

USAID/Rwanda: Country Development Cooperation Strategy Mid-Course Stocktaking Planning

Purpose: This document proposes the timing, objective, and approach for the USAID/Rwanda CDCS Mid-course Stocktaking.

Mission leadership has determined that to remain in compliance with ADS 201.3.2.18, the mission should conduct its CDCS Mid-course Stocktaking (MCS) in February/March 2018. As a result of this timing, and as allowed by the ADS, **the CDCS MCS will take the place of the annual portfolio review process and combine the requirements of both processes.**

The table below presents how a Portfolio Review, which focuses on **performance at the Development Objective (DO) level**, differs from a CDCS MCS, which focuses on **performance at the strategic level** over the CDCS implementation cycle and making course corrections:

The Portfolio Review examines...	A CDCS Mid-Course Stocktaking should...
<p>Progress toward achievement of CDCS and project results and expectations regarding future progress;</p> <p>The status of critical assumptions and changes in context, along with related implications for performance; and</p> <p>Opportunities to adapt as a result of learning.</p> <p>Missions should consider the following issues during portfolio reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Status of critical assumptions and the development hypotheses; ● Country and regional trends and how the context is evolving; ● Status of cross-cutting themes; ● What has been learned from monitoring data, evaluations, partners, program participants or other sources of information; ● The allocation and management of resources to support Mission objectives; ● Status of post-evaluation action plans (see 201.3.5.18); and ● Challenges and next steps for improving performance. 	<p>Re-validate the Results Framework and its underlying assumptions or identify potential amendments to the Results Framework for review with USAID/W;</p> <p>Reinforce continuity and institutional knowledge among new staff;</p> <p>Re-engage stakeholders and donor partners and facilitate stronger relationships with and among them;</p> <p>Assess progress on the country transition plan, as relevant;</p> <p>Focus on learning from monitoring data, evaluations, partners, program participants, or other sources of information to guide adaptations; and</p> <p>Look ahead to the next CDCS; including identifying future analytic needs and knowledge gaps.</p>

OBJECTIVE:

In order to have the most utility for the mission, generate meaningful outcomes and fulfil the intent of a CDCS MCS, management has split the process into two components.

Component One - Lessons Learned In Implementation And Re-Validation Of The Development Hypothesis And Results Framework

Using the CDCS as the frame of reference, the Mission will conduct an analysis of the operating context, development hypothesis, results framework; current status of the assumptions, risks and game changers; and, the TO teams' progress towards their respective DOs and the mission goal.

To prepare for and achieve this, the mission will convene desk based working groups centered around questions derived from the list below as follows:

1. How are the Technical Offices' activities combining to achieve success against their respective DOs? (*Thus capturing the key intent of the Portfolio Review Process*)
2. Has the CDCS theory of change remained relevant over the course of implementation?
 - a. Has the operating context changed? If so – how?
 - b. Has the Development Hypothesis proven to be accurate at predicting change?
 - c. Does the results framework allow USAID to tell a story of success?
3. How have the external factors affected, and how will they continue to affect the success of USAID's activities?
 - a. Have the CDCS assumptions remained true?
 - b. Have any of the risks or game-changers occurred?

Component Two – Exercise To Consider How To Adjust Programs And Strategies In The New Policy and Budget Environment

Component two will look at how the mission's programs are affected by both the uncertain budgetary future and the new policy announcements coming from Administrator Green. More detail on the structure and questions to be addressed in component two will be announced in the near future.

APPROACH:

The CDCS MCS will culminate in either a one or two day mission wide offsite in February and March:

- Working groups (WGs) will be established to conduct research, analysis and present findings at the first offsite (Component One).
- The WGs will be focused around the missions four DOs.

- Each WG will have at least one representative from the respective technical office, however employees from a range of other offices (other technical, support and program office) will comprise a complete working group:

Example: Structure of DO Working Group

- Lead TO representative
- Additional TO representatives (optional)
- Employee(s) from other TOs
- Interested support office employees
- PRO employee representative

Based on the above example, it is envisaged that WGs will have a minimum of four employees and an upper limit of 10 – 12 members. Each working group will have a designated chair, who will not originate from the DO. The final composition of each WG will be mutually agreed upon by the respective TO leads and PRO.

Expected Time Commitment: Working Groups will require a significant percentage of employees time. The preparatory work required for the working group should be considered a priority for each member”

- Working groups will be established by October 1 and will meet regularly as a group, with TO employees and other stakeholders until the end of the calendar year.
- Throughout January the working groups’ efforts will be focused on preparing materials for the one day offsite at the beginning of February, at which presentations will be given.
- Without knowing for certain, through the canvassing of other missions, it is anticipated that up to 30% of an employee’s time will be dedicated to the working group.

Steering Committee

In addition to the WGs, there will be an overall Steering Committee. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide guidance to the working groups; create the questions, templates and parameters for the WGs; and determine the structure and schedule of the off sites and the sessions contained within. For example - though it has been decided that the exercise will be broken down into four DOs, it has not yet been decided how the DO WGs will present their findings – powerpoint, length of session, use of presenters, TO participation in DO presentations, Q & As, how to derive CDCS next steps from the presentations.

As the Steering Committee will play a significant role in determining the questions answered and the methods, materials and information utilized, the members of the Steering Committee will be expected to uphold the interests of their office and make decisions on behalf of their team. Members: Adriana Hayes (PRO); Emmanuel Gasana (PRO); Tommy Harrold (PRO); David Rurangirwa (EDU), Reid Ahl (EXO), Deogratias Dushimumukiza (OFM), Guillaume

Bucyana (DGO), Zachary Clarke (OAA), Randy Smith (EGO). The Learning Advisor will act as the secretary to the Steering Committee.

Expected Time Commitment: The Steering Committee will meet as required:

- There will be a heavy burden at the outset (September) to determine the questions, parameters, expectations and limits for the WGs which will be established by October 1.
- In addition, there will be an all hands meeting, for which the Steering Committee will need to prepare, to present and explain to all employees, what a CDCS Mid Course Stocktaking is and how USAID/Rwanda is addressing the ADS requirements.
- Additionally, outside of meetings, Steering Committee members will be expected to clear documents prepared by the committee secretary as discussed and informed by committee meetings.
- Steering Committee members will be expected to make time for WG members with questions on the content or process.

At this stage, organizational efforts are directed on preparing the mission to undertake component one.

COMPONENT ONE TIMELINE:

With the decision being made to conduct the CDCS MCS off sites in February/March 2018 PRO has worked backwards to produce the following notional timeline for achieving the stated outcomes:

By September 15:	Steering Committee established.
From September 15:	Steering Committee develops guidance, templates, etc for WGs.
By October 1:	WG established (composition agreed and 1 st meeting conducted).
October 1 – January 31:	WGs conduct research, analysis, periodic check in meetings with all TO staff.
By November 30:	Steering Committee presentation at all hands to explain the structure and rationale of component one offsite.
January 1 – 31:	Preparation of materials and presentations.
1st week of Feb:	One day offsite.

COMPONENT TWO TIMELINE:

Feb 12 - March 2:	Preparation for component two offsite
Week of March 5:	Component two one day offsite
March 12 - 30:	Offsite outputs documented and approved at mission or Washington, D.C. as appropriate