

United States: Research Notebook for Colombia, Liberia and Sri Lanka

CATEGORY: COUNTRY STRATEGY

Q1. Does the US publish the country strategy paper for the recipient countries?

For each recipient country analyzed, research points to the existence of a document reflecting various components of a U.S. country strategy paper. Except for Nepal, no comprehensive strategy is made publicly available. These strategy papers are designed and negotiated with varying degrees of input from recipient governments, often after the initial design stage, to reflect key aspects of social and economic development priorities named by each country. However, the degree to which the U.S. truly reflects recipient government priorities is unclear.¹

Colombia: The USAID mission in Colombia produces the Mission Strategic Resource Plan (also a USAID-specific document).²

No Partially Yes

Liberia: There is a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (a USAID-specific document), although this is not publicly available.

No Partially Yes

Nepal: USAID publishes the country strategy paper for Nepal. The latest version is the Country Assistance Strategy 2009 – 2013.³

No Partially Yes

Sri Lanka: There is a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (a USAID-specific document). It has only recently been published⁴ but there are no plans to translate the document into the local languages, Tamil and Sinhala.⁵

No Partially Yes

Q2. What are the main modalities used in the US's operations in the recipient countries?

USAID's websites provides a broad overview over the types of assistance given to all countries.⁶ The most common modalities of development assistance are contracts, cooperative agreements and grants administered through US Agency for International Development (USAID) and through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).⁷ However, USAID does not provide information by country to explain which of these modalities are used.

¹ The U.S. was one of the co-chairs of the Economic Governance Steering Committee, together with the President of Liberia, that oversees the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP). This contributes to the development of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy which is cited as the core document for aligning with Liberia's national development strategy; Interview: Transparencia Por Colombia, January 2012.

² Interview: Jene Thomas, USAID official, 22 March 2012.

³ The Country Assistance Strategy 2009 – 2013 can be found at http://nepal.usaid.gov/attachments/184_Country%20Assistance%20Strategy%202009%20-%202013.pdf.

⁴ See: http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/policy_planning_and_learning/documents/CDCSSriLanka.pdf.

⁵ Interview: USAID officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁶ See: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/primer.html, Accessed on 16 October 2012 (site has been archived).

⁷ Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012; Interview: Catalina Ospina, USAID official, Bogota, Colombia, 20 January 2012; "Remarks by USAID Mission Director in Liberia at the MCC Threshold Grant signing ceremony," USAID Mission in Liberia, 6 July 2010, http://liberia.usaid.gov/stories_from_the_field/node/246, Accessed on

Based on field research in the four countries, it seems that contracts account for the dominant share of major development projects funded by USAID. These contracts are awarded competitively and almost exclusively to international non-governmental organizations or U.S. development contractors, though efforts are being made in some countries to award contracts to local organizations directly.⁸ Implementing organizations then enter into a binding implementation agreement, subsequently bound to comply with requirements for budgetary reporting and M&E protocols.⁹

Additional modalities include board participation in donor-managed trust or investment funds,¹⁰ debt relief¹¹, and technical cooperation¹² focused on a wide variety of issues from governance, environment, fiscal reform, economic development and human rights among others.

Colombia: U.S cooperation is channeled through different modalities: international organizations, U.S contractors, local NGOs and the Colombian government. Still, direct funding levels to the national government and local civil society are estimated to be 5% of the total value of cooperation provided to Colombia.¹³ In addition, modalities vary depending on the region in the country; for instance, if the project is developed in an urban or rural area.¹⁴

To improve the coordination between different US government agencies working in the country apart from USAID, the U.S is currently implementing the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). The initiative constitutes an inter-agency, “whole-of-government approach to providing U.S. assistance across the full spectrum of activities.”¹⁵

Liberia: The U.S. does not provide budget support to the Government of Liberia nor are its projects executed by the recipient government.¹⁶ For example, despite sitting on the boards and steering committees of several multi-donor trust funds, the U.S. does not channel its monies through any of these mechanisms.¹⁷ However, funding from the US to Liberia is determined sectorally from the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).¹⁸

Nepal: Normally, USAID does not provide cooperation via the Government of Nepal’s system for two reasons. Firstly, USAID cannot be sure that the money is not lost to corruption or invested effectively when giving directly to the government. Secondly, the government system tends to

16 October 2012. For an overview of the difference between contracts and grants, see:

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content/documents/AcquisitionvsAssistance.ppt>.

⁸ Interview: USAID officials, Colombo; Interview: Jene Thomas, USAID official, Bogota, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

⁹ Interview: USAID officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012; former senior official, External Resources Department (ERD), Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012. Save the Children, “Modernizing Foreign Assistance – Insight from the Field: Liberia,” (Washington, DC: Save the Children, October 2009), p. 12. http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/SC-Liberia_final.pdf.

¹⁰ Interview: Official from social investment fund underwritten by several donors, including the United States.

¹¹ Save the Children, “Modernizing Foreign Assistance – Insight from the Field: Liberia,” (Washington, DC: Save the Children, October 2009), p. 7. http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/SC-Liberia_final.pdf.

¹² “USAID Liberia Program Overview Briefer,” USAID Mission in Liberia,

<http://liberia.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID%20Liberia%20Program%20Overview%20Briefer.pdf>, Accessed on 16 October 2012. Ministry of Finance of Liberia, “Donor Fiscal Outturn Report – Quarter Two 2009/2010,” (Monrovia: Government of Liberia, 2010). <http://www.mof.gov.lr/doc/Quarter%20Two%20Narrative%20Final%20Final.pdf>.

¹³ Interview: Jene Thomas, USAID official, Bogota, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

¹⁴ Interview: Catalina Ospina, USAID official, Bogota, Colombia, 20 January 2012.

¹⁵ USAID, “Colombia: Foreign Assistance Program Overview,” *U.S. Congressional Budget Justification 2013, Foreign Operations, Annex: Regional Perspectives* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2012) p. 757. <http://transition.usaid.gov/performance/cbi/>.

¹⁶ Ministry of Finance of Liberia, “Donor Fiscal Outturn Report – Quarter Two 2009/2010,” (Monrovia: Government of Liberia, 2010). <http://www.mof.gov.lr/doc/Quarter%20Two%20Narrative%20Final%20Final.pdf>.

¹⁷ “Save the Children, “Modernizing Foreign Assistance – Insight from the Field: Liberia,” (Washington, DC: Save the Children, October 2009), p. 12. http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/SC-Liberia_final.pdf.

¹⁸ Republic of Liberia, ‘Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy’ (Monrovia: Government of Liberia, April 2008).

<http://emansion.gov.lr/doc/Final%20PRS.pdf>; Also see: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr1245.pdf>.

work more slowly than other channels. For a certain period of time, USAID used to only provide cooperation via the government system; however, due to a lack of accountability the approach was changed. Nowadays, USAID has attempted to move back towards increased cooperation with the government, while at the same time building up the system to make it more accountable and efficient.¹⁹ However, the precise modalities used in Nepal are not visible from the Country Assistance Strategy or the Homepage.

Sri Lanka: There are three main mechanisms used by USAID in Sri Lanka: contracts (given to international organizations and NGOs), cooperative agreements and grants.²⁰ Funds are not channeled through the local government but rather through implementing organizations: international or domestic companies. Although at the global level, USAID is actively evaluating the feasibility of host-country systems for channeling funds (as part of the USAID Forward agenda) in Sri Lanka's case in particular, channeling money through the government is not a reform that is actively pursued.²¹

Q3. Does the US have a policy/protocol on mutual accountability?

No Partially Yes

No formal protocols are publicly available that specifically address mutual accountability.²² However, the relationships are formalized by means of other legally binding documents with each government counterpart. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and ongoing deliberations shape the nature of how mutual accountability is addressed on a case-by-case basis.²³

Q4. How are mutual accountability protocols determined and upheld in recipient countries?

The United States subscribes to the consensus formed at Busan, Accra and the Paris Declaration, upholding that foreign aid and international cooperation should be characterized by mutual accountability. In theory, USAID's programs and projects proclaim alignment with recipient-country development strategies. In practice, U.S. policy and subsequent exercise of these principles varies by country.

As noted, there are no formal mutual accountability protocols in place for the four counties (see question 3). However, over the past few years, USAID has been integrating more principles of mutual accountability than had been previously the case in its negotiations with governments.²⁴ Still research suggests that these principles are not being fully reflected in current cooperation agreements (except in the case of Sri Lanka).

Colombia: U.S. assistance, with exception to military aid, is mostly channeled through the Colombian national agency for development cooperation (*Agencia Presidencial de la Cooperación Internacional* - APC). Still, standardized mutual accountability protocols are largely

¹⁹ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

²⁰ Interview: USAID officials, Colombo. A contract (acquisition/procurement) is concluded when the "principal purpose of the relationship is to acquire by purchase . . . property or services for the direct benefit of the Federal Government." Grants and cooperative agreements are used when the principal goals are "to transfer a thing of value" and "to carry out a public purpose of support or simulation," with the difference that a cooperative agreement involves a substantial degree of involvement by the donor and a grant does not. Georgia Hubert (Federal Assistance Director, U.S. Department of State), "Acquisition vs. Assistance: How Contracts Differ from Grants," Presentation, 23 October 2002, <http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content/documents/AcquisitionvsAssistance.ppt>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Responses to this and next question are based on interviews with USAID officials in Colombo, confirmed by desk research. The student team was not able to meet with the government counterpart, ERD, despite making numerous inquiries at various levels.

²³ Interview: Lee Mason, Acting Assistant Minister for Regional Planning, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Liberia, March 2012; John B. S. Davis, former Comptroller General, Ministry of Finance, Liberia, March 2012; Jene Thomas, USAID Colombia, 22 March 2012.

²⁴ Interview: APC, January 2012; Interview: Deputy Chief of Party, USAID Operator, Bogotá, Colombia, January 2012; Interview: PhD Candidate on Colombian International Cooperation, Universidad de Los Andes, January 2012.

absent. While there has been consolidation of cooperation under one agency's management, USAID tends to negotiate directly with individual ministries and other state institutions.²⁵

Liberia: Despite the existence of a bilateral agreement, mutual accountability does not appear to be practiced in reality.²⁶ Mutual accountability in this case appears to entail much greater leverage on part of the United States in pressuring Liberia to adhere to conditions agreed to in the bilateral agreement, while its reciprocal accountability to the recipient government lacks the same intensity.²⁷

Nepal: There is no clear approach towards mutual accountability. It differs slightly per sector, but there are no overall guidelines²⁸. This finding was confirmed by desk research that was not able to provide further information on mutual accountability protocols for USAID's operations in Nepal.²⁹ However, there are some channels that are in place that facilitate mutual accountability in practice. This includes Nepal's Aid Management Platform (AMP), which is an important step towards increased transparency and mutual accountability.

Sri Lanka: Mutual accountability protocols are established in a 'Bilateral Assistance Agreement'. Particular attention is given to upholding these protocols given the political sensitivities associated with post-conflict conditions in Sri Lanka, and the subsequent risks associated with alienating the Sri Lankan government from USAID's operations in the country.³⁰ USAID officials interviewed described having no formal processes of recourse or arbitration when problems arise.³¹

CATEGORY: AID POLICIES

Q5. Does the United States publish aid allocation policies and procedures?

No Partially Yes

Globally, USAID policy states: "USAID works in over 100 countries to: promote broadly shared economic prosperity; strengthen democracy and good governance; improve global health, food security, environmental sustainability and education; help societies prevent and recover from conflicts; and provide humanitarian assistance in the wake of natural and man-made disasters."³²

In addition, USAID claims that it supports programs that:

- Advance human rights and freedoms;
- Promote sustainable economic growth and reduce widespread poverty;
- Promote and support democratic, well-governed states;
- Increase access to quality education, combat disease, and improve public health;
- Respond to urgent humanitarian needs;
- Prevent and respond to conflict; and
- Address transnational threats.³³

²⁵ Interview: Jene Thomas, USAID official, Bogota, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

²⁶ Interview: Lee Mason, Acting Assistant Minister for Regional Planning, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs for Liberia, March 2012.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

²⁹ Sources consulted: USAID Nepal. *Overview.*, web site, <http://nepal.usaid.gov/about-us/overview.html>, Accessed on 16 October 2012; USAID, "About USAID", web site, http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid, Accessed on 16 October 2012, Ministry of Finance. Government of Nepal. "Development Cooperation Report". (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, March 2012). <http://www.mof.gov.np/files/DCR.pdf>.

³⁰ Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

³¹ Ibid.

³² See: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/, web site, Accessed on 16 October 2012. In addition, general information on each sector can be found at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/.

³³ See: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/dfa/, web site, Accessed on 16 October 2012.

In addition, an overview on where and in which sectors USAID is active can be found at USAID's homepage.³⁴ Priority areas also are often published on the USAID mission websites in each country, including general information on the sectors prioritized and an estimated amount of resources committed to each program area.³⁵

However, aid allocation policies and procedures that are specific to each recipient country are not publicly available. Rather, criteria for receiving funds is shared with recipient governments and outlined in individual project tenders.³⁶

Q6. Does the US use participatory mechanisms to involve local/national stakeholders?³⁷

In general, the U.S. incorporates at least some participatory mechanisms in each recipient country – a finding determined through a review of publicly available materials and confirmed through interviews.³⁸ USAID engages relevant local implementing partners, often by invitation, in soliciting input on existing projects, including NGOs, community-based organizations, the private sector and the media. In general, this engagement is generally limited to the projects' existing civil-society counterparts. Moreover, participation is often by invitation, rather than open avenues for ongoing participation³⁹. Recipient governments tend to have greater opportunity for participation than do civil society and non-government actors. The following documents participatory mechanisms by recipient country:

Still, none of the countries from the study could cite a formal stakeholder forum where general review and feedback could be discussed on existing projects.⁴⁰ Reasons given by various officials from USAID and counterpart governments included: difficulties of ensuring availability of translated materials in local languages (all countries), literacy constraints among stakeholder communities (Colombia)⁴¹, the weakened state of the civil society (Sri Lanka), and the culture of confidentiality and cautiousness with regard to project results in post-conflict countries (all countries).⁴²

Colombia:

According to USAID officials, there is a consultation process before, during and after the project is implemented. In addition to formal procedures, USAID carries out constant informal consultations with beneficiaries and local actors thus allowing adjustment to the implementation of the projects.⁴³ Non-USAID actors interviewed reported varying degrees of actual participation, only partially reflective of the emphasis on consistency mentioned above.

Government stakeholders: According to USAID officials, the Colombian Cooperation Agency (APC) is permanently engaged in the revision of USAID's programs/projects.⁴⁴ APC reported that while this engagement was improving, it could not be characterized as permanent.⁴⁵

³⁴ Information available at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/.

³⁵ "USAID, "Colombia: Foreign Assistance Program Overview," *U.S. Congressional Budget Justification 2013, Foreign Operations, Annex: Regional Perspectives* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2012) p. 757. <http://transition.usaid.gov/performance/cbj/>.

³⁶ Interview: Mr. Samuel Z. Joe, Unit Director, Aid Management Unit, Ministry of Finance of Liberia; Mr. James Kormon, former Assistant Minister for Economic Cooperation and Integration, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs of Liberia, March 2012

³⁷ In the Nepal study, the question reads: "Does (the development actor) use participatory mechanisms to involve local/national stakeholders in the formulation of its aid policy?"

³⁸ Interview: Catalina Ospina, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

³⁹ Interview: Imran Furkan, CEO, Sri Lanka Press Institute; Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Executive Director, Center for Policy Alternatives; Dinouk Colombage, Editor, the Sunday Leader newspaper.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Interview: Catalina Ospina, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

⁴² Interview: James Kormon, former Assistant Minister for Economic Cooperation and Integration, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs of Liberia, March 2012; ⁴² Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁴³ Interview: Edgar Muñoz Basta, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

⁴⁴ Interview: USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 22 March 2012; Interview: APC official, Bogotá, Colombia, January 2012.

Non-state stakeholders: U.S. assistance in Colombia is operated through government partners and contracting US companies or international organizations. Colombian non-governmental actors are only solicited for participation in the event that they are selected as sub-partners by contracting organizations or companies. Forums for participation among beneficiary populations are the intended goal, but do not always happen as such.⁴⁶

No Partially Yes

Liberia:

Government stakeholders: As a driving member of the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee (LRDC) Steering Committee, the U.S. has played a substantial role in providing overall policy guidance to the first several iterations of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).⁴⁷ The U.S. government draws on the PRS to inform its development strategies and priorities in Liberia.

Non-state stakeholders: With regard to non-state actors, public consultations for the PRS include two-day working sessions in each of Liberia's 15 counties during which local participants formulated their respective County Development Agendas (CDAs).⁴⁸ In theory, participation is solicited at the county and district levels, including meetings with traditional leaders, legislative members, farmers and business people, women and children, etc.⁴⁹ However, the speedy nature of these public consultations limits de facto participation.⁵⁰

No Partially Yes

Nepal:

Government stakeholder: The US's main partner is the government of Nepal. All negotiations and consultations take place with the various sector ministries and the ministry of finance. Agreements with the ministry of finance establish the sectors that USAID will be working in as well as the amount of funding planned to be provided to each of those sectors. These agreements are amended each year as projects are developed and annual spending amounts are determined.⁵¹

Non-state stakeholders: Consultations with local stakeholders occur when specific projects under the bilateral agreements are developed. There is no formal mechanism to involve non-state stakeholders.⁵²

No Partially Yes

Sri Lanka:

Government stakeholders: Strategic and budgetary documents governing U.S. activities require approval from every stakeholder: the Department of National Planning, the External Resource Department (ERD) and any relevant line ministries. The negotiations are often intensive, approaching a "line-edit" of development planning or agreement documents by all relevant actors from both governments.⁵³ Implementation of projects is then undertaken in regular communication with the Sri Lankan government counterpart (ERD), with USAID reporting on budgets and performance benchmarks on a monthly and quarterly basis.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Interview: APC official, Bogotá, Colombia, January 2012

⁴⁶ Interview: Edgar Muñoz Basta, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 22 March 2012.

⁴⁷ IMF, "Poverty Reduction Strategy, Republic of Liberia" (Washington, DC: IMF, July 2008), p. 43, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr08219.pdf>.

⁴⁸ IMF, "Poverty Reduction Strategy, Republic of Liberia" (Washington, DC: IMF, July 2008), p. 45, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr08219.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Interview: Ms. Korto Williams, Country Director, Action Aid Liberia, March 2012

⁵¹ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

⁵² Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

⁵³ Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁵⁴ Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

Non-state stakeholders: Both planning and evaluation stages involve soliciting input from the representatives of local community-based organizations, civil society and businesses. The engagement of non-state stakeholders, however, appears to be limited to a given project's existing or potential beneficiaries.⁵⁵

No Partially Yes

Q6a. Do recipient governments use participatory mechanisms to involve local/national stakeholders?⁵⁶

Colombia: Through the National Cooperation System, the APC tries to involve municipal and departmental governments in the decision-process regarding how cooperation is used.⁵⁷ APC tries to identify one representative at the departmental and municipal level with the objective of compiling information related to regionally determined needs and priorities. In reality, coordination is more likely to take place with departments and municipalities that already have greater expertise in dealing with international cooperation.

No Partially Yes

Liberia: Since the PRSP is used as the framework for channeling cooperation, its preparation becomes a means for broader stakeholder engagement to determine local demands and involve communities in policy decisions. The process is led by the minister of finance, and includes a core team comprised by other ministers and parts of government.⁵⁸ The core team also receives inputs from the Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC).⁵⁹ Moreover, each county has a County Development Officer (representing the ministry of planning and economic affairs) whose job is to work together with each respective superintendent (appointed by the president).⁶⁰

With respect to non-state actors, the answer is largely the same as that given for donors' engagement with civil society. At present citizens at large and the media still have very limited access to public data⁶¹ although there is a *Freedom of Information Act*.⁶²

No Partially Yes

Nepal: Nepal's last official aid policy was completed in 2002.⁶³ Over the last five years, the country has started on process of revising it, which provides insights into how the government is using participatory mechanisms to shape decisions on development cooperation.⁶⁴ According to interviews with a Ministry of Finance official from Nepal,⁶⁵ drafts of this policy have been circulated and discussed among various stakeholders, including civil society organizations as well as media, research institutes, universities and NGOs. The engagement of NGOs and businesses is particularly seen as necessary because the government is not able to cover all areas and

⁵⁵ Interview: Saman Kelegama, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka; Imran Furkan, CEO, Sri Lanka Press Institute; Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Executive Director, Center for Policy Alternatives; Dinouk Colombage, Editor, the Sunday Leader newspaper, March 2012.

⁵⁶ In the Nepal study, the question reads: "Within the institutional framework, which participatory mechanisms have been put in place to involve the parliament, local government and/or non-state stakeholders in the formulation of (the development actor's) aid policy?"

⁵⁷ Interview: Carolina Hernandez, APC, Bogotá, Colombia, 14 March 2012.

⁵⁸ It involves the ministers of planning and economic affairs, public works, defense, the national coordinator of the LRDC Secretariat, the director general of the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) as well as chairs of the six crosscutting working groups. Based on interview with Mr. Lee Mason, Acting Assistant Minister for Regional Planning, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs for Liberia, March 2012

⁵⁹ The SCC consists of representatives from working groups, civil society, the private sector, development partners, official from the counties, the Legislature and the Judiciary. Based on interview with Mr. Lee Mason, Acting Assistant Minister for Regional Planning, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs for Liberia, March 2012.

⁶⁰ Interview: Mr. James Afif Jaber, County Development Office of Margibi County, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs for Liberia, March 2012.

⁶¹ Interview: Mr. Lamii Kpargoi, Program Director, Liberia Media Center, March 2012.

⁶² Interview: Mr. Lamii Kpargoi, Program Director, Liberia Media Center, March 2012.

⁶³ See: <http://www.mof.gov.np/files/foreignaid.pdf>.

⁶⁴ The latest publicly available version (2009) is at: <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/Country/Nepal/Nepal-Draft-National-Aid-Policy.html>.

⁶⁵ Interview: Nepalese official, MOF, Kathmandu, Nepal, January 2012.

delivery points for the plan. In the consultation, local governments have also been included (parliament committees, political parties).

No Partially Yes

Sri Lanka: The Department of National Planning engages a wide range of government counterparts in conceptualizing and further outlines the priorities of national development. Line ministries and agencies are engaged in an ongoing dialogue on how to align activities of development-cooperation partners and with the *Mahinda Chintana*, the national development strategy. The government has no formal consultation mechanisms with civil society players or other stakeholders⁶⁶ and has been perceived of viewing NGO work negatively.⁶⁷ There is no *Right to Information* law in Sri Lanka, severely limiting data access for citizens and the media.⁶⁸

No Partially Yes

CATEGORY: BUDGETARY PLANNING

Q7. How much total development cooperation was effectively disbursed in calendar year 2011 for the recipient countries?⁶⁹

The United States constitutes one of the biggest, if not the biggest, provider of cooperation to Colombia, Liberia and Nepal.⁷⁰ This is in sharp contrast to Sri Lanka, where the U.S. share of funding has gradually declined to a level that makes it one of the less significant donors.

The websites of the USAID Missions in each recipient country make publicly available a list of projects sub-categorized by theme or strategic objective.⁷¹ These details do not include non-USAID funded activities. Information that is not publicly available generally includes budgets and specific breakdown of indicators and targets. Some of these details can be identified through additional online research,⁷² though no comprehensive portal or database exists with this information relevant to Colombia, Liberia, Nepal or Sri Lanka.

There is additional information listed in the USAID-centered portal, the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) and ForeignAssistance.gov; interactive archives of USAID spending, progress, data and regional statistics extending back several decades. Accessing real-time, or projected information on recipient country-specific, or sub-country sector specific information is not a function of this database.⁷³

⁶⁶ Interview: Imran Furkan, Director, Sri Lanka Press Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁶⁷ Interviews with NGO representatives indicated that the sector is currently viewed in the overall negative light as many think tanks have voiced criticism of the government policy. Interviews with: Imran Furkan, CEO, Sri Lanka Press Institute; Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Executive Director, Center for Policy Alternatives, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁶⁸ Interviews with: Imran Furkan, CEO, Sri Lanka Press Institute; Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Executive Director, Center for Policy Alternatives; Dinouk Colombage, Editor, the Sunday Leader newspaper, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁶⁹ In the Nepal study, the question reads: "How much total aid was effectively disbursed in calendar year 2010? Which percentage was tied/untied?"

⁷⁰ "Aid Statistics, Recipient Aid Charts," OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD-DAC), OECD, figures for Colombia, Liberia and Nepal.

⁷¹ "Programs," USAID Mission in Sri Lanka, http://srilanka.usaid.gov/programme_east_intro.php?prog_id=7. USAID Mission in Liberia web pages: "Economic Growth Overview," <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/18>; "Health Program Overview," <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/19>; "Education Program Overview," <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/20>; "Democracy and Governance Overview," <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/21>; "Crosscutting Issues," <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/88>; "Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Country Program," <http://liberia.usaid.gov/MCC>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

⁷² The Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) database serves as a source of details on some of the projects, by making publicly available project reports, but it is not a comprehensive collection of every project and every report recently published. "Development Experience Clearinghouse," USAID, <http://dec.usaid.gov>.

⁷³ The question of disclosure in conflict-sensitive areas appears to be a very proactive, rather than passive, decision. In Sri Lanka in particular and in some parts of Colombia, publicizing details on budgets and targets raises the risk of triggering sensitivities related to socio-ethnic tensions. In certain cases, such as when assistance takes the form of urgent humanitarian aid, there are additional concerns for the safety of project implementers and counterparts. Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, March 2012. Interview: Deputy Chief of Party, USAID operator, January 2012.

Publicly available information of the total cooperation disbursed by the United States for the calendar year 2011 is not available for all recipients. Some figures reported here represent disbursements for the fiscal year 2010.

Colombia: Data on the country is from 2010. In this year, the US provided US\$ 424 million in cooperation against a commitment of US \$659.8 million.⁷⁴ Still it is believed that these figures are on average nearly 50 percent less than what Colombia may see through its official aid agency. For example, disbursements may be enacted through regional bodies or missions⁷⁵, or bypass government entities entirely.⁷⁶

Liberia: Based on the OECD/DAC credit reporting system, the United States disbursed US\$ 131 million in total ODA for 2010 against a commitment of US\$ 237.9 million.⁷⁷

Nepal: According to USAID's homepage, about US\$ 58 million were disbursed in 2010⁷⁸. The total ODA flows to Nepal in 2010 amounted to US\$ 52 million⁷⁹, showing a slight divergence from USAID's numbers. For fiscal year 2010/2011, the numbers from Nepal's Development Cooperation Report state that the US provided US\$ 48.5 million for FY 2010-11 (or about US\$ 10 million less than what USAID reported).⁸⁰ Nepal is the only country where 2011 data is available. With Nepal's Aid Management Platform it will be possible to report more precise numbers and to avoid divergences among the systems.

Sri Lanka: The only figures available for the US are from 2010 and are provided through the OECD/DAC. In this year, gross disbursements to Sri Lanka were US\$ 54.9 million.⁸¹ Since the US is a small donor to Sri Lanka, the country does not report its flows in its annual cooperation report.

Q8. Does the US publish forward planning budget or documents for the institutions they fund in the recipient countries for the next three years?⁸²

No Partially Yes

Overall, documents covering a three-year period are not publicly available for any of the countries in the study. Part of the reason is that changes in U.S. foreign aid allocations are enacted with changes in the U.S. Congress, occurring as frequently as every two years.⁸³

What exists are publicly accessible documents that pertain to annual budget projections, though not official budget forecasts. The U.S. Congressional Budget Justification is the most relevant resource for identifying budget planning for recipient countries for the following fiscal year.⁸⁴ In hindsight, the actual amounts disbursed are often quite different from the numbers projected (as evidenced from question 8).

⁷⁴ See "gross disbursements" for Colombia: <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

⁷⁵ Aid disbursements to Sri Lanka are sometimes channeled through the USAID Mission in Thailand, which oversees regional initiatives, many of which have small sub-budgets for Sri Lanka.

⁷⁶ Interview: Mr. Samuel Z. Joe, Unit Director, Aid Management Unit, Ministry of Finance of Liberia, March 2012

⁷⁷ OECD, Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Development Database on Aid Activities, "Recipient: Liberia," "Flow type: gross disbursements," and "Type of aid: all types, total." <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

⁷⁸ See: <http://nepal.usaid.gov/about-us/overview/budget.html>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

⁷⁹ See: <http://nepal.usaid.gov/about-us/overview.html>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Finance. Government of Nepal. Development Cooperation Report. Fiscal Year 2010-11. (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, March 2012).

⁸¹ Sri Lanka; OECD, Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Development Database on Aid Activities, "Recipient: Sri Lanka," "Flow type: gross disbursement," and "Type of aid: all types, total." Accessed on 15 October 2012.

⁸² For this question in Nepal, the phrasing was "Does US publish the total development budget for the next three years, as submitted to parliament?"

⁸³ Interview: Transparencia por Colombia, January 2012.

⁸⁴ USAID, "Colombia: Foreign Assistance Program Overview," U.S. Congressional Budget Justification 2013, Foreign Operations, Annex: Regional Perspectives (Washington, DC: USAID, 2012). Colombia, Liberia and Sri Lanka. <http://transition.usaid.gov/performance/cbj/>.

There is a budget document that is negotiated and agreed upon annually by the United States and each recipient government.

Colombia: The main planning document had been *Plan Colombia*, a USAID-driven strategy, which has evolved in recent years as the Colombian government plays a more substantial role in co-determining the country strategy.⁸⁵ The US also supports another long-term planning document, the National Consolidation Plan. But despite this long-term political commitment, the annual assignment of resources is subjected to Congress approval.⁸⁶

Nepal: The government of Nepal is informed, but a full US multi-year budget is not published at the country level⁸⁷. The budget for the current fiscal year (2012) is published on USAID Nepal's homepage⁸⁸; information on the budget further in the future cannot be found.

Liberia: There is no publicly available forward planning document. The PRSP is used by USAID to set funding plans as the strategy paper has strategic objectives (which run for 3-5 year periods).⁸⁹ Based on interviews, USAID reportedly has a multi-year forward planning document that is publicly available but it could not be found through web-based research.⁹⁰

Sri Lanka: The main planning document is the Bilateral Assistance Agreement (a USAID-specific document) but this is not publicly available.⁹¹ The document is reviewed, negotiated, and countersigned by Sri Lankan counterparts (esp. Department of National Planning and ERD) on an annual basis.⁹² The agreement subsequently serves as the framework for channeling funds.

CATEGORY: MONITORING & EVALUATION

Q9. Does the US monitor and evaluate the implementation of operations?⁹³

No

Partially

Yes

General guidelines for USAID monitoring state: "Monitoring is a critical piece of USAID's performance management process. During the planning process, USAID Missions and Offices are responsible for establishing Performance Management Plans. These include indicators and ambitious, optimistic, and achievable performance targets to measure progress toward achieving intended objectives."⁹⁴

According to USAID representatives in each recipient country, the agency carries out M&E processes through a wide set of methodologies (participatory approach, impact evaluation, process evaluation, per-review, independent evaluation and randomized control trials).⁹⁵ Other stakeholders familiar with the M&E practices of USAID presented varying views of the regular and effective use of these methodologies. This is explained, in part, by the fact that new M&E

⁸⁵ Interview: APC official, Bogotá, Colombia, January 2012.

⁸⁶ Interview: Diego Garcia, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 20 January 2012.

⁸⁷ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

⁸⁸ See: <http://nepal.usaid.gov/about-us/overview/budget.html>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

⁸⁹ Interview: Ms. Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012.

⁹⁰ It was expressed by a USAID official in Liberia that documents of this sort are available online, but subsequent online searches reveal this is not accurate. Interview: Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID Liberia official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012.

⁹¹ This document is not made publicly available. Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ In the questionnaire for Nepal, this read: "Does US monitor the implementation of operations?"

⁹⁴ See: <http://www.usaid.gov/performance/agency-performance/index.html>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

⁹⁵ Interview: Jene Thomas, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, March 2012; Interview: Ms. Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012; Interview: Diego Garcia, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, , 20 January 2012.

approaches contrast with those previously used, whereby operators and contractors had independently conducted their own evaluation.⁹⁶

At present, it is the goal for evaluations to take place both at the midpoint of a project and upon project completion. These evaluations are generally conducted by companies or actors external to USAID. USAID missions are gradually unrolling new M&E mechanisms, starting with the largest and most recently launched projects. Project-level evaluations, in particular, are growing more rigorous.⁹⁷

The U.S. generally does not engage government counterparts directly in conducting evaluations, but regularly shares M&E results once evaluations are complete (as well as upon request). Results with regard to project progress are then incorporated into the discussion of country strategy and project portfolio for subsequent years. The results of these reviews may or may not be made public.⁹⁸

Colombia: Larger projects now undergo more complex M&E methods including the use of randomized control trials.⁹⁹ It was further cited in Colombia that USAID has assigned 5 to 15% of the project's budget for M&E purposes.¹⁰⁰

Liberia: The U.S. monitors and evaluates the implementation of operations at project level, especially for large projects and pilot or innovative development interventions.¹⁰¹ In most cases, an independent evaluator carries out evaluations.¹⁰² Selected evaluation reports are publically available.¹⁰³ The website page for the USAID Mission in Liberia includes a section on "*Studies and Assessments*" that confirms this statement.¹⁰⁴ Some reports are not made public, however, due to the sensitive nature and the language used within the report.¹⁰⁵

Nepal: USAID program managers and financial officers do the actual day-to-day monitoring of the programs. These program managers conduct multiple site visits and meet with the implementing partners (the contractors and grantees) bi-monthly/monthly to get progress updates on implementation. All programs are required to submit quarterly program and financial reports. USAID's program managers, along with the implementers, also sit on the various working groups led by the government to discuss overall implementation by all actors in the respective sectors. Additionally, each implementer is required to conduct baseline, midline, and end of project surveys to determine impact and results, and to inform the program and change course midway as appropriate. USAID also conducts independent mid-term and end of project evaluations to determine progress, impact and results.¹⁰⁶ Evaluations of programmes can be found on USAID Nepal's homepage.¹⁰⁷

Sri Lanka: As part of a reform agenda, the USAID Mission is facing new reporting requirements from DC headquarters. In particular USAID is rolling out new performance and impact evaluations

⁹⁶ Interview: Lee Mason, Acting Assistant Minister for Regional Planning, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Liberia, March 2012; John B. S. Davis, former Comptroller General, Ministry of Finance of Liberia, March 2012; Interview: Imran Furkan, CEO, Sri Lanka Press Institute; Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Executive Director, Center for Policy Alternatives; Dinouk Colombage, Editor, the Sunday Leader newspaper.

⁹⁷ Interviews with: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012; Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID Liberia official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012.

⁹⁸ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012; Interview: APC, January 2012.

⁹⁹ Interview: Catalina Ospina, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 20 January 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ USAID, "USAID Evaluation Policy: Learning from Experience," (Washington, DC: USAID, January 2011).

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/220mab.pdf>

¹⁰² Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID Liberia official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012.

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ "Studies and Assessment," USAID Mission in Liberia, <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/17>

¹⁰⁵ Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID Liberia official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

¹⁰⁷ See: <http://nepal.usaid.gov/downloads/all-downloads/category/16-evaluation-reports.html>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

which entail a much more rigorous/scientific evaluations process.¹⁰⁸ One newly initiated project, Biz+, has become the first to undergo this process in Sri Lanka. Government counterparts (ERD) are not actively involved in conducting evaluations, though all results, successes and shortfalls are taken into account at the annual discussions of the Bilateral Assistance Framework. However, there are no country-wide evaluation practices in place or pipeline for sharing information.¹⁰⁹

Q10. Does the US publish the evaluations of its aid programs in recipient countries?¹¹⁰

No Partially Yes

Interviewees in all three countries indicated that some, but not all, evaluation reports are made publicly available online. Select evaluation reports are publicly available on the DEC database, though the collection is incomplete¹¹¹. USAID officials interviewed in Liberia and Sri Lanka indicated that some reports are not made publicly available due to the sensitive nature of projects in conflict-affected areas.¹¹² The USAID Mission in Liberia makes reports publicly available online on its website.¹¹³ In Nepal, interviewees indicated that the audit reports should be published on USAID Nepal's homepage but only a selection of these is provided.¹¹⁴

In none of the countries were reports made uniformly available for every ongoing or recently completed project. There are indications that ongoing USAID reforms will require that every evaluation be uploaded to the DEC.¹¹⁵

Reports that are made publicly available are published in their entirety, but they are not generally translated into local languages.

Q11. How are disagreements dealt with between the U.S. and recipient countries?

There were no clear protocols for resolving disagreements in any of the recipient countries. Disagreements seem to be first addressed in the course of regular communication with Government counterparts, and commonly require the involvement of higher-level USAID officials. The degree of symmetry in each relationship varies greatly among the four countries:

Colombia: Interviewees and desk research revealed that there was no protocol for dealing with disputes. Depending on the existence disagreements and the unsatisfactory results of the cooperation projects, the projects can be closed.¹¹⁶

Liberia: Officials from the Liberian government who were interviewed noted that disagreements generally are resolved.¹¹⁷ According to them, there has never been a case where disagreement

¹⁰⁸ See for example : USAID, "USAID Evaluation Policy: Year One," (Washington, DC: USAID, February 2012).

<http://transition.usaid.gov/evaluation/USAIDEvaluationPolicy-YearOne.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

¹¹⁰ In the Nepal study, the question reads: "Does (the development actor) publish its annual audit of its aid programs in Nepal?"

¹¹¹ Search results for "Colombia," "Liberia," and "Sri Lanka," Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), <http://dec.usaid.gov/index.cfm>.

¹¹² Louise Fahnbulleh, USAID Liberia official, Monrovia, Liberia, March 2012; Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

¹¹³ "Studies and Assessment," USAID Mission in Liberia, <http://liberia.usaid.gov/node/17>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

¹¹⁴ Retrieved on June 2, 2012, from <http://nepal.usaid.gov/our-work/evaluation-reports.html>.

¹¹⁵ Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.

¹¹⁶ Interview: Catalina Ospina, USAID official, Bogotá, Colombia, 20 January 2012.

¹¹⁷ Interview: Sylvester Grigsby, Deputy Minister for International Cooperation and Economic Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Liberia, March 2012.

could not be resolved bilaterally.¹¹⁸ This maybe be because considerable effort is made during the negotiation phase of the bilateral agreement to extensively review the proposed clauses.¹¹⁹

Nepal: According to US representatives, there are no real disagreements. For this reasons there is no clear procedure on how to handle such a problem. USAID Nepal tries to negotiate and to solve any disagreements.¹²⁰ Desk research was also not able to find guidelines on conflict management¹²¹.

Sri Lanka: USAID officials reported having less leverage than their government counterparts, due in part to USAID's relatively small assistance budget on the overall donor presence there, describing cases where project implementation was restrained or blocked altogether.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Interview: US officials in Nepal, January 2012.

¹²¹ See: http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/ and <http://nepal.usaid.gov/>. Accessed on 16 October 2012.

¹²² A recent example is the discontinuation of the Land Administration and Property Protection program, where progress lagged due in part to the lack of active governmental support. Interview: USAID Sri Lanka officials, Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 2012.