



## Proposed USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS)

InterAction and our members know the challenges associated with food security and helping people feed themselves and build more resilient communities. **The NGO partners at InterAction work to educate Congress and the public on USG global food security policy and programs, from the Farm Bill to USAID's Feed the Future Initiative.** To build on this expertise and experience, USAID consulted the NGO community at InterAction throughout the Transformation process. As partners, implementers, and educators of humanitarian and development assistance, InterAction and our members understand the critical role agriculture, nutrition, water, and health play in fighting poverty worldwide. **Through USAID Transformation, a more holistic approach to emergency and critical food security programs has the potential to increase program sustainability and expand effectiveness.**

### Proposed Bureau Overview:

**The proposed Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) is designed to address the cycle of chronic vulnerability, extreme poverty, and hunger driven by recurrent shocks and stresses.** Lead by an Assistant to the Administrator (AtA), the new Bureau will combine resources and expertise from the current Bureau for Food Security with the water and sanitation as well as climate adaptation functions from the existing Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment. **RFS will also be the focal point for agency-wide leadership councils on nutrition, resilience, and water and sanitation.** It will house four sector centers, the Centers for Water Security, Sanitation, and Hygiene; Nutrition; Agricultural-led Growth; and Resilience to serve as strategic technical resources for USAID Missions and the Agency. The RFS Bureau, along with the new Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Prevention and Stabilization Bureau, will report to the new Associate Administrator for Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3). This structure aims to better connect and integrate programs across the humanitarian and development spectrum and develop strategic approaches that accelerate country progress on the journey to self-reliance.

### Identified Areas of Increased Effectiveness and Coordination:

- **Bridging humanitarian and development food security efforts.** The growing pressure of addressing or resolving issues such as refugees and internally displaced people, extreme weather, and prolonged conflict need thoughtful programs which develop sustainable agriculture and access to food sources during crises and improve the pathways that lift people out of poverty.
- **Centers provide multi-sector knowledge and advice.** More and more evidence confirms building long-term food security requires a multi-year, multi-sectoral approach. The inclusion of the Centers for Water Security, Sanitation, and Hygiene and Nutrition is designed to promote this cross-sector engagement. Connecting water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition through the lens of resilience can also provide new opportunities to leverage and further efforts to better health systems, alleviate poverty, strengthen market supply systems, and promote good governance and environmental resilience.

- **Implementing more holistic food security programs.** As food security is both a short- and long-term issue, connecting sectors, such as WASH and humanitarian efforts, prioritizes the need to craft sustainable approaches.

### Areas for Further Consultation or Continued Questions:

- **Clarification on the management of cross-cutting organizational structures and sectors.** Little is known about the leadership and governance of the Centers and Leadership Councils and how they will effectively deliver support for missions and direct, implement, monitor, and evaluate the results of the sectors they oversee. USAID should formalize the policy, planning, and decision-making components of the centers, and leadership councils.
- **Related sectors need critical cross-bureau links.** Recognizing the key role that hygiene and nutrition play in development and health programs, the Center on Nutrition and the Center for Water Security, Sanitation, and Hygiene must be clearly linked to the Global Health Bureau. This will ensure better integration of hygiene and nutrition programs and outcomes for poverty alleviation, health and nutrition.
- **Retaining priorities in a multi-sectoral bureau.** Resilience and food security are multi-sectoral issues that engage cross-cutting programs and require a diversity of responses throughout the agency and regions. Nutrition, WASH, climate and the environment, and agricultural research are related issues, but each has distinct aspects that cannot be overlooked. As the RFS Bureau will be engaging in a variety of issues simultaneously, vital aspects of these sectors must maintain priority and connections to other sectors, like gender or global health.
- **Clearly define resilience and engage local governments in resilience efforts.** Resilience is an amorphous term with varying interpretations depending on the perspective and type of program; the bureau should evaluate what resilience means for USAID as a whole and the distinct sectors that it covers. To ensure resilience frameworks are effective and sustainable, gender, climate, and environmental expertise as well as input from local governments and stakeholders must continue to be key elements of resilience work. Further, resilience efforts must work in humanitarian and post-conflict settings where communities are often prone to backsliding into poverty.
- **Clearly connect with humanitarian food assistance.** Food security is both a short- and a long-term need; restructuring must not lose sight of the unique but connected aspects of humanitarian and development food security programs. RFS must clearly articulate its vision to address food systems and continue to focus on sustainable structures and value chains. Particularly, it must define and connect work addressing Food for Peace and Feed the Future initiatives which address global food needs in different, yet related, ways.
- **Build upon existing strategies.** Existing agency strategies should not be forgotten, instead they should be augmented or updated to best incorporate new agency structures. Integrating effective strategies, like the Global Food Security Strategy, the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, and Global Water Strategy, will build a secure foundation for RFS as it addresses systemic food security challenges.