



United States Government Accountability Office

Report to the Acting Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies,
House Committee on Appropriations

June 2022

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Coordination of U.S. Assistance Can Be Improved

Accessible Version

GAO Highlight

Highlights of [GAO-22-104612](#), a report to the Acting Ranking Member; Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; House Committee on Appropriations

Why GAO Did This Study

The number of food-insecure people has increased since 2014, and an estimated 768 million people were undernourished in 2020, according to the United Nations. The Global Food Security Act of 2016 required the President to coordinate the development and implementation of a whole-of-government global food security strategy. According to the GFSS, increased interagency engagement is intended to build effective coordination among agencies that contribute to global food security.

GAO was asked to review U.S. global food security assistance. This report examines (1) U.S. agency coordination of global food security assistance at the global level and in selected countries; (2) the extent to which U.S. agencies coordinate this assistance in accordance with leading collaboration practices; and (3) U.S. agencies' management of any duplication, overlap, or fragmentation of assistance in the selected countries. GAO reviewed GFSS documents and interviewed representatives of GFSS agencies and other stakeholders, including implementing partners and host governments in Bangladesh, Guatemala, Kenya, and Niger. GAO selected these countries using criteria such as geographic diversity and high levels of U.S. food security funding.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations to USAID to ensure all relevant agencies are included in planning and coordination of food security assistance and can readily access information about each other's current and planned assistance. USAID concurred with both recommendations.

View [GAO-22-104612](#). For more information, contact Chelsa Kenney at (202) 512-2964 or kenneyc@gao.gov.

June 2022

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY




Coordination of U.S. Assistance Can Be Improved

What GAO Found

The agencies responsible for implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS)—collectively known as the GFSS Interagency—have established mechanisms for coordinating assistance at the global and country levels. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) leads the coordination of these agencies' efforts to implement the strategy. At the global level, GFSS Interagency working groups meet to coordinate assistance efforts. At the country level, a country coordinator facilitates a whole-of-government strategy and plan in each country where agencies provide food security assistance. Agencies providing assistance in the four countries GAO selected for its review reported using a variety of mechanisms to coordinate with one another and key stakeholders. Agency officials and key stakeholders generally reported favorably on the quality of this coordination.

GAO found that the GFSS Interagency's mechanisms for coordinating food security assistance generally address four of seven leading practices GAO has identified as important for collaboration. However, this coordination can be improved. For example, agencies without in-country personnel are not always included in country-level planning of U.S. food security assistance. In addition, the GFSS Interagency has not established a mechanism to ensure all relevant agencies can readily access information about each other's current and planned spending. As a result, they have limited ability to leverage each other's planned assistance and promote a whole-of-government approach.

Selected Leading Collaboration Practices Partially Addressed by Agencies Implementing the U.S. Global Food Security Strategy

|  Outcomes and accountability |  Participants |  Resources |
|--|--|---|
| Have short-term and long-term outcomes been clearly defined? Is there a way to track and monitor their progress? | Have all relevant participants been included? Do they have the ability to commit resources for their agency? | How will the collaborative mechanism be funded and staffed? Have online collaboration tools been developed? |

Source: GAO. | GAO-22-104612

U.S. agencies reported taking steps to mitigate potential negative effects of any duplication, overlap, and fragmentation of food security assistance in the four selected countries, where multiple agencies target similar broad objectives. Agency officials and key stakeholder representatives in the countries observed some duplication, overlap, and fragmentation but also reported coordinating to mitigate potential negative effects. For example, USAID officials in Bangladesh told GAO they try to engage monthly or quarterly with the host government and other bilateral donors to review activities; identify any duplication, overlap, or fragmentation; and devise plans to ensure the activities are complementary. U.S. officials and key stakeholders reported some duplication, overlap, and fragmentation of food security assistance in the four countries—for example, overlapping assistance provided by U.S. agencies, the World Food Program, and

the Kenyan government—but generally said this has had positive effects. GAO has previously reported that it may be beneficial for multiple agencies or entities to be involved in the same programmatic area of large or complex federal efforts.

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Abbreviations

| | |
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| DOF | duplication, overlap, and fragmentation |
| DFC | U.S. International Development Finance Corporation |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FTF | Feed the Future |
| GFSS | U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy |
| IAF | Inter-American Foundation |
| MCC | Millennium Challenge Corporation |
| UN | United Nations |
| USADF | U.S. African Development Foundation |
| USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |
| USDA | U.S. Department of Agriculture |

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June 1, 2022

The Honorable Andy Harris
Acting Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Harris:

Globally, the number of food-insecure people has increased since 2014, rising considerably from 2019 through 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that in 2020, 768 million people were undernourished—an indication of global hunger—and 149 million children younger than 5 years suffered from stunting.¹ FAO has also warned that the conflict in Ukraine may further increase global food insecurity, given the region’s important role in the world’s supply of food. One of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals is to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. However, according to FAO, the world is not on track to achieve targets for food security or nutrition.

To help address food insecurity worldwide, the United States spends billions of dollars annually. Congress passed the Global Food Security Act of 2016,² which required the President to coordinate the development and implementation of a whole-of-government Global Food Security

¹Stunting (i.e., impaired growth and development) is often caused by poor nutrition. According to FAO, the actual numbers of undernourished people and, in particular, children with stunting are expected to be higher than the original estimates because of the pandemic. See Food and Agriculture Organization, et al. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2021: Transforming Food Systems for Food Security, Improved Nutrition and Affordable Healthy Diets for All* (Rome: 2021).

²Pub. L. No. 114–195, 130 Stat. 676 (2016) codified as amended by the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2017, Pub. L. No. 115–266, 132 Stat. 3755 (2018) at 22 U.S.C. § 9301 *et seq.*

Strategy.³ The U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), established in 2016 and updated in 2021, is intended to reflect the unique skills, resources, and expertise of U.S. agencies that contribute to global food security and also to reflect input from partners in the private sector and civil society.⁴ The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) leads the global coordination of efforts conducted by itself and 11 other U.S. agencies—collectively known as the GFSS Interagency—to implement the strategy. According to the GFSS, increased interagency engagement is intended to build effective coordination.

We were asked to review U.S. global food security assistance, including amounts, progress, and coordination.⁵ This report examines (1) U.S. agency coordination of global food security assistance programs at the global level and in selected countries; (2) the extent to which U.S. agencies coordinate this assistance in accordance with leading practices for enhancing collaboration; and (3) U.S. agencies' management of any duplication, overlap, or fragmentation of food security assistance in the selected countries.

To examine U.S. agency coordination of global food security assistance programs, we reviewed GFSS documents and interviewed officials of USAID and seven other agencies with key roles in implementing the GFSS. We interviewed, and requested written information from, agency officials at the headquarters level and at U.S. missions in four countries—Bangladesh, Guatemala, Kenya, and Niger. We selected these countries on the basis of several criteria, including overall U.S. food assistance funding and geographic diversity.

³The President delegated this responsibility to the USAID Administrator. See Memorandum of President of the United States, Sept. 30, 2016, 81 Fed. Reg. 76,483 (Nov. 2, 2016), set forth as a note to 22 U.S.C. § 9304.

⁴*U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy, FY 2017-2021* (Sept. 2016); *U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy, Fiscal Year 2022-2026*.

⁵In response to this request, we have issued a mapping of global food security activities and a report on how USAID assesses and reports progress in global food security programs. See GAO, *Global Food Security: Information on Spending and Types of Assistance Provided by the United States and Other Donors*, [GAO-21-47R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 19, 2020); and *Global Food Security: Improved Monitoring Framework Needed to Assess and Report on Feed the Future's Performance*, [GAO-21-548](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 31, 2021).

We sent written, semistructured questions to officials from each U.S. agency providing food security assistance in the selected countries. We also sent the questions to key stakeholders, including multilateral organizations as well as nongovernmental organizations implementing U.S.-funded food security assistance—known as implementing partners—in these locations.⁶ We asked these officials to, among other things, describe and characterize the quality (ideal, satisfactory, or challenging) of U.S. agencies' efforts to coordinate food security assistance activities. We then conducted a content analysis of responses and compared the answers from the U.S. agencies with those of the key stakeholders, to understand the quality of the coordination from the perspective of various key participants.

To examine the extent to which U.S. agencies providing global food security assistance coordinated with one another in accordance with leading practices to enhance collaboration, we compared coordination mechanisms established under the GFSS with leading practices for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms.⁷ Specifically, we evaluated whether GFSS agencies, led by USAID, generally followed, partially followed, or did not follow leading practices related to (1) outcomes and accountability, (2) bridging organizational cultures, (3) leadership, (4) clarity of roles and responsibilities, (5) participants, (6) resources, and (7) written guidance and agreements. To make this determination, we examined GFSS documents, including the GFSS for fiscal years 2017 through 2021 (i.e., the original strategy); the GFSS for fiscal years 2022 through 2026 (i.e., the updated strategy); annual GFSS implementation reports; written responses from agencies regarding coordination activities; and agency-specific implementation plans. We also conducted oral and written interviews with agency officials.

To examine U.S. agencies' management of duplication, overlap, or fragmentation of global food security assistance in selected countries, we reviewed GFSS documents and data. We also asked agencies and key stakeholders in those countries to report whether they had observed any duplication, overlap, or fragmentation in food security assistance efforts, and we compared the U.S. agencies' and key stakeholders' answers. In

⁶In this report, "key stakeholders" refers to representatives of selected multilateral organizations and implementing partners conducting food security assistance efforts in the selected countries.

⁷See GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms*, [GAO-12-1022](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 2012).

addition, using our guide for evaluating and managing duplication, overlap, and fragmentation, we reviewed documentation provided by officials in each country.⁸ These documents included country development cooperation strategies for each country, GFSS country plans, and program descriptions for food security activities.

See appendix I for more information about our objectives, scope, and methodology.

We conducted this performance audit from November 2020 to June 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS)

The GFSS is a whole-of-government strategy that lays the groundwork for the U.S. government to contribute to reducing global hunger and food insecurity.⁹ According to the updated GFSS, the implementing agencies aim to contribute to a reduction in poverty and stunting in selected countries between 2022 and 2026 by partnering with foreign

⁸GAO, *Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication: An Evaluation and Management Guide*, [GAO-15-49SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: April 2015). For the purposes of our analysis, we considered duplication to have occurred when two or more agencies or programs engaged in the same activities or provided the same services. We considered overlap to have occurred when multiple agencies or programs had similar goals, engaged in similar activities or strategies to achieve them, or targeted similar beneficiaries. We considered fragmentation to have occurred when more than one federal agency (or more than one organization in an agency) was involved in the same broad area of need and opportunities existed to improve service delivery.

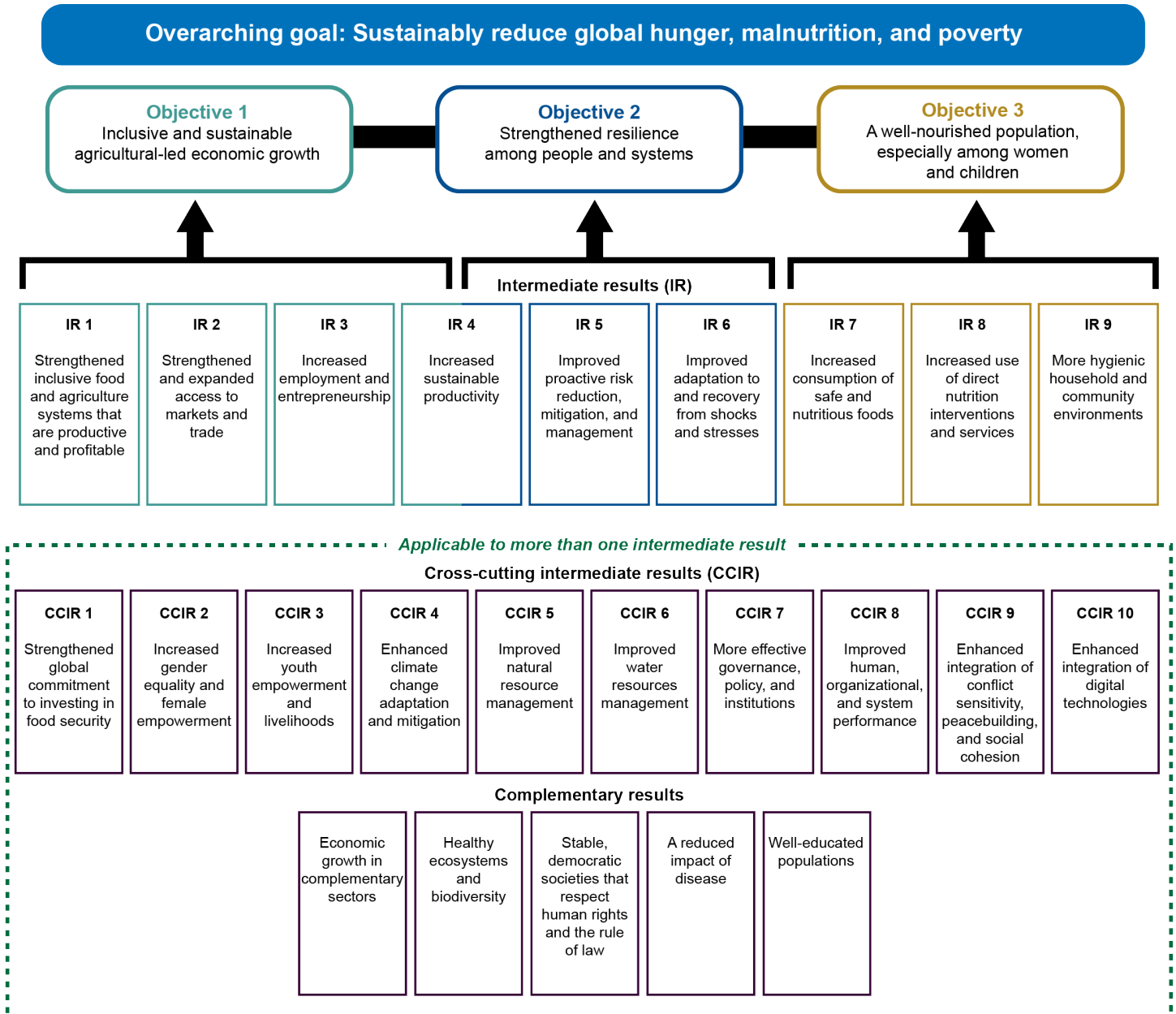
⁹The GFSS guides the implementation of Feed the Future (FTF), a U.S. government-wide initiative established in 2010 to provide nonemergency global food security assistance. Through FTF, U.S. government agencies coordinate to leverage their resources and expertise in agriculture, trade, nutrition, investment, development, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and policy.

governments, the private sector, civil society, implementing partners, and the research community.

The GFSS establishes an overarching goal of sustainably reducing global poverty, hunger, and malnutrition by achieving three main objectives (see fig 1):

- Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth
- Strengthened resilience among people, communities, countries, and systems
- A well-nourished population, especially among women and children

Figure 1: U.S. Government’s GFSS Results Framework

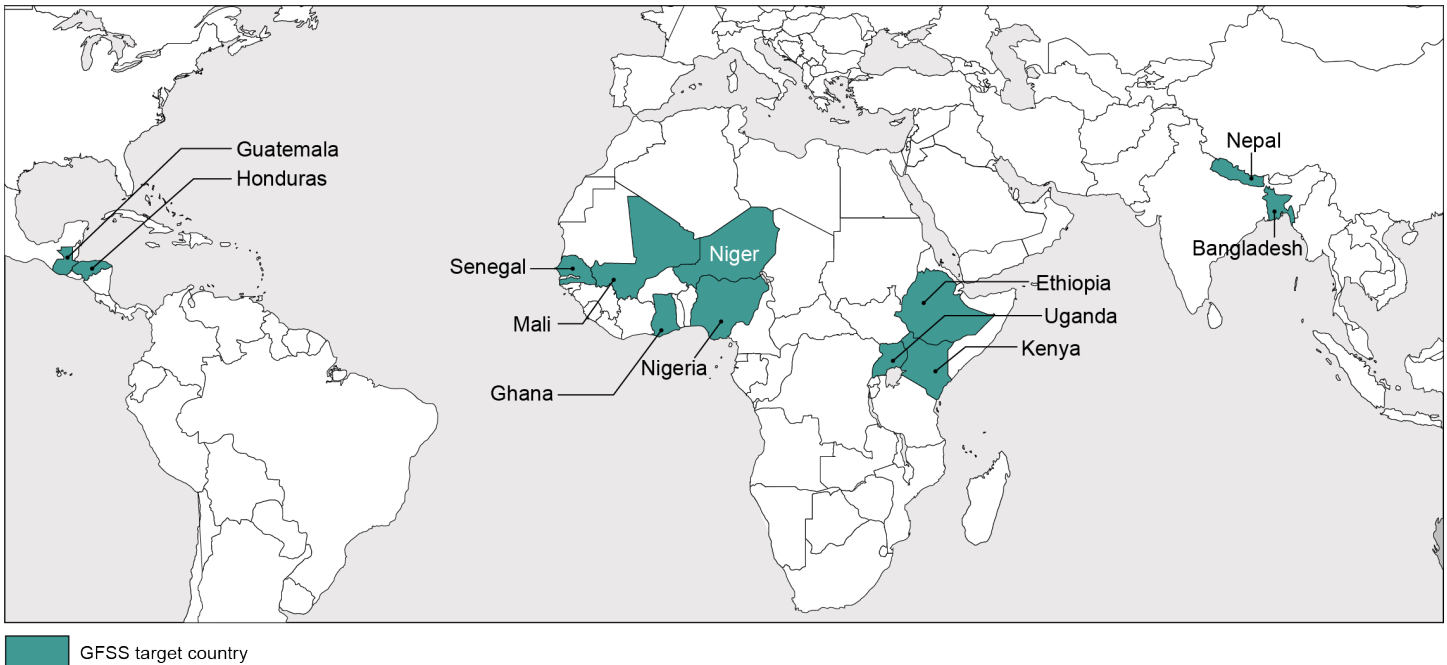


Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy documents (GFSS). | GAO-22-104612

The GFSS seeks to target investments in countries and geographic areas with the greatest potential for sustainably improving food security and nutrition. The strategy identifies 12 target countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Niger,

Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda (see fig. 2). GFSS activities, which are not limited to the target countries, also support food-security efforts in countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Figure 2: GFSS Target Countries



Source: GAO analysis of documents related to the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS). | GAO-22-104612

GFSS Interagency

The GFSS states that to achieve sustainable improvements in food security and nutrition, U.S. food assistance must be deliberately sequenced, layered, and integrated across multiple funding streams, programs, agencies, and departments.¹⁰ As we reported in 2013, USAID

¹⁰According to USAID, opportunities to sequence, layer, and integrate programs should be considered in analysis and planning of humanitarian and development programming at the community, subregional, regional, and national levels. Sequencing is a dynamic process in which programming changes focus as resilience capacity changes. Layering is the development of resilience capacities requiring multiple layers of intervention and support. Integration brings the components together to more effectively and efficiently achieve resilience. See U.S. Agency for International Development, *The Horn of Africa Resilience Network (HoRN): Regional Resilience Framework 2.0* (2016).

coordinates this whole-of-government approach for global food security assistance.¹¹

USAID leads the GFSS Interagency, whose members include seven other agencies with key roles in implementing the strategy: the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA), State, and the Treasury; Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC); U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF); Inter-American Foundation (IAF); and U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) (see fig. 3).¹² In fiscal years 2012 through 2020, these agencies provided the majority of U.S. funding—a total of approximately \$18 billion—for global food security activities, according to data on U.S. government spending.

Figure 3: U.S. Agencies with Key Roles in Implementing the GFSS



Source: GAO analysis of documents related to the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS). | GAO-22-104612

Note: The Peace Corps typically has a key role in implementing the GFSS but in March 2020 temporarily suspended its programs because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Agencies with more limited roles in implementing the GFSS are the Department of Commerce, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and U.S. Geological Survey.

¹¹See GAO, *Global Food Security: USAID Is Improving Coordination but Needs to Require Systematic Assessments of Country-Level Risk*, [GAO-13-809](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2013).

¹²The Inter-American Foundation is not named by statute as a “relevant agency” for implementation of the GFSS (see 22 U.S.C. § 9303(7)); however the President may specify other departments and agencies as relevant agencies and the IAF began participating in GFSS Interagency coordination of food security assistance in fiscal year 2018. Although the Peace Corps typically has a key role in implementing the GFSS, we did not include the Peace Corps in our review because, in March 2020, it temporarily suspended its programs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Three other agencies—the Department of Commerce, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and the U.S. Geological Survey—have more limited roles in implementing the GFSS; we did not include these agencies in our review because of their relatively low levels of global food security funding or programmatic activity. Additional agencies, such as the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and the Department of Defense, that are not involved in implementing the GFSS contribute marginally to global food security assistance.

USAID and its GFSS partner agencies focus on various types of activities to support global food security. According to USAID, in fiscal year 2020, these agencies and other GFSS stakeholders implemented or helped finance more than 740 projects in at least 108 countries, covering a wide range of activities.

- **USAID** works to promote food security through programs to strengthen agriculture-led growth; resilience; nutrition; and water security, sanitation, and hygiene. USAID aims to sequence, layer, and integrate its long-term development investments to increase resilience and food security to create sustainable pathways out of extreme poverty for chronically marginalized populations. USAID also provides emergency food assistance to vulnerable populations affected by natural disasters or conflict.
- **USDA** provides agricultural capacity building, food safety, rural development, nutrition assistance and works with developing countries to grow their economies and facilitate trade. USDA programs that support the GFSS include the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program, which supports education, nutrition, and food security; Food for Progress, which supports agricultural value chain development.
- **State** prioritizes food security as an issue of national security, and its officials in Washington, D.C., and at U.S. embassies and missions worldwide engage with foreign governments and in international forums to promote policies to improve global food security and nutrition.
- **Treasury** contributes to multilateral organizations that support multiple food security assistance projects. Treasury also leads the United States' engagement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, and the multilateral development banks.
- **MCC** provides development assistance to eligible countries through multiyear compact agreements to address barriers to economic growth and poverty reduction. This assistance includes programs to strengthen agricultural and rural economies and address sources of food insecurity.
- **USADF** provides grants and technical assistance, to small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa to support a range of programmatic areas, including agriculture and food security.
- **IAF** provides grants and technical assistance directly to local civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. This

assistance supports community-designed and -led efforts to improve agriculture and food security, among other programmatic goals.

- **DFC**, the U.S. government's development finance institution, partners with the private sector to finance solutions to challenges facing developing countries, including challenges related to agriculture and food security.

Figure 4 shows an example of a USDA food security assistance project in Guatemala.

Figure 4: USDA Food Assistance in Guatemala



Source: GAO. | GAO-22-104612

Coordination with Other GFSS Partners

The GFSS calls for agencies to coordinate their actions at the global, regional, and country levels across sectors in order to maximize impact to help countries achieve sustainable food security. The strategy also aims to promote collaboration and coordination between emergency assistance and development assistance, reiterating U.S. commitments, expressed in the Global Food Security Act of 2016, to build greater efficiencies

between emergency and development assistance.¹³ USAID is the primary U.S. agency responsible for providing both global emergency and development food assistance.

USAID, USDA, and Treasury manage GFSS programs through various entities. USAID and USDA manage GFSS programs through implementing partners, including private sector companies, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations such as the UN World Food Program. Treasury coordinates contributions to multilateral institutions that fund or implement food security projects, including the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The GFSS states that implementing partners will coordinate with host governments, other interagency partners, bilateral donor agencies, and international finance institutions.

Leading Collaboration Practices

As we have previously reported, achieving important outcomes requires the coordinated efforts of the federal government and, often, multilateral institutions, nonprofits, host governments, and the private sector.¹⁴ We have broadly defined collaboration as any joint activity that is intended to produce more public value than could be produced when the agencies act alone. Experts have defined an interagency mechanism for collaboration as any arrangement or application that can facilitate collaboration between agencies.








Federal agencies may use a variety of mechanisms, such as interagency task forces or national strategies and initiatives, to implement interagency collaborative efforts. These mechanisms can address functions such as policy development, program implementation, oversight and monitoring, information sharing and communication, and building organizational capacity. Agencies often use more than one mechanism to further collaboration. Although these mechanisms differ in complexity and scope,

¹³The GFSS aims to promote collaboration among these programs to transition from emergency assistance, focused on reducing immediate risks, to longer-term efforts that build agricultural growth in order to reduce poverty and improve food security, nutrition, and resilience to future shocks and thus reduce the likelihood of future humanitarian assistance.

¹⁴[GAO-12-1022](#).

agencies should follow leading collaboration practices to implement them effectively (see fig. 5).

Figure 5: Leading Practices for Implementing Collaborative Mechanisms

| | | Key considerations |
|---|--|---|
|  | Outcomes and accountability | Have short-term and long-term outcomes been clearly defined? Is there a way to track and monitor their progress? |
|  | Bridging organizational cultures | What are the missions and organizational cultures of the participating agencies? Have agencies agreed on common terminology and definitions? |
|  | Leadership | How will leadership be sustained over the long-term? If leadership is shared, have roles and responsibilities been clearly identified and agreed upon? |
|  | Clarity of roles and responsibilities | Have participating agencies clarified roles and responsibilities? |
|  | Participants | Have all relevant participants been included? Do they have the ability to commit resources for their agency? |
|  | Resources | How will the collaborative mechanism be funded and staffed? Have online collaboration tools been developed? |
|  | Written guidance and agreements | If appropriate, have participating agencies documented their agreement regarding how they will be collaborating? Have they developed ways to continually update and monitor these agreements? |

Source: GAO. | GAO-22-104612

Duplication, Overlap, and Fragmentation

Duplication, overlap, and fragmentation (DOF) in federal programming can lead to potential positive or negative impacts.¹⁵ For example, in 2010 we found that the existence of multiple domestic food and nutrition assistance programs at various locations in a community can increase the likelihood that eligible individuals seeking benefits from one program will

¹⁵See [GAO-15-49SP](#).

be referred to other appropriate programs.¹⁶ We also found that program overlap can create the potential for unnecessary duplication of efforts for administering agencies, local providers, and individuals seeking assistance.¹⁷ Such duplication can waste administrative resources and confuse those seeking services.

Identifying DOF in federal programming can help agencies increase programs' efficiency and effectiveness; reduce or better manage the negative effects; and evaluate the potential trade-offs and unintended consequences. The following are standard definitions:¹⁸

- **Duplication** occurs when two or more agencies or programs are engaged in the same activities or provide the same services to the same beneficiaries.
- **Overlap** occurs when multiple agencies or programs have similar goals, engage in similar activities or strategies to achieve them, or target similar beneficiaries.
- **Fragmentation** refers to circumstances in which more than one federal agency (or more than one organization in an agency) is involved in the same broad area of need and opportunities exist to improve service delivery.

When DOF leads to generally positive outcomes, no corrective actions are necessary. If officials identify potential negative effects of DOF, they should identify opportunities to increase efficiency as well as options to reduce or eliminate the impact of these effects on program outcomes—for example, by improving their coordination with other agencies or consolidating or streamlining programs.

¹⁶GAO, *Domestic Food Assistance: Complex System Benefits Millions, but Additional Efforts Could Address Potential Inefficiency and Overlap among Smaller Programs*, [GAO-10-346](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 15, 2010).

¹⁷[GAO-10-346](#).

¹⁸[GAO-15-49SP](#).

Agencies Reported Coordinating Food Security Assistance at the Global and Country Levels through Various Mechanisms

Mechanisms Established for Global and Country-Level Coordination

Agencies with key roles in implementing the GFSS have established mechanisms—including working groups and a country coordinator role—for coordinating food assistance at the global and country levels. According to USAID, at the global level, agencies have established six working groups that meet quarterly or semiannually, or as needed for specific tasks, to coordinate global food security activities and planning with each other and with other key stakeholders (see table 1). These groups, each co-chaired by USAID and other agencies, include GFSS participants as well as other agencies that may contribute relevant information or data. According to the GFSS Interagency, the GFSS working groups are the primary collaborative mechanisms that GFSS participants use to coordinate food security assistance at the global level.

Table 1: GFSS Working Groups

| GFSS working group | Purpose | GFSS participants |
|--|---|--|
| Communications and Congressional Working Group | Share information, provide updates, align messaging for external engagement, and coordinate on public events and congressional engagement. | USAID, USDA, State, MCC, Peace Corps, USADF, IAF, DFC, Commerce |
| Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Working Group | Coordinate interagency performance monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on GFSS. Share best practices for monitoring, evaluation, and learning, and aggregate results reported to Congress in annual GFSS Implementation Reports. | USAID, USDA, MCC, Peace Corps, USADF, IAF |
| Policy Working Group | Discuss policy questions related to implementation of GFSS activities, and recommend actions, as needed. Inform agencies and solicit feedback on the progress and challenges reported through the annual GFSS Policy Matrix. Share policy matters and updates of key issues related to GFSS, such as emerging threats, regional policy positions, African Union policy collaboration, and update GFSS priorities. | USAID, USDA, State, MCC, Commerce, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative |
| Private Sector Engagement Working Group | Share information and coordinate resources, tools, and authorities to engage and leverage private sector expertise and investment in support of GFSS objectives. | USAID, USDA, State, MCC, Peace Corps, USADF, DFC |

Letter

| GFSS working group | Purpose | GFSS participants |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Global Engagement Working Group | Share information on global engagement forums such as the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security. Increase agency awareness of food security policy positions and messaging across these processes. | USAID, USDA, State, Treasury, USADF, the Peace Corps, and MCC, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative |
| Research Working Group | Support implementation of the Global Food Security research strategy to better align with, and leverage, broader U.S. strategies and investments in science, technology, and agricultural research. Apply science, technology, and innovation, including the research and extension activities supported by relevant U.S. agencies. | USAID, USDA, State, MCC, Peace Corps, DFC, USADF ^a |

Legend: GFSS = U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy, USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development, USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture, MCC = Millennium Challenge Corporation, USADF = U.S. African Development Foundation, DFC = U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, IAF = Inter-American Foundation.

Source: GAO analysis of information provided by GFSS interagency. | GAO-22-104612

^aThe Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Energy, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and U.S. Geological Survey also participate in the Research Working Group.

USAID has also taken steps to coordinate emergency and development assistance at the global level. According to USAID, USAID officials serve on the executive boards of UN agencies delivering emergency assistance and participate in international donor forums for both emergency and development assistance. In addition, USAID officials engage bilaterally with counterparts from other donor agencies. According to USAID, its Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs—which manages emergency assistance—also shares information about current and planned programming with other USAID bureaus responsible for managing development assistance that participate in the agency's Resilience Leadership Council. The council seeks to improve coordination within USAID to decrease the need for emergency assistance in areas of continued crises. (See fig. 6 for an example of USAID emergency assistance.)

Figure 6: USAID Emergency Assistance in Malawi



Source: GAO. | GAO-22-104612

To facilitate interagency coordination at the country level, the chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in each target country designates an agency official—typically from USAID—to serve as country coordinator.¹⁹ According to the GFSS, the country coordinator’s role is to facilitate a whole-of-government strategy and plan for U.S. food security and nutrition programming in that country, with specific country-level targets and objectives; coordinated implementation; and a coordinated approach to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. The country coordinator establishes and leads interagency collaborative mechanisms, which vary across countries. The GFSS also includes a requirement for the country coordinator to hold interagency meetings once per quarter.

According to the GFSS, all agencies with food security activities in a country, regardless of whether they have personnel stationed at the U.S. mission, should participate in country-level interagency working groups. USAID officials told us that in situations where another agency does not have personnel at the U.S. mission, other agencies frequently request USAID headquarters to facilitate coordination between the U.S. mission and that agency’s headquarters personnel.

¹⁹According to USAID, although the chief of mission can appoint a country coordinator from any agency conducting food security activities in that country, a USAID official currently serves as the country coordinator in each target country.

Mechanisms Used for Interagency Coordination in Selected Countries

In the four countries we selected for our review, U.S. agencies reported using a variety of in-country mechanisms to coordinate their food security assistance programming with that of other U.S. agencies. In addition, according to agency officials, USAID has taken steps in all four countries to coordinate its emergency assistance efforts with other development efforts, as the GFSS directs. Agency officials in each country reported that the quality of their coordination efforts—including coordination of emergency assistance with other development efforts—was either ideal or satisfactory.

Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, USAID and USDA officials reported using a number of mechanisms to coordinate food security assistance. USAID officials stated that they coordinate with other U.S. agencies providing food assistance during biweekly economic policy meetings; monthly food security meetings; quarterly food safety meetings hosted by USDA; and ad hoc information sharing, email, and phone calls. Officials from all agencies providing food security assistance in Bangladesh reported that the quality of their coordination efforts was satisfactory.

USAID officials in Bangladesh stated that they focus on layering and sequencing interventions to leverage resources and strengthen coordination between emergency and development assistance efforts. For example, after a 2020 cyclone destroyed fields of crops and washed away fishing ponds in Bangladesh, USAID provided emergency assistance to affected communities, supplying agricultural inputs such as seeds and replacing the lost fish populations. To complement this assistance, USAID planned follow-on development assistance efforts in these areas, such as providing technical assistance to beneficiaries to help them better cultivate the crops or restock their fish ponds. Finally, USAID linked these beneficiaries with agricultural markets to promote and sell their final products.

Guatemala. Agency officials in Guatemala reported that they rely on the regular post-level meetings under the auspices of the GFSS working groups to coordinate food security assistance in the country. These meetings, organized by USAID, include participants from USDA and IAF. USDA officials stated that they regularly provide input and agenda items for these meetings. (Fig. 7 shows a USDA project in Guatemala.) IAF officials stated that they use these meetings to identify initiatives and

areas of collaboration as well as share information about the progress of their efforts. Officials from all U.S. entities providing food security assistance in Guatemala reported that the quality of their coordination efforts was either ideal or satisfactory.

Figure 7: USDA School Feeding Project in Guatemala



Source: GAO. | GAO-22-104612

USAID officials in Guatemala also identified ways in which they coordinate emergency assistance with broader development efforts, including regular coordination meetings, colocation of emergency and development assistance personnel, joint planning efforts, and on-the-ground coordination. For example, USAID officials stated that after severe storms damaged water systems in an area with ongoing development efforts, USAID directed the implementing partners for the development programs to assist with short-term emergency efforts to repair the water systems. Officials stated that when the emergency efforts were completed, the implementing partners pivoted back to development.

Kenya. U.S. agency officials in Kenya reported that they coordinate their food security assistance programming through a variety of in-country mechanisms, including GFSS working groups, joint technical coordination meetings, and joint review of potential projects and programs. For example, USAID officials reported holding monthly joint technical coordination meetings with USDA to help enhance partnership opportunities with the Kenya government. Likewise, USDA and USAID officials stated that they work closely with other U.S. agencies when

planning future food assistance efforts. Officials from all U.S. entities providing food security assistance in Kenya reported that the quality of their coordination efforts was satisfactory.

The GFSS Kenya Country Plan states that agencies should emphasize the sequencing, layering, and integration of all types of U.S. government investments in an effort to reduce reliance on emergency assistance. USAID officials in Kenya stated that they use this holistic approach to plan and implement emergency and development assistance efforts, which are complementary. For instance, USAID officials stated that they target specific geographic areas for follow-on development efforts. According to the officials, they identify areas where USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has made repeated emergency interventions and target these areas for more systematic development assistance.

Niger. U.S. agency officials in Niger reported using joint planning efforts, joint management of programs, and regular meetings to coordinate food security efforts. For example, according to MCC officials, MCC and USAID jointly developed the GFSS–Niger Country Plan and are now coordinating USAID's provision of potential follow-on support to the beneficiaries of the MCC compact after it has ended. Likewise, MCC and USADF work together on a subcomponent of the MCC compact in Niger, where USADF manages the grants-making facility for the Millennium Challenge Account. Officials from all U.S. entities providing food security assistance in Niger reported that the quality of their coordination efforts was either ideal or satisfactory.

USAID officials in Niger stated that the USAID entities responsible for coordinating their emergency and development assistance hold regular collaboration meetings. Officials said their efforts focus on the layering and sequencing of assistance efforts. For instance, officials stated that emergency programming is targeted to focus on geographic areas with the most acute long-term needs—such as areas that have been affected by armed groups and displacement—and may therefore target the same areas as development assistance efforts.

Mechanisms Used to Coordinate with Key Stakeholders in Selected Countries

In the four countries we selected for our review, U.S. agencies reported taking a variety of steps to coordinate their food security programming with other key stakeholders, including implementing partners, host

government entities, and multilateral donors, as required by the GFSS. Agency officials and stakeholders generally reported favorably on the quality of coordination between U.S. agencies providing food security assistance and key stakeholders, with most reporting that coordination was either ideal or satisfactory.

Coordination with implementing partners. U.S. agency officials in all four countries identified ways in which they coordinate their agencies' food security efforts with implementing partners in each country. For example, USDA officials in Bangladesh stated that their quarterly food safety meetings include all of USDA's implementing partners. Agency officials in all four countries reported that the quality of their coordination with implementing partners was either ideal or satisfactory.

Likewise, implementing partners in all four countries reported that the quality of their coordination with U.S. agencies was generally ideal or satisfactory. All implementing partners in Guatemala, Kenya, and Niger described the quality of their coordination with U.S. agencies as either ideal or satisfactory. In Bangladesh, two implementing partners described the quality of coordination as either ideal or satisfactory. However, one implementing partner in Bangladesh described coordination with USDA as challenging and stated that the agency could take a more active role in coordinating the activities of implementing partners with those of the host government and other partners. In response, USDA officials in Bangladesh arranged meetings with implementing partners to discuss potential actions to address any coordination gaps, according to USDA officials. As a result, in March 2022 USDA began meeting biweekly with one implementing partner to create a more formal coordination mechanism.

Coordination with host government. U.S. agency officials in all four countries identified ways in which they coordinate their food security efforts with the host government in each country. For example, USDA officials in Guatemala stated that they coordinate with the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture's Institute of Agriculture and Science to strengthen agricultural value chains and share knowledge with Guatemalan farmers through the Ministry of Agriculture's extension agents. Similarly, USAID and USDA officials in Bangladesh reported coordinating with host government entities on specific activities directly as well as through the quarterly meeting of the local consultative group, which the government of Bangladesh cohosts. Agency officials in all four countries reported that the quality of their coordination with the host government was either ideal or satisfactory.

Coordination with multilateral donors. U.S. agency officials in all four countries identified ways in which they coordinate their food security efforts with those of multilateral donors. For example, USAID officials in Kenya reported that they coordinate with key multilateral donors such as the World Bank, the World Food Program, and FAO through membership in a number of food security–related working groups, including the Agriculture and Rural Donor Working Group and the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group.

Likewise, MCC officials in Niger reported that they have coordinated with the World Bank regarding the programming and financing of livestock-sector investments and climate-resilient agricultural investments. Officials stated that they coordinated with the World Bank to harmonize implementation and geographic targeting of these efforts. Agency officials from all four countries reported that the quality of their coordination with other multilateral donors was either ideal or satisfactory, and officials of multilateral donors in the four countries reported that coordination with the U.S. government was either ideal or satisfactory.

U.S. Agencies’ Coordination Mechanisms Generally Followed Most Leading Practices for Collaboration

We found that the GFSS Interagency’s mechanisms for coordinating food security assistance generally addressed four of the seven leading practices of effective interagency collaboration, which can help federal agencies achieve global outcomes such as the GFSS objectives.²⁰ Specifically, these collaborative mechanisms generally addressed leading practices related to bridging organizational cultures, leadership, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and written guidance and agreements. The collaborative mechanisms partially addressed the remaining three leading practices, related to outcomes and accountability, participants, and resources. (See table 2.) We did not find any instances in which the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms did not at least partially address these leading practices.

²⁰See [GAO-12-1022](#). In addition, the GFSS calls for federal agencies to work in partnership to strengthen coordination. See Feed the Future, *U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy, Fiscal Year 2022-2026*.

Table 2: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed Leading Practices

| Leading practice | Extent to which collaborative mechanisms addressed leading practice |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Bridging organizational cultures | Generally addressed |
| Leadership | Generally addressed |
| Clarity of roles and responsibilities | Generally addressed |
| Written guidance and agreements | Generally addressed |
| Outcomes and accountability | Partially addressed |
| Participants | Partially addressed |
| Resources | Partially addressed |

Source: GAO. | GAO-22-104612

Notes: To assess the extent to which U.S. agencies providing global food security assistance coordinate with one another, we compared collaborative mechanisms established under the U.S. Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) with leading practices for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms. For discussion of the leading practices, see GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms*, [GAO-12-1022](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).

We determined that the collaborative mechanisms generally addressed a leading practice if documentation provided by the agencies implementing the GFSS—known as the GFSS Interagency—showed their processes incorporated all, or nearly all, critical elements related to the practice. We determined that the collaborative mechanisms partially addressed a leading practice if the agencies’ documentation showed their processes incorporated some, but not all, key considerations related to the practice.

We did not find any instances where the agencies’ documentation did not address a leading practice to any extent.

Agencies’ Collaborative Mechanisms Generally Addressed Four of Seven Leading Practices

Bridging Organizational Cultures

Our analysis found that the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms generally addressed leading practices related to bridging differences in the participating agencies’ organizational cultures. We have previously reported that addressing differences in the organizational cultures of agencies participating in a collaborative mechanism is important to enable a cohesive working relationship and create the mutual trust required to enhance and sustain the effort.²¹ Establishing ways to operate across agency boundaries—for example, developing common terminology, compatible policies and procedures, and open lines of

²¹[GAO-12-1022](#).

communication—can lead to positive working relationships that bridge organizational cultures, build trust, and foster communication.

Table 3 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms addressed key considerations related to bridging organizational cultures.

Table 3: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed Key Considerations Related to Bridging Organizational Cultures

| Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed key considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Have participating agencies developed ways of operating across agency boundaries? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GFSS working groups share information and coordinate performance monitoring activities. GFSS Interagency has developed common reporting mechanisms. In target countries, U.S. missions overseas appoint an interagency coordinator to facilitate a whole-of-government strategy with country-specific targets and coordinated implementation. | Generally addressed |
| Have participating agencies agreed on common terminology and definitions? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agencies agreed to terminology and definitions under the GFSS and the Feed the Future indicator handbook. | |

Source: [GAO-12-1022](#); GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms generally addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated all, or nearly all, key considerations related to the practice.

Leadership

Our analysis found that the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms generally addressed leading practices related to leadership. We have previously reported that leadership models range from identifying one lead agency or person to assigning shared leadership over a collaborative mechanism.²² Designating one leader is often beneficial because it centralizes accountability and can speed decision-making. Given the importance of leadership to any collaborative effort, consistent and sustained leadership can make collaborative mechanisms more effective.

²²[GAO-12-1022](#).

Table 4 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms addressed key considerations related to leadership.

Table 4: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed Key Considerations Related to Leadership

| Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed key considerations |
|--|--|---|
| Has a lead agency or individual been identified? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the global level, USAID is designated as the lead agency for interagency collaboration. At the country level, the chief of mission designates a country coordinator to lead interagency collaboration. | Generally addressed |
| How will leadership be sustained over the long-term? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USAID has been the leader of the GFSS Interagency since the strategy was initiated in 2016 and was reconfirmed as the leader for the updated strategy for fiscal years 2022 through 2026. | |

Source: [GAO-12-1022](#); GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms generally addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated all, or nearly all, key considerations related to the practice.

Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

Our analysis found that the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms generally addressed leading practices related to clarity of roles and responsibilities. We have previously reported that clarity of roles and responsibilities can result from agencies’ working together to define and agree on their respective roles.²³ Clarity of roles and responsibilities can be codified through laws, policies, memorandums of understanding, or other requirements.

Table 5 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms addressed a key consideration related to roles and responsibilities.

²³[GAO-12-1022](#).

Table 5: Extent to which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed a Key Consideration Related to Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

| Key consideration for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed key consideration |
|---|--|--|
| Have participating agencies clarified the roles and responsibilities of the participants? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each participating agency clarified its planned contributions, roles and responsibilities in the original GFSS and provided updates as part of the updated GFSS. Agencies provide annual updates to Congress through GFSS implementation reports. The updates provide information about agency activities that supported GFSS goals in the previous year. | Generally addressed |

Source: [GAO-12-1022](#); GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms generally addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated all, or nearly all, key considerations related to the practice.

Written Guidance and Agreements

Our analysis found that the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms generally addressed leading practices related to written guidance and agreements. We have previously reported that agencies that articulate their agreements in formal documents can strengthen their commitment to working collaboratively.²⁴ A written document can incorporate agreements reached in any of several areas—leadership, accountability, and roles and responsibilities.

Table 6 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms addressed key considerations related to written guidance and agreements.

Table 6: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed a Key Consideration Related to Written Guidance and Agreements

| Key consideration for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Example of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed key consideration |
|--|---|--|
| If appropriate, have the participating agencies documented their agreement regarding how they will be collaborating? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating agencies documented their agreement regarding leadership, accountability, and roles and responsibilities in the GFSS. | Generally addressed |
| Have participating agencies developed ways to continually update or monitor written agreements? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interagency produces annual GFSS Implementation Reports, a mechanism to continually provide updates of agreements. | |

²⁴[GAO-12-1022](#).

Source: [GAO-12-1022](#); GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms generally addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated all, or nearly all, key considerations related to the practice.

Agencies' Collaborative Mechanisms Partially Addressed Leading Practices Related to Outcomes, Participation, and Resources

Outcomes and Accountability

Our analysis showed that the GFSS Interagency's collaborative mechanisms partially addressed leading practices related to outcomes and accountability. We have previously reported that federal agencies can use their strategic and annual performance plans to drive collaboration with other agencies and other partners and to establish complementary goals and strategies for achieving results.²⁵ Agencies that create a means to monitor, evaluate, and report the results of collaborative efforts can better identify areas for improvement.

However, as we reported in August 2021, the GFSS interagency is limited in its ability to use performance data to assess the initiative's progress, because it has not set initiative-wide performance goals and has developed few indicators that fully meet two key attributes of successful performance indicators.²⁶ Specifically, only three of 40 performance indicators (1) were clearly linked to the initiative's overarching goal and (2) had measurable targets. We made several recommendations to USAID to address these issues; USAID agreed with these recommendations and is taking steps to implement some of them.

Table 7 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency's collaborative mechanisms addressed key considerations related to outcomes and accountability.

²⁵[GAO-12-1022](#).

²⁶[GAO-21-548](#).

Table 7: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed Key Considerations Related to Outcomes and Accountability

| Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed leading practices |
|--|--|--|
| Have short-term and long-term outcomes been clearly defined? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a results framework with intermediate results and overarching objectives. However, these were not clearly defined, such as through performance goals. Updated the GFSS in October 2021, which included updates to outcomes. | Partially addressed |
| Is there a way to track and monitor progress toward the short-term and long-term outcomes? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed indicators to measure progress. However, some indicators were not clearly linked to the GFSS overarching goals and most lacked targets. | |

Source: [GAO-12-1022](#); GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms partially addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated some, but not all, key considerations related to the practice.

Participants

Our analysis found that the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms partially addressed leading practices related to inclusion of participants. We have previously reported that it is important to ensure that the relevant participants have been included in the collaborative effort.²⁷ Additionally, it is helpful when the participants in a collaborative mechanism have full knowledge of the relevant resources in their agency; the ability to commit these resources and make decisions on behalf of the agency; the ability to regularly attend all activities of the collaborative mechanism; and the knowledge, skills, and abilities to contribute to the outcomes of the collaborative effort.

The GFSS encourages all relevant agencies to participate in GFSS working groups at the global level. In addition, the GFSS requires country coordinators to facilitate interagency meetings at least once per quarter and requires U.S. missions to report to all agencies that have investments in country, regardless of whether an agency has personnel assigned at the U.S. mission.

However, some smaller GFSS agencies reported they were not fully included in country-level planning efforts because they did not have staff

²⁷[GAO-12-1022](#).

representation at the U.S. mission and because the country coordinator did not effectively engage the appropriate headquarters personnel. USAID officials said that agencies without a presence at U.S. missions often ask USAID headquarters—the lead agency for interagency coordination—for assistance with coordination, and USAID holds bi-weekly calls with coordinators at the missions. However, the GFSS Interagency has not yet developed a process that ensures inclusion of all relevant parties at the country level. As a result, some agencies without representatives at U.S. missions did not have the opportunity to fully participate in collaborative mechanisms designed to create a whole-of-government approach to food security efforts in particular countries.

Table 8 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms addressed key considerations related to inclusion of participants.

Table 8: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed Key Considerations Related to Inclusion of Participants

| Key considerations for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed key considerations |
|---|--|---|
| Have all relevant participants been included? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the global level, all agencies are invited to participate in GFSS working groups. At the country level, some agencies noted they do not have agency representatives at the country level and their headquarters personnel are not always included in country-level planning. | Partially addressed |
| Do the participants have full knowledge of the relevant resources in their agency; the ability to regularly attend activities of the collaborative mechanism; and the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to contribute? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies assigned personnel to represent their agency in the GFSS working groups. The personnel assigned generally have knowledge of their agency’s goals and resources. The representatives have knowledge of how their agency’s resources will be used. | |

Source: GAO-12-1022; GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms partially addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated some, but not all, key considerations related to the practice.

Resources

Our analysis found that the GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms partially addressed leading practices related to resources. We have previously reported that collaborating agencies should identify the human, information technology, physical, and financial resources

needed to sustain their collaborative effort.²⁸ Consequently, it is important for groups to ensure that they identify and leverage sufficient funding to accomplish the objectives.

The GFSS Interagency tracks and annually reports funds spent during the previous fiscal year. In addition, participating agencies share information at the country level about spending for the current fiscal year as well as spending planned for future fiscal years as part of food security planning efforts at U.S. missions. Members of the GFSS working groups may also share this information informally through the groups.

GFSS Interagency officials noted that agencies may have different budget processes and timelines, which makes it challenging to strategically coordinate across agencies. In addition, not all GFSS participants have ready access to data on other agencies' current or planned spending for food security assistance in the same country. Specifically, agencies that are not represented at U.S. missions may be unable to access this information when it would be most useful, given their planning policies and timelines. Officials of some agencies noted that access to the GFSS Interagency spending plans would improve their ability to coordinate activities and leverage U.S. resources.

As of March 2022, the GFSS Interagency had not established a mechanism that would allow all GFSS participants to readily access other participants' data on current and planned spending for food security assistance. As a result, some agencies providing such assistance have limited ability to leverage and align current and future U.S. investments in the same country.

Table 9 shows the extent to which the GFSS Interagency's collaborative mechanisms addressed a key consideration related to resources.

²⁸[GAO-12-1022](#).

Table 9: Extent to Which GFSS Interagency’s Collaborative Mechanisms Addressed a Key Consideration Related to Resources

| Key consideration for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms | Examples of GFSS Interagency’s collaborative mechanisms | Extent to which mechanisms addressed key consideration |
|---|--|--|
| Is there a means to track funds in a standardized manner? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security assistance funding for prior fiscal years is tracked through annual GFSS implementation reports. However, these data are retrospective and do not include planned funding for current or future years. Agencies share country-level funding data for current and future fiscal years during interagency planning. However, not all GFSS participants have ready access to these data. | Partially addressed |

Source: [GAO-12-1022](#); GAO analysis of evidence provided by U.S. agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), collectively known as the GFSS Interagency. | GAO-22-104612

Note: We determined that mechanisms partially addressed a leading practice for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms if documents provided by GFSS Interagency participants showed their processes incorporated some, but not all, key considerations related to the practice.

U.S. Agencies Reported Taking Steps in the Selected Countries to Mitigate Potential Negative Effects of DOF

Multiple Agencies Provide Food Security Assistance with the Same Objectives in the Selected Countries

In the four countries we selected for our review—Bangladesh, Guatemala, Kenya, and Niger—multiple U.S. agencies provide emergency and development assistance with the same food security–related strategic objectives. As of August 2021, these agencies were responsible for managing or funding more than 100 emergency and development food security assistance–related projects in these countries (see table 10). In some instances, agencies indicated that although they were not providing food security assistance in the countries we selected, it was possible they would provide such assistance in those countries in the future.

Table 10: Number of Active Emergency and Development Food Security Assistance Projects in Selected Countries, by U.S. Agency, as of August 2021

| | Bangladesh | Guatemala | Kenya | Niger |
|-------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| USAID | 20 | 18 | 14 | 10 |

| | Bangladesh | Guatemala | Kenya | Niger |
|-------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| USDA | 3 | 7 | 2 | – |
| DFC | – | – | 10 | – |
| USADF | – | – | 1 | 1 |
| IAF | – | 20 | – | – |
| MCC | – | – | – | 6 |

Legend: – = Does not provide food security assistance.

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, and Millennium Challenge Corporation documents. | GAO-22-104612

Note: In addition to the agencies shown, the Department of the Treasury contributes to multilateral institutions that fund or implement food security projects, including the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The Department of State engages with other agencies implementing the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy and with host government officials in each country to raise the visibility of food security initiatives.

Our review of U.S. agencies’ food security activities found the potential for DOF in food security programming in the countries we selected. We reviewed the program objectives of all active emergency and development food security assistance projects. In all four countries, U.S. agencies’ food security projects targeted each of the GFSS’s three strategic objectives (see table 11). The GFSS, which identifies these objectives as interdependent and interrelated, states that they are key to achieving the overarching goal of sustainably reducing global hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. Our guide to evaluating and managing DOF indicates that programs with broad similarities in purpose may have some aspects that are duplicative, overlapping, or fragmented.²⁹

Table 11: Numbers of Active Emergency and Development Food Security Assistance Projects Addressing GFSS Strategic Objectives in Selected Countries as of August 2021

| Strategic objective | Bangladesh | Guatemala | Kenya | Niger |
|---|------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| I. Inclusive and sustainable agricultural-led economic growth | 20 | 35 | 19 | 8 |
| II. Strengthen resilience among people and systems | 10 | 21 | 4 | 7 |
| III. A well-nourished population, especially among women and children | 9 | 16 | 7 | 7 |

Legend: GFSS = Global Food Security Strategy.

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, and Millennium Challenge Corporation documents. | GAO-22-104612

²⁹GAO-15-49SP.

Agencies and Stakeholders Reported Coordinating in the Selected Countries to Mitigate Potential Negative Effects of DOF

U.S. agency officials and key stakeholders in all four selected countries reported observing some DOF among their food security efforts in the countries. However, agency officials reported coordinating through various means to mitigate potential negative effects of DOF in their food security programming.³⁰ Moreover, agency officials and key stakeholders said the DOF they had observed had generally led to positive outcomes.

Bangladesh

U.S. agency officials in Bangladesh reported observing some DOF between their food security efforts and those of other U.S. agencies, the host government, and multilateral donors. In general, implementing partners and other multilateral donors in Bangladesh did not report any DOF between their and U.S. agencies' efforts; only one of five stakeholders reported observing DOF in food security programming.

USAID officials stated that U.S. agencies providing food security assistance in Bangladesh review current and new activities to mitigate potentially negative effects of DOF. If they identify DOF, they meet to explore options for ensuring the activities will be complementary. USAID officials also said they make an effort to engage directly with the host government and other bilateral donors on a monthly or quarterly basis. Typically, they seek to mitigate potential negative effects of DOF by first mapping activities by thematic areas, identifying areas of DOF, and devising actionable plans to ensure that the activities are complementary. The officials said that USAID makes similar efforts with multilateral donors. World Food Program officials confirmed that they coordinate with USAID and reported that they have written information-sharing agreements with the agency. In addition, these officials stated that they provide USAID with weekly updates on their food security assistance programming.

³⁰Our guide to evaluating and managing DOF indicates that in some instances, the involvement of multiple U.S. agencies in complex or large-scale efforts may be beneficial. In these instances, agencies should take steps to mitigate any potentially negative effects related to DOF; however, when DOF leads to generally positive outcomes, no corrective actions are necessary. See [GAO-15-49SP](#).

U.S. agency officials reported that the DOF they observed had generally led to positive outcomes. USDA officials stated that occasional overlap between USDA and USAID food security assistance helps facilitate coordination between the agencies and does not complicate either agency's food security efforts or result in poor program execution. Likewise, these officials stated that duplication and overlap with the host government's food security efforts has positive outcomes when the host government and U.S. agencies target different geographic zones for assistance. In addition, an implementing partner representative who had observed DOF in food security assistance programming stated that it had led to positive effects. The representative described embassy officials' efforts to integrate overlapping food security efforts across multiple entities and activities and to inform implementers about avenues for future collaboration with the U.S. government.

However, USAID officials reported that the host government conducts some food security efforts—particularly at the regional and district levels—outside the GFSS framework. According to these officials, although USAID and the host government hold national-level coordination meetings, the host government does not always communicate information to the local level effectively. USAID officials stated that they had made efforts to engage directly with their host government colleagues on a regular basis to ensure that their efforts are complementary.

Guatemala

U.S. agency officials in Guatemala reported observing some overlap but no duplication or fragmentation between their food security efforts and those of other U.S. agencies, the host government, or multilateral donors. Key stakeholders in Guatemala did not report any duplication or overlap between their and U.S. agencies' efforts, and only one of five stakeholders—FAO—reported fragmentation.

USAID officials stated that the agency structures its regular coordination meetings in Guatemala to include agency updates intended to mitigate potentially negative effects of DOF. The discussion allows the group to identify specific actions or programming best suited to specific agencies' mandates and skill sets. IAF officials also stated that IAF encourages grantees to identify multiple sources of financial and nonmonetary support, including support provided by the local governments and other public and private entities, and to communicate when multiple entities are providing similar support. According to IAF, this helps avoid negative effects from DOF.

According to the agency officials, the overlap they observed had generally led to positive outcomes. For instance, IAF officials stated that IAF and USAID worked with the same coffee producer association to support a construction project in complementary ways; without both agencies' funding, the construction project would not have advanced. In addition, the coffee association facilitated interactions between IAF and USAID, which resulted in complementary USAID support to another IAF grantee partner in the same department.

In addition, FAO officials stated that the fragmentation they observed had generally led to positive outcomes. Officials stated that FAO and U.S. agencies both work in broadly similar areas: FAO works with very small farm holders, while U.S. agencies generally work with small to medium-size farm holders. FAO officials described this arrangement as a "win-win approach," because FAO and U.S. agencies each have unique capacities to target assistance to their particular groups.

Kenya

U.S. agency officials in Kenya reported observing some DOF between their food security efforts and those of other U.S. agencies, the Kenyan government, and other multilateral donors. Key stakeholders in Kenya reported some overlap between their and U.S. agencies' efforts as well as fragmentation with U.S. agencies' efforts, but they did not report duplication.

To mitigate any negative effects of DOF, USAID and other U.S. agencies actively participate in meetings, such as the Kenya Food Security Meeting, to conduct assessments and response-planning efforts, according to USAID officials. Likewise, USDA officials stated that the post holds routine discussions with Kenyan government officials at all levels to inform them about existing USDA food security efforts and upcoming projects.

U.S. agency officials reported that the overlap they observed in Kenya generally had positive outcomes. For example, USAID officials stated that their Food for Peace program, along with USDA's School Feeding Program, had been transitioned to the Kenyan government, with the World Food Program providing ongoing assistance to the government to support this initiative. Agency officials reported that these efforts were complementary and positive and had led to sequencing and coherence of assistance efforts.

Key stakeholders in Kenya likewise reported that the DOF they observed had generally led to positive outcomes. For instance, representatives of Mercy Corps stated that they attempt to deliberately overlap efforts. According to these individuals, layering, sequencing, and integrating efforts can be highly effective when doing so is geographically reasonable. They stated that both Mercy Corps and USAID officials had advocated layering, sequencing, and integration of food security assistance in Kenya.

Niger

U.S. agency officials in Niger reported observing some DOF between their food security efforts and those of other U.S. agencies, the Nigerien government, and other multilateral donors. Key stakeholders in Niger also reported some DOF between their and U.S. agencies' efforts.

Agency officials reported taking steps to mitigate any potentially negative effects of DOF. For instance, MCC officials stated that the compacts MCC develops with host governments must demonstrate "whole-of-government" coordination as well as coordination among other donors investing in the same sectors as MCC. In addition, USAID officials stated that they limit any negative effects of DOF with the host government through the mission's close working relationship and information sharing with Nigerien government agencies. According to officials, the mission also works closely and shares information with other bilateral entities providing assistance or implementing food security programming in the country.

U.S. agency officials in Niger reported that the DOF they observed had generally led to positive outcomes. For example, MCC officials stated that they work closely with several other entities—including the World Bank and the governments of Germany and Belgium—that are testing and promoting small-scale irrigation approaches in Niger. Officials stated that MCC modifies its approach on the basis of information and lessons learned from other donors. Specifically, MCC officials stated that their approach was heavily informed by the experiences of the World Bank and German government and that they were very satisfied with the results of these joint irrigation efforts.

Key stakeholders in Niger also reported that the DOF they observed had generally led to positive outcomes. For example, USAID implementing partners identified some overlap in efforts to develop water sites in Niger. Officials stated that implementing partners work in multiple geographic

zones and with various partners to leverage their respective geographic reach and technical expertise. As a result, some implementing partners work at the community level to identify water points for construction or rehabilitation, while others work at the community level to map all water points and enable local authorities to better direct development efforts.

Another implementing partner representative observed an instance in which a multilateral donor and a U.S. implementing partner provided seeds and food assistance to the same beneficiaries in the same geographic zones. However, the representative stated that these entities had since made efforts to avoid this type of duplication and that, overall, U.S. agencies attempt to avoid negative duplication and foster complementarity in the food assistance provided by various entities in Niger.

Conclusions

The number of food-insecure people worldwide has been increasing since 2014, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased food insecurity. The U.S. government, which spends billions of dollars annually on global food security assistance, developed the GFSS to facilitate a whole-of-government approach to such assistance and build effective coordination.

Many of the meaningful results that the federal government seeks to achieve—such as assisting other countries in achieving food security—require the coordinated efforts of more than one federal agency. Effective coordination can play an important role in clarifying desired outcomes; addressing program performance that spans multiple organizations; and facilitating future actions to manage duplication, overlap, or fragmentation among these agencies' efforts.

However, lack of knowledge of other agencies' planned spending and activities could limit the ability of USAID and other GFSS Interagency participants to effectively collaborate and to fully leverage U.S. government resources. Including all GFSS Interagency participants in country-level collaboration and ensuring that each has ready access to information about other participants' current and planned programs and spending would better enable USAID and its partners to carry out the global objectives of the GFSS and leverage U.S. resources effectively.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following two recommendations to USAID:

The Administrator of USAID should ensure that the country coordinator at the U.S. mission in each GFSS target country takes steps to ensure that all relevant U.S. agencies are included in the planning and coordination of food security assistance. (Recommendation 1)

The Administrator of USAID should work with other participants in the GFSS Interagency to establish a mechanism, such as a shared database, to ensure that each agency has ready access to information about the other agencies' current and planned U.S. global food security assistance. (Recommendation 2)

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report for review and comment to USDA, State, Treasury, IAF, DFC, MCC, USADF, and USAID. USAID provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendix II. In addition, USAID, USDA, State, Treasury, IAF, DFC, and MCC provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.


In its written comments, USAID concurred with our recommendations and stated that it would work with its interagency partners to implement them. Specifically, USAID stated that it would work with interagency country coordinators to ensure all relevant U.S. agencies are included in the planning and coordination of food security assistance through joint planning efforts. Additionally, USAID indicated it would work with interagency partners to explore whether additional mechanisms, such as a shared database, can be used to track planned U.S. global food security assistance.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees; the Secretaries of Agriculture, State, and the Treasury; the Administrator of USAID; the Chief Executive Officers of IAF, DFC, MCC, and USADF; and other interested parties. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact Chelsa Kenney at (202) 512-2964 or KenneyC@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be

found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsa Kenney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chelsa Kenney
Director, International Affairs and Trade

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

This report examines (1) U.S. agency coordination of global food security assistance programs at the global level and in selected countries; (2) the extent to which U.S. agencies coordinate with one another in accordance with leading practices to enhance collaboration; and (3) the U.S. agencies' management of duplication, overlap, and fragmentation (DOF) of global food security assistance in selected countries.

To examine U.S. agency coordination of global food security assistance programs, we reviewed documents related to the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) for fiscal years 2017 through 2021 and the updated GFSS for fiscal years 2022 through 2026. We also interviewed officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and seven other agencies with key roles in implementing the GFSS: the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA), State, and the Treasury; Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC); U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF); Inter-American Foundation (IAF); and U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). We interviewed or received written responses from agency officials at the headquarters level and four U.S. missions overseas: Bangladesh, Guatemala, Kenya, and Niger. We selected these countries on the basis of several criteria, including overall U.S. food assistance funding; geographic diversity; and the presence of multiple U.S. agencies, multilateral partners, and other donors.

We collected and analyzed information from U.S. agencies and other key stakeholders providing assistance in the four countries. Specifically, we sent semistructured questions to officials of each U.S. agency providing food security assistance in these countries, asking them to, among other things, describe and characterize the quality (ideal, satisfactory, or challenging) of U.S. agencies' efforts to coordinate food security assistance activities. We also sent these questions to other stakeholders—in particular, representatives of selected multilateral organizations, including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations World Food Program, the World Bank, and implementing partners conducting food security assistance efforts in these locations. We selected these multilateral organizations and implementing partners on the basis of several criteria, including the

amounts of funding they provided for food security programs they implemented in those countries. In addition, we sent these questions to representatives of the two multilateral institutions that receive U.S. government financial contributions from Treasury: the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. We conducted a content analysis of the written responses we received from the agencies and other stakeholders.

To examine the extent to which U.S. agencies providing global food security assistance coordinated with one another in accordance with leading practices to enhance collaboration, we compared collaborative mechanisms established under the GFSS with leading practices for implementing interagency collaborative mechanisms.¹ Specifically, we evaluated whether GFSS agencies, led by USAID, generally followed, partially followed, or did not follow leading practices related to (1) outcomes and accountability, (2) bridging organizational cultures, (3) leadership, (4) clarity of roles and responsibilities, (5) participants, (6) resources, and (7) written guidance and agreements. To make this determination, we examined GFSS documents, including the U.S. government's GFSSs for fiscal years 2017 through 2021 and fiscal years 2022 through 2026, annual GFSS Implementation Reports, and written responses from agencies regarding coordination activities. We also reviewed information that agency officials provided during interviews.

We determined that the agencies had generally followed a leading practice if they provided documentation showing that their processes incorporated critical elements of the practice to a large or full extent. We determined that the agencies had partially followed a leading practice if they provided documentation showing that their processes incorporated some, but not all, of the critical elements of the practice. We determined that the agencies had not followed a leading practice if they could not provide documentation showing that their processes incorporated any of the critical elements of the practice.

To make these determinations, two analysts reviewed the leading practices and documentation provided and rated the extent to which the agencies followed practices in each of the seven categories we used for our evaluation. One analyst reviewed the documentation provided for each leading practice and assessed whether the agencies had followed,

¹See GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms*, [GAO-12-1022](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 2012).

partially followed, or not followed the practice. A second analyst then reviewed the documentation provided for each leading practice, as well as the first analyst's determinations, and assessed whether the agencies had followed, partially followed, or not followed the practice. Any differences in the analysts' determinations were discussed and reconciled.

To examine the extent to which the agencies and key stakeholders in selected countries manage DOF of global food security assistance, we reviewed post specific documents and interviewed USAID officials in the four selected countries—Bangladesh, Guatemala, Kenya, and Niger. We also sent written semistructured questions to selected officials in each country regarding any efforts to manage potential DOF. We conducted a content analysis of the written responses, including responses from each U.S. agency involved in providing food security assistance in the countries and to representatives of selected multilateral organizations as well as nongovernmental organizations implementing U.S.-funded food security assistance programs in these locations. In addition, we reviewed documentation provided by officials in each selected country.² These documents included country development cooperation strategies for each country, GFSS country plans, and program descriptions for food security activities.

We assessed whether the documentation and information provided by officials in each country indicated the presence of DOF and whether agencies were taking steps to manage potentially negative effects. Further, we assessed whether the information provided by officials in each country indicated the presence of any positive or negative effects. For the purposes of our analysis, we considered duplication to have occurred when two or more agencies or programs engaged in the same activities or provided the same services. We considered overlap to have occurred when multiple agencies or programs had similar goals, engaged in similar activities or strategies to achieve them, or targeted similar beneficiaries. We considered fragmentation to have occurred when more than one federal agency (or more than one organization in an agency) was involved in the same broad area of national need and opportunities existed to improve service delivery.

²See GAO, *Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication: An Evaluation and Management Guide*, [GAO-15-49SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: April 2015).

To ensure that this content analysis was objective, accurate, and consistent, one analyst reviewed the documentation provided from each country and assessed the presence of DOF as well as efforts to address potential negative effects. A second analyst then reviewed the documentation and the first analyst's assessment and verified the results.

We conducted this performance audit from November 2020 to June 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Comments from the U.S. Agency for International Development

**Appendix II: Comments from the U.S. Agency
for International Development**



Bureau for Management

May 11, 2022

Chelsa Kenney
Director, International Affairs and Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20226

Re: *Global Food Security: Coordination of U.S. Assistance Can Be Improved* (GAO-22-104612)

Dear Ms. Kenney:

I am pleased to provide the formal response of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to the draft report produced by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) titled, *Global Food Security: Coordination of U.S. Assistance Can Be Improved* (GAO-22-104612).

As responsible stewards of U.S. taxpayer resources, USAID and the Feed the Future (FTF) partner agencies understand the importance of managing FTF resources to ensure they are advancing our vision of sustainably reducing food insecurity, poverty and malnutrition and increasing resilience in the countries where we work.

Since the FTF Initiative was launched in 2010, we have continually aimed to improve interagency coordination of global food security assistance. With respect to in-country coordination of FTF activities, USAID — as the lead agency for the Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) — will continue to leverage the role of FTF interagency country coordinators to ensure all relevant U.S. agencies are included in planning and coordination efforts. In addition, USAID will use Washington-based FTF interagency coordination mechanisms to reinforce and strengthen this communication and coordination.

With respect to improving information-sharing on department and agency spending, we recognize that challenges exist due to the different fiscal authorities, processes and authorizing legislation for FTF departments and agencies. While the interagency does share food security funding data for the previous fiscal year through annual GFSS Implementation Reports, we will work with interagency partners to explore what additional mechanisms, such as expanded reporting in GFSS Implementation Reports or the use of a shared database, can be used to track planned U.S. global food security assistance.

I am transmitting this letter and the enclosed comments from USAID for inclusion in the GAO's final report. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report, and for the courtesies extended by your staff while conducting this engagement. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the complete and thorough evaluation of our coordination of global food security assistance.

Sincerely,

Colleen R. Allen

Colleen Allen
Assistant Administrator

Enclosure: a/s

U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523
www.usaid.gov

**COMMENTS BY THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON
THE DRAFT REPORT PRODUCED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO) TITLED, *GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY:
COORDINATION OF U.S. ASSISTANCE CAN BE IMPROVED* (GAO-22-104612)**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would like to thank the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) for the opportunity to respond to this draft report. We appreciate the extensive work of the GAO engagement team, and the specific findings that will help USAID achieve greater effectiveness in coordinating U.S. Government Global Food Security efforts under the Feed the Future (FTF) initiative.

The draft report contains the following two recommendations for USAID's action.

Recommendation 1: The Administrator of USAID should ensure that the country coordinator at the U.S. mission in each GFSS target country takes steps to ensure that all relevant U.S. agencies are included in the planning and coordination of food security assistance.

USAID Response: USAID accepts this recommendation. Going forward, USAID will work with FTF interagency country coordinators to ensure all relevant U.S. agencies are included in the planning and coordination of food security assistance through joint planning efforts, especially around the upcoming Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) country plan development process, and through regularly scheduled interagency coordination meetings and GFSS working groups, both in the field and in Washington.

Recommendation 2: The Administrator of USAID should work with other participants in the GFSS Interagency to establish a mechanism, such as a shared database, to ensure each agency has ready access to information about the other agencies' current and planned U.S. global food security assistance.

USAID Response: USAID accepts this recommendation. Going forward, USAID will work with interagency partners to explore whether there are additional mechanisms, such as expanded reporting in GFSS Implementation Reports or the use of a shared database, that can be used to track planned U.S. global food security assistance.

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Chelsa Kenney, (202) 512-2964, kenneyc@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Judith Williams (Assistant Director), Diana Blumenfeld and Jon Fremont (Analysts in Charge), David Dornisch, Mark Dowling, Nkenge Gibson, Christopher Keblitis, Reid Lowe, Justin Snover, Owen Starlin, and Sarah Veale made key contributions to this report.

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