

Operational Readiness: What the State Department Needs to Effectively Manage U.S. International Development and Humanitarian Assistance

September 2025



Executive Summary

Effective July 1, 2025, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been dismantled and its remaining development and humanitarian functions consolidated into the State Department (State). With this unprecedented reorganization of U.S. government (USG) foreign assistance responsibilities, many have raised concerns that State currently lacks the staff, skills, and systems to manage America's foreign assistance portfolio. Only six percent of USAID's former workforce was transferred to State, and many existing State staff lack the training and experience relevant to foreign assistance responsibilities.

In this report, MFAN lays out a set of core functions needed within the State Department to maximize program effectiveness, taxpayer accountability, and alignment with U.S. foreign policy and national security interests. Responsibility for these functions lies primarily with the regional bureaus and the "F Family" of bureaus in Washington that now co-lead foreign assistance programming. Adequate staffing, with the right skills and expertise, will be essential for State to carry out the following (non-exhaustive) set of core functions. Partnering with country governments, multilateral agencies, as well as local and international non-profit and private sector entities, the successful execution of these functions by State is necessary to achieve the Administration's vision of an approach to foreign assistance that makes the U.S. safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Core Functions Needed at the State Department to Effectively Manage Development and Humanitarian Assistance



High-level Vision and Strategic Planning

- Create a new international assistance framework that articulates how the United States will integrate development and humanitarian functions alongside diplomacy.
- Produce high level guidance to bureaus on integrating foreign assistance programs, selecting programs and mechanisms, and planning for staffing needs.

Budget Execution

- Undertake short-, medium-, and long-term, portfolio-wide planning within regional bureaus to shape the budget requests they make to the foreign assistance bureau (known as F).
- Assess, within F, past budget spending against policy goals— across regions and sectors—to inform future budget tradeoffs.

Country-level Planning and Strategy

- Assess funding pipeline and requirements of congressional spending directives.
- Conduct multi-year, portfolio-wide program planning for rapid response, longer-term, and emerging trends.
- Coordinate among regional bureau, technical, and F bureau staff.
- Manage “Development Objective Agreements” and/or articulate successor agreements with partner countries.
- Engage local and national stakeholders—including government officials, civil society representatives, and private sector actors—to discuss core U.S. interests and local priorities for relief and development.

Operational Policy Governing Foreign Assistance Programming

- Develop a clear operational policy governing how to plan, design, award, deliver, oversee, and learn from foreign assistance programming that is used to guide staff and partners.

Technical/Sectoral Expertise

- Participate (with regional and F bureau leaders) in country-level strategic planning.
- Negotiate with partner country governments.
- Work with regional and F bureau staff to conduct budget planning and justification.
- Ensure program design is based on evidence.
- Engage local stakeholders in technical elements of program decisions.
- Develop scopes of work for awards and evaluate potential partners’ bids or proposals.
- Conduct quality assurance and oversight of external partners.
- Strengthen engagement with the private sector and increase public-private partnerships (PPPs) to further drive innovation and sustainable economic growth.

Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Capacity

- Manage the business of development and humanitarian assistance through acquisition (the purchase of goods and services) and assistance (awards to organizations to carry out mutually agreed objectives).
- Collaborate with implementing partners throughout the lifespan of the award to support them delivering their programmatic objectives.
- Advance A&A reforms that reduce barriers to partnership and improve customer service.

Compliance and Risk Management

- Assess potential partners’ capability to manage U.S. funding.
- Monitor external partners’ compliance with financial requirements.
- Work with external partners to manage funding flows in ways that support project performance.
- Conduct audits that blend a focus on compliance with problem solving.
- Articulate and socialize an institutional approach to risk appetite and risk management.

Coordination

- Coordinate, with leadership from F, the foreign assistance planning and budgeting across relevant regional and technical teams.
- Coordinate, led by F, across U.S. government entities responsible for foreign policy or foreign assistance, including the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), among others.
- Reestablish strong coordination with the Department of Defense on disaster response.
- Engage with other donors to identify comparative advantages, reduce duplication, and leverage additional and complementary resources toward shared goals.

Facilitation of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation's (DFC) Goals

- Perform liaison, due diligence, and reporting functions for DFC deals.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning and Cost Effectiveness Analysis

- Manage the collection, analysis, and use of high-quality program data.
- Help regional and technical teams use evidence on effectiveness and cost effectiveness to guide program design.
- Develop evaluation plans based on an understanding of the existing evidence base and gaps in knowledge.
- Support the use of continuous learning methods.

Transparency

- Report accurate and timely data on foreign assistance spending.
- Create a new public platform to publish foreign assistance evaluations, research, and learning.
- Restore public access to past documents and data.

Change Management

- Provide opportunities for meaningful involvement from a wide range of stakeholders.
- Identify potential sources of friction or confusion.
- Support a diverse range of ongoing learning opportunities, including for leadership.



Introduction

On July 1, 2025, the State Department officially assumed responsibility for U.S. development and humanitarian assistance. With USAID reduced to the minimum structure required by law—and most of its staff and programs eliminated—State is reorganizing to absorb the agency’s remaining operations. The Trump administration framed this overhaul of these key elements of American soft power as a means to exert stronger control and oversight over foreign assistance, aligning with an “America First” foreign policy focused on making the United States safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

The July 1 merger was not the endpoint, however. Instead, it marks the beginning of a complex transition. For the State Department to effectively manage its new remit, it must have in place the appropriate functions—and the people and systems that execute them—to effectively plan, deliver, implement, oversee, and evaluate its new foreign assistance portfolio.

To date, the State Department has not clearly defined its vision for development and humanitarian assistance, including its overarching goals and the processes for achieving them. However, any version of a foreign assistance strategy will require a core set of functions to underpin its successful execution.

Carrying out these functions effectively will, in turn, depend on having sufficient staff with the necessary skills and expertise. While specific staffing recommendations ultimately depend on the overall vision—which has yet to be defined—MFAN notes that current staff levels are almost certainly inadequate to achieve any vision of integrated foreign assistance and diplomacy.

Only around 700 former USAID staff—or roughly seven percent of USAID’s pre-merger workforce of more than 10,000—were hired at State to manage foreign assistance programs. These programs included both those that transferred from USAID and any new obligations. Meanwhile, State has undergone its own downsizing, reducing its pre-merger staff numbers by 15 percent of its U.S.-based staff.

While consolidating functions from USAID into State may yield opportunities for improved efficiency and leaner staffing, successful integration will require that State’s chief asset—its human capital—is well positioned to manage a larger portfolio. Adequate staffing, with the right skills and expertise, will be essential for State to carry out the following (non-exhaustive) set of core functions. These functions are vital to ensuring the United States can continue to support high quality programs, exercise appropriate oversight, reduce risk of waste and diversion, and implement strategic and coordinated action.

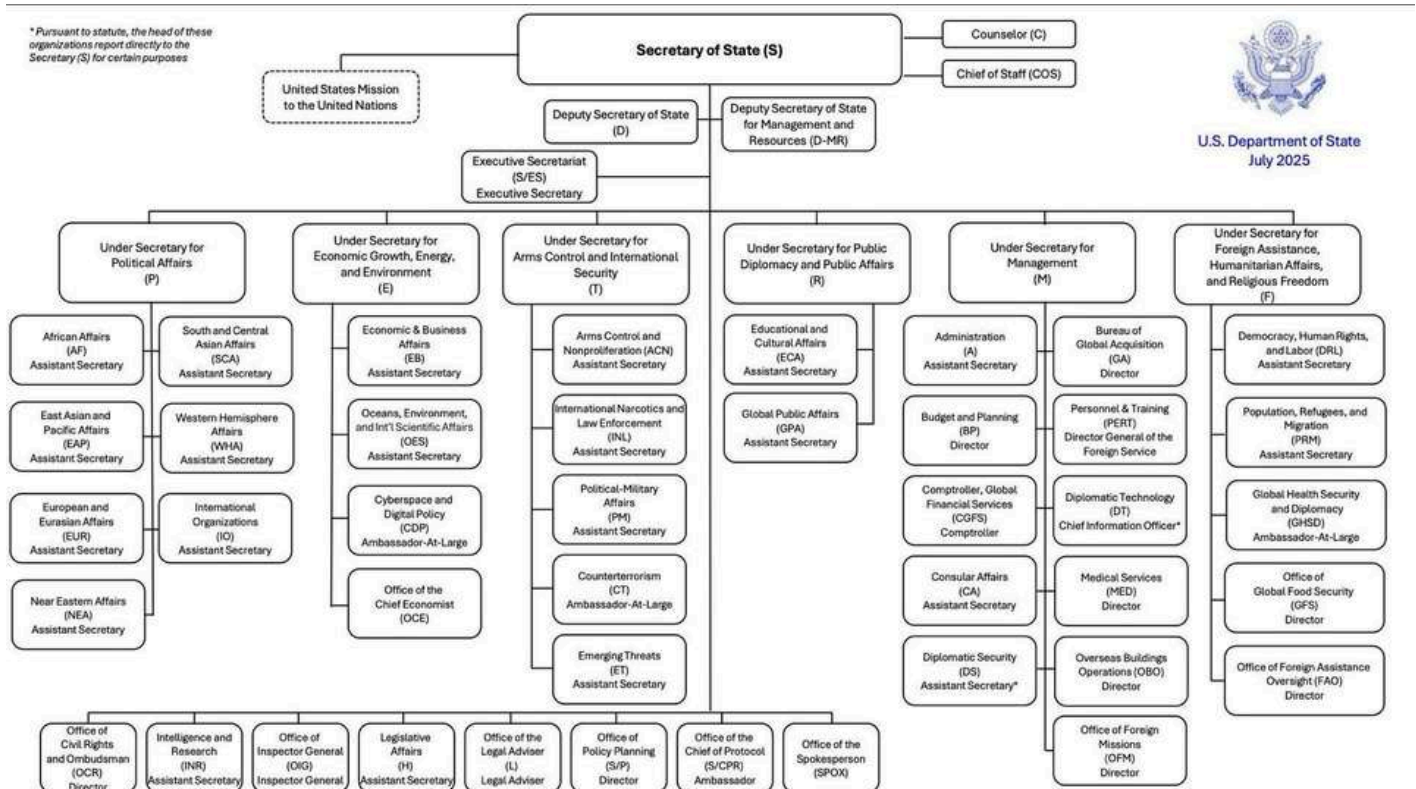


Core functions

High-level Vision and Strategic Planning

As a starting point, the State Department must craft a forward-looking vision for the successful integration of diplomacy, development, and humanitarian functions. The new Under Secretary for Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs, and Religious Freedom should empower staff within the “F Family” of bureaus to lead the development of a new international assistance framework—one that articulates the overarching goals of an integrated approach and outlines how the United States will employ foreign assistance alongside diplomacy to achieve them, to the benefit of both the United States and partner countries. This framework could be a successor to the former Joint Strategic Plan, a combined State-USAID endeavor.

Regardless of its structure, crafting the high-level vision and strategy will require meaningful engagement with staff and leadership across State’s regional and technical bureaus, as well as robust consultation with Congress. Establishing such a framework is a precondition for successful organizational reform. A clear vision must underpin and inform the top line guidance that bureaus need to integrate assistance programs into their existing work, determine appropriate programming and mechanisms, and plan for staffing needs. Guidance that enables detailed workforce planning is of particular importance since, to date, the integration of USAID staff into State’s bureaus and offices has not been based on an assessment of needed skills and key gaps to fill.



Budget Execution

The budget allocation process is one of the primary ways that high level strategy is translated into action. State Department staff within F have held some budget-related functions, but these have primarily involved reconciling planned spending between State Department bureaus and USAID and weighing the balance between development and diplomatic approaches. With those functions now obsolete, F staff will require new skills that enable them to use data and analysis to understand the success of past spending against policy goals and evaluate tradeoffs across regions and sectors ([see Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis](#)).

Regional bureaus—which will drive many decisions about foreign assistance programming—will need complementary functions. The bureau assistance coordination units within each regional bureau will be responsible for making budget requests of F. This function will require staff (as detailed in the next section) that can take a portfolio-wide view, engage in technical program planning, and create coherent theories of change over the short, medium, and long term.

Country-level Planning and Strategy

In the past, State and USAID worked closely together to create Integrated Country Strategies, with USAID contributing most of the programmatic vision, tied to the agency's Country Development and Cooperation Strategies. Responsibility now falls to State to plan how to deploy its programmatic assets in support of its strategic goals.

Several functions previously housed within USAID's Program Offices—both in country and in Washington—will be critical to effective country-level planning and are closely tied to budget execution.

Program Office staff—looking across the entire multi-year, country-level portfolio—had a comprehensive understanding of the funding pipeline and requirements associated with congressional spending directives. This overarching view enabled a strategic approach to planning and budgeting, allowing staff to identify tradeoffs from a portfolio perspective, rather than through the lens of an individual sector. As State assumes responsibility for foreign assistance, it will be important that these Program Office-style functions are housed in the regional bureaus, which are expected to play a lead role in foreign assistance programming. Regional bureaus will need staff who can, in coordination with F staff and technical experts, think long-term, conduct rapid assessments and analysis, and spot emerging trends.

One Program Office function that will continue to be relevant for country-level planning is the management of Development Objective Agreements (DOAGs), the formal agreements held between USAID and partner country governments that outline the objectives and activities of the partnership. DOAGs also provided a place for USAID to preserve funds in order to allow for detailed analysis of program decisions consistent with Congressional intent. With budget processes that regularly extend well into the current fiscal year, often delaying the release of money, having a mechanism to preserve funds will likely continue to be useful. State has taken over the management of existing DOAGs, but many expire in September. A near-term priority of country-level planning should be to determine the successor to these agreements and determine how best to use them to advance bilateral relationships, define programmatic objectives and activities, and manage program funds.

Planning for mutually-beneficial cooperation at the country level will also require strong external coordination. Staff will need convening and facilitation skills to engage a wide range of partner country counterparts—including government officials, civil society representatives, and private sector actors—in meaningful dialogue. These engagements should aim to discuss core U.S. interests in country alongside local and national priorities for economic growth and improved human welfare.

Operational Policy Governing Foreign Assistance Programming

In absorbing responsibility for development and humanitarian assistance, the State Department will need to develop a clear policy articulating the procedural and operational details that govern how to plan, design, award, deliver, oversee, and learn from foreign assistance programming. This authoritative guidance—something akin to USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS)—will be necessary to reduce confusion among staff, ensure consistency in approaches across a large organization, guide implementing partners, and prevent mismanagement or malfeasance.

The State Department’s operational guidance is found in the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). However, the FAM currently says little about how to manage a global foreign assistance program and the roles and processes required to do so effectively. For instance, it offers limited detail on the authorities of Grants or Contracting Officer Representatives and does not address how staff might manage government-to-government agreements.

To clearly articulate how foreign assistance programming will be conducted moving forward, State will need to revise and expand the FAM, drawing on best practices and lessons learned from the former ADS.

Updated guidance should clearly define expected roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. For instance, will program planning be led by embassies or regional bureaus? Does decision making about which health areas to fund, for example, lie with the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy or with regional bureaus? Clear guidance on these and other questions will support greater consistency, accountability, and integrity in the management of foreign assistance.



Technical/Sectoral Expertise

Right-sizing staff at State will be key to ensuring that foreign assistance runs smoothly and meets the goals laid out by the administration. The type of sectoral expertise and number of staff with sector-specific skills needed will depend on how aid will be delivered (e.g., through implementing partners, through multilateral organizations or funds, through direct government partnerships), the program areas that Congress directs State to fund, and for any discretionary funding, the priorities of State leadership. The administration has signaled its desire to continue some health and humanitarian engagement, and the FY 2026 appropriations process indicates continued congressional interest in other sectors as well—including basic education, water and sanitation, and democracy.

As noted above, current numbers of technical staff at State are well below what will be required to manage future aid budgets responsibly. For instance, only 50 of USAID’s nearly 1,000 Global Health staff were brought over to manage a Global Health budget that for FY 2025, even post rescissions, will be similar in size to last year’s budget.

Across the sectors in which State will engage, sufficient technical and/or sectoral expertise will be necessary to:

- Inform country-level strategy development;
- Contribute to negotiating programmatic partnerships with partner governments;
- Undertake budget planning and justification;
- Ensure program approaches are rooted in evidence and best practices;
- Manage commodity procurement, transport, and storage (where relevant);
- Work with stakeholders and program participants to plan activities;
- Develop scopes of work for grants and contracts for external implementing partners;

- Evaluate bids or proposals by external implementing partners;
- Conduct quality assurance and oversight over work performed by external implementing partners;
- Review proposals from the Multilateral Development Banks; and
- Expand private sector engagement.

Sector-based operating units—such as the Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy; the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; and the Office of Global Food Security—will serve as the key centers of technical expertise within State. The degree to which technical experts should also be located in regional bureaus and/or embassies will depend on the overall strategy for aid delivery. Different aid modalities—such as grants and contracts, government-to-government assistance, multilateral institutions, pooled funds, compact models, or support for development finance institutions—have varying needs for decentralized staffing to be effective.

In addition, over the past decade, USAID had launched over 1,900 public-private partnerships as well as a series of internal reforms effort called PSE-Modernize to make it easier to partner with the private sector by boosting efficiencies, modernizing technology, and providing flexible funding and talent exchanges. State should ensure it has sufficient staff with technical expertise in private sector engagement to reinvigorate and expand these partnerships.



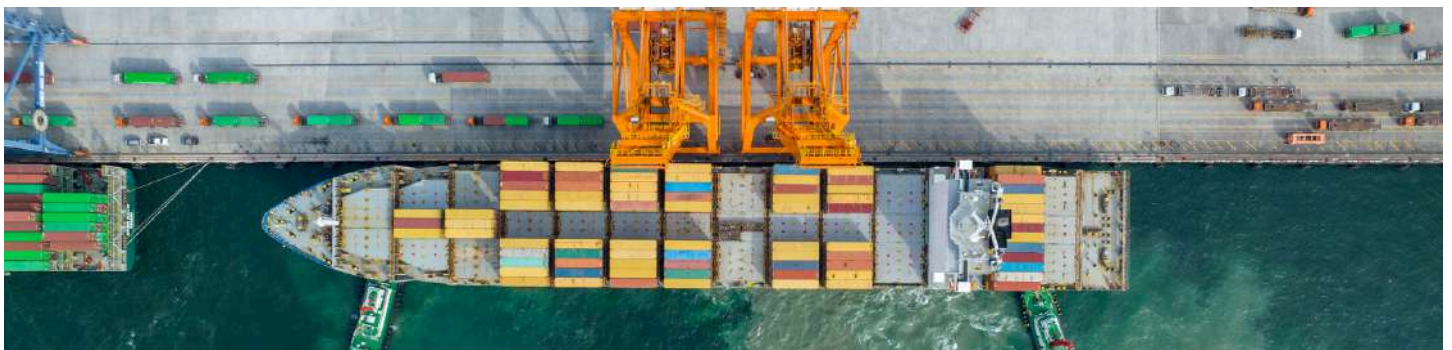
Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Capacity

The vast majority of USAID's programming was done through acquisitions (contracts) and assistance (grants and cooperative agreements), with assistance making up around three quarters of A&A awards by value. Depending on the overall vision and strategy for foreign assistance going forward, the extent to which A&A mechanisms are utilized to move aid money may shift. Nevertheless, the ability to purchase goods and services and fund organizations to carry out mutually-held objectives will remain important tools for the delivery of U.S. development and humanitarian assistance.

State has some A&A staff, including a few recently brought over from USAID, but the department likely lacks the personnel capacity and necessary skills or certifications to effectively manage a new, larger foreign assistance portfolio. Most of State's warranted A&A staff are only certified to manage acquisitions, not assistance. The primary remit of State's contracting officers is to purchase goods and services (State's largest procurements are security services, janitorial services, and concrete, linked to Embassy construction and management).

Furthermore, relatively few of State's contracting officers have warrants above the \$250,000 threshold. More fundamentally, managing awards for complex development or humanitarian projects is a very different undertaking that requires programmatic engagement and expertise. Staff overseeing development and humanitarian contracts must collaborate extensively with implementing partners to deliver on a detailed and highly technical scope of work. Assistance officers, of which State has few, must act as an informed partner to the implementer to achieve programmatic objectives together.

Within its A&A functions, State should also ensure sufficient capacity to focus on ongoing A&A advancement and reform. There is an opportunity to continue and build upon the efforts that had been underway at USAID to use a broader range of A&A tools (for instance, simplifying renewal award processes and expanding the use of fixed-amount awards that pay on the basis of completed milestones), reduce barriers to partnership, emphasize customer service, and streamline A&A procedures, including through the use of technology and AI tools. Furthermore, a culture that supports contracting and agreement officers to examine their risk posture, make decisions based on relevant information, and maintain flexibility is critical to underpin a modernized and more adaptive A&A system.



Compliance and Risk Management

The State Department will need staff who understand risk and compliance issues to support sound program execution. For instance, the functions of a controller and financial analysts are important to assess potential partners' capability to manage U.S. funding and ensure projects are staying on course from a financial perspective. Moreover, financial analysts are critical for supporting programmatic results. In addition to tracking compliance, good financial analysts are able to identify creative and innovative ways within U.S. regulations to manage funding flows to a project to optimize its performance. State will also need to ensure strong audit functions that blend a focus on compliance with an emphasis on problem solving, along with staff with expertise in safeguarding and debarment.

Absorbing a larger programmatic portfolio, and potentially a greater variety of foreign assistance mechanisms, will also require changes to the way State approaches its risk management function. Building upon best practices from USAID's approach to risk, which articulated an institutional appetite for taking smart and disciplined risks across various sources of risk (e.g., programmatic, fiduciary, legal, security, reputational) in pursuit of its strategic objectives, may be helpful in supporting State's continued evolution toward a more institutionalized risk appetite framework.

Coordination

Each of State's regional bureaus houses an assistance coordination office tasked with managing the allocation and programming of regional-facing assistance.

This decentralized approach can allow for programs that are targeted to a country's specific needs and its bilateral relationship with the United States. However, it also risks encouraging short-term projects that lack strategic focus. MFAN has proposed that the State Department empower the new Under Secretary of Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs and Religious Freedom to manage and provide strong coordination, planning, budgeting, and allocation of international assistance within the State Department. The Under Secretary's team should be empowered to work across the Department, coordinating with regional bureaus, technical teams within the F Family, and sector-based experts in the Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment family.

The Under Secretary's team should also coordinate across U.S. government departments and agencies involved in foreign affairs or foreign assistance programming, including the DFC, MCC, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, the Export-Import Bank, and others. Interagency coordination will require that F teams have adequate staff with the skills and experience to manage these relationships and the authority needed to provide direction and management of development assistance.

A particular aspect of U.S. government interagency coordination relates to the role the Department of Defense (DoD) sometimes plays in humanitarian assistance and disaster response. Over the years, USAID and DoD developed strong coordination mechanisms and procedures for circumstances in which American military forces were deployed to supplement civilian aid during crises.

These mechanisms included a strong Office of Civilian-Military Coordination at USAID and the deployment of senior USAID Foreign Service Officers to most regional and functional military commands to facilitate the coordination of emergency response activities. Sustaining such humanitarian coordination with DoD will need to be a critical function of the F Bureau.

In addition, State will need sufficient staff, led by F with close collaboration across regional and functional bureaus, to coordinate programming and humanitarian action with other donors and multilateral bodies. Coordination with other funders is imperative to identify comparative advantages, reduce duplication, and leverage additional and complementary resources toward shared goals. Bringing an overall portfolio lens to these conversations is important as external coordination requires a unified voice at the leadership level that can represent the full scope of U.S. programming in a country or region.

Facilitation of DFC's Goals

State's relationship with DFC will need to extend beyond coordination and include direct facilitation of its work. USAID had over 150 direct hires and implementing partners providing transaction advisory services for DFC—helping source investments, conducting due diligence, and providing technical assistance to potential local firms to reach deal-readiness. Because this DFC Liaison role required substantial training and resources on DFC products, project viability, and development finance, its functions cannot immediately be absorbed by current State staff.

Going forward, DFC Liaison functions would be better housed within or managed by DFC directly rather than subsumed under State to ensure transaction services are provided by experts and maintain

orientation around bankability and development impact, independent of political and diplomatic pressures.

However, important roles for State staff in support of DFC's work remain. In addition to the DFC Liaisons, USAID staff, primarily foreign service nationals (locally hired staff), also fulfilled the required role of activity manager (AM) for every DFC deal and portfolio guarantee. Their functions included liaising with the Embassy, the company, and DFC; conducting regular check-ins, due diligence, and reporting; and supporting communications around deals. The AM role required specialized training and certification and was critical in ensuring the successful implementation of transactions. State will now need to cover these critical AM functions in coordination with DFC.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning and Cost Effectiveness Analysis

The State Department should incorporate and continue to advance USAID's past efforts to improve monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) functions within foreign assistance programming. These functions are critical to supporting effective programming and ongoing learning, and they are independent of and additive to the compliance functions intended to mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse.

In particular, MERL staff in the Office of Foreign Assistance focused on Foreign Assistance Monitoring, Evaluation & Vetting will need to ensure teams manage the collection, analysis, and use of high-quality program data in ways that will enable better adaptive management, higher impact, increased cost-effectiveness, and stronger evidence to demonstrate benefits for both partner countries and Americans.

In addition to managing monitoring systems, State will need MERL staff who can work alongside local and national stakeholders to help rigorously assess: (1) what existing evidence indicates about likely program effectiveness and mechanisms of impact; (2) what knowledge gaps the program could fill; and (3) whether open questions justify further rigorous evaluation, including impact evaluations.

Performance reporting and learning agendas should serve as dynamic tools to inform how to learn from and adapt programmatic approaches on an ongoing basis. These tools must also underpin decisions about tradeoffs that are central to strategic planning and budget development processes. State already collects some core programmatic indicators and has an existing evaluation policy. However, it conducts very few evaluations and rarely conducts thorough reviews of existing global evidence to inform programmatic decisions.

Effective MERL requires sufficient staffing with strong technical expertise in areas including collaborating, learning, and adapting; evaluation, including impact evaluation; and cost-effectiveness analysis. Regional bureaus will need staff capable of carrying out these functions, in coordination with an office in F with responsibility for ensuring the robust implementation of MERL guidance across the Department.

A first priority should be to ensure sufficient staffing levels to (1) conduct basic monitoring by collecting and publishing regular data, (2) use existing evidence on effectiveness and cost effectiveness to guide project design and budget teams' work, and (3) support the use of continuous learning loop methodologies (e.g., Pause and Reflect, After Action Reviews) to enable adaptation of ongoing programs and inform the design of new ones.

In addition, State should have staff who can design and lead periodic meta-analyses within and across sectors to capture broad insights.

Transparency

Publishing detailed data on foreign assistance programming can support more accountable and effective programming. It is also required by law, thanks to multiple bipartisan efforts over the last decade, to push for enhanced foreign aid transparency. USAID had been recognized as one of the leaders on transparency, having regularly published a range of data and information related to foreign assistance programs. USAID consistently published annual reports, audits, strategies, and policies, as well as robust data about all foreign assistance spending—where it went, in what amounts, in service of which goals, and what its results were. While the State Department has been subject to the same obligations, in order to fulfill its pledge to better serve the U.S. taxpayer and demonstrate accountability, it will need to continue to invest in transparency functions, take on roles previously managed by USAID, and include a larger set of programmatic activities in its data.

Staff will need capacity to manage the collation and reporting of accurate and timely data on program spending to foreignassistance.gov, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's foreign aid reporting dashboard (the Creditor Reporting System), legally required congressional reporting (known as "the Greenbook"), and the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Many of these functions are required by law in the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016. While the functions of reporting to foreignassistance.gov have been governed by a memorandum of understanding between USAID and State for many years, the other functions were largely the responsibility of USAID.



In conjunction with a revised evaluation policy, State will also need a new platform on which to publish evaluations, research, and learning about foreign assistance programs. These evaluations are taxpayer funded and are important sources of evidence for development and humanitarian practitioners. Much of the value of evaluations lies in their accessibility to audiences both inside and outside of the U.S. government who can use them to inform future programmatic and policy decisions. USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse, which housed all USAID evaluations (and other project documentation) has been taken down, and State has not consistently published its evaluations and other data on program results. State will need to implement and manage a replacement platform to transparently communicate its programmatic results and learning.

Change Management

Integrating foreign assistance functions into the State Department is a major organizational change that will merge personnel, roles, structures, expectations, and organizational cultures—all of which introduce potential sources of friction or confusion. For example, State's operating model tends to be more centralized and hierarchical. USAID, on the other hand, was much more decentralized, with decision making, program design, and management taking place in country to be closer to its programs, local stakeholders, and the implementation context.

The process of change management must start with a clear vision—based on a firm understanding of the current state of affairs—that articulates a desired future state. A successful merger will require intentional and ongoing change management to smooth the transition, help staff navigate uncertainty, and offer the best chance of achieving the goals of increased efficiency and improved coherence.

Successful organizational change will require an empowered and stable team made up of both former USAID staff and long-term State staff to drive implementation and orchestrate meaningful involvement of a wide range of stakeholders.

Effective change management will also require ongoing learning functions, including equipping leadership with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, approaches, and relationships that will be essential for them to successfully set the vision and guide staff to execute on the strategy. Ambassadors and bureau-level leadership will now be held to account for a broader set of goals, including assistance coordination and development outcomes. Ensuring they are equipped to drive and manage progress toward them will be central to the successful integration of diplomacy, development, and humanitarian functions.

Conclusion

The successful integration of development and humanitarian assistance into the State Department will hinge upon the execution of several core functions. By putting in place the systems, staff, and skills necessary to plan, design, implement, oversee, and learn from foreign assistance programs, the United States can maintain accountability to taxpayers, advance national interests, and sustain trusted partnerships worldwide. This moment presents a critical test—and an opportunity—to safeguard the performance, accountability, and impact of America’s foreign assistance.

Acknowledgment

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About MFAN

The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) is a bipartisan reform coalition composed of international development and foreign policy practitioners, policy advocates, and experts from the U.S. and Global South. MFAN works to strengthen the effectiveness of U.S. development and humanitarian aid in order to build more resilient societies, promote democratic approaches to development, improve the lives and opportunities of the most vulnerable populations, and maximize the sustainable impact of U.S. taxpayer dollars.