



STRATEGIC TRANSITIONS

EVOLVING USAID PARTNERSHIPS

WHAT IS A “STRATEGIC TRANSITION”?

When a country shows an advanced level of self-reliance, USAID must transition its relationship to one that moves towards supporting a long-term economic, diplomatic, and security partner. This entails rethinking how we work in that country to recognize, complement, and adapt to the country’s strengths and capabilities, address the key remaining challenges, and sustain the country’s development gains to date. We call this process a “strategic transition.”

To execute a strategic transition, USAID does two things. First, it objectively and transparently identifies countries that have achieved a relatively advanced level of self-reliance using its Country Roadmaps and a range of related quantitative and qualitative data. Second, in consultation with the host country and the rest of the U.S. Government, USAID develops a new model of engagement commensurate with the country’s relatively advanced ability to manage its own development journey. Thus, a “strategic transition” should not be taken to mean an “exit” or “graduation”; rather, it represents a critical stage in a country’s development journey wherein USAID’s relationship evolves beyond a traditional donor-recipient model.

WHY INITIATE A STRATEGIC TRANSITION?

Strategic transitions realign USAID programming and activities in countries that are able to largely finance and manage their own development needs. USAID will work closely with the rest of the U.S. Government, host country governments, and civil society to re-envision the unique nature of each partnership within the context of the ongoing broader bilateral relationship. This includes identifying the

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new form of partnership models, tools, and structures, and bringing them to bear in the right place at the right time. USAID's role in this new partnership matures from a largely technical and financial partner, to a convener that mobilizes U.S. Government agencies, the private sector, and civil society to sustain the country's advanced level of self-reliance and promote its long-term prosperity. It is also important for USAID, in close collaboration with the host country government, to closely monitor and mitigate risks to avoid backsliding on development gains.

WHAT DOES A STRATEGIC TRANSITION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

USAID's process for determining candidates for strategic transition and implementation of new models of engagement is based upon several clear principles: setting transparent criteria, including through the Agency's Journey to Self-Reliance Country Roadmaps; articulating the vision and goal of strategic transition in a given country; communication and coordination; planning early and strategically; tailoring to the context; and documenting and celebrating success. USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs) will be the primary vehicle through which many of these principles will be applied.

New partnerships will leverage collaboration models that are well-suited to the country's level of advanced self-reliance, and employ resources strategically to mitigate and effectively respond to backsliding. Programs might seek to (but are not limited to) further mobilizing private capital, deepening trade relationships and access to international markets, elevating partnerships in science, technology, and innovation, establishing accountability mechanisms to see through critical reforms, and/or increasing technical and educational exchanges. Ultimately, each country's strategic transition future state will be unique to that country.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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