ADS Chapter 112

Standard Operating Procedures for Task Forces

Functional Series 100 – Agency Organization and Legal Affairs
ADS 112 – Task Force Standard Operating Procedures
POC for ADS 112: See ADS 501maa, ADS Chapters and Point of Contact List

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ADS 112 – Task Force Standard Operating Procedures

112.1 **OVERVIEW**
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

This chapter establishes the criteria for activating, transitioning, and deactivating a USAID Task Force; and the responsibilities and functions of a USAID Task Force. During its operations, a Task Force coordinates the various streams of effort of USAID's Bureaus and Independent Offices (B/IOs) in support of a crisis or challenge, or emerging crisis or challenge, that requires broad Agency support, as determined by the USAID Administrator. The Task Force assists USAID's leadership with intra-agency coordination, consistent messaging, informed decision making, and strategic alignment of the Agency and the U.S. Government's (USG) priorities related to the crisis or challenge.

A Task Force is not an implementing entity. A Task Force is a central structure that coordinates USAID's whole-of-Agency strategic response to a given crisis or challenge, while Agency B/IOs manage implementation responsibilities to achieve measurable objectives. A Task Force is not intended to replace the programmatic and operational response of B/IOs and Missions or supersede the authorities, procedures, or protocols of other Agency crisis or challenge response structures. The USAID Administrator can delegate tasking authority to a Task Force to facilitate coordination during a crisis or challenge.

This chapter aligns with existing structures, such as the procedures for the Continuity of Operations (COOP) (see **ADS 531, Continuity of Operations (COOP) Program**), international disaster response and assistance (see **ADS 251, International Humanitarian Assistance**), and the **Senior Staff Protocols for High-Level Crises** and the **Response Management System (RMS)** in the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), and does not supersede the authorities, procedures, and protocols of these structures; nor does this ADS supersede or replace other ADS guidance.

A crisis or challenge can have programmatic or operational implications, or a combination of both. Several B/IOs, including but not limited to BHA, the Bureau for Management (M), and the Bureau for Global Health (GH), have crisis response units or operational platforms. When a Task Force is activated, the B/IOs will align their response efforts to the strategic, whole-of-Agency guidance and lead and execute within their existing units and operational platforms designed for crisis or challenge response.

A Task Force has a short-term mandate, not to exceed one year, unless extended by the Administrator. Upon its establishment, a Task Force is required to draft a set of deactivation criteria, which, when met, indicates that the Task Force should begin standing down. At the end of a Task Force's mandate, the Administrator may establish a successor office or entity to address the issue(s) the Task Force focused on, or assign an existing structure such as the Management Operations Council or Risk Management Council for the continued coordination of these issues.

112.2   **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**
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a.   The **Administrator (A/AID)** authorizes the establishment of all Agency Task Forces and appoints an Executive Director to lead each one. The Administrator and/or the **Deputy Administrator or their designee**, may engage on high-level USG policy issues, interagency deliberations and decisions, and/or interest from Congress, diaspora communities, local and state governmental authorities, media, and others.

b.   A **Task Force**, when activated by the Administrator, is an integrated platform that coordinates the Agency's efforts in response to a crisis, an emerging crisis, or a challenge that exceeds the abilities of any one B/IO or combination of B/IOs to respond effectively. A Task Force is intended to facilitate a coordinated Agency response to an event that extends beyond disaster and humanitarian assistance. A Task Force combines the inputs of relevant B/IOs to manage Agency-level crisis or challenge response strategies, coordinating the actions of B/IOs with specific crisis/challenge response roles and authorities. A Task Force's size and duration will vary at the Administrator's discretion, depending on the scope, size, and duration of the crisis or challenge. The composition and structure of a Task Force should be scalable, flexible, and adaptable. The leadership of a Task Force should consider membership from affected Missions and field offices and representatives from other USG departments and agencies, in addition to representatives from stakeholder B/IOs in USAID.

c.   The Administrator names an **Executive Director** and outlines the duties and authorities corresponding to this position when activating a Task Force. The Executive Director:

- Acts as USAID's primary interagency interlocutor for the crisis or challenge of focus, and is responsible for leading the Task Force, including by setting the operational speed, assigning responsibilities, and guiding Task Force members;

- Working closely with the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) and the Task Force Readiness Unit (TFRU) under M, the Executive Director appoints staff to the Task Force to ensure it can accomplish its purpose and functions;

- Is responsible for the Task Force's execution and the documentation of the key management, financial, programmatic, and policy decisions and actions;

- Leads the team according to the expectations of senior leaders at USAID and in compliance with the Administrator's instructions as detailed in the Task Force activation memo, including guidance on regular consultation with, clearance from, and updates to Operating Units (OUs) that have key stakes in Agency operations; and

- Is responsible for the Task Force's learning during its operations, for ensuring knowledge transfer upon staff turnover or transition, and for sponsoring a Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget and Performance (M/MPBP) - led After-Action Review (AAR) upon deactivation and transition.

While the Executive Director is the primary Agency Point of Contact for the crisis or challenge, the day-to-day activity-level planning and implementation of Task Force-related functions will remain within the B/IOs, but with shared accountability to the Task Force, reflecting that the subject matter of the Task Force is a corporate priority and part of core Agency business.

d.   The Executive Director may decide to have one or more deputies. In this case, the Executive Director names the Task Force **Deputy Director(s)**, who manages the day-to-day operations of the Task Force. The Deputy Director supervises the Task Force team leads, helps to establish and oversee key Task Force processes, and reviews and approves resources and critical documents for the Task Force. The Deputy Director, along with the Task Force Readiness Unit under the Bureau for Management, monitors the need and efficacy of the Task Force.

e.   The Bureau for Management's **Task Force Readiness Unit (TFRU)** is an operational unit in M/MS. The TFRU coordinates the establishment of a Task Force and manages its operations from activation to deactivation. The operations may include the interagency logistics, staffing, and communications when the Administrator activates a Task Force; working with the Executive Director and other members to formulate a Task Force's objectives and processes; and liaising with the applicable B/IOs to activate and deactivate a Task Force.

The TFRU is responsible for the processes associated with activating, operating, and deactivating a Task Force, and handles all ongoing administrative actions after deactivation, including audit response and managing Task Force records. The TFRU is also responsible for the following:

1. Recommending resource requirements for a Task Force;

2. Providing budgetary models that incorporate clearance from the Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Financial Officer (M/CFO), the Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM), and the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget and Performance, Budget Division (M/MPBP/BUD) regarding delegation and use of Program and Operating Expense (OE) funds from permanent OUs;

3. Liaising with other B/IOs, as appropriate, on budgetary and other resource requirements (including human capital and management of ad hoc Task Force support work), as well as with internal and external entities on logistics needs (space/location, equipment, information technology, templates, and staff roles, such as position descriptions and scopes of work);

4. Developing and coordinating staff training on crisis or challenge response;

5. Establishing a cadre of subject-matter experts on whom the Agency could call at short notice to assist Task Forces;

6. Providing ongoing procedural guidance to a Task Force's Executive Director and

members throughout the life cycle of the Task Force;

7. Coordinating reporting and knowledge management requirements, including developing and maintaining a knowledge management operational structure for Task Forces to use as well as submitting the final inventory reports for the Agency's Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Reporting requirements per **ADS 502, The USAID Records Management Program**;

8. Synthesizing relevant learning from past AARs, conducted within the Agency, to share with a Task Force to inform its work; and

9. Supporting the Task Force's Executive Director and M/MPBP in the planning and conduct of AARs and managing audits and evaluations both during and after a Task Force's period of operations.

f. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget and Performance (M/MPBP)** oversees the allocation and stewardship of OE funds in the course of the operations of Task Forces. M/MPBP is responsible for explaining its process and methodology for conducting AARs to the Task Force Executive Director at the outset of a Task Force. In its leading role, M/MPBP, with the support of the TFRU, works with the Task Force Executive Director to conduct the AAR upon a TF's deactivation and transition. M/MPBP also works with the TFRU to integrate relevant operational issues and lessons learned from each Task Force into the Agency's overall operational learning.

g. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA)** informs a Task Force of assistance and/or acquisition (A&A) actions in progress, provides information on available A&A vehicles, and disseminates solutions to help the Task Force prioritize A&A actions and reduce the duplication of effort. M/OAA also leads implementing partner outreach and provides guidance concerning the detailing of any contractor employees to the Task Force, including Institutional Services Contractors (ISCs) and Personal Services Contractors (PSCs).

h. The Agency's **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** leads M/CFO and supports a Task Force to provide proper audit financial documentation and identifies potential outstanding audit recommendation(s) that would affect the operations of the Task Force. M/CFO, in coordination with B/IOs, provides accounting and financial management support to the Task Force.

In addition to financial support, M/CFO supports Task Forces with the risk management process. The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Secretariat, who is the Agency's CFO, is responsible for advising Task Forces on the Agency's ERM process, the use of the ERM Governance Framework, and the application of the Agency's risk management process, while providing technical expertise to help in guiding risk identification.

i. **Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs)** provide early, substantive input to a Task Force related to programming and planning in response to a crisis or challenge. Regional and Pillar B/IOs address the impact on current programming and staffing and identify gaps and possible resources, in consultation with other B/IOs, BRM, and M/MPBP. Regional and Pillar Bureau Assistant Administrators (AAs) and IO Directors coordinate with the Task

Force on staffing and resources. While a Task Force coordinates USAID's response to a given crisis or challenge, affected B/IOs retain their authorities and implementation responsibilities to achieve measurable objectives.

j. By statute (**2 FAM 060 International Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance**), the **Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)** leads all Agency response actions related to humanitarian aspects of a crisis or challenge. While the Task Force Executive Director is the primary Agency Point of Contact for the crisis, the day-to-day activity-level planning and implementation of Task Force-related functions will remain within B/IOs. BHA is responsible for keeping the Task Force updated on current crisis response activities of any relevant, activated Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) and/or Response Management Teams (RMTs), and for managing activities consistent with **ADS 251, International Humanitarian Assistance** and **ADS 530, Emergency Planning Overseas**.

k. The **Bureau for Global Health (GH)** is the Agency's focal point for responses to infectious disease outbreaks and broader health emergencies. While the Task Force Executive Director is the primary Agency Point of Contact for the crisis or challenge, the day-to-day activity-level planning and implementation of Task Force-related functions remains within B/IOs. GH is responsible for keeping the Task Force updated on current health emergency response activities, including coordination around response activities, the activities of relevant GH emergency response teams in Washington or at the USAID Mission(s), interagency health response structures, and for managing activities consistent with the **Guidance on the Definition and Use of the Global Health Programs Account** and **ADS 530, Emergency Planning Overseas**.

l. The **Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA)** is responsible for keeping the Task Force updated on communications and legislative needs and requirements. LPA communication representatives and press officers compile, compose, and disseminate information to the media, other USG press officers and Congressional staff, the entire Agency workforce, and the public about the roles and actions of USAID in a crisis or challenge. LPA's Congressional Liaison Officers take similar actions to provide information to Members of Congress and their staff and answer Congressional inquiries, and communicate Congressional concerns and priorities back to the Task Force. LPA's Task Force Representative must coordinate with B/IO communicators to ensure consistency of messages.

m. The **Executive Secretariat (ES)**, in conjunction with LPA and in coordination with the TFRU, upon the Administrator's declaration of a Task Force, issues the announcement as an Executive Notice. Throughout its life cycle, the Task Force will regularly communicate to Agency leadership on its work through appropriate fora, including routine meetings with the Administrator and senior leadership of stakeholder B/IO and relevant Missions. The Task Force will also provide regular updates to Agency employees, as the subject matter warrants and resources permit. The Task Force will determine a clearance process for information products and reports for external stakeholders, in coordination with ES, LPA, and the appropriate Regional and Pillar Bureaus. At the end of a Task Force, ES will also issue Executive Notices, on behalf of the Administrator, regarding the deactivation of a Task Force, transition plans, and relevant contact information.

n. The **Office of the General Counsel (GC)** provides legal advice on a broad range

of matters related to the establishment and operations of any Agency Task Force. GC participates early in the planning phase for a Task Force and advises on law and policy relevant to the Task Force's staffing and operations and on statutory restrictions and requirements applicable to the Task Force's work, among other things.

o. The **Office of Security (SEC)** provides information and guidance regarding security incidents that affect personnel at USAID Missions and/or staff of implementing partners. As appropriate, a SEC representative liaises with the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and provides intelligence briefings and analyses to a Task Force. SEC provides immediate access-control decisions and verifies clearances for visitors and/or interagency staff who are supporting the Task Force. SEC also provides operational or other forms of security support to a Task Force, including facility security for the TF to operate. If special security needs exist (for instance, classified space, communications, etc.), SEC will work with the Task Force to ensure these are available.

p. The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM)** provides support for detailed or directed reassignment positions for a Task Force and the Agency's OUs affected by Task Force staffing, for employees on authorized (voluntary) and ordered departures, and for Staff Care services.

q. The **Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation (CMC) in the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS)** supports Task Forces that require coordination with the Department of Defense not related to humanitarian assistance. CMC may provide support to the Task Force through Civil-Military Coordinator(s) with the aligned region(s) and affected Combatant Command(s) (COCOMs), the Military Representative(s) from the Combatant Command(s) aligned with the region(s) affected, and other technical staff. Additionally, Senior and Deputy Development Advisors with the aligned region(s) and affected COCOM(s) may provide support virtually. The Senior and Deputy Development Advisors at the Pentagon may provide support where high-level engagement with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and/or the Joint Staff is required.

r. The **Bureau for Policy Planning and Learning (PPL)** is responsible for directing the Agency's policy planning and shaping the Agency's overall strategic development and performance. PPL promotes and provides a culture of policy, program planning, innovation, knowledge management, and donor engagement guidance and support for the Agency. PPL develops and supports the implementation of the Agency Program Cycle Operational Policy (see **ADS 201, Operational Policy for the Program Cycle**), including policy and guidance for program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA). PPL works with the Task Force and B/IOs to adapt program cycle guidance in response to the unique circumstances of each crisis or challenge. PPL also considers what, if any, policy shifts are needed as a result of the crisis or challenge. PPL works with the TFRU to integrate the lessons of each Task Force's AAR into the Agency's overall programmatic learning.

s. The **Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM)** is responsible for USAID's program resource and budget planning, oversight, and coordination and provides support for all program resource-related matters regarding Agency Task Forces. BRM works with B/IOs to identify resource gaps and possible resources to address such gaps.

In circumstances in which the Agency requires program funding beyond normal appropriations for a disaster response, for example immediate funding shifts, a supplemental funding request, and/or an emergency appropriation, BRM works with relevant B/IOs, GC, LPA, and the Executive Director of a Task Force to identify program funding trade-offs and prepare USAID's supplemental request.

t. **USAID Mission(s)** are responsible for providing situational updates to the Task Force, including Mission operational status; staffing needs; resource requirements; updates on Mission activities; and impact on programs. Each relevant Mission Director will identify technical and subject matter experts who can serve as virtual members of the Task Force. Missions should continue to follow procedures outlined in **ADS 530, Emergency Planning Overseas**, to address emergency situations at Post.

112.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

112.3.1 What Is a Task Force?
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

A Task Force is a cross-Agency integrated team established in response to a crisis, emerging crisis, or challenge that exceeds the abilities of any one B/IO or combination of B/IOs to respond effectively. It is a limited-term unit for developing crisis or challenge response strategies, proposing actions, and delegating and coordinating the Agency's response. USAID uses Task Forces to improve both the collaboration inside the Agency and with the USG interagency and external stakeholders to achieve the goals of a crisis or challenge response.

The Administrator establishes a Task Force by approving a TFRU-drafted Action Memorandum and an Executive Message, in which they designate an Executive Director to lead the Task Force. The term "Task Force" should not be used throughout the Agency for anything other than an official, Administrator-declared Task Force. Other terms should be used instead for time-limited Agency work groups, such as "working group," "community of experts," etc.

A Task Force may remain active for up to one year, unless extended by the Administrator, under the criteria in section **112.3.3**. If a longer response coordination effort is necessary, the Agency might need to transition a Task Force to a more permanent structure. The TFRU establishes criteria with the Executive Director for the deactivation of the Task Force and assesses the criteria monthly. When criteria are met for deactivation, the TFRU presents a recommendation for deactivation to the Administrator, in consultation with the Executive Director.

112.3.2 Composition and Staffing
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

Task Force staffing must meet the requirements of the functions in section **112.3.4** and take into account the limitations of the various hiring types and contracting mechanisms available within the Agency. A Task Force's staffing plan and its recruiting/staffing practices must adhere to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), merit systems, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) laws, regulations, and principles. The

purpose of Task Force staffing is to respond to the core objectives and requirements of the Task Force in executing its mandate. The Task Force staff may support a B/IO at the B/IO's request but must not generate policy, procedure, or work products that otherwise fall within the authorities of a B/IO. The Agency must staff each Task Force sufficiently to facilitate or ensure sufficient reporting and documentation of key management, financial, programmatic, and policy decisions and actions.

Depending on the impact and scope of the challenge, the size and duration of a Task Force will vary at the discretion of the Administrator. A Task Force's composition and structure should be scalable, flexible, and adaptable and may evolve based on the scope, size, and duration of the crisis or challenge. Generally, stakeholders with equities in Task Forces will include the following:

     a. Agency Front Office;

     b. Affected Regional and Pillar Bureaus;

     c. M;

     d. Office of the CFO;

     e. LPA;

     f. PPL

     g. BRM;

     h. HCTM;

     i. GC; and

     j. SEC.

A Task Force consists of core staff and non-core staff, depending on circumstances and needs as determined by the Executive Director. Core staff will normally serve the Task Force on a full-time basis, while non-core staff is advisory or intermittent. A Task Force may activate non-core staff for specific periods as core members.

The TFRU, in conjunction with HCTM, facilitates efficient and timely detailing and hiring processes for a Task Force and provides technical guidance as well as an operational framework on how to detail Task Force personnel across multiple hiring and contracting mechanisms (see the Task Force Staffing Actions Roadmap). Note: There are additional considerations for detailing contractor employees, including individuals with personal services contracts. The TFRU consults with M/OAA prior to detailing these contractors. The TFRU provides a Task Force with sample detail Action Memoranda, Memoranda of Understanding, functional position descriptions, and statements of work.

The TFRU has developed two Agency-wide training courses on USAID Task Forces and what it means for the workforce to detail to a Task Force, to include possible Task Force

roles and responsibilities and organizational structure. These trainings are available to all staff via USAID University and are mandatory for Task Force staff. The trainings include:

- **Task Forces at USAID**: An introductory look at USAID Task Forces and the integral part they play in addressing unique crises and challenges facing the Agency, and

- **USAID Task Force Orientation**: An in-depth look at the workings of USAID Task Forces, covering everything there is to know during the lifecycle of a Task Force from activation to deactivation.

112.3.3   Activation Criteria
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

Most, or all, of the following descriptors characterize a crisis or challenge, or an emerging crisis or challenge, that requires broad Agency support and/or coordination across multiple B/IOs and the interagency:

a. An unusually complex or large-scale crisis or challenge that requires an Agency response that exceeds the abilities of any responsible Bureau or combination of Bureaus to operate and coordinate normally;

b. A crisis or challenge that has significant interest from, and engagement with, the White House, the National Security Council (NSC), Congress, and/or the interagency;

c. A crisis or challenge in which the Agency plays a significant or leadership role within the interagency response; and/or,

d. A crisis or challenge that requires prolonged intervention and monitoring.

In the case of an ongoing or emerging crisis or challenge response that meets most of the above criteria, the Administrator may activate an Administrator's Crisis Action Team (ACAT) at the recommendation of the Agency B/IO with responsibility for responding to the incident (*i.e.,* BHA for humanitarian emergencies, the Regional Bureau for political crises, SEC for attacks on Embassies/Missions, etc.), per the process outlined in the **Senior Staff Protocols for High-Level Crises**. The convening of an ACAT is not a precondition for the establishment of a Task Force; the Administrator may decide to stand up a Task Force outside of the ACAT mechanism.

A Task Force is formally established via an Action Memorandum to the Administrator submitted by M's TFRU and the applicable B/IO. The Action Memorandum must include a proposed scope of work for the Task Force that clearly states the objectives and rationale for the Task Force (*e.g.,* how the crisis or challenge response demands exceed the capacity of the Agency to respond through existing structures). If the Task Force Executive Director is identified by this time, the Action Memorandum also formally names the Executive Director to lead the task force. Upon the Administrator's declaration, ES issues an Executive Message to announce the official activation of the Task Force to the Agency workforce.

112.3.4 Functions of a Task Force

112.3.4.1 Programmatic
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

A Task Force is not an implementing unit, but a time-limited integrated platform that facilitates a coordinated Agency response to an event that extends beyond disaster and humanitarian assistance. A Task Force is responsible for Agency-level strategic oversight and the coordination of program-related decisions and actions that are directly related to the Task Force's crisis or challenge of focus. This responsibility requires substantial internal coordination with relevant Regional and Pillar Bureaus, IOs and Missions, all of which retain programmatic and operational management responsibilities. In its programmatic function, a Task Force should tackle questions such as:

   a. How best to prioritize and/or de-conflict ongoing programs and new ones.

   b. What are the near-term and long-term requirements for the Agency and the USG, associated resource implications, and how will the impact be evaluated?

   c. How can USAID and the USG build and structure crisis/challenge responses to account for the eventual need to transition to a different type of recovery programming or to a more sustainable mode of operating?

   d. Has the Agency developed a strategy to address the crisis/challenge and, if so, do the proposed activities align with the strategy?

A Task Force serves as the central focal point for all non-humanitarian requests related to the crisis or challenge, including from Missions, the interagency, and external stakeholders. The Task Force coordinates, devises, maintains, and/or delegates a system to manage all requests for field assistance and communicates that process to Agency employees, the interagency and the public. If the Agency stands up a DART or RMT alongside a Task Force, close coordination between the two will be paramount, for instance, via monthly check-ins or other similar methods.

Except for International Disaster Assistance and Title II-funded humanitarian assistance, a Task Force oversees the coordination of programmatic and resource-related discussions with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the NSC, other USG departments and agencies, Congress, and external stakeholders, in coordination with BRM, HCTM and M/MPBP. The Task Force anticipates and prepares for the expected level of interaction with all such interagency, governmental, and non-governmental stakeholders. When USAID is the lead USG agency for a given crisis/challenge or set of crisis/challenge response tasks, the Task Force clarifies the roles and the support services that different USG departments and agencies should provide.

The Executive Director and B/IOs must work within existing B/IO authorities to provide a cohesive, whole-of-Agency response to the crisis or challenge. In the case of divergence from stated strategy, disagreement between B/IOs that cannot be overcome, or other dispute over the response, the Executive Director may task the respective B/IOs to write an options memo for A/AID. The options memo will lay out each B/IO's position and

addresses the points of disagreement. The Administrator will select the option deemed to be in the best interest of the Agency's mission.

112.3.4.2   Financial Management
Effective Date: 07/15/2021

The urgency associated with crisis or challenge response can generate financial management challenges. For example, emergency funding appropriations often come with constraints on how the Agency may use them, and the practice of shifting funds among and between activities can trigger accounting or fiscal law challenges or require additional Congressional Notifications. The B/IOs accountable for the financial management functions related to the work of a Task Force maintain fiduciary responsibility for managing them.

The role of the Task Force is to ensure a coordinated Agency-wide response so that USAID completes the actions necessary for responding to a crisis or challenge. These actions include providing sufficient documentation of a Task Force's response and financial activities in coordination with the Agency's Chief Financial Officer to ensure proper financial management, funds control, and a sound financial audit trail. To expedite USAID's response while adhering to Federal requirements, the Task Force disseminates guidance to the affected stakeholders.

112.3.4.3   Acquisition and Assistance (A&A)
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

A Task Force helps to minimize duplication of effort in A&A. Complex crises and challenges often bring on needs for ongoing development and humanitarian assistance programs. Task Forces awareness of the A&A necessary to meet those needs can ensure that new efforts harmonize as much as possible with existing contracts and assistance programs.

As the Agency responds to complex crises, ongoing development and humanitarian assistance programs will need to harmonize with new crisis or challenge response activities to the greatest extent possible. In some instances, the Agency's primary emphasis will be on executing new acquisition (contracts) and assistance awards to deliver response activities. At other times, the Agency will need to modify or amend existing contracts and assistance awards to reorient ongoing programs to crisis or challenge response. The Agency should shape an approach to acquisition and assistance that is flexible enough to support its A&A professionals but is still within the existing regulatory and policy framework, including the use of available waivers, authorizations, and expedited procedures.

In any crisis or challenge response, a Task Force must maintain comprehensive awareness of, and ability to report on, the Agency's portfolio of responsive programs and their supporting A&A mechanisms. The A&A workforce will continue to exercise its regulatory and policy-based responsibilities for A&A. Cognizant Contracting/Agreement Officers (CO/AOs) and Contracting/Agreement Officers' Representatives (COR/AORs) remain responsible for their respective awards. However, by maintaining awareness of actions in progress, sharing information on available A&A vehicles, and disseminating solutions identified by other stakeholders, a Task Force helps prioritize A&A actions and

reduces the duplication of effort.

112.3.4.4   Budgetary Planning
Effective Date: 07/15/2021

The Executive Director of a Task Force may be required to identify short- and long-term budget needs based on information collected from the Task Force, other USAID B/IOs, external stakeholders, and the USG interagency. If the Agency requires funding beyond normal appropriations for a response to a crisis or challenge, the Task Force might require immediate funding shifts, a supplemental funding request, and/or an emergency appropriation. In this scenario, BRM (for program funds) and/or M Bureau (for OE funds), in consultation with the Task Force Executive Director, GC, LPA, and the applicable B/IOs are responsible for identifying short-term funding trade-offs and preparing the supplemental funding request for USAID to meet the Agency's needs. LPA takes the lead on communicating with Congress on resource issues.

112.3.4.5   Technology and Data Management
Effective Date: 07/15/2021

The pressing demands of Task Force operations often require rapid technology and data management solutions. As soon as these needs arise, the Task Force Executive Director must contact the Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer (M/CIO) to coordinate an appropriate solution, consistent with **ADS 509, Management and Oversight of Agency Information Technology Resources**, **ADS 579, USAID Development Data**, and other applicable Agency information technology and data management policies. Given the time required to establish new data analytics teams on short notice, the Task Force Executive Director is also encouraged to utilize the USAID Data Services team in M/CIO for its data analytics needs. This team is available through a contract and maintains a broad portfolio of data products and services for Agency-wide use.

112.3.4.6   Communications and Reporting
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

As noted in section **112.3.2**, upon the Administrator's declaration of a Task Force, ES, in conjunction with LPA and the TFRU, issues an announcement as an Executive Notice. The Task Force regularly communicates to Agency leadership on its work through appropriate fora, including routine meetings with the Administrator and senior leadership of stakeholder B/IO and relevant Missions. The Task Force also provides regular updates to Agency employees as the subject matter warrants and resources permit.

All stakeholders must understand a Task Force's chain of command for clearing information and reports for internal and external sharing. Standard reporting templates are useful to quickly deliver daily updates both internally and externally.

The Task Force must be resourced for communications, reporting, and documentation requirements from Congress, the Office of the USAID Inspector General (OIG), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the media, and other external stakeholders. Examples of typical reporting requirements include fact sheets, financial reporting, quantification of beneficiaries, staffing reports, and performance measures. The Task

Force does not undertake all reporting requirements but must ensure that the Agency completes all necessary reporting. For example, the Task Force needs to ensure the Agency tracks all emergency and supplemental funding the Agency obligates into existing mechanisms separately, by country, and collects all work plans and other data to meet reporting requirements. Audits of Task Forces by the OIG and the GAO are common. A Task Force must plan for an audit from the beginning, by maintaining proper documentation and identifying staff to liaise with OIG (and/or the GAO) to strengthen the coordination of, and responsiveness to, audits. The Executive Director, with the TFRU's support, must document all decisions clearly for messaging, management, and audit purposes.

112.3.4.7   Coordination of Policy and Strategy
Effective Date: 07/15/2021

A Task Force is responsible for Agency-level strategic oversight, coordination, centralized communication, and decision making directly related to the crisis or challenge. This responsibility requires substantial internal coordination with relevant B/IOs (especially PPL, given PPL's role in setting Agency-level and operational policy and guidance for the program cycle, as well as in providing operational support for the program cycle to OUs) and Missions. Given the likely interagency nature of a crisis/challenge response that warrants an Agency Task Force, a Task Force oversees the coordination of policy and strategy discussions with OMB, the NSC, other USG departments and agencies, Congress, and other external stakeholders. The Task Force anticipates and prepares for the expected level of interaction with all interagency, governmental, and non governmental stakeholders. In situations in which USAID is the lead USG agency for a given crisis/challenge or set of crisis/challenge response tasks, the Task Force clarifies the roles and the support services that different USG departments and agencies should provide toward the development of policy and strategy.

112.3.4.8   Knowledge and Records Management
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

Knowledge is a valued asset that a Task Force must store, manage, retain, and transfer properly so the Agency is continuously learning and building best practices to improve its performance, and sharing its learning with other relevant actors.

USAID intentionally embeds a strong emphasis on continuous learning and adaptive management in all of its programming and operations. An Executive Director of a Task Force, with TFRU's support, should begin the learning process as soon as practicable following the initiation of a Task Force and continue on a rolling basis (through interviews, peer learning exchanges among Task Force members and subject matter experts, analytic exercises, etc.) throughout the life of a Task Force to enable synthesis of technical and experiential learning, application of learning, and course-correction for improved outcomes. Given the usually temporary and fluid nature of staffing Task Forces, the Executive Director must ensure that Task Force challenges, success stories, and lessons learned are captured for future use to ensure continuity and success.

AARs are an Agency best practice to document lessons learned and identify weaknesses, as well as practices on which to build. The TFRU, in close coordination with a Task

Force's Executive Director, ensures that the Task Force considers relevant learning from AARs conducted by past Task Forces to inform its work from the outset. M/MPBP and the TFRU also ensure that each Task Force completes an AAR upon deactivation. M/MPBP, with support from the TFRU, initiates the AAR process 30 calendar days before the termination of a Task Force and staff transition. A Task Force submits to ES a comprehensive record, including an AAR, no later than four months after the conclusion of the Task Force. The AAR then becomes part of the Agency's official records. The Executive Director, M/MPBP, and the TFRU should consider including external stakeholders in the learning and AAR processes. USAID's AAR technical guidance is available here: **http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADF360.pdf**.

The AAR provides a forum for Task Force members and relevant stakeholders to review and critique activities related to the activation, deployment, integration, transition, and deactivation of the Task Force. Through the AAR, members of the Task Force and relevant stakeholders can voice opinions and discuss strengths, lessons learned, and areas for improvement.

When a Task Force has been activated to coordinate the non-humanitarian aspects of a crisis or challenge alongside a BHA response team (such as a DART or RMT), the TFRU will coordinate After-Action activities with BHA's Office of Field and Response Operations, which is the Agency lead for AARs following humanitarian crises.

Official records generated by a Task Force must be maintained and preserved in accordance with **ADS 502, The USAID Records Management Program**. The TFRU must submit the final inventory report of Task Force official records for the Agency's Annual Records and PII Inventory requirement.

The Executive Director of a Task Force creates and preserves records that adequately and properly document the decisions, procedures, and policies of the Task Force, as stated in **ADS 502**. The TFRU determines the records management system that all Task Forces will use as stated in the **Standard Operating Procedures for USAID Task Force Knowledge Management**. This common system ensures that Task Force records are comprehensive and consistent across successive Task Forces. The TFRU leads training for those responsible for the implementation of the records system. The TFRU works with each Task Force to manage records and documents of key decisions. Upon the deactivation of a Task Force, the Executive Director works with the TFRU to ensure all records and documents are saved in the official Task Force records repository under the TFRU, and post deactivation, the TFRU must archive and maintain the records. However, if a Task Force transitions responsibilities to a B/IO, the Task Force, in coordination with the TFRU, will pass a complete set of official records to the Records Liaison Officer in the receiving B/IO and to ES.

112.3.4.9   Monitoring and Evaluation
Effective Date: 07/15/2021

USAID is committed to rigorous and high-quality evaluation of programs to improve their effectiveness and inform Agency decisions about current and future programming. Operating Units and implementing partners will continue to be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their programs, according to the requirements of **ADS**

201, Operational Policy for the Program Cycle. However, a Task Force should consider allocating resources for conducting overarching M&E of its activities to determine whether USAID is meeting its objectives. In doing so, the Task Force must coordinate with PPL on its implementation of Agency M&E policy and guidance.

112.3.4.10   Operations
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

A Task Force is not an implementing entity. While a Task Force could have an operational focus, a Task Force's primary role is to support, oversee, and coordinate USAID's response to a given crisis or challenge. Affected B/IOs retain their authorities and implementation responsibilities to achieve the time-bound and outcome-focused operational goals and objectives established by the Task Force. Furthermore, a Task Force does not replace or perform the roles or responsibilities of the Agency's COOP organizational structure (see **ADS 531, Continuity of Operations Program**). ADS 531 provides direction, policy, and best practices for the development, maintenance, testing, training, and exercising of the USAID COOP program, in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Federal continuity policy.

The TFRU serves as the operations platform for a Task Force. The platform reduces disruption to the Agency and allows Task Force team members to focus on the scope of work for the Task Force.

112.3.5   Deactivation and Transition
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

A Task Force should only exist while a crisis or challenge warrants it, under the criteria in section **112.3.3**. Because Task Forces are intended to be relatively short-term units, the need for an integrated, cross-Agency crisis/challenge response platform will generally end before USAID has implemented, closed out, and audited all crisis/challenge-related activities. Therefore, affected B/IOs will likely have continuing responsibilities related to response to the crisis or challenge, even after deactivation or transition of a Task Force. The TFRU, in coordination with the Executive Director, establishes deactivation criteria within 15 calendar days of Task Force activation. The TFRU assesses the criteria every 30 calendar days thereafter. When these criteria are met, the TFRU recommends deactivation to the Administrator. In the event the Administrator concurs that the crisis or challenge has ended and/or the objectives of the Task Force are met, the Administrator will authorize its deactivation. The need for some of the functions associated with a Task Force will often endure beyond the existence of the Task Force itself, which will necessitate transition in addition to deactivation. In such cases, the most likely transition option is for one or more existing B/IOs to absorb the Task Force's functions, depending on the specific function in question. (If the functions a B/IO is absorbing are not reflected in its current Functional Statement in **ADS 101, Agency Programs and Functions**, the B/IO should coordinate with HCTM and follow **ADS 101** guidelines to update the language.)

When responsibilities of a Task Force transition to existing B/IOs, each B/IO that will absorb the Task Force's responsibilities must begin preparing to accept them as soon as possible, and alert BRM and M regarding any resources required to support the transition. The Task Force will work closely with the receiving B/IOs to assist with a smooth transition,

including the completion of any outstanding tasks. To ensure a smooth transition, the TFRU facilitates handover discussions at least 45 calendar days prior to deactivation. The following are illustrative factors for consideration of Task Force deactivation:

- In the event the Administrator activated the Task Force as part of a USG interagency directive, is there an established expiration date or set of interagency criteria for deactivating the Task Force?

- Has the focus of both interagency and intra-agency work shifted away from regional issues and approaches to bilateral, country-level efforts?

- Do the B/IOs most affected by the crisis or challenge now have the resources, staff, and funding in place to take full ownership of the Task Force's responsibilities?

This transition approach is viable when the complexity of the crisis or challenge response has diminished, or an existing B/IO's capacity to manage the crisis or challenge has increased, or both have occurred.

Another transition option that occurs only in rare instances is that USAID may establish a new B/IO with a mandate that includes the crisis or challenge that was the subject of the Task Force (*e.g.,* the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs). In such cases, the policy in **ADS 102, Agency Organization** will continue to guide the organizational-change process.

The Task Force must complete a number of required tasks before its deactivation and transition. These tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. **Programmatic:** The Executive Director, or their delegate, ensures the Task Force successfully transitions any relevant continuing responsibilities related to the strategic oversight and coordination of program-related decisions and actions to the designated B/IOs.

b. **Financial Management:** The Task Force ensures a clear handoff of its fiduciary responsibilities, if any, to the appropriate B/IOs.

c. **Budget and Planning:** The Executive Director, or their delegate, ensures the successful transition to the designated B/IOs, the budget planning responsibility encumbered by the Task Force. A Task Force ensures there is sufficient documentation and communication of key decisions to the participating B/IOs, PPL, BRM, and/or the M Bureau to provide a sound audit trail.

d. **Risk Management:** The Executive Director, or their delegate, with guidance from the ERM Secretariat, must ensure the successful handover of all Task Force risks to the appropriate Agency owners post transition.

e. **Communications and Reporting:** The Task Force will pass to LPA and the designated B/IOs all Task Force distribution lists and information products. As part of a Task Force's transition, the Task Force, LPA, and the relevant B/IOs will determine what reporting and information needs the Agency should maintain,

eliminate, or adjust going forward.

f. **Policy and Strategy Coordination:** The Executive Director, or their delegate, ensures the successful transition to the designated B/IOs of any relevant continuing responsibilities related to the strategic oversight and the coordination of Task Force policy and strategy decisions in close coordination with PPL.

g. **Knowledge Management:** The TFRU has overall responsibility for the management of records when a Task Force deactivates. However, when a Task Force transitions responsibilities to a B/IO, the Executive Director, in coordination with the TFRU, must pass a complete set of official records to the Records Liaison Officer (RLO) in the receiving B/IO, and to ES. The B/IO RLO will use appropriate hard copy and electronic means to file these records and provide records-management training regarding these files to the relevant B/IO staff.

h. **M&E:** The Executive Director, or their delegate, and the TFRU will use M&E documentation directly related to the work and performance of the Task Force to inform the AAR. The relevant Operating Units and implementing partners, as guided by **ADS 201, Operational Policy for the Program Cycle**, will maintain the responsibility for any ongoing project- or activity-related M&E.

M/MPBP, with support from the TFRU, initiates the AAR process 30 calendar days before the termination of a Task Force and staff transition. A Task Force submits to ES a comprehensive record, including an AAR, no later than 90 calendar days after the conclusion of the Task Force. The AAR then becomes part of the Agency's official records. The TFRU uses the AAR to inform improvements to this ADS chapter, Help Documents, and future deployments of Task Forces.

If a Task Force transitions responsibilities to a B/IO, the Task Force, in coordination with the TFRU, must pass a complete set of official records to the RLO in the receiving B/IO and to ES.

ES will issue an Executive Notice on behalf of the Administrator regarding the deactivation of a Task Force, transition plans, and relevant contact information.

112.4   MANDATORY REFERENCES

112.4.1   External Mandatory References
Effective Date: 02/10/2020

a.   **2 FAM 060 International Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance**

112.4.2   Internal Mandatory References
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

a.   **ADS 101, Agency Programs and Functions**

b.   **ADS 102, Agency Organization**

c.   **ADS 201, Operational Policy for the Program Cycle**

d.   **ADS 201mau, Guidance on the Definition and Use of the Global Health Programs Account**

e.   **ADS 251, International Disaster Assistance**

f.   **ADS 502, The USAID Records Management Program**

g.   **ADS 524, Emergency Management**

h.   **ADS 530, Emergency Planning Overseas**

i.   **ADS 531, Continuity of Operations Program**

j.   **Response Management System (RMS)**

k.   **Senior Staff Protocols for High-Level Crises**

112.5   ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

a.   **Standard Operating Procedures for USAID Task Force Communications**

b.   **Standard Operating Procedures for USAID Task Force Engagement in Audits and Related Products**

c.   **Standard Operating Procedures for USAID Task Force Enterprise Risk Management**

d.   **Standard Operating Procedures for USAID Task Force Knowledge Management**

e.   **Standard Operating Procedure for USAID Task Forces Planning for Lapse in Appropriations**

f.   **Task Force Emergency Notification Annex**

g.   **TFRU Task Force Staffing Actions Roadmap**

h.   **USAID Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan**

112.6   DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 05/12/2023

See the **ADS Glossary** for all ADS terms and definitions.

After-Action Review
A leadership and knowledge-sharing tool that helps USAID learn from experience and

better understand important events, activities, or programs. An AAR is a professional discussion of an event and focuses on performance standards that enable development professionals to discover what happened, why, and how, to sustain strengths and improve weaknesses. An AAR can be formal or informal, although those conducted for a Task Force should always be formal. (**Chapter 112**)

Task Force

A cross-Agency team established in response to a crisis or challenge or emerging crisis or challenge that extends beyond disaster and humanitarian assistance. It is led by an Executive Director designated by the Administrator and serves as a limited-term unit for developing crisis/challenge response strategies, proposing action, and delegating and coordinating the Agency's response. A Task Force is intended to function as an integrated platform to facilitate a coordinated Agency response to an event that goes beyond a humanitarian crisis. USAID uses Task Forces to improve collaboration inside the Agency and with the U.S. Government interagency and external stakeholders to achieve the goals of a non-humanitarian crisis response. (**Chapter 112**)

Task Force Readiness Unit

The entity in the Bureau for Management that is responsible for coordinating the establishment of a Task Force when the Administrator approves it, and managing its day-to-day operations from activation to deactivation. These operations may include working with the Executive Director and other Task Force members to formulate a Task Force's objectives and processes, and the interagency logistics, staffing, and communications for the Task Force during its operations. The TFRU is also responsible for handling all ongoing Task Force administrative actions after deactivation, including audit response and managing Task Force records. (**Chapter 112**)

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