environments are often fluid and complex, there are challenges associated with implementing these principles. This policy acknowledges those challenges and identifies areas for further action. They will be subject to regular review and updating.

## FOR ANALYSIS, PLANNING AND DESIGN

**Focus on the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency:** *Informed by local research and assessment, USAID Missions will identify and prioritize drivers, set clear objectives, design a focused set of interventions, and systematically evaluate related measures of progress and impact. In their assessments, Missions should consider the role of women vis-a-vis drivers and any relevant development responses.* Not every developmental need leads to violent extremism or insurgency, and committing

large resources to countries affected by violent extremism and/or insurgency is not a solution in itself.

In these contexts, analysis usually must be conducted in short time frames. In addition, it can be challenging to ensure that all stakeholders' points of view are incorporated into analysis while also avoiding biases. Moreover, operating in semi or non-permissive environments can reduce mobility and limit opportunities for speaking to varied audiences and understanding realities on the ground. USAID will continue to refine its tools for rapid, on-the-ground analysis that informs program design and implementation.

### **Promote inclusive country ownership at all levels:**

*In program assessment, design, implementation and evaluation, USAID will engage a wide range of country stakeholders – from the community to the national level – who are committed to addressing the development related drivers of violent extremism and insurgency.* Country ownership is a key ingredient of effective, sustainable development. This can include host government institutions, civil society, customary local authorities, communities and/or local populations – each of which can have an important role to play.

## TOOLS FOR ASSESSING DRIVERS

**The District Stability Framework in Afghanistan.** To increase the effectiveness of development assistance in countering insurgency, USAID and the Counterinsurgency Training Center-Afghanistan (CTC-A) developed the District Stability Framework (DSF), a comprehensive, data-driven framework to ensure that programming is continually informed by ongoing analysis of on-the-ground developments. DSF assists in (a) identifying sources of instability; (b) targeting activities to diminish or mitigate the drivers of instability; and (c) monitoring and evaluating outcomes against specific stability objectives in a particular area. The DSF process is iterative, as lessons learned from short-term activities are fed back into analysis and re-design. USAID is implementing DSF in eastern Afghanistan. In Sarkani district, for example, DSF allowed USAID to more effectively address the broad problem of “lack of legitimate government” by distinguishing government representatives' inability to circulate due to insecurity, versus a lack of capacity, and tailoring interventions by village.

**Focus Groups in Yemen.** Some USAID Missions have also relied on local organizations to conduct focus groups and surveys to inform broader analysis. Such an approach allows for more opinions to be accessed, reduces the risk of bias, and provides real-time data. In Yemen, USAID supported local researchers to organize and conduct approximately 20 youth focus groups and additional youth stakeholder focus group discussions. The results of that assessment exercise demonstrate the utility of such applied research for program development: youth, for example, stressed several drivers of violent extremism that adult youth stakeholders did not.

## INCLUSIVE COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

**In West Africa.** USAID programs in Chad and Mali are developing partnerships with local government, religious and traditional leaders, and nascent NGOs. Through training for local officials, youth employment and community improvement projects, key local actors are developing increased capability to respond to drivers of instability.

**FATA Secretariat in Pakistan.** USAID coordinates overall strategy and priority areas for intervention with the FATA Secretariat and the USG interagency. To encourage and ensure community involvement, USAID works closely with local government representatives to engage their constituent communities in project selection, design, and implementation. Local and regional government representative engagement is key to USAID's success in increasing community participation and buy-in.

In many places, poor governance is a major factor. USAID often engages with governments that lack the capacity for full country ownership, even if there is political will to address the development challenges fomenting violent extremism and/or insurgency. In other places, capacity may exist but demonstrated political will is lacking. Ultimately, USAID must leverage

and further develop local capacity related to service delivery and good governance principles, such as transparency and accountability, to respond to drivers of violent extremism and/or insurgency. USAID will use case study analysis to further understand how best to promote inclusive country ownership in countering violent extremism and insurgency.

**Exercise selectivity:** *USAID will make choices about where its investments will achieve the greatest impact, avoid programs that could have a destabilizing effect, and target its resources demographically, sectorally and geographically.* Radicalization and recruitment are often highly localized and concentrated in specific populations and/or communities. Not all drivers present in a given context may be amenable to development assistance.

USAID will take into account the plans of other USG agencies and donors actively engaged in specific programs to counter violent extremism and insurgency. Conducting a “mapping” exercise is essential to identify areas of overlap and potential areas for integration. This includes USAID's access to, and ability to use, information and analysis generated by other agencies.

Selectivity can be challenging because multiple imperatives (host country, USG, unmet developmental needs) often require USAID responsiveness to a much broader array of needs than targeted analysis may suggest. To better guide decision-making, USAID will use case study analysis to identify best practices associated with applying the principle of selectivity in these environments.

## SELECTIVITY VIA THE TRANS-SAHARA COUNTERTERRORISM PARTNERSHIP (TSCTP)

TSCTP, a multi-country interagency effort that aims to combat violent extremism (VE) in the Sahel region of Africa, involves strengthening both military and civilian security forces, conducting outreach campaigns on non-violence and tolerance, and confidence-building, community-development programs for regions identified through interagency assessments. USAID contributions to the Partnership include: the regional Peace for Development program in Niger and Chad; community development activities in Mali; and a research agenda examining the drivers of VE in the Sahel and providing a framework for development programming to counter VE. In this context, USAID programming targets specific communities and groups within these regions to mitigate the drivers that can lead to support for extremist ideologies and organizations.

## STABILIZATION, COORDINATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN

Both civilian and military actors have used cash-for-work to successfully achieve near term stabilization objectives in Afghanistan. But the sustainability of these programs has been a long-standing concern by the Afghan Government and donors when short term jobs are not connected to potential future employment (i.e., clean-up campaigns or refurbishing canals that communities would otherwise do themselves).

USAID has made sustainability a fundamental objective for cash-for-work activities in stabilization environments. Recognizing that the government must be actively involved in the implementation, we have increased the coordination between our projects and the line ministries, connecting the projects to successful rural development projects that are already being implemented by GIRoA. To improve human resource capacity, USAID cash-for-work programs work with local communities through job skill training and mentoring, which can be through their own skilled citizens or through external resources. Through a collaborative GIRoA-led community consultation, communities identify challenges, own and resolve their problems, and link to community and local government institutions. The community projects that the community decides upon not only address sources of instability but also support longer-term economic growth (i.e. instead of just clearing canals, communities are building more efficient canals to get water to new farmland). There is also a wage analysis that must accompany every approved project so we avoid distortion of local economies.

### Take a coordinated and integrated approach:

*As part of early program planning and in close interagency coordination, USAID Missions will establish a plan for coordinating and integrating programs directed at drivers of violent extremism and/or insurgency with other forms of assistance.* Planning will need to take into account requirements for longer-term development programming to reinforce early gains and sustainability. This includes cases where USAID conducts rapid, discrete activities for stabilization effects – for example, how a large-scale, cash-for-work program could better support medium-term economic development.

Stabilization does not always precede longer-term, sector-based approaches; simultaneous implementation may be required. Whether sequential or concurrent, different types of assistance must be continuously coordinated and strategically linked. Criteria should be established early for transitioning among the different types of assistance, based on context-specific factors such as permissiveness of the operating environment. A minimal level of security is required for stabilization and long-term development to take hold.

This planning will need to be conducted in close coordination with the Department of State and other interagency partners to ensure a common understanding of each others' operational

## INTEGRATION IN IRAQ

From 2006 to 2008, USAID promoted stability in communities most affected by the increasing violence in the country by providing jobs, training, and small grants to at-risk youth who might otherwise be attracted to the insurgency. Along with the “surge,” joint civilian-military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were deployed throughout the country to improve U.S. engagement with Iraqis. Beginning in 2009, USAID began consolidating the gains it achieved since the surge. USAID continues to support private-sector development and improving the Iraqi Government's ability to deliver essential services to its people. In April 2010, the Iraqi Government released the National Development Plan. USAID helped the Iraqi Ministry of Planning formulate the plan, an important milestone that outlines the Iraqis' own priorities and vision of how to achieve them.

needs and capacities, particularly as relates to security. Perceptions of sufficient security often differ among interagency partners. Integration and sequencing requires intensive effort and management by USAID and implementing partner personnel; integration first requires coordination on a strategic and then on an implementation level. Agency staffing has not consistently been configured and/or sufficiently resourced to address this important requirement, and specific guidance has been lacking. USAID will review lessons, develop guidelines and reconsider resource requirements to promote coordinated and integrated planning in both Washington and the field.

**Tailor and coordinate communications:** *USAID will effectively communicate local ownership and partnership to achieve program objectives.* This will include how USAID incorporates host government entities into the public face of its programs, whether through organizing official events or communicating to the media the local community's role in a program. Branding is typically one element of USAID's communications efforts – and is important to transparency. By statute and policy, USAID will generally brand or co-brand “USAID.” However, local context may make such branding or co-branding counterproductive for a development response to violent extremism and insurgency. In coordination with inter-agency partners, the Agency will consider creative or nuanced methods to balance security, political, and communications goals so that overall program objectives, such as strengthening governance presence or amplifying the voice of community leaders, are achieved. Working with GC and the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), USAID will review

existing regulations and craft specific recommendations related to branding and marking when appropriate and necessary. More broadly, the Agency will seek innovative approaches to development outreach and communications in these environments and capture these approaches in communications' strategies and plans.

**Think locally and bring an entrepreneurial approach:** *Informed by local actors, USAID will specifically tailor programming to the local environment, scale up successful approaches, and discontinue ineffective investments.* Every locality has varying drivers of extremism or insurgency, as well as specific resources and potential partnerships that can mitigate those drivers. Successes

## LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH IN CHAD

The TSCTP program in Chad has provided extensive training and technical assistance to five national civil society organizations, strengthening their technical and institutional capacity. One example is the Chadian Association of Herders and Nomads (AEN) which has demonstrated a significant leap in capacity, moving from a volunteer-driven association to one that includes dedicated full-time staff. USAID partners such as AEN provide training for community leaders to support their role in mobilizing community members and facilitating participatory problem-solving to ensure that local initiatives are appropriate, conflict-sensitive, and sustainable.

## TAILORED COMMUNICATIONS IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, USAID works with the Colombian President's Center for Consolidated and Integrated Action (CCAI), which leads the design and oversight of the Government of Colombia's (GOC) counterinsurgency program in the regional capitals that serve as gateways to remote, neglected regions. All CCAI-related activities are branded GOC initiative in order to build support for the GOC in those areas. Communities have viewed these activities positively and, therefore, have been positive towards the GOC for bringing them to their respective areas.

cannot automatically be replicated elsewhere without adjustment for different contexts. Local activities do not have to be big; small amounts of resources at the community level can have a significant impact. By starting small, risk can be diversified and mitigated, allowing for experimental approaches or testing new, non-traditional partners such as diaspora groups and private sector actors who may broaden USAID's reach and impact. An entrepreneurial approach requires a different risk management approach and intensive monitoring and evaluation efforts to learn quickly from efforts, to expand effective interventions, and limit unsuccessful projects. Along with supporting informed risk management and innovative monitoring and evaluation practices, USAID will continue to review and disseminate best practices



associated with a locally driven, entrepreneurial approach to responding to violent extremism and insurgency.

**Consider transnational strategies:** *USAID will take advantage of appropriate opportunities for cross-border or regional programming and coordination, as the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency often cross national boundaries.* This could include complementary programming on either side of a border, or one cross-border program. Sometimes, USG and/or host country policies on either side of the same border could be different enough to challenge the execution of a coordinated approach. Transnational strategies require strong coordination between USG and host-government entities involved in each of the countries. Coordination with USG regional actors in Washington, Department of State Regional Bureaus, as well as the appropriate Combatant Command is also essential. USAID will use case-study analysis to examine further the lessons and best practices associated with cross-border or regional programming in these environments.

## WORKING TRANSNATIONALLY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Countering violent extremism (CVE) programming in the Horn of Africa promotes stability in a strategic cross border area through provision of communication equipment to local communities where peace committees have been established to serve as a first response to stabilize a region affected by violent extremism, caused in part by al-Shabaab fighters. This cross-border program is a critical component of an early-warning and early-response approach to the drivers of violent extremism.

## FOR OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS

**Flexibility, agility, and procurement speed:** *USAID will increase its capability to procure rapidly, adjust as conditions change, and expand its work with and through local partners.* At times, USAID needs mechanisms that can respond in weeks, if not days. Existing, pre-competed contracting and grant-making mechanisms are examples of more rapid procurement. In

## RAPID PROCUREMENT CAPABILITY

In situations where there are rapid-response and program-start-up requirements, USAID's Office of Transition Initiative's (OTI) pre-competed SWIFT contracting mechanism allows for a more manageable competition among a group of seven organizations for specific programs. One new procurement can be completed in an average of four weeks, or even days if required. In addition, the contract requires the awardee to be able to start implementing activities within 48 hours of award.

some situations, exceptions to full and open competition may be required. Because the operating environment is often highly fluid, flexibility is critical to allow for programmatic change. USAID will develop a variety of procurement mechanisms to be responsive, with flexibility built into scopes of work and options for working with a variety of local and international partners.<sup>13</sup> Contracting with and providing grants to more and varied local partners, and creating the conditions where aid is no longer necessary for the countries where we work, is an objective of USAID's Implementation and Procurement Reform (IPR). It is also an important element of an effective development response to violent extremism and insurgency. As part of IPR, USAID will continue to review its procurement practices and ensure that there are options to address the need for flexibility, agility, and rapid response in these types of environments.

**Intensive program management and systematic monitoring and reporting of measures of progress and impact:** *USAID will ensure staff is equipped to provide substantial direction and hands-on management required for results, and that program oversight is a closely shared responsibility between the field and headquarters.* Intensive management and oversight require staff time and field visits, which Missions cannot always accommodate with limited operating expense budgets and/or where USAID officers may not be able to directly observe projects given security restrictions. Innovative

<sup>13</sup>Working closely with the appropriate and relevant procurement specialists in Washington and the field.

## USING DRIVERS BASED RISK ANALYSIS

Several USAID missions in Africa have used the previously referenced *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism and Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming*. Metrics derived from the risk analysis were incorporated into traditional and non-traditional program management tools, such as baseline studies, media assessments, youth-led community mapping, and independent polling to guide program implementation.

## MONITORING IN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS

Some missions such as Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen have introduced multi-layered monitoring systems including independent third-party monitoring, use of geospatial information systems (GIS) and photography, interagency support, and local stakeholder engagement. Geospatial analysis, in particular, provides a commonly understood and powerful systems framework to collect, organize and analyze place-based data. For instance, spatial analysis provides the capability to look at the effectiveness of various aid programs and projects on stabilization of different communities.

uses of technology, including geospatial information systems (GIS), can help overcome these challenges. Independent, third-party monitoring and local stakeholder feedback, where appropriate, can also be useful.

Another important element of management and oversight is consistent, appropriate collection of, and reporting on, measures of progress and impact related to countering drivers of violent extremism and insurgency. Where relevant, USAID will track outcome-level indicators in the geographic areas that its programs are targeting to monitor whether its activities are helping to reduce the emergence and severity of violent extremism and insurgency. Learning from innovations in the field, USAID will continue to refine its monitoring and evaluation platforms and

tools, particularly where security is a concern, to ensure the Agency adapts and retargets its programming in real time. USAID will also review its operating- expense needs related to effective program management and oversight.

**Innovation, evaluation, and learning: USAID will promote innovation, create mechanisms for self-critique and continuous adaptation, and share lessons learned.** A range of methods are often required to ensure real-time analysis and learning – including rapid appraisal, indicators tied to drivers, and attitude and behavior-change measures. These methods require resources from Missions that are frequently understaffed and/or have limited budgets. In addition, the state of the art for evaluating activities countering violent extremism and insurgency is still nascent. USAID will further research in this field in the context of USAID's new Evaluation Policy. That policy calls for higher standards of methodological rigor; greater transparency about evaluation findings and, on average, dedicating to external evaluation at least three percent of the program budget managed by an operating unit. USAID will explore ways to adapt its reporting requirements and monitoring and evaluation systems to enable results forecasting in shorter timeframes and programs

## LEARNING BY EVIDENCE SUMMIT

USAID sponsored an Evidence Summit in September 2010 that brought together representatives from the interagency, donor and academic communities who specialize in violent extremism and insurgency related research and evaluation to launch efforts to examine methodologies for evaluating programming and to inform this policy. Specifically, the Summit focused on three problem areas where ongoing development practice and evidence intersect: dampening processes of radicalization either at the individual or societal level; disrupting the formation of groups willing to employ terror and other forms of political violence to achieve their aims; and promoting stabilization once an insurgency has emerged. The Summit highlighted USAID's own efforts to learn from its engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, and the Sahel and demonstrated what and how the agency is learning, while also pointing out measures the agency can take to improve its practices.

to be adjusted as local contexts evolve. USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) will develop specific guidance and highlight good practices for evaluations in complex settings, where a lack of ability to measure impact, short timeframes, and evaluator safety may be concerns.

**Informed risk-taking and experimentation:** *Supported by improved Agency-wide practices and informed by the best available information and mitigation practices, USAID staff will be encouraged to take risks, adapt to incorporate lessons learned, and build on success.* There is a high degree of physical, psychological, programmatic and financial risk inherent in these often insecure environments. These environments can put Agency and implementing partner staff at physical and psychological risk, and Agency resources and practices have not kept pace. Programmatically, there are challenges: it can be difficult to identify drivers and programming options; there remains need for experimentation and not all programs will succeed; and, in some cases, taking any or certain actions may be counterproductive.

USAID will improve its practices and resources directed at these risks. The Agency will support staff with training, confidential consultations, physical-fitness opportunities, and benefits. Mission managers will ensure that implementing partners receive appropriate resources and have methods for promoting staff well-being. USAID will develop flexible, creative standards to define program success to include deciding not to act, as well as adapting, based on continuous learning of what does and does not work.

USAID will also consider additional mechanisms to verify that intended beneficiaries are using resources for intended purposes. Where necessary, Missions will avail themselves of screening mechanisms available through USAID's Office of Security, and will consult with the RLA or GC, as appropriate. This ensures that a context-appropriate vetting system not only addresses the impact on programs, but is also thorough and meets the regulatory and legal requirements already addressed by established systems.

## MITIGATING RISK

**In-Kind Grants:** In-kind rather than cash assistance to local organizations allows the Agency to work with non-traditional partners who either are not formal organizations or would not necessarily meet requirements for receiving cash grants. In-kind assistance provides the Agency a modality through which to take a risk by supporting actors who are new to receiving assistance, but have important ideas that need to be supported.

**In Afghanistan:** A3 (Accountable Assistance for Afghanistan) is a USAID initiative to prevent diversion of assistance by extortion or corruption. Some changes include restricting the number of subcontract tiers; tightening financial controls to establish auditing procedures for 100 percent of locally incurred project costs; advocating increased use of electronic funds transfers; performing additional project oversight in high-risk areas; and delegating more oversight authority to USAID field staff.

# 7 USAID INTERNAL CHANGES

To advance the Agency's development response to violent extremism and insurgency, this policy directs USAID to implement the following changes – some immediately, others over time.

## **Formalize senior leadership involvement**

USAID senior leaders and managers will engage in relevant policy, strategy, and program decision-making and oversight, as appropriate. Each relevant Bureau/Office will designate one Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA)/equivalent to be responsible for relevant strategic and interagency engagement and for this policy's implementation at those levels. Similarly, Mission Directors will be responsible in the field as they engage on program development, management, and related operational issues. This policy's engagement criteria will frame senior leader/manager involvement on these issues.

## **Establish and empower an Agency Steering Committee**

USAID will establish and empower a *Steering Committee*. Relevant Bureau/Office heads will designate staff to, and support their service on, the *Steering Committee*, which will:

- Oversee this policy's implementation;
- Provide technical leadership and support, particularly to Missions;
- Drive Agency knowledge management; and
- Support Agency and interagency planning, strategy, and coordination.

An articulation of the *Steering Committee's* structure and operation will follow this policy. USAID will also designate a full-time *Senior Policy Advisor* to serve a continuous coordination function on these issues.

## **Craft new policy guidance**

USAID will develop new guidance to facilitate program analysis, design, and implementation, in accordance with this policy. Priority action issues include:

- Risk management in high-threat environments;
- Procurement flexibility for effective and timely response, informed by on-going efforts; and,
- Effective communication strategies, including updated branding guidance.

## **Execute applied research agenda**

USAID will coordinate an applied research agenda, and disseminate findings, as appropriate. Possible research areas include: gender in countering violent extremism and insurgency; use of media and communications; and, program measurement and evaluation. The Agency will mine existing USG and external information, research, and approaches in its research efforts.

## **Design and implement knowledge-management system**

USAID will systematically collect and disseminate case studies and lessons learned critical to engagement on these issues. USAID will train staff on this policy, related tools and the most recent field experience and learning. The Agency will prioritize training for senior managers operating in these environments, field and Washington staff who design and manage programs, as well as new Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) Foreign Service Officers. Where appropriate, training should include relevant study of language, culture, and politics. USAID will adapt policies and systems to ensure personnel receive not only training but field mentorship and technical support.

The Agency will also seek collaborative, USG-wide training opportunities. This includes expanding Agency participation in Foreign Service Institute (FSI) courses and DOD pre-deployment programs. USAID will seek greater interagency inclusion in its own trainings.

### **Strengthen interagency leadership role**

USAID will robustly participate in relevant interagency processes. USAID will proactively engage the President's National Security Staff (NSS), DOS, DOD, and other agencies to further its interagency integration on these issues. The Agency will systematically engage its Senior Development Advisors to the Combatant Commands, and the latter's USAID Liaison Officers, in these efforts. USAID will strengthen interagency sharing of its growing technical expertise in countering the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency, and will learn from how the interagency analyzes and programs vis-à-vis these challenges.

### **Enhance bilateral, international, and non-traditional partner engagement**

In coordination with the interagency, USAID will increase its engagement with other donor agencies on the development response to violent extremism and insurgency. Where appropriate, USAID will move beyond information sharing to country-based, joint strategy development and program planning. Multilaterally, USAID will also draw on and share best practices. The Agency will engage non-traditional partners in countering local drivers of violent extremism and insurgency. Diaspora groups, the private sector, and local religious leaders often possess a reach that make them potentially effective partners in amplifying USAID's local impact.<sup>14</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Informed by broader USG efforts – including the U.S. Global Development Policy and QDDR, this policy serves as a foundation on which USAID will *design and implement effective, evidence-based development programming targeting drivers of violent extremism and insurgency while systemically learning from and adapting its approaches*. USAID is indispensable to any USG development response to counter violent extremism and insurgency. The policy will also fortify USAID's development voice as the USG devises and implements policies, strategies and programs in support of our shared national security objectives.

<sup>14</sup> Consult with the RLA or GC in advance to ensure that the assistance has a secular purpose and does not have the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion.