

Summary on a Proposed Regional Environmental Quality, Management and Services Support Mechanism

Introduction and Justification

This summary is intended to provide background information on a concept for a potential Regional Environmental Quality, Management and Services (REQMS) contract mechanism that—*through buy-ins from requesting USAID missions and partners*—could provide services to meet needs in the areas of environmental compliance, environmental assessments, environmental capacity building and environmentally sustainable project design. This brief provides some general proposals on possible tasks, management options, and contract mechanisms for the REQMS in order to elicit feedback from missions and partners regarding the demand for and nature of such a mechanism.

...There is a clear need to continue strengthening USAID's role as a lead agency in sustainably planned development. Given the shortage of in-house environmental expertise at USAID, it is argued that a mechanism which would facilitate completion of mandatory environmental compliance documentation and contracting assistance for design in areas such as community based resource management, cleaner production, green trade, carbon sequestration, compensation for environmental services, environmental certification and environmental management accounting (to name a few) could help to ensure environmentally friendly and sustainable design.

Objectives

Some illustrative key tasks envisioned for the REQMS mechanism might include:

Assisting Missions to Produce Mandatory USAID Environmental Compliance Documentation:

- Provide personnel and technical assistance for the drafting of IEEs, PEAs, and PERSUAPs to missions and partners;
- Provide assistance in drafting environmental assessments for strategic planning, such as Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessments (ETOAs);
- Ensure that environmental compliance documentation leads to quality activity design and implementation;
- Assist with monitoring partners' implementation of environmental compliance recommendations;
- Maintain a coherent tracking system for environmental compliance documentation;
- Draft Agency-wide guidance for environmental analyses (ETOAs) to meet FAA 118 and 119 requirements, and ADS 201 analysis for country strategic planning;
- Create, revise, and update project-level environmental screening forms and other supporting documentation as needed;
- Assist missions to draft environmental compliance sections of Annual Reports, identify and develop model TORs, contract specifications, RFP/RFA language to

- assist in building environmentally sound design principles into contract mechanisms and program design;
- Manage an environmental compliance electronic “community of practice” to provide technical and procedural updates;
 - Track host country environmental procedures and laws governing environmental compliance, and work to coordinate USAID policies with those of host country governments;
 - Provide updates on developments in host-country environmental legislation and procedures to community of practice through listserves or related information-sharing tools;

Environmental Capacity Building and Support Tools:

- Continue to support, refine and promulgate the USAID Environmental Guidelines and other technical information and documentation, responding to emerging needs;
- Assist in effectively to coordinate/communicate/complement work with other Agency Bureaus, regions and outside institutions concerned with the same/similar issues in Africa (and beyond)
- Consolidate/take advantage of experiences/lessons/techniques and procedures from other USAID regions.
- Organize and conduct environmental compliance training on a regular basis throughout the region, (in both English and French) in collaboration with Mission partners, Mission Environmental Officers, Title II cooperating sponsors, and environmental professionals from the public and private sectors;
- Implement periodic Training of Trainer workshops for environmentally sound design and application of USAID and host-country environmental compliance procedures;
- Contribute to an Africa-wide multi-donor EIA Professional Development Fellows Program;
- Prepare and update training and resource materials for above courses and for Mission and partners’ use;
- Conduct annual or biennial trainings for Mission Environment Officers (MEOs) to build capacity for drafting and monitoring environmental compliance documentation and to keep MEOs up to date on developments within the field of practice

Beyond Compliance to Sustainable Design and Implementation:

- Provide technical assistance and consultations to mainstream environmental considerations into USAID regional and bilateral programs in areas such as: trade and environment, sustainable enterprise development, compensation for environmental services, carbon sequestration, cleaner production, environmental certification, reduced impact logging, environmental management accounting, renewable energy, watershed management, community-based resource management and a variety of other innovations as demand arises;

- Organize environmental “State of the Art” (SOTAs) for USAID, implementing, private sector and host government partners on a variety of topics such as those described above;
- Support Regional Trade Competitiveness Hubs in mainstreaming environment;
- Support USAID-assisted enterprises to achieve superior environmental, health, safety and economic performance consistent with the “triple bottom line.”

Scope

As a preliminary step, this concept for a potential contracting mechanism (whether a Leaders with Associate (LWA), Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC), a Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA), etc.) is being presented to USAID missions within the Africa region to assess levels of interest and potential for commitment. However, no decision has yet been made as to the geographic or bureaucratic scope of this concept. If interest exists, it could become a global mechanism managed out of Washington, a bi-regional mechanism (e.g. LAC and AFR), or a regional/sub-regional mechanism to be managed out of one of the regional bureaus (e.g. Africa-wide managed out of REDSO, RCSA, WARP or AFR, or for the Eastern and Central, Western or Southern Africa regions alone).

REDSO is soliciting interest in such a mechanism since it is becoming clear that with changes in the Administration’s funding priorities, the need for both mainstreaming environmental issues and being legally compliant is becoming increasingly complicated. An expansion of new initiatives in agriculture, trade, HIV/AIDS and health, etc., are placing excessive demands on mission and regional staff. The Regional offices (REDSO, RCSA, WARP) would continue to provide many of the same core environmental services, but this mechanism would make it possible for missions to tackle the environmental challenges head-on, interactively with Regional staff to the extent feasible.

Request to Missions, Operating Units

Please indicate whether your mission would be willing to set-aside some environmental money to have such a mechanism available and at what levels. What types of activities would be most useful to you? Would you prefer a regional project, Africa-wide, bi-regional, global? When considering your responses, please think about the entire portfolio, what types of new designs are coming up, what good or bad experiences you have had being compliant, and integrating environmental considerations, when crafting new ISPs, implementation mechanisms, etc.

Next Steps

- Dialogue with COs and CTOs of pertinent existing mechanisms at Pillar and regional levels
- Feedback from interested potential stakeholders and investing Operating Units.
- Decision as to whether and how to proceed (decision target date: by ...).