



Regional Development Cooperation Strategy for Asia 2014-2018



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent decades, Asia's tremendous economic growth has lifted millions of people out of poverty, malnutrition, and disease at rates unprecedented in human history. Yet, Asia's growth model relies heavily on an unsustainable use of resources and has created growing inequalities that undermine the region's future economic growth. Climate change and dense urban populations place additional pressures on Asia's capacity to produce goods and energy, and weak institutional frameworks and services for vulnerable populations mean that many people do not participate fully in Asia's growth.

USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) is uniquely positioned to help connect, convene, and catalyze Asia's expertise and capital to find solutions to these substantial development challenges. RDMA will concentrate on transboundary problems that cannot be solved at the national level, with a primary focus on the countries of the Lower Mekong, where disparities are greatest.

The overall goal of RDMA's five-year strategy (2014-2018) is "A More Sustainable, Inclusive, and Prosperous Asia, with Particular Emphasis on Southeast Asia." To help Asia achieve this goal, RDMA will increase regional institutions' abilities to promote sustainable and inclusive growth, and enable vulnerable populations to help address and adapt to risks that transcend borders. Development programs will strengthen the region's management of natural capital (environment), regional integration, good governance, capacity to mitigate public health threats, rights of specific vulnerable populations, and people's ability to adapt to climate change. Throughout all of the programs, RDMA will apply three Smart Development Screens—science and technology, partnering, and gender equality and female empowerment—to increase the effectiveness of development interventions.

In addition to the development objectives and more traditional regional programs, RDMA will strengthen its role as the Agency's premier regional learning and support platform to advance partnerships and promote greater use of evidence-based and innovative approaches.

RDMA will contribute to the Agency's mission to "partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies" through its focus on inclusive growth and vulnerable populations (including human rights).

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARTC	Asia Regional Training Center
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASIA/SPO	Office of Strategy, Program, and Operations, Asia Bureau, USAID
ASIA/TS	Office of Technical Support, Asia Bureau, USAID
AusAID	former Australian Agency for International Development, now Australian Aid; see DFAT below
CIDA	former Canadian International Development Agency; see FATDC below
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
DO	Development Objective
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific
EST	Ecosystems and Trade
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FATDC	Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
FTF	Feed the Future
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
G2G	Government-to-Government
HESN	Higher Education Solutions Network
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	Intermediate Result
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LEDS	Low Emission Development Strategy
LMI	Lower Mekong Initiative
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASA	National Aeronautic and Space Administration
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NSF	National Science Foundation
PMP	Performance Management Plan
QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RDMA	Regional Development Mission for Asia
S&T	Science and Technology
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SO	Support Objective
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
USG	U.S. Government

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

“This is the future we seek in the Asia Pacific—security, prosperity and dignity for all... the United States of America is all in.” (President Obama during his visit to Canberra, Australia, 2011)

In less than a generation, Asia’s population of over four billion has become more prosperous, healthier, better educated, and better connected through innovations in communications, infrastructure and regional trade. Asia is more urban and has greater access than other parts of the world to, and higher expectations of, electricity, safe water and quality consumer goods. The region boasts significant natural resources and extraordinary biological diversity as well as burgeoning human capital, economic growth, and innovation and entrepreneurship potential. However, Asia also faces significant development issues that must be addressed to continue on this positive course. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) will work to support the region’s positive trends by connecting development stakeholders across Asia, sharing knowledge, and promoting a sustainable growth trajectory.

ASIA’S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Three mega-issues threaten to undermine Asia’s future economic growth: over-reliance on unsustainable use of resources, growing inequalities, and weak institutional frameworks and services for vulnerable populations. Although Asia has experienced rapid improvements in economic and human development indicators, these improvements have been uneven across the region, and gaping inequalities persist within and between countries.

Unsustainable Growth: Asia’s growth in GDP and consumption has come at great cost to the region’s natural resources, the global climate, and ultimately the region’s ability to sustain broad-based development over the long-term. The degradation of land, water, and other resources undermines long-term sustainable economic growth, food security, and water availability, as well as increases the risk of public health threats and disasters. In addition, global climate change will continue to strain the resiliency of vulnerable communities throughout the region.

Projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the Asia region are alarmingly high. Based on current trends, by the year 2030 Asian countries (in particular China and India) are expected to produce between 45 and 52 percent of global GHG emissions from energy, transportation and industrial sources.¹ Rapidly increasing energy demand to fuel growing economies and cities across the Asia region is the principal driver behind increasing GHG emissions, and Asia’s energy demand is growing faster than any other region in the world. Under business-as-usual conditions, the Asia-Pacific region as a whole will require a cumulative investment of about \$11.7 trillion in the energy sector between 2010 and 2035.² Rapid urbanization remains a core driver of energy demand and associated emissions. Annual deaths worldwide from air pollution now surpass malaria and HIV/AIDS death rates combined, and several of Asia’s cities are among the world leaders in air pollution levels.

Climate change is shifting the fundamental rules of city planning and administration. The density of people, economic activity in the coastal areas, and increasing frequency and severity of weather events make cities especially vulnerable to

¹ The range of estimated emissions growth was extrapolated based on analysis by USAID of emission trends from energy completed in 2011 and on updated emissions totals for 2010 from World Bank Development Indicators.

² Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and Asian Development Bank, “Energy Outlook for Asia and the Pacific,” October 2013.

climate change. The extreme weather events in the Asia region have caused not only extensive damage to human life and infrastructure losses, but have also generated significant economic disruptions. Cities must learn to adapt to these changes and become more resilient. Once their vulnerabilities are identified, they need to work together with the development community to better manage change and reduce overall risk levels.

In the Lower Mekong Basin, capture fisheries valued at up to \$3.9 billion each year provide more than 60 million people with their main source of protein. Hydropower dams on the Mekong River and its tributaries could cause more than 80 percent loss of fish catch by 2030, and dams proposed for the mainstream could cause an additional 70 percent loss of the remaining fish catch. Resulting losses in fish catch, and in the production of staple crops such as rice, threaten to worsen food security throughout the Lower Mekong Basin. Disagreement among Mekong countries on use and exploitation of the Mekong is an important source of friction in the region.

As these ecosystems essential for economic development shrink, communities that directly rely on these resources will lose valuable sources of income and food security. Experts estimate that an investment of \$45 billion in conservation efforts in the Asia region alone would result in the protection of ecosystem services worth \$5 trillion globally. Sustainable management of these natural assets can also help alleviate poverty and help poor, vulnerable populations to better cope with natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

Growing Income Disparities and Inequality: Research indicates that in addition to health and education, inequality has a negative impact on the ability of communities to adjust to the changes in the region involving urbanization, disease patterns, climate change, and natural hazards. These stressors can have a negative impact on lives, livelihoods and assets, often pushing those on the margins into poverty or the poor into extreme poverty. As Asia grows in population and economically, increasing disparities pose a number of potential challenges to the region's inclusive and sustainable development. Asia's disparities are keenly reflected in the uneven distribution of disease, gender inequalities, child mortality, and the marginalization of vulnerable populations such as minorities and migrants. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) reports that income disparities within individual countries continue to widen throughout the region. This rising inequality can dampen the poverty-reducing impacts of economic growth. Asia's Gini coefficient--a measure of income inequality--increased dramatically from 39 to 46 in less than 20 years, resulting in the conclusion that "Asia is getting less poor, but more unequal."³ Inefficient trade policies and economic regulations limit participation in emerging economic opportunities. The lack of inclusive legal and policy frameworks perpetuate gender inequalities regarding access to and control of economic opportunities. In addition, gender inequalities regarding access to justice and political participation are also important to inclusive growth and stability. As Asia advances its regional economic integration agenda, this trend toward greater income inequality could accelerate further unless specific efforts are made to enable broader participation in emerging economic opportunities. This mega-issue has major implications for growth in Asia, which still houses over 770 million people living below \$1.25 per day.⁴

Weak institutional frameworks and services for vulnerable populations: Despite Asia's improving economic outlook, the progress of "rights-based" development, inclusion and service provision for vulnerable and marginalized populations is still lagging. Institutional and legal frameworks to protect and ensure their access to information and services are underdeveloped or not fully implemented. Economic and demographic differences among countries in the Greater Mekong

³ John Larkin, "The Wealth Gap," Development Asia (Asia Development Bank, April 2013, p. 16).

⁴ World Bank Development Indicators, 2008-2012. Estimated number based on available data for all countries in Asia for poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 a day (PPP).

Subregion (GMS) have resulted in the movement of low-skilled migrants to areas with better employment prospects. Risks of exposure to and spread of infectious diseases can occur while traveling within and across national boundaries. Women and children continue to suffer from a range of inequalities, including gender-based violence and limited opportunities to benefit from regional economic growth. Considerable numbers of migrant workers, despite contributing to economic growth as they work in neighboring countries, suffer from prejudice and discrimination. They also face difficulty in accessing essential health and legal services in host countries, especially those who are undocumented and fear engaging with government institutions. Regional and subregional platforms for collaboration beyond economic pillars are being developed but still function in an ad-hoc manner. Although sexual minorities, including gay, lesbian and transgender persons, are tolerated in some Asian countries, weak human rights context and stigma are important factors conditioning the HIV response and service uptake in mainstream services. In spite of high HIV infection rates among men who have sex with men, effective HIV services for this particular vulnerable group remain limited. Civil society organizations representing the voices of vulnerable groups are mostly in early developmental stages, although these initial efforts are essential for promoting resilient and inclusive democratic societies.

ASIA'S DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A number of important aspects of Asia's economic growth can be leveraged to increase the region's focus on the sustainability of its growth trajectory and are described briefly below.

Strong Private Sector: Asia's positive economic growth, with an active and engaged private sector, and often with a healthy mix of corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is driving the economy, albeit with significant regional variance. There is a strong entrepreneurial culture and growing interest on the part of Asian governments to pursue "green growth."

Rich technology and innovation: Asia has the highest number of researchers and internet users worldwide, and offers platforms for innovation to help large numbers of poor. This experience and know-how can be harnessed to address unsustainable practices that undermine long-term prosperity for Asia.

Urbanization: By 2025, nearly 2.5 billion Asians will live in cities, accounting for almost 54 percent of the world's urban population.⁵ This urban growth represents both an opportunity and a challenge as statistics for the past 20 years have shown that urbanization corresponds to reduced poverty and inequality.⁶

Governance and Civil Society: In some parts of Asia there is an expanding civil society and growing commitment to freedom and democracy; for example, Burma's opening. A regional approach can provide opportunities to connect civil society and governments across the region to share and adapt practices that allow a greater voice for all Asians in the development of their region.

Increasing interconnectivity: Asia has become more connected economically, politically, and socially, and there is growing support for transnational cooperation. Regional institutions, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), offer platforms for broader integration which have the potential to bring

⁵ Dobbs, Richard and Sankhe, Shirish, "Comparing Urbanization in China and India." *Insights & Publications*, McKinsey & Company, June 2010.

⁶ Chen, S., Ravallion, M., Sangraula, P. "New Evidence on the Urbanization of Global Poverty." Development Research Group, World Bank, 2008.

about many social, economic and non-economic gains including employment and business opportunities as well as greater choices of quality goods and services. Greater and more efficient intra-Asian trade and investment will enable countries to extend their markets, reap efficiency gains from specialization and economies of scale, move up the value chain, and maximize growth potential. Trade and investment flows could be significantly increased with harmonized standards and trade regulations that are more predictable, transparent, and rules-based. Furthermore, these institutions provide a platform for dialogue and agreement on a host of important topics such as regional environmental standards and/or protocols; improved disaster preparation, mitigation and response; and cooperation on development of regional science, technology and human resources.

ASEAN Economic Community 2015: As member states prepare for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, there are concerns about “winners and losers” that could result from integration. ASEAN can also be a forum for addressing problems of inequality through regional cooperation and increased sharing of knowledge.

ANALYSES, ASSESSMENTS, AND CONSULTATIONS

The Mission conducted substantial consultations and analyses with a broad range of stakeholders, cross-cutting analysts, and sectoral experts. Analyses by ADB, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), and the Canadian Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development provided information on Asia’s top development challenges. Studies analyzing poverty and inequality trends in East Asia, the Pacific, and South Asia, helped guide RDMA in understanding how urbanization, women’s participation in the workforce, health, and food production contribute to poverty reduction. RDMA also assessed development gaps based on data from over 20 sources for five strategic sectors over the past decade. Additionally, RDMA commissioned a regional gender analysis of the Asia-Pacific region in February 2013 and a biodiversity and tropical forest assessment of the Asia region in May 2012 in support of developing the strategy.

RDMA’S FOCUS, SELECTIVITY, AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Given limited USAID resources relative to the vast flows of foreign direct investment and host-country government budgets, it is imperative that USAID be strategic in selecting how and where we invest. RDMA will focus on regional aspects of cross-boundary and common challenges in Asia through regional programs and partnerships with regional institutions and will also continue to support missions through institutionalizing USAID Forward reforms and providing knowledge sharing through more traditional technical assistance. RDMA’s comparative advantage among USAID missions in Asia is the ability to focus on issues that cannot be addressed effectively through bilateral programs and, where regional programming offers unique entry-points, the ability to work on topics and issues that may be untenable at the national level.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND SELECTIVITY

As discussed above, concern over the growing economic gaps between developing and developed Asia motivates RDMA to focus on the much poorer countries of the Lower Mekong region—Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (with some activities leveraging Thailand). RDMA’s geographic focus will therefore be defined by a series of concentric geographic circles starting with the Lower Mekong as the core, telescoping out to Southeast Asia, and including targeted areas of Central and South Asia and China. There are times when RDMA’s geographic focus will extend beyond the Lower Mekong region when the source of a particular, globally important transboundary challenge—whether food security, wildlife trafficking, global climate change, infectious diseases or coral reef and fisheries protection—or its solution, is located well beyond RDMA’s or any single bilateral mission’s immediate area of focus. In that case, RDMA will have to make trade-offs between adhering to the principal geographic focus and extending beyond to respond to and have an impact on an important issue (e.g., urban resilience). As RDMA works in close collaboration with bilateral missions to achieve the RDCS

goals, RDMA will implement its development objectives in collaboration with the bilateral missions and the development objectives outlined in their Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS).

The criteria that USAID uses to determine a specific focus on urban and transboundary contexts are related to what the data reveal about the “prevalence” of the problem or challenge. For example, RDMA focuses infectious disease resources on cross-border areas because the epidemiological evidence describes this as the area of critical need—where migrants from high-disease burden countries cross borders and present a real threat of disease transmission. This is the case for other cross-border challenges, such as targeting investments to maximize impact on improved management of natural resources at risk in the Lower Mekong Basin. In addition, RDMA can also serve as a platform to connect cities, sharing knowledge and practices on urban climate resilience and adaptation through collaboration with regional multilateral development partners (e.g., ADB), or using geospatial tools and, eventually, satellite imagery from the SERVIR Hub in the Mekong region to provide this decision-making data.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Stakeholders from science and technology, civil society, and the private sector revealed that one key comparative advantage for RDMA is its ability to convene traditional and nontraditional development actors across sectors (public and private) throughout the region. Stakeholders emphasized that USAID, serving as a regional thought leader, could link organizations across the Asia region to increase connectivity, share best practices, and increase development impacts. For example, during RDMA’s public-private partnership consultations with the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council in Singapore, U.S. companies spoke of opportunities and challenges in the region, in particular the lack of standardization and harmonization of regulations, processes and licensing.

RDMA must be strategic in deciding how and where to invest. RDMA will focus on two major areas where USAID can work most effectively from a regional platform: (a) as a catalyst to encourage regional thought leadership, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder connectivity; and (b) as an efficient and cost-effective provider of regional programs and services. We will only focus on regional aspects of cross-boundary and common challenges in our regional programs since RDMA’s comparative advantage among USAID missions in Asia is focusing on issues that cannot be addressed effectively through bilateral programs.

This RDCS is founded on RDMA’s unique capabilities to effectively support and complement the efforts of several USAID missions in the Asia region and to work closely with Asia Bureau’s Office of Technical Support (ASIA/TS), Office of Strategic Planning and Operations (ASIA/SPO) and other Agency Bureau counterparts, in particular the new Global Development Lab, to ensure that priority mission needs for technical, administrative, and operational support are met. RDMA will actively coordinate with ASIA/TS and ASIA/SPO on responses to technical support requests, and will also coordinate with USAID “hubs” such as Central Asia, India, and the Philippines. It should be noted that compared to Washington-based service provision options, RDMA benefits from being able to provide support to missions in “real time” and in a cost-effective manner given Bangkok’s central location within the region. RDMA established *Coordination Procedures between RDMA and Bilateral Missions for Regional Project Design and Implementation* to maximize synergies and shape RDMA’s regional programs through better field-level knowledge and insights provided by bilateral missions. This informs and sustains RDMA’s thought leadership on how regional issues may affect bilateral challenges and opportunities.

RDMA’S STRATEGIC APPROACH AND SMART DEVELOPMENT SCREENS

USAID can make enormous gains in Asia by facilitating civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, and governments in collaborating regionally. RDMA will continue to be a platform to connect Asia’s different development stakeholders to one another, and remain a catalyst for partnering, networking and leveraging, including regionally focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs), science and technology (S&T) leaders, universities, and other donors.

RDMA's strategic approach includes three *Smart Development Screens* that will improve the impact of all regional projects and services.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

All RDMA programs will accelerate current positive efforts to look for opportunities to use the best science and emerging technologies, including mobile technology and geospatial technologies, to magnify the impact of our investments. The potential of the mobile internet to transform society is the product of both its scale and its boundless versatility: by transforming how people interact, mobile technology can empower civil society and increase their engagement with government. Geospatial technologies enable integration of diverse data into maps that can be used to visualize patterns and trends over space and time, enabling a sound basis for decision-making. USAID will also partner with U.S. and Asian universities and research institutes, as well as other U.S. Government (USG) agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA), and support research to fill critical knowledge gaps to address problems such as global climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation, and global health.

PARTNERSHIPS

RDMA will mobilize outside resources at a ratio of at least 2:1 by bringing new partners to the table, including trilateral aid arrangements with both long-term and emerging donors; government-to-government (G2G) commitments; joint funding with other USAID missions, USG agencies, or other partners (e.g., universities); and partnerships with the private sector. For example, USAID partnered with MTV EXIT and achieved 11:1 leveraging over the life of the project for private sector contributions, as well as a 1:1 match with AusAID (now the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). Together, the partnerships have reached over 500 million people in Asia to counter trafficking in persons. RDMA will create more innovative partnerships that leverage outside resources, including advancing the other Smart Development Screens. RDMA's recent meetings with regional private sector representatives suggest strong and growing interest in partnering.

GENDER EQUALITY AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

Asia's exceptional growth has helped to close the gender gap on health and survival, educational attainment, and political empowerment; however, ensuring opportunities for women's participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels of society has not been fully realized. A recent U.N. study estimated that limits to women's economic participation cost the Asia-Pacific region nearly \$90 billion in lost productivity each year. In addition, the high social and economic costs of gender-based violence must be addressed by development programming to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. RDMA will analyze and address gender inequalities across development outcomes. Through partnerships, promotion of innovative and evidence-based practices, and regional networking we will deliberately enhance programming that ensures women's access to economic opportunities, fosters their leadership at all levels of decision-making, and provides greater opportunities to address gender-based violence prevention and response for survivors.

ERADICATING EXTREME POVERTY AND PROMOTING RESILIENT SOCIETIES: ACHIEVING THE AGENCY'S MISSION THROUGH RDMA'S STRATEGY

"Progress in the most impoverished parts of our world enriches us all. In many places, people live on little more than a dollar a day. So the United States will join with our allies to eradicate such extreme poverty in the next two decades: by connecting more people to the global economy and empowering women; by giving our young and brightest minds new opportunities to serve and helping communities to feed, power, and educate themselves."
(President Obama, State of the Union, 2013).

In January 2014, Administrator Rajiv Shah announced the Agency's new mission: "We partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity." In late 2013, when Dr. Shah convened a panel of experts to discuss the possibility of ending extreme poverty by 2030, he emphasized the idea that "extreme poverty is not just a measure of income, but a denial of basic rights and dignity."

RDMA's five-year strategy is structured to support the two complementary and intrinsically linked goals of USAID's mission statement: ending extreme poverty, which requires enabling inclusive, sustainable growth; and resilient, democratic societies, which requires effective, legitimate governments that connect with civil society and support all citizens, including the poorest and most vulnerable.

Worldwide, 1.2 billion people (21% of total population) live in extreme poverty defined as less than \$1.25/day. Extreme poverty in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region declined from 27.6 percent in 2002 to 12.5 percent in 2010. EAP poverty remains relatively high in selected countries that receive RDMA support, namely Timor Leste (37%), Laos (34%), Cambodia (19%), Indonesia (18%), and Philippines (18%).⁷

As one of two countries in Southeast Asia to have successfully eradicated extreme poverty,⁸ Thailand is one of Asia's success stories. ADB economists credit Thailand's success to its strong economic recovery and growth, decades of government policy focused on development and poverty reduction, social safety net programs including universal healthcare, and rising agricultural prices that benefited farmers.⁹ Thailand, despite strong political polarization and a military coup on May 22, 2014, still provides a relatively stable policy environment for the economy. The political crisis that began in the fall of 2013, however, demonstrates that political uncertainty can serve as a deterrent to foreign investors and international tourists who are major contributors to Thailand's economy.

Rapid and sustained economic growth, especially in the agricultural sector, is widely considered as the most effective way to reduce extreme poverty. In addition to increasing economic growth, governments and regional institutions in East Asia and the Pacific must enact policies that ensure that this growth is broad-based and reduce economic risk for the region's vulnerable populations.

Eradicating extreme poverty requires a sustained country-level focus that bilateral missions are well-placed to support, although RDMA will also apply its regional tools and comparative advantage to support the Agency's mission to end extreme poverty and strengthen resilient, democratic societies. By partnering with a variety of regional institutions, host governments, and the private sector, RDMA will boost inclusive regional trade and broad-based economic growth, improve sustainable development outcomes, and enhance the economic opportunities for specific vulnerable populations living in extreme poverty.

RDMA will support ASEAN, APEC and host country institutions to increase trade and regional integration while giving special attention to natural capital management, inclusive growth policies, and participation in economic decision-making.

⁷ The Multidimensional Poverty Index, developed in 2010 by Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the UNDP, uses different factors to determine poverty beyond income-based lists. According to this index of acute multidimensional poverty, Cambodia, Laos, and Timor-Leste have the highest extreme poverty numbers and intensity for Asia.

⁸ According to the World Bank (2012), "Vietnam has successfully eradicated extreme poverty and hunger in all but a few isolated regions."

⁹ Eradication means less than 3 percent of the total population live in extreme poverty.

Stronger regional institutions contribute to faster and more sustained growth, especially in the agricultural sector. Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Vietnam will benefit the most from increased ASEAN economic integration due to gains in efficiency and competitiveness, greater access to technology (including improved agricultural technologies), and investment. Several nations in Southeast Asia have resource-based economies, and RDMA's focus on economic transparency and inclusion will also promote more broad-based and equitable economic growth.

RDMA's regional approach will apply science and technology to improve public health outcomes in the region. This application is critical because Asian populations suffer from the damaging impact of transborder infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, avian influenza, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB). Rural populations, in particular, are susceptible to new diseases and drug resistant strains of tuberculosis and malaria. Disease ecology is an important root of extreme poverty, and RDMA has helped to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS, drug resistant malaria, and tuberculosis. RDMA is also strengthening the ability of countries to detect and contain emerging infectious diseases, especially in transborder areas with large numbers of migrant laborers.

Finally, RDMA will help to make vulnerable populations in Asia more able to address and adapt to climate change effects, natural disasters, and a variety of cross-border threats. These threats disrupt lives and economies, and can tip people into extreme poverty. RDMA helps mitigate these risks by providing targeted services and improved information, and by building resilient and capable regional institutions that understand the trends and vulnerabilities and can develop effective remediation and adaptation strategies. RDMA will help improve regional governance and respect for human rights in order to increase economic participation among vulnerable groups, engage both civil society and the private sector, and help selected vulnerable groups that are most likely to live in extreme poverty.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

RDCS GOAL

The United States has a unique opportunity to influence the choices at the crossroads—in the interest of the people of Asia and the United States. (Annex 1 describes linkages between the RDCS and the State-USAID strategy. Annex 2 describes linkages between the RDCS and approved CDCSs throughout Asia.) With a firm focus on democratic transformation, the sustainability of Asia’s growth trajectory, and the goals of the Presidential Initiatives in food security, global health, and global climate change, RDMA will pursue the following goal for 2014-2018:

A More Sustainable, Inclusive, and Prosperous Asia, with Particular Emphasis on Southeast Asia

DEFINITIONS

Sustainable: When the social, economic, and environmental needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹⁰

Inclusive: Broad-based benefits shared across all socio-economic levels, with special attention to women, vulnerable and marginalized populations, and the extreme poor.

Prosperous: Improved standards of living, which are linked through trade with increasing the prosperity of the American people.

In pursuing this goal, RDMA envisions progress across the following high-level indicators:

- Regional ecosystem vitality and environmental health as measured by the Environmental Performance Index (Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy, and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network at Columbia University)
- Asia’s continued progress on eradicating extreme poverty (and improving Asian standards of living, which is mutually beneficial for the American people, per the UNDP’s Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index)¹¹
- Per capita GDP of the Lower Mekong countries

¹⁰Rephrased from the Brundtland Commission’s report, “Our Common Future” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹¹ Because the Multidimensional Poverty Index (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and UNDP) is not updated annually for all countries, RDMA will use the MDI as a supplementary context indicator but not as an annual tracking tool.

FIGURE 1: RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR ALL RDACS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Goal: A More Sustainable, Inclusive, and Prosperous Asia, with Particular Emphasis on Southeast Asia

DO 1: Regional Institutions' Ability to Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Increased

DO 2: Vulnerable Populations More Able to Address Risks that Transcend Borders

Support Objective: U.S. Development Assistance Efficiency and Effectiveness in Asia Advanced

IR 1.1: Improved Management of Natural Capital

IR 1.2: Regional Integration Strengthened

IR 1.3: Good Governance Strengthened

IR 2.1: Enhanced Capacity to Mitigate Public Health Threats

IR 2.2: Rights of Specific Vulnerable People Enhanced

IR 2.3: Ability to Adapt to Climate Change Strengthened

IR S.1: USAID Missions and Non-Presence Countries Supported

IR S.2: Development Partnerships Advanced

IR S.3: Innovative and Evidence-based Solutions Fostered

Smart Development Screens: Science & Technology, Partnerships, Gender

To achieve this goal, RDMA proposes to focus on two development objectives (DO) and one support objective (SO):

- DO 1: Regional Institutions' Ability to Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Regional Growth Increased
- DO 2: Vulnerable Populations More Able to Address Risks that Transcend Borders
- SO: U.S. Development Assistance Efficiency and Effectiveness in Asia Advanced

Development Hypothesis: If Asia's regional institutions are better prepared to promote sustainable and inclusive growth (DO 1), vulnerable populations are more able to address transnational risks (DO 2), and development assistance in Asia is increasingly effective (SO), then Asia's growth will be more sustainable and inclusive.

Assumptions

- The Asia-Pacific region will experience relatively robust, but uneven economic growth. China will remain a dominant economic power in the Asia-Pacific.
- The region remains free of major armed conflict, and internal conflicts do not threaten macrostability at the country or subregional level.
- The frequency and, potentially, the intensity of climate-related events will continue to increase, affecting Asia's susceptibility to natural disasters and climate change.
- RDMA's major development initiatives will continue to receive high levels of diplomatic support and provide opportunities to take a "whole of government" approach on select regional development issues.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 1: REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS' ABILITY TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH INCREASED

Despite poverty reduction and the other important benefits it delivers, Asia's growth comes at great expense to the region's natural resources and the global climate. These environmental costs serve to exacerbate disaster risk and income disparities, and ultimately affect the region's ability to sustain broad-based development over the long-term. Asia has a uniquely resource-intensive economy, accounting for well over half of global resource use.

Much of Asia's economic growth has been fueled by regional demand for food, energy and commodities. Current economic policies, such as the goal of full ASEAN economic integration in 2015, promote greater regional economic harmonization and a reduction in trade barriers. Foreign direct investments (FDI) are now flowing into the subregion at unprecedented rates, providing crucial sources of development finance.

New investments, especially in large-scale industrialization, urbanization, infrastructure, and agriculture, however, are having significant social, environmental and economic impacts over the short and long term. Tied to this growth, Asia's economies are now contributing a large and rapidly growing proportion of GHG emissions, and addressing these emissions will be at the center of any global solution to addressing climate change. Although Southeast Asia is not considered a major contributor to global GHG emissions, the region's population and economic growth rates, combined with increasing foreign direct investment, make it imperative that regional partners and host country governments make substantive changes in their development policies in order to curb future emissions.

Increasingly, high-impact infrastructure development projects are having regional impacts. Both the source of financing and the demand for energy and resources behind these projects are increasingly originating from within Asia—primarily, although not exclusively, from China. Similarly, many of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the projects, especially in the case of hydropower, are felt transnationally. When possible, we should encourage risk-informed investments to minimize negative consequences in the future.

Asia's natural capital is being eroded rapidly, and levels of consumption are outstripping the rate at which natural systems can regenerate, resulting in natural capital depletion. The ecosystem services that are essential for economic development are decreasing, adversely impacting communities that directly rely on these resources (often the poor and vulnerable) and reducing sustainable growth potential over the long-term. The sustainable management of these natural assets can also help to alleviate poverty, and can help poor, vulnerable populations to better cope with natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

Many of the development decisions with significant social and environmental impacts on populations in Lower Mekong countries are made without the input and agreement of the most affected stakeholders, such as local communities. As a result, decisions can be unduly influenced by vested interests, do not adequately take into account and mitigate the environmental and social risks, and ultimately fail to promote sustainable development in the subregion. There is tremendous opportunity to build regional capacity for cooperation on transnational challenges, and also to enhance civil society's ability to engage with government decision makers.

Regional cooperation (including integration) will cement the region's hard-won economic gains in the face of vulnerabilities to global shocks, help reduce cross-country disparities in income and opportunities, and contribute to Asia's long-term stability and peace. The ADB describes regional cooperation as "critical for Asia's march toward prosperity;" necessary to make economic growth more sustainable; and enables Asia to tackle tough transboundary challenges such as human trafficking, climate change, and infectious disease.

DEFINITIONS

Institution: Any structure or mechanism of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given community. For the RDCS, the term "regional institutions" includes regional associations like ASEAN, APEC, and networks of CSOs.

Sustainable: When the social, economic, and environmental needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In USAID's new *Project Design Guidance*, sustainability is achieved when host country partners and beneficiaries are empowered to take ownership of development processes, including financing, and maintain project results and impacts beyond the life of the USAID project (USAID Sustainability Analysis Tool).

Inclusive: Growth that provides opportunity for every citizen without regard to gender or sexual orientation/gender identity and expression, socio-economic status or physical ability, ethnicity, religion or location.

Illustrative Indicators

- Number of action-oriented agendas adopted by targeted regional institutions to promote sustainable and inclusive integration (includes instituted regulations, standards and programs that foster integration through adoption of sustainable practices and that allow for broad-based participation in economic and civil society related opportunities)
- Number of national laws, policies, procedures, protocols adopted by ASEAN countries that implement regional institution policy directives

Development Hypothesis: If communities and governments improve their ability to sustainably manage natural capital (IR 1.1), regional integration is strengthened (IR 1.2), and good governance is strengthened (IR 1.3), then Asia's institutions will be more able to promote sustainable and inclusive growth (DO 1). This DO will focus on building the connectivity among countries, NGOs, universities, other donors, think tanks, and the private sector; strengthening these regional institutions

and actors and expanding their ability to engage constructively with various counterparts; and helping communities and governments to better manage their resources and economic growth.

FIGURE 2: RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR DO 1

DO 1: Regional Institutions' Ability to Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Regional Growth Increased

Illustrative Indicators: -Number of action-oriented agendas adopted by targeted regional institutions to promote sustainable and inclusive integration (includes instituted regulations, standards and programs that foster integration through adoption of sustainable practices and that allow for broad-based participation in economic and civil society related opportunities)

-Number of national laws, policies, procedures, protocols adopted by ASEAN countries that implement regional institution policy directives

IR 1.1: Improved Management of Natural Capital

Sub-IRs:

- Mobilization of public and private sector for Low Emission Development Strategies increased
- Regional cooperation for sustainable and legal management and trade of natural resources strengthened
- Environmentally and socially sound infrastructure investments promoted

Illustrative Indicators:

- Quantity of GHG emissions, measured in metric tons of CO₂ emissions, reduced or sequestered as a result of USG assistance
- Living Planet Index
- Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management

IR 1.2: Regional Integration Strengthened

Sub-IRs:

- Enhanced Economic Connectivity
- Enhanced Social, Scientific, and Political Connectivity

Illustrative Indicators:

- Trade volumes/values occurring through ASEAN Single Window,
- Number of laws, policies, procedures or programs developed and/or adopted that promote integration and resiliency as well as economic, social, and gender inclusion

IR 1.3: Good Governance Strengthened

Sub-IRs:

- Governments Have Increased Capacity to Engage with Non-State Actors
- Civil Society More Able to Effectively and Constructively Engage and Influence State Institutions

Illustrative Indicators:

- Voice and Accountability
- Level of capacity of regional, national, or subnational institutions to engage citizens in public decision-making

DO 1 Critical Assumptions

- Asia's political space will fluctuate but not significantly worsen throughout the region as a whole, thus allowing CSOs, community-based organizations, trade/labor unions, grassroots movements and political parties to increase their regional networking for capacity building, information sharing and broader advocacy support.
- Interest will continue to grow among Asian governments in developing a regional economic architecture that promotes inclusive and sustainable trade, investment and regional economic integration in partnership with the private sector and civil society.
- There will be continued regional commitment to strengthen and use multinational organizations such as ASEAN and APEC.
- Multilateral institutions and other regional bodies will undertake effective actions to combat transnational challenges, including global climate change and wildlife trafficking.
- USG policy and engagement at all levels will support and champion as appropriate the idea that sound development practices play an integral part in fostering stable, secure and viable economic partnerships between the U.S. and Asian economies.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.1: IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL CAPITAL

Insufficient action on environmental challenges in Asia is having catastrophic impacts on local populations and the planet. As the middle class in the Asia-Pacific region grows from 500 million in 2009 to 2.5 billion in 2030, dwarfing the size of the middle class in all other regions combined, this stratum of society will cause a dramatic rise in resource consumption and consumerism. The sheer number of people in Asia is tipping the balance of resource consumption globally—from food to water to energy. Asia's population and income growth is driving terrestrial and marine resource depletion, biodiversity loss, and air and water pollution on a scale *never before seen in human history*. It is also contributing to escalating disaster risks as natural protective systems are eroded. Because of unequal access to resources and exclusion from decision-making processes, marginalized members of society, particularly women, are further excluded from this growth. This growth is increasingly unsustainable, and in many cases we have already exceeded the limits of natural systems. This mega-trend by far will continue to have the broadest direct impacts on human and natural environments in Asia and globally.

Asia's increasing energy demand and fossil fuel consumption, industrial activity, deforestation, forest degradation, and changing land use make the region among the world's highest contributors to global GHG emissions. It is estimated that carbon dioxide emissions from energy use in Asia's rapidly developing economies will increase from 33 percent of the world total in 2008 to 45 percent by 2030. The forest and land-use sector is expected to further contribute to these emission trends; up to 80 percent of emissions of some countries in the region are from forest and land use sources. Asian countries are among the top overall emitters of greenhouse gases globally, with China, Indonesia and India having the highest emissions. The region is central to any global solution to mitigate climate change, with Asia's GHG emissions per capita growing by 97 percent from 2000 to 2008, compared with 18 percent growth per capita globally. Addressing Asia's emissions can be viewed as an opportunity to adopt new, more efficient and effective policies, technologies, and practices that boost economic growth while reducing emissions and conserving natural resources.

Hydropower projects in the Lower Mekong Basin, while providing much needed energy supplies, could have widespread negative impacts on local fisheries and food supplies. These projects need careful analysis (including more environmentally friendly alternatives), transparent decision-making, and oversight and management to prevent damage to the ecosystem and reduce impact on fish catch and the production of staple food crops, such as rice.

To alter this trend, IR 1.1 will work strategically to tackle these inherently transboundary and common challenges by engaging private sector, governments and civil society; identifying points of entry to shift momentum away from the business-as-usual trajectory; engaging the champions that are already working to tackle these issues across the region; and synergizing with bilateral missions. USAID will strengthen critical regional institutions to address mega-transnational problems in the environment sector and promote resilience.

DEFINITIONS

Natural capital: Biological (terrestrial and marine ecosystem-based) resources, geophysical (land and minerals) resources, and atmospheric resources which are essential for human survival and economic activity.

Illustrative Indicators

- Quantity of GHG emissions, measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, reduced or sequestered as a result of USG assistance
- Living Planet Index (WWF Global)
- Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management

Development Hypothesis: If the public and private sectors are mobilized for low emission regional development (sub-IR 1.1.1), and regional integration is strengthened for sustainable management and trade of natural resources (sub-IR 1.1.2), and environmentally and socially sound urban built environments are promoted (sub-IR 1.1.3), then Asia's management of its natural capital will improve (IR 1.1).

Illustrative outcomes include enhanced collaboration among public, private, and CSOs, and building the capacity of targeted Asian partners to become regional leaders in designing and implementing Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) and green growth. Strengthened linkages between regional platforms such as ASEAN, APEC and the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) will support the prioritization of wildlife and timber trafficking as a regional governance and economic security threat. In turn, regional natural resource conservation alliances such as the Coral Triangle Initiative and ASEAN's Wildlife Enforcement Network will become more sustainable, and consumer demand for illegal goods will be reduced. Multi-stakeholder dialogues on social and environmental impacts of regional development projects in the Lower Mekong Subregion will lead to decisions that take into account the true costs (including environmental and social) of such investments. The development of traceability technologies and systems to identify both legal and illegal natural resources trade sources will be critical for ensuring sustainable management of Asia's natural capital.

SUB-IR 1.1.1: MOBILIZATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FOR LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES INCREASED

RDMA will continue to engage at a transnational level to support regional sustainable development, robust economic progress, and low GHG emissions, with countries adopting and implementing LEDS and green growth practices across all sectors. RDMA will strive to strengthen support for LEDS across Asia by inspiring and catalyzing leaders of change, improving institutional capacity and raising awareness about the benefits and methods of promoting LEDS. RDMA will support the development of country-led strategic plans to promote economic growth while reducing GHG emissions in the Asia region. This will entail facilitating enhanced collaboration among government institutions, development organizations, NGOs, businesses, academic institutions, and others actively engaged in LEDS in the region. USAID and partners will continue to identify and disseminate tools, models, approaches, and best practices in priority LEDS topics to enable peer-to-peer learning and application across Asia. RDMA's approach to LEDS will focus in a holistic way on the GHG emissions

dimension of green growth taking into account clean energy, and land-based source emissions including deforestation, habitat degradation and agriculture. Current RDMA efforts focus on supply-side approaches including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

SUB-IR 1.1.2: REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AND LEGAL MANAGEMENT AND TRADE OF NATURAL RESOURCES STRENGTHENED

Efforts under the Ecosystems and Trade (EST) component will focus on drivers, leverage points and activities that inherently need a transboundary approach including: regional cooperation to demonstrate the value of Asia's natural capital; improved ecosystem management; strengthened Asia-specific government platforms such as ASEAN, APEC and LMI; and ultimately reduced illegal and unsustainable production and transboundary trade in natural resources. This will be achieved through development of improved regional protocols and standards, consumer demand reduction, improved enforcement and regional networking, and increased political will. Sub-components of EST will focus on fisheries and marine resource conservation, and trafficking of wildlife and timber. EST will take a regional approach in directly targeting the key transboundary drivers of unsustainable and illegal use, production, and trade of marine and terrestrial biodiversity including: inadequate regional coordination to protect high conservation value habitats and endangered species; weak governance and enforcement of laws, policies, and agreements; lack of multi-stakeholder involvement, especially of marginalized groups, in decision-making; business practices, protocols, and standards in the region that do not adequately consider social and environmental impacts; undervaluation of ecosystem goods and services; consumer demand for unsustainably sourced products; and lack of scientific knowledge and data. More sustainable ecosystem management can also enhance and sustain food security in the region, as demonstrated in the aquaculture sector where current unsustainable practices threaten to pollute groundwater or coastal estuaries, destroy sensitive habitats such as mangroves, reduce biodiversity, and ultimately limit the sector's ability to provide food security, jobs and income in the region.

In an effort to reduce threats to marine biodiversity from over fishing, illegal fishing and wildlife trafficking, USAID will support the ASEAN and CTI countries to promote an integrated approach to conservation and sustainable management of fishery resources. RDMA will support improvements in regional fisheries management standards and protocols, building on regional efforts to promote an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management as the underlying management regime. Activities may support efforts to develop eco-certification schemes and economically viable traceability and legality systems. Overall goals include promoting sustainable fisheries, conserving marine biodiversity, and improving food security. Objectives will be achieved by building constituencies for sustainable fisheries and conservation, partnering with public and private sector stakeholders and regional institutions, and applying science, technology and innovation.

SUB-IR 1.1.3: ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY SOUND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS PROMOTED

This component will focus on sustainability, resilience, environmental safeguards of infrastructure in energy (hydro-power, electric power grids, buildings, etc.), roads, and agricultural investment areas. Urbanization, infrastructure development, and rapidly rising consumption patterns represent unsustainable growth that could undermine and destabilize Asia's strong growth and erode natural capital. Current planned infrastructure investments do not adequately weigh broader social or environmental costs, particularly on a transborder basis, potentially resulting in ill-planned and detrimental outcomes in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. The infrastructure subcomponent will improve social and environmental soundness of regional development projects by advancing informed multi-stakeholder dialogues on anticipated social and environmental costs and benefits of regional development projects. It will also increase access to reliable information on infrastructure investment costs and benefits for national level governments.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR 1.1:

- At least \$1.25 billion in private and public investment in clean energy and sustainable forest and land use management;
- At least 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in avoided emissions as a result of clean energy and sustainable landscapes activities;
- Increasingly self-sustaining regional platforms that provide sustained assistance to Asian developing countries on LEDS and green growth (including the Asia LEDS Partnership and the ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network on Forests and Climate Change);
- At least 30 percent increase in number of illegal wildlife and timber trade seizures at priority customs and border entry points in Southeast Asia and China;
- At least four ASEAN countries adopt harmonized Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) laws and regulations promoting improved ecosystems management and endangered species (wildlife and timber) protection;
- At least 40 percent increase in tonnage of fish products traded internationally in Asia that are covered by a unified standard catch certification and traceability system; e.g., ASEAN;
- A 25 percent increase in total infrastructure investments in the Lower Mekong region that apply and/or implement industry standard social and environmental safeguards (as defined by WB/IFC/ADB);
- Regional network of CSOs focused on social and environmental safeguards established and/or strengthened;
- At least 10 CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in monitoring or advocacy on the environmental and social impacts of development projects in the Lower Mekong Subregion.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.2: REGIONAL INTEGRATION STRENGTHENED

The world has made tremendous progress in reducing global poverty. Much of this stems from economic growth. On average, it is estimated that every one percent increase in GDP per head reduces poverty by approximately 1.7 percent. Economic growth has therefore had a profound effect on poverty in Asia, where economies grew at an average annualized rate of 7.3 percent between 2005 and 2010, and 150 million people moved out of poverty during the first half of that time period. However, growth alone is responsible for only part of this poverty reduction. Income distribution is also important. Some studies suggest that only two-thirds of the recent improvement in global poverty rates was the result of economic growth alone. The remaining poverty reduction came from policies that resulted in a more equitable distribution of income.

Asia's rising inequality is highlighted in ADB's Asian Development Outlook Report for 2012, which confirms that from the early 1990s through the late 2000s, income inequality increased in 11 of the 28 countries in "developing Asia," and that those 11 countries account for over 80 percent of the region's population.¹² For example, ADB's report points out that had Indonesia's inequality not increased, its poverty rate would have fallen to just over six percent, instead of its current rate of more than 16 percent. Furthermore, the total poverty impact in the 11 Asian economies with rising inequality amounts to 240 million additional people living on less than \$1.25 per day, which is over six percent of the region's population. The implications of this additional poverty are troubling. For example, in Cambodia and Laos, children from the poorest quintile are four to five times as likely as those from the richest quintile to be out of school, effectively creating a new generation of individuals who are much less likely to benefit from and contribute to economic opportunities arising from their country's

¹² ADB, *Asian Development Outlook 2012: Confronting Rising Inequality in Asia*, April 2012.

growth and economic integration. In Cambodia, children in the bottom income quintile have mortality rates more than 10 times higher than the top quintile, and, in Laos, 40 percent of all children under 5 years of age have moderate or severe signs of stunting. UNICEF estimates that Laos loses between two and three percent of its GDP annually, or around \$200 million, as a result of malnutrition-related productivity losses.¹³ In addition, recurrent disasters affect the poor disproportionately and cost countries like the Philippines an average of one to two percent of GDP annually. Research also indicates that inequality hampers long-term growth itself, and has negative impacts on the quality of institutions, security, resiliency, and climate change in addition to health and education.

Given the importance of economic growth on poverty reduction, if the U.S. Government's goal of working with partners to eradicate extreme poverty within 20 years is to be met, robust economic growth rates will need to continue. This will require both growth promotion as well as risk management. Studies suggest that if developing countries were to maintain their post-2000 economic growth performance, then the number of extremely poor people in the world would fall from 1.2 billion in 2010 to just 200 million in 2027, or three percent. However, if growth rates fall just two percent below this level, then the poverty rate would only fall to approximately 10 percent. The greatest contributor to poverty reduction has been shown to be agricultural investments. With Asia containing 66 percent of the world's malnourished (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN [FAO], 2013) and an average yield gap in all crops of the region at around 35 percent, there is tremendous potential for reducing poverty and improving nutrition. Increasing food production and improving food security for the rural poor will contribute to and spur economic growth.

However, this growth will also need to be inclusive of all segments of society (rural and urban poor, marginalized groups, and women) as the same study indicates that improving or worsening income distribution between the poorest 40 percent and the top 10 percent will have roughly an equal impact on poverty rates as varying overall economic growth rates. Furthermore, if this growth is to be sustainable and improve quality of life, it cannot come at the expense of the environment.

Recognition within Asia for the need for more inclusive growth is growing. Several economies in the region, such as Malaysia and Thailand, have adopted some form of inclusive development programs. Experience indicates that countries that have been successful at reducing inequality have prioritized investments in education, health, and basic infrastructure such as sanitation and roads; fostered a balanced sectoral composition of growth among manufacturing, services, and agriculture; supported the development of small and medium-sized enterprises; and allowed for the development of strong labor market institutions. In addition, core development partners in the region have prioritized the need for more inclusive growth as part of the region's economic integration efforts. For example, ADB's *Guiding Strategy 2020* highlights its support for "pro-poor growth in its Developing Member Countries that is inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and draws on the region's increasing levels of cooperation and integration."

Regional integration will play an increasingly important role in Asia's development for a variety of reasons. While not only fostering a more efficient movement of goods, services, and people, it will provide an opportunity to establish common regulations and standards that promote inclusive and sustainable growth practices. In addition, effective integration can help raise awareness about key regional challenges and foster a sense of regional identity and connectivity that could assist in addressing issues such as the environment, human rights, resource utilization, and disaster preparation and recovery.

¹³ UNICEF and Lao PDR National Commission for Mothers and Children, *Child Well-Being and Disparities in Laos*, November 2012.

RDMA seeks to synergize with a number of regional institutions to enhance health programming within countries and the region. Regional health partnerships include WHO and FAO regional offices, regional priorities supported by other donors including DFAT, private foundations, and regional programming supported by the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria.

USAID missions throughout the region will continue to foster inclusive and sustainable growth within individual countries by assisting them in integrating into the evolving economic community. Regional institutions will also play a critical role by establishing the framework for this integration. This includes ASEAN and its envisioned 2015 Economic Community as well as APEC. In addition, USG initiatives such as the LMI can also play important roles. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is another regional institution that has had recent success with integrating their economies with public-private bodies focused on trade.

ASEAN is one of the more advanced regional institutions in the world, with ambitious commitments to sustainable and inclusive economic growth and capacity to influence Asia's economic growth path. It provides an excellent platform from which the U.S. Government can help to play a "convener" or "integrator" role in the region. APEC is another such forum, albeit with more of an exclusively economic focus that works in many areas where trade and investment overlap with other issues like environment and health. Through the LMI, the United States and countries in the Lower Mekong work together to address environmental, agricultural, health, educational, energy and connectivity development issues.

ASEAN's original founding document, the ASEAN Declaration, states that the aims and purposes of the association are "to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region" and "to promote regional peace and stability through an abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter." The United States has been an official Dialogue Partner with ASEAN since 1977. In line with the objectives of this IR, ASEAN's Framework for Equitable Economic Development emphasizes that "equitable economic development is characterized by narrowing development gaps within and between Member States, better access to opportunities for human development, social welfare and justice, and more inclusive participation in the process of ASEAN integration and community building."

Deep and sustained ASEAN-U.S. cooperation is vital to the member states of the organization, which includes 10 countries and over 600 million people. ASEAN has made great strides, particularly in the last 10 years, toward meeting its economic, political and socio-cultural goals. Through its relationship with ASEAN, the United States can both address a range of issues that have an impact on the entire region and forge a partnership that supports the organization's objectives to achieve a rules-based, integrated, and stable region. Although U.S. regional assistance is unlikely to have a direct measurable impact on poverty, it will help to establish conditions that will reduce poverty and improve regional governance and favorable management of transnational issues.

Established in 1989, APEC is the leading forum for facilitating trade and investment, economic growth, and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific community and represents 21 member economies. It was created with three overlapping aims: to develop and strengthen the multilateral trading system; to increase the interdependence and prosperity of member economies; and to promote sustainable economic growth. APEC's numerous policy and working groups touch on a variety of political, social, and scientific issues that influence trade policy and economic growth. Together, APEC's membership accounts for 40 percent of the world's population, 44 percent of global trade, and 53 percent of world GDP in terms of purchasing power parity.

The LMI is a USG-developed initiative that focuses on the lesser developed countries of Southeast Asia. Also supporting the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, which is focused on closing the development gap among ASEAN member states, LMI allows the United States to partner with Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Burma to address development issues related to the environment and water, agriculture, food security, health, education, energy security, and connectivity.

Headquartered in Kathmandu, Nepal, SAARC was established in 1985. Its eight member states address a variety of political, economic and social issues at the annual summit and at a host of smaller meetings throughout the year. RDMA's engagement with SAARC has been modest, in part because of historical challenges that USAID and other donors have faced. In the past few years, the Trade Promotion Network (TPN), a quasi-official public-private body, has had success in resolving trade issues within the region. The TPN presents an attractive pathway for entry to SAARC engagement and thus regional cooperation on trade and trade issues such as standards and non-tariff barriers. In building upon a successful establishment of a relationship with SAARC, through the TPN, there are opportunities to link SAARC to ASEAN for the sharing of best practices in approaches and policy frameworks.

DEFINITIONS

Regional Economic Integration: The process by which states within a defined geographic area agree to increase economic efficiency through a reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers that impede the free flow of goods, services and labor.

Connectivity: Physical, institutional, and human connections that facilitate political discourse and agreement, connect citizens and their regional institutions, and ensure the flow of goods and services as well as information and ideas.

Inclusive Growth: Growth that enables marginalized, vulnerable, or underserved groups, including women and youth, to participate in and benefit from increased economic opportunities stemming from economic growth.

Illustrative Indicators

- Trade volumes/values occurring through ASEAN Single Window (ASW)
- Number of laws, policies, procedures or programs developed and/or adopted that promote integration and resiliency as well as economic, social, and gender inclusion

Development Hypothesis: If USAID supports enhanced economic connectivity (sub-IR 1.2.1), as well as enhanced social, scientific, and political connectivity (sub-IR 1.2.2), then regional integration will be strengthened (IR 1.2).

IR 1.2 will build the capacity of regional institutions to create and manage regional integration frameworks. It will facilitate engagement by the USG and other actors with regional institutions and initiatives in order to promote economic integration that is sustainable and inclusive, and that is based upon scientific research and harmonized regulatory and legal approaches. In particular, it will support connectivity—economic, social, and political—in order to facilitate these objectives. Strengthening linkages between ASEAN and APEC will also help to support the prioritization of regional governance and economic security threats, such as wildlife and timber trafficking.

SUB IR 1.2.1 ENHANCED ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY

USAID will support ASEAN, APEC, and other key regional institutions to harmonize standards, regulations and systems for increased regional trade and investment, in collaboration with other USG agencies, such as the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Trade Representative. Particular emphasis will be placed on the development of standards that not only facilitate trade, but promote traceable and sound environmental, health and labor practices. USAID's activities will help establish policies that reduce export bans and import tariffs, harmonize food quality and safety standards, manage resources, establish common clearance procedures through the use of a "single window," and promote inclusive growth opportunities. By encouraging standardization and reducing barriers to free trade and the movement of goods across borders, these activities increase transparency for U.S. businesses looking to trade and invest in the region, and also serve to create a "level playing field" based on scientifically sound practices that promote sustainable development. At the same time USAID's efforts will promote greater regional integration in a manner that will help reduce

large cross-country disparities in income (which, if left unchecked, could generate instability or conflict), promote sound production practices, and inhibit trade of illegal or unsafe products.

SUB-IR 1.2.2 ENHANCED SOCIAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND POLITICAL CONNECTIVITY

If economic integration is to result in more sustainable and inclusive growth and a more inclusive and prosperous Asia, it will need to be underpinned by solid social, scientific and political connectivity that fosters stability, resiliency, shared values, and sound decision-making. In other words, supporting the goals of regional institutions to promote rules-based, stable communities requires sharing of information and pathways to harmonized approaches to issues of common concern across member states. Encouraging the sharing of ideas, development of common awareness, and harnessing of data for policy makers, youth leadership and social networks can play a role in closing the development gap between lesser and more developed countries in the region.

Particularly important will be efforts that promote evidence-based decision-making on practices and technologies that support sustainable agricultural development; energy efficiency; disaster risk reduction; youth and women's participation and access to economic opportunities; land and water management; and the capture of emerging opportunities in the face of rapid economic growth. These efforts will need to involve civil society, the private sector and youth, and be in partnership with governments and regional institutions. Equally important, these efforts need to promote awareness of considerations relating to gender and human rights, as well as the challenges facing young people in the region. Mechanisms to do so will include youth volunteerism and leadership activities, engagement of emerging academic leaders through science fellowships and awards, and small and medium enterprise development and training aimed at women and youth entrepreneurs. Sub-IR 1.2.2 will therefore promote the development and sharing of knowledge and skills through the platform of established regional institutions that can enable sound, stable, resilient, and inclusive regional integration. For instance, RDMA's recent work with Microsoft on the Imagine Cup engages students in developing mobile technology approaches to address major development challenges. Similar activities will catalyze the development of innovative technologies while also fostering youth entrepreneurship.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR 1.2:

- ASEAN and APEC secretariats, chairs and targeted working groups further develop and utilize their capacity to create and implement a framework that promotes inclusive and sustainable growth within Asia;
- USG engagement with ASEAN and APEC is coordinated and facilitated in a manner that efficiently and effectively promotes development objectives related to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and political and socio-cultural integration;
- A functioning regional platform for ASW enables interconnectivity among country level systems and lowers the time and cost to trade;
- Reduced trade barriers and adherence to international agreements facilitate trade and transparent trade practices;
- Participation of the private sector and civil society with regional institutions lead to improved regional policy outcomes;
- Increased participation of SMEs in available economic opportunities;
- Food production practices, protocols and standards, are agreed upon by regional institutions and leading producers and buyers in ASEAN member states that promote sound environmental and labor practices;
- Technologies and knowledge exchanged, particularly through South-South learning, that contribute to poverty reduction, food security, and inclusive economic growth;

- Knowledge sharing and the development of technical capacities promote regional, governmental and private sector practices that reduce vulnerability and impact of natural and manmade disasters, leading to greater economic resiliency;
- Connectivity and collaboration between regional and U.S. universities promote research and exchange leading to improved economic and environmental practices and policies;
- Partnerships promote knowledge sharing to ensure women have access to participate in and benefit from economic opportunities;
- Internet and other technologies are utilized to develop skills and knowledge that enable inclusive participation in emerging economic opportunities.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.3: GOOD GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENED

Among Asia’s most significant long-term development challenges is a growing “legitimacy gap” borne from a lack of adequate opportunities for engagement between citizens and elected governments, both among vulnerable populations (e.g., ethnic minorities, economic migrants, indigenous) as discussed later in IR 2.2 and the general public as addressed here in IR 1.3. If left unchecked, this “legitimacy gap” could have serious consequences on stability in the region. These problems are worsening as the region’s rich and powerful advance much faster than the poor, vulnerable, or simply less politically influential populations. These disadvantaged groups can feel that the government is unresponsive to their needs by failing to provide the income opportunities, education, and healthcare upon which their livelihoods depend.

Climate change can seriously impact the most disadvantaged groups living on vulnerable sites, like steep slopes and low-lying coastal areas, which lack basic services and are prone to natural disasters. With respect to health, increasing global warming is fueling the spread of disease vectors that disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society. Increased political engagement could help reduce the long-term risks faced by vulnerable populations due to the effects of climate change.

Inclusive development policies will expand the rights, opportunities, and aspirations of the relatively weaker segments of society while reducing their risk from economic instability, climate change and a host of public health problems. Addressing the development challenges effectively will depend on governments being able to engage non-state actors, engage civil society more effectively in public decision-making, and increase citizens’ access to justice.

The success of these elements will mean that the broader public interest—from the rich and powerful to the poor and marginalized—is taken into account as part of policy making at the country-level in the Asian nations where USAID works. In turn, this should allow these countries to reflect a more complete understanding of their people’s needs when engaging regional institutions. Better governed countries, therefore, are necessary to promote a responsive development approach at the regional level, including on topics such as economic growth.

DEFINITION

Good Governance: System of governance that is representative of the will and interests of the people and is infused with the principles of participation, inclusion and accountability.¹⁴

¹⁴ USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, p. 37.

Illustrative Indicators

- Voice and Accountability (Worldwide Governance Indicators)¹⁵
- Level of capacity of regional, national, or subnational institutions to engage citizens in public decision-making

Development Hypothesis: If USAID increases the capacity of governments and regional bodies in Asia to engage with non-state actors in decision-making processes (IR 1.3.1), and increases the ability of civil society in Asia to more effectively engage and influence state institutions (IR 1.3.2), then governments and people in Asia will be better able to work with both country-level and regional institutions to promote sustainable and equitable growth.

IR 1.3 emerges from the hypothesis that when good governance is strengthened, governments and people in Asia will be better able to work with regional institutions to promote sustainable and equitable growth. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton highlighted the interaction between good governance and economic growth when she affirmed that civil society undergirds both democratic governance and broad-based prosperity. She observed that “activists, organizations, congregations, writers, and reporters...work through peaceful means to encourage governments to do better.”¹⁶ Providing support for good governance in Asia will allow governments and regional institutions to better represent their people¹⁷ and increasingly practice principles of participation, inclusion and accountability.

Broadly stated, good governance is responsive and accountable to the needs of all the people living under the system’s rule. When people are able to express their will and the government responds to those needs, the system has greater buy-in from its people, resulting in more sustainable and inclusive development. Good governance is further strengthened by enhancing access to justice, such that people and stakeholders are aware of their rights, have the capacity to protect and exercise their rights, and advocate for their rights in a context where the rule of law is both supported and enforced.

In East Asia, there is a critical mass of democracies and prospects for continued movement in the direction of good governance. Forty percent of East Asian states (seven of the seventeen) are democracies. As political sociologist Larry Diamond wrote in 2012, “if a new regional wave of transitions to democracy unfolds in the next five to ten years, it is more likely to come from East Asia—a region that has been strangely neglected in recent thinking about the near-term prospects for expansion of democracy.”

Freedom House describes Asia-Pacific as a region that made progress in political rights and civil liberties over the past year, but despite the strong proportion of elected democracies, Asia overall has hardly progressed in democratic reforms since 2000. Indeed, the Lower Mekong countries score particularly low in civil liberties, especially associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and press and internet freedom, and have experienced gradual erosion in their scores over the past 10 years.

¹⁵ “Perceptions of the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. Scores presented in standard normal units of the governance indicator, ranging from -2.5 to 2.5 with higher values corresponding to better governance outcomes.” (info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx)

¹⁶ “Civil Society: Supporting Democracy in the 21st Century,” Community of Democracies, Krakow, Poland (July 3, 2010).

¹⁷ Note that this document makes use of the word people rather than citizens. Citizen is a more narrow term, which may exclude portions of a country’s population who do not have citizenship for a variety of reasons that may be beyond their immediate control. Work with citizens will generally be the main focus due to a government’s stated obligations to its citizens, but we will broaden the definition to people subject to the governing system’s rule whenever possible, for example, hill tribes in Northern Thailand or stateless migrants between countries in the region.

In meetings with RDMA senior leaders, regional NGO stakeholders described civil society as young in some countries like Laos and Burma, where their transition to more open societies is not yet complete. Strong NGOs from Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand could help strengthen the emergent CSOs in Cambodia, Burma, Vietnam, and Laos.

In middle income countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines, improving economic conditions coupled with better public provision of services has diminished the financing for small service-oriented NGOs and community based organizations, which will need to evolve in order to avoid “collapse.” They will need to redefine their role, strengthen their financial sustainability, and think strategically about how to engage constructively with governments as partners.

Under this IR, USAID proposes to work with governing institutions to advance their understanding of the value of public participation in decision-making and to build their capacity to engage civil society effectively; and to strengthen capacities of stakeholders, including CSOs and their networks to engage government institutions in public decision-making (with particular emphasis to strengthening the capabilities, voice, and influence of women leaders).

SUB-IR 1.3.1 GOVERNMENTS HAVE INCREASED CAPACITY TO ENGAGE WITH NON-STATE ACTORS

Governments and the people whom they govern must work together to create and sustain a participatory, inclusive, and responsible system of governance. USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Strategy provides a framework to support the establishment and consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies to advance freedom, dignity and development.¹⁸ A key element of this strategy is to promote responsible institutions and leaders. The ability of government to engage with non-state actors, such as CSOs and regional institutions, is a building block to accountability. When government institutions seek out and weigh the interests of the broader public in decision-making, policies will be more responsive to their needs. Governments across Asia also must look to create space that allows the people to have constructive channels of input.

Enhancing access to justice is an essential component of good governance. Governments are made accountable and citizens are able to exercise their rights freely and with protection under the law. Where opportunities exist for rule of law work in the region, RDMA will work with a variety of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, universities, the private sector, lawyers, and rights advocacy groups. Access to justice will be enhanced through activities that improve the capability of stakeholders to protect rights and increase the ability of citizens to exercise their rights through the justice system.

SUB-IR 1.3.2 CIVIL SOCIETY MORE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY ENGAGE AND INFLUENCE STATE INSTITUTIONS

For citizens to constructively engage their governments and regional institutions, they must find and use their voices in public decision-making. Civil society and media represent a broad range of opinions and demands, which they actively advocate for vis-à-vis government institutions, thus giving voice to the voiceless. USAID can help civil society to adapt and grow across Asia by enabling organizations to work cooperatively and strengthen channels of communication with governments. USAID can also help sectors within civil society to expand beyond service provision into development advocacy and policy dialogue. USAID will also promote sustainability among CSOs by offering technical support to build their capacity to become less reliant on a limited number of international funders and increasingly seek support from such diverse sources as local donors and indigenous philanthropy. Technology and partnerships with the private sector, as well as leveraging influence through regional and global networks, are equally critical to more capable and sustainable civil society in Asia.

¹⁸ USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, June 2013, p. 5.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR 1.3:

- Increased capacity of national and local governments to engage citizens in public decisions;
- Strengthened rule of law and citizen access to justice in targeted countries;
- Stronger CSOs that are able to work cooperatively and network effectively;
- More sustainable NGOs with stronger regional partnerships and access to diverse sources of funding;
- More publicly accountable institutions and leaders throughout the region.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 2: VULNERABLE POPULATIONS MORE ABLE TO ADDRESS RISKS THAT TRANSCEND BORDERS

Asia faces many risks that could undermine, threaten, or constrain its current development path. Some threats *cross borders*—emerging pandemic threats and infectious disease, disasters, and human trafficking—while others are *common to most countries* such as the effects of climate change, or human rights issues such as the failure to fully include all members of society in Asia’s prosperity and growth. DO 2 focuses and concentrates resources specifically on some of the populations most at risk, and builds their resilience and ability to manage those risks. The majority of Asia’s populations are susceptible to health, climate, and disaster risks, and USAID will work to strengthen systems to better manage those challenges. For populations that are most vulnerable to violations or limits on their human rights, USAID will work with those groups directly in order to reduce chronic vulnerability and facilitate inclusive growth. USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance’s programs on disaster risk reduction complement these efforts by supporting governments, communities, and civil society in reducing the risk of and preparing for natural disasters by safeguarding lives, livelihoods, services and facilities, thereby increasing their resilience to adverse transitory events.

In 2012, USAID joined the UNDP, ADB, and UNESCAP at their series of Asia regional workshops on the U.N.’s Post-2015 Development Agenda. Many of the presentations centered on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely: ending violence against women and strengthening women’s economic empowerment; addressing other inequalities and gaps related to income or disability; linking health to sustainable development and focusing on global health; and integrating planning on disaster risk reduction and climate change. As one lead analyst from UNESCAP described, Asia’s “current economic growth model is in deep crisis: growth is happening, but with rising inequality and grave deprivations... increasingly we see poverty in emerging economies, and climate change is imposing costs.”

DEFINITIONS

Vulnerable Populations: Individuals or communities that are typically excluded, disadvantaged or marginalized based on their economic, environmental, social, or cultural characteristics¹⁹ and those who are more susceptible to adverse effects

¹⁹ This includes four well-recognized categories of vulnerable groups: 1) ethnic and religious minorities; 2) people with disabilities; 3) individuals denied enjoyment of rights due to their sex, gender or sexual orientation/gender identity and expression; 4) and migrants. It also includes key populations, namely those who are at higher risk of being infected or affected by a disease, who play a key role in how the disease spreads, and whose involvement is vital for an effective and sustainable response.

from shocks or stresses such as natural hazards, infectious diseases, economic shocks, and conflict and who do not have adequate coping mechanisms or support systems.

Transcend Borders: Issues that are either cross-border or common to multiple Asian countries.

Illustrative Indicators

- Ability of selected communities to organize, network, and advocate for their own rights (composite score)
- Percentage of vulnerable populations who have improved access to and/or inclusion in national and regional institutions
- Organizational capacity score of CSOs serving vulnerable populations

Development Hypothesis: If Asia's capacity to mitigate public health threats is enhanced (IR 2.1), rights of specific vulnerable people are enhanced (IR 2.2), and the region's ability to adapt to climate change is strengthened (IR 2.3), then vulnerable populations will be more able to address transboundary risks (DO 2).

FIGURE 3: RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR DO 2

DO 2: Vulnerable Populations More Able to Address Risks that Transcend Borders

Illustrative Indicators:

- Ability of selected communities to organize, network, and advocate for their own rights (composite score)
- Percentage of vulnerable populations who have improved access to and/or inclusion in national and regional institutions
- Organizational capacity score of civil society organizations serving vulnerable populations

IR 2.1: Enhanced Capacity to Mitigate Public Health Threats

Sub-IRs:

Strengthened Health Systems

Improved Access to Quality Health Services

Effective Policies Implemented

Illustrative Indicators:

- Percentage of vulnerable population individuals accessing quality health services
- Percentage of health workers trained to deliver quality health services
- Number of health policies developed to support scalability and sustainability of quality health services

IR 2.2: Rights of Specific Vulnerable People Enhanced

Sub-IRs:

Vulnerable Populations More Aware of Risks

Organizations and Networks Have Increased Capacity to Advocate for Rights

Livelihoods of marginalized populations improved

Illustrative Indicators:

- Percentage of selected populations with increased rights (specific rights defined by population)
- Percentage of selected populations with improved perceptions of increased rights (specific rights defined by population)

IR 2.3: Ability to Adapt to Climate Change Strengthened

Sub-IRs:

Countries Have Better Access to Resources Implementing and Sustaining their Climate Change Adaptation Actions

Governments & Communities in the AP Region Have Enhanced Capability to Develop and Implement Effective Strategies to Minimize Climate Change and Disaster Risks

Illustrative Indicator:

- Number of stakeholders with increased capacity to adapt to impacts of climate variability and changes as a result of USG assistance
- Number of stakeholder groups implementing risk-reducing practices/actions to improve climate and disaster resilience as a result of USG assistance

DO 2 Critical Assumptions

- Political space will fluctuate but not significantly worsen, thus allowing CSOs, community based organizations, trade and labor unions, grassroots movements and political parties to use public space and the media effectively for advocacy.
- The enabling environment for technology remains open to users and developers; media infrastructure continues to expand across the country; and use of mobile phones and internet expands. Youth will use formal education in law to advocate for fair rule of law.
- Youth and key populations who are members of CSOs and political parties will become more inspired to visibly advocate for political reform, and step forward as future leaders.
- Vulnerable groups will change as the region experiences extensive economic growth, rapid urbanization, and climate variability.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.1: ENHANCED CAPACITY TO MITIGATE PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS

Asian countries have reached unprecedented levels of prosperity, but millions of people are still affected by poverty and poor health. With a growing gap between the rich and poor and inequalities in other socioeconomic factors, solutions to address the root causes of poverty and inadequate health services remain elusive. Within this context, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases continue, threatening to slow or even reverse economic progress achieved in the past decade.

USAID's analysis of Asia's demographic, income, and health statistics over a 20-year period revealed that improved health has a significant positive impact on reducing poverty and income inequality. This finding motivates RDMA to make a strategic connection between health outcomes and more resilient populations, which ultimately contributes directly to the goal of inclusivity and prosperity in Asia.

Overall, Asia has made great progress in combating TB, HIV and AIDS, and other infectious diseases. For example, TB prevalence is falling, and two countries in Asia have reached their MDG target, with four other countries on track to achieve their TB MDG target. Similarly for TB treatment, five of eleven Southeast Asia countries have already achieved 2015 targets, and the another five countries are on track. Despite these gains, much remains to be done to combat TB in the region.

Multidrug-resistant (MDR) strains of malaria and TB remain major threats to public health, with the possibility of spreading outside of Asia. Southeast Asia accounts for an estimated 88,000 MDR-TB cases, with China adding an additional 100,000. Co-infection of TB and HIV—and in particular TB diagnosis and treatment among HIV infected patients—continues to be a challenge. USAID has supported TB control and prevention in the Asia-Pacific region since 2006.

Sixty-five million people in the GMS are at risk for malaria infection. An estimated 900,000 people are infected with malaria each year—the real number is likely much higher because of poor detection and reporting in underserved areas where the disease is most likely to occur. Asia accounts for 15 percent of malaria cases and 3 percent of deaths due to the disease worldwide. Those most vulnerable include tribal communities, migrant populations, and people working on development projects such as hydropower dams, roads, irrigation projects, mining, and plantations. An emergency response has been initiated by regional and global partners to stop the spread of artemisinin-resistant strains, especially in the Thailand-Burma and Thailand-Cambodia border regions. Between 1998 and 2010, the GMS nations have collectively achieved an 81 percent reduction in the annual number of deaths attributed to malaria. Elimination strategies in the region are focusing on identifying and treating the remaining cases, usually found among hard to reach vulnerable populations.

The effects of rapid economic growth—which include ports, dams, mines and planned economic corridors—pose new challenges for public health in Asia. Changing demographics, urbanization rates, and lifestyle also require a different approach to continue the progress in preventing infectious diseases.

Under this IR, USAID will prioritize engagement with regional platforms and governments, trilateral donor opportunities, increased private sector involvement, and cross-border and urban area programming. We will provide technical assistance to support innovation, evaluation, capacity and advocacy in the region. Broader development approaches to achieving health development goals, such as more sustainable surveillance systems, may need support from areas outside of the health sector. Gender considerations are critical elements in accurately characterizing differential risk of exposure to emerging infectious diseases, including zoonoses of pandemic potential. Defining occupational exposure that may traditionally be gender specific in the region, such as employment in farm and market settings, will facilitate appropriately targeted surveillance and risk mitigation strategies.

DEFINITION

Public health threat: Any event that poses a serious threat to public health. RDMA will focus on infectious diseases that threaten the public health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations in particular, with special emphasis on those with cross-border impacts. Specifically, these include diseases that are within the manageable interest of RDMA, such as artemisinin-resistant malaria, HIV and AIDS, MDR-TB, pandemic influenza, and other emerging pathogenic threats.

Illustrative Indicators

- Percentage of vulnerable population individuals accessing quality health services
- Percentage of health workers trained to deliver quality health services
- Number of health policies developed to support scalability and sustainability of quality health services

Development Hypothesis: If health systems are strengthened to address malaria, TB, Emerging Pandemic Threats and HIV and AIDS (sub IR 2.1.1), access to quality health services is improved (sub IR 2.1.2), and effective policies are implemented (sub IR 2.1.3), then countries and vulnerable populations in the region will have enhanced capacity to mitigate public health threats (IR 2.1).

Public health threats are transnational, prevalent in multiple countries in the region, and transferred across borders. USAID will prioritize engagement with regional platforms and national governments, bi- and multi-lateral donor cooperation, increased private sector involvement, and cross-border and urban area programming. We will provide technical assistance to support innovation, capacity, strategic information including evaluation, and advocacy. Broader development approaches to achieving health development goals, such as stronger and harmonized health information systems, may need support from areas outside of the health sector. RDMA's health team is uniquely qualified to provide targeted technical assistance and will closely coordinate with country-led programs from bilateral missions to provide coordinated program management and regional connectivity. Senior technical advisors with specializations in health system strengthening, veterinary and human health, and monitoring and evaluation will actively seek opportunities to leverage investments with bilateral and non-presence country programming. Expected results will include the increased utilization of health services by vulnerable populations, and regional or country specific health systems able to provide sustainable, high quality services to targeted populations. Improved health policy by regional, national, and subnational organizations for health outcomes will lead to reduced rates of infectious disease.

SUB-IR 2.1.1: STRENGTHENED HEALTH SYSTEMS

RDMA will strengthen functional networks of healthcare providers; including public, private, and non-governmental providers. The strengthening of networks is a critical factor for improving uptake of health services and bringing about behavior change. It is important to address the barriers that limit access for vulnerable people, which includes provision of relevant information and skills, client-friendliness, and affordable services. Moreover, there needs to be a concerted action

to eliminate stigma and discrimination, which are major impediments to accessibility to health services. On the supply side, health service providers are vital partners because their behaviors influence demand positively and negatively. Quality of service provision is a key factor in influencing access. With this reasoning, USAID will provide behavior change communication to key populations to better inform them of health and related key social risks (e.g., gender-based violence) and how to prevent themselves from contracting HIV and AIDS, TB, malaria, and emerging pandemic threats. Social mobilization activities in conjunction with the behavior change communication activities will allow for populations at risk for these infectious diseases to be motivated to reduce risky behaviors.

SUB-IR 2.1.2: IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES

RDMA will collaborate with host country governments, civil society and private health service providers to develop and pilot service delivery models or approaches aimed at improving the volume and quality of services available to vulnerable populations, with a focus on HIV and AIDS, TB, malaria and emerging pandemic threats. Public and private sector health service providers will be targeted to improve their knowledge, attitudes and behavioral practices to assist vulnerable and key populations in reducing their exposure to harm from the target infectious diseases and related exposures such as sexual and physical violence. Capacity building will also include support for improving service quality, including staff training, information system strengthening, and service facility improvement. As countries increasingly move toward the provision of universal health care coverage, RDMA will capitalize on existing partnerships to share expertise with the region.

We will invest in promoting and validating proven tools for potential scale-up and policy change because RDMA's strategy has long focused on identifying approaches and policies that can be transferred for scale-up with funding from other sources. USAID will work with host country governments and civil society or private providers to develop and prove service delivery models or approaches currently not in use in the respective countries in order to improve the volume, quality and impact of services available to vulnerable and key populations across the target diseases. Service delivery will encompass any one part or a combination from the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and after-care continuum. We will promote innovations and the use of new technologies in improving service delivery. Once an approach is proven cost-effective, it will be transferred to the host government for scale-up using either government or other donors' funds. USAID will support activities to adopt scalable technologies, introduce effective alternative delivery systems, improve strategic information and its use in programming (including disease surveillance systems and operations research), and build the capacity of human resources to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of national health systems. The advantage of "scalable" is that it encompasses cost-effectiveness, affordability within host country budget envelopes, alignment with host country policies, and realism with respect to host country staff, facility and logistics resources. All of these advantages need to be kept in mind as models evolve.

SUB-IR 2.1.3: EFFECTIVE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED

RDMA will concentrate on making health systems more responsive and resilient by building national health policies, which can support both the supply and the demand sides of RDMA's work. Health related policy development and implementation will be enhanced to support scalability and sustainability of quality health services for vulnerable populations. Policy development is key to sustainable financing and country ownership. Building on the results of sub-IR 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, we will develop an approach to policy tracking in our field of operations. This will encompass identification of baseline policy issues and problems, policy interventions and documents, official endorsement of policies, implementation (including financing), and evaluation of policy impact on health. We will support evidence-based policy development and implementation including regulatory systems, linking expertise within Asia to inform progress on these issues. Our work on evaluation and research will join up with policy development and implementation. RDMA recognizes the need to focus more upstream on policy, financing and health system strengthening.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR 2.1:

- Increased demand for health services from targeted regional populations;
- Improved access to information, client-friendly service providers and affordable health services;
- Reduced risk taking among key populations due to more effective social mobilization activities;
- Improved knowledge, attitudes and behavioral practices among key vulnerable populations;
- Better service delivery models to improve volume, quality and impact of health services for key populations;
- More effective and efficient national health care systems through improved human resources.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.2: RIGHTS OF SPECIFIC VULNERABLE PEOPLE ENHANCED

As Asia continues to grow rapidly, many vulnerable populations have not shared in the benefits of this economic development and remain at risk of falling behind. Asia's populations most at risk include women and men vulnerable to human trafficking; displaced persons and migrants; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations; people with disabilities; women and men who are at risk for gender-based violence; women; indigenous people; and ethnic and religious minorities. Protection of these vulnerable populations is not only a question of equity and human rights, but also a matter of inclusive economic growth. As former USAID Deputy Administrator Don Steinberg stated, development must draw from the full contribution of women, LGBT, minorities, and other marginalized populations that together represent 70 percent of the population in most countries.

Trafficking: As many as 11 million people are victims of human trafficking within the Asia-Pacific Region, with Southeast Asia representing a key context for the supply of people into illegal, unpaid and exploitative situations. Of these victims, according to the International Labour Organization, 55 percent are women and girls, and thousands are victims of forced sexual exploitation. President Obama has called human trafficking a "debasement of our common humanity...which must be called by its true name—modern slavery." The State Department's 2013 *Trafficking in Persons Report* categorizes most ASEAN countries as Tier 2, meaning that they do not fully comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. All ASEAN governments are part of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, a non-binding, voluntary forum co-chaired by the governments of Indonesia and Australia, which began in 2002. But not all countries have strong national legislation in place. The Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) has fuelled progress in anti-human trafficking efforts in the GMS since its inception in 2004. In 2004, the six Governments of the GMS (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam) signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) against Trafficking in Persons. This MOU, signed at the Ministerial level, committed the governments to a response to human trafficking meeting international standards, highlighting the need for multi-lateral, bilateral, and government-NGO cooperation to fight human trafficking.

Displaced Persons and Migrants: UNHCR estimates that there are 2.5 million displaced persons in Southeast Asia, including refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and returnees from situations of displacement. As a consequence of their status, displaced persons and migrants are increasingly vulnerable to want, abuse and exploitation. Want constitutes a lack of access to food, clean water, shelter, health, sanitation, and other humanitarian needs. Abuse and exploitation include physical attack, stigmatization, and leveraging displaced vulnerable status by non-displaced persons for labor, profit and political advancement.

LGBT: LGBT populations in Asia are subject to prejudice-inspired intimidation, legal discrimination and incarceration, stigmatization, and murder as a result of having nontraditional sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Many Asian countries continue to outlaw LGBT status; even where the status is not illegal, many LGBT people continue to face minimal if any legal (services) protection against attacks and discrimination. As a result, LGBT people in Asia are at continual risk of facing health and education access discrimination, enduring general social stigma, and even losing their lives.

People with Disabilities: Of the 650 million disabled people in the Asia and Pacific region, approximately 250 million are of working age. Only 10 percent of children with disabilities are estimated to attend primary school in the Asia Pacific region, and disabled people are often excluded from training and workplaces.²⁰ Many live in poverty and suffer discrimination, exclusion, prejudice and superstition. They are often subject to widespread human rights violations including malnutrition, forced sterilization, sexual exploitation, denial of educational and vocational training opportunities, limited access to public services, institutionalization, and the denial of voting rights. The disabling injuries caused by landmines and unexploded ordinances (UXO) in countries such as Laos pose special challenges for those affected.

Ethnic Minority and Excluded Populations: Minority and excluded populations constitute segments of societies that have a potential to suffer at the hands of those who rule among a population's majority group, seen through the lens of national identity, ethnic/religious identity, and/or ideological points of view. Exclusion includes legal discrimination, socio-cultural homogenization, physically or legally enforced dislocation or localization, and political marginalization.

DEFINITIONS

Rights: Fundamental rights as defined broadly by UN Declaration of Human Rights and other applicable international legal standards.

Vulnerable Groups: All of these groups share common challenges with ineffective formal institutional and legal structures; lack of capacities of vulnerable groups and individuals to attain rights and equity; and prejudicial social views (for specific vulnerable populations, see definitions above).

Persons with Disabilities: Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (ILO, 1983).

Illustrative Indicators

- Percentage of selected populations with increased rights (specific rights defined by population)
- Percentage of selected populations with improved perceptions of increased rights (specific rights defined by population)

Given the enormity and range of challenges confronting vulnerable groups in Asia, RDMA will focus and prioritize its interventions in close coordination with bilateral missions and Embassy partners, selecting specific vulnerable populations both regionally and in some cases within specific countries, particularly non-USAID presence countries, based on several key criteria, including identified rights-related needs; applicability to a regional approach to the problem; limited existing donor engagement; anticipated impact of programming; political imperatives; and manageability. Consideration will also be given to cross-fertilizing civil society experiences and best practices across Asian countries in order that organizations and actors can learn from each other.

Under this IR, USAID proposes initially to 1) build awareness of trafficking risks among vulnerable populations and society at large; 2) strengthen enjoyment of rights without regard to sex, gender or sexual orientation/gender identity and expression; 3) improve the livelihoods of ethnic Tibetans; 4) address challenges facing specific disabled communities; and 5) address key women and children's rights issues. Across all identified vulnerable priorities listed above there will be a focus

²⁰ Estimates based on data sources from UNESCAP, ILO, and UNESCO.

on identifying and deliberately programming to close the gap on the most important gender inequalities, including women's economic inclusion, and awareness and services for gender-based violence prevention and response.

Development Hypothesis: If vulnerable populations gain greater knowledge and awareness of risks (sub-IR 2.2.1), and capacity of organizations and networks that advocate for the rights of vulnerable populations is increased (sub-IR 2.2.2), and the livelihoods of marginalized populations are improved (sub-IR 2.2.3), then the rights of specific vulnerable people will be enhanced (IR 2.2). Sustainable improvements in the rights of vulnerable populations also may depend on change in enabling environments at the national level; this will be achieved through advocacy by CSOs.

Expected results will include changes in intended and actual behavior of vulnerable populations toward identified risks, and regional CSOs and networks that more effectively engage with government and non-government institutions toward sustainable rights outcomes. Increased effectiveness in regional, national, and subnational organizations in realizing sustainable rights outcomes will lead to reduced rates of identified areas of rights abuse in the region.

USAID's contribution to the whole-of-government anti-trafficking effort was, until recently, its partnership with MTV EXIT, which played a major role in raising awareness in vulnerable groups of the threat of trafficking by producing 32 major concert events, 76 television and online programs, and dozens of outreach activities and directly engaged almost two million people in the region from 2006 to 2014. Together with the members of ASEAN, and in partnership with CSOs, the U.S. Government looks forward to enhancing regional efforts to protect and rehabilitate trafficking survivors, bring traffickers to justice, and raise awareness so that trafficking can be stopped before it starts. During the ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Meeting held in Cambodia in November 2012, President Obama and the 10 ASEAN heads of state agreed to improve cooperative efforts to tackle modern slavery, including the forced labor and sex trafficking of women, men and children.

RDMA is partnering with UNDP on a joint effort entitled "Being LGBT in Asia: A Participatory Review and Analysis of the Legal and Social Environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Civil Society." Together with grassroots LGBT organizations and community leaders, Being LGBT in Asia seeks to understand the challenges faced by LGBT people, leveraging value-added innovations in video and mobile technology to educate development stakeholders, including USAID, about LGBT-inclusive development. In the next phase, Being LGBT will work with civil society actors and organizations as well as government institutions to realize greater rights recognition of LGBT people throughout Southeast and East Asia. Efforts will include CSO capacity building, support to advocacy efforts toward legalization and legal recognition of LGBT populations, and efforts to reduce general stigmatization of LGBT people.

USAID will continue to improve opportunities for Tibetans by helping communities meet socio-economic needs while conserving the environment and preserving their cultural heritage. USAID support will improve access to education, vocational training and healthcare, and assist in enterprise development. As a result, Tibetan nomads will have improved and enhanced skills in rangeland management, livestock development, and crop production. USAID support will also enable the preservation of the arts, rare texts, and cultural sites, and will assist Tibetan artisans to market their products.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.3: ABILITY TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE STRENGTHENED

Climate change affects social and economic development in the Asia region in different ways. Higher temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, and more intense droughts and storms can affect food crops, water supplies, livelihoods, coastlines, roads, infrastructure, and national economic performance. The poorest countries and communities are most vulnerable to these risks.

The urgency for adaptation is highlighted by projections from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) coupled with the long-lasting effects of natural disasters in recent years. By 2050, the temperatures in Asia are expected to

rise 2-4°C, and the sea level could rise 1-2 meters. Even with a temperature increase of 1-2.5° C, the IPCC predicts serious effects. For example, climate changes could reduce crop yields in tropical areas leading to greater food insecurity, increase the incidence of climate-sensitive diseases such as malaria, and cause the extinction of up to 20-30 percent of all plant and animal species.

Asia's rapid urbanization is linked closely with accelerating economic growth in the region. The number of migrants seeking economic opportunities in urban centers will likely increase after 2015 as the ASEAN Economic Community is established. Urban climate risk is expected to increase most rapidly as a result of spatial expansion by poor migrants into hazard-prone areas, which are located along coastlines, flood plains, and other low lying areas in many Asian primary and secondary cities. Experts predict that these areas will experience more frequent and intense storm surges, floods, and coastal erosion as a result of climate change. The urban poor are often the least resilient due to lack of access to basic services, social safety nets, and alternative livelihoods options. Given the uncertain impacts of climate change in these risk-prone areas, it will be important for cities to promote adaptive management methods to minimize these risks in this rapidly changing environment.

The Mekong River Basin is home to more than 60 million people, and is considered one of the world's most vulnerable areas to climate change impacts. Their food security, health and economic livelihoods depend directly on the natural systems and services provided by the Mekong River and its tributaries, particularly for crop irrigation and fisheries. Extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, will increase due to climate change impacts. It is important for these communities to understand their exposure to climate change risks and take appropriate actions to minimize them.

DEFINITION

Adaptation: A process through which societies make themselves better able to cope with an uncertain future (IPCC).

Illustrative Indicators

- Number of stakeholders with increased capacity to adapt to impacts of climate variability and change as a result of USG assistance
- Number of stakeholder groups implementing risk-reducing practices/actions to improve climate and disaster resilience as a result of USG assistance

Development Hypothesis: If governments and communities in the Asia-Pacific region have better access to resources to develop and implement effective strategies to minimize the climate change and disaster risks (sub-IR 2.3.2), and governments and communities have enhanced capability to develop and implement effective strategies (e.g., finance, information) to minimize climate change and disaster risks (sub-IR 2.3.1), then these stakeholders' ability to adapt to climate change will be strengthened (IR 2.3).

Adapting to climate change entails taking the correct measures to reduce the negative effects of climate change or expanding the positive ones already in place. Because adverse changes from climate variability are happening rapidly, reducing the vulnerability of developing countries and increasing their capacity to adapt is an urgent need. Future vulnerability can be reduced if countries factor climate and disaster risk into their sustainable development plans. Thus, adaptation interventions should be undertaken in the context of local, national, and global development efforts and in partnership with country governments, the international development community, and the private sector.

Targeted stakeholders include governments (national and sub-national), regional platforms/bodies, NGOs, communities, private sector actors, and CSOs in Asia (in particular those in LMI and ASEAN member countries) who are directly or indirectly involved with managing the negative impacts of climate change. Special emphasis is placed on the vulnerable

populations in urban, rural, and coastal areas including, but not limited to, urban poor, subsistent farmers, small-scale farmers, coastal fishers, and people who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods.

SUB-IR 2.3.1: GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES HAVE BETTER ACCESS TO RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING AND SUSTAINING THEIR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION ACTIONS

Lack of reliable information and finance are two of the most common challenges that hinder governments and communities in Asia from taking and sustaining appropriate measures for climate change adaptation. Reliable information requires science-based data to help decision makers, institutional or individual, to understand changes caused by changes in climate and their likely impacts on social and economic development. Financing arrangements are then critical to making the changes required to adapt to projected climate change impacts. This sub-IR will strengthen the ability of governments and communities in Asia to acquire critical information on how climate change will impact important economic sectors and stakeholders, to identify key climate vulnerabilities, and to build capacities of stakeholders to adapt and maintain resilience given the negative consequences of climatic change. The activities will foster closer coordination among relevant government agencies, academic institutions, and development partners to share and integrate information in order to assist countries and the region to take collective actions to minimize climate change impacts. This sub-IR will also facilitate collaboration between good climate adaptation initiatives and financiers (e.g., climate funds, national systems, private sector investments) in order to sustain adaptation actions.

SUB-IR 2.3.2: GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION HAVE ENHANCED CAPABILITY TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO MINIMIZE CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISKS

Reliable science-based information will be useless if not put to good use. This sub-IR will strengthen the capacity of governments and communities (e.g., academic institutions, private sector actors, and civil society stakeholders) to analyze and process the information on projected climate change risks and vulnerabilities in order to develop effective climate adaptation strategies and responses that are actually executed to achieve greater resilience. Planning, design, and implementation of actions will be undertaken in a participatory manner to foster a stronger sense of ownership by all stakeholders, thereby generating more sustainable solutions.

Illustrative Outcomes

Expected outcomes at the end of this strategy will include:

- Over two million vulnerable people will benefit from reduced risks due to climate change impacts;
- Over \$1 billion in financing will be leveraged for climate resilience interventions in selected secondary cities and communities;
- Effective climate resilience procedures and practices implemented in 25 secondary cities and 25 rural communities across Asia.

SUPPORT OBJECTIVE: U.S. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN ASIA ADVANCED

DEFINITIONS

Efficiency: The measure of development results achieved, as compared with the cost of the inputs used.

Effectiveness: The extent to which development assistance produces desirable outcomes, results and impacts.

Illustrative Indicators

- Perception among bilateral client missions that RDMA support enhances their staff's abilities to advance USAID priorities (measure of "effectiveness")
- Ratio of outside funds mobilized vs. RDMA's funds (measure of "efficiency")
- Percentage of client mission staff who report applying knowledge, skills and/or tools as a result of RDMA support

Development Hypothesis: If RDMA provides support to USAID missions and non-presence countries on Agency priorities (IR S.1), advances development partnerships (IR S.2), and fosters innovative evidence-based solutions (IR S.3), then U.S. development assistance will be more effective and efficient in Asia.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT S.1: USAID MISSIONS AND NON-PRESENCE COUNTRIES SUPPORTED

USAID's Asia Bureau leadership envisions RDMA as an efficient and effective platform to advance the Agency's vision and to operationalize the Asia Bureau's priorities in the Asia region. The Asia Bureau's goal is to strengthen this existing foundation and maximize RDMA's performance potential, in particular when regional administrative and technical operations are shown to be in the best financial and programmatic interests of the Agency and the U.S. Government. This Support Objective is a key element of RDMA's roadmap for meeting the development objectives described earlier in this strategy as well as advancing the Agency's priorities. To realize this vision, RDMA will continue to: a) serve as the forward operating base for the deployment of USAID Forward and QDDR reforms, Agency policies (both technical and operational), and the implementation of Presidential Initiatives in Asia; b) provide cost-effective administrative, operational and/or technical support to bilateral missions; c) implement bilateral programming in non-presence countries; and d) implement regional programs (including support for regional institutions) in close consultation with the Asia Bureau and relevant missions. Service as a forward operating base is a combination of direct mission assistance including the provision of training and experience exchanges, regional networking within and beyond USAID, and exploring key regional approaches and partnerships to advance priorities that may serve as examples for the Agency.

RDMA is best positioned to serve as a major regional provider for a wide range of cost-effective administrative, financial, technical and programmatic services to bilateral USAID missions in the Asia region as well as to key non-presence countries. In addition, the caliber of development professionals that comprises RDMA's staff will set a standard for excellence in regional support platforms as well as support provided to bilateral missions: this Mission will be one of the first to benefit from the expertise of an advisor from the Agency's new Senior Technical Group in a continuing effort to provide technical leadership in the development community. RDMA's strategic regional approach under this Support Objective will help to project the Agency's role in developing "thought leadership" by convening regional stakeholders, participating in regional and global debates, and facilitating knowledge sharing and training on innovative development and operational approaches. RDMA will actively coordinate with USAID missions to further their interests and objectives to promote connectivity in the region.

FIGURE 4: RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORT OBJECTIVE

Support Objective:

U.S. Development Assistance Efficiency and Effectiveness in Asia Advanced

Illustrative Indicators:

- Perception among bilateral client Missions that RDMA support enhances their staff's abilities to advance USAID priorities (measure of "effectiveness")
- Ratio of outside funds mobilized vs. RDMA's funds (measure of "efficiency")
- Percentage of client mission staff who report applying knowledge, skills and/or tools as a result of RDMA support

IR S.1: USAID Missions & Non-Presence Countries Supported

Sub-IRs:

Technical and Administrative Support Provided

Training, Tools, and Systems Developed for More Effective Implementation

Best Practices in USAID Reforms Identified, Supported, and Disseminated

Illustrative Indicators:

- Number of regional support systems, mechanisms and approaches developed (by type of support) to advance Agency priorities or initiatives (e.g., advancement of LGBT human rights)
- Percentage of bilateral client Missions expressing satisfaction with RDMA support in enhancing their capacity to advance USAID priorities (as measured by survey instruments)

IR S.2: Development Partnerships Advanced

Sub-IRs:

Assets and resources mobilized

Capacity of local partners strengthened

Thought leadership with other development partners influenced by USAID

Illustrative Indicators:

- Percentage of bilateral mission resources channeled directly to local organizations and host governments due in part to RDMA support
- Number of new partnerships in bilateral missions as a direct result of RDMA support

IR S.3: Innovative and Evidence-based Solutions Fostered

Sub-IRs:

Systems and capacities built and promoted to enhance development and application of scalable innovative solutions

Robust analyses to strengthen evidence-based decision-making in USAID priority areas of programming are utilized

Illustrative Indicators:

- Number of regional platforms/networks for sourcing and sharing innovations strengthened
- Number of innovative approaches identified by RDMA that are funded or adopted by USAID or bilateral missions
- Percentage of RDMA activities utilizing mobile technology to improve development outcomes

DEFINITION

- **USAID:** Includes bilateral and regional missions in Asia, as well as programming in non-presence countries (China, Laos, Thailand)

Illustrative Indicators

- Number of regional support systems, mechanisms and approaches developed (by type of support) to advance Agency priorities or initiatives (e.g., advancement of LGBT human rights)
- Percentage of bilateral client missions expressing satisfaction with RDMA support in enhancing their capacity to advance USAID priorities (as measured by survey instruments)

Development Hypothesis: If technical and administrative support is provided (sub-IR S.1.1), training, tools, and systems are developed for more effective implementation of Agency priorities (sub-IR S.1.2), and best practices under USAID reforms and policies are identified, supported, and disseminated (sub-IR S.1.3), then the capacity of USAID missions and non-presence country programs to deliver better development results will be strengthened (IR S.1).

As USAID rebuilds itself as the world's premiere development agency, there is a need to strengthen the Agency's capacity to translate new policies into more effective programs and approaches; hone operational skills to work more efficiently and effectively; and share more broadly the knowledge and best practices that are being developed across missions in Asia. With its central location and its quality facilities, RDMA offers a cost-effective platform to support, convene, and train USAID staff in the region. RDMA serves as a regional learning platform in Asia to help address missions' training requirements and bolster program and operational needs when it is more effective for the Agency to have capability at a regional level, rather than in each individual mission. In addition, regional innovations spawned in USAID missions have increased application within the same region due to economic, social and political factors; therefore, RDMA is uniquely placed to gather, synthesize, share knowledge, and help catalyze adoption among USAID missions in the region.

Support to Missions: RDMA provides technical and operational support to USAID missions through TDYs, remote technical assistance, and regional networking of expertise, training, and regional programs. One source of technical assistance is the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)—a cadre of cross-sectoral advisors that includes the technical areas of gender, local capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, disaster risk reduction and resilience, science and technology, public-private partnerships, conflict, and engineering. RDMA's technical offices (public health, economic growth, governance and vulnerable populations, and environment) will articulate regional programs and mechanisms that help missions to advance Agency priorities and enhance the development impact of their programs through buy-ins or otherwise leveraging partnerships and innovation. RDMA actively coordinates with ASIA/TS and with missions that have unique technical capabilities to help link field needs with broader Agency capabilities. Finally, ongoing operational support provided by RDMA's USDH, USPSC, and FSN staff in procurement, financial management, legal, executive, and program development offices is critical to the success of USAID Forward reforms and the program cycle.

The Asia Bureau and RDMA are working together to ensure close coordination on meeting demand for technical assistance and other services and will explore options moving forward.

State of the Art Training Facility: The Asia Regional Training Center (ARTC) is a powerful platform to help fill knowledge gaps and promote the use of innovative approaches. In addition to steady and impressive increases in occupancy, now averaging as many, or more, seats filled than the average university in the United States, we aim to use the ARTC to provide not just standard Agency training but to become a platform for thought leadership, including through courses developed and implemented by RDMA staff. RDMA's Local Systems course (already administered in multiple countries) and the exceptionally well-received worldwide USAID Forward Experience Summit are excellent examples of such efforts.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR S.1:

- Increased opportunities for stakeholders to participate in discussions of regional and global development issues;
- Improved knowledge sharing and training on innovative development and operational approaches.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT S.2: DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS ADVANCED

RDMA is proposing a new vision for how to engage as a development leader. By sharing state-of-the-art development knowledge, identifying and scaling up innovations and best practices, and connecting key stakeholders, USAID will add value far beyond the dollar value of development assistance to Asia. As part of that effort, RDMA will establish a Private Sector Engagement Group to increase economic growth throughout Asia by assisting RDMA and client missions in identifying opportunities with the financial sector, partnerships and technology solutions. Engagement with the private sector is at the core of the group's work. As USAID's forward operating base in Asia, RDMA promotes high-impact partnerships that will lead to sustainability. In order to achieve long-term sustainable development, USAID partners with government institutions, private sector, CSOs, other USG colleagues, and other development actors to collectively serve as engines of growth and progress at the national and regional levels. RDMA is helping to achieve this through public-private partnerships, partnerships to advance programming in gender equality and female empowerment, science and technology, and increased investment directly to partner governments and local organizations.

The power of partnerships will be harnessed through proactive engagement with NGOs, private companies, multilateral donors, and academia. These engagements will lead to tangible results through leveraging additional funding for innovative programs and resources for entrepreneurs and SMEs. Development Credit Authority (DCA) loans will mitigate the risks that banks face in lending to non-traditional clients, thus leading to more impactful investments. Partnerships with NGOs and academia will lead to greater collaboration and sharing of best practices with a larger number of beneficiaries. Continued outreach and partnership with the private sector will lead to additional technical expertise, networks and financial resources in tackling development challenges. Multilateral relationships with other donor organizations will increase the reach and impact of USAID development programs through mutual synergies and objectives.

Illustrative Indicators

- Percentage of bilateral mission resources channeled directly to local organizations and host governments due in part to RDMA support
- Number of new partnerships in bilateral missions as a direct result of RDMA support

Development Hypothesis: By mobilizing assets and resources (sub-IR S.2.1), strengthening capacities of local partners (sub-IR S.2.2), and influencing thought leadership with other development partners (sub-IR S.2.3), RDMA will advance the development of partnerships in the region, a critical component of improving the effectiveness of development assistance throughout Asia (IR S.2).

Under IR S.2, RDMA will measure progress within its regional programs and technical assistance to other missions to meet USAID Forward top-line indicators as well as the application of RDMA's smart development screen on partnering by requiring almost all RDMA programs to mobilize at least two dollars of outside resources for every dollar of RDMA investment. This will encourage more partnerships that build on Asian expertise and resources, leverage Asia's tremendous private sector and substantial government investments through G2G funding, and share buy-in and commitment with bilateral missions to address common problems together. In addition, RDMA will develop new models the missions can use for increased investment directly to partner governments and local organizations and through public private partnerships. RDMA will develop mechanisms for USAID to access qualified regional and local institutions to provide capacity development services such as advocacy and policy development, analytic and adaptive abilities, sustainability, strengthened management capacities and internal systems, and visioning and leadership.

Using its convening power, RDMA will engage key stakeholders on strategic development issues that are regional or global in nature. In order to gain a better understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context in Asia, RDMA will explore ways to address jointly development challenges in the region. By engaging a broad range of regional actors, RDMA will contribute to and benefit from new ideas and approaches toward sustainable development. For example, RDMA will continue to leverage support from Malaysia for the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program and will seek to encourage other ASEAN donors to also consider contributions to this important

initiative to develop future leaders of ASEAN and promote regional integration. RDMA will also help bilateral missions and host-country counterparts to think more regionally and identify mutually reinforcing ways in which bilateral and regional missions can work together. This provision of connectivity will strengthen collaboration and help support development of a network of partners, working toward common goals.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR S.2:

- New opportunities for USAID missions to work with financial sector and regional partners on technology solutions;
- Additional funding sources for entrepreneurs and SMEs leveraged through innovative programs;
- Increased private sector expertise, networks and financial resources available to address development challenges;
- Better public-private partnership models for USAID to engage with partner governments and local organizations;
- Improved USAID mechanisms for providing capacity development services to regional and local institutions.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT S.3: INNOVATIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOSTERED

RDMA will expand its role as a platform for promoting innovative and evidence-based programming. This includes furthering the Agency's efforts to identify and scale up innovative, breakthrough solutions to development challenges (across sectors and priority areas), including use of mobile and geospatial technologies in USAID programs; supporting research to fill transnationally important knowledge gaps; supporting approaches to bridge the gap between existing science and its application in policies and development practice; and supporting capacity building, research, networks, and other approaches to further enable evidence-based programming and decision-making. RDMA, as a Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (STIP) Priority Mission, will work in close cooperation with the Global Development Lab in Washington (the Lab) and with other STIP priority missions in Asia to build a regional community of practice. RDMA's Science & Technology and Partnerships teams will provide technical assistance and training to assist regional and bilateral mission staff in integrating science, technology, innovations, and partnerships throughout program activities. Also, as a priority mission on resilience, RDMA can facilitate the implementation of the USAID-Rockefeller Global Resilience Partnership and support the Resilience Challenge.

RDMA views itself as a key partner for the Lab, with roles to play in regionally scaling globally sourced innovations, building regional networks—both internal and external to the Agency—to strengthen the application of S&T to decision-making and assisting with communications of global STIP initiatives. RDMA has a long history of collaborating with the Lab on partnerships, mobile technology, data and analytics, funding of research (PEER Science), and other areas. RDMA intends to deepen its collaboration with the Lab and ability to function as a cutting-edge platform, by enabling staff from the Lab, Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) labs, other USG agencies, and academia to engage. For example, a Lab Data Fellow will be working with RDMA for several months on a fisheries database project with the Mekong River Commission as a pilot of this model for collaboration.

DEFINITION

Innovations: Development interventions that are deliberately designed to achieve major, rather than incremental, improvements in overall cost effectiveness, impact or scale compared to standard practice. Forms of development innovation include new processes, improved business or organizational models, service delivery practices, or cost-effective variations on an existing practice.

Illustrative Indicators

- Number of regional platforms/networks for sourcing and sharing innovations strengthened
- Number of innovative approaches identified by RDMA that are funded or adopted by USAID or bilateral missions
- Percentage of RDMA activities utilizing mobile technology to improve development outcomes

Development Hypothesis: If systems and capacities are built and promoted to enhance development and application of scalable innovative solutions (sub-IR S.3.1), and staff fill knowledge gaps and utilize more robust analyses to strengthen evidence-based

decision-making in USAID priority areas of programming (sub-IR S.3.2), then USAID will foster innovative and evidence-based development solutions for Asia for greater impact (IR S.3).

RDMA will use its role as a convening platform to host knowledge sharing and thought leadership events designed to identify and share innovative, breakthrough solutions to development challenges. By regularly engaging thought leaders from academia, the private sector, and other areas, we will track the leading edge of the opportunities that technology can potentially deliver. We will develop approaches to catalyze and source innovations, including using prizes, challenges, and other contest-based approaches. RDMA will also work with USAID missions in Asia to identify and share innovative approaches that may be appropriate to scale up more broadly. We will apply a particular emphasis on finding new ways to foster female leadership, ensure women have equal access to economic opportunities, and address gender-based violence.

RDMA will use its platform to share information throughout the region through the Asia Connect blog, regional calls or DVCs to facilitate cross-learning between missions, and the use of summits to bring practitioners together, such as through the M&E Learning Summit and the USAID Forward Summit.

Evidence-based solutions must be based on robust knowledge. RDMA will support partnerships with the scientific community to fill knowledge gaps identified through our own analysis and through our engagement with bilateral missions and regional thought leaders. We will utilize spatial analysis to integrate diverse data in the design and evaluation of USAID activities. We will also continue to use evaluation findings of our own projects to further the evidence base upon which future development efforts will be built, and to assess the impact and scalability of innovative USAID approaches.

Illustrative Outcomes

By the end of this five-year strategy, RDMA expects to see the following outcomes under IR S.3:

- Increased use of mobile and geospatial technologies in USAID programs to address development challenges;
- More focused research on bridging the gap between existing science and development applications;
- Increased capacity in regional institutions to use evidence-based programming and decision-making;
- New approaches, such as prizes, challenges and contests, to catalyze and source innovations.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

USAID/RDMA has been a leader in institutionalizing USAID Forward reforms in the Asia Region and throughout the Agency. Fundamental among these reforms are strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In aligning with USAID Forward goals for 2014 and beyond, RDMA will emphasize learning and adaptive management as key components to implementing the Program Cycle and will continue to operate as a regional learning platform for the Agency.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation activities work to improve project and program management and ensure accountability. However, tracking indicators and evaluating projects are only first steps in achieving Mission objectives. RDMA is committed to incorporating a dynamic dimension to M&E that allows for learning, adaptation and innovation to create the conditions for achieving results. This will ensure that the RDCS works as a living strategy, providing guidance and reference points not only for implementation but also for learning and course corrections as needed.

Monitoring processes will be continually assessed and standardized at all levels of programming to validate indicator methodology as well as to test the causal linkages to higher levels within the RDCS Results Framework and track potential game changers. This ongoing exercise involves the rigorous, consistent and timely collection of indicator data, as well as regular consultation with implementing partners and stakeholders. RDMA intends to integrate monitoring with an emphasis on learning and adapting through robust performance monitoring, project M&E Plans, and a Mission Performance Management Plan (PMP) that complements the

RDCS as a living document. Not only will the Mission incorporate lessons learned into future project designs, it will share findings with implementing partners and other stakeholders to inform their efforts.

In addition to monitoring, evaluation strengthens accountability and learning. By applying a learning approach to evaluations, RDMA will continue to incorporate evaluation planning directly into project designs and consequently use the evaluation findings to refine and adapt projects accordingly and share reports with the wider development community. Through the regional Technical and Support Services for Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Knowledge Management Services contract, RDMA will support and build local and regional technical capacity for providing evaluation services.

LEARNING

Monitoring and Evaluation are components of the larger concept of collaborating, learning, and adapting. Findings from M&E serve both as inputs to learning activities and as sentinels to changes in context which stakeholders may need to address, and allow systematic testing of key hypotheses and questions. Learning, in turn, allows programmatic flexibility, continuous dialogue, and instills a culture of adaptive management that allows the RDCS to remain relevant and dynamic through the strategy implementation process. RDMA will incorporate the following elements to its learning approach:

- Establish a core team of learning champions led by an advisor to ensure Mission-wide engagement and ensure that learning is converted into effective decision-making throughout the portfolio;
- Develop a Mission-wide Learning Plan that outlines concrete actions in establishing RDMA as a regional learning and support platform;
- Improve activity- and program-level monitoring and evaluation practices to use feedback mechanisms to generate usable knowledge and improve analysis and design;
- Provide special events and partner forums to monitor critical assumptions, game-changers, policy implementation progress, and external trends that could affect success;
- Test development hypotheses related to the effectiveness of integrated programming and RDCS implementation through evaluations, assessments and studies, pause and reflect sessions, and evidence and experience summits on an on-going basis;
- Provide opportunities for DO and SO teams to lead in offering periodic pause and reflect sessions, in addition to semi-annual Portfolio Reviews, to ensure objectives are on track;
- Continue to develop and expand the M&E Corps as well as other technical assistance groups such as TAG to provide technical support internally and to field missions to develop capacity and promote collaboration;
- Continue to generate, capture, share, and apply knowledge regionally and worldwide through learning events for M&E, areas of USAID Forward and specific development topics relevant to the Asia region;
- In collaboration with the technical assistance advisors, technical assistance groups, and ARTC, establish a learning network throughout Asia where RDMA will serve as a facilitator.

EVALUATIONS

Through the RDCS, RDMA will explore opportunities for rigorous impact and performance evaluations to determine the results of USAID interventions and projects. From these evaluation findings, RDMA is committed to adaptive management by quickly responding to implementable recommendations, incorporating lessons learned into follow-on projects/activities, and adapting to both internal and external changes during the period of implementation. RDMA has identified opportunities for conducting impact evaluations for each DO below:

DO1: Regional Institutions' Ability to Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Regional Growth Increased

- How effectively has the project strengthened regional cooperation for sustainable and legal management of natural capital?

- To what extent has the project approach been effective in increasing regional networking and collaboration among public and private organizations and governments in improved management of natural capital? To this end, how well has the project promoted multi-stakeholder dialogues on the social and environmental impacts of regional development projects?

DO 2: Vulnerable Populations More Able to Withstand Risks that Transcend Borders

- To what extent is the project's focus on institutional improvement, individual and organization capacity development, and improved social inclusion an effective approach to the realization of the selected rights of the selected vulnerable populations?
- To what extent has progress toward the realization of selected rights of targeted vulnerable populations been an efficient approach to improving vulnerable populations' ability to address risks that transcend borders?
- How have the intended actions of beneficiaries been affected by public awareness campaigns against human trafficking?

DEVELOPMENT OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Effectively communicating best practices and lessons learned by USAID/RDMA and its implementing partners is vital to the RDCS goal as well as the underlying Development and Support Objectives. Working closely with the Development Outreach and Communications (DOC) unit, each objective team will proactively research and plan for the use of communications to help RDMA reach their development priorities. In addition to increasing visibility for effective programming for results and impact in targeted audiences, a concerted effort by RDMA to institutionalize communications planning and sharing these successes through their implementing partners will benefit counterparts outside of RDMA. Successful development models emerging from RDMA's programming may benefit USAID's bilateral missions, other donors, development agencies, government ministries, host-government counterparts, philanthropic foundations, the private sector, and other partners devoted to fighting poverty and replicating development gains for resilient growth.

- Throughout its projects and activities, RDMA will require all of its existing and new implementing partners to submit well-researched and measurable annual communications plans that highlight achievements and best practices that align with USAID/RDMA strategic priorities.
- RDMA's DOC unit will provide training in communications and outreach for USAID implementers to gather and disseminate best practices internally and externally through traditional and social media, as appropriate to the specific audience and country; RDMA's DOC will also endeavor to support other interested missions in the region that may request such services.
- RDMA's DOC unit will seek ongoing input from RDMA staff and implementers to develop, implement, evaluate and adjust communications approaches over the life of this RDCS to reach maximum impact.
- All RDMA offices will factor in outreach and communications programming, staffing, and budgeting from the onset of the program development phase to ensure that milestones and development impact are effectively communicated internally and externally throughout the life of each project and mechanism.

PROGRAM RESOURCES AND PRIORITIES

DO1: Regional Institutions' Ability to Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Increased. New projects are being designed in the Office of Governance and Vulnerable Populations (GVP) and Regional Environment Office (REO), and are expected to commence in early FY 2015. DO1 will be primarily funded by Development Assistance (DA) under two Objectives: Governing Justly and Democratically and Economic Growth.

DO2: Vulnerable Populations More Able to Address Risks That Transcend Borders. New projects are being designed in the Office of Public Health (OPH), GVP and REO. These new projects are expected to commence in early FY 2015. DO2 will be primarily funded by DA under two Objectives: Investing in People and Economic Growth. Substantial additional resources are drawn from State (HIV/AIDS), Global Health (GH/OHA) and Pandemic Influenza and other emerging Threats (PIOE). The resources will support a wide range of programs to counter transborder public health threats in the Asia Region.

Support Objective (SO): U.S. Development Assistance Efficiency and Effectiveness in Asia Advanced. Advancing the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. Development Assistance is an overarching role for RDMA in the Asia Region. Due to the integrated nature of RDMA's support function, the cost of providing services to bilateral missions are included within the OE budget estimates and the Program Resource budget for each DO.

PROGRAM CLOSE-OUTS

RDMA must be strategic in deciding how and where to invest program funding. The portfolio will be oriented toward two major areas where USAID can work most effectively as a regional platform: (a) as a catalyst to encourage regional thought leadership, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder connectivity; and (b) as an efficient and cost-effective provider of regional programs and services. RDMA programs will only focus on issues that cannot be addressed effectively through bilateral programs.

MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Given RDMA's strategic role as the Asia Bureau's forward operating base and the Administration's rebalance to Asia, the USAID program here will be one of the most politically important in the region. With the establishment of an ambitious, integrated five-year RDCS, RDMA will align staff requirements with U.S. assistance programs in economic growth and governance, health, environmental remediation, global climate change, as well as support for the vulnerable populations. The program portfolio has continuously evolved to support the Agency's mandates to advance U.S. interests in these strategic areas.

In recognition of the strategic importance of the U.S. relationship with key Asian nations, USAID/RDMA must maintain adequate staffing levels to provide basic program and fiduciary oversight to the Mission's ongoing programs, and will enable staff to continue to provide support to other bilateral missions in the Asia Region. RDMA will make necessary and appropriate adjustments to OE and staffing in line with program budget changes.

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