



## El Salvador Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2020 - 2025

### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



El Salvador has a particularly deep, close, and multifaceted relationship with the United States. Approximately 25 percent of Salvadorans live abroad, and most of these reside in the U.S. In 2019, these residents sent more than \$5.65 billion back to El Salvador, primarily to family members, representing nearly 21 percent of the country's total GDP.<sup>[1]</sup> These family ties can create a 'pull factor' for migration to the United States, but lack of economic opportunity and insecurity in El Salvador are often cited as the

fundamental root causes of outward migration. Eighty-three percent of illegal immigrants returning from the United States cite individually or a combination of: a lack of economic opportunities, insecurity, and a lack of government protections and services, as their main reasons for leaving El Salvador.<sup>[2]</sup> In addition, El Salvador frequently experiences extreme climate events, such as flooding and drought, and natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tropical storms. These crises affect physical and human capital, have particular impacts on women and children, and further exacerbate internal displacement and both legal and illegal migration. Improved security, enhanced economic opportunity, and strengthened governance will therefore play a central role in responding to the needs of Salvadoran citizens, including the specific needs of women and youth, and in building resilience to the country's vulnerabilities so that its citizens can prosper in their home communities.

The Government of El Salvador (GOES) administration has a five-year term (2019-2024) that corresponds to a majority of this 2020-2025 CDCS, and the strategy aligns directly with its proposed improvements in security, economic prosperity and governance. USAID/El Salvador has a notable window of opportunity to deepen partnerships with the GOES, municipalities, private sector, and civil society, and advance the country's ability to reduce illegal migration. Furthermore, El Salvador's scores on most development indicators measured by USAID's FY 2020 Journey to Self-Reliance Roadmap hover just above or below global averages, meaning that well-planned interventions carried out with the political and financial support of the GOES

and other partners will be well-positioned to have a meaningful, sustained impact in ways that further develop the country's self-reliance.

This CDCS was developed and finalized in 2019 and early 2020 as COVID-19 became a global pandemic. USAID/EI Salvador will continue to monitor its potential impact and if needed, the Mission will re-evaluate the strategic approach.

The strategic vision of the 2020-2025 CDCS is to increase the belief among targeted populations that they can lead a safe and prosperous life, supported by a transparent and accountable government, in El Salvador. Hard data and corroborating anecdotal information demonstrate that improved security and economic prosperity, combined with confidence in government institutions and effective public service provision, motivate people to stay in El Salvador.<sup>[3]</sup> USAID/EI Salvador will determine the validity of the development hypothesis and whether the interventions carried out help reduce illegal migration and foster self-reliance in El Salvador by using data to measure the impact of our efforts, both real and perceived, using a variety of sources. USAID/EI Salvador also plans to commission sub-national perception surveys focused on the urban hubs of El Salvador, which will provide additional data on intentions to migrate and the factors influencing that decision. To best accomplish the strategic vision, the CDCS builds upon lessons learned and improved access to data to make several shifts in USAID's strategic approach to reduce illegal migration and increase the country's self-reliance.

USAID/EI Salvador will have a clear geographic, demographic, and programmatic focus for this CDCS. As part of the CDCS development process, USAID/EI Salvador invested in select strategic analyses and worked with colleagues and partners from across the interagency and outside of it to generate the evidence needed to refine our approach and ensure that U.S. taxpayers get the best return on investment possible.

Utilizing new apprehension data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other sources, USAID/EI Salvador will strategically target all programming on those individuals most likely to migrate illegally. Specific factors include age, education level, employment status, income level, sex, crime victimization, internal displacement, and evidence of prior attempts to migrate. USAID/EI Salvador will also strategically narrow its geographic focus to the country's three main urban hubs: San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana, which account for the majority of illegal migration and insecurity in the country. Finally, USAID/EI Salvador will align all programming to the core drivers of illegal migration, including security, prosperity, and combating impunity and corruption. Through this focus, USAID/EI Salvador will no longer prioritize programming focused specifically on rural development, agriculture and environmental conservation, though efforts in these areas may fall under the scope of other programming when important synergies exist.

USAID/EI Salvador's goal for this 2020-2025 CDCS is: Reduce the Drivers of Illegal Migration by Fostering a More Self-Reliant El Salvador: Secure, Prosperous and Well-Governed. USAID/EI Salvador will remain focused on stemming the flow of illegal migration to the United States by addressing the root causes that drive Salvadorans north, and, thereby, building the country's self-reliance.

USAID/EI Salvador's security programming will focus on three core thematic areas: preventing crime, protecting vulnerable populations and victims, and improving the criminal justice system in El Salvador, or in other words: prevention, protection, and prosecution. USAID/EI Salvador's

security programming will strive to improve real and perceived citizen security within targeted urban hubs, with an emphasis on those most likely to migrate.

USAID/EI Salvador's economic growth programming will facilitate job creation for likely migrants, and address key barriers to trade, investment, and access to capital by utilizing and building upon other U.S. government tools, networks, and relationships to mobilize Salvadoran and international private sector investment in key sectors, particularly through the DFC. USAID/EI Salvador will undertake inclusive economic growth programming in select high-growth sectors to position EI Salvador assertively as a competitive emerging market and leader in developing new products and services in alignment with the GOES' defined priority areas.<sup>[4]</sup> USAID/EI Salvador's prosperity programming will focus on human capital development, mostly at the basic, secondary and vocational education, in alignment with the recent USAID Education Policy and USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy. USAID/EI Salvador will no longer prioritize higher education activities due to the focused targeting of this CDCS, although partnerships with higher education institutions may be used to support CDCS objectives through learning and knowledge sharing.

USAID/EI Salvador's governance programming will improve citizens' confidence in government, both nationally and sub-nationally. This improvement will advance the USAID Democracy, Rights and Governance Strategy and directly support the sustainability of outcomes under both prosperity and security. Programs will result in more efficient and effective resource management and expenditure and better quality service delivery that responds to citizen needs and demands. Activities will combat corruption by enhancing oversight and accountability, and by strengthening civil society and institutions working to counter corruption.<sup>[5]</sup> The Mission will work to promote more active and vibrant citizen advocacy groups to serve as a check on government, and more representative and responsive political parties.

On the 2020 Country Roadmap EI Salvador ranks average in commitment (0.5) and just above average in capacity (0.55).<sup>[6]</sup> USAID/EI Salvador conducted a multifaceted assessment process to review self-reliance parameters and metrics within the context of EI Salvador and USG strategies and policies to inform this CDCS and its implementation. Based on that assessment, USAID/EI Salvador will concentrate on J2SR-related strategic outcomes most directly related to the core drivers of illegal migration to the United States, including security, prosperity, and anti-corruption / combating impunity. Specifically, under security, USAID/EI Salvador will focus on Safety & Security, Open Government and Social Group Equality metrics. Under prosperity, USAID/EI Salvador will concentrate on GDP Per Capita, Business Environment and Education Quality metrics. Finally, under governance, USAID/EI Salvador will focus on Government Effectiveness, Liberal Democracy, Tax System Effectiveness and Civil Society & Media Effectiveness metrics.

USAID's 2020-2025 CDCS will therefore focus on the demographics of those most likely to illegally migrate to the United States in EI Salvador's main urban hubs, and increase their sense of hope by targeting improvements in economic opportunity, security, and confidence in the government, particularly to build the foundation of the country's journey to self-reliance. USAID/EI Salvador recognizes that this journey requires the interest and participation of numerous actors, including but not limited to the Government of EI Salvador, private sector companies, and civil society organizations.

While the Mission sees this CDCS as the first in a sequence of reinforcing, interrelated strategies, this strategy will play a central role in bolstering EI Salvador's J2SR through the use

of data, analysis and research in the pursuit of joint U.S./El Salvador development objectives. This CDCS will facilitate the ability of the private sector, GOES, and civil society to make informed decisions, and encourage them to choose development partners committed to building El Salvador's self-sufficiency. During implementation of our CDCS, USAID/El Salvador will ensure that central to the design and implementation of our strategy will be the mission-wide effort to diversify our partner base, and engage (and co-create with) new and underutilized partners, including faith-based organizations; strengthen private sector engagement; support women's economic empowerment; and advance religious freedom.

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, a commission that monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad, El Salvador does not qualify as a Tier 1 or 2 country of concern or as a country that needs monitoring.

USAID programs will work to incorporate the principles of procurement reform and support El Salvador as it leads its own development journey to the point when there is no longer a need for foreign assistance. In addition, USAID/El Salvador views collaboration with other USG agencies as vital for achieving impact and making sustained progress on reducing the drivers of illegal migration. As such, USAID/El Salvador will place particular focus on building capacity and supporting commitment from those vital actors throughout implementation of this CDCS.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Central Bank,. January 14, 2020 Remittance data.  
([https://www.bcr.gob.sv/esp/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=1464:el-salvador-recibi%C3%B3-us\\$56502-millones-de-remesas-familiares-en-2019&Itemid=168](https://www.bcr.gob.sv/esp/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1464:el-salvador-recibi%C3%B3-us$56502-millones-de-remesas-familiares-en-2019&Itemid=168))

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibid.; Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería, 2018

<sup>[3]</sup> Northern Triangle Migration Information Initiative, International Organization for Migration, 2018

<sup>[4]</sup> Ministry of Economy, 2014. "*Política Nacional de Fomento, Diversificación, y Transformación Productiva de El Salvador.*"

<sup>[5]</sup>Control institutions include: Court of Account, Probity Unit, Attorney General's Office, Access to Information Institute, Ethics Tribunal, and the Electoral Tribunal.

<sup>[6]</sup> USAID/El Salvador Journey to Self-Reliance Roadmap, 2020.