ADS 201, PROGRAM CYCLE OPERATIONAL POLICY
KEY REQUIREMENTS

PARTIAL REVISION: OCTOBER 28, 2020

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❖ Strategic Planning and Implementation

POST-R/CDCS APPROVAL		
TOPIC/ REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
Projects v. Standalone Activities ADS 201.3.2.14	**After R/CDCS approval, Missions must decide whether to implement their strategy through projects, standalone activities, or a combination.** ● For identified projects, Missions should refer to guidance in ADS 201sam, Project Design and Implementation. For standalone activities, guidance does not apply.	● While projects are optional, Missions are encouraged to make this determination based on criteria in ADS 201.3.2.14.
Initial PMP ADS 201.3.2.15	**Unless waived, Missions must prepare an initial Performance Management Plan (PMP) within three months of CDCS approval.** ● The initial PMP must include the following: 1. A table of contents that describes each part of the PMP with links to content in different systems, and a log of modifications over time. 2. Identification of learning priorities and plans to address them through monitoring, evaluation, and Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA). 3. Confirmation that at least one performance indicator has been identified for each R/CDCS Intermediate Result (IR). (Sub-IR indicators and targets for IR indicators are not required.) This information may be in the Mission's Information Management System and does not need to be repeated in the PMP.	● Missions are not required to consolidate PMP content into a single document. Its content may exist in different tracking systems or databases. ● Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRs) are not required for initial PMP approval. ● In addition to ADS 201.3.2.15, Missions should reference guidance on monitoring, evaluation and CLA in ADS 201.3.5, ADS 201.3.6, and ADS 201.3.7, respectively.

	4. Confirmation that the Mission has plans for 1) at least one evaluation-per-IR, 2) one evaluation for any known activities at or above $20 million, unless exempted per ADS 201.3.6; and 3) an impact evaluation for any pilot interventions. The PMP may link to content in the FACTS Info Next Gen Evaluation Module or another System and does not have to be repeated in this plan. 5. A schedule of performance management tasks and associated resources, either within the plan or linked to the plan. ● After the Mission Director approves the initial PMP, Missions must upload the first two sections to ProgramNet and inform their Regional M&E POCs and PPL's Learning, Evaluation, and Research Office.	
DOAG Agreements ADS 201.3.2.19	**Missions that obligate funds through Development Objective Agreements (DOAGs) must negotiate DOAG agreement(s) with their partner government in support of CDCS objectives.** ● Missions must document compliance with applicable legal requirements in ADS 201mad, DOAG Obligation Legal Requirements Summary Checklist.	● Missions are encouraged to scope DOAGs such that they only cover one DO.

R/CDCS IMPLEMENTATION		
TOPIC/ REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
Portfolio Reviews ADS 201.3.2.18	**Missions must conduct at least one portfolio review per year that focuses on CDCS progress.**	● Missions should consider topics described in ADS 201.3.2.18(a) during their portfolio review.

TOPIC/ REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
PMP Implementation/ Updates ADS 201.3.2.15	**Missions must implement their PMP and update it as needed, including as part of strategy-level portfolio reviews.** ● Missions must also update their PMP as new projects/ activities are designed and approved.	● Mission Directors are not required to approve PMP updates.
CDCS Mid-Course Stocktaking ADS 201.3.2.15	**Missions must conduct at least one CDCS Mid-Course Stocktaking during CDCS implementation.** ● Missions must submit documentation of the stocktaking process to the Regional Bureau for distribution to other Washington OUs.	● A Mission's mid-course stocktaking may fulfill the requirement for a strategy-level portfolio review for that particular year. ● Missions should address topics described in ADS 201.3.2.18(b) during this stocktaking.

❖ Project Design and Implementation*

Guidance is only applicable where Missions have opted to use a project approach.

PROJECT DESIGN		
TOPIC/ REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
Phase One: Project Design Planning ADS 201sam, Section 6	**During Phase One: Project Design Planning, Missions must a) appoint a project design team; and b) identify scope and process parameters to guide the design process.**	● Missions are encouraged to consider parameters discussed in ADS 201sam, Section 6 at this stage (e.g., the team's approach for mandatory analyses for which there are several options). ● Formal clearance or approval of phase one parameters is not required. For example, teams could meet with identified senior staff and record decisions in the form of minutes.

| Phase Two: Project Design

ADS 201sam, Sections 6 & 7 | During Phase Two: Project Design, design teams must a) conduct a project design process; and b) document key decisions in a short document called the Project Development Document (PDD).

● Teams must use the PDD template in ADS 201mba. The PDD may not exceed section limits established therein, with a maximum limit of 15 pages.

● Mission Directors (or designees) must approve the initial PDD through a brief action memo. By approving the PDD, the Mission Director/designee provides authorization for the overall project concept. Approval does not confer binding authorization for activities, nor does it authorize the use of funds. | ● Teams should incorporate self-reliance principles discussed in ADS 201.3.4.3 into the design process to the extent feasible and appropriate.

● Missions are encouraged to use the PDD Approval Memo Template to approve the PDD. |

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

TOPIC/ REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
Project Manager ADS 201sam, Section 11	After a PDD is approved, Missions should identify a) a team to implement the project and b) a Project Manager to provide overall guidance and direction at the project level.	● The Project Manager and associated team should carry out roles and responsibilities discussed in ADS 201sam, Section 11.
Design of Component Activities ADS 201.3.4	Concurrent with, or subsequent to, the project design process, Missions should design and implement "component activities" in support of project-level result(s). ● Such activities must be approved through Activity Approval Memorandums (AAMs) (see ADS 201mai).	● [See activity design and implementation section below.]

PDD Updates ADS 201sam, Section 8	Missions should holistically update or revalidate their PDD at least once a year to ensure that it remains a useful frame-of-reference.	• Missions are encouraged to time PDD updates with annual portfolio reviews. • Missions are also encouraged to establish a process that does not require formal clearance of PDD updates. For example, Missions could circulate updated PDDs in advance of their annual portfolio review and record any decisions that require additional changes in the minutes for the review.

❖ Activity Design and Implementation

ACTIVITY DESIGN		
TOPIC/REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
Phase One: Activity Design Planning ADS 201.3.4.5	**During <u>Phase One: Activity Design Planning</u>, Operating Units (OUs) must a) appoint a primary Point of Contact (POC)/ design team to lead the design process; and b) identify or revalidate high-level parameters to guide the process.** • At a minimum, OUs must identify: 1) the preliminary activity purpose; 2) how the activity will advance CDCS and/or project-level results, as applicable; 3) the preliminary budget; and 4) the preliminary mechanism type (e.g., whether the activity is expected to be an A&A mechanism or another type). • OUs must ensure that identified parameters are documented. OUs may satisfy this requirement through email or a meeting with minutes. For activities that were planned in a PDD, the parameters therein may satisfy this requirement.	• OUs are also highly encouraged to consider additional scope and process parameters discussed in ADS 201.3.4.5 at this stage (e.g., the overall plan for analysis and engagement, the team's approach for mandatory analyses for which there are several options, etc).

Topic/ Reference	Requirement(s)	Best Practice(s)
Phase One: Activity Design ADS 201.3.4.6-7 ADS 201mba, Activity Design Process for Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) mechanisms	**During <u>Phase Two: Activity Design</u>, OUs must determine how to advance intended result(s) through a given type of implementing mechanism.** • For most acquisition and assistance (A&A) mechanisms, design teams must reference ADS 201mba, Activity Design Process for Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) mechanisms. • For other mechanisms, design teams must reference ADS 201.3.4.6(b) or ADS 201.3.4.7, depending on the mechanism type.	• Teams should incorporate self-reliance principles discussed in ADS 201.3.4.3 into the design process to the extent feasible and appropriate.
Approval through an AAM ADS 201mai, Activity Approval Memorandum (AAM)	**OUs must approve all new activity designs through brief Activity Approval Memorandums (AAMs).** • OUs must ensure that their AAMs conform with the four functions established in ADS 201mai. • OUs may approve a single activity or multiple, complementary activities through an AAM.	• OUs are encouraged to use or customize the AAM template in ADS 201mai.
Pre-Obligation Requirements Additional Help: List of Pre-Obligation Requirements for New Activities	**OUs must also ensure that they satisfy applicable pre-obligation requirements during the design process.** • Per ADS 201mai, OUs must document compliance with certain core requirements in the AAM. OUs may document other requirements through a standalone checklist.	• OUs are encouraged to reference Additional Help: List of Pre-Obligation Requirements for New Activities -- in addition to their OU's guidance -- to ensure that all applicable requirements are addressed.

ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Topic/ Reference	Requirement(s)	Best Practice(s)

Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan ADS 201.3.4.10	**OUs must ensure that Implementing Partners submit an Activity MEL Plan before major implementation actions begin -- typically within 90 days of award -- unless exempted.** ● At a minimum, Activity MEL Plans must include: ○ The activity's monitoring approach, with targets for all performance indicators; and ○ As appropriate, the approach for collecting and responding to feedback from beneficiaries.	● OUs should ensure that MEL Plans address other content described in ADS 201.3.4.10 (e.g., expectations for collaboration, proposed evaluations, etc).
MEL Implemen-tation ADS 201.3.4.10	**OUs must monitor and evaluate activities in accordance with applicable requirements.** ● Key activity-level monitoring requirements include ensuring PIRS are complete within 3 months of collecting indicator data; performing site visits, generally at least every six months; and using monitoring information to make decisions and adapt. ● See Monitoring, Evaluation & CLA section below for other requirements.	● Where possible, OUs should complete PIRs prior to data collection. ● While OUs may initiate performance evaluations at any point, they should plan them during the design process, when feasible.
Activity Modifications ADS 201.3.4.12	**OUs are not required to modify AAMs to execute changes to activity-level agreements.** ● Per ADS 201.3.4.9, final authority to approve modifications of activity agreements rests with the CO/AO or other official with delegated authority.	● While not required, OUs may determine that certain types of activity-level changes should be cleared by parties in the OU with equities.

❖ Monitoring, Evaluation & CLA

MONITORING, EVALUATION & CLA

TOPIC/ REFERENCE	REQUIREMENT(S)	BEST PRACTICE(S)
Monitoring ADS 201.3.5	**Monitoring requirements include:** ● At least one performance indicator is required for: 1) each IR in an R/CDCS Results Framework; 2) the Project Purpose identified in PDDs; 3) key activity outcomes in Activity MEL Plans. ● OUs must also select indicators to report results in their annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR) and other reporting processes. ● Unless exempted, OUs must work with partners to include requirements in Activity MEL Plans. ● OUs must identify targets for Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators in their PPR and performance indicators in Activity MEL Plans. (Note that targets are no longer required for strategy/project-level performance indicators.) ● OUs must conduct a data quality assessment (DQA) for each performance indicator reported to external entities, including those in their PPR.	● Context indicators are recommended to track changes to key risks, changes in the country/regional context, and/or programmatic assumptions. ● Performance indicator data should include baseline values, the baseline timeframe, and actual values. ● DQAs may be conducted remotely in non-permissive environments.
Evaluation ADS 201.3.6	**Evaluation requirements include:** ● Missions with an R/CDCS must conduct at least one evaluation per IR (at any level: intervention, activity, set of activities, or the IR as a whole); ● OUs must conduct at least one evaluation for activities that are expected to cost $20 million or more (for Missions, this evaluation may also meet the one evaluation-per-IR requirement);	● OUs should devote approximately one to three percent of total program funding to external evaluation, on average. ● An OU may request that an internal evaluation be used to meet evaluation requirements if the evaluation meets or exceeds evaluation standards in ADS 201.3.6.2. ● OUs may consider conducting an Evaluability Assessment to examine the extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and

	• OUs must conduct an impact evaluation, with cost analysis, of any new, untested approach to be expanded in scale or scope (i.e., a pilot intervention); • Missions must develop and update information on planned evaluations in the Mission PMP and/or Evaluation Registry; • OUs must submit data assets created/derived while conducting an evaluation to the Development Data Library (DDL) (see ADS 579); and • Emergency assistance, disaster assistance, transition assistance, and programming funded by PEPFAR are exempt from evaluation requirements.	credible fashion (see Conducting an Evaluability Assessment for USAID Evaluations.)
Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) ADS 201.3.7	**CLA requirements include:** • Mission Program Offices are responsible for overseeing key CLA activities such as the Mission's portfolio-review process. • Missions must identify learning questions in their R/CDCS, and CLA plans to address strategy learning priorities in their Mission-wide PMP.	• OUs should consult Agency-wide learning agendas to determine whether any learning agenda questions can be addressed. • OUs should integrate CLA approach in strategy, project, and activity planning and implementation, as applicable.