



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Climate Strategy

2022-2030





USAID **Climate Strategy** 2022 - 2030

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change is a global crisis. As temperatures and sea levels rise, people around the world are increasingly seeing heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclones, and wildfires upend their lives. The effects of climate change are not equal – they disproportionately impact the poorest and most marginalized communities we work to support every day. Climate change affects virtually everything that USAID does and threatens the development progress we have supported over more than 60 years.

Climate change increases water and food scarcity, displacement, and the need for humanitarian assistance, as well as contributes to conflict and disrupts economic stability. Yet at the same time, our response presents an opportunity to improve livelihoods. Decarbonizing economies means less air pollution that negatively affects health. Building climate-resilient infrastructure means people are safer when disaster strikes and reduces the need for costly repairs after every storm. Investing in green jobs presents an opportunity to make workforces more equitable and inclusive.

This decade will be decisive for the future of our planet, and USAID is poised to galvanize the lasting changes necessary to combat climate change. USAID’s convening power, global presence, longstanding partnerships, and breadth of technical expertise position us to make a real difference in this critical global fight. We also recognize that those of us who are responsible for much of the damage caused by the climate crisis have an obligation to those least responsible for causing it.

That is why USAID has developed a new Climate Strategy that will guide our work through 2030 in a way that is truly different. Building on of our previous 2012-2018 Climate Change and Development Strategy, which focused on specific climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, this new Strategy takes an unprecedented “whole-of-Agency” approach that calls on all corners of USAID to play a part in our response. We will work on the ground with partner governments and local actors to set the global trajectory toward **our vision of a resilient, prosperous, and equitable world with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.**

Addressing the climate crisis requires a holistic approach to development. Every USAID sector and Mission has a role to play as we help transform global systems like agriculture, energy, governance, infrastructure, and health. This Strategy includes **six ambitious high-level Targets** that reflect how a whole-of-Agency approach can dramatically increase USAID's impact. We will update these 2030 Targets and supplement them with interim Targets throughout the Strategy's lifetime as our budget and experience with delivery evolves.

- **Mitigation:** USAID will partner with countries to support activities that reduce, avoid, or sequester six billion metric tons¹ of carbon dioxide equivalent.
- **Natural and Managed Ecosystems:** USAID will support the conservation, restoration, or management of 100 million hectares with a climate change mitigation benefit.
- **Adaptation:** USAID will enable the improved climate resilience of 500 million people.
- **Finance:** USAID will mobilize \$150 billion in public and private finance for climate.
- **Country Support:** USAID will align our development portfolios with countries' climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments in at least 80 countries by 2024 and will support our partners to achieve systemic changes toward meeting those commitments in at least 40 countries.
- **Critical Populations:** USAID will support our partners to achieve systemic changes that increase meaningful participation and active leadership in climate action of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups in at least 40 partner countries.

Our Climate Strategy is guided by a single, overarching goal: **to advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis**. Our efforts to achieve this goal will be organized around two main Strategic Objectives.

1. **Targeted Direct Action.** This Objective recognizes the need to prioritize and confront the most urgent demands of the climate crisis in the here and now. USAID will carefully target climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to the highest-priority communities and locations – those with the most urgent needs or most immediate opportunities – to maximize our impact.
2. **Systems Change.** This Objective acknowledges that fully addressing the climate crisis requires long-term, transformative changes that affect every aspect of society and will be neither easy nor quick. USAID will take a systems approach to these larger transformations – such as transforming food systems to be more resilient, less wasteful, and less environmentally destructive, or transitioning economic systems to be less carbon-intensive – in ways that are comprehensive, equitable, and locally led.

These Objectives are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually reinforcing. We will aim to achieve both in parallel or, at times, sequentially.

Our Strategic Objectives are supported by a **Special Objective to Do Our Part**. We are working to transform our own workforce, operations, and policies to reduce carbon emissions substantially, adapt to the climate crisis, and further climate justice – and support and expect our implementing partners to do the same. This will include implementing sustainability improvements and strengthening our climate workforce through improved efforts on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

Every USAID Bureau and Mission will play a part in helping the Agency meet these Objectives, be it through direct climate work or by integrating actions that help tackle the climate crisis into our other

development and humanitarian assistance work. This Strategy is built on several foundational principles, which will be incorporated into all planning and activities:

- **Locally Led Development.** Sustainable and equitable climate actions should be locally led, owned, and implemented and be tailored and context appropriate.
- **Equity and Inclusion.** USAID will center its actions in the context of the diverse communities in which we work and will engage local, marginalized, and underrepresented groups as agents of change.
- **Private-Sector Engagement.** USAID will partner with the private sector to expand the scale, impact, and sustainability of our programs.
- **Nature-Based Solutions.** USAID will elevate nature-based solutions as key tools to absorb carbon, reduce disaster risk, support livelihoods, and improve food and water security.
- **Evidence, Technology, and Innovation.** USAID will support the rigorous research, technology, and development needed to identify and deploy effective climate solutions, including those locally known and developed.

USAID will coordinate internally to organize and galvanize a whole-of-Agency response. We will also coordinate with other U.S. government Departments and Agencies to complement and reinforce their work as part of a whole-of-government effort to tackle the climate crisis. Finally, we will continue to coordinate externally with other donors, civil society, partner governments, and other stakeholders to align our support with their climate efforts and commitments where appropriate.

USAID will develop and regularly update robust guidance for tracking our progress as we implement this Strategy. The Strategy also includes requirements and recommendations for all USAID Operating Units to facilitate implementation. To reduce inefficiencies and improve coherence across all programming, much of our implementation guidance will build on existing processes such as budget planning, workforce recruitment, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning that are routine features of the USAID Program Cycle. We will also have staff dedicated to the capacity-building, knowledge-management, and communications needs of a whole-of-Agency approach to climate change.

Together with our partners and allies around the world, we can and we must do all we can to advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis. Our future depends on it.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a planetary crisis that is leaving no corner of the world untouched. It affects the frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme weather events, alters precipitation patterns, disrupts ecological systems, and causes temperatures and sea levels to rise.² These changes undermine the resilience of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, increasing the stress on already-scarce resources.

It is now well understood that the impacts of climate change reach far beyond the environmental sector – affecting poverty, economic growth, peace and stability, displacement, fragility, and local, national, and regional security. Climate change negatively affects life-long physical and mental health, mortality, food security, and access to essential services, such as health care; water, sanitation and hygiene; and education.^{3,4,5}

These impacts, in turn, exacerbate economic, socio-cultural, and environmental inequities, increasing the vulnerability of marginalized and underrepresented groups to hunger, malnutrition, and violence – including gender-based violence and child abuse, dispossession, and disempowerment. Globally and at home, the United States contends with disruption to food and water supplies as well as more frequent and severe disasters. In short, failure to address climate change aggressively will have dire consequences for us all.

The climate crisis is occurring concurrently with other global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, worsening food and water insecurity, accelerated loss of biodiversity, and increasing violence and conflict. These compounding crises make addressing the climate crisis more difficult, as they amplify negative impacts and impede access to places and people facing multiple stressors. These compounding challenges result in impacts that vary as a function of differing capacities, power dynamics, and resources available to address them. This requires developing local, contextualized responses. Yet, if these concurrent and compounding crises are considered in concert, we may be able to leverage the political will and resources available to achieve the transformative changes necessary and envisioned in this Strategy.⁶

Marginalized and underrepresented populations

may include, but are not limited to, poor and ultra-poor households, women and girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, displaced persons, migrants, Indigenous Peoples and communities, children in adversity and their families, youth, older persons, religious minorities, ethnic and racial groups, people in lower castes, persons with unmet mental health needs, people of diverse economic class and political opinions, and more. These groups often suffer from discrimination in the application of laws and policy and/or access to resources, services, and social protection, and may be subject to persecution, harassment, and/or violence. These groups are also more vulnerable to climate shocks and stresses, and have fewer assets and means within their reach to adapt and withstand the effects of climate change. Through application of the principle on equity and inclusion, USAID will demonstrate our commitment to paying special attention to how we engage, support, and empower marginalized and underrepresented groups.

Addressing climate change is a top priority for USAID as part of the U.S. government's renewed and strengthened commitments to building climate resilience and helping limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius⁷ as called for under the Paris Agreement.⁸ Tackling climate change is also a top priority because achieving our development and humanitarian mission is dependent on effectively and urgently addressing the climate crisis. However, this will not be easy: Staying within the 1.5°C target will require all countries to work together to achieve net-zero global carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, and achieve a 45 percent reduction in emissions relative to 2010 levels by 2030.⁹ It will also require addressing the worsening impacts of climate change in an equitable and inclusive manner to avoid unintended adverse impacts. The U.S. government is stepping up to support global efforts to address this critical challenge. Within this larger effort, USAID plays a leading international role by working on the ground with partner governments and local actors to strengthen mitigation and adaptation.

USAID has a longstanding commitment to support our partners to respond to the threat of climate change and seize on the opportunities to define resilient, low-emissions pathways that meet development objectives. These include mitigation actions such as the use of renewable energy and natural climate solutions, climate change adaptation, and systems transformation. USAID's work on climate change mitigation aims to ensure that global emissions are sufficiently reduced such that a robust range of adaptation options remain

possible. Globally, there are great opportunities for adaptation and mitigation to achieve complementary objectives across sectors including agriculture, energy, natural resource management, and more.

Responding to the climate crisis represents an economic, technological, ecological, and sociopolitical opportunity for countries to transition into societies with greater equality, well-being, and sustained prosperity for all. Bold and inclusive action on climate can lead to trillions of dollars in economic gain by unlocking new investment opportunities and supporting job growth and economic development.¹⁰ USAID will emphasize climate actions that support our partner's climate priorities, leverage other priorities and strategies to provide broader development benefits (food and water security, health, peace, and education), and ensure a just transition to an economy based on clean energy and a sustainable use of natural resources. At the same time, our broader development and humanitarian efforts, especially those that strengthen the social and



USAID's Strengths



Global Presence

Strong on-the-ground presence globally enables USAID to amplify and build on local priorities in creating sustainable climate actions that are locally-led and locally valued.



Longevity

Long and consistent history of working with partner countries, organizations, the private sector, and communities situates USAID as a trusted and influential partner.



Breadth of Expertise

In-depth sectoral technical expertise combined with contextual understanding of local economic, political, cultural and institutional landscapes situates USAID well to address complex challenges.



Convening Power

A trusted and respected position enables USAID to catalyze climate action at scale through institutional partnerships with host governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, the private sector, academia, and others.

economic empowerment of marginalized and underrepresented groups, are reducing vulnerability more generally, and thus increasing people's abilities to adapt to the climate crisis.

This Strategy, spanning from 2022 to 2030, represents an effort to align USAID's programs and investments with the significant challenges confronting us. The Agency will draw on our strengths as an international development agency, which include our global presence, longevity in many of our partner countries, breadth of technical and development expertise, and convening power (see USAID's Strengths graphic above). USAID will weave rights-based, gender-responsive, and socially inclusive approaches carefully throughout our efforts to ensure the ambitious climate actions of USAID and our partners achieve sustainable impacts. Throughout implementation of this Strategy, USAID will consult and partner with those most vulnerable to climate change, including people living below the poverty line, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented populations, to co-create solutions, avoid unintended harm, and

maximize local benefits. Underpinning our efforts will be the use of climate data and knowledge, including traditional and local knowledge, as it promotes data- and knowledge-driven programming and decision-making and strengthens the capacity of communities to adapt to climate impacts.

This Strategy will also support wider international development and humanitarian efforts, especially achievement of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While climate action is included as one of the 17 SDGs, as noted throughout this Strategy, climate impacts will affect and undermine global efforts to achieve virtually all of these goals. To achieve success, USAID will collaborate internally as well as across the U.S. government and expand our relationships with other donors and international partners; local, national and regional governments and organizations; and the communities and individuals most affected by climate change. All of our efforts will be informed and guided by the plans, strategies and priorities of our partners.

OUR TARGETS FOR ACHIEVEMENT: 2022-2030

This Strategy sets six Targets that we aim to achieve by 2030:

- USAID will partner with countries to support activities that reduce, avoid, or sequester **six billion metric tons¹¹** of carbon dioxide equivalent.
- USAID will support the conservation, restoration, or management of **100 million hectares** with a climate change mitigation benefit.
- USAID will enable the improved climate resilience of **500 million people**.
- USAID will mobilize **\$150 billion** in public and private finance for climate.
- USAID will align our development portfolios with countries' climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments in at least **80 countries** by 2024 and will support our partners to achieve systemic changes toward meeting those commitments in at least **40 countries**.
- USAID will support our partners to achieve systemic changes that increase meaningful participation and active leadership in climate action of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups in at least **40 partner countries**.

Targets cover the period 2022–2030. They are in line with Fiscal Year 2023 requested funding levels and other assumptions around improved performance and reporting.

CLIMATE STRATEGY TARGETS 2022-2030

Mitigation:
CO₂e reduced

6
Billion metric
tons

**Natural & Managed
Ecosystems:**

Hectares protected,
restored, or managed

100
Million
hectares

Adaptation:

People supported to be
climate resilient

500
Million people

Finance:

Public and private funds
mobilized

150
Billion dollars

Country Support:

NDCs/NAPs supported

80
Countries
supported

Critical Populations:

Increase equitable
engagement

40
Country
partnerships
strengthened



PHOTO: SANTIAGO JAVILLA FOR USAID

Building on lessons learned from our previous Climate Change and Development Strategy, an analysis of our past program evaluations and lessons learned, more than 40 listening sessions with partners and stakeholders from around the world, and a number of analyses, including a gender analysis (see box on page 23), this Strategy transitions USAID toward a much more holistic and whole-of-Agency approach.

This transition requires decreasing emphasis on some approaches while continuing or increasing the emphasis on interventions that can achieve the necessary scale and impact we seek, taking into account the contexts in which we work. The exact interventions USAID undertakes will depend on the local context and partner priorities, and prioritization will occur at the regional, national, and local levels in consultation with our partners.

The dual climate change priorities of **mitigation** (reducing and sequestering emissions) and **adaptation** (reducing climate vulnerability and improving resilience to climate impacts) cut across the Strategic Objectives and are embedded throughout the Strategic Framework. Under the first Strategic Objective, USAID addresses adaptation and mitigation through separate but mutually reinforcing efforts to ensure that the most urgent needs of each priority are met. Under the second Strategic Objective, USAID will prioritize efforts to catalyze the transformation of systems over the long-term in ways that address both adaptation and mitigation needs together. Under both of these objectives, USAID will support actions that avert and minimize loss and damage to the extent possible.

USAID'S CLIMATE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As reflected in the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report,¹² the decade from 2020-2030 is critical for setting the global trajectory and ensuring future generations are not subjected to the most devastating effects of climate change. Under this new Strategy, USAID is motivated by a vision of a **resilient, prosperous, and equitable world with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions**.

Working toward that vision, this Strategy will guide USAID's **whole-of-Agency** efforts through 2030 to **advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis**. This goal will be achieved through two Strategic Objectives (SOs) that allow USAID to facilitate **targeted direct action** (SO 1) and **systems change** (SO 2) across all sectors. These two Strategic Objectives are mutually reinforcing; many programs and activities will contribute to both, in parallel or sequentially. USAID will also demonstrate our commitment to addressing the climate crisis by implementing a Special Objective (SpO) through which USAID will **do our part** by transforming our operations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially, adapt to the climate crisis, and improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility among our staff working on climate, and by supporting our partners to undertake similar efforts.

USAID cannot achieve any of its high-level Targets through actions under any single Strategic Objective or their underlying Intermediate Results (IRs). Instead, USAID will achieve each of our Targets through multiple actions taken under both Strategic Objectives and across multiple Intermediate Results.



USAID's Climate Strategic Framework

VISION: A resilient, prosperous, and equitable world with net-zero emissions
GOAL: To advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis

SO 1. TARGETED DIRECT ACTION

Accelerate and scale targeted climate actions

SO 2. SYSTEMS CHANGE

Catalyze transformative shifts to net-zero and climate-resilient pathways

IR 1.1 Reduce Emissions

Catalyze urgent mitigation (emissions reductions and sequestration) from energy, land use, and other key sources

IR 1.2 Build Resilience

Strengthen resilience of populations vulnerable to climate impacts (adaptation)

IR 1.3 Mobilize Finance

Increase the flow of and equitable access to finance to support adaptation and mitigation

IR 1.4 Partner with IPLCs

Partner with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to lead climate action

IR 1.5 Amplify Crucial Voices

Enable and empower women and youth and other marginalized and/or under-represented groups to lead climate action

Embedded Principles



Locally Led Development



Equity and Inclusion



Private-Sector Engagement



Nature-Based Solutions



Evidence and Innovation

IR 2.1 Transform Key Systems

Advance transformation of key systems and essential services to reduce emissions and enhance climate resilience

IR 2.2 Shift Market Signals

Support a transition to resilient, net-zero economies and financial systems

IR 2.3 Improve Governance

Strengthen responsive, transparent governance and citizen engagement for effective climate action

IR 2.4 Work Across Assistance Types

Strengthen the coordination of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding assistance to address climate impacts

SpO 3. DO OUR PART

Strengthen the operations and approaches to programming to address climate change and further climate justice within USAID and our partner organizations.

To achieve these Strategic Objectives, USAID will take a whole-of-Agency approach, engaging every Bureau, Operating Unit, and Mission throughout the Agency. Our success will require harnessing a combination of dedicated climate and other sectoral funding as we take a **holistic approach to climate programming**, integrating climate into all areas of our development and humanitarian assistance, including in conflict-affected and fragile geographies, and expanding definitions of success in

all sectors to include climate objectives. This will involve not just targeted actions, but also the long-term work of influencing the systems that shape economies and societies. Such a holistic approach does not mean that USAID will stop doing the broad range of development work that is core to our mandate; it means that we recognize that the climate crisis jeopardizes all our progress and objectives and that there are strategic opportunities to drive progress on climate within much of our work.

To avoid and limit potential negative impacts, all our climate efforts should incorporate principles of conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding, social cohesion, and inclusive development. USAID will pursue climate actions responsibly to avoid exacerbating tensions, conflicts, and inequalities. USAID will pay special attention to ensuring that programs do no harm and protect Indigenous Peoples and environmental and human rights defenders. Throughout implementation of this Strategy, USAID will consider, partner with, and consult with those most vulnerable to climate change, including Indigenous People and local communities,

women, children and their families, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups, to avoid unintended harm and maximize local benefits.

To this end, USAID will continue to support the ethical and responsible use of data, knowledge, including traditional and local knowledge, digital technology, and analytics to achieve its goals. Further, five important principles will be **embedded into all actions** taken under this strategy: Locally Led Development; Equity and Inclusion; Private-Sector Engagement; Nature-Based Solutions; and Evidence, Technology, and Innovation (see elaboration on page 12).

To an important extent, prioritization within our strategic areas of emphasis will be defined at a sectoral, regional, and national level given the diversity of contexts in which we work. Unlike much of the work that USAID does, working on climate is not only a sectoral activity, but something that touches on every sector in a multitude of ways. Thus, how best to effect change will very much depend on a wide range of context-specific factors. The fundamental premise of this strategy is not that



we will do all things in all geographies but rather that we have a framework for describing our goals and interventions and that we will support Missions and teams to shape how they can

contribute most effectively to our goals. No two climate plans of action from a Mission or Bureau will be exactly the same.

This Strategy is built on several foundational principles, which will be incorporated into all planning and activities:



Locally Led Development

Sustainable and equitable climate actions should be locally led, owned, and implemented; adhere to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent; and be tailored and context-appropriate. USAID will defer decision-making authority and leadership to local actors to the greatest extent possible, including to governments at all levels, local private sector actors, universities, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Locally-led action focuses on respecting and protecting rights, enabling self-determined development, creating decent jobs, and ensuring that local knowledge and expertise drive USAID's work.



Equity and Inclusion

Equitable and inclusive action is critical to sustaining bold climate ambition. USAID will center its actions in the context of the diverse communities in which USAID works, committing to empowering accessible and inclusive approaches through which local communities and the marginalized groups within them—in particular, Indigenous Peoples and those people and groups often excluded from decision and policy making, funding, and benefit sharing—are meaningfully engaged as climate change agents. USAID will also confront the entrenched power structures that create and maintain inequalities.



Private-Sector Engagement

USAID must partner and engage with the private sector to address climate change and its impacts, create decent green jobs, and avoid generating adverse impacts. Serving

as both a catalyst and a partner to private companies and investors will greatly expand the scale, impact, and sustainability of USAID's programs. USAID will be alert through our on-the-ground presence to private sector engagements that will drive environmental and/or human rights abuses and will seek to engage those actors proactively to address the issues at hand wherever feasible.



Nature-Based Solutions

Nature-based solutions are essential to limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius and adapting to climate change. Forests, peatlands, and other ecosystems absorb and store large amounts of carbon, reduce disaster risk, and support livelihoods, food and water security, and health. USAID will elevate the use of nature-based solutions to simultaneously reduce emissions and store carbon, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and conserve and restore ecosystems.



Evidence and Innovation

USAID will work closely with scientists, academics, practitioners and entrepreneurs, drawing especially on local experts, to help unlock and promote innovative and proven, context-appropriate climate solutions. By leveraging local knowledge and practice, new research, data collection and analysis, as well as exploring and scaling promising technologies, USAID will develop and apply the evidence and innovations necessary to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE I: Targeted Direct Action: Accelerate and scale targeted climate actions

USAID will take, support, and facilitate targeted direct action to confront the most urgent demands of the climate crisis. Under Strategic Objective I, USAID will employ context-sensitive approaches to support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in critical geographies, mobilize increased finance, and partner with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups in locally led efforts to address the climate crisis.

Strategic Objective I will build on and support our partners' climate plans, policies, and strategies and will seek to facilitate and motivate the transformative change sought under Strategic Objective 2.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.1: Catalyze urgent mitigation (emissions reductions and sequestration) from energy, land use, and other key sources.

Avoiding the most catastrophic climate impacts will require climate change mitigation actions that drastically reduce new greenhouse gas emissions, including short-lived climate pollutants like methane, and remove greenhouse gases currently in the atmosphere. In emerging economies, energy consumption will grow by 70 percent by 2050,¹³ representing 73 percent of global energy emissions.¹⁴ In addition, in lower-income countries, a majority of emissions come from deforestation, agriculture, and other land use.¹⁵ Sound management of land and ecosystems is also the only currently available and affordable approach to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere at large scales globally,¹⁶ and tropical developing countries have disproportionately high mitigation potential from opportunities like forest conservation and restoration.¹⁷

Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will help partner countries reach near-term climate targets and avoid locking in longer-term emissions trajectories by working with partners to reduce emissions from energy, urban areas, transportation, industry, waste, food systems, and land use, including agriculture, deforestation, and degradation of critical ecosystems. In the energy sector, USAID will work with partner countries to achieve both economic development and ambitious climate objectives through emissions reductions across power, buildings, transport, and industry. USAID will work with countries to achieve ambitious emissions reductions and

Nature-Based Solutions and Natural Climate Solutions

Actions to conserve, manage, and restore ecosystems (including managed systems such as agricultural lands) that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively are called **nature-based solutions** when broadly referring to goals like climate adaptation and mitigation or food and water security, and are called **natural climate solutions** when specifically referring to climate change mitigation.

sequestration through natural climate solutions, which conserve, manage, and restore forests, mangroves, wetlands, agricultural lands, and other natural and managed systems. USAID will also support countries to dramatically reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (like methane and black carbon), one of the strongest levers for slowing near-term warming and toxic air pollution.¹⁸ Pursuing ambitious and equitable mitigation to advance a just transition will have many economic, health, ecological, and social benefits. Mitigation efforts will use an inclusive approach that empowers a broad range of stakeholders, including the labor movement and marginalized and underrepresented groups, to ensure shared and sustained outcomes, as well as to limit any negative impacts.



PHOTO: MWANGI KIRUBUSAID

Actions under this Mitigation Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

ENERGY PRODUCTION AND USE

- Catalyzing the accelerated **deployment of proven technologies**, including renewable energy technologies and practices, and **identifying opportunities to support mature and affordable mitigation technology transfer** relevant to the context of USAID partner countries.
- Continuing to support **integration of renewables** into the electricity grid and reduce reliance on fossil fuels for power generation, and **expand and strengthen electricity grids** utilizing advanced smart-grid technologies.
- Facilitating expansion of local and central grid solutions using renewable energy to **reach those without energy access and electrify households and cooking methods** to avoid future emissions, reduce energy poverty and deforestation, and improve air quality and health.
- **Incentivizing energy efficiency** standards and practices to enable economic growth at lower cost and emissions intensity.
- Supporting countries to analyze, plan, and implement actions to **reduce emissions from industry, buildings, and transport** by switching to clean energy sources and introducing technologies, processes, and behaviors that reduce energy intensity.
- Launching new activities to reduce emissions and **support decent work and growth in cities**, such as supporting clean transport systems that allow safe, affordable access to markets and jobs and facilitate supply chains.
- Helping partner countries reduce emissions of **short-lived climate pollutants**, such as methane (e.g., agriculture, waste, and fossil fuels), black carbon (e.g., high-emitting vehicles, residential energy, and biomass burning), and emissions of nitrous oxide (e.g., from agriculture, energy use, industrial processes, and waste management) to catalyze rapid emissions reductions and reduce health risks.



PHOTO: USAID PHILIPPINES / BLUE MOTUS

Center Nature as a Climate Defense and a Solution

Nature has been our first line of defense against the climate crisis for decades, and it is also an essential part of the solution. Oceans and forests absorb large amounts of carbon emissions while also supporting livelihoods and human adaptation to climate change. This interdependence of climate and natural systems—and human dependence on both—means that neither the climate crisis nor environmental degradation can be tackled independently. Nature-based solutions provide a key means for USAID to simultaneously reduce emissions, strengthen climate resilience, and conserve our biosphere, while providing important humanitarian and development benefits and promoting equity and inclusion.

LAND USE, INCLUDING AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

- Supporting the conservation, management, and restoration of forests, mangroves, peatlands, and other **high-carbon ecosystems** to achieve climate change mitigation benefits.
- Working with private-sector partners to align interventions and launch new partnerships **to reduce deforestation** and increase native forest restoration in commodity supply chains.
- Promoting through policy, agricultural innovation, and stakeholder engagement **sustainable, productive landscapes** that sequester carbon in soils and trees, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, produce higher quantities of food and agricultural products, support diverse livelihoods, and protect and restore high-carbon and ecologically sensitive ecosystems.
- Collaborating with partner countries to reduce emissions from food and agriculture systems including through enhanced agricultural productivity, reduced **food loss and waste**, and deployment of efficient, clean energy in agriculture value chains.

POLICY, PLANS, AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

- Partnering with countries to identify and implement additional mitigation opportunities that align with country priorities and **advance and bolster their Nationally Determined Contributions** under the Paris Agreement.
- Using political economy, economic, conflict, gender, and social inclusion analyses to identify **cost-effective, equitable mitigation** approaches to support implementation.
- Protecting and supporting **environmental and human rights defenders** who advocate to preserve critical carbon-sequestering ecosystems. This may be done by advancing their rights, intervening on their behalf with governments where appropriate, and supporting digital security, collective defense strategies, and rapid-response mechanisms.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.2: Strengthen climate resilience of people vulnerable to climate impacts (adaptation).

Climate impacts are pervasive and have disparate and disproportionate impacts across sectors, populations, and geographies. Extreme weather events and slow-onset climate impacts pose new risks, aggravate existing social, economic, and political challenges and inequities, and degrade ecosystems and natural resources. They also drive migration and increase the risk of conflict. Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will support and scale actions that build the climate resilience of people, places, ecosystems, and livelihoods that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate variability and change. Actions under this Intermediate Result will help people, communities and countries anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to current and future climate impacts while fostering human dignity and hope. This work will strengthen adaptive capacity and harness the robust evidence that adaptation can save lives, reduce food and water insecurity, safeguard ecosystem services and livelihoods, and improve health, including mental health, education, and well-being outcomes.^{19,20} Adaptation efforts will use conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches, and will be co-developed with those most vulnerable to climate change, including poor households, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, persons with disabilities, those affected by migration and displacement, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups. These actions will directly support the implementation of countries' national and local adaptation priorities as identified through relevant plans and strategies, including Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans under the Paris Agreement.

Actions under this Adaptation Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

EXPANDING ACCESS AND USE OF DATA, INFORMATION, AND KNOWLEDGE TO STRENGTHEN CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- Facilitating capacity building of regional, national, and local partners to **co-design and deliver demand-driven climate information services.**
- Scaling user-centric climate services for **risk-informed planning, decision-making, and early action** tailored to users' expressed needs for near, medium, and long-term decision-making.
- Identifying and **working within the unique local and community contexts** to understand and reduce climate risks.
- Supporting the use, digitization, and archiving of historic and current environmental and climatic data to understand, forecast, and prepare for weather and climate impacts.
- Ensuring widespread **availability of reliable and appropriate climate vulnerability data and information**, including traditional knowledge, particularly for communities facing the greatest risks.



Urban Climate Action: Climate action in cities cuts across all elements of the Strategy and will be critical for meeting immediate climate targets while investing in long-term systemic transformation. Cities house over 55 percent of the world’s population, are responsible for more than 70 percent of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions²¹ and generate 80 percent of global GDP.²² By 2050, almost 70 percent of the world’s population will live in cities.²³ The rapid growth rate of cities in low-and middle-income countries has led to the expansion of urban communities living in informal settlements who are marginalized, food insecure, and at risk to extreme weather. If these trends continue, cities will increasingly be where climate change and development intersect; creating opportunities for development programming to maximize synergies across traditional sectors for greatest impact. Urbanization trends, coupled with industry and infrastructure development and population growth, will contribute to increased demand for food, energy, water, sanitation, and transportation, which will place increasing pressure on land, forests, and water. USAID will expand our work in cities to address the climate crisis by reducing emissions and supporting adaptation, equity and inclusion through a just transition, and invest in sustainable land and water management.

INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF KEY DEVELOPMENT SECTORS AND SERVICES

- Supporting **climate-resilient food systems**, including the development and wide-spread adoption of diversified climate resilient agriculture, livestock, and fisheries across value chains.
- Strengthening the quality and resilience of water systems through **improved water resources management**.
- Supporting comprehensive **disaster risk reduction strategies, early warning systems, and anticipatory action**, including those accessible by women, girls, youth, disabled, displaced, and other marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- Strengthening **natural resource management** to manage and reduce climate risks and build local capacity for resilience and resource sharing, including through socio-ecological approaches.
- Supporting the **implementation of nature-based solutions**, including the conservation, management, and restoration of forests, mangroves, peatlands, and other critical ecosystems, to deliver adaptation, mitigation, and other co-benefits.
- Working with partners to address **health impacts from climate change through prevention and treatment**, including surveillance and early warning of climate-sensitive, vector-borne diseases, heat-health action plans, air quality management, behavioral, clinical, and public health interventions and mental health services.
- Supporting climate-resilient education systems and non-formal education settings to **ensure learning continuity and the development of climate adaptation skill sets**, with emphasis on girls, women, and marginalized and underrepresented populations.
- Strengthening **local governance, gender-equitable resource rights, and inclusive approaches** that increase the resilience of populations most vulnerable to climate impacts.
- Promoting and strengthening **climate resilient livelihoods, services, and markets**.
- Incentivizing and enhancing the capacity of **private-sector actors** to invest in and catalyze adaptation actions.

- Supporting countries to **increase resilience of key infrastructure sectors**, including supply- and demand-side systems for energy, transportation, communications, and water services.
- Working with partners to address climate-related migration by working with communities and migrants to **limit displacement and support safer and more productive migration**, including in sending and receiving communities.
- Supporting **sustainable, resilient, affordable housing, infrastructure, and services in urban areas**, including in slums and informal settlements, that are vulnerable to flooding and other climate risks.
- Utilizing principles of environmental peacebuilding to advance equitable resource sharing and management that both **mitigate conflict risk and increase climate resilience**.

MAINSTREAMING ADAPTATION IN POLICY, PLANS, AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS AT ALL SCALES

- Working with local communities, governments, and regional institutions to **strengthen their leadership, agency, and capacity** to assess and manage climate risks.
- Catalyzing participation, inclusion and equity, accountability, transparency, and local ownership to **advance adaptation priorities**.
- Supporting development, budgetary alignment, and **implementation of NAPs, adaptation components of National Determined Contributions**, and adaptation objectives across development and sectoral policies.
- Expanding our efforts to build resilience by holistically addressing risks, including climate risks, and **aligning with the Agency's Resilience Policy**.
- Supporting **climate-sensitive peacebuilding efforts** in climate-affected, fragile contexts that advance equitable resource sharing and management.
- Leveraging principles of **gender responsiveness and universal design and accessibility** to ensure that adaptation interventions are designed for all members of the community.
- Identifying and addressing local barriers to action by community members, including the increasingly common **mental health effects of climate change** that require attention and that in turn reduce resilience and capacity to take action.
- Ensuring child-centered adaptation measures are in place to **protect children** from their unique vulnerability to climate change.



INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.3: Increase the flow of and equitable access to finance to support adaptation and mitigation. Additional resources are needed across all sectors and at all levels, ranging from national government investments like electric grids that can handle extensive clean power sources, down to the community level for actions like reforestation to reduce flood risks. Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will provide and mobilize public and private finance to support equitable climate actions in the areas of mitigation and adaptation in line with our partners' priorities. This greater focus on inclusive climate finance will deliver significant emissions reductions while increasing economic productivity, creating decent work, ensuring a just transition, and improving quality of life. It will also support interventions such as climate smart agriculture, accessible and sustainable water and sanitation services, inclusive health and education services, climate information services, resilient infrastructure, ecosystem protection, assistance to populations after climate shocks, and nature-based solutions.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

- **Catalyzing public and private finance to underserved countries, sectors and populations** through efforts that convene, co-invest, de-risk, and catalyze private and public finance to where it can be most effective, and address systemic constraints in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- Supporting increased **access of local governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to climate finance** to achieve mitigation and adaptation targets, especially in rapidly urbanizing cities in developing countries that currently receive little to no climate finance.
- Activating USAID's **extensive network of investment and private enterprise officers** and **employing a broad toolbox of approaches** to mobilize climate finance, including blended finance approaches, instruments that mitigate investment risk such as guarantees and insurance and work with private sector entities to promote investment in resilience, low-emissions supply chains.
- Partnering with the U.S. government's International Development Finance Corporation, U.S. Trade Representative, Millennium Challenge Corporation and other U.S. government agencies to **develop pipelines of climate friendly projects for investment, increase access to capital and promote enabling environment reforms** that help governments and private sector entities avoid accumulating unsustainable debt as they pivot to climate-friendly investments.

- Supporting the **purchase of sovereign disaster risk insurance** as part of broader national disaster risk management strategies and contingency plans, where appropriate.
- Enhancing the ability of national and local governments, local organizations, communities, and entrepreneurs – including women and youth – to **seek financing, conduct feasibility studies, assess the economic viability of projects, and obtain public and private finance**.
- Working to **enhance political will and partnerships** to mobilize domestic resources – public and private – and support inclusive approaches and access to climate finance, including the Green Climate Fund, particularly for Least Developed Countries.
- Working to advance **strong standards of transparency and accountability** in the selection of recipients, the disbursement of funding, and the monitoring of results, including support for citizen oversight of climate financing and projects, in part to combat corruption and advance equity and impact.
- **Ensuring transparent and accountable governance of investments** and avoidance of harm for the most climate-vulnerable and marginalized groups, including young children and their families, by including incentives, capacity development, and comprehensive environmental and social safeguards, and accessible grievance mechanisms.

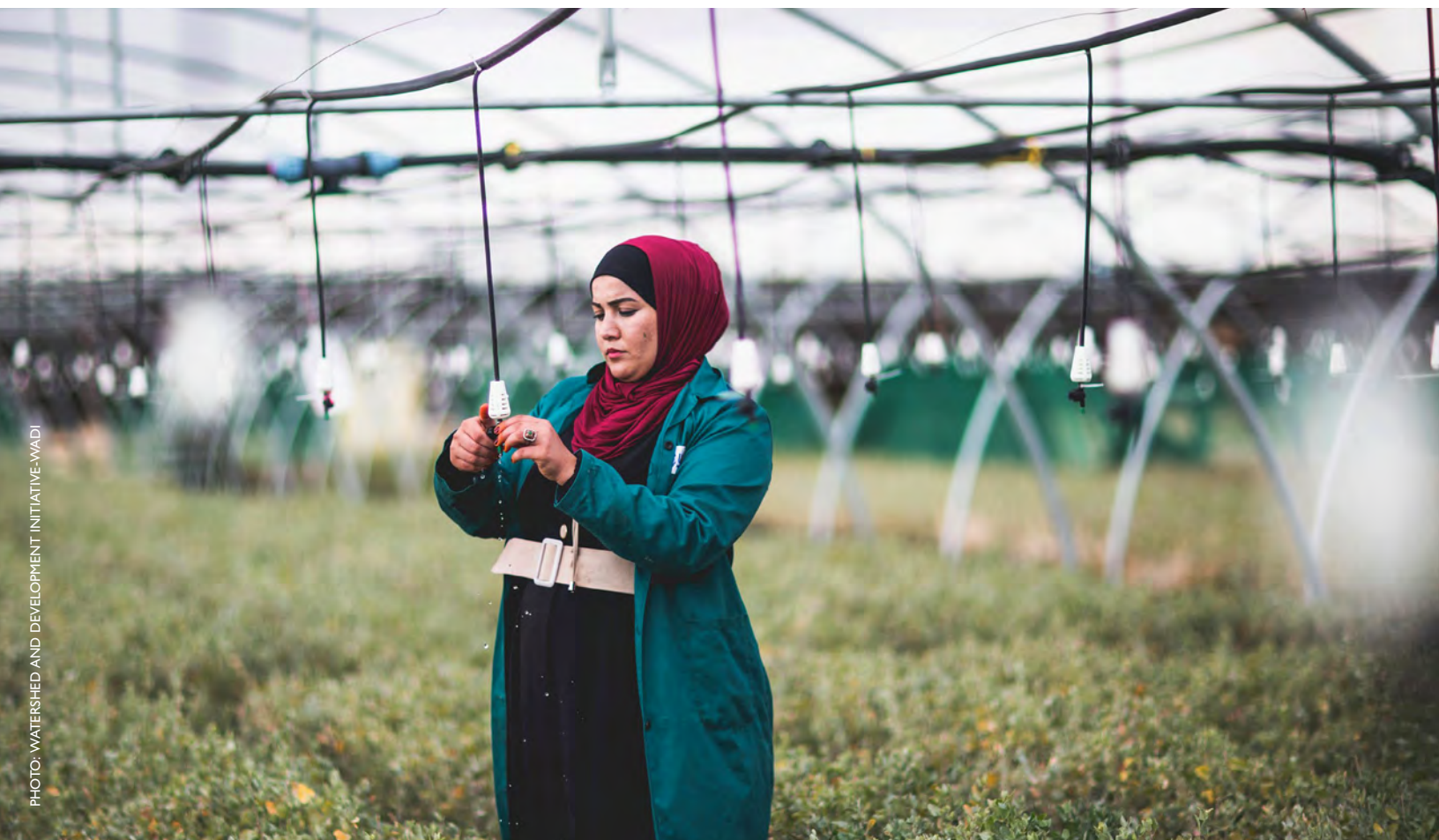


PHOTO: WATERSHED AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE-WADI



INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.4: Partner with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to lead climate action.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities²⁴ are key stakeholders and agents of change in addressing the climate crisis. Indigenous Peoples and local communities have tenure rights to and/or manage more than a quarter of the world's lands, which intersect with 40 percent of land-based Protected Areas, intact landscapes, and critical ecosystems.²⁵ There is clear and growing evidence that the lands that Indigenous Peoples and local communities manage are highly effective at sequestering emissions and promoting adaptation through land and water management. However, much of their land is not legally recognized, contributing to marginalization and reducing incentives for conservation. Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' relationships with the environment are profoundly affected by climate change, yet these groups are frequently excluded from climate decision-making processes and lack the resources they need to advance climate action. Further, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and environmental defenders are not adequately protected, and they are persistently criminalized and targets of harassment and violence. These tactics minimize Indigenous Peoples' ownership, voice, knowledge, and leadership and detract from global efforts to address climate change.

Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will partner with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to lead gender-responsive climate actions, respecting traditional values and practices and measuring success not only by increased resilience, security, and reduced emissions, but also through the increased agency and leadership these groups play in program design, implementation, and effecting change. Through these partnerships, USAID will help accelerate global efforts to address sustainably and equitably the climate crisis. Our partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities will be in line with our [Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(PRO-IP\)](#) and accompanying guidance and toolkits.

Animal, Environment, and Human Health Connection

The COVID-19 pandemic is a strong reminder of how closely human and ecological environments are connected, and how emerging pathogens can threaten global health and economies. As climate change, land use change, deforestation, and other drivers increase contact between animals and people in new and risky ways, diseases increasingly are jumping across species and borders. Since the start of the outbreak, USAID has provided billions of dollars to fight COVID-19 in more than 120 countries. As our climate change efforts ramp up, USAID is committed to addressing the interconnections among human, animal, and environmental health through its Global Health Security Program, using a multisectoral One Health approach to reduce opportunities for future infectious disease outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

- Building partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to **co-create decision-making opportunities and strengthen capacities and leadership**.
- Gathering, documenting, and facilitating the application of **indigenous knowledge, traditional practices, and life plans** in climate change actions.
- Establishing and expanding more **direct and innovative channels of funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities** organizations and networks through co-creation methodologies.
- Equipping Indigenous Peoples and local communities **with resources, including climate information, to implement their own solutions** and research, collect, monitor, and evaluate relevant climate data.
- Promoting **safe, secure, and enabling political environment** at all levels of governance for Indigenous Peoples, human rights and environmental defenders, and local communities to participate in climate actions.
- **Promoting legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure rights** to land, territories, and natural resources (including carbon), including strengthening Indigenous women's resource tenure.
- Pursuing **meaningful consultation** with Indigenous Peoples and seeking **Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)**,²⁶ as appropriate.
- Working with partner countries to ensure Indigenous Peoples and local communities **participate in the development and implementation** of Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.



PHOTO: FEED THE FUTURE GUATEMALA



PHOTO: USAID MIDDLE EAST

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1.5: Enable and empower women and youth and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups to lead climate action. Women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups constitute a vast majority of the world’s population and are leading many of the most influential climate movements around the world, and yet they are not always included or appropriately resourced. A successful approach to climate programming recognizes that their leadership, knowledge, and skills are vital to addressing the climate crisis. Successful climate action should also take an intersectional approach that recognizes that many elements of a person’s identity can affect how they experience the world. In combination with systems of inequality, these intersecting identities can lead to varying degrees of power and privilege that, in turn, create unique power dynamics, effects, and perspectives for contribution to climate solutions.

WOMEN

Women, including adolescent girls, have unique knowledge, skills, and networks that make them critical stakeholders in designing and implementing climate solutions. Work under this IR will take into account the gender norms that shape the lived realities of people and their unique climate risk exposure and coping strategies. It will examine the gendered power dynamics that dictate access to and control over resources that shape climate resilience, and ensure that climate solutions do not exacerbate gender inequality or lead to unintended consequences, such as gender-based violence. This work will be guided by and adhere to the requirements of [USAID’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#). Under this IR, USAID will work with a diverse range of women to identify and implement climate actions, measuring success not only by increased resilience and reduced emissions, but also through the increased agency and leadership of women in their roles as decision-makers.

Gender Analysis

USAID conducted a gender analysis to inform our Climate Strategy which documents evidence on the gender-climate nexus and outlines specific recommendations across each Intermediate Result. The gender analysis demonstrates the disproportionate negative effects of climate change on women and girls, particularly for members of marginalized and underrepresented groups. It also highlights the impacts of climate change on achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment globally, and the critical role women will play in addressing the climate crisis.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

- Increasing **financial and technical resources for women-led and gender equality organizations** to enable leadership in addressing the climate crisis.
- Creating tangible economic **opportunities for women in climate friendly industries** by supporting the training, education, and enabling environment and opportunities necessary to ensure equitable access to jobs.
- Supporting behavior change and communications campaigns that help **increase acceptance of women’s meaningful participation and leadership on climate actions**, identify and hold up women as agents of positive change, and work with male champions to support and encourage women’s active participation.
- Supporting **gender-transformative programs and policies** to address and mitigate risks for climate-related gender-based violence at the household and community levels and in institutions.

YOUTH

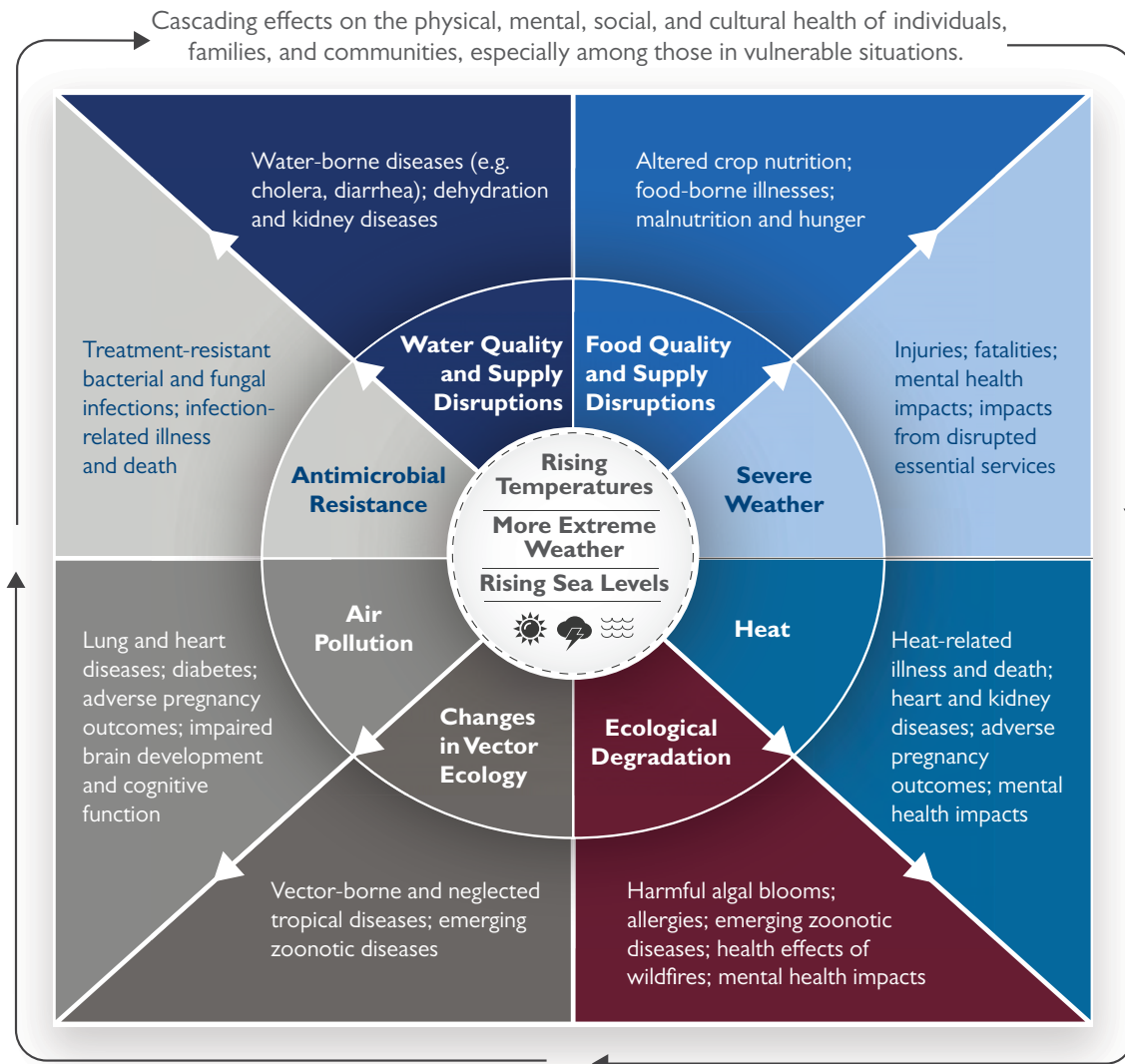
Youth (ages 10-29) have emerged in recent years as key actors in mobilizing large-scale awareness, demanding government action to tackle the climate crisis, running educational programs, promoting sustainable lifestyles, conserving nature, supporting renewable energy, adopting environmentally friendly practices, and implementing adaptation and mitigation projects.

Youth are also critical in adopting new technologies and practices to address climate change. They have increasingly strong social and environmental awareness and are engaging as leaders in movements to transform our societies toward a net-zero and climate-resilient future. Youth populations represent an evolving demographic that with time will include today’s infants and young children (ages 0-9) who are particularly affected by climate. USAID will apply principles outlined under the [Agency’s Youth in Development Policy](#), and other relevant policies, of effective engagement of youth in decision-making.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

- Supporting behavior change and communications campaigns that help **increase acceptance of young people’s meaningful participation, activism, and leadership on climate action and education**, identify and hold up youth, in all their diversity and age stages, as agents of positive change and work with other stakeholders and champions to support and encourage youth’s active participation.
- Recognizing the growing **importance of a broad range of climate-related mental health conditions among youth, including eco-anxiety**, and supporting programs at scale that address these issues.
- Increasing our **financial and technical resources for youth-led organizations, enterprises, and networks** to enable a leadership role in addressing the climate crisis.
- Creating tangible **economic opportunities for youth in climate-friendly industries** by providing access to jobs, combatting discrimination, and supporting technical and leadership education and training to equip them to be the leaders of both today and of the future.
- Supporting the **empowerment of youth organizations**, including youth conservation and agriculture networks, through financial and technical resources to better enable them to lead as sources of inclusive solutions to climate change.

Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health



Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Impact of Climate Change on Human Health*, <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/default.htm>

Climate shocks and stresses interact with non-climate stressors to create different impacts based on the different vulnerabilities and strengths of individuals and communities.

MARGINALIZED AND/OR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Marginalized and/or underrepresented groups²⁷ often experience discrimination in the application of laws and policy and access to resources, services, and social protection, and may be subject to persecution, harassment, and violence. During extreme weather events, they may experience disproportionately higher rates of injury and mortality. Such outcomes are not inevitable and should not be assumed to be the result of inherent vulnerability. They result from structural inequalities and power dynamics stemming from the intersections of pervasive social norms.²⁸ Such groups are accustomed, by necessity, to creative problem-solving and leveraging their diverse and intersectional identities to generate solutions that also benefit society at large. USAID is committed to inclusive climate action that enhances the resilience of all marginalized and/or underrepresented groups and empowers them as positive agents of change.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

- Supporting behavior change and communications campaigns that help **increase acceptance of participation and leadership** of marginalized and/or underrepresented groups on climate action, identify and hold them up as agents of positive change, and work with other stakeholders and champions to support and encourage their active participation.
- Increasing our **financial and technical resources** for marginalized and/or underrepresented groups to enable their leadership role in addressing the climate crisis.
- Creating tangible **economic opportunities** for marginalized and/or underrepresented groups in green industries by providing access to jobs, combatting discrimination, and supporting technical and leadership training.
- Supporting the **empowerment of organizations** of marginalized and/or underrepresented groups through financial and technical resources to better enable them to lead as sources of inclusive solutions to climate change.



PHOTO: USAID/VIETNAM FORESTS AND DELTAS PROJECT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Systems Change: Catalyze transformative shifts to net-zero and climate-resilient pathways

Fully addressing the climate crisis will require a combination of targeted action (i.e., Strategic Objective 1) and efforts to catalyze transformational and systemic change. Governance, economic, social, and financial systems need to better value natural systems and incentivize and prioritize resilient, low-emission investments. Inclusive formal and informal pre-primary through higher education systems need to produce a generation of climate-aware citizens ready to innovate, take action, and engage with their governments to demand a more sustainable future.

Governments need to implement systems that are transparent, legal, and corruption-free to enable full participation, inclusive of marginalized and underrepresented groups, to enable equitable and sustainable investments that benefit local communities and ensure a just transition.

Under our Systems Change objective, USAID will support partner countries, communities, and international organizations to catalyze systems transformation in ways that strengthen and achieve their locally determined goals and promote synergies and manage trade-offs between results, as well as a just transition toward an equitable, climate-resilient world with emissions-reduction based on net-zero pathways. All of our efforts will build on and support our partners' climate plans, policies, and strategies, as well as the more targeted action under Strategic Objective 1.

This systems change will require addressing and modifying the legacy issues, factors, motivations, sectors, actors, and/or interactions operating in an interconnected network. As USAID learns more about effecting transformational systems change, the actions the Agency takes under this Strategic Objective may change to ensure we are working in the most effective manner.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.1: Advance transformation of key systems and essential services to reduce emissions and enhance climate resilience. Transforming key systems, services, and associated sectors will be necessary to place the planet on a net-zero, climate-resilient trajectory. Integrated systems such as energy, transport, water, sanitation, agriculture and food systems, health, and urban, among others, will all need to decrease emissions and vulnerability to achieve lasting and feasible net-zero and climate-resilient pathways.

Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will address major underlying capacity and institutional constraints to systems change such as corruption and violent extremism, ineffective or non-existent tenure rights, and poor infrastructure, among others. While supporting systems transformation will take time, these changes will lay the foundation for future economies and social systems that are less extractive and emission-dependent, and more restorative, equal, and resilient.

Work under this Intermediate Result will take into account the social and cultural norms that shape the lived realities of people, examine, and challenge the power dynamics that dictate access to and control over resources, and ensure that climate solutions do not exacerbate inequality or lead to unintended consequences, such as gender-based violence.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

INCREASING AND HARNESSING INFORMATION, CONTEXT, AND UNDERSTANDING

- Listening to, learning from, and partnering with all the relevant stakeholders, including marginalized and underrepresented groups, to develop long-term **roadmaps to transformative change** that align with local priorities.
- Conducting analyses to **evaluate the net economic and social benefits and costs** associated with climate change mitigation and adaptation, and communicate the results to build capacity and understanding among partners and stakeholders.
- Developing and using existing analyses to better **understand the local contexts, systems, and priorities** needed to achieve major shifts in key systems and services, including uncovering the barriers and motivations among individual actors to adopting and sustaining behaviors that are critical to systems change.
- Supporting the **responsible production of community-driven data** for planning and implementation.
- **Strengthening local, regional, and national agencies, ministries, and institutions** to co-create, provide, and use climate services to support climate-informed decision-making in sectors and systems from education, social protection, and health to agriculture and energy.

FOSTERING BEHAVIOR CHANGE

- Supporting **behavior change and communications campaigns** that challenge and help increase acceptance of the participation and leadership of women and others on climate actions.
- Fostering, incentivizing, and nurturing the civic engagement and **behavior changes** necessary to guide and sustain systems change, including through education and other sectoral activities.

Behavior Change

Behavior change is a critical component of successful climate change initiatives. Effectively addressing the climate crisis will require the adoption of new behaviors by a range of actors, including policymakers, the private sector, community leaders, household members, and USAID staff. Behavior change programs target increasing awareness of climate change risks and impacts and should be coupled with feedback loops that provide information and support for potential solutions. Programs must work to shift social and gender norms to provide greater voice for marginalized and underrepresented groups, address the structural barriers impeding access to products, services, and financing as part of larger climate change initiatives. To address the complexity of the climate change challenge, USAID will apply insights and evidence from the latest research on behavior change and will draw lessons from behavior changes programs in other sectors, such as Global Health. We are committed to applying these lessons to human-centered climate solutions across all sectors.



PHOTO: OLAF ZERBOCK FOR USAID

WORKING IN KEY SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

- Working in cities to catalyze decarbonization and build resilience in systems from transport to food to energy.
- Supporting the **move away from emissions-intensive vehicles and transportation systems**, while ensuring people have equal access to economic opportunity.
- Working to catalyze major **shifts in national, regional, and local energy institutions and markets**, transportation systems, and food systems, among others.
- **Supporting higher education institutions, research institutions, and local scientists** to advance research, innovations, and the development of an educated and technically skilled workforce needed to drive and maintain systems change.
- Promoting **responsible and reliable supply chains for minerals** needed for renewable energy technologies, including support for relevant transparency and anti-corruption measures.
- Supporting improved **access to resilient and lower-emission essential services**, such as health, water and sanitation, social protection, and housing, which can help ensure households and communities are able to adapt effectively to climate shocks and stresses.
- Improving organization and functioning of health systems, **by strengthening governance, financing, and the flexibility of the health workforce**, that can meet the demands of climate change using a multi-sectoral approach.
- Increasing access to **climate-adapted early childhood development programs** from birth to protect young children from the impact of climate change.

Education

Climate change poses challenges to education infrastructure and learning outcomes. It impacts marginalized populations disproportionately, worsening poverty and exacerbating non-climate stressors. Some climate risks to education include: education institutional closures; interruptions to attendance and reduced learning efficiency; reduced household incomes and families' reduced ability to invest in education for their children and youth; and increased migration of the most marginalized. Strong education systems, from pre-primary through higher education, can implement proactive measures to reduce climate shocks and stressors in the long-term, such as: ensuring school buildings are resilient to predictable extreme weather events; powering schools with renewable energy; choosing fuel-efficient options for transporting learners to and from school; applying climate smart practices to book supply chains; training the green workforce, and conducting research to develop green technologies.

Education for girls and young women, in particular, advances their empowerment and reproductive health, fosters their climate leadership and pro-environmental decision making, and helps them develop green skills for green jobs. In addition, education equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to adapt to and overcome climate challenges. Education systems with strong emergency response capacity minimize damage and disruption due to climate events, such as droughts and hurricanes. Technical, vocational, and higher education, in partnership with the private sector, can also prepare job seekers for work and self-employment in energy, agriculture, and other sectors to support more resilient societies and economies. USAID will apply the principles outlined in its Education Policy.

CATALYZING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- Supporting partner governments, traditional and Indigenous leaders, local communities, and marginalized and underrepresented groups, including migrants, to **strengthen tenure and resource rights** to lower emissions and support efforts to build climate resilience.
- Promoting and catalyzing **climate actions that span political borders and complementary sectors**, through support to global, regional, and national organizations that offer common standards for governance, prioritization, financing, and monitoring of climate actions.
- Supporting **policy development and implementation**, capacity development, and innovation that span sectors, including those that reach across national borders.
- Supporting partner governments in **reforming national sectoral and fiscal policy**, such as agricultural subsidy programs, to shift market incentives toward climate-smart agriculture practices.
- Supporting implementation of **net-zero, resilient national and local policies and standards** based on proven practices.
- Rooting out **corruption and conservation crimes** that hamper climate change mitigation efforts (e.g., illegal logging, land grabbing, illicit mining).
- Supporting application of **open government approaches and anti-money laundering tools**, among others, to address the ways in which political finance and financial secrecy contribute to the overexploitation of natural resources and the neglect of lower-emission energy sources.
- Assisting people, industries, employees, and countries to **foster a just transition to climate-resilient livelihoods and employment**, including advocating for government-led and international investments in adapted safety nets, social protection programs, or other incentive programs.
- Investing in **responsible use of digital technology** to accelerate progress toward climate Targets.

Air Quality, Health, and Short-Lived Climate Pollutants

USAID is committed to pursuing joint air quality-climate change mitigation strategies to reduce inequities and substantially improve public health. For many developing countries, air pollution is a public health crisis disproportionately impacting poor and marginalized communities. Delivering immediate clean air benefits for local communities while reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential for advancing climate justice and building support for climate ambition in developing countries.

Significant growth in emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) is occurring in developing countries. USAID is well-positioned to help partner countries address the major sources of methane (e.g., agriculture, waste, and fossil fuels) and black carbon (e.g., high-emitting vehicles, residential energy, industry, and biomass burning). USAID will significantly scale-up its efforts by helping countries and cities create the enabling environment, capacity, and behavioral change required for wide-spread adoption of low-cost, targeted SLCP measures. USAID will actively work to advance the Global Methane Pledge, Clean Cooking Alliance, and other key international SLCP efforts.



PHOTO: NINA STOCK FROM PIXABAY

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.2: Support a transition to climate-resilient, net-zero economies and financial systems.

Unsustainable, high-emission economic development is an underlying driver of climate change. Therefore, climate risks and emission-reduction targets need to be incorporated into all economic and financial decisions. Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will help our partner countries transition toward the resilient, net-zero economies they seek, and that create sustainable livelihoods and decent work and are transparent, inclusive, and equitable in their design and operation. The following actions, among others, will be aligned with our partners' priorities and plans, address the local context and challenges, and seek to enable prosperity for all people.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include, but are not limited to:

INCREASING AND HARNESSING INFORMATION, CONTEXT, AND UNDERSTANDING

- Conducting analyses that evaluate local political and economic realities and identify appropriate entry points from which to initiate change.
- Helping identify net-zero, climate-resilient economic growth and **investment policies and institutional structures** that do not exacerbate or cause social inequities

HARNESSING RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Harnessing the momentum of the growing number of net-zero pledges from governments and businesses²⁹ to **capture additional financial resources and political will** for action.
- Pursuing the **creation of decent work** through a transition to climate-resilient, net-zero economies and financial systems.
- Helping **prepare people for climate-friendly careers**, including through education and training, while strengthening social systems to support transitions to improved livelihoods.
- Leveraging **remittances and diaspora investing**, substantial and reliable sources of financial capital, to promote resilience and improve investment in low-emissions, climate-resilient infrastructure and services.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS AND DISINCENTIVES

- Seeking to **address underlying causes and distortionary effects** that encourage high emissions and climate-vulnerable growth by creating the enabling environment, capacity, and incentives that promote investments in a just transition.
- Supporting replication and scaling of models that **shift financial and economic incentives and subsidies** toward effective climate-resilient, low-emissions systems.
- Partnering with governments, financial institutions, and major corporations to ensure that the **full costs of climate risks and emissions are understood and priced** in financial transactions, internalized through market regulations, and addressed through financial risk mitigation tools.
- Supporting placing a price on carbon through **carbon taxes and carbon markets** and other mechanisms that drive lower-cost mitigation action with market incentives underpinned with robust and transparent social and environmental safeguards.
- Working with sub-national and national governments as well as the private sector to adopt incentives to **increase efficiency, limit pollution, and reward environmental stewardship** while fostering a circular economy that is gender inclusive, reduces -waste, makes the supply chain more resilient, and extends the life of parts.
- Working with U.S. government trade agencies to assess the impact of proposed trade policies on partner countries that **factor in the greenhouse gas emissions** required to produce imported and exported goods to protect workers and industries in partner countries.

HELPING FACILITATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- Pursuing national financial policy reforms that advance climate action in collaboration with the development finance institution community (including the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation), development banks, and private-sector actors.
- Strengthening government capacities to **build shock-response social protection systems** and **pre-arrange disaster risk financing** to respond effectively to future climate shocks.
- Partnering with governments, industry, and civil society to address **development, environmental, and other risks associated with increased mining** for minerals used in renewable energy technologies.



PHOTO: COLBY GOTTERT FOR USAID

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.3: Strengthen responsive, transparent governance and citizen engagement for effective climate action. A strong interdependent relationship exists among citizen engagement, inclusive governance, and climate action. Citizen engagement and good governance underpin both democratic and climate resilience. Climate action requires societal involvement including all sectors, line ministries, levels of government, and public- and private-sector engagement. This creates an unparalleled challenge and opportunity to ensure democratic and peaceful means to identify and negotiate socially inclusive and equitable pathways to achieve a resilient, net-zero future. Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will proactively support citizen engagement and civil-society efforts, and will strengthen participatory and inclusive governance systems to implement partner climate goals.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

SUPPORT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

- **Supporting civil society and media**, including citizen- and youth-led organizations, independent media, and investigative journalism to engage safely and effectively in advocating, educating, monitoring, and reporting on climate objectives and action.
- Supporting and protecting the rights of civil society and **environmental defenders**, including **land and resource rights** for effective climate outcomes.
- Prioritizing and **elevating the voices of communities historically excluded, including marginalized and underrepresented groups**, that are disproportionately affected by climate change.
- Building the capacity of individuals, particularly marginalized and underrepresented groups, to participate meaningfully in climate action by **translating science-based scenarios and climate information into accessible media**.
- Catalyzing civil society to implement locally led **and child-sensitive actions on climate change**, ensuring that the voices of children and youth – as future custodians of our planet – are heard, both directly and indirectly through their parents, caregivers, and communities.

Human Migration and Displacement

Climate variability and change are increasingly contributing to human migration and displacement. Climate impacts exert additional stress on communities already facing pressures such as limited economic opportunities, social or political marginalization, poor governance, and degraded natural resources. Climate-related migration ranges from a proactive adaptation strategy to forced displacement in the face of life-threatening risks. Most climate-related migration occurs within national borders, has urban destinations and ranges from seasonal to permanent movement. USAID is increasing its focus on climate-related migration through research and analytics, program responses, and attention to migration affected populations including sending communities, receiving communities and potentially trapped populations unable to move in the face of climate impacts. Further, USAID is focused on ensuring that climate actions to limit warming and increase resilience do not inadvertently lead to economic or physical displacement.



STRENGTHEN PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

- Supporting citizens and governance institutions to **promote accessible and participatory climate planning processes inclusive of those affected by decisions of those processes** and craft the policy reforms needed for sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and accountable climate action.
- Increasing **transparency, accountability and anti-corruption efforts** in government and private-sector climate efforts.
- Supporting **policy reforms** needed for sustainable, equitable, and accountable climate action.
- Supporting **transparent and accountable urban governance systems** that include citizens' voices in decision-making processes and provide equitable access to services across all income levels and geographies.
- Supporting **social cohesion, peace building and equitable representation** in communities affected by climate-related migration and conflict.
- Supporting partner countries and locally led efforts to **find inclusive, gender-transformative, and democratic development pathways** to implement climate actions.
- Strengthening climate planning and action by **formal and informal or customary governance systems** at the local, regional, national, and transnational levels.
- Working with partners to improve technical capacity, including through education and training, in areas such as **emissions accounting, public expenditure for climate action, institutional enabling, and regulatory environments** including parliamentary and judicial support, anti-corruption efforts, and accountability for climate actions.
- Working with national governments to **strengthen and implement their national climate plans and policies** and ensure such plans are woven into subnational planning and implementation.
- Supporting the digitalization of **climate data**, appropriate and responsible open data practices, and production of participatory digital data tools so that civil society can access and engage with climate data.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.4: Strengthen the coordination of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding assistance to address climate impacts. Currently, different sets of actors and institutions are separately addressing various aspects and phases of complex crises, including those exacerbated by climate change. Siloed approaches to delivering humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding solutions are less effective and cost efficient, decreasing the level of assistance USAID and partners can provide. With the increased number of disasters expected from a changing climate, USAID must work across assistance types to optimize the response to the climate crisis.

Under this Intermediate Result, USAID will strengthen the coherence of humanitarian, development, and peace nexus throughout policy and investments to maximize impact, reduce climate risk, tackle the systemic causes of climate vulnerability that are rooted in inequity, and ultimately reduce humanitarian need. Together these actions, among others, will help reduce the unintended consequences of siloed approaches and ensure that the support provided by USAID and our partners becomes more anticipatory, cost-effective, and impactful.

Actions under this Intermediate Result include but are not limited to:

- Continuing to **build the knowledge base** associated with humanitarian, development and peace actions through collaboration, education, research, dialogue, joint risk assessments, and demonstration programs.
- Strengthening **coherence across our own strategies, programs, and activities** through increased and substantial cross-sector and cross-bureau co-creation and joint implementation.
- Working with partners to implement programs, policies, and plans that **promote coherence among national and local governments and civil society** responsible for humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actions to leverage the comparative advantage of each type of assistance.
- Convening multilateral partners as well as the interagency to advance the **dialogue across all humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors** to achieve collective climate outcomes at global levels.
- Integrating **shock responsive mechanisms and nimble programming** considerations across the humanitarian, development, and peace building nexus at all levels from community to international.
- Supporting migrants and displaced people by **investing in capacity and assets that travel with those on the move**, such as transferable job skills, access to mobile or transferable assets, access to mobile social safety nets, and strengthening access to services in urban destinations.
- Focusing work in climate-vulnerable geographies with complex contexts to **address conflict, insecurity, and structural governance challenges**.

Complex Crises and Conflict

While considerable attention has been paid to the potential causal patterns of climate change and conflict, the central focus in USAID's climate security efforts is on the compounding crises that occur when the impacts of climate change and conflict intersect. The overlapping impacts of conflict and climate change create a dangerous cycle with severe impacts for individuals' human security: conflict increases climate change vulnerability and climate change vulnerability increases conflict risk. This cycle is consistent from the global to the household scale - contributing to worsening risks of organized armed violence, loss of livelihood, gender-based violence, violent extremism, food and water insecurity, poor environmental governance, disaster vulnerability, and degraded natural resources. Addressing these risks requires integrative approaches that focus on the broader systems that climate change threatens. Concurrent attention to these intersecting crises provides opportunities for dual-purposed climate adaptation and peacebuilding results through actions such as resource sharing agreements, incentives for land rights protection, and supporting a just transition to renewable energy.

SPECIAL OBJECTIVE: DOING OUR PART: Strengthen operations and approaches to programming to address climate change and further climate justice within USAID and our partner organizations

Addressing the climate crisis will only be possible if everyone contributes. Therefore, USAID is committed to doing our part to confront the climate crisis by transforming the Agency's operations and supporting our implementing partners to undertake similar efforts. These reforms build on U.S. government commitments outlined in several Executive Orders³⁰ and USAID objectives detailed in the Agency's [Climate Readiness Plan](#)³¹ and Sustainability Plan. Collectively, these reforms will help ensure USAID and our implementing partners are better equipped to confront the climate crisis.

Actions under this Special Objective include but are not limited to:

- **Reducing USAID's operational greenhouse gas emissions** worldwide as specified in USAID's Sustainability Plan, including through increasing the energy efficiency of our infrastructure, vehicle fleet, information technology, and staff travel and ensuring carbon-conscious procurement.
- **Integrating climate resilience and mitigation** more robustly in our program cycle through an update and expansion of the Climate Risk Management (CRM)³² process per existing Agency operational policy ([ADS 201](#)).³³
- Strengthening the **diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of the climate workforce**, including by championing and implementing the [USAID Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#).³⁴



ROADMAP TO IMPLEMENTATION

USAID's implementation of this Strategy employs a whole-of-Agency approach that involves every Bureau, Mission, and Operating Unit throughout the Agency doing its part. USAID has a growing portfolio of investments in climate programs, which will accelerate under this strategy. Many USAID Operating Units are in the midst of advancing climate programming - or have begun the process of identifying new opportunities to better integrate climate variability and change into their portfolios. As a first step to support the growth of this portfolio, the Agency developed interim climate policy and programmatic guidance.

A summary of USAID's commitments to implementation is found in Annex I. More detailed guidance is forthcoming, as the Agency works to balance an effective and efficient response to the climate crisis. This will involve helping Operating Units develop programming and planning appropriate for their unique contexts and capacities while working to reduce administrative and reporting burdens.

USAID is updating the Automated Directives System (ADS), which guides USAID's work, to correspond with the implementation requirements outlined in Annex I. As part of regular consultation with Operating Units, requirements and processes may change over the course of the Strategy, as we learn more and take an adaptive-management approach to operationalizing the Strategy.

BUDGETING AND PRIORITIZATION

USAID will target funding and technical assistance to achieve the Strategy's Goal within the context of USAID's wider development and humanitarian assistance portfolio. USAID will be guided by the intent and limitations of specific congressional appropriations and directives within those appropriations and will leverage other sectors' activities by integrating climate approaches across programming. This prioritization will be informed by high-quality quantitative and qualitative data to harness potential adaptation and mitigation benefits and maintain the necessary balance of actions across and between our Strategic Objectives while maintaining a whole-of-Agency approach. Missions and other field Operating Units will be supported to explore innovative, combined, and flexible funding and implementing mechanisms to enable locally led development and enhance impact, co-benefits, and adaptability.

All sectors, irrespective of funding directives, should consider the impacts from climate variability and change, climate action opportunities, and country priorities in their own geographic and programmatic prioritization exercises.

Prioritization of all direct climate funds will consider opportunities to (1) achieve synergistic climate, development, peace and humanitarian objectives, (2) leverage and complement multiple funding streams, (3) support partner-country priorities and needs through locally led development, (4) catalyze additional finance, and (5) support and partner with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized and/or underrepresented groups.

USAID will use these general guidelines to allocate funds that Congress currently directs the Agency to use for climate (i.e., for Adaptation, Renewable Energy, and Sustainable Landscapes). USAID will also use additional criteria, which include, but are not limited to:

1. **Adaptation:** climate vulnerability and preparedness. USAID will focus on countries and regions with moderate and high climate vulnerability across and within sectors, and a range of preparedness. This approach will ensure inclusion of those most vulnerable to climate risk and those least prepared to respond to it.

2. **Renewable Energy:** emissions rates and emissions reduction potential, likelihood of success, commitment of partners, and energy poverty.
3. **Sustainable Landscapes/Natural Climate Solutions:** biophysical potential to reduce emissions and/or increase sequestration, potential for progress of and/or use of scalable approaches, commitment of partners, and potential for regional and global cooperation across the stakeholder spectrum to deliver results.

Budgeting and prioritization may change or expand under different funding directives and levels and over time as USAID develops additional experience driving systems-level change and direct action to deliver results on climate.



ANNEX I: Summary of USAID’s Commitments to Implementation

USAID’s implementation of this Strategy employs a “whole-of-Agency” approach that involves every Bureau, Mission, and Operating Unit throughout the Agency doing its part. To further support implementation, the Agency is developing more comprehensive implementation guidance, which will expand on the following topics, recognizing that support and flexibility are key ingredients for success. USAID will make associated updates, as appropriate, to the Automated Directives System (ADS), which guides USAID’s work.

Strategic Planning

To ensure continued and rapid implementation of the Strategy, all Operating Units across the Agency must consider how they will contribute to the Strategy’s Strategic Objectives, Intermediate Results, and Targets in forthcoming strategic planning processes. USAID will also improve and build on its existing practice of climate risk management.

- USAID Missions and field Operating Units must incorporate their contributions to the Climate Strategy Intermediate Results and Targets in forthcoming Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies (R/CDCS) or equivalent planning documents, as appropriate to their unique circumstances. In the near term, if a new R/CDCS is not under development, Missions and other field Operating Units must identify opportunities and programming priorities aligned with the Strategy’s Intermediate Results and Targets by reviewing and adding a short section to their existing R/CDCS Climate Annex as appropriate to their context.
- USAID Pillar and Regional Bureaus must develop brief documents that describe how the Bureau plans to support implementation of the Strategy, including planned contributions to Strategy Targets and technical assistance to other Bureaus and Missions.
- All Operating Units must communicate annually what they will contribute to the implementation of the Climate Strategy in their Operational Plans.

Staffing, Roles, and Responsibilities

USAID will develop an Agency-wide staffing plan to support the implementation of the Climate Strategy under the direction of the Chief Climate Officer. This plan will cover hiring, training and retention of staff focused on climate change and climate equity, and staff with cross-sectoral expertise to integrate climate change and climate equity effectively into all sectors at USAID.

All Operating Units must empower leadership and enable all staff, particularly those designing and managing programming, to take responsibility for implementation of the Strategy.

All Operating Units are currently required to designate climate integration leads (CILs). Given many CILs have limited bandwidth, Operating Units should also strengthen support for CILs with the appropriate time, technical capacity, and authority to perform their CIL responsibilities.

Technical Guidance

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. USAID will also develop guidance in the form of questions for consideration to help identify and avoid any major potential unintended negative impacts of implementing this Strategy.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Reporting

To meet the objectives of the Strategy, all missions and sectors will be asked to contribute to the Strategy's Objectives and Targets, as applicable. New and improved reporting methodologies and procedures and increased capacity in monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning are essential to support expanded climate action across the Agency and track progress toward Strategy Objectives and Targets. USAID will increase investment in Agency-wide MEL capacity building and peer-support working groups.

All Operating Units will have identified in a strategic planning document (see Strategic Planning) which of the Strategy's Targets they will contribute to. OUs will subsequently set their own Climate Strategy Targets and report progress on meeting those Targets via their Performance Plan and Report (PPR).

USAID will develop an Agency Climate Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan. The Agency will also produce a Progress Report presented to the Administrator, Congress, and the general public at a minimum every three years to track progress toward the Targets.

Adaptive Learning and Management

MEL will be geared toward supporting adaptive learning and management, both at an Agency level and at the activity level. Adaptive management includes the ability to adapt our strategic focus when unexpected shocks (e.g., COVID, disasters) occur. Climate change programs will incorporate Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) at all levels, per ADS 201, to ensure strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptive management.

Knowledge Management and Communication

USAID will develop knowledge management and communication guidance to ensure lessons are broadly learned and applied across relevant programming. Throughout implementation of the Strategy, USAID will communicate and share learning regularly within the Agency as well as with external partners, including local organizations, to advance the Strategy, leverage synergistic efforts for maximum impact, and speed generation, sharing, and uptake of promising climate approaches.

Capacity Building

To ensure a successful whole-of-Agency effort, USAID will develop a climate change capacity-building plan that takes into account the varied needs of different Operating Units. This plan will address essential skills for designing, integrating, implementing, monitoring, reporting, evaluating, and learning that are necessary for equitable and inclusive climate change programming.

Inter- and Intra-Agency Coordination

USAID will continue to coordinate its efforts with Departments and Agencies from across the U.S. government to ensure synergistic collaboration. USAID is coordinating with the Department of State on a multi-year Joint Strategic Plan and a Greening Diplomacy Initiative for overseas operations. USAID is also working closely with the Department of State and other relevant Agencies on a number of interagency strategies and initiatives. We are also helping to elevate climate in the National Security Strategy process. USAID will continue to work with U.S. diplomatic, defense, scientific, and intelligence Agencies to ensure the Agency's efforts are complementary to other U.S. government development institutions. Internally, USAID will ensure that this Strategy aligns with, and supports, other USAID policies, strategies, and sectoral plans. Additional guidance and tools to support this alignment will be forthcoming.

Coordination of the USAID Climate Efforts

To organize and galvanize a whole-of-Agency response, USAID will empower all staff and Missions to lead on our climate efforts. Sustained and effective on-the-ground results that benefit all our partners, which are primarily achieved by our Missions, are the ultimate aim of this Strategy. To ensure coordination across the Agency, USAID has established the following initial coordinating structures to support our Missions and our climate work:

- The **Chief Climate Officer** is a senior USAID official who is responsible for guiding climate policy and action, ensuring a whole-of-Agency response to the crisis, and serving as the climate lead in U.S. Washington interagency and bilateral headquarters discussions.
- The **Climate Change Leadership Council**, chaired by the Agency Chief Climate Officer and composed of the senior leaders of all Washington-based Bureaus and Independent Offices, enables high-level, intra-agency cross-bureau coordination, guidance, and strategic leadership for adaptation, mitigation, and the broader work of mainstreaming climate programming and the resources allocated to advance them.
- The **Technical Working Group** is a core forum for the development of technical guidance and coordination across the Agency. This group comprises technical experts representing each Bureau and Independent Office and the Operating Units that lead on adaptation, natural climate solutions, clean energy, climate finance, youth, gender equality, inclusion, integration and policy. The Technical Working Group co-chairs liaise with the Leadership Council to provide details on technical policy guidance and programmatic oversight over the course of the strategy.

Requirements and processes may change over the course of the Strategy, as we learn more and take an adaptive management approach to operationalizing the Strategy.

ANNEX II: General Assumptions for All Targets

Funding Type: Assumes that some USAID activities with focused climate funding will generate and report significant results toward these targets. Assumes that USAID activities without focused climate funding will also generate and report significant results toward the Strategy’s targets as a result of mainstreaming climate objectives across the Agency.

Performance Reporting: Assumes improved data collection and performance reporting for Strategy targets by Missions and Implementing Partners as a result of:

- increased investment in climate-related monitoring, evaluation and learning;
- increased outreach and training on climate results reporting;
- increased capacity of Missions and partners to measure and report results;
- improved tracking of activity results over time, including ex-post;
- improved monitoring of results from a wide range of programs, including the impacts of policy change;
- improved ability to collect geospatial data by activities;
- ambitious results-oriented activity design and target setting;
- a decrease in reporting gaps for both direct and indirect results;
- the development of new data collection tools and systems; and
- monitoring approaches that combine traditional annual reporting with the use of modeling to estimate programmatic reach and impact.

Program Effectiveness: Assumes ongoing increases in the effectiveness of USAID activities toward generating climate-related results. These increases may come from:

- changes in criteria guiding budget allocations;
- changes to technical guidance to the field on how to program climate funds;
- increased impact from activities in countries with high mitigation or adaptation potential;
- increased focus on climate objectives by USAID’s non-climate programs;
- the incorporation of learning from past programs, evaluations, research, or other sources;
- increased diplomatic attention, global efforts, and US government coordination;
- systemic changes in climate finance, governance, or other sectors; and
- technological, capacity, or policy improvements to the enabling environment in partner countries.

Periodic Reviews: USAID will review progress toward target achievement annually and update targets or indicators as necessary in year 3 and year 6 of the strategy’s implementation. In addition, we will assess our progress against our targets on an annual basis. Indicator definitions are located in USAID’s Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS), which will be revised annually and made available publicly.³⁵

ANNEX III: Key Climate Considerations

USAID's current approaches to addressing several issues regarding key climate considerations (in alphabetical order):

Biodiversity Loss

As established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems puts at risk the ecosystem goods and services vital for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The [U.S. Government Plan to Conserve Global Forests: Critical Carbon Sinks](#) notes the existential and intertwined crises posed by climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and poverty and establishes the need to protect ecosystems over the long term as critical carbon sinks. At USAID, the [Biodiversity Policy](#) recognizes the critical role of ecosystems in addressing climate change and supporting priority development outcomes such as food security, health, and economic development. Similarly, both the [Global Food Security Strategy and Water and Development Plan](#) highlight the cross-cutting role of natural resource management for achieving sector goals. To the extent that USAID's objectives under the Climate Strategy rely on the ability of ecosystems to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, USAID will need to continually strengthen the integration of biodiversity conservation and natural resource management considerations in its sector programming and policies. We also recognize the importance of human rights and the critical role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conserving ecosystems and sustainably managing natural resources.

Climate-Related Migration

Climate impacts on food and water security, sea level rise, and intensifying extreme weather events and disasters affect livelihoods, reduce livability, and lead to increased migration and displacement. These climate impacts interact with other drivers of human movement, including political, social, and economic factors. Weather-related disasters displace around 30 million people annually, and by 2050 modeling suggests that the interaction of climate impacts with other pressures will lead to hundreds of millions of new migrants. The [White House Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration](#) outlines U.S. government efforts to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate-related migration and scale support to migrants, sending and receiving communities. USAID will accelerate support to people in place and to migrants by addressing key drivers of migration, responding to displacement, and supporting people who choose to move as a livelihood diversification, risk management, and adaptation strategy.

Climate Security

Climate change and conflict are inextricably linked as compounding crises that undermine past developments gains while threatening future outcomes. Competition over resources is expected to worsen as the climate crisis results in more insecurity, shifting patterns of human movement, and more pronounced inequitable power dynamics. Seventy-five percent of USAID partner countries are experiencing or recovering from violent conflict, and all of these countries are experiencing the impacts of climate change. This reality requires climate action in challenging operating environments. Proactive identification of climate security risks can leverage the common challenge of climate change to achieve effective peacebuilding. Conversely, the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy requires green minerals and other natural resources located in many geographies with active conflict and historical inequities. These geographic overlaps underscore the need for conflict-sensitive climate action along with climate-related anti-

corruption, peacebuilding, and social cohesion efforts. USAID maintains a “do no harm” posture as it integrates climate action and conflict sensitivity into programming as it faces the climate crisis and responds to it.

Deforestation and Commodity Production

The unsustainable expansion of commodities and agriculture – including cattle, soy, palm oil, pulp, cacao, and coffee amongst others – to meet global demand is contributing substantially to increased global emissions from deforestation and environmental degradation, negatively affecting marginalized and underrepresented groups, and driving widespread loss and degradation of natural habitats. A recent study found that 69 percent of this forest conversion is also illegal. While illegal timber is regulated through trade laws such as the U.S. Lacey Act, agricultural commodities are not effectively regulated. In recent years there has been a surge of corporate commitments and voluntary initiatives by the private sector to curb deforestation in their supply chains, but these efforts have been insufficient, forcing consumer countries and investors to put the issue on their trade policy agendas. USAID’s work begins with supporting governments to improve land use planning, transparency on issues such as deforestation in supply chains, policy incentives, and social safeguards and rights to enable sustainable production, forest conservation and restoration to lay the foundation for the growing market of investors and private-sector firms seeking to procure deforestation-free commodities. By partnering with the private sector, NGOs, and technology service providers, USAID joins in the development of tools and practices to improve supply chain management and meet the specifications of markets, lenders, and investors, including verified legality and sustainability.

Digital Technology

Climate programs can improve their reach, impact, and efficiency by leveraging accessible digital technology to crowdsource data, enable real-time analytics, relay critical information, create resilient digitally enabled communities, and increase access to clean energy. We should also promote climate-neutral technological innovation, as increasingly widespread emerging technologies (such as cryptocurrencies and artificial intelligence) demonstrate potential for adverse climate impact through their outsized energy consumption. Digital technology can also amplify dis- and mis-information, and climate change-related disinformation is a critical challenge. The responsible inclusion and consideration of accessible digital technology in climate change mitigation and adaptation programming is in alignment with the goals of USAID’s [Digital Strategy](#). Building on decades of USAID leadership in digital development, the Digital Strategy outlines USAID’s deliberate and holistic commitment to improve development and humanitarian assistance outcomes through the responsible, ethical, and equitable use of digital technology and by fostering open, accessible, inclusive and secure digital ecosystems.

Energy Technologies for Deep Decarbonization

The USAID Climate Strategy targets significant near-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while also supporting our partners to chart pathways for deep decarbonization. Technologies like carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration, green hydrogen, modular nuclear reactors, and advanced batteries are often identified as being critical to achieving the most difficult aspects of energy sector decarbonization, but they are not typically commercially viable in the markets where USAID works. USAID will focus efforts under Strategic Objective 1 on technologies that can provide immediate development and decarbonization benefits, and under Strategic Objective 2 will work with partner countries to understand the role these additional technologies can play in partners’ long-term energy plans and to develop strategies to deploy them as appropriate in a cost-effective manner.

Green Jobs

The product of over a year of discussions and consultations, USAID's [Employment Framework](#) includes the wide spectrum of formal and informal employment and mixed livelihoods in its definition of what a job is. It also recognizes that “better jobs” are essential to the achievement of inclusive development: *The concept of “better jobs” implies not higher earnings for some, but better opportunities for all, including youth, women, and socially excluded groups. For that reason “better jobs” are central not only to sustainable economic growth but to another driver of self-reliance: inclusive development.* (USAID 2019, ix). The climate crisis is impacting nearly all aspects of lives and livelihoods, and USAID recognizes that jobs can improve both climate and livelihood outcomes by building resilience to climate shocks and stressors and advancing inclusive development. However, job creation and transformation efforts can contribute to the climate crisis or fail to help mitigate its effects if such efforts do not integrate considerations to foster green jobs. “Green” jobs can be seen as those that help drive the change for systems to become more inclusive, lower-carbon, and climate-resilient, including but not limited to those requiring less land and water. Additionally, to ensure that the transformation toward green jobs fosters a just transition, it also is critical to be intentional about integrating measures that ensure these jobs are inclusive and provide decent work and sustainable livelihoods while respecting workers’ rights.

Fossil Fuels

According to the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, fossil fuel combustion has been responsible for 86 percent of total anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions over the past ten years. It is clear that to address the climate crisis it is critical to phase out fossil fuel use. Over the next decade, USAID will support our partner countries to greatly reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and thus reduce their emissions. The vast majority of USAID’s energy-related programs do not work on fossil fuels and must comply with the Renewable Energy earmark. As a matter of policy and practice, USAID does not support new coal projects and we will continue to work with the interagency and international community to reduce coal consumption. Under extremely limited conditions, support for oil and gas-related projects may be considered for non-earmarked funds. However, US government guidance limits those circumstances to ones in which there are no viable alternatives to meet priority national security, development, or humanitarian objectives, and when support for gas does not delay the transition to renewable energy or otherwise inhibit the achievement of net-zero global emissions by 2050 and the country’s decarbonization pathway and/or goals.

Gender Equality and Inclusive Development

The negative effects of climate change disproportionately affect women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized and underrepresented groups. Restrictive gender and social norms limit access to opportunities, rights, and resources that contribute to resilience, including representation in climate decision-making bodies. Recognizing the contributions of these groups and empowering them to lead climate action is fundamental to combating climate change. USAID acknowledges that these groups will bear a disproportionate burden of the effects of climate change and that they are critical partners in developing and leading climate action. As such, USAID’s climate action is informed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Decision to advance the Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan the [U.S. Government National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#), the [U.S. Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act](#), [USAID’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy](#), and the [U.S. Government’s Gender-Based Violence Strategy](#). USAID climate actions are also informed by the [UNFCCC Local Communities](#)

[and Indigenous Peoples Platform](#), [USAID's Youth Development Policy](#), the [Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), [LGBTQI Vision for Action](#), and [USAID's Disability Policy Paper](#).

One Health and Global Health Security

From forests to croplands, the climate crisis threatens the ecosystems that make all life possible. Healthy, intact ecosystems and a climate-smart One Health approach can increase food security and strengthen community resilience while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. This approach also can address the elevated infectious disease risk owing to climate change, land use change, deforestation, and other drivers that increase contact between animals and people in new and risky ways, which has the potential to endanger lives and disrupt economies, travel, trade, and the food supply. USAID partners with the Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other departments and agencies to implement our Global Health Security program, which includes the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). The GHSA is an international initiative launched in 2014 to advance health security priorities multilaterally, bilaterally, and domestically. USAID's Global Health Security Program emphasizes the need for strong multi sectoral engagement across the human, animal and environmental health sectors, and includes agriculture, security, defense, law enforcement, development assistance, foreign affairs, research, and finance sectors, among others, for implementation of a One Health Approach to problem solving.

Responsible Renewables Sourcing

There are significant concerns about environmental degradation and human rights abuses associated with green energy minerals and renewable energy technology supply chains. Credible evidence from civil-society watchdogs suggests, for example, that components critical to the manufacture of solar panels are made with forced labor. USAID purchases limited renewable technologies directly. Instead, USAID focuses on policy, grid integration, and related enabling conditions to facilitate the rapid transition to renewable energy. However, it is important that USAID and our partners critically examine renewable energy supply chains, including the minerals that are found in these technologies, and work to minimize procurement of technologies associated with environmental or human rights abuses. USAID supports immediate actions by the U.S. government, partner countries, and companies to confirm that renewable technology supply chains are environmentally responsible and respect human and labor rights. We also encourage the expansion of responsible supply chains for green energy minerals and renewable technologies in the United States and abroad and aim to advance this effort.

ANNEX IV: Glossary

Adaptation: The process of adjusting to the actual or expected climate and its effects in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In the context of this strategy, adaptation interventions seek to strengthen resilience to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. (From IPCC WGI AR6).

Adaptive Capacity: Adaptive capacity is the ability of systems, institutions, humans and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences. (From IPCC WGI AR6)

Agriculture: The science and practice of activities related to production, processing, packaging, transporting, trade, marketing, consumption, and use of food, feed, fiber, and other outputs, including aquaculture, farming, wild fisheries, forestry, and pastoralism. (As referenced in the GFSS-R Glossary of Key Terms)

Climate Finance: Using financial resources to assist developing countries to reduce and/or avoid greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Climate Migration: The movement of people predominantly for reasons of sudden or slow-onset/progressive changes in the environment related to climate change impacts (e.g., shifts in water availability, crop productivity, employment, or livability). This includes people who are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border.³⁶

Climate Resilience: Climate resilience can be generally defined as the capacity of a system to maintain function in the face of stresses imposed by climate change and to adapt the system to be better prepared for future climate impacts.

Climate Security: The ways in which the impacts of and responses to climate change alter geopolitical and socioeconomic systems that affect peace and security.

Climate Services: Climate services provide climate information to assist people, communities and countries to make climate informed decisions to adapt to climate variability and change.³⁷ The service includes close collaboration between users and providers, that is based on scientifically timely, credible, reliable, dependable, accessible and usable information and assistance, tailored to user needs (Hewitt et al., 2012).

Climate Smart Agriculture: Climate Smart Agriculture is composed of three main objectives: 1) Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; 2) Adapting and building resilience to climate change; and 3) Reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where appropriate. CSA is, fundamentally, “smart agriculture informed by climate science.” It encompasses how agriculture affects and is affected by climate change and aligns this integration with food-security objectives (reduction of hunger and poverty, improved nutrition).

Equity: The consistent and systematic, fair, and just treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to marginalized and underrepresented groups that have been denied such treatment. Equity addresses the specific and proportionate needs of certain persons or groups to attain fair and just treatment and outcomes, as opposed to equality, which when used to describe a process, emphasizes the same or equal treatment for all persons or groups regardless of specific circumstances or needs. Equality as a goal refers to the equal enjoyment of resources, opportunities, and rights.

Essential Services: Essential services are the services and functions that are absolutely necessary to maintain the health and welfare of a municipality. Without these services, sickness, poverty, violence, and chaos would likely result.

Gender Transformative: An approach that seeks to fundamentally transform relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality. This approach requires : 1) critically examining gender roles, norms, power dynamics, and inequalities, 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support gender equality and an enabling environment, and 3) transforming underlying power dynamics, social structures, policies, and broadly held social norms that affect women and girls, men and boys, and gender non-binary individuals and perpetuate gender inequalities. This approach recognizes that gender equality cannot be achieved or sustained without an approach that includes all three of these components.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs): Greenhouse gases are gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, by the atmosphere itself, and by clouds.

Green Minerals: The minerals and metals used in renewable-energy technologies and energy storage capabilities.

Intersectionality: The intersections between forms or systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination. Intersectionality recognizes and examines how various biological, social, and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual identity, caste, and other identities interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to discrimination and inequality. Intersectionality holds that varying forms of oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, and homophobia, do not act independently of one another, but rather interrelate and create a system of oppression

that reflects the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination.

Inclusion: A dynamic state in which diversity is leveraged to create a fair, healthy, and high-performing organization or community. An inclusive environment is safe, respectful, engaging, celebratory, and motivating and values the unique contributions of all individuals and communities.

Just Transition: Just Transition, applied to global climate change, refers to transitioning the global economy to a low-carbon, resilient one in a way that seeks positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes together, delivers equitable benefits, and does no harm. To do so, there must be inclusive, gender-equitable, and participatory decision-making and development processes that ensure justice in the transition, growing low-carbon and resilient firms, institutions and communities, fostering good livelihoods, developing demand-driven skills and labor-matching, protecting and enhancing workers' rights, safeguarding community health, and human rights of affected individuals, including in indigenous and local communities.

Mitigation: A human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.

Natural Climate Solutions: Actions to protect, manage, and restore ecosystems (including managed systems such as agricultural lands) specifically for the purpose of mitigation.

Nature-Based Solutions: Actions to protect, manage, and restore ecosystems (including managed systems such as agricultural lands) that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively.

Resilience: Resilience refers to the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. (2012 Resilience Policy)

Short-Lived Climate Pollutants: Short-lived climate pollutants are powerful climate forcers that remain in the atmosphere for a much shorter period of time than carbon dioxide (CO₂), yet their potential to warm the atmosphere can be many times greater. Certain short-lived climate pollutants are also dangerous air pollutants that have harmful effects for people, ecosystems, and agricultural productivity.

Vulnerability: The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.

Well-being: A positive outcome that is meaningful for people and for many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well.

Youth: USAID takes an ages and stages approach to developing age-appropriate and intentional engagement of children and youth in climate activities. USAID's Youth in Development Policy defines youth as individuals aged 10-29. USAID defines the different periods of youth as follows: early adolescence (10-14); adolescence (15-19); emerging adulthood (20-24); and transition to adulthood (25-29).

ENDNOTES

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- 6 Hereafter referred to as “Strategy”.
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- 24 [Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) outlines the set of criteria USAID uses to identify Indigenous Peoples.
- 25 [Nature: "A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation"](#).
- 26 The conditions and requirements for how USAID approaches FPIC are detailed in the [PRO-IP](#) (Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).
- 27 Marginalized and underrepresented groups may include, but are not limited to, women and youth with particular attention to girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, displaced persons, migrants, Indigenous Peoples and communities, children in adversity and their families, older persons, religious minorities, ethnic and racial groups, people in lower castes, persons with unmet mental health needs, and people of diverse economic class and political opinions.
- 28 Including, but not limited to, discrimination; stigma; exclusion; and racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, ageist, classist, and others.
- 29 UN Climate Press Release (2020) *Commitments to Net Zero Double in Less Than a Year*. <https://unfccc.int/news/commitments-to-net-zero-double-in-less-than-a-year>
- 30 USAID Responses to EO 13990, Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis; EO 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad; EO 14013, Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>
- 31 USAID's 2021 Climate Readiness Plan. <https://www.usaid.gov/climate-change/2021-climate-readiness-plan>
- 32 Missions must carry out climate risk screening during the development of Regional or Country Development Cooperation Strategies (see [ADS 201mat](#)) and Operating Units must assess climate-related risks for all USAID investments and incorporate CRM measures into the design and implementation of activities, if applicable (see [ADS 201mal](#)).
- 33 Automated Directive Systems (ADS) contains the organization and functions of USAID, along with the policies and procedures that guide the Agency's programs and operations
- 34 2021 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Strategic Plan. <https://pages.usaid.gov/OCRD/2021-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-strategic-plan>
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- 36 This definition draws from the [IOM Glossary on Migration](#) and the [White House Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration](#)
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