

Information Collection Request Supporting Statement: USAID COVID-19 Implementation Plan

PART A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The United States Agency for International (USAID) is a global leader in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In January 2021, President Biden released an *Executive Order on Organizing And Mobilizing The United States Government To Provide A Unified And Effective Response To Combat COVID-19 And To Provide United States Leadership On Global Health And Security*, and the *National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness*. Goal 7 of the National Strategy, Restore U.S. leadership globally and build better preparedness for future threats, underlines President Biden's *National Security Memorandum on United States Global Leadership to Strengthen the International COVID-19 Response and to Advance Global Health Security and Biological Preparedness*. The National Strategy prioritizes actions to strengthen the United States' humanitarian response to COVID-19, and mitigate second-order impacts of the pandemic on health, the economy, international development, and diversity, equity and inclusion. On July 1, 2021, the White House released the *U.S. COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework*, which includes five objectives. In response to this Framework, USAID has developed an agency-specific Implementation Plan. This Implementation Plan outlines lines of effort for each of the five objectives in the Framework, reflecting USAID's unique mandate, capacities, value added, and expertise in contribution to the goal of ending the pandemic and building back better.

As USAID prepares to roll out the Implementation Plan with Missions worldwide, the USAID COVID-19 Task Force and other USAID technical offices seek to support USAID Missions and partners as they respond to the daunting, life-saving challenges they currently face and identify priority approaches for reversing backsliding on key health, development, and economic growth metrics that has resulted from the pandemic.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

USAID now desires to receive input on the Implementation Plan and its lines of effort in order to determine priority actions in a complex operating environment. In addition to seeking input from USAID Missions and Interagency partners, USAID proposes to seek input from experts in the fields of global health security and health systems strengthening, gender equality and inclusive

development, humanitarian response, economic growth and development, and private sector engagement.

This expert input, combined with global monitoring and surveillance of COVID-19 and its health and economic impacts, and with situation analyses received from countries worldwide, will improve the quality of USAID's urgent responses to the pandemic.

The information collected would be used by the USAID COVID-19 Task Force and technical bureaus to improve the technical assistance, global leadership, and guidance USAID provides to implementing partners, the InterAgency, and Missions globally. This will enable more focused, efficient, and effective coordination and implementation of the USAID Implementation Plan. Examples of use of similar information from past similar information collections undertaken by USAID include guidance documents on technical issues, alignment with national plans and strategies, or incorporation of key issues in Country Development Cooperation Strategies. Some documents produced using information collected through this proposed process may be made available to the public.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

This input would be sought through seven listening sessions: two sessions each on global health security and health systems strengthening, and economic and development impacts of the pandemic, and one session each on gender equality and inclusive development, humanitarian response, and private sector engagement. No automated or electronic input, such as via a survey or online form, will be sought. All input will be received orally.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in item 2 above.

The information USAID seeks to collect cannot be sufficiently obtained through other means, and is not duplicative with other approaches, because the partners who will be invited to participate have a unique combination of technical expertise, global reach, and knowledge of USAID's policies, processes, strategies and investment approaches; and because the information requested will be specific to the USAID Implementation Plan, which is a new agency-specific Federal action.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Each listening session would include 10-15 individual participants. Some participants may represent small entities. However, in order to minimize burden, each participant will be requested to contribute only one hour of time to this information collection with no written feedback or reporting required in order to minimize burden. Additionally, all provision of information will be voluntary, allowing small entities to determine the impact of the time burden USAID is requesting.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing the burden.

The supporting materials USAID intends to produce incorporating feedback from this information collection will assist USAID Missions and interagency, inter-governmental and implementing partners in prioritizing their actions to advance the five objectives of the U.S. COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework. As a result, USAID investments will be more responsive to global and local trends, less duplicative with those of other partners, and more effective in ending the pandemic and building back better. This, in turn, will contribute to a more successful whole-of-U.S.-government effort to bring about an end to the COVID-19 pandemic and support rapid economic and social recovery.

Absent this information, USAID's immediate and intermediate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic may be less impactful, duplicative with other donor investments, or poorly responsive to local trends. This would potentially result in inefficient use of taxpayer dollars, failure to accomplish the goals laid out in President Biden's *Executive Order on Organizing And Mobilizing The United States Government To Provide A Unified And Effective Response To Combat COVID-19 And To Provide United States Leadership On Global Health And Security* and *National Security Memorandum on United States Global Leadership to Strengthen the International COVID-19 Response and to Advance Global Health Security and Biological Preparedness*, or in prolonging the pandemic and its second-order impacts.

Further, delays in operationalizing USAID's COVID-19 Implementation Plan could slow down or otherwise impact President Biden's commitment to provide 500 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to country worldwide, by reducing the efficiency of USAID's efforts to ensure readiness of health systems and health workforces worldwide, and of efforts to raise awareness of the benefits of vaccines and combat mis- and dis-information ahead of the launch of vaccines campaigns. As variants of the SARS-CoV2 virus continue to develop, with increased transmissibility, USAID's leadership in global vaccination efforts becomes ever more pressing.

The varied potential risks highlighted above could, in turn, extend the public health and economic burden of the pandemic on Americans, requiring further Federal Government response.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
- Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
- Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
- Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than 3 years;
- In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or that unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
- Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

N/A, this information collection will not collect information with any of the above-mentioned formats or criteria.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.

As required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), and consistent with OMB emergency processing of Information Collection Requests, USAID is submitting a Federal Register notice simultaneously to this ICR Submission Package in order to notify the public of this request.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

N/A, no payment or gifts will be provided.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

These listening sessions would request input from participants on specific questions related to relevant Objectives and lines of effort in USAID's Implementation Plan, designed to elicit feedback on trends the Implementation Plan may not have sufficiently considered, recommendations on the most impactful approaches to multi-sectoral objectives, and other operational considerations. USAID will request participant consent to take notes of the discussion, but will not collect or record any personally identifiable information.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

N/A, no questions of a sensitive nature will be asked of participants during this information collection.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

USAID anticipates that the seven sessions envisioned to take place in the first two weeks of August, 2021, will be held with ten to fifteen participants in each, totalling between 70 and 105 participants across the information collection. Each session will request one hour of participants' time, resulting in between 70 and 105 hours of burden.

USAID estimates that participants will have an approximate average hourly wage equivalent of \$45.00 per hour, the equivalent of approximately a \$90,000 annual salary. This results in a cost equivalent of between \$3,150.00 and \$4,725.00 over the course of the information collection intended to take place during the first two weeks of August, 2021.

USAID has requested approval of this information collection request until December, 2022, and for a total of 17 listening sessions. This would enable flexibility for further information collection on progress against the same topics after a period of implementation, reflection and learning on progress and challenges. Should USAID be approved to and elect to hold up to ten additional listening sessions as requested, in order to receive updated information during a rapidly changing pandemic, the total participants would be up to 250 individuals, representing 250 total hours annually. The estimated cost over the course of this longer information collection, using the same calculations as above, would thus be \$11,250.00.

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.

Respondents and record-keepers will face no cost burden other than labor costs provided above.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal Government.

There will be no costs associated with this Information Collection Request beyond normal labor costs for staff.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported on the burden worksheet.

N/A, this is a new information collection request.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The information received through this collection will not be published. However, it may inform content of COVID-19 related publications anticipated to be produced in 2021.

17. If you are seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

N/A

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.

N/A

PART B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

N/A. This information collection does not employ statistical methods.