



HOW-TO NOTE: DEVELOPING TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT THE CLIMATE STRATEGY

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This document is intended to help USAID Operating Units meet a commitment made in the Climate Strategy's Annex I: Summary of USAID's Commitments to Implementation, which states that:

“Pillar Bureaus will develop relevant technical and operational guidance for implementing climate action across key development sectors. Guidance will address how the sector can contribute to this Strategy to meet near- and long-term development objectives and Strategy Targets.”

This How-To Note is intended as a reference to assist Washington-based Pillar Bureaus and other OUs developing technical and operational guidance for designing and implementing programming that contributes to [USAID's new Climate Strategy](#). It is being made publicly available in the interest of transparency.

This How-To Note outlines topics for climate-related guidance that other development sectors can provide to their communities to operationalize the Strategy's concepts into technical approaches.

BACKGROUND

The whole-of-Agency approach that is fundamental to this climate strategy and meeting its objectives and targets will rely heavily on mainstreaming climate work into key systems and sectors and leveraging non-climate funding. OUs across USAID are eager to implement the climate strategy, and there is great potential to integrate climate actions into activities supported by a range of other sectors. Therefore it's important that climate-related technical and operational guidance be developed for a broad range of audiences including those that are not explicitly programming climate-earmarked funds.

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURAL STEPS FOR THOSE DRAFTING GUIDANCE:

1. Check existing and planned guidance (link available for USAID staff) tracker to avoid duplicative efforts and identify opportunities to collaborate.
2. Email the Agency's internal Climate Change Technical Working Group (CCTWG) secretariat (email available for USAID staff) to add any proposed new guidance to the tracker.
3. Engage in consultative, inclusive drafting process to develop guidance that addresses at a minimum: rationale for integrating climate; tools and approaches for assessing climate risks and opportunities within the sector; programmatic examples; indicators for capturing Climate Strategy impacts.
4. Share draft with CCTWG and Agency's Climate Strategy Mission Advisory Group (MAG) for input by sending it to the CCTWG secretariat, specifying a timeline and review-questions, if applicable.
5. Clearances are determined by the OU(s) from which the guidance originates.

6. Send the final technical guidance document to the secretariat for posting on the Climate Strategy intranet site. Specify if the guidance is suitable for public dissemination—if so, it will be posted on climatelinks.org and disseminated via its newsletter and social media.

WHAT SECTORS AND TOPICS MIGHT NEED CLIMATE-SPECIFIC TECHNICAL GUIDANCE?

The intent of the commitment in the Strategy is to encourage USAID Pillar Bureaus that manage important funding streams or lead on other development sectors and issues, including those not typically combined with direct climate funding, to develop high-level technical implementation guidance to help OUs across the Agency integrate climate action while still achieving their primary development objective. This mainstreaming of climate work across other sectors will be essential to implementing the Strategy's whole-of-Agency approach and meeting its objectives and topline targets.

Based on initial brainstorming by the CCTWG, areas that would benefit from new or updated high-level guidance include: Infrastructure, Agriculture and Food Security, Water, Health, Education, Humanitarian Assistance, Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG), Climate Security, as well as Climate Adaptation, Nature-Based Solutions and Energy. Cross-cutting issues include, but are not limited to, gender, youth, Indigenous Peoples, inclusive development, systems and systems change, digitalization, localization, conflict sensitivity, leveraging Climate Risk Management, private sector engagement and finance, and avoiding unintended consequences.

The CCTWG does not intend to lead the development of technical guidance at this time—Pillar Bureaus and their relevant OUs should decide what guidance is most strategic to develop and how to develop it. In fact, Bureaus are asked to identify what technical guidance related to climate change they will produce in their [Bureau Climate Action Plan](#), which is a requirement of the Strategy. Bureau Climate Action Plans are due by April 21, 2023. The CCTWG will seek to coordinate the process and provide feedback on draft guidance if requested. CCTWG will maintain this tracker (link available for USAID staff) to compile information on what climate-related technical guidance has already been drafted or is planned, and by whom, and may reach out to Pillar Bureaus to highlight potential gaps. As noted, the development of Bureau Climate Action Plans is also a strategic time for Pillar Bureaus to engage with field-based OUs and others in Washington to prioritize areas where more guidance would be most useful.

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF TECHNICAL GUIDANCE - WHAT ISSUES MIGHT BE COVERED IN GUIDANCE?

Guidance should address the rationale for integrating climate in a sector, available tools for assessing, designing, implementing and evaluating climate-related assistance in the sector, procurement language, and programming examples.

To facilitate implementation of the new Climate Strategy, a number of components should be covered in each guidance document or set of documents:

- Linkages between the specific sector or topic and climate change—Why is climate change important in the context of the sector's work, what are the major climate change risks, and in turn, what are climate change adaptation and mitigation opportunities? This could include listing

potential development co-benefits from climate actions in the sector (e.g., renewable energy's contribution to fighting air pollution).

- Rationale for programming within a sector to contribute to the USAID Climate Change Strategy targets, SOs, IRs, sub-IRs, including what a climate-resilient system that advances the net-zero goal looks like in the context of the sector. (i.e., energy, food, health, etc.).
- Sector-specific programming approaches and/or illustrative activities that contribute to Climate Strategy IRs (e.g., what are the building blocks for integrating climate considerations into the sector's main programming approaches)?
- How cross-cutting issues should be approached. The Climate Strategy principles are all important to consider and guidance should provide sector-appropriate, illustrative examples around: 1) Locally Led Development; 2) Equity & Inclusion; 3) Private Sector Engagement; 4) Evidence, Technology, and Innovation; 5) Nature-Based Solutions.
- Pitfalls or unintended consequences inherent in these approaches, and how can OUs avoid adverse impacts (link to be added when available).
- Programming examples from the field, which are often the most useful for other field programs.
- How new policy priorities such as anti-corruption, COVID recovery, and DRG can be integrated.
- Tools, templates and frameworks that can be leveraged to inform program design. Examples include:
 - [Climate Risk Management](#) - Through CRM, USAID assesses, addresses and adaptively manages climate risks to its programming. The process can also serve as a launchpad to identify and integrate opportunities to contribute to climate change adaptation, mitigation, equity and finance.
 - This [Gender Analysis](#), developed for the Climate Strategy, which can be used by Missions to supplement Mission or OU-level gender analysis of climate programming and to identify possible interventions that align with the Strategy's Intermediate Results.
 - [Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations Additional Help for ADS 201](#)
 - Tools and methodologies to map systems relevant to the sector (ie, Open Standards and biodiversity)
- Suggestions on appropriate use of earmarks.
- Monitoring and evaluation, including use of appropriate indicators. See [climate change monitoring and evaluation resources](#).
- Sample or flexible procurement language to assist mainstreaming climate adaptation or mitigation into a contract or a grant/cooperative agreement (e.g., language for a governance procurement, a health procurement).

Additional information that may also be useful to consider when developing guidance includes:

- Key institutions and stakeholders to involve / engage in activities, including climate-oriented stakeholders.
- Foundational policy documents such as NDCs, NAPs.
- Measures in each sector to ensure long-term sustainability and permanence of climate actions and achievements.
- Priority geographies for climate action (countries and regional missions).

- Achieving and measuring sector- and economy-wide impacts of climate actions in each sector.
- Opportunities for Agency or global knowledge sharing and communication.

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES FOR PILLAR BUREAUS DEVELOPING TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT THE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY?

As noted above, the development of technical guidance to support climate programming will not be heavily managed by the CCTWG or the Agency’s Climate Change Leadership Council (CCLC), a senior leadership group at the Agency focused on climate action. That said, there are best practices that Bureaus should follow as they develop guidance to support the implementation of the Climate Strategy:

- Guidance should be as streamlined as possible, building on any existing guidance or processes, and should generally have a field-based focus.
- Ensure new climate change guidance is not duplicative and is well-aligned with existing and planned guidance.
- Guidance should be developed as the output of a consultative, inclusive process that involves drafting and/or reviews from those representing various equities from across the Agency, as appropriate. This may include climate experts, field colleagues (please email the secretariat to request engagement with the Mission Advisory Group, if desired), Regional Bureau technical experts, experts on key cross-cutting issues, and others.
- [Existing guidance](#) can also be a useful input, particularly with regard to cross-cutting issues.
- It may be useful to designate a technical guidance lead or main POC as well as a core team to develop guidance.
- Leverage existing working groups, if available, or consider standing up a working group or extended drafting team to provide periodic comments and inputs from a broader set of stakeholders.
- Allow time to get feedback from the CCTWG and Mission Advisory Group (MAG).
- Technical guidance documents may be submitted or presented to the CCTWG for review on a rolling basis. When draft documents are ready for CCTWG review, please email the secretariat so that the document can be distributed to the CCTWG for review. In some cases, a short presentation to the TWG could be arranged.
- Clearances should be managed by Pillar Bureaus and the relevant OUs from which the guidance originates, in accordance with the ADS and those Bureaus’ processes.

WHERE SHOULD GUIDANCE BE DISSEMINATED?

Final guidance can be posted on [ClimateLinks](#) and the Agency Climate Strategy intranet site; shared directly via listservs or other communication channels used by the specific sector or theme. Guidance POCs could also consider leveraging the CCLC to disseminate finalized technical guidance.

EXAMPLES OF CLIMATE CHANGE TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

While each case will be different, a number of sectors have already begun the process of developing guidance to support climate change integration and contributions to the 2022 Climate Strategy.

For Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, the RFS/Center for Water Security developed interim guidance for internal audiences on climate and the water directive (earmark), as well as a climate toolkit that includes programming examples and guidance on monitoring and reporting. They are also in the process of

developing a Climate and Water Security, Sanitation and Hygiene Technical Brief as part of their existing and externally facing [Water and Development Technical Series](#).

As per above, consideration of cross-sectoral issues should be incorporated into guidance documents. However, stand-alone guidance on consideration of cross-sectoral issues can also be valuable, as in the case of “[Effective Engagement With Indigenous Peoples: USAID Sustainable Landscapes Sector Guidance Document](#)” (link available for USAID staff).