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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



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COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY (CDCS)

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ACRONYM LIST

| | |
|--------|---|
| ART | Antiretroviral Treatment |
| ARV | Antiretroviral |
| C-TIP | Counter-Trafficking in Persons |
| CBSI | Caribbean Basin Security Initiative |
| CDCS | Country Development Cooperative Strategy |
| CLA | Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting |
| CLM | Community-led Monitoring |
| CMM | Conflict Mitigation and Management |
| CWT | Combating Wildlife Trafficking |
| CRD | Consejo Regional de Desarrollo |
| DR | Dominican Republic |
| DRM | Domestic Resource Mobilization |
| DO | Development Objective |
| F/GBV | Family/Gender-based Violence |
| FBO | Faith-based Organization |
| FC | Focus Clients |
| FSR | Financing Self-Reliance |
| FTA | Fiscal Transparency and Accountability |
| GBV | Gender-based Violence |
| GODR | Government of the Dominican Republic |
| IDEC | Iniciativa Dominicana para una Educación de Calidad |
| IR | Intermediate Result |
| J2SR | Journey to Self-Reliance |
| KP | Key Population |
| MARN | Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning |
| MEPyD | Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo |
| MINERD | Ministerio de Educación de la República Dominicana |
| MMA | Marine Managed Area |
| MMD | Multi-Month Dispensing |
| MSP | Ministerio de Salud Pública |
| NDS | National Development Strategy |
| NPI | New Partnership Initiative |
| PES | Payment for Ecosystem Services |
| PFM | Public Financial Management |
| PIRS | Performance Indicator Reference Sheet |
| PLHIV | People Living with HIV |
| PMP | Performance Management Plan |
| PPP | Public-Private Partnership |
| PPR | Performance Plan and Report |

| | |
|------|--|
| PSE | Private Sector Engagement |
| RDR | Redefining our Relationship |
| SEED | Sustainable Environmental and Economic Development |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprise |
| SNS | Servicio Nacional de Salud |
| TIP | Trafficking in Persons |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene |
| YES | Youth, Education, and Security |

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Dominican Republic (DR) 2020-2025 Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCS) is to promote a more secure and inclusively prosperous Dominican Republic that advances local and transboundary resilience.

As one of the United States' closest neighbors, prosperity and security in the Dominican Republic directly impact the United States. Reflecting close economic, diplomatic, and social ties, the USAID/Dominican Republic CDCS advances America's strategic priorities and secures the foundation for the Dominican Republic to lead its own development. This strategy's focus on improving wellbeing for the most vulnerable and building local and national capacities that drive commitment for responsive governance supports national security initiatives related to crime and violence; illicit trade in narcotics, wildlife, and persons; health and infectious disease control; countering malign actors; and market-based development. USAID's work to enhance citizen-responsive governance, strengthen essential service systems, and improve community resilience and wellbeing promotes the CDCS Goal of a more secure and inclusively prosperous Dominican Republic that advances local and transboundary resilience.

Analysis of Country Roadmap metrics for the Dominican Republic indicates higher Capacity than Commitment and an overall average standing within its regional grouping. Capacity metrics highlight robust macroeconomic growth and achievements in measured poverty, yet the Dominican Republic exhibits continuing deficiencies in education quality and a persistent decline in safety and security. In Commitment, the Dominican Republic exhibits a steady decline in liberal democracy and social group equality that ranks among the lowest globally. Taken together, the Roadmap paints a picture of a country where many have not benefited from macro-level prosperity, government institutions could better support human and environmental wellbeing, and personal safety remains the top concern for Dominicans.

Religion and ethnic minorities are important features of Dominican society and culture. Eighty-eight percent of the Dominican population identifies as Christian (including Catholic), 11 percent are unaffiliated, and all other religions make up approximately 1 percent of the population. The Government of the Dominican Republic imposes almost no restrictions on religious freedom, and religion is a large component of social life in the Dominican Republic. However, the Haitian and Haitian-descent ethnic minority population that comprises approximately 7.5 percent of the total population of the Dominican Republic experiences social, economic, and institutional discrimination that drives the country's low social group equality. Across the Mission's portfolio, activities that will address issues of governance and human rights, access to quality public services, and mobilizing community resources.

Developed as part of a consultative process with the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR), private sector, and civil society, this strategy represents USAID's commitment to employing its comparative advantage over the next five years to help the Dominican Republic overcome constraints that limit progress and create the capacities and incentives that advance the journey to self-reliance. Still grappling with the adverse effects of COVID-19, this strategy nonetheless comes into effect at an opportune moment when new perspectives can facilitate pivotal reforms and the experience of a global shock demonstrates the need to develop institutions and services that support secure, inclusive, and

resilient prosperity. Through this CDCS, USAID advances a future where, driven by local structures and resources, Dominican youth develop productive and valued human capital, Haitian-descent populations in the Dominican Republic take part in shared growth, local efforts achieve HIV epidemic control, crime and security becomes a secondary concern for Dominicans, and public trust in GODR institutions rises.

Effective institutions form the foundation of self-reliance, and DOI will help the GODR develop the capacity to deepen citizen-responsive governance. Investments in data-centered, evidence-based decision making, targeted improvements to sectoral legal frameworks, PEPFAR-driven alignment to global health and HIV standards, and interventions aimed at effective policy implementation boost capacities that catalyze GODR commitment to transparent and accountable state institutions. This will be coupled with strategic partnerships with media and civil society, the private sector, and Caribbean regional entities to ensure consistent and effective demand for improved education, citizen security, human rights, health, water and sanitation, energy, and environmental conservation.

In conjunction with governance efforts, USAID investments in DO2 will build the capacity to deliver high quality and inclusive essential services via well-functioning decentralized systems. Viewing service delivery as integrated systems that involve government, private sector, community, and civil society stakeholders, activities in DO2 are designed to promote health and work-readiness for Dominicans, resilient and reliable energy infrastructure, and a professionalized justice sector that practices equal treatment under the law. These activities prioritize access to quality services for vulnerable populations and robust service provision to targeted areas, including the population along the Dominican Republic-Haiti border region, women and youth, people with disabilities, LGBTI persons, and the HIV+ population, noting also the compounded challenges associated with the intersectionality of multiple vulnerabilities. In strengthening service systems, USAID will actively seek private sector partners to co-create and co-implement initiatives that support service systems, identify market-based solutions to environmental challenges, and strengthen Dominican networks that reduce opportunities for malign actors.

During consultations, Mission staff and private sector participants were asked to identify the characteristics they would like to see more developed in the Dominican Republic, and the results were consistent and powerful: sense of community, civility, harmony, empowerment. DO3 brings together the Mission's work that promotes community wellbeing, accounts for vulnerable and underserved populations, and helps build community-level resilience to shocks. Grounded in locally-led development, DO3 emphasizes building the capacities of local organizations to promote positive youth development, crime and violence prevention, and psycho-social and family health. Activities in DO3 will also employ locally-led and Dominican Republic-Haiti transboundary approaches to limit the adverse impacts of environmental and economic threats and will fortify communities through local and transboundary conflict mitigation and management along the Dominican Republic-Haiti border. Local organizations -- government, private sector, media, civil society, community and faith-based organizations -- will play key roles in advancing PEPFAR's community-led monitoring approach, community resilience and wellbeing, and USAID will build the capacities of local organizations to effectively engage in locally-led and locally-owned development.

Genuine self-reliance is not created in isolation, and USAID will foster innovative, robust, and impactful partnerships across the landscape of development stakeholders. During implementation of the CDCS, USAID/Dominican Republic will ensure that the Mission-wide effort to diversify its partner base is central to the design and implementation of the strategy. USAID's redefined relationship with the GODR is driven by a focus on building internal capacities to make and implement decisions with transparency

and accountability that motivates commitment to citizen-responsive governance. This also means working with GODR entities to harmonize local-to-national linkages to strengthen decentralized service networks and better elevate the needs of vulnerable communities. This CDCS also takes a new approach with regard to private sector engagement, integrating the private sector as development stakeholders, partnering to identify challenges and create, fund, and implement market-based and sustainable solutions. These private sector collaborations will leverage skills and resources to complement USAID's comparative advantages and achieve lasting impact in health and HIV, environment, water and sanitation, energy, education, and crime and violence. The Mission's consultations also revealed opportunities to engage and co-create with new and underutilized partners. Indeed, many local NGOs, civil society, and faith-based organizations have the roots, credibility, and expertise to deepen USAID's impact and carry forward locally-led and locally-owned development. While work with new and underutilized partners will require investment to build the managerial and administrative capacities of local and transboundary organizations, this work is pivotal to building grassroots self-reliance. Implementation of the CDCS will support women's economic empowerment, advance religious freedom, and will work to incorporate the principles of procurement reform and support the Dominican Republic as it leads its own development journey to the point when there is no longer a need for foreign assistance.

This strategy is designed to align with and support U.S. Government priorities outlined in the National Security Strategy, the Joint Strategic Plan, the Joint Regional Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Dominican Republic Integrated Country Strategy. In the implementation of this CDCS, the Mission is also keenly aware of the DR's downgrade to Tier 2 Watchlist status in the June 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. In conjunction with other USG entities, USAID's work to combat TIP in the DR crosses the Mission's portfolio and addresses victim-centered approaches to judicial reform, the intersection of TIP with gender-based violence (GBV) in the DR, and inclusive access to livelihood, psychosocial, health and other basic services for vulnerable children and youth to reduce the incidence of trafficking.

Figure I. Results Framework Graphic



II. COUNTRY CONTEXT

A. Challenges and Opportunities

The Dominican Republic is a place of contradictions and enormous potential that has yet to be fully realized. GDP averaged over 5.3 percent annual growth from 1993 to 2018¹, among the most robust in the LAC region, and official measures of poverty have improved from 34.4 percent to 20 percent.² Government spending on education has doubled since 2013, and infrastructure access has increased substantially, particularly in rural areas of the country.

However, despite these improvements, inequality that fuels entrenched interests and political misconduct continues to be an influence in Dominican social, economic, and political life. Over 40 percent of the population remains economically vulnerable to shocks, and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national poverty rate has risen to 25 percent in the first six months of 2020.³ Crime and violence ranks as the top concern among Dominicans⁴, and over 50 percent of women experience some form of gender-based violence (GBV)⁵. Particularly for rural areas and the border region, increased infrastructure or service offering has not equated to quality or access that leads to improved outcomes. Despite two decades of combatting the HIV epidemic, the Dominican Republic remains a PEPFAR focus country with over 70,000 people living with HIV⁶ and an epidemic that has shifted toward the Haitian and Haitian-descent population. The Dominican Republic ranks second lowest in the LAC region in educational performance, and the pool of human capital is not conducive to supporting broad-based, value-added, inclusive growth, creating little opportunity for the under-30 youth bulge that comprises 53 percent of the population⁷. Further, squarely located in the Caribbean hurricane belt and highly dependent on external forces for trade, tourism, and remittances, the Dominican economy lacks the resilience to weather even minor shocks, and the economic effects of COVID-19 have led 78 percent of families to experience food insecurity⁸. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the deficiencies of Dominican services, as the health system was immediately overburdened, and despite attempts at austere security measures, the Dominican Republic, as of this writing, has more COVID-19 cases than the rest of the Caribbean region combined.

The Dominican Republic also uniquely shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, its less prosperous and politically unstable neighbor. Seeking economic opportunity through migration to the Dominican

¹ World Bank 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/dominicanrepublic/overview>

² Ibid.

³ Listin Diario. “La pobreza alcanzara casi al 25% de la población.” July 16, 2020.

<https://listindiario.com/economia/2020/07/16/626524/la-pobreza-alcanzara-casi-al-25-de-la-poblacion-dominicana-aumentara-4-4-este-ano-segun-la-cepal>

⁴ “Citizen security, crime and violence in five high-risk communities in the Dominican Republic.” Criminal Justice System Strengthened Project, Chemonics International. USAID Dominican Republic, 2019.

See also: OSAC Dominican Republic 2019 Crime & Safety Report.

<https://www.osac.gov/Country/DominicanRepublic/Content/Detail/Report/a82172f0-f827-4656-bd39-15f4aec20e0d>

⁵ UN Women. <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/dominican-republic>

⁶ UNAIDS. Dominican Republic Country Profile.

<https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/dominicanrepublic>

⁷ “Estimaciones y proyecciones nacionales de población 1950-2100.” Oficina Nacional de Estadística, Vol. IV. April 2016. Pg. 53. <https://www.one.gob.do/publicaciones?ID=1463>

⁸ UNICEF 2020. Survey of Impact of COVID-19 on Dominican Households. [Link](#).

Republic, the Haitian and Haitian-descent population now numbers approximately 800,000.⁹ Discrimination in the Dominican Republic results in the highest levels of poverty for Haitian migrants, constant fear of deportation, and frequent accusations of instigating crime and spreading infectious disease. Changes in 2013 to Dominican law rendered stateless nearly 300,000 Dominicans of Haitian descent, barring many from access to basic social services and deepening long-standing social tensions. While most evident in the Dominican Republic-Haiti border region, the challenges and barriers faced by Haitian and Haitian-descent persons in the Dominican Republic are experienced nationwide.

National elections in July 2020 resulted in a change of government, ousting the party that had been in power for 16 years with a mandate for the new government to bring sweeping reforms that advance citizen-responsive governance, improve service systems, and strengthen the wellbeing and resilience of communities.

B. GODR National Development Strategy (NDS)

In 2010, the Dominican government approved the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2010-2030¹⁰ that focuses on four axes: 1. ethical and transparent state institutions, 2. equal rights and quality public services to reduce inequality, 3. a diversified and quality-oriented economy that promotes sustainable and broad-based growth, 4. efficient environmental risk and natural resource management and adaptation. These goals overlap directly with the CDCS objectives of citizen-responsive governance, efficient and inclusive service delivery, and resilient and inclusive community wellbeing.

This new CDCS, the journey to self-reliance (J2SR) approach, and the expectations of a new GODR administration create opportunities to advance NDS objectives. Directly addressing key challenges that hinder self-reliance, our governance objective (DO 1) focuses specifically on building the capacity to employ evidence-based methods to determine allocations for public funding and to craft and execute sustainable implementation and enforcement plans. Further, our service system capacity objective (DO 2) emphasizes building the quality and inclusiveness of essential service provision that moves the GODR toward local ownership and registers meaningful progress toward GODR and USAID objectives. USAID expects to collaborate closely with the incoming GODR administration, brought in with a strong transparency and anti-corruption mandate, to better advance NDS initiatives and promote self-reliance in the Dominican Republic.

C. Country Roadmap Analysis

The CDCS is rooted in the findings of the Country Roadmap, but data for the Dominican Republic paint a contradictory picture of a thriving yet vulnerable country still in need of significant progress to achieve self-reliance. While both capacity and commitment register as relatively high, deeper analysis brings out large disparities. A recent World Justice Project index ranked Dominican Republic 24 out of 30 countries in LAC for rule of law, particularly for constraints on government power¹¹. Social group equality in the Dominican Republic also ranks among the lowest within the lower-middle income group

⁹ This is a commonly used estimate of the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic. Official data sources do not accurately or consistently account for the Haitian or Haitian-descent population, but UNHCR 2018 estimates a population “between 650,000 and one million.” (<https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749d2e21.html>)

¹⁰ Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo 2010-2030. <http://mepyd.gob.do/estrategia-nacional-de-desarrollo-2030>

¹¹ Dominican rule of law summary report from the World Justice Project: <https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/Dominican%20Republic%20-%202020%20WJP%20Rule%20of%20Law%20Index%20Country%20Press%20Release.pdf>

worldwide, emphasizing the disadvantages faced by the country's vulnerable groups -- LGBTI, HIV+, Haitians and Haitian-descent, people with disabilities, women, and youth. These fundamental imbalances lay the foundation for less effective governance systems and the provision of low quality services that perpetuate the cycle of poverty, inequality, and crime and violence.

At the same time, the Country Roadmap minimizes some of the Dominican Republic's greatest challenges. Policies have typically not been followed by robust implementation plans, and regulatory enforcement in the Dominican Republic ranks in the lower 15 percent globally.¹² As a result, pollution and habitat loss continue, even in protected areas¹³, and the Dominican Republic ranks 12 out of 180 countries in climate vulnerability¹⁴. Education performance ranks second lowest in the LAC region¹⁵, and citizen security initiatives are not supported by enforcement¹⁶. Crime ranks as the greatest development concern for Dominicans¹⁷, but Roadmap measures do not capture assault or gender/family based violence, the most common forms of violence in the Dominican Republic. Official statistics also largely exclude migrants and vulnerable populations, resulting in safety and security measures that underestimate the extent of crime and violence, and child health indicators that overestimate water and sanitation access in the Dominican Republic. For example, official data states that 85 percent of the population has access to improved water services¹⁸, however, this obscures the fact that in many border communities water access is provided at the community level and is typically available only once per week. Despite robust macroeconomic growth, measured poverty and per capita GDP do not reflect the deep economic inequality that permeates nearly every aspect of life in the Dominican Republic. An exceptionally active media and civil society, aimed at creating social demand for transparent and effective governance, has shown some positive movement in generating momentum for civic engagement or democratic reform¹⁹. This CDCS thus focuses on effective policy implementation beyond policy development, quality service provision to underserved areas and populations, and improved opportunities for broad based and resilient economic growth.

III. STRATEGIC APPROACH

This CDCS takes the strategic approach of supporting transformational Capacities that catalyze Commitment and jointly motivate self-reliance. Although the Country Roadmap analysis for the

¹² Policy enforcement in the Dominican Republic ranks 108/128 globally:

<https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2020/Dominican%20Republic/Regulatory%20Enforcement/>

¹³ Convention on Biological Diversity <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=do>.

Kennerley, Rosalind et al. The impact of habitat quality inside protected areas on distribution of the Dominican Republic's last endemic non-volant land mammals. *Journal of Mammalogy*, Volume 100, Issue 1, 28 February 2019, pg. 45–54. <https://academic.oup.com/jmammal/article/100/1/45/5304528>

¹⁴ Eckstein, David, Marie-Lena Hutfils and Maik Wings. "Global Climate Risk Index 2019." Germanwatch, 2019. Pg. 33. <https://www.germanwatch.org/en/cri>

¹⁵ Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018.

http://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_DOM.pdf

¹⁶ USAID/Dominican Republic Criminal Justice System Strengthened Project. *Citizen security, crime and violence in five high-risk communities in the Dominican Republic*, 2020.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ FAO 2020. AQUASTAT Core Database. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Database accessed on 2020/08/25. <http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/data/>

¹⁹ Espinal, Rosario, Jana Morgan, Jonathan Hartlyn. *Sociedad civil y poder político en República Dominicana*.

América Latina Hoy, 2010. (Older but still relevant publication.)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/50997390_Sociedad_civil_y_poder_politico_en_Republica_Dominicana

Dominican Republic suggests that Capacity has not created demand for greater Commitment, deeper analysis reveals fundamental gaps in Capacity that hinder the ability to promote credible Commitment. Planned activities build on USAID's comparative advantage, engaging national and local governments, individuals, organizations, civil society, and the private sector to build capacities for transparent and evidence-based public sector decision making, strengthen capacities to deliver high quality essential services, and develop capacities to enhance community resilience and locally-led development. By fortifying these strategic capacities, our work will help generate demand for and create the conditions that spur deepened Commitment and lasting self-reliance.

The CDCS features a Results Framework (RF) built around thematic development objectives focusing on citizen-responsive governance, service systems, and community resilience. The Mission's research and consultations show that the structural elements and capabilities that impede progress in the Dominican Republic share fundamental similarities. Across sectors, limited transparency and accountability and inconsistent policy implementation or enforcement hinders the responsiveness of governance to the needs of citizens. This contributes to underfunded service systems that do not fully develop human capital, promote citizen security, protect natural resources, or safeguard public health. These weaknesses can perpetuate individual and community vulnerabilities, harm youth outcomes, and foment conflict in Dominican-Haitian communities, ultimately limiting community resilience and locally-led development and increasing risk for the most vulnerable communities.

Rather than emphasizing traditional sectors, the RF thus addresses roadblocks to self-reliance and sustainable development that impact each sector and technical team. The thematic approach seeks results-oriented transformational change achieved by the combined efforts of activities across the portfolio.

A. Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR)

Deeply rooted in the J2SR approach, the CDCS gives importance both to the strategic objectives in the results framework and the manner in which they are achieved. This means ensuring that USAID builds the capacities that promote local problem identification, foster increased engagement with new and underutilized partners, facilitate co-creation of solutions, and enable sustainable and local financing of development initiatives.

USAID/Dominican Republic has reenvisioned private sector engagement (PSE). Although previous private sector partnerships yielded successful results, they were not viewed as catalysts for lasting change in the Dominican Republic. Through J2SR, the private sector is integrated as a stakeholder in development. Private sector engagement efforts focus on leveraging the complementary resources and comparative advantages of private entities, keeping in mind their profit-based objectives, to focus and propel USAID interventions. The expanded PSE approach also supports recent GODR legislation²⁰ to expand public-private partnerships, focusing on competitive procurement for services and infrastructure investments and establishing a directorate for public-private partnerships. Through this approach, USAID will build on the successes of recent PSEs that have helped identify local development issues, co-create solutions, and co-fund initiatives. Thus far, these include work in education and youth development, natural resource management, energy, water and sanitation, and community development. Implementation of this CDCS is expected to intensify PSE to include advocacy for GODR transparency

²⁰ Ley 47-20: Ley de Alianzas Publico-Privadas. El Congreso Nacional de la República Dominicana. <https://dgii.gov.do/legislacion/leyesTributarias/Documents/Otras%20Leyes%20de%20Inter%C3%A9s/47-20.pdf>

in procurement, improved health outcomes, and strengthened school-to-work pathways. Internally, the Mission will also expand its implementation of flexible procurement measures that enable greater private sector collaboration.

Building on momentum from early efforts in financing self-reliance (FSR), the CDCS targets activities to improve GODR capacities for consistent evidence-based public financial management (PFM), strengthen the ability of civil society and local organizations to compete for and manage public funding for development, and mobilize domestic resources (DRM) aimed at development along the Dominican Republic-Haiti border. Evidence across sectors also shows that non-competitive procurements in the Dominican Republic too often fail to target the greatest needs, and a lack of transparency or competition creates a focal point for corruption. Procurement reform thus also plays a key role in USAID's approach to mobilizing host country resources and financing self-reliance.

USAID/Dominican Republic is committed to working with new and underutilized partners. In FY2019, Dominican organizations received 40 percent of the Mission's funds, and the Mission expects to continue to incorporate new and underutilized partners in co-design and consortium awards to foster increased engagement. Locally-led development is a strategic focus of this CDCS, and USAID will work to build capacities in organizational management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and new business development and grant management for local organizations. This effort includes technical offices as well as assistance from the contracting office to understand the unique needs of local partners and better provide support in the process of co-creation.

B. Organizational Structure

USAID/Dominican Republic's midcourse stocktaking exercise in 2019 revealed common areas of work across the Mission, but also identified structural and organizational barriers that obscured the Mission's focus and prevented collaboration or effective leveraging of human or financial resources. Across all technical sectors – security, health, education, environment, water, energy – the same story was consistently repeated: Limited GODR planning and implementation of policies has led to low quality basic service provision that harms community wellbeing, perpetuating poverty, inequality, and corruption. However, each office addressed these common issues from an isolated technical perspective. This new CDCS seeks instead to advance J2SR and locally-led development by explicitly acknowledging the factors that unite each of the Mission's teams and recognizing that, despite different sectors and tactics, the Mission's work jointly advances a common set of objectives to build capacity, commitment, and self-reliance. While the Mission's team structure is unlikely to change, this CDCS provides the opportunity for each team's IRs to contribute to thematic DOs that synthesize the Mission's cumulative impact. By focusing on overarching themes at the DO level, the Mission expects to leverage expertise, foster collaboration, and create opportunities for efficient and innovative development solutions.

C. Focus: Populations and Systems

USAID cannot tackle effectively all of the Dominican Republic's development challenges. This CDCS thus emphasizes those sectors and activities that i) are catalytic toward increased long-term impact and local ownership, and ii) fall within USAID's comparative advantage and resource base. Based on exhaustive research and Mission-wide discussion, this CDCS targets populations and systems. Focus populations are the vulnerable, underserved, and underrepresented -- Dominicans of Haitian-descent, at-risk children and youth, persons living with HIV, LGBTI persons, Venezuelan migrants, victims of human trafficking, and people with disabilities. Elevating these populations means directly addressing inequality, open

government, quality and inclusive service provision, and community strengthening. Systems targeting is based on a systems thinking approach, viewing development challenges in the context of the network of stakeholders, influences, and incentives within which they occur. USAID's interventions are thus designed to impact critical points in a system, freeing bottlenecks or increasing capacities that multiply effect across the system and fortify locally-led development.

D. Transboundary

In addressing development challenges in the Dominican Republic, interactions and linkages with Haiti can no longer be ignored. The unique geographical setting of a single island housing two countries, necessitates perspectives that view security and inclusive prosperity in the Dominican Republic and Haiti as mutually reinforcing phenomena. Political instability and more limited economic opportunity in Haiti serve as ongoing push factors for out-migration into the Dominican Republic and make Haitian children a significant source of human trafficking into the Dominican Republic. Conversely, social practices, cultural bias, and public policies in the Dominican Republic limit opportunities for Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, creating a large unempowered underclass. Nonetheless, Haiti and the Dominican Republic are economically interdependent and active trading partners, and economic fluctuations have clear and direct transboundary impacts in both countries. Further, natural phenomena and infectious disease do not recognize political boundaries. Successful conservation and management of natural resources, including crucial potable water resources, requires “ridge to reef”²¹ watershed management that necessitates transboundary collaboration to connect stakeholders in both countries. Effective disease control also requires addressing push-pull factors for migration between the Dominican Republic and Haiti and strengthening transboundary coordination of services.

This CDCS takes the strategic approach of explicitly acknowledging the intimate linkages between the Dominican Republic and Haiti and actively seeks to foster collaboration between governments, USAID Missions, communities, civil society, and the private sector to create mutually beneficial solutions to locally identified problems. Thus, where appropriate, the implementation of this CDCS will seek collaboration with USAID/Haiti on transboundary issues to share data and best practices, co-identify transboundary and local development challenges, and engage private sector and new and underutilized partners with assets and networks in both countries. Formalizing this mutual understanding, the two Missions signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on May 26, 2020 signaling their concurrence to engage in transboundary work. The two Missions have regular technical meetings to discuss transboundary issues and are working to develop joint activities.

E. Relationship with Host Country Government

Reaffirming the strength of the relationship between the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo attended the August 16, 2020 inauguration of President Luis Abinader and the new administration.²² As the Dominican Republic's largest trade partner and most significant development donor, the US has historically benefited from consistent access to GODR decision makers and collaborative relationships with counterpart Ministries. After 16 years of single party rule, the

²¹ “Ridge to reef” is a watershed management systems approach that analyzes natural processes and economic pressures from a water source to the sea. International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/water/our-work/current-projects/ridge-reef>

²² “Secretary Pompeo Travels to the Dominican Republic to Reaffirm Strong Ties and Shared Democratic Values.”

<https://www.state.gov/secretary-pompeo-travels-to-the-dominican-republic-to-reaffirm-strong-ties-and-shared-democratic-values/>

election of President Abinader represents a change of government and reflects heightened expectations of improved transparency, citizen-responsive governance, and an end to official impunity, all key themes highlighted in his inaugural speech.²³ The coincidence of this change with the initiation of a new CDCS provides an opportunity to secure increased commitment toward improving self-reliance metrics. President Abinader has already stated his intention to undertake “unprecedented agreements and alliances with the U.S.,” as well as increased collaboration on counter-trafficking in narcotics and international crime.²⁴

Progress toward self-reliance in the Dominican Republic depends heavily on the new GODR administration following through on their mandate for increased transparency and accountability. However, the GODR is not a monolithic, unified entity, but rather, a heavily decentralized, nationally administered collection of sectoral and geographically-defined entities. GODR commitment and capacity similarly must be assessed both by sector and administrative level, and this strategy is thus designed to work across government levels, from national to local, in the Mission's relevant sectors. The Mission's strategic approach to GODR engagement focuses on building capacities for local engagement, evidence-based decisions, and effective policy implementation while promoting demand for commitment at both local and national levels.

At the local level, GODR follow-through means the productive integration of local GODR entities as stakeholders in systems analyses and local listening exercises, support for locally-led initiatives, and moreover, actions that help promote local issues at the national level. At the national level, activities will have a greater focus on bolstering capacity to undertake evidence-based decisions with transparency and accountability and effective policy implementation and enforcement. At the same time, work with civil society will seek to maintain oversight and promote active commitment to reform, continuing demand-side pressure.

In the first two months of the new GODR administration, significant cost-cutting measures aimed at eliminating redundancies and clientelism in government have lent credibility to stated intentions to confront corruption. Ministerial-level courtesy calls and preliminary engagements with technical teams have specified alignment with the National Development Strategy (NDS) and suggested consistency with key elements of J2SR. Previously hypothesized risks of the new administration's objectives not aligning with those of the U.S. appear substantially diminished. Analysis of GODR proposed budget expenditures²⁵ for 2021 suggest continued support for USAID's key sectors of education, health, and community services, significant growth in energy, and some reductions in environmental protection and citizen security. Projected expenditures also show large reductions in administrative and operating costs across government offices, and these known fiscal savings provide an opportunity to help the GODR direct funding toward development investments.

²³ “No habrá impunidad para la corrupción del pasado.” Listin Diario. August 16, 2020.

<https://listindiario.com/la-republica/2020/08/16/631001/abinader-no-habra-impunidad-para-la-corrupcion-del-pasado>

²⁴ “Luis Abinader define su política con Estados Unidos como “muy especial.” Diario Libre. July 30, 2020.

<https://www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/politica/luis-abinader-define-su-politica-con-estados-unidos-como-muy-especial-NA20462681>

²⁵ Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana. Presupuesto.

<https://www.digepres.gob.do/presupuesto/gobierno-general-nacional/>

F. Counter-Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP)

In the June 2020 TIP Report²⁶, the Dominican Republic was downgraded from Tier 2 to Tier 2 Watchlist. The Dominican Republic is a major source, transit, and destination country for TIP, as well as a destination for touristic sex exploitation of minors. Instability in Haiti and Venezuela has resulted in a corresponding increase in human trafficking of victims into the Dominican Republic. While the Dominican Republic has shown improvement in the legal framework surrounding TIP, implementation has been uneven, and the report did not find a measurable increase in GODR efforts compared to the previous year. Specifically, the report identified ongoing allegations of official complicity and impunity in human trafficking, lack of adequate victim services, and insufficient tracking of TIP indicators.

As one axis of the USG's C-TIP effort, USAID focuses on the prosecution, protection, and prevention dimensions, particularly as related to GBV issues. C-TIP work crosses the Mission's portfolio. Building on the recommendations of the 2020 TIP report, USAID will work to build capacity among judicial professionals to ensure a victim-centered approach to C-TIP and strengthen prosecution and sentencing to combat impunity. These elements of judicial capacity dovetail with support for increased GODR commitment to adequate financing for accelerated, locally owned C-TIP measures. Prevention efforts emphasize capacity building to disrupt recruitment channels for TIP related to sexual and labor exploitation, with particular emphasis on identifying Venezuelan and Haitian TIP victims and TIP related to forced and early child marriage. USAID programs also emphasize GODR coordination and budgeting to ensure the establishment of adequate victim protection mechanisms. Broader USG-assisted C-TIP efforts in the Dominican Republic are administered by the Department of State and focus on identifying trafficking victims, building National Police capacity to conduct TIP investigations, developing a new TIP law, and increasing the criminal justice system response to TIP.

G. Engaging the Private Sector

USAID/Dominican Republic will focus on seeking more sustainable and enterprise-driven outcomes through the planning and programming of strong private sector engagement. With a resource base that vastly outnumbers donor funding, the private sector has enormous potential to facilitate significant and meaningful change related to key development goals; and strategic alliances with private sector partners can leverage USAID's investments to create lasting sustainability. Further, private sector leaders are increasingly aware that a country's socio-economic development improves productivity, expands markets, and bolsters profitability, creating a unique opportunity for partnership on mutually beneficial projects.

As the largest economy in the Caribbean region with economic growth rates among the strongest in the entire LAC region, the Dominican Republic's dynamic private sector has propelled the country to middle income status. While the economy is dominated by large conglomerates in service sector industries (telecommunications, financial services, transportation and shipping, real estate, and construction), a growing manufacturing base benefits from the expansion of free trade zones, attracting significant foreign investment and the presence of several multinational companies.

USAID/Dominican Republic will seek mutually beneficial partnerships with respected private sector organizations with a strong presence and leadership in their respective markets, whether it may be local,

²⁶ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf>

non-local, or U.S. based. The Mission will seek partnerships with entities that commit to co-creation activities that support their bottom-line objectives, advance achievement of USAID's results, and promote sustainable solutions.

H. The Role of Media and Civil Society

As suggested by the Country Roadmap, civil society and media in the Dominican Republic are very dynamic, but their efforts are predominantly reactive, centralized to the economic and political capitals, and focused on after-the-fact response and mobilization of citizen groups. The effectiveness of civil society and media is thus limited, particularly as a result of the lack of reliable and timely data to support proactive, evidence-based advocacy. This lessens civic engagement and debilitates the capacity of civil society and media to serve in oversight and advisory roles to the GODR in identifying development challenges, demanding accountability, and developing and implementing solutions. Through the CDCS, USAID will support the GODR in the development and expansion of nationwide and representative data collection, analysis, and sharing. In conjunction, USAID will boost the capacity of media and key civil society organizations to seek information and proactively mobilize and educate citizens to advocate for needed changes and instill expectations of transparency and accountability from the onset of projects. A fortified civil society will thus be an effective partner to advance self-reliance in the Dominican Republic, supporting the much-needed demand side that strengthens Commitment from local to national levels and complements and leverages USAID's efforts to build GODR capacity.

I. Interagency, GODR, and Donor Coordination

This strategy is designed to align with and support U.S. Government priorities outlined in the National Security Strategy, the Joint Strategic Plan, the Joint Regional Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Dominican Republic Integrated Country Strategy. USAID collaborates regularly with other USG interagency stakeholders to leverage complementary resources and capabilities that help advance common interests and larger USG initiatives. These include the Department of State (including International Narcotics and Law Enforcement), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, the Peace Corps, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Commerce (including Foreign Commercial Service and Commercial Law Development Program), Inter-American Foundation, and the International Development Finance Corporation. Each of these organizations have objectives that overlap with aspects of USAID's work, and the Mission actively seeks opportunities to consult, collaborate, and share information. Given USAID's unique diplomatic presence and on-the-ground networks, technical teams lead and actively participate in various interagency working groups, ensuring that the principles of J2SR are promoted across USG entities.

As part of the long-term strategy to advance self-reliance in the Dominican Republic, USAID seeks to elevate the GODR, specifically the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development (MEPyD), as the hub for carrying out the NDS and donor coordination. This promotes the GODR's understanding of their role in advancing J2SR and further creates an avenue for introducing evidence-based decision making tied to the Mission's FSR efforts. Initial conversations with the new MEPyD leadership indicate that this approach coincides with the GODR's intentions and signal a desire to work with USAID to strengthen MEPyD's position. USAID's technical expertise, nationwide presence, and convening power will be essential to expanding donor coordination and shifting development leadership in the Dominican Republic.

In the short term, USAID will lead donor coordination efforts with MEPyD to build on momentum from donor consultations organized as part of the midcourse stocktaking and in preparation for this CDCS. These well-attended meetings included general donor consultation, as well as discussions focused specifically on Dominican Republic-Haiti border region issues. While COVID-19 has stalled follow-up meetings, the Mission intends to resume quarterly meetings with MEPyD and the donor community. Based on participant feedback, USAID will revive sectoral and thematic meetings to address common issues, including themes based on the development objectives in the RF. This will ensure coordination not only for individual USAID activities, but also for larger DO-level objectives. Time will also be allocated to discussing and sharing tools and best practices in the field. Further, most donors expressed a common interest in GIS data and analysis, currently lacking in the Dominican Republic, and USAID will take measures as part of donor coordination to co-create and co-finance the development of a geographically-coded database of activities.

USAID will also engage in longer-term technical assistance and collaboration with MEPyD to develop their capacity to coordinate and lead the development effort in the Dominican Republic. Linked to FSR objectives, this work will include improving capacity in data analytics and evidence-based decision making, assistance in strategic planning to help optimize the use of public resources, and the development of sector-specific implementation plans following strategies.

IV. RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The goal of the Dominican Republic 2021-2025 Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCS) is to promote a more secure and inclusively prosperous Dominican Republic that advances local and transboundary resilience.

USAID will support self-reliance in the Dominican Republic by building capacity and commitment within the sectors, regions, and populations where identified gaps have limited progress toward security and inclusive prosperity. This will be achieved by promoting reforms that lead to citizen-responsive governance, strengthen capacities to improve service delivery systems, and enhance community networks and resources to improve resilience and wellbeing. Across the strategy, activities seek to promote gender equality, inclusive development, positive youth development, and environmental management and conservation, emphasizing locally-led development and increasing domestic resources for development via active and innovative engagement with non-traditional private sector partners. The strategic lenses of security and anti-corruption guide activity design, seeking always to promote personal, economic, and environmental security while ensuring the systematic reduction of corrupt practices that harm development outcomes.

The CDCS aligns with the increasing GODR focus on integrating and uplifting underserved areas and populations, as well as exercising a growing leadership role within the Caribbean region. Particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDCS goal of a more secure and prosperous Dominican Republic directly aligns and integrates with wider USG priorities as detailed in the Integrated Country Strategy, the National Security Strategy, and the State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan.

The CDCS is rooted in the findings of the Dominican Republic Country Roadmap. Declining measures of liberal democracy and worsening social group inequality hinder governance systems and reduce education quality, perpetuating the cycle of poverty, inequality, and crime and violence. At the same time, the Roadmap minimizes some of the Dominican Republic's greatest challenges. Strong policy frameworks are not typically followed by robust enforcement such that, for example, pollution and habitat loss

continue, even in protected areas. Official statistics also largely exclude migrants and vulnerable populations, resulting in safety and security measures that underestimate the extent of crime and violence and child health indicators that overestimate water and sanitation access in the Dominican Republic. Perhaps most significantly, measured poverty and per capita GDP do not reflect the deep economic inequality that permeates nearly every aspect of life in the Dominican Republic. The CDCS thus focuses on effective policy implementation beyond policy development, quality service provision to underserved areas and populations, and improved opportunities for broad-based and resilient economic growth.

A. DOI: CITIZEN-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENED

Development Hypothesis

The Dominican Republic will have improved citizen-responsive governance if accountable and interconnected institutions are strengthened, targeted areas of citizen security and human rights exhibit more inclusive and effective policy implementation and enforcement, and health and HIV frameworks meet global standards.

Development Hypothesis Narrative

Despite robust economic growth that has propelled the Dominican Republic into the middle income category, some governance systems retain aspects of less developed economies. Deeply entrenched socio-economic inequalities translate to vast differences in political influence, poor transparency, and minimal accountability such that vulnerable groups and more remote border areas of the country are largely left behind. Relatively low investment in government capacity and often inconsistent lines of authority or responsibility have limited evidence-based decision making, planning for the implementation of policies, and performance monitoring of government service provision.

. Seeking to build demand for increased Commitment, DOI addresses Capacity dimensions of the Country Roadmap where local evidence and disaggregated data suggest that indicators for the Dominican Republic may be overstated: Government Effectiveness (0.45), Tax System Effectiveness (0.36), Civil Society & Media DOI seeks to improve citizen-responsive governance in the Dominican Republic by promoting policy reform and strengthening capacity for evidence-based decision making and performance monitoring, leading to governance structures that effectively and inclusively implement and enforce policy Effectiveness (0.90).

Private Sector Engagement

Activities in DOI engage the private sector to advocate for increased GODR capacity for evidence-based decision making and procurement reform that promotes transparency in public funding. Private sector partners also serve as advocates for the implementation of stronger educational frameworks that comply with education standards, and energy sector reform that attracts investment and bolsters energy reliability and resilience.

Financing Self-Reliance

DOI touches on various elements of FSR. Collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development (MEPyD) seeks to improve domestic resource mobilization (DRM) by augmenting capacity for data collection, analysis, and use in resource planning. The establishment of a payment for ecosystem services (PES) model in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN)

will also create a tried-and-tested and sustainable avenue for the GODR to dedicate domestic resources toward environmental and watershed management. Efforts in DOI will also improve resource management capacity and Public Financial Management (PFM), and transparency and efficiency in public budgeting and improved tax system effectiveness and Fiscal Transparency and Accountability (FTA).

Redefining Our Relationship

DOI is the focal point of the Redefining Our Relationship (RDR) initiative in the CDCS. Specifically designed to build capacities that build commitment toward improved citizen-responsiveness in governance, DOI engages key GODR entities to strengthen data-driven and evidence-based decision-making, modernize sectoral policy frameworks, efficiently and transparently implement sectoral action plans, and create innovative pathways to mobilize domestic resources. This approach seeks to expand on successes in the health sector, where the combination of USAID intervention and demand from civil society and local organizations spurred the GODR to commit to updating HIV policies and fully funding all HIV test kits and antiretroviral treatment for all HIV+ persons in the Dominican Republic. DOI also emphasizes capacity building for local media and civil society to ensure effective citizen-driven demand for transparent and accountable governance.

New Partnership Initiative

In DOI, USAID will continue its well-established partnership with local organizations in support of responsive governance, electoral processes, and education reform. Overlapping with PSE objectives, this CDCS also expands new partnerships to include national and Caribbean regional electrical and renewable energy entities focused on improved energy sector governance and promoting private sector investment in the energy sector.

I. IRI.1: Inclusive and Effective Policy Implementation and Enforcement in Targeted Areas of Citizen Security and Human Rights Improved

Despite robust economic growth that has propelled the Dominican Republic into the middle-income category, limited investment in government capacity and unclear lines of responsibility have inhibited evidence-based decision making, policy implementation, and government performance monitoring. The resulting governance system only partially responds to the needs of the population. IRI.1 focuses on inclusive and effective policy implementation and enforcement in human rights and citizen security, including education and youth. Programming under this IR will strengthen the GODR's capacity to plan, implement, monitor, and use sound data to make evidence-based decisions, while strengthening the capacity of civil society and media to serve as advocates for the human rights and citizen security needs of Dominicans.

The Dominican Republic ranks number one in the perception of insecurity in the LAC region. According to the 2019 Americas Barometer survey in the Dominican Republic, 60 percent of respondents report feeling insecure due to crime, with juvenile delinquency highlighted as one of the most important problems facing the country. USAID will support the GODR to implement essential policies that strengthen citizen security, clarify civil and penal codes, and enhance protections against gender-based violence (GBV) and trafficking in persons (TIP). USAID will work to build capacity in key GODR ministries to conduct research, data collection, and analysis to employ evidence-based approaches to citizen security and human rights via partnerships with local and U.S. universities. As part of financing self-reliance (FSR) efforts, USAID will seek to update procurement laws to foster a stronger

anti-corruption framework and will pursue greater enforcement of public-private partnership (PPP) provisions.

Inclusive, effective, and citizen-responsive governance in the Dominican Republic carries a strong human rights component. USAID will work to support the implementation of governance frameworks that account for the rights of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, ensure equality under the law for LGBTQI persons, and promote opportunity for youth while combating child labor. This work includes capacity building for non-discriminatory treatment and strengthening legal frameworks for education to overcome barriers that detract from equitable access to quality education.

2. IRI.2: Accountable Interconnected Institutions Strengthened

Weaknesses in accountability have inhibited progress toward frameworks that promote citizen responsiveness and self-reliance in the Dominican Republic. Despite a solid cadre of laws and policies, the GODR has historically lacked commitment in terms of enforcement and implementation. As an example, Country Roadmap indicators score the Dominican Republic high on Biodiversity and Habitat Protections based on the number of laws and official protected areas. However, natural resources in the Dominican Republic remain highly vulnerable, and consistent demand pressure for charcoal, tourism, agriculture, construction, urban expansion, and extractive minerals has led to biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. Under IRI.2, USAID/Dominican Republic will thus strengthen accountable interconnected institutions by partnering with GODR and local actors to maximize investments, ensure long-term sustainability, and advance J2SR.

Interconnected institutions working together will be better equipped to inform GODR policy and program decisions, promote credible enforcement, and advance new legislation. Work in IRI.2 will strengthen the capacity of the GODR to track, coordinate, and mobilize domestic and international resources to increase access to data, information, and evidence sources for local actors. Across the country and the Dominican Republic-Haiti border region, USAID will work to link institutions, local actors, and underutilized partners to national government entities, strengthening communication and working channels for efficient and tailored development interventions that create incentives for private sector investments and respond to the greatest development needs. The recently signed MOU with USAID/Haiti also recognizes that some issues cross natural and political boundaries and that private sector entities, CSOs, and local governments may have presence or influence in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Transboundary efforts have already begun to include relevant actors in both countries via binational summits and co-identification and co-creation events. Further, through this IR, USAID will increase the provision of timely and useful information and guidance to civil society and local organizations to access both public and private domestic resources to address local development challenges.

Activities under IRI.2 engage collaborative action with local and national governments, civil society, private sector, and other local actors to promote transparency and hold accountable Dominican institutions. Potential activities aimed at improving resource management include capacity building for transparent and competitive tender processes, technical assistance to institutions to improve and integrate planning for energy investments, and adaptive management provisions to strengthen enforcement and collaboration in marine managed areas (MMA). Promoting financing self-reliance (FSR) and related activities, work in IRI.2 builds on successful examples across the Caribbean to establish payment for ecosystem services and other sustainable financing mechanisms to promote natural resource management and water source protection. Linking to IR3.2, interventions will also collaborate

with municipalities and other local actors to plan for and appropriately finance climate change adaptation considerations in their decision-making processes to promote community resilience. USAID will also work to foster local-level, transboundary collaboration and experience-sharing related to participatory governance of coastal marine resources including protected and managed areas in the Haiti-Dominican Republic northern Hispaniola border.

3. IRI.3: Global Standards for Health and HIV Governance Advanced

IRI.3 focuses on elevating health and HIV governance to meet established global standards aimed at reducing new HIV infections, facilitating early access to lifesaving antiretroviral treatment (ART), and achieving viral load suppression and epidemic control. While the GODR has demonstrated significant financial commitment to combating HIV in support of PEPFAR objectives, fully providing all test kits and antiretroviral (ARV) medications since 2015, key changes and updates to the health policy environment are needed to generate renewed progress toward epidemic control. Work in IRI.3 includes improved alignment of HIV and infectious disease guidelines to international standards, the development and implementation of policies to strengthen national and local health systems, health supply chain improvement, and efforts to increase and mobilize domestic resources. Governance activities will also work toward reducing institutionalized stigma and discrimination that effectively blocks access to lifesaving health care for disproportionately affected key populations, including men who have sex with men, female sex workers, and transgender women, as well as the Haitians and Haitian-descent population.

These efforts build on the GODR's demonstrated willingness, in conjunction with USAID support, to update administrative and clinical care guidelines to better reflect global best practices for rapid initiation of ARV treatment, progress toward National Health Insurance inclusion of ARVs as essential medicines, and strategic planning to prioritize index testing and self-testing. PEPFAR-driven policy reform in collaboration with GODR health authorities has been a model for advancing self-reliance that may lead to more general improvements in the health sector and serves as an example to be replicated in other sectors. As supply chain management for health and HIV necessarily links to private sector entities, this CDCS will also help advance self-reliance in health governance via private sector engagement to harmonize local and national demand with international supply chains, facilitating HIV testing and ensuring the possibility of rapid ART initiation on a national scale.

Optimal HIV supply chain management and effective health information systems are key components of self-reliance in health for the Dominican Republic. Work in IRI.3 also includes technical assistance to ensure that supply chain policies and logistics financing support sufficient and uninterrupted medical supplies and that GODR commitments appropriately support the expansion of health information and patient tracking systems.

4. Critical Assumptions and Risks

Assumptions

- GODR remains committed to citizen security and human rights.
- GODR remains committed to HIV epidemic control and health policy reform.

Risks

- The impacts of COVID-19 deepen poverty, exacerbate inequality, worsen crime and insecurity, and incentivize diminished GODR transparency or accountability.

- External shocks (natural, financial, economic, COVID-19) adversely affect GODR capacity to advance or finance self-reliance.

B. DO2: EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS ENHANCED

Development Hypothesis

The Dominican Republic will have more effective and inclusive service delivery systems if the effectiveness of decentralized service provision is increased, and quality services are improved to promote inclusive livelihoods, citizen security, and health and HIV.

Development Hypothesis Narrative

Focusing on the systems aspect of service delivery, DO2 takes an analytical approach that views development problems within the context of a local, national, and regional system to identify barriers and strategically employ USAID's comparative advantage to promote catalytic change. Responding to key Country Roadmap metrics, activities in DO2 directly address deficiencies in Social Group Inequality (0.17), a critical driver limiting access to and quality of services in the Dominican Republic. Other activities highlight relevant components of Roadmap indicators where macro-level measures mask on-the-ground realities and overstate the Dominican Republic's actual development status. In particular, DO2 activities seek to strengthen Government Effectiveness (0.45), Safety & Security (0.48), Education Quality (0.38) Biodiversity and Habitat Protection (0.86), and Child Health (0.89).

Private Sector Engagement

Viewing the private sector as an integral part of service systems, work in DO2 offers substantial opportunities for innovative PSE. USAID expects to engage in co-created water security initiatives in vulnerable and Dominican Republic-Haiti border communities in conjunction with large private sector entities and will seek similar opportunities in citizen security, education, and health. In particular, USAID will prioritize PSE opportunities that most effectively help improve the quality and inclusiveness of service systems by integrating PSE with NPI and FSR objectives.

Financing Self-Reliance

Work in DO2 will seek to implement a self-sustaining payment for ecosystems services (PES) initiative, similar to others already existing throughout the Caribbean, financed by the private sector and targeted municipalities and aimed at finding market-based solutions to improve environmental and natural resource management and conservation. Work in DO2 will also include efforts to strengthen public procurement systems so that public funds are effectively used to provide essential goods and services. This includes work to effectively and transparently implement the newly passed public-private partnership law in accordance with international best practices.

Redefining Our Relationship

In DO2, a redefined relationship with the GODR means greater emphasis on follow-through, ensuring that policy reforms carry forward into action and that actions are supported by adequate funding. From the RDR perspective, work in DO2 is thus strongly linked to DO1, and USAID expects the impact of

redefined relationships in governance to impact the quality and inclusiveness of service systems, and vice versa.

New Partnership Initiative

In DO2, USAID will continue to build upon its well-established partnership with local organizations in support of enhanced service delivery. In this CDCS, the Mission is exploring building a consortium of organizations to support capacity building of new and underutilized partners to further enhance service delivery in areas of HIV, WASH, and locally-led development.

I. IR2.1: Quality Services to Promote Citizen Security and Inclusive Livelihood Opportunities Improved

Low community trust in law enforcement and the justice sector correlates directly to high perceptions of insecurity. Further, inconsistent service delivery has hampered progress in strengthening livelihoods or improving citizen security, particularly for youth and vulnerable populations. Crime in the Dominican Republic is largely neighborhood-based, and solutions must involve national security institutions supporting community and neighborhood efforts to reduce crime and violence. The Dominican Republic has also lagged behind in many key education milestones, suggesting that the education system could be improved to better alleviate social inequalities, provide positive opportunities for youth, and strengthen citizen security.

Building on the framework of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), IR2.1 focuses on building GODR capacity to provide quality services that contribute to citizen security and build livelihood opportunities by addressing the complex relationships between youth, education, justice, and security. USAID activities will focus on improving the effectiveness and inclusiveness of justice services to vulnerable groups and victims of TIP and family/gender-based violence (F/GBV), and improving the quality of police services. Increasing access to justice services, USAID will expand the community justice program to new targeted municipalities and increase services for youth and vulnerable populations, particularly victims of F/GBV and TIP. Moreover, USAID will expand programs to provide youth in conflict with the law alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and alternatives to incarceration, including a supervised release program and a pretrial diversion program. Complementary activities will focus on education system improvements to support workforce opportunities and democratic participation. Focusing on increasing capacities that enable GODR commitment, USAID will take multi-sectoral approaches that leverage and integrate progress from across the portfolio to build GODR capacity to provide quality services.

Quality and inclusive education boosts human capital, opens livelihood opportunities for vulnerable populations and directly impacts citizen security. However, the Dominican Republic remains among the lowest performers for education quality in the LAC region despite the Ministry of Education (MINERD) holding the largest budget of any ministry. A 2018 GODR study found that only 12 percent of third grade students are reading at grade level, teacher competencies need improvement, classrooms are still ill-equipped, and high student-to-teacher ratios adversely affect instruction quality. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exposed further gaps and stalled improvements in student performance.

USAID activities will target systemic constraints in the education sector that limit self-reliance. Support to MINERD will help establish professional competencies for early grade teacher selection and technical assistance to build monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) capacity to allow adaptive management and

informed decision-making. To improve classroom instruction, USAID will continue to strengthen high quality teacher training and capacity building and support MINERD in the inclusion of classroom technology to operationalize the curriculum, expand instructional resources available to teachers, and alleviate learning constraints imposed by COVID-19. Further, USAID will support the nationwide scale up of a successful and well-received program to improve early-grade reading through the distribution of decodable, leveled books and innovative resources. Focused on improving learning outcomes and MINERD's ability to assess and plan for educational improvements, results measurement in education includes the implementation of an internationally accepted early grade reading assessment developed in collaboration with MINERD to ensure sustainability and use in GODR decision making.

To promote sustained and locally owned outcomes, USAID will engage in strategic GODR and private sector partnerships that fortify the links from national-level policy to decentralized service delivery to communities and beneficiaries. USAID will partner with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, universities, and private law firms to directly provide services to vulnerable groups targeted by community justice projects, with emphasis in the high crime area of Santo Domingo West²⁷ and on GBV victims, and will continue to identify new stakeholders to advance these efforts. For improved capacity and quality in the educational system, USAID will continue to partner with MINERD, Iniciativa Dominicana para una Educación de Calidad (IDEC), private sector, and faith-based organizations, ensuring that stakeholders understand and seek to advance performance and self-reliance metrics.

2. IR2.2: Effectiveness of Decentralized Service Provision Increased

Through IR2.2, USAID will enhance effective and inclusive service delivery systems by improving the decentralization of service provision in key systems in the Dominican Republic. In the energy sector, USAID will strengthen the operations, management, and policies of energy providers through technical assistance for more robust integrated planning and management, strategic placement of energy infrastructure, and the expansion of local energy delivery networks, leading to improved quality and reliability to underserved populations and areas. USAID will also work to streamline service delivery and scale-up of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems via technical assistance to improve locally-led participatory design models for local and community management of water resources, thereby improving inclusive water security to highly vulnerable areas. Additional work with municipal and community partners will develop plans for solid waste and recycling infrastructure, as well as technical assistance to combat ocean plastic pollution. Capacity building activities to municipalities and other stakeholders will focus on FSR initiatives that improve the ability to solicit public funding and design and manage locally-led initiatives to improve access and quality of basic services at the local level.

Private sector partners play a key role in ensuring the efficacy and long-term viability of interventions in IR2.2. Advancing the resilience and performance of the energy sector will require USAID's guidance and close collaboration between private sector providers and GODR regulatory entities to ensure adoption and scale-up of needed reforms. Water security activities will be co-created with large private sector entities and designed to integrate and build the capacity of community-based and faith-based organizations (FBO), overlapping with New Partnership Initiative (NPI) objectives. Promoting FSR, IR2.2 also includes the implementation of a payment for ecosystem services (PES) plan to advance self-sustaining, private sector-financed environmental and natural resource management objectives.

²⁷ USAID/Dominican Republic Criminal Justice System Strengthened Project. *Citizen security, crime and violence in five high-risk communities in the Dominican Republic*, 2020. Highlights Santo Domingo West as the second most crime-ridden municipality and lacking in justice sector or GBV victim services.

WASH and water security work also provide an opportunity to engage in meaningful donor collaboration, as USAID's focus on technical assistance and community management can complement larger water infrastructure projects financed by the World Bank and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

3. IR2.3: Quality of Health and HIV Services Improved

Through IR2.3, USAID will improve the quality of health and HIV services in the Dominican Republic, seeking to augment care and treatment services and harmonize the implementation of national-level directives to local health care providers. USAID's approach supports strategies that adapt to the lives of focus and key populations to provide client-centered and stigma/discrimination free services that facilitate testing and antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation and adherence. Clinical activities will develop continuous quality improvement mechanisms for HIV testing, care, and treatment to accelerate progress toward HIV epidemic control, targeting in particular the Haitian and Haitian descent population in the Dominican Republic. Strengthened monitoring and supervision at the clinical level will better customize the client experience to tailor services to the needs of focus and key populations throughout the continuum of care.

Work in IR2.3 will also support the Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud Pública, MSP) to harmonize supervision systems and tools across the health system in coordination with the national health service (Servicio Nacional de Salud, SNS), regional health directorates, provincial health offices, and HIV clinical site leadership. Activities will ensure compliance with national goals, guidelines, and protocols to achieve HIV epidemic control among focus and key populations, including human resource management and improved planning for facility, community, and mobile staffing. Building from IR1.3, USAID will also work with GODR entities and private sector suppliers in IR2.3 to improve HIV medical supply and commodity systems to ensure sufficient stocks, facilitate community dispensing of antiretroviral (ARV) medications, and promote the scale-up of multi-month dispensing (MMD).

4. Critical Assumptions and Risks

Assumptions

- GODR remains committed to reforms to attract private sector investment for development.
- Coordinated municipal interventions leverage impacts across sectors.
- Targeted Haitian private sector, civil society, and/or local governments commit to transboundary collaboration.
- GODR remains committed to decentralized service provision.
- Health care providers have the capacity to enact performance improvement measures.

Risks

- COVID-19 worsens poverty
- Economic, natural/climate change, or health crises damage livelihoods, infrastructure, or human capital.
- Climate change, natural, and environmental impacts or shocks (hurricanes, earthquakes, drought, flood, pests, etc.) continue to worsen and damage infrastructure and livelihoods.
- Instability in Haiti prevents transboundary collaboration.

C. DO3: RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY WELLBEING IMPROVED

Development Hypothesis

The Dominican Republic will improve resilient and inclusive community wellbeing if the capacity for locally owned sustainable outcomes is improved, citizen security is enhanced through integrated community level violence reduction, and health management and monitoring at the community level is strengthened.

Development Hypothesis Narrative

The field of international development has long been criticized as paternalistic and prescriptive, reinforcing the false narrative that countries need rescuing because local actors are incapable of advancing their own development. However, transformative and intergenerational prosperity must be locally led to achieve sustainability and self-reliance. Through DO3, USAID is shifting its relationships with local and transboundary actors – individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, governments – to jointly set development agendas, design solutions, build capacities and domestic resources to undertake successful initiatives, and leave a legacy of development capacity to enable lasting progress beyond USAID programming.

DO3 takes an analytical approach to address community resilience through the social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions that impact wellbeing, as determined by individuals and communities. Work in DO3 will focus on communities and local organizations, building capacities to undertake locally-led development, increase civic participation, resolve local conflict, and advocate for needed resources to foster resilient community wellbeing.

Private Sector Engagement

Work in DO3 aims to build rural, underserved, and border community capacity to take part in the Dominican Republic's macro-level economic growth, and this requires greater PSE at the community level. Integrated with place-based approaches to citizen security, community-level activities in education and workforce skills tie directly to the private sector as a source of jobs and local investment. PSE in DO3 also supports transboundary initiatives, as cross-border trade contributes importantly to the economies on both sides of the border. The Mission has already identified a prospective set of key private sector firms seeking to expand their investments in the Dominican Republic and along the border region and will develop those relationships as part of locally-led development efforts in water and sanitation, biodiversity, and conflict mitigation and management.

Financing Self-Reliance

FSR efforts in DO3 focus on increasing the capacity of local civil society to access and mobilize domestic resources, particularly in vulnerable and Dominican Republic-Haiti border communities. Closely tied to NPI objectives in DO3, this work seeks to undo the bias in GODR funding that has tended to ignore some of the country's most underdeveloped areas by boosting the capacity of local organizations to solicit, secure, and administer funding for locally-identified development initiatives.

Redefining Our Relationship

RDR in DO3 means shifting conversations and decisions from a distinct focus on urban areas toward vulnerable communities and local needs, and work in DO3 thus continues the theme of elevating local organizations in vulnerable areas into the national spotlight. Reinforcing FSR objectives, RDR will build networks of local stakeholders that successfully integrate with national decision-makers, raising the profile of development challenges in the most vulnerable communities and creating pathways that lead to the mobilization of greater domestic resources. These may include youth-focused organizations, advocates for community security, transboundary organizations, and community health advocates.

New Partnership Initiative

DO3 is the nexus of USAID's strategic focus on new and underutilized partners to strengthen locally-led development. NPI efforts in DO3 will help build a consortium of local NGOs to support capacity building efforts for new and underutilized partners to compete for and manage USAID awards. Specific activities may include: training and technical assistance on organizational and financial management for NGOs, robust M&E methods for NGOs, and tools to structure and manage small grants portfolios. This approach builds on more comprehensive Mission-wide efforts to integrate institutional strengthening across all awards and promotes, for example, PEPFAR's goal of directing 70 percent of global funding to local organizations.

I. IR3.1: Integrated Community Level Violence Reduction and Citizen Security Enhanced

Dominican youth face tremendous challenges that do not allow them to reach their full potential. Seventy seven percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 29 have been victims of F/GBV, and youth represent the highest percentage of homicide victims in a country with high levels of violent crime. Moreover, poor educational quality and attainment leads to early school abandonment resulting in low skill levels amongst Dominican youth that limit their possibilities of accessing employment and contribute to juvenile delinquency. In response, IR 3.1 will foster locally-led youth and community strengthening initiatives to empower local actors and strengthen civil society organizations. Activities will focus on promoting positive youth development, youth leadership, and community-level interventions to reduce the risk of crime and violence. In conjunction, other activities will expand access to formal and informal justice for vulnerable populations through community-based legal aid and victims' assistance programs.

Reflecting CBSI's strategic framework and its emphasis on integrating multifaceted crime and violence drivers in high-threat locations, USAID will employ place-based approaches for crime and violence prevention at the community level, focusing integrated efforts in high crime hotspots²⁸. Based on available crime and violence data, site selection will be jointly decided through collaborative engagement with GODR, civil society, and private sector stakeholders. In each identified place, USAID will bolster the capacity of community organizations such as Community Justice Houses and local Citizen Security Roundtables to develop data-driven and evidence-based interventions that target citizen security and gender issues. At the community level, USAID will support youth networks in areas of high crime and violence through an integrated and multi-sectoral approach that provides increased opportunities in

²⁸ Eck, John E. & Rob T. Guerette. 2012. "Place-Based Crime Prevention: Theory, Evidence, and Policy." In Brandon C. Welsh & David P. Farrington, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Crime Prevention*. pp 354-383. New York: Oxford University Press.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288349490_Place-Based_Crime_Prevention_Theory_Evidence_and_Policy

education, employment insertion, and health for youth with risk factors caused by marginalization and disenfranchisement.

To ensure continued community-level demand for democratic progress, efforts to increase civic engagement will complement youth security initiatives and foster more resilient communities. USAID will continue to work with targeted high-crime municipalities to build civil society and independent media capacity to demand regular coordination spaces and to allow vulnerable populations, including youth at risk, to interact with local governance systems on addressing issues of crime and violence. Within the school setting, USAID will also build networks and collaborative capacities for community and parent organizations, local governments, and civil society and faith based organizations to strengthen support services for vulnerable youth and serve as information and referral hubs for families in need of additional services. To advance financing self-reliance, USAID will also foster private sector partnerships to mobilize resources to improve school facilities, ensure work-relevant curricula, and facilitate school-to-work pathways for youth.

To ensure effective and inclusive strategy and program implementation, USAID will engage in partnerships with local government, civil society and private sector stakeholders. Building on existing agreements with large-scale private sector manufacturing entities, USAID will promote positive youth development in vulnerable communities, bringing resources and capabilities to integrate crime and violence, education, and workforce development efforts.

2. IR3.2: Capacity for Locally Owned Sustainable Outcomes Improved

Development issues occur within the context of social, economic, and political influences and are most effectively addressed when local priorities and development solutions are integrated via active networks that harmonize the linkages between centralized government policies and local implementation plans. Robust connections between communities, private sector, civil society, local, and national governments help ensure that interventions generate internal sustainability for needed results. However, at the local level, pathways and capacities for productive engagement and collaboration that form the foundation of locally-led development are limited in the Dominican Republic. Vulnerable populations and communities are often disconnected, without access to decision-making systems or networks, and without the means to independently solve locally identified issues. IR3.2 thus seeks to build the capacity for locally owned sustainable outcomes that promote resilient and inclusive community wellbeing and genuine self-reliance in the Dominican Republic and the border/transboundary region.

IR3.2 expands the systems thinking approach to foster locally-led, locally-owned, sustainable development outcomes. Work in IR3.2 will link local systems to strengthen the capacity to identify community development challenges and collaboratively craft and implement solutions in key sectors. To establish a foundation of local, relevant data for decision-making, USAID will engage local organizations and associations as grantees to conduct the formative research necessary to develop and implement social behavior change strategies that raise awareness and include all segments of the community — including women and youth — in participatory, two-way communication. For marine protected areas, this will bring together local and transboundary stakeholders to support local participation and adaptive management in the northern Dominican Republic-Haiti region. Similarly, WASH activities will build the capacity of local stakeholders - communities, government actors, and the private sector - to take collective action in the sustainable management of critical water resources and sanitation systems. Building on strengthened policy environments (IR1.2) and service systems (IR2.2), USAID will also help bolster the resilience of local livelihoods and farmers to withstand extreme weather events like

droughts, heat waves, and floods that damage crops and reduce food security. IR3.2 will further support the establishment of renewable energy generation that will provide increased access to clean energy to vulnerable communities and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

Work in IR3.2 will foster new partnerships between local transboundary organizations from the Dominican Republic and Haiti to address conflict drivers and conflict mitigation and management (CMM) challenges that have constrained collaboration in the Dominican Republic-Haiti border region and stalled people-to-people reconciliation. These efforts will build on shared community assets in both Dominican and Haitian communities to improve livelihoods, generate forums for dialogue and conflict resolution, and facilitate locally-led development solutions.

3. IR3.3: Community Health Management and Monitoring Strengthened

USAID/Dominican Republic's Health work, through the PEPFAR program, has been at the forefront of empowering local actors and vulnerable populations and engaging communities to advance self-reliance. Under IR 3.3, activities will support the development of community-led health management and monitoring in collaboration with civil society and host country governments. The ongoing challenge of antiretroviral initiation and retention on treatment to achieve HIV epidemic control - particularly among the Haitian and Haitian descent population - requires a suite of interventions aimed at providing clinical, psychosocial, and broad-based family services in culturally and linguistically responsive settings. Complementary activities will enhance the capacities of civil society and community serving organizations to advocate for and facilitate inclusive and high-quality community health services. Community-led monitoring (CLM) will be an integral part of USAID activities to improve health outcomes, initiated, led, and implemented by independent, local community organizations, including community-based, faith-based and civil society organizations, as well as networks for key populations (KP) and People living with HIV (PLHIV). Designed to be action-oriented, CLM is expected to help diagnose and pinpoint persistent challenges and barriers related to HIV service uptake and retention at the community and facility level and link directly to follow-up processes and corrective actions to improve service delivery for PLHIV.

Leveraging New Partnership Initiative (NPI) resources and supporting the local partner transition detailed in the PEPFAR strategy²⁹, activities in IR3.3 will also provide technical assistance to current sub-grantees to effectively manage USG funds and will seek expanded opportunities to include additional local, community, and faith-based organizations as partners. Expanded work as part of the NPI will facilitate direct engagement with new and diverse local partners that can flexibly customize interventions to the changing needs of focus and key populations. Further, IR3.3 advances transboundary collaboration, explicitly linking to PEPFAR/Haiti to improve and advance local and community-level HIV objectives in both countries.

4. Critical Assumptions and Risks

Assumptions

- Community-based approaches leverage resources and improve programmatic effectiveness.
- Civil society remains active in target communities.

²⁹ PEPFAR/Dominican Republic Country Operational Plan 2020.
<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COP-2020-Dominican-Republic-with-Appendix-C.pdf>

- Human resources are available to provide culturally appropriate health care, psycho-social, and support services to focus populations in target communities.
- GODR strengthens local actors (MEPyD) to coordinate local development resources and direct donor interventions.

Risks

- Economic or food security impacts of COVID-19 in vulnerable communities overtake other development priorities.
- Local and transboundary actors are unable to collaborate productively.
- Supply chain challenges negatively affect the ability to provide quality health services at the community level.

V. SUPPORTING CONTENT

A. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

Robust MEL strategies form an integral part of USAID's self-reliance approach for the Dominican Republic. As part of the implementation plan for this CDCS, USAID/Dominican Republic will develop monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approaches to track, analyze, and evaluate progress toward CDCS strategic objectives and promote evidence-based decisions for adaptive management. Good MEL practice involves engaging GODR counterparts, civil society, and private sector stakeholders in MEL planning and MEL activities, including data sharing and use of evidence for decision making, to promote dialogue, deepen the culture of evidence-based decisions, and support progress toward self-reliance.

The CDCS introduces a new thematically-based results framework, and MEL strategies will seek to capture and highlight the multiple dimensions of the CDCS objectives. In particular, MEL efforts will seek to capture results based on each of the DOs - governance, service systems, and community resilience - as the aggregate of IR-level results accomplished by each technical team. Addressing the thematic dimension of the CDCS, DO quarterly review teams will coordinate with technical teams and the Mission's MEL team to identify appropriate metrics and indicators to regularly monitor progress and to synthesize findings from evaluations and assessments to effectively track and attribute accomplishments at the DO level. Notional learning questions may also take into account the different degrees of impact across technical sectors for similar types of work. However, the MEL approach will also capture the impacts of work that crosses DOs, as suggested in the Notional Cross-DO Learning Questions. Typically within the context of a particular technical team's portfolio, learning questions may seek to address the relations between governance, service systems, and community resilience within a sector to assess the magnitude and directionality of any cross-impacts. This genre of portfolio analysis may help teams better understand their comparative advantages, allowing strategic adjustments to improve programmatic effectiveness.

Upon approval of the CDCS, the Mission will begin development of the Performance Management Plan (PMP) where monitoring approaches, evaluation plans, and collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) plans will be specifically articulated. The PMP will focus on providing evidence to document program results and guide decisions about programmatic use of learning through evaluations. Particularly as part of the learning agenda, the PMP will also identify opportunities to advance locally-led development and strengthen the culture of evidence-based decisions in the Dominican Republic through shared learning

opportunities with local and national GODR counterparts, civil society, communities, and private sector stakeholders. Given the challenges posed by COVID-19, the PMP will seek innovative MEL approaches adapted to ensuring robust data collection and effective communication in the context of the current operating environment.

Performance monitoring lays the foundation of the Mission's MEL approach. Activity MEL plans will ensure that partners collect robust, consistent, and timely data that allows for effective adaptive management and promotes progress toward specified objectives. Given the CDCS emphasis on vulnerable populations -- children and youth, women, Haitian-descent populations, PLHIV, and LGBTI -- implementing partners will also be required, as feasible, to account for relevant disaggregations (at minimum, age and sex) that allow targeted approaches and meaningful analysis. Where activities operate at the institutional, organizational, or policy level, monitoring will ensure the establishment of appropriate process metrics and consistent measures to assess changes in capacities and progress toward increased commitment. Active performance monitoring will entail regular field visits, ongoing consultations with implementing partners, and clearly elaborated performance indicator reference sheets (PIRS) to ensure the validity of performance data.

Evaluations serve to validate the Mission's development hypotheses, measure the impact of contextual factors on activity implementation, and identify adaptive management possibilities that routine monitoring could overlook. Evaluations will be planned with as much lead time as possible, establishing potential evaluative questions as part of project or activity design and ensuring the collection of relevant baseline data. Performance evaluations and impact evaluations (when feasible) will employ mixed methods of data collection. These may include desk analyses of published studies and third-party data, stakeholder or beneficiary surveys, key informant interviews and consultations with civil society, implementing partners, sector-working groups, and local and national government. The Mission will articulate an evaluation plan as part of the PMP and periodic updates to the Agency's Evaluation Registry. For example, the Mission will explore ways to use evaluation to understand changes related to the cross-cutting theme of resilience (IRs 1.2, 2.2, and 3.2). The Mission will coordinate and collaborate with LAC bureau colleagues and M&E specialists to refine the research agenda and ensure that evaluation results both address USAID performance and give insight into opportunities to improve self-reliance.

The Mission expects CLA to be integrated and prioritized across technical teams and to incorporate learning from across multiple dimensions of the RF. CLA activities will ensure Mission-wide collaboration to identify information gaps, clarify learning questions, and implement adaptive measures as needed to help target and refine interventions and validate development hypotheses. To highlight the unique dimensions of the RF, the complete CLA plan will be guided by the refined set of learning questions developed as part of the PMP process. Beyond a series of disconnected learning pieces, the CLA plan will seek to better understand the thematic elements of the DOs, as well as the impacts of sector-specific activities. For example, at the DO level, learning questions related to the effectiveness of USAID interventions on the inclusiveness and effectiveness of service delivery systems (DO2) may identify correlations and leverage points between education and citizen security activities (IR2.1, YES Team) and interventions in water security and natural resource management (IR2.2, SEED Team). Other learning activities may address a technical team's sectoral work across DOs. The Health team, for example, may seek to understand how strengthening community health capacities (IR3.3) impact advocacy for improved health sector governance (IR1.3).

DO 1 Notional Learning Questions

- What are the most sustainable and effective civic mechanisms to empower citizens and civil society to advocate for resources and reforms related to crime and violence prevention?
- To what extent have private sector engagement (PSE) and domestic resource mobilization (DRM) supported the Dominican Republic in its journey to self-reliance?
- How can USAID effectively leverage its comparative advantages to advance financing self-reliance (FSR) activities?
- What are the primary drivers of private sector investments in targeted sectors?
- How can communities be incentivized to effectively contribute to natural resource conservation and sustainable natural resource management?

DO 2 Notional Learning Questions

- To what extent have USAID interventions improved the inclusiveness and effectiveness of targeted service delivery systems in the Dominican Republic?
- To what extent do coordinated municipal interventions in basic education and youth-focused livelihood initiatives impact crime and violence in the Dominican Republic?
- To what extent do transboundary collaborations with Haitian private sector, civil society, and/or local government impact the quality of local service delivery across national borders?

DO 3 Notional Learning Questions

- To what extent do place-based initiatives impact community crime and violence in the Dominican Republic?
- How and to what extent can organizations (e.g. community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector stakeholders, etc.) access and effectively operate in targeted hot spots communities where crime and violence is acute?
- To what extent do informal justice interventions affect GBV and the ability of vulnerable groups in the Dominican Republic to exercise rights?
- To what extent do linked local systems affect community resilience?
- To what extent do Creole-based psychological and clinical services impact initiation and adherence to treatment among HIV+ Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent?

Notional Cross-DO Learning Questions

- To what extent do interventions to strengthen new and underutilized partners affect civic engagement? (DO1 and DO3)
- To what extent do changes in the quality or inclusiveness of service provision affect community wellbeing or resilience? (DO2 and DO3)

B. Religious Freedom and Faith-Based Organizations

Data from the Pew Research Center³⁰ shows that 88 percent of the Dominican population identifies as Christian (including Catholic), 11 percent are unaffiliated, and all other religions make up approximately 1 percent of the population. Further, the GODR imposes almost no restrictions on religious freedom, and religion is a large component of social life in the Dominican Republic. As such, there exist a large number of community-level faith-based organizations (FBO) in the Dominican Republic, and this CDCS recognizes the untapped potential for building self-reliance and locally-led development in part through

³⁰ Pew Research Center. Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project. <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/dominican-republic>

these organizations. Although the Mission has undertaken successful partnerships with larger U.S.-based FBOs (World Vision, Christian Aid, etc.), the experience of co-creation, awards, or sub-awards with local, smaller FBOs has been much more limited. Particularly in DO3 as part of the Local Works activity and CLM activities in Health, activities building community resilience and wellbeing will seek to involve community organizations and FBOs as stakeholders to help fortify citizen security initiatives, promote behavior change and conflict management and mitigation, and strengthen community health and HIV outcomes. However, successful engagement of local community organizations and FBOs may require significant capacity building efforts to bolster their administrative and managerial capacities and project sustainability.

Required Annex

- A. [Journey to Self-Reliance Country Roadmap](#)