



Agency Leadership Councils: Establishment, Governance, and Function

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 101

New Edition Date: 01/06/2021
Responsible Office: HCTM/PPSM
File Name: 101maa_010621

Agency Leadership Councils

Agency Leadership Councils (ALCs) provide an Agency-wide platform for leadership, oversight, and coordination in instances where the resources and decision-making authority for a technical focus area are dispersed across multiple Washington Operating Units (*i.e.*, Pillar or Regional Bureaus). ALCs create a formal coordination structure to enable executive, cross-Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO) guidance and strategic leadership in technical focus areas and the resources allocated to provide recommendations on budget allocations to the Office of Budget and Resource Management. The Administrator (A/AID) has the authority to establish or dissolve ALCs with input from the Deputy Administrator (DA) and/or Associate Administrators.

Establishing an Agency Leadership Council

While ALCs represent a useful organizational tool, they should only be established when the existing organizational structure is unable to facilitate cross-B/IO strategic, policy, budgetary, and technical coordination for a technical focus area. An ALC is not appropriate for a focus area for which the predominance of funding, technical leadership, and programming is under the guidance of a singular Operating Unit. Criteria for the creation of an ALC include:

- Significant Agency resources, both human and financial, are implicated in the technical focus area;
- Existing structures and processes such as sector councils, working groups, Technical Earmark Groups (TEG), roundtables, and other coordination platforms managed by the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) and the Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM) cannot provide the necessary level of coordination and oversight; and
- The technical focus area represents a significant Agency and/or USG development policy priority or the technical area is a critical contributing factor to a significant Agency or USG development policy priority.

A Bureau or Independent Office (B/IO) directed to stand up an ALC must submit an action memorandum from the Assistant Administrator/Assistant to the Administrator/Director of the chairing B/IO, along with a proposed charter, to the A/AID for approval. A/AID approval ensures the ALC is properly organized to address Agency priorities and that the structure is an effective means to achieve the Council's coordination mandate.

The action memorandum must articulate how the proposed ALC addresses the criteria above and explain why existing structures and processes, including PPL and BRM platforms and other coordination mechanisms, are not sufficient. The charter must outline the Council's objectives, leadership structure, membership, and official proceedings. The charter must be prepared in accordance with **Tab 1 - Template for**

an Agency Leadership Council Charter. All B/IOs participating in the ALC must clear the charter.

ALC members will periodically review the charter to ensure that the Council remains properly organized to address Agency priorities and that the structure continues to be the most effective model for coordinating Agency resources and policies. The ALC and the DA or Associate Administrator responsible for the program area must approve major revisions to the charter, such as leadership or membership changes. The relevant B/IO will work under the direction of the DA or Associate Administrator, with approval from the A/AID, to sunset an ALC if a determination is made that it is no longer necessary.

Structure and Supporting Roles

The A/AID will delegate leadership of an ALC to a Washington Pillar or Regional Bureau deemed most appropriate to chair the Council and support its secretariat. The responsibility of ALC management will be based in the Washington B/IO where the chair resides. In cases where a technical focus area has both an ALC and a formal organizational unit, that center or office would support the operations of the ALC as its Secretariat and the designee of the B/IO where the center or office is housed becomes the chair.

The designated Secretariat will support the ALC and receive input from Technical Working Group (TWG) representatives of B/IOs that are ALC members. The Secretariat is responsible for preparing and tracking ALC recommendations and coordinating input from the sector TWG prior to submission to BRM. This ensures alignment on deliverables across the Operating Unit structures to advance the ALC's technical focus area or cluster of areas with significant Agency-wide priority and importance.

Agency Leadership Council Functions and Authorities

In accordance with [ADS 101.3.1.1](#), the A/AID establishes and dissolves ALCs. The A/AID then delegates authorities to the DA or Associate Administrator, as appropriate, to determine membership and oversee the ALC.

ALCs will lead Operating Units' coordination in the following key areas:

- a. **Budgetary Recommendations:** To support the mandate of the Agency to deliver coordinated leadership and support evidence-based decision making, ALCs are responsible for providing the final strategic recommendations on budget allocations to BRM, and to Agency leadership at various stages of the year to be used by BRM during the USAID budget formulation process to build, justify, and implement foreign assistance budgets for the designated technical focus area. The Secretariat will develop sector/focus area recommendations, in consultation with BRM and the TWGs supporting each ALC and the program offices

associated with the core funding relevant to the sector/focus area, for review by the ALC at key points in the budget process prior to submission to BRM.

- b. Technical Leadership and External Engagement:** ALCs serve as a single Agency point of contact for their technical focus area, leading inter-agency coordination and external engagement on the technical area of the council. ALCs strengthen USAID's engagement with key external stakeholders and the interagency by ensuring consistent and coordinated messaging. As the coordination platform for technical excellence within their focus area, ALCs ensure the cross-pollination of evidence supporting the technical focus area among relevant Missions and B/IOs. ALCs, under the authority of the chair, elevate messages across the global community to drive progress and global coordination.
- c. Technical Policy Guidance:** ALCs lead the development of technical policy and programming guidance for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of portfolios addressing the focus area of the council, including advising field Missions and B/IOs in Washington on strategic planning of related resources with implications for the technical focus area. The ALC Secretariat coordinates technical assistance to Missions in line with its mandate.
- d. Programmatic Oversight:** ALCs ensure effective and integrated implementation of relevant USAID and interagency strategies and Agency-wide metrics and targets with guidance from PPL. To limit the burden of ad hoc data collection on the field, ALCs will exercise oversight in reviewing information gathered through existing USAID planning and reporting processes, in consultation with PPL. ALCs ensure strategic and programmatic alignment with sector and country strategies and technical guidance relevant to the specific technical focus area, and other Agency policies, such as [ADS 201](#). This includes guidance on:

 - Monitoring program performance and operational context;
 - Evaluating the performance and results of USAID programs;
 - Learning and adapting for improved effectiveness;
 - Developing and revising technical guidance and tools to support project and activity design; and
 - Supporting Missions to fulfill programming requirements, including providing technical support.

See [Agency Notice 53645](#) for a summary of the current three Agency Leadership Councils: Resilience; Nutrition; and Water Security, Sanitation, and Hygiene.



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TAB 1

TEMPLATE

USAID [INSERT TITLE] LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Charter

Version X.0

Date: [Month, Day, Year]

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CHARTER – USAID [Insert Title] LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

1. BACKGROUND

[Insert what problem or challenge the Agency Leadership Council (ALC) addresses, including any specific agency or administration priorities the ALC supports. This description should outline the background for establishment and the authorized scope of the ALC.]

2. CHARTER AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the authority of the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, this charter details the objectives, leadership structure, membership, and official proceedings of the [Insert Title] Leadership Council. The Agency Leadership Council (ALC) operates in accordance with [ADS 101, Agency Programs and Functions](#); [ADS 101maa, Agency Leadership Councils - Establishment, Governance and Functions](#), and all relevant policies in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS). The effective date of establishment for this ALC is [Insert date of A/AID signature establishing the ALC].

3. OBJECTIVES

The [Insert Title] Leadership Council will provide recommendations on topics relevant to [insert brief technical focus area description], including: [Insert list of key objectives or functions of the ALC. The list should provide a clear sense of the objectives within the scope of the ALC.]

The [Insert Title] Leadership Council will lead Operating Unit (OU) coordination in the following key areas:

- Budgetary Recommendations
- Technical Leadership and External Engagement
- Technical Policy Guidance
- Programmatic Oversight

4. MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

The [insert Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO)] will chair the [Insert Title] Leadership Council. [Insert description of the leadership structure along with their roles and responsibilities. The list should include those of key individuals (*i.e.*, chair, deputy chair, etc.) and cover topics such as who will lead the Council meetings, using position titles and not personal names on account of potential staffing changes.]

ALC membership will be open to representatives of key stakeholder Bureaus and Independent Offices (B/IOs) at the DAA level. [Include a list of members by B/IO and position/title. Do not include names of members.]

5. DECISION-MAKING

[Describe how decisions will be made. Additional delegations in the absence of the chair, or their designated proxy, should be outlined and agreed upon through the Agency Leadership Council in this charter].

6. MEETING

[Identify the expected meeting schedule for the Agency Leadership Council, where meetings will be held, what constitutes quorum, and how participation will be managed. For example, identify when and how preparatory information will be shared, if call-in lines will be made available, and how or when email will be used to address Agency Leadership Council business.]

7. SECRETARIAT AND STAFF SUPPORT

The [Insert Title] Leadership Council Secretariat will be led by [insert B/IO Title] where the Chair resides. [Identify which B/IO and Office or Center will serve as the Secretariat. Describe the duties of the Secretariat as well as any working groups that may be created or already exist that will provide input to the Council.]

8. CHARTER REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The [Insert Title] Leadership Council will periodically review the charter to ensure that the Council remains properly organized to address Agency priorities and that the structure continues to be the most effective model for coordinating Agency resources. Major revisions to this charter, such as leadership or membership changes, must be documented and approved by the ALC and the Deputy Administrator (DA) or appropriate Associate Administrator. The relevant B/IO will work under the direction of the [DA or Associate Administrator], with Administrator (A/AID) approval, to sunset the ALC if a determination is made that it is no longer necessary.

USAID [Insert Title] LEADERSHIP COUNCIL CHARTER – SIGNATURE PAGE

Name Date
[insert title] Leadership Council Chair
Title, B/IO
USAID

Name Date
[insert title] Leadership Council [Leadership Position]
Title, B/IO
USAID

Name Date
[Deputy or Associate] Administrator
USAID

Clearance Page for Action Memo to the Administrator for approval of the USAID [Insert Title] Agency Leadership Council Charter

Participating B/IOs

Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL)

Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM)

Office of the General Council (GC)