

**Grand Bargain in 2019:**  
**Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

**Name of Institution: U.S. Government**

**Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):**

**Date of Submission:**

The United States Government (USG) remains committed to the Grand Bargain and the need to realize significant results in the field. As the single largest provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide, the USG continues to institute reforms to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its own assistance as well as that of its implementers. In 2019, Congress agreed to the ongoing merger and elevation of USAID's humanitarian offices into the new Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. The FY 2020 President's Budget proposed to restructure USG overseas humanitarian assistance, starting with interim steps to optimize its impact and effectiveness.

The USG also expects system-wide reforms across three broad areas to match our own effort and ensure the efficient use of donor funds to meet the assessed requirements of people in need in a transparent and accountable manner: 1) continued improvements to joint needs assessments and analysis that inform prioritized humanitarian response plans; 2) significant progress to reduce unnecessary and duplicative administrative costs within UN agencies to free up more funding to meet humanitarian needs, while ensuring effective oversight; and, 3) greater collaboration between humanitarian and development actors in crisis-affected and fragile contexts to maximize the impact of humanitarian programs.

**Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2019?**

To support the progress in key priority areas, the USG continued to engage at all levels. Recognizing that rigorous assessments and sound analysis of need underpin effective humanitarian action, at the global level, the USG co-drafted a joint donor letter to the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) outlining the seven priority areas where donors expect implementers to make substantial progress to optimize the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC) towards prioritized appeals. The USG also continued to actively participate in the Grand Bargain Joint Needs Assessment/Analysis workstream as well as in the development of the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework as a foundational element to improving the HPC.

More specifically, in 2019 USAID formally introduced a new internal humanitarian assistance Assessment & Analysis Policy, Guidance, and Tools that will strengthen the rigor of our engagement in assessments and analysis in line with the Grand Bargain commitments. At country level, the USG continued to invest in comprehensive data collection and analysis efforts, such as multi-sector needs assessments, and support information management capacity within clusters to improve assessment and analysis and ultimately inform evidence-based decision-making.

The USG continued to aim for humanitarian funding to be timely, predictable and, in some instances, awarded on a multi-year timeframe. In 2019, USAID issued its first solicitation for multi-year emergency food assistance awards, and continued to employ other modalities that enable partners to plan and program in dynamic contexts, such as: issuance of "pre-award" letters; grant budget line-item flexibility; and expanding support for country-based pooled funds. Likewise, State/PRM seeks to provide international organization partners

maximum flexibility with broad regional or sub-region earmarks where relevant and with country earmarks when appropriate.

Core to the USG's approach is robust field-based staffing, regular dialogue with humanitarian stakeholders, and routine use of early warning analysis to inform decision-making.

**Question 2: Please explain how the outcomes/results have or will lead to long-term institutional changes in policy and/or practice.**

In addition to pressing implementers for progress in key areas, the USG has focused on fundamental changes in its own organizational structure and practices to strengthen and improve the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance it funds. For example, Congressional approval for the creation of a Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance within USAID, will remove the artificial distinction between food and non-food assistance programs.

The USG continues to support and engage in efforts to enhance the HPC to ensure that the assessments and appeals are increasingly reflective of an objective, comprehensive assessment of needs. The percentage of total USG humanitarian funding applied toward projects in coordinated appeals increased from 69.9 percent to 76 percent.<sup>1</sup> The USG is also calling for greater public global burden sharing. We cannot sustainably meet future humanitarian needs without higher support from others.

While the USG continues to support flexibility through various funding modalities, we also expect significantly greater transparency of and efficiency in costs, including the management costs of partners. Specifically, we demand major demonstrable progress in operational planning and transparent budgeting that clearly proves to donors that partners are taking all efforts to reduce unnecessary costs and duplication, while at the same time maintaining the capacity necessary for effective accountability and oversight.

**Question 3: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>2</sup> in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).**

The USG requires all partners to conduct a gender analyses, demonstrate the meaningful involvement of women and girls, and explain how activities are designed or adapted to reduce existing inequalities and avoid creating new inequalities.

There was continued focus on implementation of the Safe from the Start initiative, aiming to improve gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response from the onset of emergencies. Overall, in 2019, the USG dedicated nearly \$134 million towards targeted life-saving GBV programs around the world. USG funding supported life-saving assistance, GBV coordination, gender mainstreaming, and programming to reduce the risk of GBV, including the

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<sup>1</sup> USG funding for CY2019 as recorded in FTS.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

deployment of GBV coordinators, regional advisors, and experts, as well as and training for non-GBV sector leads on GBV risk reduction.

The USG also specifically funded the development of tools for the humanitarian community on tailored approaches for obtaining feedback from women and girls to design and course-correct activities, ensuring women and girls shape the assistance they receive. New evaluation guidance, for example, asks for qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of strategies to improve gender equity both at the participant and project management level.

**Question 4: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?**

The USG seeks to reduce the vulnerability and humanitarian needs of populations affected by crises by drawing on the comparative advantages of humanitarian and development actors to achieve collective outcomes. The USG is strengthening policies to support greater humanitarian and development coherence, and new partners are being engaged to facilitate prevention, preparedness, and early action financing. We expect the international system to do the same.

Throughout 2019, the USG continued to mainstream the humanitarian-development nexus including through the creation of an interagency Relief-Development Working Group to ensure U.S. humanitarian and development programming and funding is coordinated and aligned to realize efficiencies and ensure sustainable solutions. The USG developed, evaluated, and increased programming for resilience, livelihoods, and disaster risk reduction to promote sustainable solutions for populations affected by crisis and mitigate and reduce recurring humanitarian crises. Humanitarian and development offices were encouraged to support joint analysis, planning, and financing, and internal inter-agency and intra-agency working groups were established to further facilitate this work.

Within the wider humanitarian system, the USG also worked with national and local authorities, UN Country Team leadership, the World Bank, donor governments, and others to encourage the development of joined-up and flexible programming that better responds to long-term need, in line with the 2019 OECD Development Assistance Committee Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

Additionally, changes to USAID's organizational structure, to become operational in 2020, will elevate resilience in addition to humanitarian assistance, and connect those more closely with conflict prevention and stabilization efforts. The USG overall recognizes that humanitarian programs serve as the building blocks for longer-term recovery, resilience and our partner countries' "journey to self-reliance." USAID's new Policy Framework includes a focus on fostering self-reliance, presenting a new vision for development and humanitarian assistance: building a country's capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to local development and humanitarian changes, and ensuring that

there is a commitment to see these solutions through effectively, inclusively, and with accountability.