

USAID Climate Change and Development Strategy

“...the threat from climate change is serious, it is urgent, and it is growing. Our generation’s response to this challenge will be judged by history, for if we fail to meet it—boldly, swiftly, and together—we risk consigning future generations to an irreversible catastrophe.”

President Obama, United Nations Summit on Climate Change, September 22, 2009



A USAID-supported program trains youth in Brazil to install solar panels.

BACKGROUND

Climate change is among the greatest challenges to sustainable economic development. USAID is addressing this challenge by recognizing both its severity and the opportunities it presents to spur innovation and encourage investments that will deliver long-lasting environmental and development benefits. As USAID helps countries build resilience to climate change impacts and move towards a “low-carbon” economic growth pathway, people around the world can benefit from a more stable and prosperous future, including expansion of the green economy and new markets for clean technology. Failure to meet this challenge could jeopardize many of the development gains the international community and the U.S. government have worked for decades to secure. The Climate Change and Development Strategy provide a strategic framework for USAID to address these challenges and opportunities.

GOAL

The goal of USAID’s Climate and Development Strategy is to enable **countries to accelerate their transition to climate resilient, low emissions development** to promote sustainable economic growth.

Climate Change Challenges and Opportunities

- *Increasing resilience to climate change.* Some 2.5 billion people depend directly on climate-sensitive economic activities such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and tourism for their livelihoods. Climate change impacts, in the form of rising temperatures, increasingly variable rainfall, stronger storms, and sea level rise, are likely to undermine these livelihoods and threaten food security and public health, especially in the developing countries where USAID works. USAID, by helping countries increase their capacity to withstand and bounce back from climate change impacts, plays a vital role in preserving economic opportunities and ensuring access to food and health services in spite of a changing climate.
- *Promoting low emission economic development.* According to the International Energy Agency, in 2008 greenhouse gas emissions from developing countries exceeded those from developed countries for the first time. Over the next 30 years, more than 90 percent of projected growth in global energy demand will come from developing countries. Investing in low emission development that leapfrogs traditional carbon-intensive energy sources and supports clean, efficient energy solutions benefits both the environment and global economic growth and helps create new markets for U.S. technologies.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

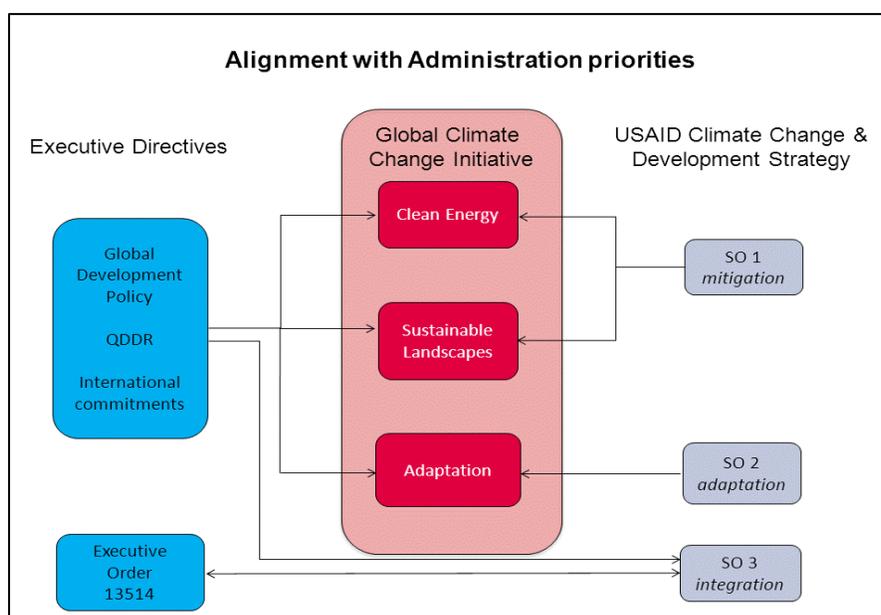
Guided by the Strategy, USAID is adopting two complementary approaches to climate change. First, we will invest in dedicated programming to tackle the risks and opportunities presented by climate change through efforts that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Second, we will integrate climate change into core development programs to foster climate resilience and lower emission approaches to development.

USAID’s Climate Change and Development Strategy will pursue three strategic objectives (SOs):

1. Accelerate the transition to low emission development through investments in clean energy and sustainable landscapes for climate change mitigation;
2. Increase resilience of people, places, and livelihoods through investments in climate change adaptation; and
3. Strengthen development outcomes by integrating climate change in USAID programming, learning, policy dialogues, and operations.

POLICY CONTEXT

USAID’s Climate Change and Development Strategy is guided by the larger domestic and international policy context, including Administration policy as developed in the President’s Global Development Policy, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), *USAID Forward*, the USAID Policy Framework 2011-2015, the Global Climate Change Initiative, and Executive Order 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*.



The Strategy also contributes to meeting the U.S. Government’s international climate change commitments, including Fast Start Financing, a U.S. pledge to join other developed countries to provide funding for adaptation and mitigation approaching \$30 billion between 2010 and 2012.

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIC VISION

The strategy includes a roadmap for implementation that identifies priority countries for adaptation and mitigation investment, and describes six key areas of focus for climate change integration efforts under the leadership of USAID’s Global Climate Change Coordinator. The long-term vision is that by the end of the Strategy period in 2016, USAID will be in a stronger position to program the next generation of climate change funds according to best practices, based on lessons learned from Strategy implementation, and to consider climate change more fully in the design and implementation of its broader development portfolio.

“...together, we have the power to create the world we seek if we have the courage to embrace the opportunity and the willingness to do things differently.”

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, Center for Global Development, January 19, 2011