USAID’S REVISED PROGRAM CYCLE OPERATIONAL POLICY (ADS 201) WEBINAR FOR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Transcript from December 15, 2016
Wade Warren: All right. Thank you, Dar. And good morning to everyone from an icy-cold Washington, DC. I see that we have people signed on from all around the world. But we are experiencing our coldest morning of the season so far here in Washington.

My name is Wade Warren. And, as Dar mentioned a little earlier as we were getting set up, I'm the head of USAID's Policy Planning and Learning Bureau. And we're really happy to have so many of you joining us today so that we can talk about our efforts to strengthen our development assistance and make our programs more effective and sustainable [audio cuts out briefly or just silence?]

Before we really get started, I wanted to say a couple of words about the webinar itself. We really appreciate your input, and we want to answer as many questions from you as we can today. So please take advantage of the chat box. You can enter your questions in at any time while we're talking. We'll cue them up and we'll get to as many of them as we can. Also wanted to point out that the webinar is being recorded. And it will be available I think later today on the Learning Lab. So if you have colleagues who weren't able to join you and you wanna download it and review it with them later, you'll be able to do that.

And then, finally, at the end of the webinar, we will put a short survey up on the screen, and we'd like to get feedback from you about if you found the webinar useful, how we can do things better in the future. So I encourage you to stay until the end of the show and then give us your thoughts about how things went in the short survey that we'll put up at the end.

All right. So let's jump right in. Go to the next slide. I wanted to just offer a few introductory remarks. And the slide that you're looking at now shows a schematic of what we call the Program Cycle. And I just wanted to explain a little bit what we mean by that. The Program Cycle is USAID's operational framework, as I said, for implementing more effective programs. And it's composed of a number of different pieces, and I wanted to explain them just briefly. The idea of the Program Cycle includes strategic planning, which we do at both the country and regional level. It includes projects, which we implement to achieve the results of the strategic plan that we've written. It includes activities, which operationalize those projects.
And if you're not used to the term "activities," it's synonymous with the term "implementing mechanisms," which some of you may be more familiar with. And it really encompasses all the work that we do on the ground from agreements with partner countries to grants and contracts with local and international organizations.

And then finally, the Program Cycle includes the whole range of monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities that we undertake throughout the cycle as we seek to gain evidence and learn more about the programs that we're implementing and ways to improve them as we move forward.

I wanted to talk a little about why we're having this webinar. And the main reason is that we have recently revised the Program Cycle. We've made extensive revisions to it, in fact, over the past 18 months, and we released a new version in September.

So I wanted to just give you a sense of how and why that came about. And I think the first thing to point out is that these elements of the Program Cycle – strategic planning project and activity design and monitoring, evaluation, and learning – are not new. Those elements have been part of the way USAID has worked throughout its history. But they haven't always been emphasized or utilized in the same way that we do now. And I think those of you who have known the agency for a long time are probably aware that back in 2005, the policy bureau at USAID was eliminated, and along with that elimination, many of these aspects of the way we do our work were de-emphasized.

And so there was a period in the agency's history, ten years ago or so, where strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation, in particular, were not nearly as robust as they are now.

So back in 2011, just after the policy bureau was recreated at USAID, we created what we now call the Program Cycle. And it was a very deliberate effort to re-institutionalize those good practices from the past. So the Program Cycle was
first introduced to USAID in its current form in 2011. And so we used this for five years. And as we did use it, we realized that it could be improved, that there were lessons learned and advances in thinking around development. And so we set about, about a year and a half ago, to revise and improve the guidance.

And, as I just mentioned, we released the new guidance in September of this year.

It was a very large and comprehensive effort to consult with the field and with implementers and folks in Washington before we made the revisions. We consulted with 50 of our missions, including mission directors, more than 15 mission directors. We had an advisory group here in Washington that was composed of representatives from every bureau. And we consulted on a number of occasions with implementing partners outside the agency. So the new policy has been released. It applies to all of our operating units in the field, and also to operating units in Washington. We consider it a really major milestone in our ongoing effort to strengthen our programming.

And I'm gonna close out my introductory remarks with just three observations about the key outcomes and the key changes that these Program Cycle changes have brought about. The first one is that we intend to have the guidance be more principles-based. We realized that the previous guidance sometimes had a kind of a check-the-box feel to it. And we had written this guidance to be more flexible so that our field missions and our offices here in Washington can apply the pieces of the program cycle in ways that make the most sense to them through a principles-based approach. We also tried to greatly emphasize the need to manage programs in an integrated way and really look at project-level implementation.

And then I think, most importantly of all, is: throughout the guidance, we emphasize the use of evidence to improve projects as they are being implemented and as we design follow-on projects in the future. So this effort to introduce adaptive management into the Program Cycle is I think one of the most important changes. And I think it's one of the things that implementing partners really need to understand as well: that we intend for missions to use data and evidence and
then adaptively manage projects as they are implemented so that changes can be made to improve them as we move along.

So, those are my introductory comments. As I said, we encourage you to ask questions and place comments in the chat box throughout the webinar. I am gonna turn it over now to three experts that we have here in the room with me who will make further presentations, and then we'll all be available to answer your questions.

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The people that're sitting here with me are Alicia Dinerstein, who's the director of our Strategic and Program Planning Office in the PPL Bureau, Melissa Patsalides, who's the director of Learning, Evaluation and Research office in PPL, and then Sunil Xavier, who's the deputy director for Foreign Operations in the Management Bureau's Office of Acquisition & Assistance. And, together, these three have I think a comprehensive knowledge of the Program Cycle and will be able to answer all your questions. So I'm gonna turn over now to Alicia.

Alicia Dinerstein: Hi. Good morning, everyone. Thanks, Wade. As Wade mentioned, my name's Alicia Dinerstein. I'm the director of the Office of Strategic and Program Planning in the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning. And as he discussed, we're trying to take a more principles-based approach to the policy. And so we have identified four main principles that have guided us in that process.

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It's always really tempting to try to compel a major organizational change with a bunch of rules and requirements. But what we've come to appreciate over the last two years, once the Program Cycle was first rolled out after 2010, is that missions and programs are very diverse, and if we're gonna be successful, we really have to give mission staff more flexibility to design and manage programs that're more responsive to the context in which they're working.

So, the new ADS, which is the Automated Directives System, in case anyone out there is unaware of that – and that's the body of guidance that provides the agency with its policy. The new chapter, ADS 201, which contains the Program Cycle policy, really gives our staff in the field and in Washington a lot more discretion to use their professional judgment within the parameters of the policy. And it provides a set of four principles to guide all of the efforts.
Now, the principles themselves aren't necessarily all new. But in this version, we really emphasize them much more strongly. In this version of the policy, they're really at the heart of it. And we're talking a lot about them and trying to focus on them.

So the first one is related to basing decisions on rigorous analysis. And what this means is that we get evidence from a multitude of sources; not just evaluations, which people often talk about. But obviously there's monitoring data; there's conversations with your partners; there's conversations with our host country counterparts. And what we wanna try to do is make sure we're analyzing all of the information and data available to us and basing our decisions on the best information.

And then the next principle is related to the fact that we need to put that learning and that information to good use. And that means that once we have information or we understand that the context in which we're working is changing, we need to adapt what we're doing and adapt the way we're working. And my colleague Melissa will describe that in a little more detail in a few minutes.

The next one is about prioritizing local ownership in order to achieve more sustainable results. Some of you may be familiar with an initiative that was rolled out under the USAID Forward initiative, which was called Local Solutions. Local Solutions was a big focus of USAID's work in the last few years. But initially the term was really sort of considered synonymous with increasing direct funding to local partners. And now we have a very different approach to it.

We're not interested so much in who's implementing, who's the direct recipients of our funding; but rather, we're focused on ensuring that whatever we are supporting, we're considering local priorities, we're leveraging local resources, and in whatever way the most sense, we're encouraging local actors to participate in implementation. So we wanna make sure that the local actors in whatever country we're working in have some skin in the game. This is also related to a concept we've been talking about called "systems thinking."
And I'm just gonna throw out there: if you have not read the Local Systems Framework, which maybe we can also provide you with a link to at some point, you should take a look at it. Because that sort of talks about the context in which we're working and provides us with some tools to better understand that context.

So the final principle is really based on the fact that we don't wanna use one-size-fits-all approaches. And that we know there's a diversity of challenges in the field. And we have a huge range of tools and mechanisms at our disposal to address those challenges. And we don't always have to fall back on the same modalities that we've used: mainly simple contracts and grants and cooperative agreements. There's a whole bunch of options out there and we want our staff to consider all of those.

So, in order to operationalize these principles, it takes a lot more than just putting down onto paper. So what we've done so far is drafted the policy. But changing the way we do our work is gonna take some effort.

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So, one of the other changes, and this is a pretty big one also – that will have hopefully, honestly, some impact on you all – is an emphasis on project-level management. So, as Wade explained, often even USAID staff as well as our implementing partners, our government counterparts, other donors – we often use the term "project" to describe a single contract or agreement. But in the policy, according to the Program Cycle, a "project" is actually a suite of contracts, grants, other activities that together support a common purpose. And that's called the "project purpose." So there can be a whole range of activities; even USAID staff conducting policy dialogue would be considered an activity that's contributing to some type of project purpose.

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So, to ensure that all these activities complement one another to achieve a higher-development change, we're placing a lot more emphasis in this version of the Program Cycle policy on project outcomes over activity outputs.

So what does that mean for you? Basically your individual activity, your individual contract, grant, cooperative agreement, may be meeting its targets and delivering on its expected results. However, many of you usually know that your activity fits under some sort of a development objective – which may or may not be synonymous with the project actually, but that's sort of a different issue. But the point is: if your individual mechanism, individual contract or agreement, is
achieving its expected outputs but the larger program outcomes are not being reached – if we're not able to move the needle on the larger outcomes – then we may have to rethink something.

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And the AOR/COR may have to work with you to figure out if something needs to be changed. And this is one of the key reasons we are emphasizing adaptive management as well. Again, because it's looking at the overall context, whether we're moving the needle in the direction we want it to move in, and if not, what do we have to do to adapt?

So, in order to implement this practice of focusing on project outcomes, the new ADS 201 requires that missions designate someone called Project Managers to provide overall guidance and direction at the project level. So this position will be a function in the mission, and it is not necessarily a supervisory position. And your reporting relationship will continue to be to your individual COR or AOR. But as I mentioned, many of you I'm sure have worked under a development objective framework. So you are accustomed, to some extent, to the fact that you fit within a larger program. And you know that there're other people that're looking at what's happening in terms of the way your program is performing.

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So this makes it a more formal arrangement, with the establishment of the project manager function. And that person will have to work with CORs and AORs to ensure that the whole suite of activities that are supposed to be contributing to the project purpose are in fact doing so, and help to make sure they work in a complementary and synergistic manner.

So, consequently, what we hope that will mean is that, over time in the field, you'll see a greater focus on collaborative learning with other partners and among partners, implementing partners – that there'll be more partner meetings, more peer exchanges, that missions will establish learning networks or communities of practice, and that there will be more emphasis on how partners work together to achieve something, a common objective.

I'm gonna leave it there and transition over to my colleague, Melissa Patsalides, who's the director of the Learning, Evaluation and Research Office. And she'll talk a little bit more about some of these changes.
Melissa Patsalides: Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening, everyone. As Alicia said, my name's Melissa Patsalides. I direct the Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research. And our office is responsible for producing the policy and guidance and capacity-building materials around monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

So one of the biggest changes in the revision is the enhanced focus on strategically using evidence to learn and inform course corrections as much as for reporting and for accountability. There are a couple of ways that this is incorporated into the revised policy. The ADS revision requires monitoring, evaluation, or learning plans at each level: for activities as well as for projects and strategies. And this is to ensure more intentional approach to learning and adapting.

The policy also encourages missions to conduct more targeted analyses and to fill knowledge gaps as needed for improved decision-making. What this really means in practice is that we're not asking people to frontload all of their analytical work at the beginning of the design process or a planning process, whether it's strategy, project, or activity. We're asking people to do a more iterative analysis so that they are able to take in that information and use it in a closer-to-real-time way.

And Alicia mentioned this Project Manager role. So Project Managers will also be working with CORs and AORs to monitor changes in the broader project context, not just results that are attributable to activities. We have a much more holistic expectation about what we're monitoring during implementation.

And we'll be implementing evaluations not only of activities within a project, but also potentially evaluations of issues that cut across activities, as well as evaluations that cover a whole project, to look at whether or not the interaction among the individual mechanisms is leading to or may effectively lead to the desired outcome. So that will be something that looks and feels different for implementing partners.
But of course ensuring we can be adaptive based on evidence and take in new information and do something about it is a key change in the policy, but it's not only the policy that will make this happen. It will require that our staff design contracts and grants differently in order to ensure the space for adaptability is built in from the start. And when evidence during implementation suggests that we need to adjust course, Project Managers, AORs, CORs, and implementing partners will need to work together to determine the most feasible approach for making adjustments.

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To talk about what this might look like in more detail, I'd like to turn it over to Sunil Xavier for a few minutes. He's the deputy director of our Office of Foreign Operations in the Bureau for Management's Office of Acquisition & Assistance.

Sunil Xavier:

Thanks, Melissa. I'm glad to be here. And in my former life, before I came back to Washington, I was a Foreign Service Contracting Officer. I've served in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, East Africa, Kenya, and Haiti during the earthquake, where adaptive management is very important, because things happen that are unforeseen and unexpected.

First I wanted to thank PPL in collaborating with M/OAA in the 201 revisions. Particularly I wanna note that it's important and critical that the language in the revisions state that the project and activity design teams should include staff from OAA, OFM, as well as RLO (Resident Legal Officers) in addition to other technical staff as appropriate.

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One of the key Program Cycle principles is to manage adaptively, through continuous learning. This makes it even more important to include A&A staff early in activity design, to incorporate collaboration, learning, and adapting, CLA, into Project Appraisal Documents, as well as develop Independent Government Cost Estimates, evaluation criteria, proposal submission requirements in our solicitations. CLA can be done continuously depending on the operating environment and complexity of the project. For example, in non-permissive environment, it might be done more frequently, on a quarterly basis, or as needed. However, we need to remember that there are cost implications, and constantly re-pivoting will result in higher cost.

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I also wanted to take a chance to go over some myth-busters. One myth that some of our partners believe is that we cannot engage with external partners in project design. The truth is we encourage it, including putting out draft statements of work, program descriptions on FedBizOpps and Grants.gov.

Another myth that people have talked about is that once a contract, an agreement is awarded for five years, it is written in stone. In fact the truth is that it can be changed using the work plan as a tool. And also we have some new mechanisms which will make it easier to make changes and pivots to avoid multiple contract and grant modifications.

One thing I wanted to stress: when we do our statements of work and program descriptions, they should be outcome-based, such as increased literacy among secondary school children, or increased access to justice.

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We do not wanna be overly prescriptive or narrowly focused, because when we do that, that restricts our ability to be more flexible.

One of the things I wanted to promote are some of the new OAA mechanisms to promote CLA and adaptive management. One is a hybrid contact, which has an IQC embedded into it. So it could be a cost-plus-fee contract, and there would be an IQC within that contract. This is when you know 80 percent of what you wanna do over the course of the project, and there's 20 percent that's unknown. And that's where you use the IQC component to basically react to these unforeseen situations.

Another popular type of mechanism that many missions are using are single award IQCs. This is when you know less than 80 percent of what you wanna do during the life of the project, and this is kind of a modular approach. So basically: at the end of year one, you would issue another task order based on what happened, and so forth, for the remaining years of the contract.

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Under assistance, we have introduced a phased approach, which is called a Continuing Application Process, where the activity is implemented in phases. For example, you could have: Phase 1 to be months 1 through 24; at the end of Phase
1, we would basically look at what occurred, they could do impact evaluations, and the implementing partner would come to the mission or to the operating unit and basically make suggestions on any changes that should be made for Phase 2. We would incorporate that into the agreement through a modification.

Another technique that we wanna field test is scenario planning based on different outcomes as a result of external events. So in our solicitations, we would ask for scenarios to be priced out based on what could happen in the course of a project.

Finally, I wanted to let you know about one of our new initiatives in M/OAA – is the creation of Acquisition & Assistance –

Innovation Laboratories which are being established in our field regional missions to test new innovative procurement techniques such as reverse auctions, oral presentations, and scenario planning. Right now we've established regional hubs in Frankfurt, which'll cover the Middle East, the E&E bureau. We also have the Africa Lab in South Africa. And we have our Washington Lab. So it's a hub-and-spoke model. And really the purpose of this is to promote field testing of innovative techniques, and also information-sharing amongst our Contracting and Agreement Officers. The objective, again, is to make this a worldwide initiative and have future labs in East Asia and Latin America. This includes a business manager's toolbox and regional scheduled VTCs to get all of our A&A staff talking and collaborating more frequently.

And it's also a safe place to be innovative and take calculated risks. So please check out the USAID external site for these procurement executive bulletins on adaptive and flexible contracting. I think we can also ask those as links as well. I'm gonna hand this over now to Melissa for final thoughts on how all of the ADS 201 changes, as well as A&A policy changes ______ our implementing partners.

Melissa Patsalides: Thanks so much, Sunil. So, as you've all heard about the policy changes as well as from Sunil about what our Office of Acquisition & Assistance is doing to enable us to implement this policy. But you all know as well as we do that fully implementing these reforms will also require significant shifts in behavior and culture, not just at USAID but among our partner community as well.
We know we all need to recognize that each activity is part of a bigger picture that contributes to USAID's country strategy and the country's overall development efforts. So we'll need to find new and better ways to collaborate and share lessons learned among our implementing partners as well as with a wider range of local partners. Because promoting local ownership will increase the likelihood of sustaining our investments, it requires that we all improve our ability to – convene and listen to local actors and to let them take a more central role in priority-setting as well as implementation.

And, finally, we all need to be positioned to adapt our programs in response to new information and changing circumstances to yield more effective results. We think these are the four areas in our policy change that will result in the biggest difference in feel of implementation for our partners.

So we wanna be able to work collaboratively with you on implementing these changes. I will hand it back over to Wade to wrap up.

Wade Warren:
Thanks, Melissa. So, just a final quick thought before we go to questions. I think you can appreciate from the presentation that to really implement the Program Cycle effectively is gonna require a concerted effort on the part of everyone, not just USAID staff, but all of our implementing partners as well. And in some ways, I think it really requires a bit of a culture change for many of us, where we started to think more strategically, innovate, take informed risks, and learn from evidence and adapt our programs as we go along.

So, with those concluding thoughts, as I said at the outset, we really want to hear from you. I've seen questions coming in through the presentation. So keep them coming as we go along.

And we will get to as many of them as we can. So, let's just jump right in with questions. The first one that we've gotten is from Tetra Tech, and it asks if OAA, the Office of Acquisition & Assistance will work on RFP language to allow more flexibility for adaptive management.
Sunil Xavier: Sure. In the link that has been posted on adaptive and flexible contracting types, it does give examples of RFP language for the hybrid contract, which is the contract that has the typically cost-plus-fixed-fee with the IQC component. What were also trying to do is provide language to our agreement officers on the continuing application process for assistance. So these are being disseminated in the field. We've had a number of webinars with our Contracting Officers worldwide.

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And through the A&A lab, we're going to actually develop and field test additional language provisions for our RFPs and NOFOs.

Wade Warren: Thanks, Sunil. The next question is from Rich Mason. And he wants to know what if anything will be done to improve mission ability to share project-level design in monitoring and evaluation learning information such as PADs and PMELPs.

Alicia Dinerstein: Okay. So this is Alicia. I'll take the design part and I'll turn over the MEL part to my colleague, Melissa. In terms of sharing project-level design information, the process that we have in place is that projects are designed hopefully with the input and collaboration of implementing partners and local partners on the ground. And then they are documented in a document that's called a Project Appraisal Document or a PAD. That document itself is not actually public document. It's not sharable.

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Because it may have some procurement-sensitive information. Because it might have information on planned activities that have not yet been solicited. However, what we are hoping will happen is that, for any new activity that is being solicited, there should be information on the project to which it contributes. So that hopefully something you'll see in your solicitations as you're bidding is: "Where does this individual activity fit within the broader picture?" So that would be your first view into what the mission is envisioning and how it affects this individual contract, grant, cooperative agreement to contribute to a larger-level result.

The agreement might also have some requirements that say how you would be expected to interact with other partners, information that you would be expected
to share, joint-planning that you would be expected to conduct together. Hopefully that would be signaled in the solicitation. So that's the first place that you'd get a sense of the project within which this activity sits.

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Also, as I mentioned, hopefully the mission would be organizing more meetings among the implementing partners that are contributing to that higher-level result. So that the mission would be having discussions about what's happening with each individual activity and whether or not they're working together to achieve the intended outcomes that the mission was anticipating.

So it's not that you would see the documentation necessarily directly about the project that was designed, but hopefully there are other mechanisms that the mission will use in order to ensure that each implementing partner knows clearly and explicitly where it sits within that project. And I would say it would be very fair for you to ask your COR or AOR for more information on that if they have not offered it. So that's one way to go about it.

Not all activities, though – I will clarify: it is possible that there will some activities that are a little bit of outliers.

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And one of the things we're trying to make sure missions don't do is: in the past, these Project Appraisal Documents, as I mentioned – they were used more as a mechanism simply for getting the authority or the permission to go ahead and issue a solicitation. We don't want that to be the case anymore. Right now we really wanna use these documents, these Project Appraisal Documents that set the stage for how different things are gonna work together, only to include those activities that really have a synergistic and complementary relationship.

So if there are activities that the mission's implementing that don't fit within a project, then it should be clear that those don't have to contribute to a higher-level result or outcome. But if they do, then you should know exactly what that is. Because that will help you understand when and if you might be expected to adapt based on changing circumstances. So that's what I can say in terms of access to information on the project.
In terms of information about the monitoring and evaluation and learning plans, I'll let Melissa address that.

Melissa Patsalides: Sure. And this is a quicker response. Missions absolutely should make available to partners when there are specific indicators which are necessary to measure project outcomes or which are required, as well as planned evaluations; in particular, when the activity may be part of a whole of project evaluation, as well as any particular plans around learning.

Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting is something that you heard noted by Sunil. This is part of the ADS revisions: that missions actually incorporate plans for intentional learning and collaboration with partners and adapting into their monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans, so we have a comprehensive plan about not only "How are we going to collect and analyze information?" but "How are we gonna do that collaboratively, and what kinds of adaptations might we make as a result of that?"

So that is all information that should be available to partners as part of the solicitation process. Because it would not be fair to you to ask you to collect information or be part of collaborative processes or part of evaluations that you actually didn't know about. So that is an explicit part of our guidance materials.

Wade Warren: Great. Thanks, Melissa. I think the next question is in a way a follow-on to what you were just speaking about. The questions is: can you give more details about the focus on collaboration and learning? And what does it look like in practice and what are the roles of our implementing partners?

Melissa Patsalides: Sure. So there are actually fabulous recent examples, and that's what I would point you to first in terms of what the emphasis on what this emphasis on Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting looks like in practice.

On the USAIDLearningLab.org website, there are all of the cases from a recent case competition in which probably several of you on the line submitted cases that were examples of how both partners and missions were implementing
Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting. So I will point you there for the practical examples. But I will also say with regard to a few more details about it.

So we actually have Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting in the ADS now. It's an explicit intentional way of gathering together relevant stakeholders, stakeholders who we may normally think of as well as stakeholders who may be more nontraditional or who may give us alternative perspectives. So it's a way of thinking about getting a much more holistic look at our implementation. And gathering them together in processes like portfolio reviews or other learning events when –

people can look at new information, the information they have available, and discuss and analyze that information and decide how they need to use that information to make adaptations. So that's really a very plain-English way of describing what that is. But it's certainly our emphasis on: how do we try to move our monitoring and evaluation beyond just box-checking exercises to: "How do we really look at this as information that's vital to us to make changes in what we're doing to ensure more effective programs?"

Great. Thanks, Melissa. So, the next question I think is an interesting one, from Jennifer Winestock Luna in ICF, and it gets at, I think, how adaptive management will work in practice. And what she's asking is: how will adaptive management handle target setting in PMPs, and what will happen if a project does not meet its annual targets?

Will there be an opportunity to reflect and adapt the project, or are you just gonna be asked to justify why the target wasn't met?

That is a great question, Jennifer. Thank you so much. So, this is part of our change process really. Technically, this was always an option. People are always setting targets that aren't met and then having the conversation about "Why did we not meet these targets?" is what we really wanna see happening all along. With this ADS revision, we're really emphasizing the fact that that's a likely scenario: that maybe targets will be set without the best information, and maybe part of the adaptation that needs to be made is not just an adjustment in target, but maybe questioning: "Are we measuring the right thing?" We need to talk about whether we're looking at the right information and whether we maybe have
holes in our theory of change about how we think things are going and how our projects and how our activities are fitting together.

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So that's the kind of conversation we would want something like that to trigger: "Are we actually going down the right path or do we need to modify our approach? Do we need to modify even not just the targets, but actually what are we aiming for? Do we need to modify that?"

Alicia Dinerstein: This is Alicia. I wanna be clear though: it's not that we're gonna be changing what our objectives are. So, adaptive management isn't about saying, "Oh, we actually wanted to do the wrong thing" necessarily. It's about saying, "We want to have an impact on community" – or "We want to improve farmer incomes," and we set a target for that, and then what we find is that the way we're trying to get there isn't working. And so we're gonna adapt our path for achieving that target. So it's not really about necessarily changing the target. Because there's accountability. So it's not about changing the target; it's about changing the path to achieve the target.

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Because what's happened in the path is: too often, in our solicitations, we told you, our implementing partners, exactly how we expected you to achieve that. And we set out a very detailed step-by-step path of how you were going to increase farmer incomes. And then it turned out that didn't work out so well. But you were locked into a specific set of activities or set of tasks under your agreement because that's what the solicitation said. The idea here is that we should have done a very good analysis of the problem. We should know what the problem is and what we wanna solve and have an idea of what the expected outcome or impact is that we want. And the thing that we might be adapting is how we achieve it.

So, yes: there might be some changes in targets along the way. That might have to do more with if there's a major change in the context. So if there isn't a huge change in context and we find that we've set a target and we're not achieving it, it's not about changing the target.

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It's about changing the path we take to achieve the target. However, if there's a huge change in context, meaning there's an earthquake or there's a conflict that breaks out, then we might need to revisit things, and we wanna be positioned to revisit things in a broader sense.

So I wanna be clear: we still have to be accountable. We're not changing the goalpost. We're just changing the path we take to reach that goal.

*Wade Warren:* Great. Thank you both. So we have a couple of questions from MSH. And I think the first one probably is one that's on many people's minds. And that: how does this new guidance affect current projects that are already underway? The second question I think is also a good one, and it's also focused on adaptive management: how do you know when it's time to make a change? And then how do you monitor that change? So: when do you know that the information that you now have merits a significant change versus a minor change versus no change at all?

*Alicia Dinerstein:* Okay. So the first piece of that is: how do these changes affect current projects?

We thought it would be absolutely impossible for us to go back and ask missions that are actively implementing to go back and revise what they're already doing. So the reality, we think, that these policy changes are going to take years to really be seen having their full impact in the field. So it's gonna be iterative changes that you're seeing. And what this means is that new projects will be designed using the new guidance, but it was absolutely impossible for us to go back and ask missions to take on the burden of revising all their current projects.

However, I do believe that given the benefits and the focus and the way the new policy is written, I do believe it's possible that some missions may choose to go back and revisit some of their current projects to sort of take a different approach and see more systematically how well things are actually working together to achieve a common objective.

So that remains to be seen: if missions will choose to do that or not. So, in terms of how it affects current projects, it will depend on the mission. But what's
existing was actually kind of grandfathered, and there was no requirements that projects be revised based on the current policy.

In terms of when to adapt and how to monitor, as we mentioned, one of the principles is that missions have more discretion to make decisions based on their own best information. So there's no specific guidance on when to do it. However, we have asked missions to build into their activities, their projects, and their strategies what we call "pause and reflect moments." So missions should be very deliberately taking time to look at what is happening: again, analyze all of the different available sources of information, and considering when something is moving in the right direction or not, and determine whether or not.

If things are not moving in the right direction, then they have choices to make. Does that mean they only have to make changes potentially within one activity? Within one contract or agreement? Within multiple contracts or agreements? For an entire project? Or for the whole strategy? So there's no set requirement for: "Every three months a mission must do X, Y, or Z." But all new solicitations are going to require that partners have a learning plan and are going to encourage or require – depends on how the solicitation is written – that there be these deliberate moments when the mission and the partner together consider what's changing or how things are moving and whether or not anything does need to be changed. So that's up to the mission and the partner to figure it out.

What we're hoping is that partners will feel more freedom to say to their COR or AOR, "You know, we took all the information we have, and based on our analysis, we don't think we're gonna be able to achieve this target.

"So we propose doing X, Y, or Z instead of A, B, or C. How do you respond to that?" And we're trying to create an environment where our contract and agreement officers are not just there to make sure that your work plan is followed to the letter and that you're working together to make sure your work plan will deliver on the results you wanna achieve. So hopefully there will be some space in there to make those sorts of changes within your individual activities. That's what we're hoping to get to.

Wade Warren: All right. Thank you. So, next we have an interesting question I think from Daniel with MSI in Colombia. And I'm noticing from some of the chat box feedback that we're seeing that I think some implementing partners may not
appreciate or fully feel that their activities are well-integrated into a larger project.

[0:47:00]

And so could you comment on that? And I guess specifically the question is: is it possible that some existing activities will have to be retrofitted in some way to ensure that they're contributing to a broader project?

Alicia Dinerstein: As I mentioned – this is Alicia again – there's no requirement that projects be revisited. However – and the truth is, in the past, missions often designed projects that weren't really true projects. What they did was: under a particular sector maybe they were going to have 20 activities, and so because they were 20 activities in the same sector, they wrote all of them together as if they fit together in a project. And then they wrote a project appraisal document that covered all 20 of those activities. But really maybe only seven of those activities actually had to be looked at how they are interacting in order to achieve a higher-level outcome. And the rest of those activities perhaps should not have been part of that project.

[0:48:00]

But it was just a mechanism that missions use in order to get authorization to continue with the solicitation process. So that's what – we can't tell missions they have to go back now and revise those projects. But we're hoping they will choose to because it makes sense and it would be a best practice.

So I think that you absolutely should be asking your COR or AOR, "How does my activity fit within your broader picture? And who are the other partners who are working on the ground that we should be talking to to see if we are actually working towards a shared objective? Or maybe we're actually somehow undermining each other on the ground," which hopefully doesn't happen that often, but I imagine it does if you don't really have a sense of what the bigger picture is. So I think it would be completely fair for you to ask your COR, AOR, or the DO team leader, the Development Objective team leader, or at the next all staff meeting –

[0:49:00]

with all the partners that come together in the mission, to ask the mission director, "How do you see this working?" and see what they say. I think it would
be great actually if our implementing partners helped us advance this agenda by asking those questions. That would be something we would appreciate. So we would really like you to be asking these questions of your CORs and AORs and the Development Objective team leaders and eventually a project manager, and even the mission director, and ask how they see this working in their mission.

Wade Warren: Okay. Great. So the next question is from Micah Frumkin. Micah, it's nice to see your name in the chat box. Micah's with MSI Kenya, but he recently worked with us in PPL.

[Crosstalk]

Wade Warren: So it's good to hear from you. He says that there seems to be a difference between traditional activities and mission M&E support platforms. And do we in PPL anticipate providing specific resources or support to those platforms as they help mission program offices interpret and implement the new ideas?

Melissa Patsalides: Thank you so much, Micah. That's a great question. You're absolutely right. The monitoring, evaluation, and sometimes monitoring, evaluation, and learning platforms are definitely different in kind completely from activities that are implementing programs. And, yes, we do plan to target our MEL platforms explicitly. We have just completed an assessment of the MEL platforms worldwide, and are reviewing that right now, to inform us in terms of what and how we reach out. But we will definitely be reaching out explicitly to our MEL platform colleagues. Because that's a conversation that's a little bit more technical and niche in nature. And we will enjoy having it, but maybe everybody else doesn't wanna have it with us. So that's a conversation we'll have separately.

[0:51:00]

Wade Warren: Okay. Great. Next we have a fairly specific question from Carine Khoury in social impact in Lebanon. She wants to know if the technical note on Logical Framework design that feeds into the CD CS from 2012 is still applicable and valid.

Melissa Patsalides: Thanks so much for that question, Coreen. Actually we have colleagues right now working on updating a technical note. Because while LogFrames are very helpful and they're still an option that we're allowing missions to use, we've actually broadened the options. We're asking missions to use logic models of some kind. But LogFrames were actually a little bit more rigid than reality would
suggest. And that's really what we learned from our stock-taking that we talked about as part of our ADS revision process. So, in the ADS, you'll see that logic models of all kinds are welcome.

We simply ask that missions use some approach to spell out how they think change is going to happen. They have an option to use LogFrames, but they have options to use additional models. And we will have a technical note coming out in 2017 that should update that previous tech note. So thanks for asking.

Wade Warren: Great. The next question I think is an interesting one, from David Nyange from MSU. And it gets at I think the thoughts that some people are having about moving from a sort of more competitive procurement process into one that emphasizes collaboration more. And what David is saying – he says that he sees a challenge, as an implementing partner, moving from the competitive procurement process into a collaborative partners during implementation. And are there procurement mechanisms that would allow for the formation of consortiums among implementing partners?

And that that would be helpful.

Sunil Xavier: Hi. This is Sunil. In terms of competition, that's one thing that we encourage. It is required by statute. But you can also have collaboration and competition at the same time. We often see proposals which are based on consortiums of implementing partners with one prime. We also, in our RFPs, are trying to encourage more collaboration among implementing partners who have their own activities – their own implementing mechanisms directly with USAID. For example, colocation, cocreation of work plans, and more meetings to basically discuss outcomes.

Wade Warren: Okay. Thank you. Next we have a question from Liz Ruedy from IRI. And she says this is a question from one of her IRI colleagues.
What USAID recommendations or processes are in place for any cost implications of adaptive management? I think that's a good question. And looking specifically at cooperative agreements.

**Sunil Xavier:** Sure. So in our NOFOs, which were formally called requests for applications, and also funding opportunities, what we should be doing is stating in the proposal preparation instructions that, for the technical application, that they do need to propose an approach in terms of what adaptive management they envision, and also to price out what they think they may need to fund collaboration, learning, and adapting. So that has to be in the NOFO to begin with, and it has to be in the application, so then when we make the award, that it is budgeted for and that we can pay for it.

**Melissa Patsalides:** And this is Melissa. I'll just add onto what Sunil said.

**[0:55:00]**

On the upfront planning side, the ADS actually requires that missions establish a budget for monitoring, evaluation, and CLA as part of their monitoring, evaluation, learning plan. So it's an estimate, but we're actually asking for explicit resources to be dedicated to this. Because we recognize: it doesn't happen for free. But it is so critical to effective implementation. We want it to be an explicit, budgeted item.

**Wade Warren:** Great. All right. I just wanna point out that we built a lot of time into this webinar for question and answers. We still have half an hour to respond to your questions. So I want to encourage you to keep the questions coming, use the chat box, and send us anything that you'd like for us to speak about.

We have another question from Maud Seghers of VVOB. And I think this is a good question.

**[0:56:00]**

She's asking: what's the time frame for a project? And does the length of a project depend on the type of outcome that we're seeking? Because some things obviously take longer to achieve than others.
**Alicia Dinerstein:** This is such a great, logical question, Maud. Thank you. Yes. The time frame of a project should depend on the type of outcome. You know, we always do things in these five years, three years. We pick these generic numbers based on what we think makes sense at the time. But often our strategies – one of the things that happens in the new guidance is we give missions the option to create strategies that are longer or shorter than one would normally choose. Because it depends – they may have an election coming up. So they may wanna have a shorter-term strategy or a longer-term strategy depending on their context. Same thing with a project. So a project may be three years or it may be five years or it may actually be longer.

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Because as long as there is an activity that is still contributing to a project, that project is still effectively open. Because until all the activities under that project finish, we don't have the final project outcome.

However, what we'll probably see happening is that missions will develop new CDCSs, new country strategies during the course of an ongoing project, and so some activities may actually be synced into a new project as they shift from one strategy to another. So if I'm in a mission in – I'm just gonna pick a country – Kenya and our CDCS expires next year, we have right now, say, for example, six or seven ongoing projects. Next year, when we do our new CDCS, we may design new projects. And some of those activities may be transferred then under the new projects, depending on how the mission chooses to organize itself. So, yes, the time frame of a project should depend on the outcome.

[0:58:00]

But it is also tied to the length of the individual agreements and contracts under that project. So it's not a very straightforward answer, but: yes, it depends.

**Wade Warren:** Okay. Thanks, Alicia. So, DAI has asked a couple of I think very interesting questions about indicators. And they're two different questions. I'll read them both and then we'll address them both. The first one is: when we're looking across a project and there are multiple activities, are we going to require or encourage some kind of consistency among the indicators for all the activities? So I think that's an interesting question. And then the second one is also quite interesting. It gets as this age-old question about contribution versus attribution. And, consistent with system thinking and collaboration, are we gonna look at indicators that address both?
Melissa Patsalides: Thanks a lot. For the folks from DAI, those are great questions. I'll take the first one.

[0:59:00]

Yes, of course we are looking at consistency among activity indicators within a project. Technically we should have been doing that all along. But many of you may not be surprised to know that we have not always had consistency. And so we're working very hard to train, to message, to give materials to our staff in missions to make sure they understand that when they have the same indicator that's collected by a number of different implementers, it's more important than ever to make sure all of those implementers know exactly what that indicator means, how it's defined, what the data collection methodology is. That's really been a requirement all along, but we are trying to hit that very hard. It's obviously the foundation of data quality. So we do have guidance materials that're going out to our staff, and we'll have some things available for partners also.

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So, if you, in collaborating with others, find that some of you are collecting data within the same project and you are being asked to college data slightly differently, we'd encourage you to let your AOR or COR know. You can help us also in kind of pointing out where we have discrepancies, and make sure that we are being consistent when we need to be.

With regard to your second question, I'm so glad you asked that too. Yes, this is one of the more exciting changes in the ADS. We really opened up our expectations for measurement. And we tried to pull away some of the requirements we had before where we were asking missions to measure performance around high-level results where we knew that it really wasn't a reflection of our performance.

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So we actually stripped away requirements for indicators at some of the higher levels in our country strategies. Because we were collecting data that really wasn't useful; it wasn't telling us anything about performance of our programs. And we instead replaced that with options to monitor context and to measure contribution. And there are methods for doing that that are probably trending more toward non-indicator-based methods. There's a lot of work going on in the agency to broaden our Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit and to look outside of
indicators, where it's warranted, in order to actually measure and help us understand what's going on. So thanks so much for that question.

*Wade Warren:* Good. So an interesting question, and I think a very relevant one from Marcel Janssen in Mercy Corps.

[1:02:00]

And we're talking about doing a lot more monitoring and learning evaluations through the life of a project. Does that mean that we are expecting people to budget more – that more budget would be assigned to these projects, through the life of the project, for all these kinds of analysis and data collection efforts that we're pursuing?

*Melissa Patsalides:* Thanks for that question, Marcel. Yes, actually the guidance that we had before had been: five to ten percent of the program should be allocated to some of these measurement and learning costs. That was not necessarily based on a real rigorous assessment of what was happening or what it would take. So we actually removed that sort of range in the ADS because we found that not necessarily to be very useful, and it also wasn't something that could be tracked corporately because of the way the budgeting is done.

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It's in mechanisms, it's in projects, and within missions. So there wasn't a really strong way to be able to track that data. So what we have in the ADS is that adequate resources need to be allocated to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Whether it is one of these examples you cite of a particular kind of evaluation or a particular kind of method or approach or not, we're asking our missions to make sure that resources are allocated to it so that it can be undertaken.

And then, in turn, your mechanisms – you should be seeing in solicitations an expectation to budget for some of these measurement and learning approaches. And we know it's not free and we want it to be done well. So we're asking for resources to be allocated to it.

[1:04:00]
Wade Warren: Good. Thanks, Melissa. Next we have a question from Jacqueline Bass in FHI. And she wants clarification on how deliverable-based contracts fit in with new hybrid mechanisms.

Sunil Xavier: Thanks, Jacqueline. This is Sunil. In the hybrid contract, for example – this is when you know 80 percent of what you need to do over the course of the project, of the activity. So, for example, this hybrid contract would be used in Colombia – I was a contracting officer. There was a change in the human rights law, so we needed to do a rapid assessment that was never foreseen in the original contract. So you could use that IQC component, which is the 20 percent component that's inside the contract, to basically issue a task order and modify the contract and then basically fund the assessment. So that's one of the benefits of using this hybrid mechanism.

Wade Warren: Great. Thanks, Sunil. So, next we have a question from Alison Hemberger at Mercy Corps, and I think it's a follow-up, Alicia, to the comments you were making earlier about targets. And she mentioned that this adaptive management is not really about changing targets, but she points out that everyone has lots of targets on many levels: objective intermediate, objective outputs, etcetera. And so will people have flexibility to change targets at the output level as activities are adapted, even if the higher-level targets are not changing?

Alicia Dinerstein: Hey, Alison. Thanks for the question. I think it depends. Honestly, you'll have to talk with your COR or AOR and figure out if that makes sense. And, again, this goes back to missions having discretion and CORs and AORs hopefully partnering with our implementing partners to figure out what makes the most sense. It's a really important shift in the relationship that we're hoping to see.

And so what that means is sitting down with your COR or AOR or your activity manager – depends on how it works in the mission you're working with – and saying, "Here is what our situation is. Here's what our outcomes are. Here's what our current output targets are. We don't think achieving those output targets are actually gonna get us to the outcome. And therefore we need to change it." That's very different than just saying, "We're not gonna meet our targets" or "We have to shift it." So it really depends.

Obviously if you had a plan to train teachers, and so that was your output target, and then you decide training teachers is not the way to go and you need to buy
books instead, then I think it would make sense to say you don't need to report against that indicator anymore. So it really depends on what is happening within your individual activity, and the conversation you have and the agreement you reach with your COR/AOR about how you're gonna change direction, and whether that means you need to change not only targets but potentially your whole indicators.

[1:07:00]

So that will have to depend on the situation.

Wade Warren: Okay. Thanks. We have a question from Emma Proud in Mercy Corps. She says the collaborative part of CLA is being strongly incentivized and built into the project cycle. And the adapting piece is being enabled. Are there pieces that are actively incentivizing adaptation?

Melissa Patsalides: Thanks a lot. How are you, Emma? Thanks for joining us. Yes, there are pieces that are being put in place to actively incentivize adaptation. That's part of the reason we wanted Sunil to be here with us today: to talk about the different means of actually using our funds to work with partners. So on the acquisition and assistance side, they've made a lot of strides in being able to use more flexible and adaptive mechanisms.

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Now, on the implementing mechanisms side, which you feel the most, on the inside the mission, at the project level and at the strategy level, we also made changes in the ADS that make it easier and less bureaucratically burdensome for missions to update or amend their projects and their strategies. So we tried to take a very holistic look at the program cycle and look at: "Where are the points when new information or context changes could require adaptation? And what are the processes we have that allow things to be modified?"

But then we also, in giving options for, as Alicia noted earlier, length of time of strategies, of projects, as well as the models that we use to –

[1:09:00]
describe them, we have encouraged missions in the ADS to look at: how sure are they about the path to achieving the results they want to achieve? If they're not very sure, we're asking our staff to take a very different approach to design, and have a much more iterative approach to design.

So, in terms of how we design, in terms of how we change later, and in terms of how we procure and we implement and manage, we're looking all along the chain at enabling adaptations. So, thank you very much for that question. As Alicia said, this is one of the biggest behavior changes we're asking for. So we do expect this to be a longer-term change effort among our staff.

**Alicia Dinerstein:** And I'll just add that from the actual incentive in terms of promotions, from that angle, we are revising the promotion precepts for foreign service officers this year.

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And next year we'll start on the process for our civil service officers. And issues pertaining to adaptation, risk management, systems thinking – all of those are being added, focusing on local ownership. Elements related to those principles that are really inherent in the guidance are now going to be reflected in our promotion principles. So there's that type of incentive also being put in place. Hopefully that will encourage people to manage more adaptively.

**Wade Warren:** Good. So we have another question from DAI. It's one – I think it's a fair question about cost. Sunil mentioned that RFPs may request implementing partners to design and cost multiple scenarios for the out years. And I think everyone can appreciate that, as you cost out multiple scenarios into the future, it's harder to forecast your budget with any certainty.

[1:11:00]

So, how will USAID match this adaptive management approach on both the technical and the cost side?

**Sunil Xavier:** Thank you, Wade. So, one of the things we wanted to field test in our A&A Laboratory – one example could be Zimbabwe. For example, if President Mugabe is re-elected, we would go one direction; if he's not re-elected, we would go a different direction. If there was some change in law, we could go a different direction. So these would all be priced out based on what you think would
happen. But, again, these modules would be flexible enough that we could make changes to the modules.

The other thing that we're looking at is: for example, in year three, something happens. You may have seen some of this in some of our solicitations. It's called a window of opportunity. So basically it's a plug-in amount.

So if there's some opportunity that was unforeseen at the award of the implementing mechanisms – for example some new innovation or some change that was never anticipated – that plug-in figure could be used to make those changes, and they would be costed out to basically implement any changes that were unforeseen.

Great. So, I think a good question from Susana Oguntoye from Africare, a kind of an overarching question for us here in the bureau: how does USAID anticipate measuring our success with regards to this new ADS? And what are our parameters for doing so?

Well, Susana, you asked the hardest question of all, didn't you? We're looking at a couple of ways of doing this.

In the same spirit that we ask missions to have when they're doing their planning, we also have a theory of change about the Program Cycle and we think that doing strategic planning at the country level and using a project design process to document and be explicit about how we think higher-level changes are gonna happen, and then how we use activities to implement and get to those higher changes, and how we monitor, evaluate, and learn during our programming to then influence our designs and the way we work – we think that those are all components that will lead to more effective operations and missions, and with our partners, and to development outcomes.

So we're looking at the Program Cycle components individually. We have access to strategy documents and project design documents.
And we see the evaluations missions are doing. We see the way they're planning to monitor, evaluate, and learn, and then we will be able to see how they're actually doing that. So we'll be looking at the individual components of the Program Cycle, but we'll also be doing some periodic studies looking at how it all hangs together. We'll be doing some case studies actually in different missions to understand whether and how we're implementing the whole of the Program Cycle together, and what difference is it making? So we're certainly not going to have a traditional measurement approach to something as systemic as that. So we're actually gonna be using some of these other kinds of methods that we're encouraging missions to use in measuring hard-to-measure outcomes in development. We'll be applying that to ourselves. So thanks for that question.

Wade Warren: Thank you, Susana. It's a fair question.

[1:15:00]

So, thanks for the question, and thanks for the answer, Melissa.

So I'm mindful of the time. We have about ten minutes left in the webinar and we want to leave time for the survey at the end. So I believe we're gonna have this be our last question. It's from MEASURE Evaluation at UNC Chapel Hill. And they're asking about centrally-funded mechanisms, and: how do we envision using our centrally-funded mechanisms to help missions implement these changes? And I would say, maybe more broadly than that, not only how are we using centrally-funded mechanisms, but, more generally, how are we going to implement these changes through training and outreach? Because, as we said just before the question-and-answer period started, this does require something of a culture change in the agency and among our implementing partners, and that can't happen overnight. So how are we going to take those next steps?

Alicia Dinerstein: Okay. I'll launch this one.

[1:16:00]

So, in terms of how to use centrally-funded mechanisms, actually we expect that Washington – so, many of the what we call "pillar bureaus" in Washington, the technical bureaus in Washington – they also implement programs. And they are who have the centrally-funded mechanisms generally. And they also have to follow certain elements of the guidance, but not all elements of the guidance. And actually the guidance is very clear about what applies to Washington versus what doesn't. But what we have said is: we are trying to encourage the core-funded activities – the Washington-based activities – that are supporting the field
to work in the same spirit in the principles. So they should be focusing on local ownership to the extent possible; they should be adaptable to the extent possible. So those are for technical programs that may or may not be designed as part of a project, or they may be designed really to support the field.

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And so it's not that there's a specific result or outcome that USAID/Washington is trying to achieve, but really if the goal is to support the field, they will be handled differently. But, again, with local ownership and adaptive management hopefully being fully encompassed within that individual activity design.

Then there is a whole range of mechanisms that are crosscutting and maybe that relate to monitoring and evaluation. And I'll actually let Melissa talk a little bit about those activities and how they can support more direct implementation of the policy.

Melissa Patsalides: Sure. There are several centrally-managed mechanisms that we manage ourselves in PPL to extend our reach and our efforts in helping bring these changes about in missions. Some of them allow for short-term or longer-term staffing where people need a little shot in the arm to help them do project design better, to monitor, evaluate, or learn better.

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We're also working with our office of – we'll just call it human resources, since that's the plain English way of saying it – that manages a training contract that will provide completely revamped training that incorporates all of these Program Cycle changes. So that is rolling out in January.

In addition, we have a number of publications and technical resources available. Webinars like this we do very frequently for staff inside the agency. And we have a lot of additional ways that we're trying to leverage missions who are doing the work well to share what they're doing with others. Because we think that's even more powerful an example than us talking about the good examples. And things like the CLA Case Competition where we're able to highlight the great work that partners are doing.

[1:19:00]
We want to continue to leverage opportunities like that, in terms of peer learning, as another way to help us bring about the big behavior changes that we know we need to see within our agency.

It's pretty exciting, so we're trying to take a very full-spectrum approach to it, and to be as creative as possible. So thanks for that question.

Wade Warren: Thank you, Melissa. So, as we wrap up, let me say a couple of things. First, I want to thank Alicia, Melissa, and Sunil for their enormous expertise and enthusiasm around this subject. When I learned from them that we were gonna have an hour-long Q&A session, I was filled with trepidation [laughs]. But it has gone very smoothly and quickly. I think the questions were great, and your answers were so informative. So thanks to the three of you.

And then those of you who called or looking at the screen can't appreciate it, but I wanted to point out that there is a beehive of activity behind the scenes making the technology work and cueing up the questions and taking care of all the other things that make this webinar possible.

[1:20:00] So I wanted to say thank you to all the folks who have supported this effort.

And then, lastly, thanks to all of you who signed into the webinar. We really appreciate your interest in the topic. And as we've said repeatedly, obviously the changes that we want to see made to the way we deliver assistance around the world can't take place without your strong involvement and understanding of the guidance. So we really appreciate your attention and enthusiasm about the subject.

So, as I mentioned at the outset, we have a short survey that we would like for you to fill out before you sign off. It helps us understand which parts of this webinar worked well, which didn't, how we can improve in the future. So I'll leave you to do that.

[1:21:00] But, again, I just wanted to offer our thanks for everything that you do, and wish everyone [audio cuts out] –

[End of Audio]