USAID/RWANDA

Valuing Open and Inclusive Civic Engagement (VOICE) 2015-2020 Project Appraisal Document (PAD)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy (USAID)
CLA	Collaborating-Learning-Adapting (USAID)
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSC	Citizen Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDP	District Development Plan (GOR)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DG	Democracy and Governance (USAID)
DO	Development Objective (USAID)
DPCG	Development Partners Coordination Group
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (USAID)
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GOR)
EG	Economic Growth (USAID)
EU	European Union
FtF	Feed the Future (USAID agriculture/food security initiative)
G2G	Government-to-Government
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GIZ	German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation
GOR	Government of Rwanda
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum (GOR)
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MOH	Ministry of Health
MRR	Mission Resource Request
NCBS	National Capacity-Building Secretariat (GOR)
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
OYB	Operating Year Budget
PAD	Project Appraisal Document (USAID)
PMT	Project Management Team (USAID)
POL/ECON	U.S. Embassy Kigali State Department Political and Economics Section
PPIMA	Public Policy Information, Monitoring, and Advocacy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Valuing Open and Inclusive Civic Engagement (VOICE) Project Appraisal Document (PAD) informs the design of mechanisms and activities supported by USAID/Rwanda intended to *increase civic participation and consultation in governmental decision-making at all levels.*

In line with the Government of Rwanda (GOR), USAID/Rwanda's goal, as captured in its Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), is to accelerate Rwanda's progress to middle-income status and better quality of life through sustained growth and reduction of poverty. This goal is undermined, however, when the GOR restricts citizens' input into policies affecting them, does not consistently respect the rule of law and human rights and limits public dialogue to the one-sided acceptance of official policies and narratives. This lack of substantive engagement with citizens coupled with a weak protection of civil rights and liberties will inevitably limit the sustainability of peace and development in Rwanda.

The ultimate goal of the VOICE project, then, is to *improve conditions for durable peace and development through strengthened democratic processes*, thereby leading to sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. This PAD furthers that goal through achieving its purpose to increase civic engagement and consultation in decision-making at all levels. This will be achieved through three key sub-purposes: (a) improved performance and engagement by civil society organizations (CSOs) and GOR entities; (b) strengthened protection of civil rights and liberties; and (c) improved environment for political participation and transparent elections.

The **development hypothesis** of the VOICE project is that *if* Rwandan citizens have an increased and better-informed voice in shaping public policy and demanding government accountability, and *if* the GOR has the ability and will to protect human rights and adopt inclusive democratic processes, *then* citizens will be more invested in Rwanda's governance and development outcomes leading to improved conditions for durable peace and development.

The VOICE project will focus on strengthening relevant institutions, frameworks and opportunities to ensure that stakeholders participate effectively in public decision-making, exercise their civil rights and liberties and take part in transparent, inclusive electoral processes. The project also seeks to strengthen Rwandan civil society and increase trust between GOR institutions and civil society. The project will leverage and complement USAID/Rwanda's existing mechanisms and activities to support the Mission's goals and objectives, the partner country's priorities and the larger donor community's efforts. In addition, the project will promote gender equality and women's empowerment principles through addressing gender constraints highlighted in the gender analysis completed for the VOICE project.

This PAD covers activities from FY 2015-FY 2020. Achievement of results will be supported through a whole-of-mission effort, which acknowledges the importance of improved democratic governance to USAID/Rwanda's Mission goal of

accelerating Rwanda's progress to middle income status and better quality of life through sustained growth and reduction of poverty.

Human Rights versus Civil Rights

The difference between human rights and civil rights lies at their source. We all have human rights simply because we are human beings. Most people enjoy civil rights because their government has granted them certain legal rights. Human rights are the most fundamental rights, and are considered to be immutable characteristics of human existence. They include the rights to life, education, protection from torture, free expression and a fair trial. Civil rights, on the other hand, are those rights that one enjoys by virtue of citizenship in a particular nation or state, and they are guaranteed by positive law (such as a constitution or code of laws). For example, U.S. citizens have the civil right to be free from discrimination, as guaranteed by the Constitution. The Rwandan Constitution guarantees certain fundamental human rights such as the right to be free from any form of discrimination, the right to be free from violence, the right to equal protection of the law, the right to freedom of thought and opinion, the right to freedom of the press and the rights to freedom of speech and association. This codification makes these rights both human rights and civil rights. In this PAD, both civil rights and human rights are addressed, as USAID seeks both to uphold fundamental human rights of all citizens and to ensure that the Government of Rwanda protects the civil rights of every citizen as guaranteed them by the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda.

Cross-Sectoral Impact

Many democracy and governance issues cut across sectors, such as civil society organization capacity, the role of the media and citizen engagement on government policies. As such, VOICE's efforts to strengthen democratic structures in Rwanda will impact the economic growth, health and education sectors as well. VOICE will feed into and complement other Mission projects and contribute to achieving broader goals and objectives for the Mission. This is most notable in the two large, cross-sectorally funded activities: the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) activity and the LAND Project. Based on Mission-wide consultations, coordinated activity planning and occasional use of common indicators, the DG Office will ensure that its VOICE results impact Feed the Future, Global Health and Education investments. At the same time, VOICE will maintain a DRG lens to encourage long-term, sustainable gains in the Rwandan democratic institutions.

Key elements to fostering inclusive economic growth and mitigating poverty include respecting human rights, ensuring participatory and accountable institutions under a democratic system of government and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment to enable all citizens to equally and actively contribute to the country's development. Democratic institutions not only encourage citizen participation and the provision of policies and services that are focused on citizens' needs, but also provide a legal and policy framework for expanding economic opportunity by securing property and land rights, enforcing contracts and regulating markets. VOICE positively impacted the Rwandan land sector through data-driven research and policy dialogues on land rights,

particularly regarding women's and other vulnerable groups' land issues. Further, in order for Rwanda to attract more foreign investment and business, the GOR will have to ensure strong respect for the rule of law and consistent, predictable enforcement of contracts and laws. Without such predictability and consistency, there is significant risk to foreign investment in Rwanda. Additional activities may encourage the GOR to uphold the rule of law to stimulate additional private sector investments.

Moreover, USAID has made significant contributions to improved governance of the health sector by improving the policy and legal environment for health; strengthening the government's capacity to plan, execute and monitor health programs; and increasing accountability. Through global health investments, VOICE worked with civil society to build policy advocacy skills, as well as the capacity to take part in decisions that affect local and national health. In Rwanda, challenges remain in fostering community-led demand for health products and services, empowering families and communities to take action and make investments in their own well-being and building strong local partners to help inform and carry out future public policy directives.

Finally, in education, programs that improve the policy and accountability environment combined with interventions that strengthen the government's capacity to design and implement reforms are better able to sustain achievements at all levels of the educational system. VOICE supported advocacy and participation in education of citizens at the local level, building the capacities of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to serve as a strong and well-informed voice, demanding and supporting high student achievement, and encouraging school-community partnership.

VOICE Results

At the end of this project, USAID envisions that Rwandan citizens and civil society will have (a) more opportunity and ability to engage with the GOR on policy development and implementation; and (b) greater demand for accountability and respect for human rights and the rule of law from the GOR. Further, USAID envisions that at the end of this project the GOR will (a) increasingly turn to civil society for significant consultation in developing and implementing policies; (b) more consistently respect the rule of law and human rights; and (c) allow increasing open, informed dialogue on sensitive issues in the lead up to the 2017 Presidential Elections. Of course, USAID will not be able to achieve as much under the alternative budget scenario identified above as under the CDCS budget levels. Nevertheless, USAID believes that it can accomplish its broader objectives on a smaller scale with the budget outlined in PAD Amendment 1.

This PAD summarizes the country context under which the project will take place and examines its relationship to the CDCS, results framework and related initiatives and projects. The PAD also outlines Rwanda's key institutions, development policies and strategies and donors' activities to identify entry points for project interventions. These inform the proposed project description.

This document also includes an overview of the implementation plan emerging from the analyses and project description, which includes a project management

plan, a cost estimate and an approach to monitoring and evaluation to support the achievement of intended results.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO MISSION CDCS, RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND OTHER USG PROGRAMS

Rwanda Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

As noted in the draft CDCS, USAID/Rwanda's overall goal is to "accelerate Rwanda's progress to middle income status and better quality of life through sustained growth and reduction of poverty" through four complementary objectives. To this end, the DG Office has identified its Development Objective (DO2) as "improved conditions for durable peace and development through strengthened democratic processes." This objective builds on the link between progress on development outcomes and the need for strong democratic institutions, respect for human rights and participatory, accountable governance to sustain such progress.

DO2 comprises two intermediate results: IR 2.1, increased civic participation and consultation in governmental decision-making at all levels, and IR 2.2, improved social cohesion. IR 2.1 is addressed through VOICE, while the second IR will be the subject of future activities which focus on promoting social cohesion, peace building and reconciliation, specifically focusing on grievances that have the potential to lead to a resurgence of ethnic tensions and violence. Through increasing civic participation and respect for human rights while building the foundation for a more cohesive society, the Mission believes durable peace and development is possible.

The CDCS provides the framework for the design of VOICE. DO2 is the project goal, and IR 2.1 is the project purpose for this PAD. The following sub-intermediate results serve as VOICE's sub-purposes:

- Sub-IR 2.1.1/Sub-Purpose: 1 *Improved performance and engagement by CSOs and GOR entities*
- Sub-IR 2.1.2/Sub-Purpose: 2 *Strengthened protection of civil rights and liberties*
- Sub-IR 2.1.3/Sub-Purpose: 3 *Improved environment for political participation and transparent elections*

The CDCS prioritizes two cross-cutting pillars focusing on institutional capacity building and gender-sensitive approaches as key foundations of achieving and sustaining all of USAID's objectives in Rwanda. The VOICE project's emphasis on building capacity of the public, private and civil society sectors is an integral aspect of all interventions and the expected results will have an impact across USAID/Rwanda development objectives. It provides the foundation to allow for citizens' participation and inclusion in policy making while advocating for governmental transparency and accountability. The project's intrinsic focus on human rights requires addressing gender inequity issues as well as developing gender-sensitive approaches in each activity – as well as approaches that acknowledge the needs of other marginalized groups. See Annex P for USAID/Rwanda's Human Rights Strategy. Both pillars are reflected in greater

detail in the analyses and project design content of this PAD. Additionally, an important aspect of addressing these pillars, and thereby, the overall goal of the CDCS, is understanding how VOICE works with other USAID and USG programs as described below. To see how VOICE relates to other USG policies, please see the Expanded Project Description in Annex D.

Several Mission activities outside of the project help inform and support the realization of VOICE's results. They offer opportunities for the project team to work together on interventions, share lessons learned and achieve greater impact. They include:

Community Health and Improved Nutrition (CHAIN) Project

A major focus of the Health Office's Community Health and Improved Nutrition (CHAIN) project is to build the capacity of CSOs and strengthen GOR capacity where appropriate. CHAIN seeks to improve not only their performance, but the productive engagement between civil society and the public sector on health and nutrition, which contributes directly to Sub-Purpose 1. CHAIN's PAD identifies HICD as a possible channel of collaboration to improve performance in a systematic and sustainable way for CHAIN. Such a partnership that encourages community-based approaches to managing local challenges while improving the institutional capacity of CSOs will lead to more inclusive and sustainable development and a stronger civil society sector.

Decentralized Health Systems Strengthening Activity

The Health Office will also implement the Decentralized Health Systems Strengthening activity, which will provide significant support through technical assistance to the GOR for decentralization in the health sector, health policy development and building capacity of service providers and systems. Such interventions also contribute to VOICE's Sub-Purpose 1, particularly through a focus on *participatory* policy development involving citizen input, as well as supporting decentralization policies and improving service provision.

Famine Early Warning System

The Economic Growth (EG) Office also funds activities that complement VOICE's expected result to improve performance and engagement by CSOs and GOR entities, particularly in the area of service provision. The objective of the **Famine Early Warning System** activity was to build the capacity of Rwandan academic and government institutions to support agriculture sector modernization and food security development through information collection and analysis toward strengthened agricultural policymaking and famine preparedness. This objective contributed to VOICE's outputs under Sub-Purpose 1: increased organizational capacity and research/monitoring, advocacy and outreach skills of CSOs; improved communication and trust between CSOs and GOR entities; and improved service provision by the GOR.

VOICE, in turn, provided a platform for collaboration between the DG and EG Offices through HICD. HICD was a model of structured and integrated processes

designed to identify root causes of performance gaps in partner institutions, address those gaps through performance solutions and enable systems for continued improvement. The activity worked with key partners of the EG Office, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, by providing support for assessing and improving its public finance management systems, and INGABO and IMBARAGA, two farmers' unions, on capacity building, including developing business models and conducting monitoring and evaluation, among other areas. Further, the DG team generally believes that broad economic empowerment will lend increasing weight to citizens' input in social and political processes.

Private Sector-Driven Agricultural Growth Activity

The Private Sector-Driven Agriculture Growth (PSD-AG) activity aims to increase smallholder farmers' incomes through upgraded agriculture value chains. In doing so, PSD-AG will support the GOR to create a regulatory environment conducive to attracting private sector investment and will build the capacity of agribusinesses and farmer cooperatives to upgrade agricultural value chains. A key activity under PSD-AG is to establish a mechanism for public-private dialogue specific to agriculture issues, allowing the GOR and the private sector represented by the Private Sector Foundation and farmer organizations to forge partnerships and bolster interaction. This improved public-private dialogue mechanism will also serve as a platform where the private sector and farmers organizations will provide inputs during policy discussions.

Learning Enhanced Across Rwanda Now! (LEARN) Project

The goal of Project LEARN, which has ended, was to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for children in primary schools in Rwanda. Its two key objectives—to improve quality of education and to increase access to high quality teaching and learning materials for teachers and students—depended, in part, on the capacity of relevant GOR institutions, including the Ministry of Education, Rwanda Education Board (MINEDUC/REB), University of Rwanda College of Education (URCE), and education offices at the district and sector levels. Capacity-development activities were integrated into LEARN to foster and sustain LEARN's goals. The capacity building activities integrated into Project LEARN, as well as the HICD activity, contributed to VOICE's Sub-Purpose 1.

Akazi Kanoze and Huguka Dukore Youth Livelihoods Activity

Akazi Kanoze, which has ended, and the follow-on activity, *Huguka Dukore,* aim to enable rural and urban youth to be more capable of earning a livelihood through life and work readiness training. *Huguka Dukore* also seeks to enable local institutions (government, private sector and civil society) to better prepare youth for work, and better connect them to personal development, employment and self-employment opportunities. The latter objective contributes to VOICE's Sub-Purpose 1, specifically increasing organizational capacity (Output 1.1) and improving service provision by the GOR and civil society organizations (Output 1.3).

Finally, in light of the sensitive nature of some of the intended activities, DG will work closely with State's Political/Economic section and the Front Office to ensure

that USAID's human rights strategies are in line with USG policies, as inspired by the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). Further, on relevant issues (such as TIP) and as appropriate DG will consult with State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) in design and strategic considerations.

3. RELATIONSHIP TO PARTNER COUNTRY AND OTHER DONOR PROGRAMS

Many GOR institutions and partner country aid agencies operate in Rwanda alongside USAID. These government entities and bilateral and multilateral donors help build the enabling environment for effective and inclusive development. By coordinating and partnering with the partner country and other donors, as well as accounting for their policies and strategies, USAID can improve aid delivery and maximize development results.

Partner Country Key Institutions, Policies and Strategies
Any development activities in Rwanda must be considered in light of the GOR's development strategies, particularly the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013-2018 (EDPRS II), Vision 2020 and the National Strategy for Transformation. The GOR has identified "Accountable Governance" as one of the four main pillars of EDPRS II, citing the need to "enhance accountable governance by promoting citizen participation and mobilization for delivery of development, strengthening public accountability and improving service delivery." Moreover, in Vision 2020, the first pillar on "good governance and a capable state" highlights the importance of capacity building—that is, strengthening country systems and the institutional capacity of local organizations to contribute to national development and policy recommendations—and promoting good governance through transparency and empowering local communities in decision-making processes. In support of these strategy pillars, the GOR has instituted important media reforms and created a national decentralization policy.

The key partner country ministries for successfully implementing this project are the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), including the Rwanda Governance Board; Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN); Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST); and Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF). The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) promotes the GOR's good governance and decentralization policies, develops mechanisms to increase citizen participation in policy formulation and conducts research on service delivery. VOICE may create opportunities to work with RGB to conduct performance gap assessments on service delivery, to create regular opportunities for citizens to engage with the GOR on policy and to build the capacity of local leaders to coordinate and implement development plans through local Joint Action Development Forums and District Development Plans. MINECOFIN's National Capacity Building Secretariat (NCBS) coordinates all efforts to build the capacity of government actors. Through HICD, USAID aligned its approach to community development with NCBS's framework on capacity building, thereby ensuring that current and future interventions complement GOR priorities for capacity building.

The mission of MINIJUST is to organize and oversee the promotion of the rule of law in Rwanda. Opportunities to strengthen the work with MINIJUST include promoting the rule of law through training justice system actors or strengthening the capacity of the judicial and prosecutorial secretariats to ensure the written law is enforced, especially on gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. MIGEPROF supports child protection and family rights and promotes equality and equity for men and women. Opportunities to further strengthen the Mission's work with MIGEPROF include improving communication with representatives on gender issues (especially related to gender-based violence), building the capacity of local social services units and addressing issues related to land tenure and land policies for the LAND Project.

Please see more details on coordination with GOR ministries in Table 3 of the Expanded Project Description in Annex D.

Other Donors

Donor coordination in Rwanda is extensive, from high-level representatives to technical working groups, and inclusive of all partners, such as bilateral and multilateral donors, international and local NGOs and private sector representatives. The Development Partners Coordination Group (DPCG), which a development partner and the Ministry of Finance co-chair, is the highest-level coordination body and is responsible for the coordination of all development aid in Rwanda. The group also fosters alignment of development partners' interventions with GOR sector strategic and action plans. The DPCG coordinates an annual Development Partners Meeting and Development Partners Retreat for dialogue between the GOR and its development stakeholders. Additionally, the sector working groups on Governance and Decentralization and Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order serve as important entities for the DG Office to review and discuss project and activity planning and implementation. These groups provide a space for significant interaction among stakeholders relevant to VOICE.

Of particular note in VOICE, USAID participates in a DFID-led multi-donor civil society organization support fund for local civil society organizations in Rwanda working to strengthen social cohesion, reconciliation, and good governance. USAID and other donors supported the multi-donor civil society support fund in order to strengthen coordination, limit the risk of duplication (multiple funding of the same activities), reduce transaction costs, achieve economies of scale and support a common vision for the development of civil society.

Please see more details on coordination with other donors in Table 4 of the Expanded Project Description in Annex D.

4. SUMMARY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Purpose: Increased Civic Participation in Decision-Making at All Levels

Project Problem Statement: In line with the Government of Rwanda, USAID/Rwanda's goal, as captured in its CDCS, is to accelerate Rwanda's progress to middle-income status and better quality of life through sustained growth and reduction of poverty. This goal is undermined, however, when the GOR restricts citizens' input into policies affecting them, does not consistently respect the rule of law and human rights, and limits public dialogue to the one-sided acceptance of official policies and narratives. This lack of substantive engagement with citizens coupled with a weak protection of civil rights and liberties will inevitably limit the sustainability of peace and development in Rwanda.

Project Goal: The ultimate goal of the VOICE project is to improve conditions for durable peace and development through strengthened democratic processes. VOICE supports this goal through its purpose to increase civic engagement and consultation in decision-making at all levels, thereby achieving the goal and leading to sustained economic growth and poverty reduction in Rwanda. This will be achieved through three key sub-purposes:

1) Improved performance and engagement by CSOs and GOR entities;

2) Strengthened protection of civil rights and liberties; and

3) Improved environment for political participation and transparent elections.

Project Theory of Change: *If* Rwandan citizens have an increased and better-informed voice in shaping public policy and demanding government accountability, and *if* the GOR has the ability and will to protect human rights and adopt inclusive democratic processes, ***then*** citizens will be more invested in Rwanda's governance and development outcomes leading improved conditions for durable peace and development.

Key Assumptions and Risks: Democracy and human rights provide the foundation for stable, inclusive and productive societies and economies and in Rwanda, advancing democratic space and respect for human rights is perhaps the most challenging of our Mission goals. We recognize that implementing democracy and governance activities in Rwanda is not without its risks. While the GOR has shown impressive effectiveness in terms of governance, it has failed to provide its citizens *democratic* governance, which threatens to undermine stability in the event of future substantial political shifts or demographic shocks. The GOR has on occasion demonstrated its willingness to be responsive to would-be reformers who deliver balanced and data-driven critiques to government policy, and who offer reasonable alternatives. However, it has also shown its willingness to be implacable towards both external and internal dissent, even within its own political ranks. While the current administration enjoys a broad base of support among Rwandan citizens, there is a great need to build trust between key democratic actors in order to shore up the foundation that has been

laid for permanent and lasting developmental progress in Rwanda over the last 20 years.

Clearly, the operating environment in Rwanda is complex, and USAID/Rwanda's DG team will need to take special care in selection of its partners and the design of its activities. USAID recognizes that achieving these goals in the Rwandan context will require long-term engagement that lays the foundation for increased critical thinking skills and takes advantage of windows of opportunity to gradually expand political space and improve democratic governance. Nevertheless, in light of the importance of citizen participation in governance, respect for human rights and fair and inclusive elections to sustain development and lasting peace, and given President Obama's September 2014 Memorandum on deepening USG support of an enabling environment for civil society, the Mission firmly believes it is worth the inherent risks, and that this project targets the appropriate openings for protecting, using and increasing democratic space.

The Mission implements this project aware of and addressing the following assumptions and risks. First, key assumptions of this project and its strategies include: the GOR continues to value its reputation among donors for inclusive development and ensuring low corruption; political will exists to sustain existing platforms for policy input; the GOR is willing to view civil society as partners in development if civil society is equipped to do so; the GOR remains receptive to high-quality research and evidence-based advocacy; independent local CSOs exist who will apply for grants/assistance; political will remains to sustain media reforms; legal and regulatory environment for CSOs and media remains sufficient to allow them to operate independently; the Rwandan Constitution will be amended to allow President Kagame to seek a third term; and the GOR continues to allow independent elections observers in voting processes.
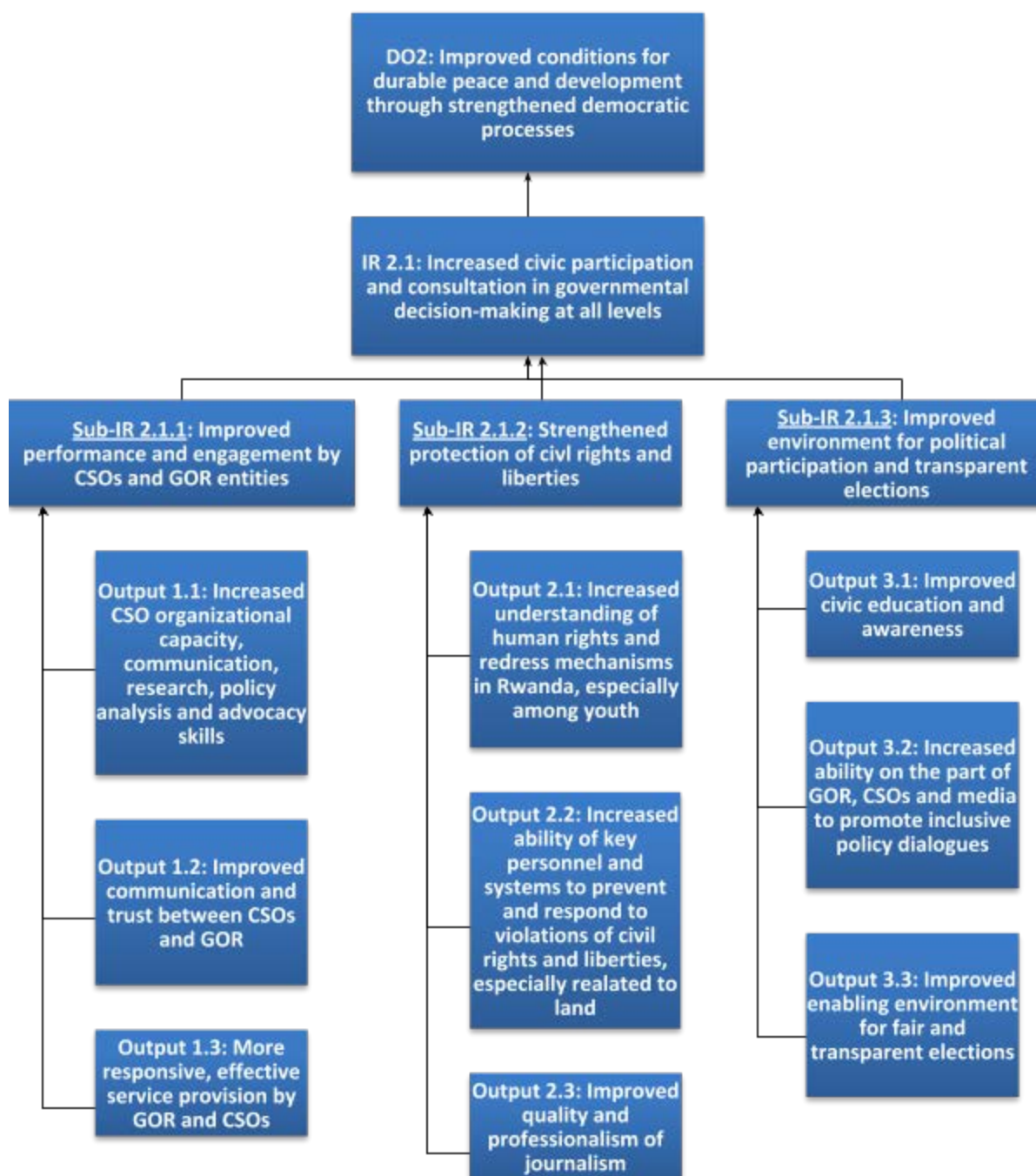
Key risks to this project include: local CSOs that receive USAID funding for human rights activities encounter increased pressure from the GOR, including registration difficulties; USAID's support for civil society, media and/or elections activities are improperly viewed by the GOR as threatening state security, thereby jeopardizing implementation; the GOR refuses capacity-building efforts for justice system actors and inspectorates; DG funding continues to be severely limited, jeopardizing USAID's ability to achieve planned results; that the Rwandan Constitution will not be amended to allow President Kagame to seek a third term, and our strategies have to be revised; and the GOR backs away from media self-regulation and clamps down on reporting that does not follow accepted development narratives.

An additional risk to the implementation of the VOICE Project involves potential shifts in USG policies towards the Rwandan Government. Given the geo-political events regarding the GOR's alleged support of the rebel group M23 in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the subsequent decline of donor support, the USG's decision not to approve Government to Government (G2G) funding, and considering the continued human rights issues inside Rwanda, it is feasible that the USG policy towards Rwanda could shift, negatively affecting GOR's attitude towards the USG's development investments, or increasing concerns from the USG regarding deeper investments in certain areas of this project's results framework.

Finally, in light of the genuine risk to local CSOs, USAID will take a measured approach to capacity building of local human rights organizations that is informed by Embassy input. If any of these activities create heightened tension between the USG and GOR, USAID will reassess its activities and approach and discuss appropriate strategies with the USAID and Embassy Front Offices. USAID will learn from our failures and, depending on funding, we will scale up the successes.

VOICE Results Framework

VOICE activities will support three sub-purposes (each supported by three outputs), as illustrated in the below results framework diagram.

DO2: Improved conditions for durable peace and development through strengthened democratic processes

IR 2.1: Increased civic participation and consultation in governmental decision-making at all levels

Sub-IR 2.1.1: Improved performance and engagement by CSOs and GOR entities

- **Output 1.1:** Increased CSO organizational capacity, communication, research, policy analysis and advocacy skills
- **Output 1.2:** Improved communication and trust between CSOs and GOR
- **Output 1.3:** More responsive, effective service provision by GOR and CSOs

Sub-IR 2.1.2: Strengthened protection of civl rights and liberties

- **Output 2.1:** Increased understanding of human rights and redress mechanisms in Rwanda, especially among youth
- **Output 2.2:** Increased ability of key personnel and systems to prevent and respond to violations of civil rights and liberties, especially realated to land
- **Output 2.3:** Improved quality and professionalism of journalism

Sub-IR 2.1.3: Improved environment for political participation and transparent elections

- **Output 3.1:** Improved civic education and awareness
- **Output 3.2:** Increased ability on the part of GOR, CSOs and media to promote inclusive policy dialogues
- **Output 3.3:** Improved enabling environment for fair and transparent elections

In addition to the three sub-IR's, there are two crosscutting pillars that will be incorporated throughout the project, in alignment with USAID/Rwanda's CDCS. These are:

- A gendered approach to development with a particular focus on women, children, youth and vulnerable populations; and
- Institutional capacity building.

Gender considerations, including a focus on gender-based violence, will be incorporated throughout all of the activities in this project with a more detailed

analysis of entry points for gender-focused activities discussed in the analyses portion of this PAD.

Institutional capacity building, while also incorporated throughout all of the sub-purposes of this project, is an explicit goal of sub-purpose one. The outputs under the sub-purpose: *improved performance and engagement by CSOs and GOR entities*, will directly work towards this cross-cutting pillar while also contributing to activities in other contributing to results in other projects.

Sub-Purpose 1: Improved Performance and Engagement by CSOs and GOR Entities

Development Logic: Fundamental to the underlying development logic of sub-purpose one is that local CSOs currently lack the capacity to engage in evidence-based research and policy analysis. This capacity deficiency constrains their ability to effectively engage the GOR on policy development and implementation, and therefore their ability to represent the interests of their constituencies. Further, this capacity deficiency curbs local CSOs' ability to push the GOR for increasing accountability and respect for human rights and rule of law. As a result of this deficiency, the GOR largely is unwilling to engage or collaborate with CSOs as credible partners in shaping public policy and service delivery choices, most often relying on its own analyses and limited input through government-driven citizen engagement mechanisms. Through improved capacity, in particular their ability to perform rigorous policy analysis and engage in effective outreach and advocacy, Rwandan CSOs will gain the respect of the GOR as partners with substantive contributions to make in shaping public policy and improving service delivery.

Output 1.1: Increased CSO organizational capacity, communication, research, policy analysis and advocacy skills

Many Rwandan CSOs lack sufficient capacity in financial and administrative management, internal governance and strategic planning, in addition to limited knowledge and skills in gender integration. As noted above, they also have serious deficiencies in their ability to conduct evidence-based policy research and analysis, which hinders their ability to serve as credible policy advocates to the GOR. The Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) and LAND Projects served as lead vehicles for the Mission to strengthen CSO capacities in management and governance; strategic planning; connecting with constituents; undertaking research and policy analysis, particularly as they relate to land and gender inequalities faced by women and marginalized populations; and engaging as more of an equal partner with the GOR on policy dialogue, formulation and assessment.

A DFID-administered multi-donor CSO support program serves as another core mechanism to achieve results under Output 1.1. A key downstream objective of this initiative, which has funding commitments from DFID, USAID, SIDA, and the Swiss government, is to strengthen the capacity of independent local CSOs to engage with the GOR as more equal and effective partners on public policy and development issues. USAID and the other development partners recognize that this requires an approach that fosters constructive engagement between civil

society and government for the purpose of improving policy and governance. USAID has determined that a project contribution-type grant to DFID is appropriate for this initiative because it is the most effective way to leverage the Mission's relatively small contribution while influencing a larger pool of funds and enabling the Mission to participate in a coordinated multi-donor effort that will unify a critical mass of donors supporting civil society organizations in Rwanda, a significant purpose of the grant. This significant purpose is accomplished at the point of USAID's disbursement of funds to DFID because USAID's contribution immediately places the Mission within that unified and coordinated group of donors with more credibility and bargaining power in encouraging the GOR to open what has historically been a limited space for civic participation. Indeed, by joining forces and speaking with one voice, development partners have a stronger platform for fostering constructive dialogue and cooperation between the GOR and CSOs, and for engaging with the GOR on issues of shared concern relating to the operating environment for CSOs, including civil and human rights.

For this output, activities follow gender-sensitive approaches to capacity building and include a focus on gender-specific issues around land rights and creating formal and informal networking opportunities. Further, activities encourage partner CSOs to prioritize gender equity internally through gender-empowering management structures and externally through gender-focused programs and advocacy efforts.

Output 1.2: Improved communication and trust between CSOs and GOR

Activities under this output will leverage GOR receptivity to civic input at the local government level, capitalizing on existing planning and monitoring structures, such as the District Development Plans, the JADFs, Community Development Committees, District Development Councils and the evaluation of the performance contracts for district mayors (*Imihigo*). Moreover, USAID may partner with other development partner-supported initiatives that are working to strengthen citizen engagement (such as the PPIMA project and its citizen score cards). The Mission, led by the DG Office, may also seek opportunities to collaborate appropriately with the RGB, which is mandated to work on governance and democracy issues. All activities will ensure that women – in their capacity as decision-makers, advocates, and project beneficiaries – are strongly represented in these forums through substantive discussions. Please see Annexes D and O for more details on these mechanisms as well as how the activities will build on them.

Output 1.3: More responsive, effective service provision by GOR and CSOs

Citizen input is critical for government-provided services to reach targeted populations and address needs. While the GOR has established a number of citizen engagement mechanisms, they are used primarily as a platform for disseminating information and implementing reforms rather than soliciting meaningful user input on service priorities and policies.

The space for CSO engagement appears to be greater at the local level, where government is more receptive to citizen input on issues of service effectiveness and accountability, in line with the focus on "accountable governance" in the GOR's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013-18 (EDPRS

II). This output addresses the need to move discussions beyond simple accountability (i.e., are the teachers showing up to work?) to a relationship where citizen input on service delivery quality and policies (i.e. is school preparing students to succeed in the modern workforce?) are part of the discussion. The 2013 RGB Citizen Report Card offers one good entry point for constructive dialogue with the GOR and service providers.

Moreover, in conjunction with the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) project, VOICE worked to develop the technical capacity of identified GOR actors to effectively engage with CSOs on policy development and implementation.

Sub-purpose 2: Strengthened Protection of Civil Rights and Liberties

Development Logic: Political space in Rwanda is tightly circumscribed, with limited space for public dialogue about civil and human rights. Self-censorship is commonly practiced by both media practitioners and average citizens. Recent analyses, including Human Rights Watch reports and the Millennium Challenge Cooperation scorecards for Rwanda, note a decline in human rights and political freedoms. As anticipated, there was further deterioration as the country moved toward the 2017 presidential elections. Individuals, organizations and media outlets that criticize the GOR face pressure and the threat of arrest, and the GOR has shown its willingness to force out CSO leaders who openly challenge its positions. Most citizens, particularly women, have limited understanding of laws and regulations that affect their civil rights and liberties, such as access to information and property rights. Many human rights-focused CSOs must walk a fine line between advocating for expanded rights and supporting government policy. There are, however, some bright spots, including more robust discussions on national and community radio and in social media (although at present most social media users critical of GOR policies reside outside of Rwanda). Youth organizations, particularly CSOs focusing on university student issues, have also been able to more openly discuss human rights issues, including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues. Women have also made impressive gains in the political realm, although mostly at the national level. The outputs below consider these shortcomings and how to build on these entry points in media, youth and gender.

Output 2.1: Increased understanding of civil and human rights and redress mechanisms in Rwanda, especially among youth

With more than 50% of the population under the age of 20, youth are a critical force in Rwanda. Political dialogue, while still nascent, is growing among this demographic. USAID will continue to support youth-focused organizations to build their capacity to develop critical thinking skills; create thought leaders; increase access to information about human rights and governance, gender equality, human trafficking and gender-based violence; better understand and engage the justice system at the local and national level; and engage with the GOR. Additional activities are likely to include training the public, especially youth, on civil and human rights; organizing conferences, debates and forums on civil and human rights issues; supporting local organizations to conduct rigorous research on human rights issues in Rwanda, including LGBT issues; and providing support for social media and other new forms of communication to help youth connect on

rights, peace-building and socio-economic development issues. Further, USAID will explore a mobile application to inform citizens of important information on political processes, elections and other relevant information.

Output 2.2: Increased ability of key personnel and systems to prevent and respond to violations of civil and human rights, especially related to land

The first step for protecting the rights of citizens is to adopt laws and policies offering protection from and redress for civil and human rights violations. In order for these laws and policies to become "tangible" to citizens, however, there must be enforcement. In other words, if a citizen claims her rights were violated, she must have a means to report it and the relevant authorities must have the will and ability to investigate and, if necessary, prosecute the claim to conclusion. Under this output, USAID supported efforts to ensure that government officials have the knowledge and ability to consistently enforce the law (and are held accountable to the law themselves). Activities include funding research on the extent of trafficking in persons in Rwanda and the GOR's capacity to prevent and respond to such cases; empowering local CSOs (including LGBT organizations) to engage in effective human rights research, public awareness campaigns and advocacy; training key personnel on existing laws, policies and procedures in place for the protection of marginalized groups; training justice system actors (such as prosecutors and judges) to consistently enforce the written law; improving the capacity of community mediators (*abunzi*) to preside over cases; increasing public awareness of how to engage the local and national justice system; and strengthening the capacity of justice system actors to respond to cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

Further, as Rwanda has the highest population density on the continent, and the second highest in the world, an effective land rights system is critical to sustained reconciliation and community cohesion. Studies from other developing countries that, like Rwanda, rely heavily on agriculture to sustain their rural populations have revealed that lack of access to land is one of the most significant predictors of poverty, vulnerability and conflict. VOICE developed informative land-related research through the LAND activity and used this research to inform and guide the development of inclusive, effective government policy.

Activities also aim to improve the ability of the GOR to effectively implement land and other regulations and judgments (enforcement of court and mediation decisions on land is a particular challenge). A critical aspect of this is increasing dialogue between CSOs and the GOR so that the government better understands how land regulations and judgments can disproportionately impact women and minority communities as well as smallholder farmers.

Output 2.3: Improved quality and professionalism of journalism

As noted above, while CSOs are under close scrutiny by the GOR there appears to be space for media, in particular on national and local radio and social media sites, for differing views on government policies to be expressed and discussed (although still not without possible repercussions). Given the recent media reforms, which provide for expanded rights of journalists and media self-regulation, a critical window of opportunity exists to support journalists and

media practitioners to develop a dynamic, professional and sustainable media sector. At present, the media sector in Rwanda is underdeveloped and journalists often lack critical thinking skills and self-censor. Journalistic professionalism and ethics are still in their infancy, and almost no outlets have the capacity or resources for truly investigative journalism.

Building on the work done through previous elections-related activities, USAID activities under this output include: building the capacity and confidence of the Rwandan media around political processes and reporting; providing training and assistance to local CSOs, media houses and journalists to conduct evidence-based reporting; providing training and assistance to media houses and journalists on strategic planning, professionalism, critical thinking and social media use; supporting media houses to do strategic planning, business development and increase revenue generation; support innovative technology use by journalists in support of elections reporting; and support the media sector to provide in-depth, thoughtful and independent reporting. Further, VOICE seeks to help community radio stations to improve their professionalism and the sustainability of their business models. A key risk in this sector is the relatively small potential advertising market as well as advertisers that are close to government. The potential for government- or self-censorship also has the potential for eroding gains in the media sector.

Sub-purpose 3: Improved Environment for Political Participation and Transparent Elections

Development Logic: As stated above, formal political space in Rwanda is very limited. Political parties, though no longer legally required to join the government-sanctioned Consultative Forum for Political Parties in order to be an active part of the political landscape, are strongly pressured to do so. The Forum acts as a venue for discussion of political platforms before they reach open debate in Parliament, with a requirement to reach internal consensus before any public proclamations. This rule by consensus is promoted by the GOR as a way to ensure that political debate remains manageable, under the belief that anything else threatens internal security. The Green Party of Rwanda, a party long in opposition to the government, registered with the government and joined the Forum after the legal obligation to do so was lifted. It is too early to tell whether this has had the effect of co-opting the opposition or of including more diverse views into political discussions.

With the upcoming 2018 parliamentary elections, USAID may design a new activity to support increased free speech, policy debate and civic awareness in the natural space created by the elections. USAID seeks to increase the level of issue-based public debate around these elections, with the end result of creating a more open electoral process in the future.

The outputs under this sub-purpose were informed by an elections assessment conducted in October 2014 with support from the Center of Excellence for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance. This assessment identified possible entry points for USAID and other donor programming leading up to the 2016, 2017 and 2018 elections, and what can realistically be achieved given the current

political environment. Such entry points focus on how the Mission can ensure free and open democratic processes with a broad respect for civil and human rights.

Output 3.1: Improved civic education and awareness

Rwanda is a nascent democratic system and citizens are largely unaware of their rights and responsibilities. There is also a high rate of illiteracy, especially among women and girls, and this lack of education limits their political participation and awareness. Working with and through the media, government-instituted local forums (like JADF) and local CSOs, USAID works to increase the level of civic awareness around Rwanda's upcoming elections through basic civic education and through providing opportunities for public debate around the elections. Specific activities include conducting awareness campaigns and trainings and developing materials; creating incentives for journalists to conduct investigative journalism though competitions for stipends, travel funds, etc.; offering "production-plus-training" grants to media platforms to produce elections-focused news, mixed with a training element; working with private and community radio stations; working with women's organizations on policy advocacy; developing mobile platforms for citizens to get up-to-date information on political processes; and providing assistance for CSOs, faith-based organizations and private sector actors to engage in public debates and forums on political processes.

Output 3.2: Increased ability on the part of GOR, CSOs and media to promote inclusive policy dialogues

Policy dialogue is currently limited in Rwanda, as the result of the absence of a robust media, opposition political parties, active NGOs and spaces for civic participation. The political culture of "consensus democracy," as well as significant levels of self-censorship, stifles open debate. USAID will increase substantive dialogue and the level of issue-based debate around both the local and national elections by engaging voters on policies that are relevant to their daily lives, in advance of and on through the upcoming elections cycle. Specific activities may include training key GOR, CSO and media personnel on political participation and evidence-based platform development; providing technical assistance to GOR, CSOs and media to hold forums and public debates on policy issues and political processes; and continuing the citizen reporting website activity. In addition, other activities may seek to assist women to more actively participate in civic issues, develop leadership skills and increase their self-confidence to make their voice heard within the community.

Output 3.3: Improved enabling environment for fair and transparent elections

While domestic CSOs have taken part in monitoring past elections, they have not been able to freely point out irregularities nor had the capacity to track all aspects of vote tabulation. While international CSOs have tracked elections as well they have often been constrained by macro political considerations when reporting irregularities. USAID contends that international election observation is a supplement, not a replacement for, domestic observation. USAID decided not to support either national or international electoral monitoring during the 2017 Presidential elections, but with respect to the 2018 Parliamentary elections may

support domestic election observation and long-term observation training for local CSOs; providing training and assistance to CSOs and media to conduct rigorous research on the existing legal frameworks related to elections and political processes, with a particularly focus on barriers to independent candidates' candidacy. Such activities may lay the foundation for more democratic elections in the future, serve to show that USAID remains interested in this sector and provide continued opportunities to engage in policy dialogue on democratic processes including potential changes in the legal framework.

The above represents USAID's intended outputs with CDCS Baseline funding levels. As noted previously, the DG Office acknowledges that it will achieve more modest results should funding be closer to its alternative scenario than the CDCS baseline levels (as laid out in the Executive Summary). Nevertheless, DG believes that it can accomplish its broader objectives on a smaller scale with the alternative budget. Implicit in this is DG's belief that its strategic plan to accomplish VOICE's goals is an integrated strategy, where each output plays a key role in accomplishing the overall purpose. Given funding availability and the local context, DG is prioritizing its civic engagement/elections, human rights and civil society activities as compared to investments in HICD and LAND activity follow-ons (unless HICD and/or LAND follow-ons are fully funded by other Sectors, as is currently being done).

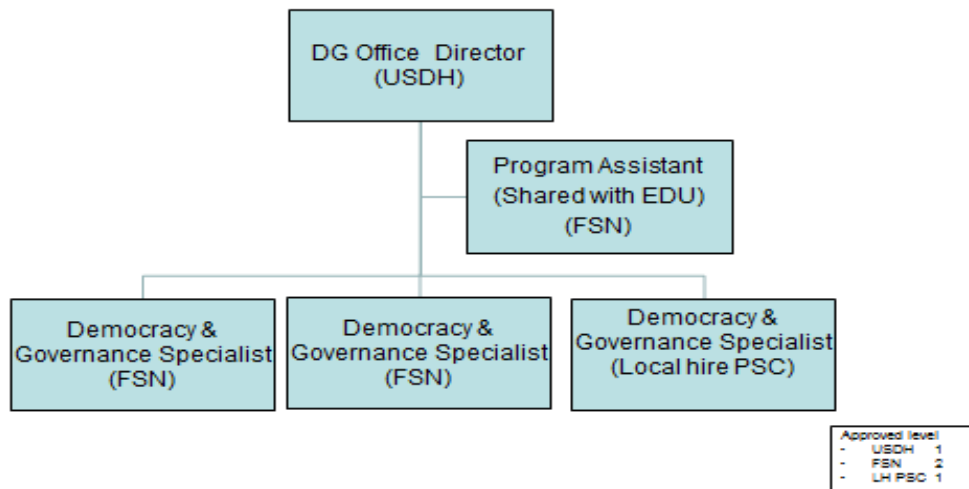# 5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND SELECTED MECHANISMS

Implementation Plan

The VOICE Project when originally designed included an Annual Program Statement that resulted in nine additional activities added in 2016 and 2017. The VOICE Project currently comprises nine activities as described in Table 1 below. Four activities under the Project have concluded. Detailed descriptions of each activity are included in Annex D: Expanded Project Description and Annex F: Expanded Implementation Plan and Schedule. It should be noted that the Approximate Ceiling of these activities reflects the CDCS baseline budget scenario, and is the amount for which USAID is seeking approval in this PAD. See Annexes E and F for implementation plans based on the alternative budget scenario. While DG's current media and elections activity will close out in early 2015, the project seeks to replace it with a new intervention for the 2016 local, 2017 presidential and 2018 parliamentary elections. The procurement actions for the new activity are identified in Annex G: Acquisition and Assistance Strategy.

Project Management Roles and Procedures

DG will implement VOICE according to established management roles and procedures, as outlined above in Table 1 and in the DG organizational chart below.

Organization Chart
Democracy and Governance Office

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  DG Office  Director │
                    │       (USDH)        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                             │
                             │    ┌─────────────────────┐
                             │    │ Program Assistant   │
                             │────│  (Shared with EDU)  │
                             │    │       (FSN)         │
                             │    └─────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│   Democracy &    │ │   Democracy &    │ │   Democracy &    │
│ Governance       │ │ Governance       │ │ Governance       │
│ Specialist       │ │ Specialist       │ │ Specialist       │
│     (FSN)        │ │     (FSN)        │ │ (Local hire PSC) │
└──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
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Approved level	
- USDH	1
- FSN	2
- LH PSC	1

DG believes its current staff is sufficient to manage this project and its planned activities.

As the project has significant cross-sectoral impact, it will reflect input from all technical offices. DG will be the lead section for technical expertise and for communicating with the project's immediate partners as appropriate, including the GOR, CSOs and donors. The DG Office Director will head the Project Management Team (PMT), with assistance from the Democracy and Governance Specialists. The COR/AORs of each activity will be members of the PMT.

The Project Manager will be broadly responsible for:

- Coordinating the work of the members of the PMT across technical offices
- Negotiating COR/AOR priorities with their direct supervisors or the DO Team Leaders
- Ensuring that indicators that are used across different activities, especially across DOs, are consistent in definition and collection methodology
- Conducting performance monitoring and aggregation of results at the project level
- Coordinating monitoring and evaluation information sharing and adaptive learning adjustments
- Working with AOR/CORs and the Program Office to document and disseminate project-level success stories
- Confirming that AOR/CORs ensure that implementing partners are in compliance with Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy and ADS Chapter 205
- Providing input for PMT member annual evaluations
- Updating the Mission-wide Evaluation Plan on an ongoing basis as new activities are developed

The entire PMT will meet on a quarterly basis to review larger project-level questions of implementation, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and adaptive learning. In addition, the PMT will hold semi-annual Implementing Partner Meetings and annual meetings with GOR stakeholders to reflect on project implementation to date and to share information. The PMT will also hold adaptive learning forums, as described in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptive Learning Approach section below, and participate in relevant Donor Coordination Technical Working Groups.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The DG Office collaborates with other technical offices across projects through two main mechanisms: the joint management structure between VOICE and teams with which activities are shared, and participation in learning spaces described in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptive Learning Approach section. In short, all of IR 2.1's activities require the involvement of the technical teams for their sectoral expertise and coordination with relevant GOR contacts, and all teams are key stakeholders in the project's design and implementation. There may be opportunities for further cross-sectoral collaboration in activities currently under design which the DG office will discuss with the broader Mission.

DG also considers the Front Offices for the Embassy and the Mission, as well as the Embassy's Public Affairs and POL/ECON sections, as strategic stakeholders in the project. The DG Office relies on the Front Offices' regular communication with GOR entities in particular to provide it with information on major trends, opportunities and concerns related to the Mission's goals and, more largely, USG foreign policy goals. This bilateral relationship is integral to the success of all project activities because it provides a way for DG to contribute to a country-owned development vision and deliver development assistance more efficiently with greater impact. The Public Affairs section provides an additional perspective on the media sector in the country and input on potential partners and stakeholders among media practitioners. The POL/ECON section helps DG share and analyze news and information that has an effect on the larger political environment in Rwanda, as well as programming more narrowly. POL/ECON also plays a significant role in the project's human rights-related activities. As noted in the CDCS, such human rights interventions will require risk and innovation and, subsequently, a Mission-wide approach that includes regular consultation with the Embassy. See Annex P for USAID/Rwanda's Human Rights Strategy.

As outlined above on cross-sectoral impact, DG cannot achieve and maintain the project results without strengthening the capacity of public, private and civil society entities across all sectors. This includes a commitment from the Mission and Embassy to provide continual and meaningful input into the project's development process.

DG will also work with bilateral and multilateral donors and international organizations beyond its current structures (sector working groups and donor coordination meetings) to look for synergies and avoid duplication on election activities, as well as civil society strengthening interventions. As described in the Summary Project Description section, DG is already in communication with USAID counterparts (led by DFID) on a multi-donor fund to strengthen local CSO capacity

and speak with one consolidated donor voice to the GOR on civic participation issues. In consultation with other donors, DG also conducted a pre-election assessment focused on fostering more space for constructive civic dialogue, particularly through media.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Monitoring and evaluation are essential for assessing and addressing knowledge gaps and changed circumstances during the project's implementation. When they are reinforced with an adaptive learning approach, this allows for greater transparency and informed feedback. The project team is better able to monitor data and evaluate results to realize project results. These integrated processes contribute not only to the strengthening of project implementation mechanisms and activities, but also the achievement of Mission-wide goals and objectives by informing the Mission's Performance Monitoring Plan.

As required by ADS 201, this project monitoring and evaluation plan, indicates how the VOICE project is complying with ADS 201 and presents data from project inception (baseline data), and describes how data will be collected periodically over the life of the project for both monitoring and evaluation purposes. There is no plan to conduct an impact evaluation; however three performance evaluations are expected throughout the life of the project. The plan also describes the project's learning or adapting approach and its implementation plan. More detailed information about the VOICE project's "Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and Learning Approach" is attached as Annex H. The annex presents the project level indicators, data sources, and data collection methodologies and is consistent with the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) for the mission-wide PMP. Specific targets will be set by the relevant AOR/COR in conjunction with the Implementing Partner during the work plan stage.

Monitoring

Objectives and Use of Monitoring

Monitoring will track the progress of implementation and achievement of project results. Effective monitoring and its accompanying data will clarify and ensure commitments made by the relevant stakeholders, help improve accountability and performance and allow for adjustments to strengthen activities. It will also help assess the project's higher contribution to DO2's goal: "Improved conditions for durable peace and development through strengthened democratic processes." Finally, project monitoring data will contribute to the Mission's Performance Monitoring Plan by providing information to facilitate decision-making on budget allocation and program changes, encourage participation and learning by all partners and improve transparency.

Overview of Monitoring Processes and Procedures

The project logical framework will contribute to and reflect implementing partners' planning of activities, timelines, indicators and targets. Partner plans, in turn, will describe the baseline documentation process, required surveys and analyses to be conducted and how to track progress. Those plans will be subject to

routine approval processes, depending on the agreement between USAID and implementing partners.

If additional research is required for successful project implementation, the DG Office will discuss its needs with implementing partners and provide guidance. Partners are also expected to submit quarterly and annual reports, which will collectively inform annual project reviews and progress toward results. As the VOICE project supports community-based and district-level strengthening elements, the COR/AOR will closely monitor the work plan through documented site visits, meetings, and regular communications with partners. This will be done on a quarterly basis, or more frequently, as needed.

Implementing partners must be able to ensure the quality of monitoring data they submit. To support this, USAID will schedule data quality reviews at least twice during the life of each VOICE activity. The data quality review will identify challenges in collecting information, as well as error margins in the data, and, if needed, implementing partners will develop action plans to improve data quality.

Table 2: Monitoring tasks and responsibilities

USAID	Implementing Partner
Develop logical framework at project level	Integrate log frame indicators into mechanism and activity monitoring
Approve activity-level monitoring plan	Develop mechanism-specific monitoring plan
Provide direction for monitoring, including defining log frame indicators, and any required changes in reporting	Report in compliance with requirements and defined logframe indicators
Conduct oversight of monitoring activities, including through regular site visits, meetings, and communications	Implement management processes and work plans that document implementation activities and provide monitoring data
Schedule data verification review at least twice during the activity cycle	Routinely review data quality and respond to USAID findings on data verification
Review quarterly monitoring reports	Submit quarterly monitoring reports
Organize joint annual reviews	Participate in joint annual reviews
As needed, jointly develop action plans in response to learning from monitoring data, intervene to improve performance or modify activities	

Monitoring Tools and Guidance

USAID/Rwanda uses AidTracker+ (AT+) as the primary tool for performance monitoring. AT+ is a cloud-based management information system that helps manage data related to the Mission's strategy, projects and implementing mechanisms including indicator management. AT+ allows AORs/CORs and Implementing Partners to consolidate all indicator data and Implementing Mechanism information (e.g., quarterly reports, geospatial coordinates, deviation narratives, Data Quality Assessments, Performance Indicator Reference Sheets, photos, etc.) into an electronic portfolio. Performance data at all levels of the results framework is tracked in tandem

at the project and Development Objective (DO) levels. AT+ also contains a robust reporting tool to track indicator performance and spot trends, providing the AOR/COR and Project Management Team with important data upon which to make performance management decisions.

Evaluation

Objectives of Evaluation

Evaluation is critical to understanding and informing project interventions and gauging impact. First, it provides an assessment of baseline data measured against progress toward achieving project results. Second, it serves as an analysis for understanding the challenges of successful project implementation, unexpected results and the project's impact across time and over different interventions. Finally, evaluation can provide information for improving or modifying current activities as well as the design of subsequent interventions. Regular and systematic reviews, including ones that share assessments across technical offices, can help ensure stronger and more effective evaluation tools.

Overview of the Project Evaluation Plan

The VOICE team developed an evaluation plan for two individual activities (detailed below) that are part of the project. The evaluation plan covers the same time period as the CDCS (2015-2020). Additional evaluation and learning activities will be identified as the Mission annually updates its Performance Monitoring Plan and evaluation registry and plan.

The Mission will specify the purpose and objectives of each evaluation and provide guidance on potential evaluation designs and methods. It will also instruct service providers on the outputs required for each evaluation, submission of data and presentation formats. To the extent possible, both evaluation outputs and data specifications will be standardized in advance of systematic reviews.

Key Evaluation Questions
To assess the project's contribution to the achievement of DO2's goal, "Improved Conditions for Durable Peace and Development through Strengthened Democratic Processes," evaluation efforts will seek to answer the following notional questions during base-, mid-, and end-line data collection and analysis:

In 2016 the Mission conducted a performance evaluation of the *Human and Institutional Capacity Development* activity. An evaluation was conducted of the LAND activity in 2015 to help inform the Mission's decision process on whether to continue cross-sectoral funding for the activity.

Additional evaluations will be identified as the Mission annually reviews and updates its Performance Monitoring Plan and evaluation registry/plan.

Adaptive Learning

<u>Objectives of Learning</u>

The Mission's CDCS emphasizes a Collaborating-Learning-and-Adapting (CLA) approach to ensure that technical offices share and analyze information across projects and adjust and strengthen implementation as needed. This approach will also help lead to a more dynamic and flexible assistance program.

<u>Activity/IM Reviews, Project Reviews and Portfolio Reviews</u>

Periodic reviews of the Mission portfolio are important for understanding progress toward the results outlined in its CDCS Strategy and Project Log frames. These reviews include:

- **Activity/IM Reviews:** COR/AOR will analyze the information from implementing partner reports to determine if any changes are necessary to work plans, budgets and/or schedules. These analyses can be done informally and in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, if appropriate. Any changes to work plans, budget and/or schedules for A&A awards will be within the terms and conditions of the award.
- **Project Reviews:** The DO Team Leader will conduct Project Reviews with COR/AOR, in collaboration with project managers, initiative managers and the Program Office. When appropriate, implementing partners may also be included. These reviews will be held annually, after the Performance Plan and Report is due to USAID/W and before Strategic Portfolio Reviews are conducted. Project Reviews will serve as required pre-meetings for Portfolio Reviews and allow technical teams to develop more rigorous and thoughtful issues papers. The Mission Order on Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning provides additional guidance on project reviews.
- **Stakeholder, Host Government, and Sectoral Reviews:** As needed, the Program Office and/or DO/Project Teams will conduct reviews with stakeholders, host government partners and technical sectors in order to improve communication and collaboration.
- **Portfolio Reviews**: The PO will coordinate a Mission-wide review of all DOs each year.

<u>Adaptive Management and Learning</u>

In order promote a supportive learning environment and a culture of inquiry within USAID/Rwanda, the DG Office will conduct quarterly meetings with a cross-sectoral working group to ensure all offices are aware of the PAD's progress and obtain input. The Office will also continue monthly meetings with the Embassy's POL/ECON section to exchange ideas on how political events in the country could affect the project.

DG will address the learning aspect of the CLA approach by attending informational meetings held by relevant GOR institutions, such as the MINALOC/Decentralization

and MINIJUST/Justice sector working groups; meetings with donors, in particular GIZ, SIDA and DFID, to discuss their democracy and governance efforts, as well as with UNDP to discuss Rwanda's progress on gender equality; and meetings with CSOs to learn about their challenges and successes in civic participation. DG will also consider holding periodic "learning events," modeled after USAID/Uganda. These events take place with all project partners to assess overall performance and discuss required adjustments. To be most effective, such discussions will need to be well-planned, with clearly-defined goals for learning outcomes. For example, an AOR/COR could present a case study on key course corrections or adaptive management actions undertaken in response to positive or negative developments during an intervention.

Based on the above approaches, review findings, and changes in USG or GOR policies, the Office will adapt programming when appropriate.

7. ANALYTICAL AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The USAID/Rwanda DG Office conducted several assessments/analyses which contributed to the development of this PAD. A Gender Analysis was conducted in October 2014 by employees of the Center of Excellence for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance from USAID/Washington's DCHA bureau. In accordance with Agency guidance, the Office's IEE was updated in November 2014 and again for PAD Amendment #1, and a Sustainability Analysis was undertaken by the DG team. Finally, an investigation of the possibilities presented by the project for private sector engagement is also explored in a Partnership Analysis.

For the full analyses referenced below, please see corresponding Annexes attached.

Gender Analysis

The Government of Rwanda (GOR) has made great strides in developing policies and strategies to support women's empowerment and the advancement of gender equality, and numerous mechanisms have been instituted to support their implementation. Nevertheless, women in positions of authority tend to carry less influence than their male counterparts. Further, while two-thirds of parliamentarians in Rwanda are women, a large share of women in Rwanda experience intimate partner violence (56 percent). The existing inequalities and persistent lack of voice and agency for Rwandan women as members of society require consistent and long-term emphasis, particularly in civil society, to bring about change.

This analysis identified gender issues that pose barriers to specific civil society and civic engagement outcomes, as well as opportunities to empower women and advance gender equality through democracy and governance activities.

Key findings include:
- The multiple demands placed on women from professional, personal and family responsibilities are the foremost barriers to women's participation in civic life and civil society.

- Social norms and stigmas also limit women's voice and participation in civic life.
- Lack of education, skills and/or confidence contributes to low participation by women in civil society.
- Unequal levels of decision-making and high levels of gender-based violence often dissuade women from participating in civic activities and civil society.

Recommendations specific to each Outcome of VOICE Results Framework are detailed in the analysis and should be considered when designing activities under this PAD. The following are overarching recommendations to consider as separate activities or across multiple activities:

- *Civil society organizations (CSOs) are active in Rwanda but they struggle to effectively monitor programs, rigorously analyze data and collaborate with each other. To help improve and extend the impact of CSOs, especially within the realm of women's empowerment, USAID/Rwanda can build CSOs' capacity by: providing training to improve their ability to conduct evidence-based advocacy; supporting efforts to build community platforms and coordination programs; enhancing CSOs' gender-mainstreaming and integration skills.*
- *Social norms have hindered Rwandan women's empowerment process. USAID/Rwanda can support activities that guide community leaders to realign traditional values to further the protection of women and human rights in general. To further women's empowerment, USAID/Rwanda can engage with CSOs that offer trainings, especially to youth and men, on the core characteristics of human rights and the meaning and benefits of gender equality to society.*
- *The differences in experience, skills and confidence between male and female citizens need to be overtly addressed through specific interventions from the start.*

By focusing on these priorities, VOICE can help advance the momentum generated by political will and leadership at the national level to foster greater inclusion by women and minorities in decision-making and consultation at all levels. The project can also help raise awareness of LGBT issues as part of human rights. For the full VOICE gender analysis, see Annex I attached.

Environmental Analysis

Existing activities authorized under the VOICE PAD are covered by the Initial Environmental Examination (Rwanda_FO2_GJD_IEE_083110), signed by the Africa Bureau Environmental Officer on August 31, 2010 and approving a negative determination with conditions and categorical exclusion for Democracy and Governance activities. The planned new VOICE PAD activities are covered by the Initial Environmental Examination (Rwanda_DG_VOICE_PAD_IEE_121214), signed by the Africa Bureau Environmental Officer on December 12, 2014 and approving a negative determination with conditions and categorical exclusion for DG activities.

For the full VOICE environmental analysis, see Annex J attached.

Sustainability Analysis

The elements of sustainability across all sub-purposes that are essential to achieving the project results include strong local partners and country ownership. Specifically, interventions will employ a variety of approaches to ensure that citizens gain the skills to analytically participate in civil and political processes, such as public-policy decision-making, human rights advocacy and local and national elections, in a genuine and productive way. Owing to the number of activities where DG will seek to partner with local organizations, implementation modalities in themselves will contribute to achieving Agency and Mission-level USAID Forward Local Solutions targets. In turn, successful interventions aimed at GOR entities are expected to inculcate the value of meaningful dialogue with citizens to improve policy formulation, service delivery and accountability. This section summarizes the major considerations for sustainability for each of VOICE's sub-purposes, while Annex K provides a detailed analysis of achieving sustainability, including mitigating factors, for each Sub-Purpose.

Central to the project's sustainability objectives for Sub-Purpose 1 is building the capacity of CSOs to monitor and provide evidence-based input on GOR policies; strengthening their outreach skills with constituents, partner CSOs and relevant public institutions; earning the trust of the GOR for ongoing collaborative policy-making; and training and assisting GOR actors to consistently collaborate with CSOs to develop and implement good policies. The project will employ HICD's methodology across activities for addressing organizations' technical, operational and management gaps, as well as for creating a community of practice to provide ongoing education and support

Interventions under Sub-Purpose 2 will strengthen the protection of civil and human rights, by increasing understanding on such rights and increasing the ability of key personnel and systems to respond to violations of civil and human rights. Possible activities under this result include: educating citizens, media, CSOs and GOR on civil and human rights laws and redress mechanisms; empowering local CSOs to sustain and increase human rights knowledge; and training GOR actors to know their role and legal duty to protect human rights. Possible actions to ensure sustainability include ensuring local perspective and context are considered in activity development; and building on HICD's existing mechanism to identify gaps, design solutions and develop a community of practice for improving.

Activities under Sub-Purpose 3 are aimed at training and assistance for CSOs, including media practitioners, to educate and engage citizens in the electoral process as well as build public demand for more election transparency. Support at the grassroots level is critical not only to achieving more diverse political participation and transparent elections but to ensuring ongoing demand and local ownership after the project ends. Possible activities under this result include: developing local service delivery action plans as part of DDPs; partnering with human rights and social justice funds to engage youth in policy development; and using CRCs to create dialogue on improving service delivery. A possible action to ensure sustainability is to include ongoing mentoring of GOR actors, in addition to training. For the full VOICE sustainability analysis, see Annex K attached.

Partnership Analysis

Developing public-private partnerships (also known as global development alliances, or GDA) in the democracy and governance sector is difficult. While Rwanda is known for the ease of starting a new business, many organizations and businesses have difficulty in their ongoing operations, in significant part because key Rwandan laws (regarding contracts, employment, taxation, property and immigration, for example) are vague and the Government of Rwanda interprets and enforces its laws and contracts inconsistently and, at times, arbitrarily. In a business environment already fraught with risk (i.e., laws and contracts are unpredictable and inconsistently applied and government-owned businesses dominate some market sectors), engaging in initiatives that might "rock the boat" on democracy and governance will not be attractive to foreign investors or business-people. Nevertheless, there is a potential point of entry for public-private partnerships in the DG sector in Rwanda that can have a significant cross-sectoral impact in Rwanda: strengthening the rule of law (under Outputs 2.1 & 2.2).

All of the stakeholders the team interviewed agreed that stronger rule of law is an important issue to be addressed in Rwanda. First, as Rwanda moves away from a civil law system to a more hybrid civil/common law legal system, it will need to develop an online legal research medium so that businesses, lawyers and citizens can find case law providing more definitive interpretations of key issues, such as those on commercial law, contract interpretation, property rights and employment law. Such a searchable case law database will reduce uncertainty and variance in the application and interpretation of laws, thereby changing the calculus for investment from outside Rwanda. Additionally, the two private universities identified the following activities to strengthen the rule of law in Rwanda: building the knowledge, capacity and skills of justice system actors (including lawyers, judges and/or prosecutors) to consistently and effectively enforce the written law; building the professional capacity of judicial and prosecutorial inspectorates to monitor and ensure written laws are being enforced consistently; and reviewing relevant laws (such as the laws affecting businesses and individuals) and creating policy papers that recommend a change in the substance to or enforcement of those laws.

While many of these possible GDA activities on the surface are focused on facilitating a more attractive investment climate for foreign companies, the rule-of-law strengthening activities will benefit all Rwandans by providing more consistent protection of the law. In light of the foregoing, the DG team submitted an addendum to the Rwanda GDA Annual Program Statement hoping to attract private sector actors in this theme. However, the DG team did not ultimately fund a GDA activity. For the full VOICE sustainability analysis, see Annex L attached.