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# ADS Chapter 203

## Assessing and Learning

Partial Revision Date: 02/10/2012  
Responsible Office: PPL  
File Name: 203\_021012

**Functional Series 200 – Programming Policy  
ADS 203 – Assessing and Learning**

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## ADS 203 – Assessing and Learning

### \*203.1 OVERVIEW

Effective date: 01/17/2012

As outlined in [ADS 200](#), learning links together all components of the Program Cycle. During the monitoring and evaluation phases of the Program Cycle, outlined in this chapter, Missions should ensure that systems, methods, and practices are in place for ensuring that learning occurs throughout the Program Cycle. Sources of learning include data from performance monitoring, findings of research, evaluations, and analysis commissioned by USAID or third parties, and other sources and should be used to make adaptations to plans, projects, and programs in order to improve development outcomes.

USAID plans and implements Development Objectives (DOs) that are expected to improve the development status of selected countries and regions around the world. In order to meet these development goals and to ensure accountability for the resources employed to achieve these goals, USAID Missions/Independent Offices must strive to continuously learn and improve their approach in achieving project results. The purpose of strong evaluation, research, and performance measurement practices is the ultimate application of the evidence and learning gained. USAID must rely on the best available evidence to rigorously and credibly document program effectiveness, to make hard choices, and to learn more systematically.

As detailed in [ADS 201](#), a key principle is that USAID Operating Units - USAID Missions, Regional Platforms, and Washington Bureaus and Independent Offices, henceforth referred to as USAID Mission/Offices, - must clearly define, based on evidence and a development hypothesis, the results and outputs that the Mission intends to achieve and how the results will be measured and evaluated. This chapter provides guidance for USAID Missions/Offices on Agency practices, standards, and tools to determine progress toward intended results and to learn and consequently adapt in order to better achieve development outcomes. It describes:

- 1) How Missions collect and use both quantitative and qualitative performance information to manage for and report on results;
- 2) How to use the tools of performance monitoring, evaluation, and research to promote learning and strengthen future performance in achieving planned development results;
- 3) How processes such as Portfolio Reviews and preparation of the annual Performance Report contribute to performance analysis and learning at the Bureau and Agency levels;
- 4) How to understand the factors that may be limiting progress made in achieving targeted results and the kinds of actions needed to optimize the achievement of targeted results; and

- 5) How USAID should facilitate the sharing of knowledge within the Agency, with other USG foreign affairs organizations, partner institutions, and throughout the development community as a whole.

## **203.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

For specific responsibilities of various USAID Missions, Regional Platforms, and Washington Bureaus and Independent Offices, see [ADS 200.2](#).

## **\*203.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

### **203.3.1 Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Guidance**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

This chapter describes both mandatory and non-mandatory procedures and practices. Mandatory procedures are identified with use of the words “must,” “required,” or other clear designation. They are mandatory because they deal with USAID’s policies and processes, or are required by law, regulation, Executive Order, or binding agreement. In some cases, the underlying law, regulation, Executive Order, or binding agreement will include provision for exceptions, waivers, and national interest determinations and these provisions must be followed. Please consult with the Office of the General Counsel (GC) or with the Regional Legal Advisor (RLA) if there is doubt about whether a provision is mandatory and the process, if any, for exceptional treatment.

The non-mandatory procedures described in this chapter are intended to increase consistency and predictability of operations. Non-mandatory procedures are based on best practice and identified with use of the words “should,” “recommended,” “may,” or other clear designation. Although USAID Missions/Offices should generally follow these procedures, they may choose to allow exemptions or adapt them to particular situations, especially when such exemptions promote core values, and guiding principles, and increase cost-efficiency. USAID Missions/Offices should document these decisions in mission orders on monitoring and evaluation as well as in the relevant section of the Performance Management Plan.

**Note:** To alert readers, the word “MANDATORY” will often appear at the start of a paragraph. The paragraph itself may contain a combination of mandatory and non-mandatory language, as signaled by the words listed above.

The text details special exemptions from some mandatory procedures. Assistant Administrators have authority to approve, as necessary, additional exemptions from the mandatory procedures beyond those exemptions specifically mentioned in this chapter. Approval for any such additional exemptions must be obtained in writing from the Assistant Administrator of the responsible Bureau and must be written as an action

memorandum cleared by the Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (PPL/LER) before approval.

**Special Exemptions:** Certain programs are exempted from the mandatory procedures described in this chapter, including (1) emergency disaster assistance such as that under the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account and (2) emergency food aid authorized under Title II of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, as amended (PL. 480).

### **\*203.3.2 Evaluation**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics and outcomes of programs and projects as a basis for judgments to improve effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about current and future programming. Evaluation is distinct from assessment, which may be designed to examine country or sector context to inform project design, or an informal review of projects.

The purpose of evaluations is to ensure accountability to stakeholders and learn to improve effectiveness. Evaluations may be undertaken at any level of a Mission's portfolio, from an individual award, to a project, to a Development Objective.

Evaluations ensure accountability to stakeholders by measuring project effectiveness, relevance and efficiency, disclosing those findings to stakeholders, and using evaluation findings to inform resource allocation and other decisions. For evaluation to serve the aim of accountability, metrics should be matched to meaningful outputs and outcomes that are under the control or sphere of influence of the Agency.

Evaluations that are well designed and executed can also systematically generate knowledge about the magnitude and determinants of project performance, which can be used to inform and improve project and strategy design and implementation. Learning requires:

- Careful selection of evaluation questions to test fundamental assumptions underlying project designs,
- Methods that generate findings that are internally and externally valid, and
- Systems to share findings widely and facilitate integration of the evaluation conclusions and recommendations into decision-making.

To facilitate sharing evaluation findings, evaluation reports must be submitted to USAID's central document repository, the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), within three months of the evaluation's conclusion (see [EvalWeb](#)).

**\*203.3.2.1 Impact and Performance Evaluations**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Evaluations at USAID will be impact or performance evaluations.

- a) **Impact evaluations** measure the change in a development outcome that is attributable to a defined intervention. Impact evaluations are based on models of cause and effect and require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual to control for factors other than the intervention that might account for the observed change.
- b) **Performance evaluations** often incorporate before-after comparisons, but generally lack a rigorously defined counterfactual. Performance evaluations focus on descriptive and normative questions:
  - What a particular project or program has achieved;
  - How it is being implemented;
  - How it is perceived and valued;
  - Whether expected results are occurring; and
  - Other questions pertinent to program design, management and operational decision making.

Required evaluations at USAID must be led by an external team leader, managed in most cases by Program Office staff, and supported by DO team members, other knowledgeable members of a USG Operating Unit, or partner organizations.

In addition to required evaluations, USAID Missions/Offices are encouraged to conduct internal or self-evaluations as needed for management purposes or organizational learning.

**\*203.3.2.2 Basic Organizational Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Figure A below illustrates the evaluation roles and responsibilities of USAID program and technical offices.

**Figure A: Roles and Responsibilities**

	<b>Program Offices</b>	<b>Technical Offices</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	Identify an evaluation point of contact	
<b>Training &amp; Learning</b>	Invest in training of key staff	
	Actively encourage staff to participate in an evaluation community of practice	
<b>Planning</b>	Ensure planning for evaluation questions in context of CDCS development	Provide relevant technical support to development of evaluation questions, PMPs and M&E Plans
	Ensure adequacy of Evaluation section of Mission portfolio wide PMP	
	Ensure M&E Plans are incorporated into Project Designs	
	Develop a budget estimate for evaluations	
	Allocate program funds for external evaluations (Goal: three percent of USAID Mission/Office's total program budget)	
<b>Evaluation Scopes of Work and Evaluation Reports</b>	Ensure that final scopes of work for external evaluations adhere to standards in Section 4 of Evaluation Policy	Provide relevant technical support to ensure that SOWs address standards of the Evaluation Policy
	Manage, in most cases, required external evaluations	
	Organize in-house peer technical reviews to assess quality of evaluation SOWs and draft reports	Participate in peer technical reviews
<b>Evaluation Technical Support</b>	Develop contractual mechanisms to access evaluation expertise support	
	Prepare a Mission Order on evaluation describing context-specific approaches	
<b>Reporting &amp; Knowledge Management</b>	Include evaluation reporting and plans in the Performance Plan and Report annex on evaluation	
	Warehouse evaluation data	

**\*203.3.2.3 When Is an Evaluation Appropriate?**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Each USAID Mission/Office is required to conduct at least one evaluation of each large project it implements. For these purposes, a “large project” is one that equals or exceeds in dollar value the mean (average) project size for each DO for the USAID Mission/Office. All Operating Units (OUs) should calculate the average project size at the Development Objective (DO) level (formerly known as a Strategic Objective or Assistance Objective). Use the definition for project provided in [ADS 200](#). The goal of this approach is to ensure that major projects in each DO undergo evaluation, even when a DO is a relatively small share of an OU’s budget. Missions can use several means of calculating a large project. The main principle is that missions conduct an appropriate analysis to determine the mean project size and document their analysis. For more information on calculating the mean project size, reference the Evaluation Policy FAQs posted on [ProgramNet](#).

In cases where there are factors that make it difficult to calculate mean project size – for example, when many projects are co-funded with other USG partners – USAID Missions/Offices should consult with PPL/LER to determine an appropriate means of calculation.

Additionally, any activity within a project involving untested hypotheses or demonstrating new approaches that are anticipated to be expanded in scale or scope through USG foreign assistance or other funding sources will, if feasible, undergo an impact evaluation. If it is not possible to effectively undertake an impact evaluation, USAID Missions/Offices may undertake a performance evaluation, provided that the final evaluation report includes a concise but detailed statement about why an impact evaluation was not conducted.

Regardless of whether an impact or performance evaluation is selected, the evaluation should be integrated into the design of the project. Any activity or project designated as a “pilot” or “proof of concept” will fall under this requirement.

For USAID Missions engaged in the preparation of a three- to five-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy, mission leadership must identify at least one opportunity for an impact evaluation for each DO as well as high priority evaluation questions for each DO. Identifying key evaluation questions at the outset will both improve the quality of the project design and guide data collection during implementation.

USAID Missions/Offices are encouraged to identify opportunities for evaluations at the program or sector level. This is particularly valuable in a period preceding the development of a new strategy.

USAID Missions/Offices may evaluate additional projects for learning or management purposes, at any point in implementation. Evaluations should be timed so that their findings can inform decisions such as exercising option years, designing a follow-on

program, creating a country or sector strategic plan, or making a policy decision. In the course of implementing a DO, the following situations could serve as triggers for an evaluation:

- A key management decision is required, but there is inadequate information to make it;
- Performance information indicates an unexpected result (positive or negative) that should be explained, such as unanticipated results affecting either men or women (Refer to gender analysis conducted per [ADS 201](#));
- Customer, partner, or other informed feedback suggests that there are implementation problems, unmet needs, or unintended consequences or impacts;
- Issues of sustainability, cost-effectiveness, or relevance arise;
- The validity of Results Framework hypotheses or critical assumptions is questioned; for example, due to unanticipated changes in the host country environment; or
- Periodic Portfolio Reviews have identified key questions that need to be answered or that require consensus.

#### **\*203.3.2.4 Planning Evaluations**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Missions should be actively involved in evaluation planning to ensure the final product is useful. Stakeholders should be consulted to assist in prioritizing the evaluation questions. Evaluations may directly involve ultimate customers in data collection and analysis. Regardless of an evaluation's scope, the planning process should involve the following steps:

1. Clarify the evaluation purpose (including what will be evaluated, who wants the information, what they want to know, and how the information will be used);
2. Review and understand the development hypothesis as a basis for identifying evaluation questions;
3. Identify a small number of key questions and specific issues answerable with empirical evidence;
4. Consider past evaluations and research that could inform project design and evaluation planning;

5. Select evaluation methods that are rigorous and appropriate to the evaluation questions, specify methods with sufficient detail that findings will be reproducible; and
6. Plan for data collection and analysis, including gender issues.

These plans will be used to inform evaluation statements of work.

The scope of an evaluation will vary according to available management information needs and resources. During the design phase of each project, Missions will give consideration to the evaluations that will be undertaken, and identify key evaluation questions at the outset. This will improve the quality of the project design, guide data collection during implementation, and ensure evaluations are planned and used to inform decisions.

Significant attention is required to ensure that baseline data, including sex-disaggregated data, are collected using high-quality methods early in the project lifespan, before any significant implementation has occurred. Working closely with the Program Office, project managers will ensure that implementing partners collect relevant monitoring data and maintain data and documentation that can be accessed for future evaluations.

Evaluations will address the most important and relevant questions about project performance. The importance and relevance will be achieved by explicitly linking evaluation questions to specific future decisions to be made by USAID leadership, partner governments, and/or other key stakeholders.

Most evaluations will be conducted by external experts, to be managed by Program Office staff, with support from DO team members, other knowledgeable members of a USG Operating Unit, or partner organizations. Required evaluation teams (for large or innovative projects) will always be led by an independent expert outside USAID, with no fiduciary relationship with the implementing partner. To the extent possible, evaluation specialists with appropriate expertise from partner countries, but not involved in project implementation, will lead and/or be included in evaluation teams.

In cases where impact evaluations are undertaken to examine the relationship between an intervention or set of interventions and changes in key development outcome, a parallel contractual or grant agreement may be established at the inception to accompany implementation. That contractual or grant agreement will include sufficient resources for data collection and analysis. Under unusual circumstances, when a separate arrangement is infeasible, implementing partners may subcontract an impact evaluation of a project subcomponent.

The USAID Mission/Office Program Office should manage evaluations. USAID Mission/Office management may make exceptions under unusual circumstances. Exceptions must be documented in the Mission's overall PMP.

USAID Missions/Offices should devote approximately three percent of total program funding, on average, to external evaluation.

**\*203.3.2.5 Statement of Work**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

A statement of work (SOW) will be needed to contract out evaluations to external entities. The SOW provides the framework for the evaluation and communicates the research questions. The Contracting Officer may have to place restrictions on an evaluation contractor's future work. For more information, see the Office of Acquisition and Assistance Web site: <http://inside.usaid.gov/M/OAA/evaluation/index.html> or <http://www.usaid.gov/business>, and [Contract Information Bulletin \(CIB\) 99-17](#).

A well-written statement of work should:

1. Describe the specific intervention, project/program, or process to be evaluated;
2. Provide a brief background on the development hypothesis and its implementation;
3. Identify existing performance information sources, with special attention to monitoring data;
4. State the purpose of, audience for, and anticipated use(s) of the evaluation;
5. Identify a small number of evaluation questions that are relevant to future decisions and answerable with empirical evidence;
6. Identify all evaluation questions for which gender-disaggregated data are expected; also identify questions for which an examination of gender specific or gender differential effects are expected;
7. Identify evaluation method(s) that will generate the highest quality and most credible evidence on each evaluation question, taking time, budget and other practical considerations into account and specify methods with sufficient detail;
8. Describe how data collected on evaluation questions will be analyzed;
9. Describe strengths and limitations of the evaluation methods;
10. Specify the evaluation deliverable(s) and their timelines and logistics, including requirements for the transfer of data to USAID and expectations concerning evaluation team involvement in the dissemination of evaluation results;

11. Clarify expectations about the methodological and subject matter expertise and composition of the evaluation team, including expectations concerning the involvement of local evaluation team members (one team member should be an evaluation specialist);
12. Describe intended participation of USAID staff, implementing partners, national counterparts or customer/beneficiaries in the design or conduct of the evaluation;
13. Address scheduling, logistics and other support;
14. Clarify requirements for reporting and dissemination, including mandatory inclusion of Appendix 1 of the Mandatory Reference on Evaluation; and
15. Include a budget.

For more information, see the Evaluation Statement of Work Checklist:  
[http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation\\_resources.html](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html).

#### **\*203.3.2.6 Evaluation Methodologies**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Evaluations will use methods that generate the highest quality and most credible evidence that corresponds to the questions being asked, taking into consideration time, budget, and other practical considerations. Both qualitative and quantitative methods yield valuable findings, and a combination is often optimal.

Depending on the scope, purpose, and key questions of the evaluation, the design and the types of methodology used may be relatively simple or more complex. For impact evaluations, experimental methods (randomization), or quasi-experimental methods should be used. For performance evaluations, a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods applied in a systematic and structured way is optimal.

A number of tasks involved in all evaluations – measuring outcomes, ensuring the consistency and quality of data collected, establishing the causal connection between activities and outcomes, and identifying the influence of extraneous factors – raise technical or logistical problems that may not be easy to resolve. Therefore, when selecting among evaluation methods, USAID Missions/Offices should consider issues such as:

- The nature of the information, analysis, or feedback needed;
- Cost-effectiveness;
- Cultural considerations;

- The timeframe of the management need for information;
- Time and resources available; and
- The level of accuracy required.

Such careful consideration will help to minimize unexpected technical or logistical problems.

If the purpose of the evaluation is to establish the impact of a project and if there are sufficient resources (funding, time, and technical expertise), more complex evaluation designs involving randomized techniques may be used. Randomization is best established at the beginning of a project as it may be difficult to define “pure” control groups after project implementation has begun. Two factors should be considered before embarking on this type of evaluation:

- (1) The importance of maintaining control and treatment groups throughout implementation, and
- (2) The need for a particularly high standard of data quality in order to maintain the integrity of the evaluation design.

Before settling on any particular method, evaluators should determine the extent and quality of existing data sources and potential biases, and take steps to minimize bias. USAID Missions/Offices should be as rigorous as possible in the evaluation data collection and analysis, regardless of the methodology.

Evaluation methods should use sex-disaggregated data and incorporate attention to gender relations in all relevant areas. Methodological strengths and limitations will be communicated explicitly both in evaluation scopes of work and in evaluation reports.

#### **\*203.3.2.7 Participation in Evaluations**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

USAID Missions/Offices are strongly encouraged to include customers and partners (implementing partners, alliance partners, host-country government partners, and so forth) in planning and conducting evaluations. Evaluations will be undertaken so that they are not subject to even the perception of biased measurement or reporting due to conflict of interest or other factors. In most cases, evaluations should be externally-led (i.e., a third-party contractor or grantee, managed directly by USAID), and the contract or grant for the evaluation should be managed by the USAID Mission/Office’s Program Office.

For required evaluations (i.e. large or innovative), the evaluation team leader must be an independent expert from outside USAID, with no fiduciary relationship with the implementing partner.

In cases where USAID Mission/Office management determines that appropriate expertise exists within the Agency, and that engaging USAID staff in an evaluation will facilitate institutional learning, an evaluation team may be predominantly composed of USAID staff. However, an outside expert with appropriate skills and experience will be recruited to lead the team, mitigating the potential for conflict of interest. The outside expert may come from another USG agency uninvolved in project implementation, or be engaged through a contractual mechanism.

For non-required evaluations (i.e. neither large nor innovative), funding may be dedicated within a project design for implementing partners to engage in evaluative work for their own institutional learning or accountability purposes. In cases where project funding from USAID supports an evaluation conducted or commissioned by an implementing partner, the findings from that evaluation must be shared in written form with the responsible technical officer within three months of the evaluation's conclusion.

### **\*203.3.2.8 Documenting Evaluations**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Evaluation reports must meet the following criteria:

1. The evaluation report must represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not work, and why.
2. Evaluation reports must address all evaluation questions included in the scope of work. The evaluation report should include the evaluation statement of work as an annex. All modifications to the statement of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the technical officer.
3. Evaluation methodology must be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists, and discussion guides will be included in an annex in the final report.
4. When evaluation findings address outcomes and impact, they must be assessed on males and females.
5. Limitations to the evaluation must be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
6. Evaluation findings must be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or simply the compilation of people's

opinions. Findings should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.

7. Sources of information must be properly identified and listed in an annex.
8. Recommendations must be supported by a specific set of findings and should be action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.

USAID Missions/Offices must maintain appropriate documentation at the conclusion of any evaluation. The nature of the documentation will vary depending on the formality, importance, scope, and resources committed to the evaluation. At a minimum, documentation should highlight:

1. Raw quantitative data and any code books;
2. Scope and methodology used to collect and analyze data;
3. Important findings (empirical facts collected by evaluators);
4. Conclusions (evaluators' interpretations and judgments based on the findings);
5. Recommendations (proposed actions for management based on the conclusions);
6. Disclosure of conflict of interest and statement of differences, if any; and
7. If appropriate, lessons learned. Generally, evaluations at the project level are not expected to produce lessons learned that are broadly generalizable to different contexts unless they use impact evaluation methodologies

Evaluation reports should be readily understood and should identify key points clearly, distinctly, and succinctly. All reports should include an executive summary that presents a concise and accurate statement of the most critical elements of the report.

### **203.3.2.9 Responding to Evaluation Findings**

Effective date: 01/31/2003

USAID Missions/Offices should address findings and recommendations of evaluations that relate to their specific activities and DOs. To help ensure that institutional learning takes place and evaluation findings can be used to improve development outcomes, Missions should take the following basic steps upon completion of the evaluation:

1. Meet with the evaluation team to debrief and discuss results or findings and provide feedback on any factual errors.

2. Review the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations systematically.
3. Determine whether the team accepts/supports each finding, conclusion, or recommendation.
4. Identify any management or program actions needed and assign responsibility and the timeline for completion of each set of actions.
5. Determine whether any revision is necessary in the joint country assistance strategy or USAID country development cooperation strategy, results framework, or project, using all available information.
6. Share and openly discuss evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations with relevant customers, partners, other donors, and stakeholders, unless there are unusual and compelling reasons not to do so. In many cases, the USAID Mission/Office should arrange the translation of the executive summary into the local written language.

**\*203.3.2.10 Sharing Evaluations to Enhance Agency Learning and Transparency**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Evaluation is useful when it provides evidence to inform real-world decision making. Every step of USAID's Program Cycle – from design to implementation to evaluation – should be undertaken from the perspective not only of achieving development objectives, but of enriching the Agency's knowledge base for improved policies, strategies, and projects. USAID Missions/Offices will promote transparency and learning by sharing information about evaluations when the evaluation design is agreed upon and when the evaluation report has been completed.

USAID Missions/Offices will provide information through FACTS Info about completed evaluations and the initiation of evaluations and expected timing of release of findings. This information will be included in the annual PPR Evaluation Registry and communicated to the public on the USAID Web site.

Evaluation reports must be provided to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC): [dec.usaid.gov](http://dec.usaid.gov) within three months of the evaluation's conclusion. The evaluation reports will be accessible for use in planning and assessing other programs. If the evaluation was not "finalized," the USAID Mission/Office should submit the last draft it received. If appropriate, the USAID Mission/Office may also submit the response (if any) of the DO team, USAID Mission/Office, or counterpart agency.

**Exception:** In cases where national security considerations and/or proprietary information may be involved, USAID Missions/Offices may request an exception from this requirement. Exception requests should be submitted to the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research.

All data sets collected by USAID or one of the Agency's contractors or grantees for the purposes of an evaluation must be uploaded and stored in a central database. The data should be organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or the evaluation. Until this database is established, data can be submitted to [DevelopmentData@usaid.gov](mailto:DevelopmentData@usaid.gov).

USAID Missions will encourage the utilization of evaluation findings in their Mission Orders and highlight evaluation findings in their Country Development Cooperation Strategies. In addition, the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research may commission technical audits to determine whether evaluations meet the standards of the USAID Evaluation Policy, and how evaluation findings are being used for decision making by USAID Missions/Offices.

### **203.3.3 Performance Management**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 establishes requirements for strategic planning and performance measurement for all USG agencies. USAID Missions and B/IOs may be audited for their compliance with USAID policies on performance management as described in [ADS 592, Performance Audits](#).

Accordingly, USAID Missions and B/IOs and their DO Teams are responsible for measuring progress towards the results identified in the planning stage to achieve foreign assistance objectives. The concept of performance management encompasses the tools used for assessing, learning, and sharing. As defined in [ADS 200.6](#):

**Performance management** is the systematic process of monitoring the achievements of program operations; collecting and analyzing performance information to track progress toward planned results; using performance information and evaluations to influence DO decision-making and resource allocation; and communicating results achieved, or not attained, to advance organizational learning and tell the Agency's story.

Performance management represents the Agency's commitment to managing DOs for results in order to achieve the best possible development outcomes.

It is important to understand the difference between performance monitoring and evaluation, as these tools perform different functions:

- Performance monitoring reveals whether desired results are occurring and whether DO outcomes are on track. It addresses the "what" of performance. Performance monitoring uses preselected indicators to measure progress toward planned results at every level of the Results Framework continuously throughout the life of a DO.

- Evaluation answers the “why” or “why not” of performance, as well as the “what else” question. It is used on a periodic basis to identify the reasons for success or lack of it, to assess effects and impacts, or to indicate which, among a range of program or project/activity alternatives, is the most efficient and effective. It may also be used to draw lessons for future interventions. Evaluation typically employs a range of quantitative and qualitative measures in addition to preselected indicators and may consider both planned and unplanned results. Evaluation also provides an opportunity to reexamine the Development Hypothesis of the DO (as well as its underlying assumptions) and to make adjustments based on new evidence.

### **203.3.3.1 The Performance Management Process**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

The four principal steps in performance management are:

**a. Establishing a performance management framework.** As a DO Team develops its Results Framework (see the mandatory requirement in [ADS 201.3.8.3](#)), it must identify the hierarchy of results that it intends to achieve over the long term. Concurrently, the DO Team must plan how it will monitor and evaluate progress toward those results. This includes:

- Selecting performance indicators;
- Planning for evaluation and special studies that will be used to measure progress over time and to understand any obstacles impeding progress;
- Defining the program/project starting point (by establishing a performance baseline) and the change in the situation that will signal success (by identifying performance targets for each year of the project);
- Identifying the data collection methods that will be used, the frequency of data collection, and the responsibility for data collection, compilation, analysis, and data quality assessments; and
- Deciding how data will be used for decision-making on how to improve performance, resource allocation, and communication of the USAID Mission and B/IO’s story.

**b. Collecting and analyzing performance information** to track progress toward planned results. Performance information can come from a variety of sources—for example, partner progress reports, periodic evaluations, or special studies conducted by the host government, other donors, or USAID itself. The

DO Team should regularly collect, analyze, and interpret the data in order to enhance its ability to make program/project adjustments in a timely manner.

**c. Using performance information to influence DO decision-making and resource allocation.** USAID Missions and B/IOs usually have varying information needs for decision-making depending on the implementation stage of a DO. The evolving levels of performance information over the life-cycle of a program are shown graphically in Figure 203A, “Reaching Results: The Causal Pathway.” The basis for decision-making by DO Teams will vary according to the implementation stage of a program. Early in the implementation of a DO, DO Teams are likely to base their decisions largely on input and output data. As implementation proceeds and outputs become more substantial, DO Teams will still need to consider the input and output data sources, but will also focus their program management decisions more on whether intended results are being achieved. Therefore, DO Teams will need information that measures progress at the DO level. This information will come both from monitoring and from evaluation data. (For definitions of input, output, outcome, and impact, see [ADS 200.6](#).) While activities and projects are expected to produce the measurable change represented by outcomes, it is likely to take the combined efforts of several projects to produce sustainable impact at the DO level.

**d. Communicating results** achieved or not achieved, to advance organizational learning and demonstrate the Agency’s contribution to achieving the overall USG foreign assistance goal. Communication allows a USAID Mission or B/IO to tell its story to its various stakeholders and partners, including the host government. For example, sharing performance information with local partners and customers can help mobilize the knowledge and experience of key stakeholders and identify ways to improve results. Communication includes submitting reports—such as project evaluations, the yearly Operational Plan or the Performance Report—which facilitate learning within the Agency and other concerned USG agencies. Communication is also a powerful element of performance management.

### **203.3.3.2 Key Principles for Effective Performance Management**

Effective date: 07/11/2011

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

To implement performance management effectively, USAID Missions and B/IOs and their DO Teams should demonstrate a broad commitment to key principles and practices that foster a performance-oriented culture. USAID’s credibility is enhanced when its DO Teams employ the following principles and practices as a regular part of their performance management efforts:

**a. Plan early for performance management.** DO Teams should plan for performance management while developing a new DO. Starting early is critical because assembling the various elements of the system takes

time. For example, when working on a preliminary Performance Management Plan (PMP), some Missions and B/IOs may discover that data to measure performance is inadequate or unavailable. They may need to establish new plans to collect data that are adequate and available.

- b. Make decisions on the basis of performance data.** USAID Missions and B/IOs should use performance information to assess progress in achieving results and to make management decisions on improving performance.
- c. Seek participation.** USAID Missions and B/IOs and DO Teams can strengthen performance management by involving customers, partners, stakeholders, and other USAID and USG entities in the following performance management steps:
  - (1) Developing PMPs;
  - (2) Collecting, interpreting, and sharing performance monitoring information and experience;
  - (3) Jointly defining a critical set of performance indicators;
  - (4) Jointly reviewing evaluation results;
  - (5) Jointly planning for dissemination of evaluation results;
  - (6) Integrating USAID performance management efforts with similar processes of partners; and
  - (7) Assisting partners to develop their own performance management and evaluation capacity.

Needs for host country or local organization capacity building in this area should be identified at the beginning of a project and adequate funds budgeted.

- d. Streamline the process.** DO Teams should only collect and report on the information that is most directly useful for performance management. More information is not necessarily better because it markedly increases the management burden and cost to collect and analyze. Where possible, DO Teams should also align their performance information needs with those of their host country counterparts, other donors, and implementing partners. This should lessen the overall data collection burden and help to promote aid effectiveness. DO Teams should ensure that data collection and reporting requirements are included in acquisition and assistance instruments, and that partner reporting schedules provide information at

the appropriate times for Agency reporting. (For specific information on streamlining planning and reporting, see [Mandatory Reference 201mag, Interim Streamlining of Foreign Assistance Planning and Reporting Processes & Selected Findings from Surveys of Contributors and Users.](#))

- e. **Be transparent.** USAID Missions and B/IOs should share information widely and report candidly. Transparency involves (1) communicating any limitations in data quality so that achievements can be honestly assessed; (2) conveying clearly and accurately the problems that impede progress and steps that are being taken to address them; and (3) avoiding the appearance of claiming results achieved jointly with the host country or other development partners as solely USAID or USG results.

### 203.3.3.3 Budgeting for Performance Management

Effective date: 09/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

USAID Missions and B/IOs should include sufficient funding and personnel resources for performance management work, including funds for capacity improvement in host country or local organization partners, in their budgets. Experience has shown that 5 to 10 percent of total program resources should be allocated for this purpose.

Efforts should also be made to keep the performance management system cost-effective. USAID data collection requirements should be integrated in performance management activities and work plans of implementing partners. Integrating USAID and partner efforts reduces the burden on USAID and ensures that partner activities and USAID plans are well-aligned.

If anticipated costs appear prohibitive, DO Teams should consider:

- Revising the data sources and/or collection method for performance indicators, or selecting other performance indicators for which data collection may be less expensive; or
- Modifying the relevant outcome and/or intermediate result statements and corresponding indicators so that progress can be judged at more reasonable costs. (See [ADS 201](#) for a discussion of Results Frameworks, their components, and their relationship to the Foreign Assistance Framework and its Standardized Program Structure);

In some situations, expensive technical analyses or studies, such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), are vital to managing performance and are important ingredients of the development activity itself. Where possible, these studies should be coordinated with partners and other donors to ensure cost-sharing.

#### **203.3.3.4 Performance Management Plans**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

**MANDATORY.** DO Teams must prepare a complete Performance Management Plan (PMP) for each DO for which they are responsible.

The purpose of this requirement is to establish indicators that will provide accurate baseline data on the initial program or project/activity conditions. As the project unfolds, the DO Team can measure the degree of change. While a solicitation instrument may include a preliminary PMP, once the award is executed the project staff must complete the PMP, with relevant indicators and baseline data, within the first few months and before major project implementation actions get underway.

As defined in [ADS 200.6](#), a **Performance Management Plan (PMP)** is

A tool to plan and manage the process of monitoring, evaluating, and reporting progress towards achieving a DO.

#### **\*203.3.3.5 Format and content of PMP**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

There is no standard format for PMPs. USAID Missions/Offices should use a format that best fits their management and communication needs. The following information should routinely be included as part of a mission-wide PMP:

- a. Specify the schedule for data collection.** Identify what actual time period the data cover, when data will be collected. Note that whenever possible, data should be collected and reported on U.S. fiscal year basis. Baseline values and targeted values for each performance indicator included in the PMP.
- b. The source of the data, the methods for data collection and analysis.** The description of data collection should be operationally specific enough to enable an objective observer and/or new staff person to understand how the raw data are collected, compiled, analyzed, and reported. A specific USAID Office, team, or individual should be assigned the responsibility for collecting the data and the name should be noted on an indicator reference sheet. This individual is also responsible for ensuring that the data are acquired by USAID in time to feed into decision-making and preparation of the annual Performance Report. Data collection methods should be consistent and comparable over time, and any changes should be documented in the PMP. Data collection requirements that could be incorporated into projects and obligation agreements with partner organizations should be identified.

Missions must ensure that all data used to report performance to Washington meet data quality standards. (See f of this section.)

- c. Disaggregate all people-level performance indicators by sex**
- d. Document known data limitations** of each performance indicator by explaining any data quality limitations and what steps will be taken to address them. Missions must ensure that all data used to report performance to Washington meet USAID data quality standards. Data reported to Washington for GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRMA) reporting purposes or for other external reports on Agency performance must have had a data quality assessment at some time within the three years before submission. The date of the most recent data quality assessment should be recorded on the indicator reference sheet in the PMP and also should be reported along with current year results in the Performance Plan and Report.
- e. Describe the data quality assessment procedures** that will be used to verify and validate the measured values of actual performance of all the performance information.
- f. Estimate the budget** for collecting, analyzing, and reporting performance data, and plan how these will be financed and implemented.
- g. Provide a calendar of performance management** tasks that the DO Team will conduct over the expected life of the DO; the calendar should contain an approximate timeline for the completion of each task. Typical performance management tasks include:
- Reviewing partner reports;
  - Conducting site visits and routine meetings;
  - Conducting Portfolio Reviews;
  - Assessing data quality (See 203.xxx);
  - Updating and revising the PMP as needed;
  - Preparing the annual Performance Report; and
  - Designing and conducting evaluations as planned and as needed.
- h. Evaluation Plan** as noted above in 203.3.xx, this should identify planned evaluations over the CDCS timeframe. Evaluation plans should include

possible evaluation questions, ideas for evaluation design and methodologies to be used.

In most cases, a complete PMP does not exceed 25 pages, excluding indicator reference sheets and appendices. DO Team files can be used to store any additional information. This Additional Help document, [TIPS Number 7, Preparing a PMP](#) provides tools and examples.

### **203.3.4 Performance Indicators for PMPs and projects**

Effective date: 01/31/2003

USAID Missions/Offices must include performance indicators in their PMPs. As defined in [ADS 200.6](#), a **performance indicator** is

A particular characteristic or dimension used to measure intended changes defined by a Results Framework or a project. Performance indicators are the basis observing progress and measuring actual results compared to expected results. Performance indicators help answer how or if USAID is progressing towards its objective(s), rather than why such progress is or is not being made (evaluations respond to the question of why or why not progress is being made). The PMP must include performance indicators for all levels of a Results Framework.

#### **203.3.4.1 Types of Performance Indicators**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated to adhere to the USAID Framework.*

**a. Quantitative and qualitative indicators.** Performance indicators may be quantitative or qualitative. DO Teams should select performance indicators for the PMP that are the most appropriate for the result being measured. For example, the result “non-traditional exports increased” could be measured using the *quantitative* indicator, “dollar value of cut-flowers exported.” The result “advocacy by civil society organizations improved” could be measured with a purely *qualitative* approach, such as using a panel of experts to assess performance by examining a set of previously agreed characteristics of “advocacy.” In most cases, however, qualitative results can be effectively measured by methods that quantify progress and mitigate subjectivity. Major types of indicators that quantify qualitative results are described below. For more information about the “Characteristics of Good Performance Indicators,” see **203.3.4.2**. USAID Missions and B/IOs should be aware that changes to the questions, scoring, or other procedures of qualitative indicators will decrease their comparability over time. The following examples show the difference between a purely qualitative indicator and qualitative measures that have been quantified:

- **Milestone Indicator:** A type of indicator that measures progress towards a desired outcome by dividing the progress into a series of defined steps. An example of a milestone indicator could come from a policy reform

activity, where the first critical milestone may be passage of a law; a second, the establishment of an oversight agency; and a third, the equitable implementation of the policy. Milestones may be used in conjunction with other types of indicators to measure progress towards a result. For additional examples, see the Additional Help document, [TIPS 14, Monitoring the Policy Reform Process](#). If a milestone plan will be used, the PMP should provide a clear definition of each step or milestone; criteria for assessing whether the step or the milestone has been achieved; and an expected timeline for when each step will be achieved.

- **Rating Scale:** A measurement device that quantifies a range of subjective responses on a single issue or single dimension of an issue. One example of a rating scale is when survey respondents are asked to provide a quantified response (such as 1 to 5) to a survey question. If DO Teams use rating scales, the PMP should provide a clear definition of how the rating scale will be implemented and how respondents should rank their answers.
- **Index:** A type of indicator that combines two or more data sources into a single measure. Indices can be useful ways to represent multiple dimensions of progress if they have been carefully developed and tested, but the final index value may be difficult to interpret and year-on-year changes may be minimal. Examples of commonly reported indices include couple years of protection (CYP) in population programs, the Corruption Perceptions Index, the Index of Economic Freedom, and the AIDS Program Effort Index (API). For additional examples, see the Additional Help documents, [TIPS 15, Measuring Institutional Capacity](#) and [TIPS 15 Annex, Measuring Institutional Capacity \(Annexes\)](#). If a DO Team develops its own index, the methodology and procedures for data collections and interpretation must be included in the PMP.

**b. Contextual indicators.** Contextual indicators measure the environment within which each DO is implemented, at the outcome or impact level. Examples include a country's gross domestic product (GDP), inflation, and HIV seroprevalence rates, which are usually beyond the management control of a DO Team. USAID Missions and B/IOs may use contextual indicators in their PMPs to illustrate and track the development environment of a country, sector, or DO, not to describe the effects or impacts of USAID activities. For reporting at the Functional Objective and Program Area levels, USAID maintains a list of indicators collected through third party sources. The trend data for these indicators is accessible through USAID's Economic and Social Database.

**c. "Standard" and "custom" indicators.** These indicators, used in the annual joint State/USAID Operational Plans and Performance Reports, are discussed in **203.3.8.3**. USAID Missions and B/IOs are encouraged to use standard indicators to the extent they are useful for performance management purposes.

### 203.3.4.2 Characteristics of Good Performance Indicators

Effective date: 09/01/2008

When choosing performance indicators, DO Teams should consider questions for each result and year of the DO, such as:

- What will be different as a result of these USAID projects and activities?
- How will we be able to recognize the desired difference?
- What will be different at the end of the current year?

DO Teams should also remember that performance indicators merely “indicate” how a DO is performing and do not necessarily tell the full story. Just because one indicator shows strong performance does not always mean the entire DO is on track. The intended DO should drive the selection of indicators, not the other way around.

When selecting PMP performance indicators, DO Teams should use the seven criteria below (abbreviated OPUDATA). It may be difficult or unrealistic to select performance indicators that meet all criteria. DO Teams should be aware of the tradeoffs between the criteria and should use the PMP to document the limitations of an indicator and the rationale for selecting the indicator. Note that these criteria apply to both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators.

- a. **Objective.** Performance indicators should be unambiguous about what is being measured. Performance indicators should be unidimensional (should measure only one aspect at a time). Performance indicators should also be precisely defined in the PMP. If an indicator is expressed as a proportion or percentage, for example, what is included in the numerator and the denominator should be stated precisely, in addition to the indicator name or label. To ensure that indicators (especially qualitative indicators) are comparable over time, USAID Missions and B/IOs should clearly define and document the indicators to permit regular, systematic, and relatively objective judgment regarding their change in value or status.
- b. **Practical.** USAID Missions and B/IOs should select performance indicators for which data can be obtained at reasonable cost and in a reasonable time.
- c. **Useful for management.** Performance indicators selected for inclusion in the PMP should be useful for the relevant level of decision-making. Where possible, it is efficient to use standard indicators from State/F’s *List of Standard Indicators* to do double-duty for country-level program management as well as for program reporting to Washington.

- d. **Direct.** Performance indicators should closely track the results they are intended to measure. If a direct indicator cannot be used because of cost or other factors, a **proxy indicator** (an indirect measure of the result that is related by one or more assumptions) may be used to measure the result. (For example, a proxy measure of household income might be the number of TV antennas or tin roofs in a given geographical area; the assumption is that an increase in household income will be associated with increased expenditure on televisions or tin roofing.) If USAID Missions and B/IOs use proxy indicators, the assumptions supporting the selection of the proxy should be documented in the PMP and confirmed on a regular basis.
- e. **Attributable to USAID/USG efforts.** Performance indicators selected for inclusion in the PMP should measure changes that are clearly and reasonably attributable to USAID (or USG, as appropriate) efforts. In the context of performance indicators and reporting, attribution exists when the outputs of USAID-financed activities have a logical and causal effect on the result(s) being measured by a given performance indicator. One way to assess attribution is to ask, “If there had been no USAID project or activity, would the measured change have been different?” If the answer is “no,” then there likely is an attribution issue, and the DO Team should look for a more suitable performance indicator. If more than one agency or government is involved in achieving a result, USAID Missions and B/IOs should describe exactly what role each played in achieving the result.
- f. **Timely.** Performance indicators should be available when they are needed to make decisions. Experience suggests that the information needed for managing activities and projects (tracking inputs and outputs) should be available on a quarterly basis. Results-level indicators may not be available more frequently than once a year. Data that are available after a delay of a year or more may be difficult to use. For information on reporting performance on the USG fiscal year versus calendar year. If a performance indicator is not available every year (such as data from the Demographic and Health Survey), the schedule should be noted as a data limitation. The USAID Mission or B/IO should also select other performance indicators, direct or proxy, which reflect DO performance and are available more regularly. For more information about proxy indicators, see section (a) above.
- g. **Adequate.** DO Teams should have as many indicators in their PMP as are necessary and cost effective for results management and reporting purposes. In most cases, two or three indicators per result should be sufficient to assess performance. In the rare instance, when a result is narrowly defined, a single indicator may be adequate. Additionally, too many indicators may be worse than too few, because all performance indicators require resources and effort to collect, analyze, report, and use.

**Additional Help Resources.** A worksheet based on these criteria is available in the Additional Help document, **Performance Management Toolkit, Worksheet 5**. For information on selecting performance indicators, see the Additional Help document, [TIPS Number 6, Selecting Performance Indicators](#)

#### **203.3.4.3 Reflecting Gender Issues in Performance Indicators**

Effective date: 04/25/2011

Men and women have different access to development programs and are affected differently by USAID activities. USAID seeks to understand these differences to improve the efficiency and overall impact of its programs so that both women and men have equitable access to development activities and their benefits.

**MANDATORY.** In order to ensure that USAID assistance makes the optimal contribution to gender equality, performance management systems and evaluations must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the technical analyses supporting an DO, project, or activity demonstrates that

- The different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the activities to be undertaken; and
- The anticipated results of the work would affect women and men differently.

Gender-sensitive indicators would include information collected from samples of beneficiaries using qualitative and quantitative methodologies or an examination of the project impact on national, regional, or local policies, programs, and practices that affect men and women.

Programs often affect men and women differently, and Missions should look for unintended consequences that may need to be addressed over the course of the project. For technical assistance and additional guidance, consult the USAID Mission/Office or Bureau gender specialist or the Office of Women in Development (WID) in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT). (See also, [Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis](#))

#### **203.3.4.4 Additional Reporting Requirements**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

Washington may have additional reporting requirements for some USAID Missions and B/IOs. Such requirements will be communicated through formal channels, such as the annual guidance for the joint Operational Plan and the joint Performance Report.

#### **\*203.3.4.5 Setting Performance Baselines and Targets**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

CDCS Guidance requires that missions set baselines and targets for Development Objective level indicators. For each indicator in a PMP, the DO Team should include performance baselines and set performance targets that are ambitious, but can realistically be achieved within the stated timeframe and with the available resources. While a solicitation instrument should include a preliminary M&E Plan, once the award is executed the project staff must complete the implementing mechanism monitoring and evaluation plan, with relevant indicators and baseline data, within the first three months and before major project implementation actions get underway. These M&E plans must be approved by the AOR/COR.

As defined in [ADS 200.6](#), a **performance baseline** is:

The value of a performance indicator before the implementation of USAID-supported projects or activities that contribute to the achievement of the relevant result.

Baseline values should be measured using the same data collection source and method that will be used to collect data throughout the life of a DO. If baseline data cannot be collected until later in the course of a DO, the DO Team should document when and how the baseline data will be collected on the indicator reference sheet in the PMP.

As defined in [ADS 200.6](#), a **performance target** is the:

Specific, planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe with a given level of resources.

Missions should set targets for the end of the DO time period and may set targets for the interim years in between. (Yearly targets are required for the standard indicators reported to Washington in the annual Performance Plan and Report).

Targets should be ambitious, but achievable given USAID (and other donor) inputs. Missions should be willing to be held accountable for achieving their targets. On the other hand, targets that are set too low are also not useful for management and reporting purposes. Missions should plan ahead for the analysis and interpretation of actual performance data against performance targets.

#### **203.3.4.6 Updating PMPs**

Effective date: 01/31/2003

Usually, as part of the USAID Mission and B/IO's Annual Portfolio Review process, DO Teams should update PMPs regularly with new performance information as DOs develop and evolve.

#### **203.3.4.7 Changing Performance Indicators**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

During project implementation, Missions may need to change or drop PMP performance indicators. For example, there may be changes in program priorities or budgetary decisions that affect the scope/geographic focus of the DO which would require the use of indicators different from those originally selected. Indicators may need to be adjusted, if the indicators prove to be unsuitable, for example, if the effort and cost needed to collect them become excessive. Indicators may also be added as lessons are learned about project dynamics during implementation and through evaluations. Missions should note that changing performance indicators can compromise the comparability of performance data over time. This is a particularly critical issue for indicators at the DO or outcome level.

It should be clear that the caution about changing indicators refers to all levels of results in a Results Framework. As explained and illustrated in Figure 203A, it is expected that over the life-cycle of a project, different types of indicators will be more useful at different times: in the early stages, output indicators are likely to be the primary source of performance information, while at later stages outcome and impact indicators will become more important. The full set of indicators should be specified at the outset, and even indicators that are subsequently dropped—because they are unsatisfactory or no longer used because their targets have been met—should be retained for reference in PMP records.

Because USAID Missions/Offices generally have the authority to approve changes to PMP performance indicators, Missions are responsible for documenting these changes while updating their PMPs. At the level of an award, the AOR/COR documents and approves changes to the implementing partner's monitoring and evaluation plan, with appropriate input from DO Team members and project staff. The DO Team/Office should note the reason(s) for the change, along with final values for all old indicators and baseline values for any new indicators.

**Exception.** USAID Missions/Offices must consult with the Bureau of Global Health before making changes to any HIV/AIDS or malaria program performance indicators. The annual Performance Report guidance may provide additional instructions on indicators that are used for the Agency's Annual Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report or the Congressional Budget Justification. Similarly Missions/Offices implementing Presidential Initiatives should contact the relevant parties before making any changes.

### **203.3.5 Data Quality**

Effective date: 01/31/2003

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

There is always a trade-off between the cost and the quality of data. USAID Missions and B/IOs and DO Teams should balance these two factors to ensure that the data used are of sufficiently high quality to support the appropriate level of management decisions. Performance data should be as complete and consistent as management needs and resources permit.

### 203.3.5.1 Data Quality Standards

Effective date: 01/31/2003

To be useful for performance management and credible for reporting, USAID Mission/Offices and Missions should ensure that the performance data in the PMP for each DO meet five data quality standards (abbreviated VIPRT). When this is not the case, the known data limitations and plans to address them should be documented in the indicator reference sheet in the PMP.

Note that the same data quality standards apply to quantitative and qualitative performance data.

- a) **Validity.** Data should clearly and adequately represent the intended result. While proxy data may be used, the DO Team must consider how well the data measure the intended result. Another key issue is whether data reflect a bias such as interviewer bias, unrepresentative sampling, or transcription bias.
- b) **Integrity.** Data that are collected, analyzed, and reported should have established mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that they are intentionally manipulated for political or personal reasons. Data integrity is at greatest risk of being compromised during data collection and analysis.
- c) **Precision.** Data should be sufficiently precise to present a fair picture of performance and enable management decision-making at the appropriate levels. One key issue is whether data are at an appropriate level of detail to inform management decisions. A second key issue is what margin of error (the amount of variation normally expected from a given data collection process) is acceptable given the management and resource decisions likely to be affected. In all cases, the margin of error should be less than the intended change. For example, if the margin of error is 10 percent and the data show a change of 5 percent, the USAID Mission/Office will have difficulty determining whether the change was can be attributed to USAID activity or is a function of lack of precision in the data collection and tabulation process. USAID Missions/Offices should be aware that improving the precision of data often has time and financial resource implications.
- d) **Reliability.** Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods from over time. The key issue is whether different analysts would come to the same conclusions if the data collection and analysis processes were repeated. USAID Missions/Offices should be confident that progress toward performance targets reflects real changes rather than variations in data collection methods. When data collection and analysis methods change, the PMP should be updated.
- e) **Timeliness.** Data should be timely enough to influence management decision-making at the appropriate levels. One key issue is whether the data

are available frequently enough to influence the appropriate level of management decisions. A second key issue is whether data are current enough when they become available.

For further discussion, see USAID Information Quality Guidelines and related material on the Information Quality Act in [ADS 578](#) and at [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/).

### **203.3.5.2 Purpose of Data Quality Assessments**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

The purpose of a data quality assessment is to ensure that the USAID Mission/Office and DO Team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the data, as determined by applying the five data quality standards, and are aware of the extent to which the data integrity can be trusted to influence management decisions.

**MANDATORY:** Data reported to Washington for Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) reporting purposes or for reporting externally on Agency performance must have had a data quality assessment at some time within the three years before submission. USAID Missions/Offices may choose to conduct data quality assessments more frequently if needed. USAID Missions/Offices are not required to conduct data quality assessments for data that are not reported to USAID/Washington. Managers are not required to do data quality assessments on all performance indicators that they use. However, managers should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of all indicators.

### **203.3.5.3 Conducting Data Quality Assessments**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

USAID Missions and B/IOs collect data from a variety of sources, some of which are more reliable than others. The rigor of data quality assessments depends on the kind of source and the level of control that USAID has over the data. For all sources, the process described in point a below should be followed. Additional considerations depending on the source of data are discussed in points b and c below.

#### **a. General guidance for USAID Mission and B/IO data quality assessments.**

- Verify that data are of reasonable quality, based on the five data quality standards. Note that the same data quality standards cover quantitative and qualitative performance data.
- Review data collection, maintenance, and processing procedures to ensure that the procedures are consistently applied and continue to be adequate. Identify areas for improvement if possible.
- Retain documentation of the assessment in the DO Team's performance management files and update the information within three

years. Documentation should describe whether the five data quality standards have been met for relevant indicators and can be captured in a memorandum.

**b. Quality assessments of data from implementing partners and secondary data sources.** When DO Teams conduct assessments of quality of data from secondary sources (including implementing partners, government counterparts, and international agencies), they should focus the data quality assessment on the apparent accuracy and consistency of the data. In many cases, the data are not under USAID control and the USAID Mission or B/IO, therefore, may not have the right to audit or investigate the quality of data in depth. Ways to conduct the assessment are described below.

- In many cases, DO Teams can compare central office records and the records kept at a field site(s). DO Teams should consider visiting a broad range of sites; the point is to assess whether reports accurately reflect what occurs in the field. Note that requests for proposals for contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants should usually include standards for data quality in the reporting requirements.
- If the secondary data come from periodic reports or service statistics, the DO Team should review the data to ensure that what is being reported is accurate. The DO team can conduct regular meetings with other development partners to gain an appreciation of how accurate the data are and how much credence can be placed in the figures cited. The DO Team can request a briefing on the data collection and analysis procedures, including procedures to reduce error.
- If a DO Team provides technical assistance to a government ministry to improve data collection and analysis, the team may be in a good position to assess the quality of the data.
- The data quality assessment findings should be documented in a memo to the file.

**c. Additional considerations for conducting quality assessments of data collected directly by USAID (primary data).** When DO Teams collect primary data on their own or through independent entities contracted by USAID for this purpose, the data quality assessment should focus on the written procedures and training for crosschecking data. DO Teams should consult experts in data collection methodology to avoid some of the more common pitfalls.

If a DO team contracts a specific organization to collect data, the team should ensure that the organization has the technical capacity to collect data of appropriate quality, as evidenced by the following:

- Written procedures are in place for data collection;
- Data are collected from year to year using a consistent collection process;
- Data are collected using methods to address and minimize sampling and non-sampling errors;
- Data are collected by qualified personnel and personnel are properly supervised;
- Duplicate data are detected;
- Safeguards are in place to prevent unauthorized changes to the data; and
- Source documents are maintained and readily available.

The DO team should include data quality requirements in any Statement of Work (SOW), Request for Proposal (RFP), or Request for Application (RFA). The DO team should also maintain communication with the implementation partners to spot check that quality assurance mechanisms are being used. (Note that if a DO team procures these services from a centrally managed contract, the central office managing the contract should ensure that the contractor establishes and maintains quality control over its data collection and analysis.)

#### **203.3.5.4 Monitoring in High Threat Environments**

Effective date: 10/01/2008

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs) are responsible for seeing that the contractors and grantees they manage are performing adequately and accomplishing the tasks they set out to achieve. In high threat environments, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes the need to keep Mission personnel safe, as well as the need to visit project sites and meet with beneficiaries of development assistance.

##### **a) Definition**

As described in [ADS 200.6](#), a high threat environment is a country, city, area, sub-region or region in which USAID is hindered in accomplishing its mission due to security risks, such as:

- 1) Specific targeting of U.S. interests,
- 2) A favorable operating environment for terrorist groups,

- 3) Intelligence indicating that a threat is imminent, or
- 4) Other significant risk as identified by the Office of Security (USAID/SEC), the Regional Security Officer (RSO), or other appropriate U.S. Government (USG) official, in consultation with the RSO.

Such risks usually result in reduced ability to mobilize staff in the field.

**MANDATORY:** Regional Bureau Assistant Administrators may recommend at any time that a USAID Mission be designated as "a high threat environment" using the definition above. The relevant Regional Bureau Assistant Administrator must submit the recommendation with justification in writing to the USAID Administrator with clearances from the Office of Security (SEC) and the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (COO). The Administrator either approves or disapproves the designation. Through the General Notices, the COO is responsible for publicizing in a timely manner the initial designation of a Mission as having "a high threat environment." SEC is responsible for maintaining a comprehensive list of all Missions with high threat environments, including the date of initial designation as a high threat environment. SEC will review this list annually and make recommendations to the Regional Bureau for any changes. Regional Bureau Assistant Administrators may request the removal of a Mission from this list at any time following the same procedures described above for designation. Missions designated on the High Threat Environment List may use one or more of the alternative monitoring methods described below to ensure sufficient USAID oversight of activities.

#### **b) Alternative Monitoring Methods**

USAID Development Objective (DO) Teams managing activities in high threat environments may, in consultation with the responsible Contracting Officer's Technical Representative or Development Officer (COTR/DO), utilize one or more of the following methods, as appropriate to local conditions, as a basis for approving deliverables and performance reports:

- 1) Require Photographic Evidence:** Federal and Agency regulations allow USAID to request visuals as part of implementers' periodic performance reports when the COTR can not make site visits. The COTR/DO, in consultation with Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Development (OAA/Washington), will insert a provision into the solicitation and resulting award that requires the contractor or recipient to submit photographic evidence of accomplishments with their periodic performance reports, according to specifications appropriate to the activity. Existing awards will need to be modified. The COTR will review the photographs, triangulate this information with expected results and performance reports, and keep it as well as the COTR's analysis in the award file. USAID may require contractors to report more frequently than quarterly, if necessary for the Agency to properly monitor the contractor's performance (see AIDAR 742.11). For Development awards, to the extent deemed appropriate by the responsible Agreement Officer, if reporting is required more often than quarterly, the Operating Unit will comply with the

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) (see [22 CFR 226.51\(h\)](#)), which states that USAID shall comply with clearance requirements of 5 CFR part 1320, which is the PRA, when requesting performance data from recipients.

**2) Utilize Local and/or Third Party Monitoring:** Operating Units may contract with local and/or third parties to monitor activities and verify results. Quarterly reporting formats should be updated to reflect additional information that enables third party monitoring. Local or third parties may include Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), located in Missions or in close proximity as advisable; local accounting firms; think tanks; and universities - particularly those that received or are receiving USAID assistance.

Operating Units may be able to supplement reports and data through discussions with host-country government officials.

**3) Engage Other USG Agencies:** Operating Units may work closely with and enlist the Development of other USG Agencies or Departments working in the region, such as the Department of Defense's Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, to monitor in areas where civilian USG personnel are not free to travel. For example, such Development may be provided by RSOs and the U.S. military.

**4) Use Other Technology for Consultation or Oversight:** When it is not possible to travel to meet local partners at project or event sites, Operating Units may use various technological means to enable consultations and verification.

**5) Establish Flexible Targets and Results:** If a high threat environment makes it impossible to set the end-of-project results targets in the contract or agreement, the COTR/DO, in consultation with OAA/W, may allow contractors or grantees to propose to report on annual results and to establish quarterly targets for USAID approval. This provision must only be undertaken with the approval of the responsible COTR/DO and under contract types that allow this flexibility.

**6) Delegate Cooperation -** In addition to sharing reports and data with other donors, including other USG Agencies, bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, public international organizations, the private sector, and philanthropies, Operating Units also may be able to take advantage of situations where one donor (a "lead" donor), may be delegated authority to act on behalf of one or more other donors (the "delegating" donors). The level and form of delegation vary, ranging from responsibility for one element of a project cycle to a complete sector program or even country program. However, Operating Units and COTRs/DOs must comply with applicable Agency policy for designating the COTR for implementing instruments that include this Alternative Monitoring Method (see ADS 302 and 303). (See **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Committee (DAC) Harmonising**

## Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery, Chapter 6, "Delegated Cooperation").

Careful consideration must be given to the appropriateness of the above Alternative Monitoring Methods to local conditions. Likewise, informed planning, using flexibility and creativity to assess how to best gather information in light of local conditions, is essential. COTR/DOs, DO Teams (i.e., Program Managers, COTRs) must anticipate and plan in the earliest stages for additional costs and unique contract and Development provisions due to the need for Alternative Monitoring Methods. To give just one example, if balancing safety concerns posed by the use of local commercial airlines, Operating Units may make use of charter flight day trips to areas of implementation. During the planning and implementation phases, project management teams need to engage in realistic target-setting and/or revision to existing targets. Their files should include documentation of the impact of high threat environments on data quality. When assessing potential vulnerabilities, consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, the Regional Legal Advisor, and/or the Office of the Inspector General may be appropriate.

### 203.3.6 Portfolio Reviews

Effective date: 01/31/2003

*\*This section is under review and will be updated.*

**MANDATORY.** USAID Missions and B/IOs must conduct at least one Portfolio Review each year that covers all activities included in their various programs.

As defined in [ADS 200.6](#), a **Portfolio Review** is:

A periodic review of all aspects of a USAID Mission or B/IO's DOs, projects, and activities, often held prior to preparing the annual joint Operational Plan.

A Portfolio Review examines strategic and operational issues and determines whether USAID-supported activities are leading to the results outlined in the approved Results Framework. The Portfolio Review should bring together various expertise and points of view to determine whether the DO is "on track" or if new actions are needed to improve the chances of achieving results. Portfolio Reviews should lead to management decisions about the implementation of the DO and feed back into planning and achieving processes. If a USAID Mission or B/IO identifies significant deficiencies or problems during the Portfolio Review, it may need to alter, increase, or discontinue activities and rethink the logic behind the original expectations.

There is no single prescribed structure or process for conducting Portfolio Reviews. USAID Missions and B/IOs may define standard procedures that are judged useful for their program. Many USAID Missions and B/IOs find it particularly useful to conduct a Portfolio Review prior to preparing the annual joint Operational Plan. USAID Missions and B/IOs may conduct a Portfolio Review as a single event or may break the Portfolio

Review into several parts conducted at different times of year. In most cases, designated staff should analyze a variety of program-related information and prepare issues for discussion in a larger group forum that includes members of the DO team, the broader USAID Mission or B/IO, and other knowledgeable members of the USG Operating Unit as appropriate. DO Teams should maintain the documents produced for Portfolio Reviews, including summaries of issues discussed and decisions made, as part of the team files, as provided in [ADS 202](#).

### **203.3.6.1 Issues to Address During a Portfolio Review**

Effective date: 01/31/2003

USAID Missions and B/IOs and DO Teams should examine the following items as part of their Portfolio Review process:

- Progress towards achievement of the DO during the past year and expectations regarding future progress;
- Evidence that projects/activities are adequately supporting the relevant Intermediate Result(s) (IRs) and ultimately contributing to the achievement of the DO;
- Adequacy of inputs for producing planned outputs;
- Adequacy of the performance indicators selected in the PMP;
- Status and timeliness of input mobilization (such as receipt of new funding, procurement processes, agreement negotiations, and staff deployments);
- Progress on the Annual Procurement Plan;
- Status of critical assumptions and causal relationships defined in the Results Framework, along with the related implications for performance;
- Status of cross-cutting themes and/or synergies between DOs;
- Status of related partner efforts that contribute to the achievement of IRs and DOs;
- Pipeline levels and future resource requirements, compliance with forward funding guidance, or any need for de-obligation;
- DO team effectiveness and adequacy of staffing; and
- Vulnerability issues, related corrective efforts, and their costs.

### **203.3.6.2 Illustrative Questions for Portfolio Review**

Effective date: 03/19/2004

The following figures (Figures 203C, 203D, and 203E) provide illustrative questions that may be used to plan and conduct Portfolio Reviews. Other questions may be relevant and useful to address.

**Figure 203C, Illustrative Program and Project-Level Issues to Address During Portfolio Reviews**

Areas of Concern	Suggested Questions
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are the desired results being achieved?</li> <li>▪ Are the results within USAID's manageable interest?</li> <li>▪ Will planned targets be met?</li> <li>▪ Is the performance management system in place adequate to capture data on the achievement of results?</li> <li>▪ Is progress being made toward addressing gender equality and women's empowerment?</li> <li>▪ Have additional resources been leveraged?</li> <li>▪ What program synergies have developed with other partners including the host country?</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are planned results being achieved on schedule?</li> <li>▪ Are the outputs leading to the achievement of the desired results as anticipated?</li> </ul>
<b>Inputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are the necessary inputs being provided on schedule by USAID and/or its customers/partners?</li> <li>▪ Are inputs relevant and effective in producing the desired outputs?</li> <li>▪ Are funding pipelines adequate to finance activities until new funds become available for obligation?</li> <li>▪ If there are significant differences between planned and actual expenditures, do they point to potentially problematic delays or cost overruns?</li> <li>▪ Is de-obligation of funds needed at this time?</li> </ul>
<b>Development Hypothesis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has the logic identified in the development hypothesis in the Results Framework been found to hold true?</li> <li>▪ If not, what adjustments, if any, are needed to the approach?</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Assumptions Inherent in Results Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do the assumptions stated in the Results Framework still hold true?</li> <li>▪ If not, what effect does this have on the DO and its expected results?</li> <li>▪ What innovation can be brought to bear to address any issues?</li> </ul>
<b>Non-USAID Circumstances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are there situations or circumstances beyond USAID control and influence, other than the identified critical assumptions, affecting USAID activities?</li> <li>▪ If so, what are they, and what are the effects on USAID activities?</li> <li>▪ How can they be addressed?</li> </ul>
<b>Interface between Tactics and Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At the current rate of progress, is USAID on track to achieve the results that have been targeted in the future?</li> <li>▪ Were significant problems or issues identified in their early stages in order to take corrective action, or are they dealt with after major problems have occurred?</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What lessons emerged during implementation that should be shared within the USAID operating unit, Agency-wide, with the host country and other development partners?</li> </ul>

**Figure 203D, Illustrative Performance Issues to Address During Portfolio Reviews**

<b>Areas of Concern</b>	<b>Suggested Questions</b>
<b>Indicators and Targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are the performance indicators appropriate for management needs?</li> <li>▪ Are the established indicators being monitored regularly?</li> <li>▪ Will USAID be able to attribute progress in the indicator to USAID?</li> <li>▪ Were the set targets realistic?</li> <li>▪ If not, what targets are more appropriate?</li> <li>▪ Do performance data meet quality standards for reporting?</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have any evaluations been completed to fill performance information gaps?</li> <li>▪ Is the information from prior evaluations informing decisions and action on relevant activities?</li> <li>▪ Are new evaluations needed to influence future decisions?</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do team members have clear roles and responsibilities and adequate authority for implementing activities?</li> <li>▪ Is the team receiving adequate support from other organizational units?</li> <li>▪ Is the team regularly involving non-USAID members in information sharing and decision-making?</li> <li>▪ Is staffing of the team adequate?</li> <li>▪ Are any changes to roles or new team members needed?</li> <li>▪ Are sub-teams (if there are any) functioning adequately?</li> </ul>
<b>Customer/Partner Perceptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are customer/partner expectations and needs being regularly assessed?</li> <li>▪ Are customers/partners involved in the performance management and assessing effort?</li> <li>▪ Are there new gender issues that the DO Team needs to take into account?</li> <li>▪ What opportunities do customers have to obtain information and to provide ongoing feedback to USAID on priorities and activity implementation?</li> <li>▪ Are faith-based and community organizations and/or leaders participating?</li> <li>▪ Are there opportunities to develop public private partnerships?</li> </ul>

**Figure 203E, Illustrative Vulnerability/ Risk Mitigation Issues to Address During Portfolio Reviews**

<b>Areas of Concern</b>	<b>Suggested Questions</b>
<b>Financial Vulnerability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do recipient institutions meet financial management and accountability standards?</li> <li>▪ Are the funds received from USAID being handled properly?</li> <li>▪ Are previously identified financial problem areas being corrected?</li> </ul>
<b>Other Vulnerability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are activities in compliance with any applicable legal or legislative restrictions?</li> <li>▪ Are potential conflict of interest or procurement integrity issues being adequately managed?</li> <li>▪ Are activities in compliance with the environmental impact mitigation provisions of the 22 CFR 216 environmental determinations, as provided in ADS 204 and 201.3.12.2b?</li> </ul>

Areas of Concern	Suggested Questions
<b>Audit Readiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have Data Quality Assessments been conducted on all indicators reported to Washington?</li> <li>▪ Are filing systems and documentation adequate to establish an audit trail?</li> <li>▪ Are approval authorities and procedures clear and being followed?</li> <li>▪ Has the necessary post-obligation documentation been developed (for example, financial and substantive tracking)?</li> <li>▪ Do the performance data and reported information represent real progress?</li> </ul>

### **203.3.6.3 Documenting a Portfolio Review**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

USAID Missions/Offices should fully document the issues raised, the conclusions reached, and the next steps that the Portfolio Review recommended. The subsequent Portfolio Review should review the previous reviews and determine whether the recommendations were implemented and with what effect. Portfolio Review documentation may also assist USAID Missions/Offices in preparing for Intensive Program Reviews.

### **\*203.3.7 Operating Unit Annual Performance Report**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

The Program Cycle culminates in stock-taking of development results and in reporting those results to Washington annually in the Performance Plan and Report.

Each USAID Mission/Office in the field must prepare a yearly Performance Plan and Report (PPR) in collaboration with other USG agencies and under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador. Washington-based USAID Offices also prepare these reports.

#### **\*203.3.7.1 Purpose of the Performance Plan and Report**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Assuring transparency in programs and in performance reporting is an important goal of foreign assistance. Information from the Performance Plan and Report helps meet statutory requirements and management needs in compliance with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. The PPR collects data on many different aspects of foreign assistance for many stakeholders. The Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance (F) uses PPR data and narratives to develop externally required documents such as the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ), the Annual Performance Report (APR)/Annual Performance Plan (APP), and the Joint Summary Report on Performance and Financial information (formerly known as the Citizens Report). Other groups within USAID and the Department of State also use the PPR as a data collection platform to fulfill specific data needs.

Yearly, State/F drafts guidance for the PPR soliciting input from USAID and other concerned agencies and determines the submission schedule for these documents. For additional information on the PPR, and the Foreign Assistance Framework/Standardized Program Structure Definitions, see [ADS 200](#).

#### **\*203.3.7.2 Performance Report and Reporting Year**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

For purposes of the annual Performance Plan and Report, OUs report on foreign assistance results realized during the fiscal year (for example October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012) and set targets for results projected in the next three fiscal years. In the case of this example, these would be FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

USAID Missions/Offices should use the U.S. fiscal year (October through September) for all reporting purposes. If data are available on a quarterly basis from partners, host countries, or other agencies, the annual figures must be recalculated to reflect the U.S. fiscal year. If performance data are not available on a quarterly basis and also are not available on the U.S. fiscal year, the local fiscal year or calendar year may be used, but should be reported in the “data limitations” as not conforming to the U.S. fiscal year. If point data are used (such as Demographic and Health or other survey data), the date of the survey must be provided. These data must be reported in the fiscal year when the findings were first available, not the date of the survey itself.

#### **\*203.3.7.3 Performance Report, Other USAID Mission/Office Reporting and Data Quality**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

**Performance Report Data.** USAID Missions/Offices must have conducted a data quality assessment within the past three years for all performance data reported to Washington.

**Other USAID Mission/Office Reporting.** The same data quality assessment standards apply to any data reported to USAID/Washington that will be used to report externally on Agency performance.

**Exception:** The responsible USAID Bureau may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis with clearance from PPL/LER.

#### **203.3.7.4 Performance Report and Environmental Requirements**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

**MANDATORY:** Each Operating Unit must include a brief summary sentence of the status of compliance with 22 CFR 216 in the Operating Unit Performance Summary and must complete the Supplementary Reference: *Environmental Compliance template* in the FACTS system.

Environmental soundness is an important criterion for all Agency programs. As part of meeting the pre-obligation requirements described in [ADS 201](#), the potential environmental impact of programs or projects must be reviewed. In some cases, the environmental review may identify environmental impact mitigation measures that must be followed during implementation. If activities implemented to support a DO do not adequately address required mitigation measures, the DO is likely to be out of compliance with USG environmental regulations. If a USAID DO is not in compliance with regulations, the USAID Mission/Office must document this in the Performance Report and identify steps needed to ensure compliance. Problems or delays in ensuring compliance must be considered when making an overall judgment as to whether a DO is meeting targets.

**\*203.3.7.5 Evaluation Reporting in PPR**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

Operating Units are required to submit an inventory of evaluations conducted during the previous year in each year's Performance Plan and Report in the Evaluation Registry. This is in addition to the requirement to submit all evaluations to the Development Experience Clearinghouse.

**203.3.8 Reporting Requirements for Projects Not Managed by Country-Based USDH Staff**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

USAID-funded programs or projects that are not managed by country-based USDH USAID staff are reported through the Performance Reports of Regional Platforms or USAID Washington and are subject to the procedures above.

**203.3.9 Intensive Program Reviews**

Effective date: 01/31/2003

**MANDATORY.** USAID Regional Bureaus must conduct intensive program reviews of each USAID Mission and B/IO or program for which the Bureau is responsible at least once every three years. Bureaus may conduct such program reviews more often if necessary.

The purpose of the program review is:

- (1) To examine thoroughly how each of the Mission and B/IO's DOs is proceeding;
- (2) To provide an opportunity for Washington Bureaus to examine planned and actual progress toward results set forth in the Results Framework and Performance Management Plan for each DO; and
- (3) To advise on proposed course corrections in order to improve program outcomes and impact, and to review future resource requirements for each DO.

Each Bureau may develop its own procedures for intensive program reviews, but Bureaus should include AID/A/COO/PAC, M/MPBP/PERF, GC, the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), and other Regional and Pillar Bureaus in the review process, as necessary. Bureaus should determine what documentation would be useful and relevant to examine program performance and strategic choices. Useful documents may include the planning parameters for the development of a long term country plan (see [ADS 201](#)); the approved strategy; Results Frameworks and Performance Management Plans used in the USAID Operating Unit or program; Portfolio Review documents; major evaluations and assessments; and Performance Reports prepared since the previous program review.

### **203.3.10 Development Objective Close Out Reports**

Effective date: 09/01/2008

**MANDATORY.** DO Teams must produce a brief close out report for each of their DOs when the DO is either completed or terminated. Termination includes situations where some of the program elements and related activities may be continued under a new program, but where the original program is no longer being pursued and funded. Termination does not include situations where a program is simply being amended and continues to be funded. Consult the program office in the responsible Bureau to determine the applicability of these requirements.

The program close out report should be submitted to the relevant Regional Bureau Program Offices and to the Development Experience Clearinghouse.

The intended audience for the DO close out report includes development professionals in USAID and partner organizations that seek to learn from broader Agency experience and apply this experience in planning or assessing other development efforts. The DO close out report should summarize overall experience in achieving intended results as well as provide references to related materials and sources of information. Most DO close out reports contain five to ten pages of text, followed by supplemental annexes with more detailed information or references. DO close out reports should include:

1. Basic identifying information, such as DO name, number as applicable, approval date, and geographic area (country[ies] and region[s] assisted);
2. The total cost of the DO by USAID (or USG as applicable) funding account, actual or estimated counterpart contributions, and the best available estimate of other partner resources that contributed to results achievement;
3. The principal implementing partners (including those with whom USAID obligated or sub-obligated funds and those who may have received funding from other sources);
4. A summary of overall impact at the DO level and the Intermediate Results level in relation to what was originally planned;

5. Significant changes in the Results Framework during the life of the DO;
6. A summary of projects used to implement the DO and their major outputs and outcomes;
7. Prospects for long-term sustainability of impact and principal threats to sustainability;
8. Lessons learned for application to other USAID projects, including follow-on projects in the same country or sector and similar projects in other countries or sectors;
9. A summary of performance indicators used and an assessment of their relative usefulness for performance management and reporting;
10. A list of evaluations and special studies conducted during the life of the DO, including Performance Reports;
11. A list of instrument close out reports prepared for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements; and
12. Names and contact point of individuals who were directly involved in various phases of the DO (planning, achieving, and assessing and learning), and who would be good sources of additional information.

**\*203.3.11 Development Experience Clearinghouse**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

USAID Missions/Offices must share key USAID-managed DO documents, where available, with the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), an Agency-wide service for the submission, storage, and sharing of documentation. USAID documents should be sent in electronic form to <http://dec.usaid.gov>, then click on Submit Reports, E-mail: [docsubmit@usaid.gov](mailto:docsubmit@usaid.gov).

To support the broader Agency learning process, if they exist, the following documents should be submitted:

1. Evaluation reports, DO assessments, and studies;
2. Contractor/grantee technical reports, publications, and final reports;
3. USAID-funded conference/workshop proceedings and reports;
4. DO Close Out reports; and
5. USAID Mission/Offices Close Out (“graduation”) reports.

**\*203.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

**\*203.4.1 External Mandatory References**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

The external mandatory references are listed below. Due to the interrelated nature of ADS chapters 200-203, please also consult the list of references in [ADS 200](#) and [201](#).

- a. [The Government Performance and Results Act \(GPRA\) of 1993 \(P.L. 103-62\)](#)
- b. [The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 \(P.L. 111- 352\)](#)
- c. [5 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1320, “Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public”](#)
- d. [22 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 216, “Environmental Procedures”](#)
- e. [22 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 226.51, “Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance”](#)
- f. [Section 7060\(a\) and \(f\), “Programs to Promote Gender Equality,” of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act of 2012 \(P.L. 112-74\)](#)

**\*203.4.2 Internal Mandatory References**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

The internal mandatory reference documents mentioned in this ADS chapter are listed below. Due to the interrelated nature of ADS Chapters 200-203, please also consult the comprehensive list of documents in [ADS 200.4.2](#).

- a. [Contract Information Bulletin \(CIB\) 99-17, Organizational Conflict of Interest](#)
- b. [Guidance on the New Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting System Requirements for HIV/AIDS](#)
- c. [Non-Presence Programming Procedures](#)
- d. [USAID Evaluation Policy](#)

**\*203.5 ADDITIONAL HELP**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

The Additional Help documents mentioned in this ADS chapter are listed below. Due to the interrelated nature of ADS chapters 200-203, please also consult the comprehensive list of documents in [ADS 200.5](#).

203 ADDITIONAL HELP TITLE	AVAILABLE AT
Evaluation SOW Checklist	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html</a> .
Evaluation SOWs: Good Practice Examples	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/EvaluationSOW-GoodPracticeExamples.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/EvaluationSOW-GoodPracticeExamples.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 01, Conducting a Participatory Evaluation	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABS539.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABS539.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 02, Conducting Key Informant Interviews	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABS541.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABS541.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 03, Preparing an Evaluation Scope of Work	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-PreparinganEvaluationStatementofWork.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-PreparinganEvaluationStatementofWork.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 04, Using Direct Observation Techniques	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABY208.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABY208.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 05, Using Rapid Appraisal Methods	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-UsingRapidAppraisalMethods.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-UsingRapidAppraisalMethods.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 06, Selecting Performance Indicators	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-SelectingPerformanceIndicators.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-SelectingPerformanceIndicators.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 07, Preparing a PMP	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABY215.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABY215.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 8, Baselines and Targets	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-BaselinesandTargets.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-BaselinesandTargets.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 10, Conducting Focus Group Interviews	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABY233.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABY233.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 12, Data Quality Standards	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-DataQualityStandards.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-DataQualityStandards.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 14, Monitoring the Policy Reform Process	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACA949.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACA949.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 15, Measuring Institutional Capacity	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACG612.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACG612.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 15 Annexes, Measuring Institutional Capacity	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACG624.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACG624.pdf</a>

203 ADDITIONAL HELP TITLE	AVAILABLE AT
TIPS Number 16, Conducting Mixed-Method Evaluations	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-ConductingMixedMethodEvaluations.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-ConductingMixedMethodEvaluations.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 17, Constructing an Evaluation Report	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-ConstructinganEvaluationReport.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-ConstructinganEvaluationReport.pdf</a>
Expanded Response Guide to Core Indicators for Monitoring and Reporting on HIV/AIDS Programs	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/200sbk.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/200sbk.pdf</a>
Guide To Gender Integration and Analysis	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/201sab.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/201sab.pdf</a>
Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnacc390.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnacc390.pdf</a>
Handbook of Indicators for HIV/AIDS/STI Programs	<a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACK416.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACK416.pdf</a>
TIPS Number 18, Conducting Data Quality Assessments	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-ConductingDataQualityAssessments.pdf">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/documents/TIPS-ConductingDataQualityAssessments.pdf</a>
UNAIDS National AIDS Programmes: A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation	<a href="http://www.unaids.org/en/policyandpractice/monitoringandevaluation/default.asp">http://www.unaids.org/en/policyandpractice/monitoringandevaluation/default.asp</a>
UNAIDS/UNGASS: Monitoring Country Progress	<a href="http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/CountryProgress/Default.asp">http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/CountryProgress/Default.asp</a>

The additional help Web sites (links) and e-mail addresses mentioned in this ADS chapter are summarized below.

ADS SECTION	DESCRIPTION	AVAILABLE AT
203.3.6	EvalWeb, a website containing resources for program evaluation and assessment	<a href="http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html">http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html</a>

ADS SECTION	DESCRIPTION	AVAILABLE AT
203.3.12	M/CIO/KM, website to submit, search, and review documents submitted to Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)	<a href="http://dec.usaid.gov">http://dec.usaid.gov</a>
203.3.2	A collaborative resource for supporting the Program Cycle/	<a href="http://programnet.usaid.gov/evaluation">http://programnet.usaid.gov/evaluation</a>

**\*203.6 DEFINITIONS**

Effective date: 01/17/2012

See comprehensive list contained in [ADS 200.6](#).

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