Deputy Administrator Coleman's Participation in the Information Resilience Council Agency Kick-Off Meeting
[redacted]

CONTACTS:
Bureau leadership: DDI /AA: Karl Fickensher; [redacted]; **DRG/DAA Johnny Walsh**, [redacted]
Plus 1 or 2: Vera Zakem; [redacted]; Rosarie Tucci; Meral Karan; and Diana Parzik
Drafter: DRG Vera Zakem, [redacted], DRG/DRI Information Resilience Specialist, Diana J. Parzik, [redacted]
SCIF: [redacted]
Above contacts will be available to answer potential questions from the Principal 15 minutes prior to meeting.

CONTEXT:

Based on key findings during the May of 2022, DDI/DRG Mis/Dis/Mal-information (MDM) workshop, USAID's DRG Center is proposing that the Agency establish an Information Resilience Council (IR Council) (see full listing of findings in Tab 1). The intent of the IR Council is to convene and coordinate MDM related activities across the Agency. The purpose of the IR Council would be to bring greater focus, coherence, and effectiveness to the Agency's response to disinformation and related challenges. The IR Council's core lines of effort include that, first, it will provide guidance to the Agency for addressing MDM and promoting information resilience. Second, it will serve as a forum to discuss and optimize what we currently do on MDM, including programmatic investments, innovation and training, address operational and reputational risks, and strategic communications in adverse information environments. Third, it will strengthen external coordination with the interagency, the technology sector, Congress, implementing partners, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. This initial event will serve as the "soft launch" to a larger process that we hope Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IO) will join and dedicate staff time to.

USAID DESIRED OUTCOMES:

There are three desired outcomes for this initial kick-off meeting. First is to establish for AA-level leadership that addressing Mis/Dis/Mal-Information is a cross-cutting and immediate priority for USAID which requires a coherent whole-of-Agency response. Second is to outline USAID's current approach to addressing MDM, along with the five core lines of effort for this Council. Third is to "soft launch" the Information Resilience Council (IR Council) as the node for internal USAID coordination, leadership around this emerging space, and ask bureaus to identify at least one person who (with perhaps 20 percent of their time) can contribute to the Council's core work.

Participant List and Run-of-Show

You will chair this initial meeting with Vera Zakem. Following your opening remarks, Vera Zakem will outline USAID approach and LOEs. The list of confirmed participants will be annotated on the calendar invite.

AGENDA/ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

I. Opening Remarks (DA Coleman)

II. USAID's MDM lines of effort (LOE): (Vera Zakem)
- Discussion on USAID's approach/ Five LOEs and illustrative examples

III. Next steps for USAID to address MDM
- Organization and participation
- IR Council expectations/deliverables

IV. Due outs
- B/IO Asks

Key Discussion Points: (DA Coleman)

- Disinformation is an enormous threat, not just to Democracy, but also Development.

- Disinformation is cross-cutting and can affect all aspects of development, target our teams and projects, and undermine broader USG national security policy - whether that's our work in global health, humanitarian assistance, climate change, food security, or economic growth.

- We need to consider not just how to help our partner countries strengthen their information ecosystems, but also how to protect our own reputation, security, staff, and partners. Nearly a third of our Missions (see Tab 3) have self-reported that MDM is a moderate or high threat to their mission.

    - Just in the last two weeks, USAID has been the subject of a Russian Ministry of Defense disinformation campaign tying our Global Health work to U.S. military biolabs, the origins of COVID-19, and outbreaks of Monkeypox and African Swine Flu globally. This campaign has been picked up globally and we've received reports back from our Missions in Egypt, Serbia and Ethiopia about how these narratives are playing out locally.

    - [redacted]

- Disinformation has rapidly evolved in recent years with the use of technology and social media. Preventing, mitigating, and responding to these challenges requires new ways of work.

- We know many malign actors (especially the PRC and Kremlin) spend far more time and money purveying MDM than we do to counter it. But the U.S. government–and USAID–must enhance our response and invest the time and resources needed to build resilience against the weaponization of information.

- That's why I'm delighted to join you all today to kick off USAID's new whole-of-agency approach to countering MDM: the Information Resilience Council.

- I encourage you all to lean into this important new initiative and think critically and creatively about how to leverage USAID's comparative advantages in this space.

- USAID has been programming in the information resilience space for over thirty years–supporting the media sector or expanding access to information, and using innovative approaches by, with, and through local partners to reach targeted audiences. At least half of our Missions currently have programs in this space.

- To make the most of USAID's infrastructure and expertise, we need to consider how to enhance our response across each of our sectors and assess what tools are available beyond our traditional programming.

- How can we and our programming be more innovative, agile, and adaptive in addressing this threat? How do we support our Missions' strategic and crisis communications so they can prepare for, manage, and respond to MDM as effectively as possible?

- To that end, I believe it's critical for USAID to get "out front," and experiment with creative tools (like ad buys or infotainment) to target relevant populations as a way to address disinformation.

- I'm particularly excited about our upcoming pilot project with USAID/Kenya, where the mission will design an ad buy campaign to communicate what USAID is doing on food security and push back on disinformation from the PRC and the Kremlin on the global food crisis. I look forward to seeing the results of the food security pilot, as well as the new tools and ideas supported by the Information Resilience Council.

- Thank you all for joining today's kick-off meeting. I want to turn over to Vera and Johnny who can share with us the key elements of the Information Resilience Council that DDI/DRG has been thinking through.

Key Discussion Points: (Vera)

- Many of you or your teams participated in the MDM Retreat several weeks ago. Together we identified the gaps and challenges currently present in the Agency as we try to respond to this growing problem.

- Based on that process and consultations with the field, USAID has identified five proposed lines of effort (LOEs) that are required to address this space. These are suggestions for areas of focus for this new Council.

    - LOE 1. Enhance and expand USAID programmatic approaches and innovation to strengthen information resilience;
        - USAID does a lot of work in this space programmatically, but we need your help to fully

identify the full scope of our work that touches on this space.
    - Although we have some ideas of what we'd like to accomplish through this IR Council, one of the first agenda items that we'd like to prioritize is defining our work across the Agency on MDM, conduct a full scoping exercise and a gaps analysis, and attempt to reach a common operating picture.
    - We are currently in the process of setting up a series of interviews with Missions to identify gaps and challenges in the field, but welcome your support on this effort as well.

- LOE 2. Optimize our strategic communications to better address MDM risks;
    - How does the Agency respond upstream of a narrative that we know is coming and how do we better position ourselves to elevate these concerns? Should we consider a rapid response strategic communications mechanism, a red teaming capability or provide "pre-bunking" or crisis communications guidance to the field? How do we use creative tools like social media ad buys, infotainment, etc to communicate about our work as a way to address disinformation?

- LOE 3. Reduce operational risk to USAID Missions, staff and implementing partners and develop operational procedures to help Missions in managing this problem;
    - As mentioned, ⅓ of Missions have identified MDM as a threat but we don't really have a good baseline understanding of the threats and vulnerabilities - to not only our Missions, but our staff and implementing partners.
    - What central systems may be helpful to Missions, DOCs or our partners? For example, maybe we

should set up a "hotline" to report incidents to understand the scope of the problem and any emerging patterns, with at least some amount of capability residing in the IR Council to help address such incidents? Should there be training developed or operational guidance?

- LOE 4. Develop a coordination and outreach plan to include engagement with the USG interagency, Congress, technology sector (digital platforms and emerging technologies); and outreach to implementing partners and civil society;
  - We need new ideas and new partners in this space. And we need to allow our existing partners the opportunity to air their concerns around targeted disinformation campaigns (as well as cyber attacks). We are currently in the concept phase for developing a Community of Practice (CoP) with implementing partners and NGOs and kicking off an initial event in the first Quarter of Fiscal Year 23.
  - We probably should also use this Council to help us work more closely with our interagency counterparts, as each agency - notably DOD and State - have stood up its own capability to respond to this problem. We need to deconflict with their efforts, but also to cooperate and learn from each other.

- LOE 5: Stand up an ad hoc crisis response capability in order to respond to MDM challenges as they arise. While these workstreams have been identified as the general framework for USAID's approach to this space, the Agency is currently not institutionally organized or staffed in such a way to be managing, addressing and operationalizing the foreseeable solutions.

    - Lastly, we recognize that sometimes these challenges are ad hoc and need urgent attention. Should we build a capability to address urgent issues?

- I'd like to also offer some insight and some expectations for how we envision this Council to play out. We'd like to meet on a monthly basis at the AA or designee level. Perhaps more important than these senior-level check-ins, though, is to stand up a more technical-level working group that would manage the core lines of effort I identified above. We are asking for your support for such technical level participation.
- We are currently in the process of drafting an action memo for A/AID, as well as a draft Information Resilience Charter that will be forthcoming.
- Johnny - over to you on additional insights you'd like to offer.

As next steps, we have a few specific asks:

- Please identify a senior level POC (whether it's you or a DAA) to attend senior level meetings, and a portion of someone's time at the technical level who can participate in the working group to address these lines of effort and who can be responsible for identified deliverables.

- Please tell us what resonates (or doesn't) regarding these Lines of Effort, and what are your priority countries in your region? What would be your priorities for this Council and immediate needs?

- Once we have collectively affirmed the priorities, gaps and approaches, we will invariably need to figure out resourcing. As we are rapidly approaching the end of the Fiscal Year, there may be available fall out funds available we could put towards the efforts of this Council. Does your B/IO have existing mechanisms that may have funding or could receive funds to support this effort?

Attachments:

Tab 1 – A/AID MDM Info Memo
Tab 2 – Annotated Agenda
Tab 3 – Mission Submission Spotlight

[redacted] 9/10

Drafter: USAID/DRG/DRI Diana J. Parzik, dparzik@usaid.gov
Approved: DDI/A-AA: Karl Fickenscher *OK'd w/edits 8/18/2022*

Bureau Level Clearances	**Clearance Status**	**Date**
DDI/DAA: Johnny Walsh	Clear w/edits	8/18/2022
DDI/DRG/Dir: RTucci.	Clear w/ edits	8/17/2022
DDI/DRG: Vera Zakem	Clear with edits	8/17/2022
DDI/ DRG/ Dep Director: MBillera	Clear w/edits	8/17/2022
DDI/DRG/DRI:Meral Karan	Cleared with edits	8/17/2022
DDI/DRG/CSM: Lauren Kirby	Cleared w/edits	8/17/2022
ES: BBeiler	Clear w/ edits	8/18/2022
ES: JBernton	Info	8/18/2022
CoS	Info	8/18/2022

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INFORMATION MEMO FOR ADMINISTRATOR POWER

Date: **July 11, 2022**

From: **Johnny Walsh, DDI/DAA , DDI's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DDI/DRG)**

Subject: USAID Initial Response to Disinformation and Related Issues

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- DDI/DRG organized a full-day pan-USAID workshop on how we can better respond to misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (sometimes abbreviated at USAID as MDM). The exercise gathered roughly 50 participants, and reflected a shared judgment that MDM has become a pervasive problem for USAID, the broader U.S. government (USG), and the world. It poses significant risk to USAID and its staff, partners, and programs, especially in the field.
- Key takeaways from the workshop included a shared perception that we are not set up bureaucratically to programmatically or operationally respond well to MDM. Internally, we need to share information, clarify roles, and tighten our operations. Externally, we need more strategic and comprehensive partnerships with interagency leads on MDM, the technology sector, and academia, among others.
- Moving forward, DDI/DRG will shepherd a process to better define the problem, produce a framework document for our efforts moving forward, explore some form of intra-agency entity on MDM, and use these tactics to strengthen USAID's response to the needs identified above.

BACKGROUND:

On May 25th, DDI/DRG organized a strategic planning workshop with approximately 50 participants from each of the USAID Regional Bureaus, CPS, PPL, LPA, SEC, and DDI. Prior to the workshop, DDI/DRG conducted an Agency-wide survey to gather feedback from USAID/Washington and Missions, which solicited more than 100 responses. Below is a list of key takeaways from those consultations:

- **The need to share and learn from what different parts of the Agency are doing:** USAID requires Agency-wide guidance to address MDM. We need to systematically share information on our programmatic and operational work streams across the Agency (e.g. on security and reputational risk, strategic communications, cybersecurity, etc.). USAID has considerable tools to counter MDM, given its global presence, local

partnerships, and work across diverse sectors, but the Agency must take a more systematic approach to deploying those tools.

- **The need to clarify roles, responsibilities, and response mechanisms within USAID:** MDM is a whole-of-Agency problem, but roles, responsibilities, and response mechanisms are largely undefined — both within respective Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices (M/B/IOs) and Agency-wide. While some M/B/IOs (e.g. DRG, OTI, or GH) are tackling MDM through targeted programming and by measuring the MDM-related impact of their programs , other M/B/IOs are less intentionally engaged on MDM, and might benefit from institutional expertise on how MDM impacts their work and best practices to address it. The respective roles of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), Office of Security (SEC), Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub (ITR), Office of Acquisition, and Assistance (OAA) and others are also important to define in USAID's overall approach to combating MDM.

- **The need to assess our operations in order to respond to reputational and security risks:** Information theft and manipulation affects USAID's reputation and security as well as those of its staff and local partners. USAID has not adequately assessed reputational and security risks to USAID mission staff and implementing partners stemming from MDM campaigns, or the direct risks MDM may pose to its operations. USAID also lacks communication guidance on how to best prepare to respond to targeted MDM campaigns that affect its programs, staff, implementing partners, and civil society. Further, there is no information sharing or reporting mechanism between USAID missions and Washington Headquarters, creating gaps in information and awareness of threats that could help reduce operational risks. A solution would entail clarifying USAID's policies, organizational structures, training, resources, budget, contracting, and personnel to document these instances - and more importantly, to better respond.

- **The need to strengthen interagency coordination:** USAID could benefit from more intentional interagency coordination both in DC and in the field. USAID employees (leadership and working level) are not systematically made aware of or know how to deploy the tools available across the USG that may help them in their response to MDM. For example, the Global Engagement Center's (GEC) Insights Quantified (GEC-IQ) platform offers analysis and social media analytics tools to track MDM campaigns. Moving forward, USAID can better partner with the interagency in DC and in the field, and through NSC processes like the "information integrity and resilience" and "sensitive messaging" IPCs to strengthen the coordination. Our contribution will draw on our programs and localized knowledge; we can also revisit applicable lessons learned from the USG coordinating mechanisms for counterterrorism, countering violent extremism, and atrocity prevention.

- **The need for localized and contextual solutions to understand the information and media environment:** USAID's local knowledge and partnerships are a substantial comparative advantage. We are well positioned to fill gaps that the interagency and the tech sector often struggle to handle, especially by strengthening a society's resilience to disinformation before any specific campaign takes root. For example in Georgia, USAID

is implementing a one of a kind "whole-of-society" program to address disinformation and strengthening the resilience of the information environment at the local level by providing targeted trainings to media and civil society, and working with local data scientists, emerging technologists, religious figures, artists, and anthropologists addressing MDM.

- **The need to strengthen our relationship with the tech sector:** USAID should coordinate and expand partnerships with both established digital platforms and emerging technology firms, particularly with an eye to places where these companies lack significant local presence and operations to address MDM. Such partnerships could seek to strengthen the information environment by supporting independent media, digital literacy, and cyber hygiene training, as well as ways for local media, civil society, democratic host-government counterparts, our missions, and implementing partners to track, report and elevate MDM-related concerns more strategically and systematically.

- **The need to elevate USAID's focus and capacities related to the cybersecurity of programs:** There is growing evidence that insufficient cybersecurity contributes to the success of MDM campaigns directly harming our programs. In one recent instance, the Nicaraguan government launched a two-year disinformation campaign against a local civil society organization funded by USAID, to pave the way for a legal attack on the partner and the media sector at large (lawfare) that resulted in prison sentences of 9-13 years for members of the local CSO. These campaigns are spread by coordinated troll groups trained and funded by the government, as well as with technical support from third country malign governments. During that disinformation campaign, the government conducted cyberattacks on several media outlets that attempted to report on the government's disinformation campaign. These incidents and broader trends strongly indicate these types of attacks are more widespread and will continue to accelerate in pace, scale, and sophistication. This could create an existential threat to USAID's ability to ensure the security of local partners and to implement programs, especially in unstable or otherwise closing spaces.

Elements of a Stronger USAID Response

At the workshop and in subsequent discussions, the Agency B/IO and DRG representatives have identified several key things we as an Agency seek to accomplish en route to a more coordinated, integrated, potent USAID capability to address MDM.

- **Define the problem and our objectives.** We will agree upon a definition that captures the scope, scale, and distinctive challenge of disinformation at USAID. We will survey USAID's existing efforts on MDM, identify gaps and opportunities, and develop a manageable set of strategic objectives.

- **Develop an interim framework document.** This should address the challenge, provide guidance to USAID Missions and B/IOs, and propose a manageable number of strategic priorities on MDM, including identification of a few countries for cross-sector interventions.

- **Set up a USAID entity to lead on disinformation.** This requires further thought, but we are exploring a number of models for a Whole-of-Agency body to coordinate MDM efforts. Key to this effort will be the ability to bring (depending on the situation) senior leadership and working-level representatives from relevant regional and functional B/IOs across the Agency, who can give a portion of their time to this challenge, to ensure we get whole-of-agency, cross-sector representation. We envision this entity will be led by DRG, but initially, will not be a full-time standing body or have its own budget. We want to remain flexible as our needs to address this challenge evolve.
    - Even such an internal body is sensitive right now because of the recent backlash against DHS' "Disinformation Governance Board." To guard against any similar backlash (against what would be a very different enterprise from DHS'), we will work closely and transparently with the NSC, State, and others to ensure we are avoiding all foreseeable pitfalls.

- **Assess and Expand Programmatic Responses:** We will catalog existing programs that are addressing MDM, identify gaps and opportunities for innovation, and establish mechanisms to share best practices. From this exercise we will develop strategic objectives for USAID's overall programmatic response to this challenge.

- **Reform USAID Operations**: We will consult across the Agency, including with PPL, LPA, SEC, ITR Cybersecurity, and HCTM, to identify needed operational changes, such as best ways for the missions to respond to reputational, security risk, and employee resilience. From this exercise we will establish clear strategic communication guidelines, in collaboration with LPA. We will similarly identify MDM issues for our implementing partners, and how we can respond.

- **Strengthen External Partnerships:** We will solidify external relationships with the tech sector (social media and emerging technologies in Silicon Valley and in developing countries where we serve), implementing partners, NGOs, and local institutions to elevate and share MDM related challenges and best practices. One way that USAID can lead in this arena is to support the formation of locally led independent coordination bodies, inclusive of civil society, the tech sector, and relevant government stakeholders to elevate and prioritize concerns, promote accountability, and facilitate cooperation.

NEXT STEPS:

I have asked Vera Zakem, our newly-arrived Senior Advisor for Tech and Democracy and a broadly recognized expert on disinformation, to spearhead planning on this effort: defining the problem, developing an interim framework document, planning for a cross-Agency entity to lead on these issues, and mapping initial steps the Agency should take to begin reforming USAID operations and strengthen external partnerships. Other experts across USAID will support Vera, and we will work closely with interested bureaus at every turn. In the next month or two, we

will follow up with an Action Memo for your approval to launch some or all of these efforts in earnest.

Attachment:

- External views on the DHS disinformation governance board

CLEARANCE PAGE

Drafter: Vera Zakem, DDI/ DRG vzakem@usaid.gov and Diana Parzik: DDI/DRG/DRI dparzik@usaid.gov

Approved: DDI/DAA: LMarr for A-AA: KFickenscher 6/16/2022

Bureau Level Clearances	**Clearance Status**	**Date**
DDI/DRG: JWalsh	Clear	6/12/2022
CPS/AtA: RJenkins	Clear	6/15/2022
CPS/OTI/Dir: BBrown	Clear	6/14/2022
LPA/ Rebecca Chalif	Clear	6/6/2022
LPA/Lauren Shaw	Info only	6/8/2022
PPL/A-AtA: SWalter	Clear	6/8/2022
PPL/SPP: GYang	Clear	6/6/2022
EE/S. Maguire	INFO	6/9/2022
SEC: Brian McGill	Info Only	6/6/2022
DDI/DRG/Dir: RTucci	Clear w/edits	6/3/2022
DDI/DRG/Dep Dir: DBlack	Clear	6/8/2022
DDI/DRG/DRI: MKaran	Clear with edits	6/3/2022
DDI/DRG/CSM: MDouglas	Clear	6/3/2022
DDI/DDI/ITR/A-Dir: AContreras-Donello	Clear w/edits	6/8/2022
DDI/ITR: JO'Bryan	Info Only	6/8/2022
DDI/ITR/Dir: TJones	Info Only	6/8/2022
NST: Sophia Lalani	Clear w/edits	7/1/2022
ES: BBeiler	Clear	7/1/2022
ES: KWilliams	Clear	7/1/2022
ES: JBernton	Clear	7/5/2022
DCoS: SKorde	Clear	7/12/2022

DA Coleman's's Meeting with AAs and DRG on MDM
19, August 2022
Virtual

ANNOTATED AGENDA

I. **Issues for Discussion**

a. Sub-topic: Elevating Agency's Work on Mid/Dis/Malinformation for the Agency with the creation of the Information Resilience Council. Purpose of this meeting will be to go through the five core proposed lines of effort for the Council: programs, reputations / security risk, communications, coordination, ad hoc crisis response capability.

b. Sub-topic: Food Security Pilot in Kenya and the need for our missions to "get out front" with our communication by, with, and through partners as a way to address disinformation.

II. **Issues for Decision or Engagement**

a. Sub-topic: Initial asks to stand up the Council (Action Memo forthcoming). These include: identify senior level and technical POCs to attend executive and working group meetings; identify key priorities for B/IOs; identify potential mechanisms for resources.

Drafter: DDI/DRG Vera Zakem
Approved:

Bureau Level Clearances	**Clearance Status**	**Date**
DDI/DRG: JWalsh.	Info	8/16/22
DDI/DRG: RTucci	Clear	8/17/22
DDI/DRG/DRI: Mkaran	Clear	8/16/22

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mission Submission Spotlight

Mis/Dis/Mal-information Risks

Africa Bureau

Liberia	
Risk: If the space for civil society and media to operate becomes restrictive in the build up to the 2023 elections, then this will create challenges for achieving goals of civil society and media activities.	**Treatment(s):** USAID's Elections, Civil Society, and Media activities will continue to work with GOL stakeholders to uphold media freedom, and broaden the space for civil society to freely operate in the build up to the 2023 elections.
H	

Libya	
Risk: If the current uncertainty in the operating environment in Libya, characterized by inconsistent application of laws and regulations, visa and banking restrictions, and general harassment of implementing partners continues to rise, then the mission's ability to implement activities in Libya will be increasingly impaired and the mission may not be able to fully reach its objectives.	**Treatment(s):** * Open communication with partners. * Coordination with other donors. * Utilize diplomatic channels.
H	

Madagascar	
Risk: If the Mission does not appropriately monitor implementation of activities among its partners during the pre-election period, then there is a risk that activities can be co-opted to promote political parties, especially in rural and remote areas.	**Treatment(s):** Strengthen communication strategies and dissemination of regulations with the implementing partners, the DOC, and the PD section to prevent any forms of manipulation.
M	

Zimbabwe	
Risk: If the proliferation of negative news about the Mission remains, as well as the negative perception of sanctions by the Government of Zimbabwe and some sections of the public (as signified by the demonstrations outside the embassy),then the Mission's programs, staff and partners may lose credibility in the eyes of the public and may attract government censure. Recent arrests of human rights defenders is a case in point.	**Treatment(s):** USAID/Zimbabwe has developed and is implementing a communication strategy to highlight positive contributions and results in Zimbabwe; and to educate staff on media engagement. USAID also works with other donors and embassies to coordinate responses, so that no one organization is singled out.
If the safety of unit staff is not assured, they may be exposed to harm and reputational risk via the deliberate manipulation of news.	1. The Mission tries not to give life to fake news by not responding to it in any manner, neither confirming nor denying. 2. Ongoing meetings with the RSO and a coordinated training on these security related issues. Raising awareness of security protocols on dealing with protesters. AORs/CORs have also tested virtual meeting platforms that ensure constant touch with implementing partners to provide required guidance and monitoring of activities.
M	

Asia Bureau

Bangladesh	
Risk: Consistent with recent elections, if the upcoming 2023 national elections are marred by violence between political party supporters and GOB security entities before, during, and after the elections, then USAID and IP staff may be in danger and mission programs may not achieve their intended results.	**Treatment(s):** -
H	

Burma	
Risk: If USAID and IPs do not respond to regime information requests and follow laws, then their continued functions and operations may be in jeopardy, whereas USAID and IP interactions with the regime and programming results may be perceived as collaboration by regime opponents, or used by the regime for legimitization purposes.	**Treatment(s):** -USAID will communicate and message to a wide range of groups in-country to explain the efforts and intentions of the Mission and partners, plus mitigate potential negative effects -OPTIONAL: Engage in more public messaging about our programming while safeguarding sensitive information -USAID will develop and refine existing plans and guidelines on how it can best respond to regime requests for information in order to maintain its operations and that of IPs -USAID will analyze the risks associated with different levels and types of regime interactions, as well as how information made public outside of Myanmar may jeopardize programming and operations -USAID will encourage IPs to develop risk mitigation plans for potential criticism and fallout for any regime

	interactions (such as MOU renewal) that they must undertake to continue their functions.
If the military regime slows, blocks, controls or intensifies monitoring of internet usage, then the ability of the Mission and partners to function will be impaired, with increased surveillance risk for individuals and organizations.	-
H	

Cambodia	
Risk: If government harassment, surveillance, arrests and detentions of civil society activists and government opponents intensifies or remains the same and/or the RCG moves forward with implementation of the National Internet Gateway (NIG), then the security risks to USAID partner organizations which engage in collective civic action may increase, forcing the organizations to keep a low profile, reduce the scope of their activities, and refrain from actions aimed at holding government accountable, and other activities deemed overtly political.	**Treatment(s):** Through USAID assistance, partners will continue to employ organizational and digital security procedures and use secure and encrypted communications apps and virtual meetings platforms, while limiting the number and size of in-person gatherings to reduce their risk exposure. We will continue to monitor arrests and detentions and provide legal assistance to jailed activists. We will continue to monitor the situation with the NIG and support diplomatic messaging through the Embassy/Ambassador.
H	

Indonesia	
Risk: Democratic backsliding and shrinking space for civil society and free media, including the GOI attempting to pre-approve specific implementers for USAID programs.	**Treatment(s):** Continue to support civil society, Indonesian journalists, and free media through DRG and other programming. Continue to prioritize principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the design, management and staffing of our programs to maintain a diversity of viewpoints and voices. Weave messages of the sanctity of DEIA and democratic principles in Mission outreach, public materials, and remarks. With regard to GOI attempts to pre-approve implementers, explain that under U.S. law, the Government of Indonesia cannot pre-approve USAID implementers or the specific nature of our assistance for democracy and governance and human rights programs.
H	

Nepal	
Risk: If local organizations are awarded to implement USAID programs, then the GON and/or political parties may unduly influence and increase complaints - or create roadblocks within the government - compromising local organizations' ability to effectively implement and achieve intended results.	**Treatment(s):** Incorporate into the design of local awards opportunities to liaise with youth and other party leaders to build trust and be responsive to local government and CSO requests. Deliver briefings about USAID's competitive solicitation processes to local NGOs, political representatives, and the government. Promote local cooperation and coordination among CSOs and other local institutions. Establish parameters for engagement in design and implementation of G2G awards.

If USAID faces increased, unwarranted, and/or unproductive host government scrutiny of development programming (as reflected by Nepal's International Development Cooperation Policy), then USAID's operations and project implementation may suffer from the host government failing to abide by the terms of the bilateral assistance agreements.	The USG should be proactive with the evolving situation in Nepal in regards to the operating environment for development assistance. USAID should engage government ministries as appropriate to reinforce the terms of the bilateral agreements. As an alternative to excessive scrutiny of development assistance, USAID should promote alternative means to enhance visibility of programs including joint portfolio reviews and site visits. FO, PPD and RLO will work with the Ministry of Finance to streamline and simplify formal correspondence (e.g., RODs, ILs, etc.) to improve lead time on design and mitigate implementation delays due to GON concerns. USAID should consider supporting multi-donor financing agreements, where feasible.
H	

Bureau for Europe & Eurasia

Albania	
Risk: If malign influence spreads/continues then Albanian security, socio-economic, and political environment could be impacted.	**Treatment(s):** There are programming efforts in support of the accession to the EU.
M	

Armenia	
Risk: If Malign actors (foreign and domestic, many with links to Russia) continue to exercise disproportionate and oftentimes opaque influence over key sectors of the economy, media, and security services.	**Treatment(s):** Active involvement of USAID Mission leadership and working level staff with relevant GOAM counterparts. Continuous collaboration with private sector, civil society, watchdog organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. USAID/Armenia leadership and staff conduct regular meetings with key GOAM partners on policies and reforms. The mission is actively programming funds to address the issue.
H	

Azerbaijan	
Risk: Russian disinformation and malign influence can shape public opinion that may impact USAID programming. Also, recent war and Covid increased the disinformation stream coming from various sources including Iran.	**Treatment(s):** Continue to invest in Countering Malign Kremlin Influence and resiliency programming to counter Russian and other disinformation propaganda.
M	

Bosnia and Herzegovina	
Risk: If foreign malign influence is not countered our programmatic and policy efforts are jeopardized as well as BiH's Euro Atlantic integration.	**Treatment(s):** Maintain and enhance robust programming to counter malign influences, including increasing CMKI initiatives. Incorporate language in the program design stage to address malign influence and ensure current and future implementing partners understand the significance placed on this issue.
H	

Georgia	
Risk: If anti-Western disinformation targets programs, partners or beneficiaries that impact public trust in USAID and its programs, and/or cyber-attacks on government and non-government partners impact their ability to implement program objectives, then USAID programming could be disrupted.	**Treatment(s):** **1.** USAID will work with Georgian and international partners to develop a whole-of-society approach to countering disinformation and improve Georgia's ability to protect its information space. USAID will proactively share information about its programs with the government and the public through in-person meetings as well as through social media and traditional media, whenever available. **2.** USAID is working with partners to upgrade their hardware, software and cyber hygiene practices and protect themselves from future cyber attacks. This is accomplished through USAID/Georgia programming as well as tapping into USAID/Washington global mechanisms such as ISC, APEX and others.
H	

Kosovo	
Risk: The Kremlin Malign Influence (KMI) and other malign foreign actions in energy and cyber security may increase.	**Treatment(s):** USAID Kosovo is working on designing and implementing activities addressing KMI and other malign foreign influences.
H	

Kyrgyzstan	
Risk: If ongoing efforts by the Kyrgyz government and malign foreign actors to close civic space continue and find success, it will negatively impact the ability to achieve program objectives, particularly in the field of Democracy and Governance.	**Treatment(s):** The Mission has reoriented our existing civil society program to have an dedicated approach to maintaining civic space and our new media activity includes efforts to maintain core freedoms. The Mission will continue to monitor the situation and partner with government allies and civil society to seek to defend civic space and democratic institutions. The Mission will continue to urge the Embassy and USG high-level visitors to raise issues of civic space in high-level engagements with the Kyrgyz government.
H	

Moldova	
Risk: If Russia, China, and/or other malign actors continue to exert pressure and spread disinformation to confuse Moldovan citizens and weaken the Moldovan government, Mission objectives of helping the country on its EU trajectory may be impeded.	**Treatment(s):** The Mission is implementing programming to help Moldovans recognize disinformation from internal and external sources and improve availability of quality independent journalism.
Russia's malign influence, including: 1) Possible Russian invasion would lead to greater political, economic, and social instability in Moldova; USAID/Moldova's capacity to advance all Development Objectives may be impeded. 2) Russia will seek to maintain or increase its influence in Moldova including through Russian mass media, which could negatively impact attitudes toward the West, and in particular, the United States (and USAID).	USAID will continue to mitigate malign Kremlin influences across its entire portfolio. In line with USAID's CMKI and Clear Choice development frameworks, this includes strengthening economic ties and trade with the West, further instilling affinity for Western democratic values, countering disinformation from the Kremlin through an independent media, and building energy independence for Moldova away from Kremlin energy sources. Examples of how our approach will counter malign Kremlin influence include: Supporting a common vision of a united and cohesive Moldova with reduced ethnic and linguistic polarization Promoting a strong voice of the citizenry to demand a more transparent and effective government that is less susceptible to malign influences Reducing reliance on external malign, corrupt financial influences and improving domestic resource mobilization by enhancing financial viability of local organizations and actors Reducing the judicial system's vulnerability to Kremlin, Chinese, and related malign influences Mitigating malign influence in political processes and instilling more confidence in a democratic, Western-oriented model of governance Strengthening the ability of Moldovan markets to meet and comply with international standards and practices through improved regulatory implementation Improving trade facilitation and aligning trade-facilitating laws, procedures, and processes to enable implementation of the requirements of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement

	and the EU/Moldova Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement Promoting energy security against malign Kremlin influence will include facilitating integration with the European Network of Transmission System Operations (ENTSO-E); and increasing domestic power generation, diversifying Moldova's natural gas supply, and improving critical infrastructure protection Working with associations to improve their financial sustainability thereby making them less susceptible to malign financial influences Cultivating and leveraging local Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) talent skill-sets among youth, and retaining this talent in-country thereby reducing outmigration.
H	

North Macedonia	
Risk: If foreign malign influence from Beijing and the Kremlin is not countered it may stall or undermine achievement of CDCS Development Objectives, or even create backsliding.	**Treatment(s):** -
M	

Ukraine & Belarus	
Risk: Russia's malign influence, including its ongoing, full-scale invasion, could lead to greater political, economic, and social instability in Ukraine. This could result in USAID/Ukraine capacity to advance all Development Objectives. Further, Russia will seek to maintain or increase its malign influence in Belarus including through Russian mass media, which could negatively impact attitudes toward the West, and in particular, the United States (and USAID) and: The Lukashenka regime continues to periodically detain activists as well as civil society, media, business, and political organization leaders inside Belarus, some of whom are USAID partners. The regime regularly tries to block access to online media supported by USAID. To intimidate Belarusians from visiting social media channels of USAID partners, the regime has labeled many of these organizations as "extremist", which means subscribers or those found with these materials on their electronic devices can be jailed.	**Treatment(s):** Russia initiated a full scale invasion on February 24, 2022. The Mission, USG and international community are engaged in far reaching, across-the-board support to Ukraine in the face of Russia's aggression. The mission successfully evacuated US staff and provided personal safety training opportunities, and financial support to FSNs inside and outside of Ukraine. Monitoring of Russian influence and media programming continues. Belarus will continue to monitor and work to ensure independent media and civil society in and out of Belarus can operate.
H	

Serbia	
Risk: If disinformation campaigns intensify or if risks of cyber attacks increase for USAID or partners, programs may be compromised.	**Treatment(s):** Monitor cyber and media dynamics with interagency at post. Review trends as needed with Mission senior staff and adapt programming and operations as appropriate. Consider providing cyber hygiene training for IPs and USAID staff, based on post assessment of risk.
M	

Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Brazil	
Risk: If the various crises in Brazil draw USG attention from achieving DOAG goals without allocating additional staff time towards the new objectives, then it will become increasingly difficult for USAID/Brazil to achieve the stated Development Objectives. For example, Global Health Security, COVID Pandemic response, and Countering Chinese Influence, each have presented significant inflows of funds and placed management burden on existing staff. If this continues, USAID/Brazil will have a difficult time achieving either the stated or the special objectives.	**Treatment(s):** USAID/Brazil will engage regional support from USAID/Peru and Washington including technical assistance, activity management, mechanisms options for implementation of GHSI, COVID-19, and CCIF funding. While ensuring that the awards are handled outside of Brazil Mission helps alleviate the concerns, there is still significant pressure placed on our staff for these purposes. USAID/Brazil will continue to pursue such support from creative sources within the Agency, including technical assistance through UTRAMS. The Mission does not have programmatic funding for these purposes due to a strong biodiversity earmark, and therefore, staff that focus on these endeavors must be OE funded to meet these needs.OU also is facing Office space limitation due to the NEC, OU only have 2 office, 8 cubs and 2 files space, the assigned space cannot support the current workforce of 02 USDH, 10 FSNs and 01 EFMs, plus 01 C3 (assigned to OU and should arrive by Dec22).
H	

Nicaragua	
Risk: If USAID staff cannot adequately perform their responsibilities, due to GON's intimidation and the hostile operating environment (including leaked personal information and information regarding specific activities), then the safety of USAID staff will be compromised.	**Treatment(s):** **1.** Continue to involve the Regional Security Office (RSO) and LAC SEC team, where appropriate. **2.** Continue using the Emergency telephone cascade system. **3.** The Mission and RLO will continue to liaise with GC and DOJ regarding any possible diplomatic protections and possible legal resources for Staff where available. (See also Treatment for risks 1 and 2) **4.** Maintain staff informed about available Staff

	Care Services aimed at boosting resilience and morale. All members of the USAID and their family members can access professional counseling services through the Staff Care Service Center.
H	

Middle East Bureau

West Bank & Gaza	
Risk: If the Palestinian people resist the MEPPA/BREB programs due to normalization perception and/or the PA resists these programs since it doesn't directly benefit from these programs, then the Mission may experience significantly less participation from the Palestinian people which makes it difficult to fully achieve the MEPPA goal.	**Treatment(s):** The Mission will continue to 1) expand its outreach to target a wider audience and new Palestinian partners, 2) work to change the perception about MEPPA as a tool to promote peace and prosperity for Palestinians, and 3) assign an in-house Subject Matter Expert (SME) to work with potential implementing partner/s during the co-creation phase to improve the quality of the proposal and enhance the program's impact.
M	

Full Count:

AFGHANISTAN	
ALBANIA	☑
ANGOLA	
ARMENIA	☑
AZERBAIJAN	☑
BANGLADESH	☑
BELARUS	
BENIN	
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	☑
BOTSWANA	
BRAZIL	☑
BURMA	☑
BURUNDI	
CAMBODIA	☑
CAUCASUS	
CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS	
COLOMBIA	
Djibouti	
DOM REPUBLIC	
DROC	
TIMOR-LESTE (former East Timor)	
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN	
Ecuador	
EGYPT	
ELSALVADOR	
ETHIOPIA	
Georgia	☑
GHANA	
GUATEMALA	
GUINEA	
HAITI	
HONDURAS	
INDIA	
INDONESIA	☑

IRAQ	
JAMAICA	
JORDAN	
KENYA	
KOSOVO	☑
KYRGYZSTAN	☑
LAOS	
LEBANON	
LESOTHO	
LIBERIA	☑
LIBYA	☑
NORTH MACEDONIA	☑
MADAGASCAR	☑
MALAWI	
MALI	
MERP	
MEXICO	
MOLDOVA	☑
MOROCCO	
MOZAMBIQUE	
NAMIBIA	
NEPAL	☑
NICARAGUA	☑
NIGER	
NIGERIA	
PAKISTAN	
PARAGUAY	
PERU	
PHILIPPINES	
RDMA BANGKOK	
RWANDA	
SENEGAL	
SERBIA	☑
SIERRA LEONE	
SOMALIA	
SOUTH AFR REG	

SOUTH SUDAN	
SRI LANKA	
SUDAN	
SWAZILAND	
TANZANIA	
TUNISIA	
UGANDA	
UKRAINE	☑
VIETNAM	
W.BANKGAZA	☑
WEST AFR	
YEMEN	
ZAMBIA	
ZIMBABWE	☑

Breakdown

Home Bureau	% of Missions Reporting Mis/Dis/Mal Information Risks
AFR	15.4%
ASIA	38.5%
E&E	91.7%
LAC	14.3%
ME	10.0%
Total Risks Submitted	27
Total High Risks	19
Total Medium Risks	8
% of Total Missions	27.4%

Country Heat-Map



Missions which submitted a mis/dis/mal information risk captured in this report.