ADS Chapter 597
Operations Performance Policy

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ADS 597 – Operations Performance Policy

597.1 OVERVIEW
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

The President’s New Management Agenda\(^1\) focuses on realizing a smarter, more innovative, and more transparent government. The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development\(^2\) also specifically outlines the need for a more efficient and effective approach to global development. These directives emphasize the need for USAID to deliver services more quickly and effectively by establishing goals and strategies to ensure that all Agency investments support development outcomes.\(^3\)

USAID’s operations performance is important to the Agency’s ability to achieve its development objectives; ensure that resources are aligned with priorities; and institutionalize USAID Forward reforms.

Studies in the private sector have shown\(^4\) that improving procurement processes improves strategic planning within an organization. By improving USAID’s procurement systems we are able to more effectively shape how we do business, and with whom we do business. The same is true for other operation functions such as information technology (IT) services. IT optimization reduces costs,

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\(^1\) Cross-Agency Priority goals. 2014. Remarks by the President Presenting New Management Agenda. July 8, 2013.


\(^3\) There are many strategic planning requirements for external and internal reporting from the Office of Management and Budget. A few to note are the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 (external reporting) and OMB A-123.

\(^4\) KPMG. 2012. The Power of Procurement A global survey of Procurement functions.
increases efficiency by automating business processes, and provides improved access to information which results in better decisions within USAID and from our partners.

Our approach as an Agency is to work as one team to innovate and deliver results. This policy is intended to ensure that USAID’s platform uses a strategic management process to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. Figure 2 provides a graphic rendering of how our operations platform supports our policy framework and country development cooperation strategies to achieve our mission.

**effectiveness**
The extent to which a unit achieves the desired outcome. This is measured by the concepts of quality and customer satisfaction.

**efficiency**
The extent to which a unit achieves the maximum possible outputs, outcomes, and impacts with as few resources as possible. This is measured by the concepts of time, cost, and process.

Figure 2: USAID’s Platform

The strategic management process outlined in this chapter provides tools for Operating Units to communicate priorities and streamline business process and consolidate reporting requirements.
USAID’s Strategic Management Cycle, shown in Figure 3, illustrates that strategic planning is not a linear process; it is continuous, with feedback loops. The dark blue circle highlights the ongoing steps needed to strategically manage an Operating Unit’s activities for the best possible results. Please see section 597.3 for more detail on these steps.

The steps highlighted in dark blue are encircled by the concepts of continuous improvement and change management. Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes using data driven decisions. Change management is the process of institutionalizing these changes. These steps and concepts drive the increase in efficiency and effectiveness shown in the outer circle of the graphic.

The center point for strategic management reflected in the middle of the circle, is our Agency’s mission. Operating Units need to align their strategies with the Agency Mission so that the Operating Unit’s success of more efficient and effective processes can result in the Agency's success in achieving our goals.

**Figure 3: USAID’s Strategic Management Cycle**

This policy is mandatory for Operating Units in the Bureau for Management.

USAID strongly encourages other Washington-based Operating Units that have operations as their central function to use the guidance and standards presented in this
chapter to employ best practices for operations management. Missions can use this guidance in conjunction with Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), USAID Forward, project design, monitoring and evaluation activities, and Mission Management Assessments to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes to support their development objectives and align all resources with their goals.

A strengthened and evidence-based strategic management process, implemented with robust stakeholder participation, better enables Operating Units to support USAID’s development outcomes. The process benefits Operating Units in multiple ways, directly and indirectly, as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Benefits Strategic Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT</th>
<th>INDIRECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Translates the mission statement into tangible objectives and activities, with clear timelines.</td>
<td>• Highlights trade-offs associated with responding to changing demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses management and support staff’s knowledge and experience to chart internal priorities and course of action and links them to overall USAID objectives.</td>
<td>• Illustrates that some types of improvements require a long-term commitment (that is, three years or more).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improves customer service by making management and staff more accountable.</td>
<td>• Inspires and challenges staff to achieve and measure performance goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defines the steps and actions necessary to reach an operations objective and achieve results.</td>
<td>• Keeps staff focused and productive, even in times of uncertainty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps management and support staff justify their resource requirements and quantify results.</td>
<td>• Identifies and integrates cross-functional team responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clarifies staffs roles/responsibilities in meeting goals and targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Boosts the practice of teamwork.</td>
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</table>

597.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES
Effective Date: 06/09/2014
a. **Operating Units**, whose primary functions are management and support, should plan and manage performance to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of their business processes. They should formulate and execute an Operations Management Plan (OMP); monitor and assess performance; and communicate results in a transparent manner. (This policy is mandatory for the Operating Units listed in Figure 1.)

b. The **Assistant Administrator, Independent Office Director, or Mission Director** approves the Operations Management Plan for their offices and ensures communication regarding the plan at all organizational levels.

c. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget and Performance, Performance Division (M/MPBP/PERF)** provides technical assistance and training on policy and provides access to the Transparency, Accountability, and Performance Project contracting mechanism for additional technical support.

d. The **core team**, which includes relevant subject matter experts and any significant stakeholders from within or outside the Operating Unit, should facilitate the Operations Management Plan development process (for example: conducting business analysis, consulting with stakeholders). This process is further discussed in section 597.3.1.

### 597.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

The dynamic and iterative concepts presented in the Strategic Management Cycle (Figure 3) are presented in greater detail below in Figure 5. The activities related to strategic management include:

- Consulting with stakeholders and identifying the problem (stage one);
- Addressing the identified problem (through the use of a results framework) and presenting a roadmap to achieve results (stage two);
- Monitoring the metrics associated with your results framework, and assessing progress made (stage three); and
- Communicating results through internal Web sites and the congressional budget justification (stage four).

These stages are discussed in more detail in section 597.3.1.

The process results in a three-year Operations Management Plan, its associated Execution and Performance Plan (EPP), and the practice of sharing information in a transparent manner.

*Figure 5: The Strategic Management Process*
597.3.1 Operations Management Plan (OMP)  
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

The Operating Units identified in Figure 1 must develop a three-year OMP based on the fiscal year presenting forward-looking details of their objectives, priorities, and targets for advancing efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. As each Operating Unit develops their OMP, they should bear in mind USAID core values and how they should be reflected.

Senior leadership should manage the process for OMP development and execution. Senior leadership should establish a core team and designate a team leader to guide all steps in the OMP development process (for example: conducting business analysis, consulting with stakeholders). Based on Agency experience, each Operating Unit should plan for the core team to allocate 60 hours of their time over a five to six week period to develop the OMP and the EPP.

597.3.1.1 Stage One: Conduct Business Analysis  
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

USAID Core Values

- Passion For Mission
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Inclusion
- Commitment To Learning
The Operating Unit should analyze available quantitative, qualitative, and trend data to identify the operations challenges and opportunities for improvement. The Operating Unit should also consult with stakeholders who have influence, impact, interest, and an investment in their products and services (for example: line managers, senior leadership, customers, and other process related owners). The team should synthesize the data collected based on its desktop reviews, any mapping of processes (or other diagnostics and analyses), and consultations (see Types of Business Analysis).

597.3.1.2 Stage Two: Formulate the Operations Management Plan
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

The OMP must include the following:

- **Executive Summary**: Briefly summarize the Operating Unit’s function and the operations objectives and intermediate results expected at the end of the three-year OMP.

- **Background**: Briefly describe the Operating Unit’s mission, organizational context, roles, and responsibilities in relation to both Washington backstopping functions in the field.

- **Stakeholder Analysis**: Summarize needs expressed by stakeholders in consultations with stakeholders who are invested in the Operating Unit (for example, line managers, senior leadership, customers, and other process related owners).

- **Problem Analysis**: Describe key challenges or opportunities that the Operating Unit will address. Include anticipated improvements in operations performance based on a complete discussion of the current situation. Highlight the consultative process, research, and analyses used to identify problems and solutions. Explain how planned improvements address the Operating Unit’s efficiency (for example: cost, time, and process) and effectiveness (for example: quality and customer service). Discuss how proposed operations objectives contribute to Agency or federal initiatives.

- **Results Framework**: A results framework presents a hypothesis that describes the cause and effect linkages between an operations objective and its intermediate results (see Results Framework Checklist). A results framework must include the following:

  - **Operations Objectives (OOs)**: The OO is the highest level result within the manageable interest of the Operating Unit and for which it is willing to be held accountable. An OO should be stated as a result or desired outcome, not as an activity or process. Operating Units should frame their OOs in terms of improved efficiency and effectiveness outcomes. For example, "efficient recruitment and staffing services" is preferable to
“update policies on local hire recruitment” (see Results Statement Checklist).

- **Intermediate Results (IRs):** List the IRs (and sub-IRs where needed) that represent results, which together, are necessary and sufficient to achieve the OO. IRs serve as the basis for activities that the Operating Unit will undertake to achieve the objective (for example, new or revised policies or procedures).

- **Illustrative Activities:** List key activities the Operating Unit will undertake to achieve the IRs. Examples are: drafting and updating policies; launching new efforts; researching new systems and methods; and executing new work or procedures.

- **Illustrative Metrics:** List performance metrics that will be used to measure progress and document the intended results and outcomes by OO and IR (see Metric Selection Criteria). For example, the result “better functioning long-term storage” can be measured using several quantitative metrics, such as, “annual dollar amount spent on Agency long-term storage” and “average weight of storage per person over standard allowance.” Include baseline values, if available.

- **Critical Assumptions:** List any critical assumptions and their linkages to the OOs. Critical assumptions are conditions outside the Operating Unit’s control or influence that might impinge on its ability to achieve its objective(s) (for example, constant staffing levels). Where identified, describe the steps or alternative strategic courses the Operating Unit could take to mitigate risks and avoid jeopardizing the achievement of the OO.

- **Graphic:** Provide a one page graphic representation of the results framework outlining the above elements as listed below in Figure 6. Figure 6 is an example of a results framework for travel and transportation services at USAID.

  - **Management requirements:** Describe how the Operating Unit plans to direct its activities and resources (such as staff, funding, space, and equipment) to achieve the OMP.
  
  - **Change Management:** As Operating Units complete their OMP they should plan their approach to implementing and communicating changes necessary to achieve their objectives.
Figure 6: Illustrative Results Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations Objective:</th>
<th>More efficient and effective travel and transportation services to better support USAID operations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metrics:</td>
<td>1. Percent of “very satisfied” responses from customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Percent of travel authorization forms TTD can sign digitally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Average dollar amount per 100 pounds of shipments annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intermediate Result 1:** Improved policies and guidance on travel and transportation

**Intermediate Result 2:** Modernized travel and transportation systems

**Intermediate Result 3:** Improved movement of household effects

**Intermediate Result 4:** Better functioning long-term storage

597.3.2 Execution and Performance Plan (EPP)

Effective Date: 06/09/2014

Operating Units are responsible for implementing, monitoring, and assessing the OMP in accordance with their EPP (see [EPP Template](#)). This management tool helps operating units:

- Establish a foundation for evidence-based decision making and reporting,
- Alert staff to imminent tasks, and
- “Tell its story” with evidence.

597.3.2.1 Stage Three: Monitor and Assess Functions and Processes

Effective Date: 06/09/2014

An EPP must be developed within three months of the OMP approval. The EPP’s format can vary and the details of the plan can be developed in three to six months.

**Illustrative Activities:**
- Develop work plan and launch OBE
- Develop work plan and launch ETS2
- Implement electronic filing system
- Update TTD website

**Critical Assumptions:**
- Enhanced relationship with DOS, especially with regards to IAMS
- Federal Transportation Initiative will continue to demand a move towards a U.S. Center of Excellence

**Intermediate Activities:**
- Conduct data call to storage vendors
- Contact employees on assignment every two years to ensure need for storage
- Explore ways to reduce cost of long-term storage
- Instruct employees to remove storage
- Enforce storage regulations so goods are kept in DC and not home of origin
- Complete transfer of storage database
phases to include: a list of critical tasks, a responsible officer for each task, and timelines for completing the tasks.

The EPP must also include performance metrics for each OO and IR (with baseline data and periodic and final targets). Each metric should have a Metric Reference Sheet that describes:

- The method for collecting data (for example: surveys, desk top reviews) and data sources;
- The method for establishing targets;
- The process and timing for collecting data;
- Any data quality limitation issues;
- The process for assessing data quality; and
- Persons responsible for performing related tasks.

During the three-year life of the OMP, an Operating Unit must conduct at least one data quality assessment (DQA) of all performance metrics in their EPP to document the strengths and weaknesses of the data (see Data Quality Assessment Checklist). For any metric reported to external stakeholders, for example, the Office of Management and Budget, the Operating Unit must perform a DQA within six months after the EPP has been approved. The Operating Unit’s task managers are responsible for conducting DQAs. These reviews serve to verify that the data collected are of reasonable quality and that the data collection, maintenance, and processing procedures are consistent and adequate. The DQA examines the data in relation to five standards of quality: validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness.

Operating Units must organize and document formal semi-annual Statistical Reviews following the AIDStat process to monitor and assess the performance of an OMP. The senior-most executive responsible for the Operating Unit should chair the Stat Review meeting, and participants should include subject matter experts, person(s) responsible for any key execution plan tasks, and decision-makers. The typical Stat Review meeting agenda covers:

- Overall progress during the past performance period;
- Verification of the operations hypothesis;
- Status of planned targets, critical assumptions, and results;
- Status of DQAs;
Any intended or unintended consequences;

Adequacy of the level of effort; and

Recommendations for any mid-course adjustments needed to achieve the planned results.

597.3.3 Communicating Results
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

The Operating Unit’s senior leadership is responsible for ensuring that the OMP is communicated to stakeholders. Managers and staff need to have a clear understanding of the plan, its priorities, and their expected roles in its implementation.

597.3.3.1 Stage Four: Communicate Results
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

The primary objective when implementing a communications plan for the Operating Unit’s OMP is to convey the benefits of the new framework and address key stakeholder concerns. The Operating Units should communicate their progress in a transparent manner to advance organizational learning and continuous improvement and hold themselves accountable for achieving results. For more information on communication plans, please see USAID’s Development Outreach and communications Forum’s “How to Guide”.6

To further ensure transparency, within two months of its approval, the Operating Unit must post the OMP on its internal Web site. The Operating Unit must:

- Submit the final external version of the OMP to the Agency’s Development Experience Clearinghouse (see ADS 540, USAID Development Experience Information);
- Post any associated underlying data on the Development Data Library; and
- Post key business processes, success stories, and summaries of Stat Reviews on its intranet Web site.

597.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

597.4.1 External Mandatory References
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

a. OMB Circular A-123, Management’s Responsibility for Internal Control

b. Standards for Internal Control 1999 ("Greenbook")

597.4.2 Internal Mandatory References
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

a. ADS 540, USAID Development Experience Information
b. ADS 592, Performance Audits
c. ADS 596, Management’s Responsibility for Internal Control
d. ADS 620, Financial Management Principles and Standards

597.5 ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 05/08/2015

a. ADS 597saa, Results Statement Checklist
b. ADS 597sab, Results Framework Checklist
c. ADS 597sac, Metric Selection Criteria
d. ADS 597sad, Data Quality Assessment Checklist
e. ADS 597sae, Metric Reference Sheet Template
f. ADS 597saf, Execution and Performance Plan
g. ADS 597sag, AIDStat One-Pager
h. ADS 597sah, Types of Business Analysis
i. ADS 597sai, Transparency, Accountability, and Performance Project Overview
j. ADS 597saj, Change Management Best Practices Guide

597.6 DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 06/09/2014

adequate
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is adequate if it and its companion metrics are sufficient to measure the stated result. (Chapter 597)

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7 The internal control "Greenbook" is in the process of being revised. For the draft copy please see http://www.gao.gov/products/gao-13-830sp.
attributable
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is attributable if it can be plausibly associated with the Operating Unit’s interventions. (Chapter 597)

baseline
The value of an indicator before major implementation actions of USAID-supported strategies, projects, or activities. Baseline data enable the tracking of changes that occurred during the project or the activity with the resources allocated to that project or activity. (Chapter 201, 597)

cause-and-effect linkages
The concept of causality, in which one action or event produces a certain response in the form of another event. If a and b happen then c should happen. (Chapter 597)

core team
The core team leads and supports all aspects related to formulating and producing the Operations Management Plan. (Chapter 597)

critical assumptions
A general condition under which the operations hypothesis will hold true. Critical assumptions are outside the control or influence of an Operating Unit (in other words, they are not results), but they reflect conditions likely to affect the achievement of a Results Framework. (Chapter 597)

Data Quality Assessment (DQA)
An examination of the quality of performance indicator data in light of the five standards of data quality (validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness) to ensure that decision makers are fully aware of data strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which data can be relied on when making management decisions and reporting (see data quality standards). (Chapter 201, 597)

direct
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is direct if it is straightforward and a valid measure of the result. (Chapter 597)

effectiveness
The extent to which a unit achieves the desired outcome. This is measured by the concepts of quality and customer satisfaction. (Chapter 597)

efficiency
The extent to which a unit achieves the maximum possible outputs, outcomes, and impacts with as few resources as possible. This is measured by the concepts of time, cost, and process. (Chapter 597)
**execution and performance plan (EPP)**
A management tool used to implement the Operations Management Plan and monitor, assess, and report progress toward achieve operations objectives. *(Chapter 597)*

**impact**
The highest order effects, generally achieved over medium and long-term. The impact can be intended or unintended, positive or negative. *(Chapter 597)*

**integrity**
One of the five standards of data quality assessments: data that have integrity have established mechanisms in place to reduce the possibility that they are intentionally manipulated for political/personal reasons. *(Chapter 597)*

**intermediate result (IR)**
A component of a results framework, IRs are measurable, specific results that are seen as essential to achieving the Operations Objective. *(Chapter 597)*

**manageable interest**
A result is within an entity’s manageable interest when there is sufficient reason to believe that its achievement can be significantly and critically influenced by interventions of that entity. *(Chapter 597)*

**objective**
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is objective if it is unambiguous about what is being measured and which data are being collected. *(Chapter 597)*

**Operations Management Plan (OMP)**
A three-year strategic plan that presents forward-looking details of their objectives, priorities, and targets for advancing efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. *(Chapter 597)*

**operations objective (OO)**
The most ambitious result that an Operating Unit can materially affect, and for which it is willing to be held accountable. *(Chapter 597)*

**outcome**
A higher level or end result resulting from a combination of outputs. Operations Objectives should be outcomes. For example, improved guidance on procedures, modernized transportation systems. *(Chapter 597)*

**output**
The tangible, immediate, and intended products or consequences of an activity within USAID’s control or influence; the direct result of inputs. *(Chapter 201, 597)*
performance metric
An observable or measurable characteristic that shows or “indicates” the extent to which an intended result is being achieved. (Chapter 597)

practical
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is practical if it can be collected at a reasonable cost and in a reasonably timely fashion. (Chapter 597)

precision
One of the five standards of data quality assessments: data that has precision present a fair picture of performance, give an appropriate level of detail, enable management decision-making at the appropriate levels, and have a margin of error less than the intended change. (Chapter 597)

reliability
One of the five standards of data quality assessments: data that has reliability reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods over time. (Chapter 597)

result
A significant and intended change in a development condition affecting people, systems, or institutions. Results are outputs and outcomes, including the Development Objective (DOs), Intermediate Result (IRs), sub-Intermediate Result (sub-IRs), Project Purpose, and project outcomes, as specified in a Mission’s CDCS or project logic model. (Chapter 201, 597)

Results Framework
The predominant logic model for representing the development hypotheses underlying the Mission’s strategy. The Results Framework diagrams the development hypotheses, outlining the logic for achieving DOs over time, including causal logic (at levels up to IRs) and contribution between IRs and DOs and between DOs and Goals. The Results Framework includes the CDCS Goal, DOs, IRs, and sub-IRs. (Chapter 201, 250, 597)

stakeholders
Those who have influence, experience impact, interest and an investment in the Operating Unit’s processes. (Chapter 597)

Strategic management process
A continuous, holistic process that involves ensuring that business operations are efficient and effective by: 1) conducting business analysis; 2) formulating and executing a management plan; 3) monitoring and assessing performance; and 4) communicating results. This is an inclusive process, implemented with robust participation and collaboration of stakeholders. It is also grounded on the principles of effective change management and continuous improvement of operations. (Chapter 597)
**target**
Specific, planned level of result to be achieved within a specific timeframe with a given level of resource. (Chapter 201, 597)

**timeliness**
One of the five standards of data quality assessments: data that are timely are current and available frequently enough to inform and influence management decision-making at the appropriate levels. (Chapter 597)

**timely**
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is timely when it can be obtained frequently and in time to be useful for decision-making. (Chapter 597)

**useful**
One of the seven criteria for selecting a quality metric: a metric is useful to the extent that it provides a meaningful measure of change over time for management decision-making. (Chapter 597)

**validity**
One of the five standards of data quality assessments: data that has validity are clear of bias and provide a clear and adequate representation of the intended result. (Chapter 597)

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