



USAID'S BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Strategic Framework for Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience (ER4)

OCTOBER 2022



Cover photo: A man tends his crops in southern Indonesia's West Nusa Tenggara Province, where BHA partner World Neighbors trains farmers living in drought-prone areas on resilient agricultural practices.
Photo by Morgana Wingard for USAID

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A student takes part in an agroforestry vocational training program in Uganda's Nakapiripirit district organized by Catholic Relief Services with support from BHA. The program aims to build resilience to shocks, enhance livelihoods, and improve food and nutrition security for vulnerable rural families. *Photo courtesy of Will Baxter/CRS*



Introduction

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has developed this strategic framework to provide guidance to BHA and Agency staff and partners on approaches and programming¹ in the areas of early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4). BHA considers the broad range of activities encompassed by ER4 programming to be integral components of humanitarian assistance and is committed to programming within the parameters of this framework.

Over the past decade, humanitarian assistance has evolved and adapted to a changing humanitarian landscape, characterized by climate change, complex and protracted crises, global migration, urbanization, and the rise of infectious disease outbreaks and global pandemics. Humanitarian assistance has thus extended beyond disaster response and traditional disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities to include a diverse set of activities characterized by innovative disaster risk management approaches.

BHA's ER4 programming encapsulates a broad spectrum of work that can vary greatly in scope. For instance, risk reduction and early recovery activities can be relatively short in duration and very focused on certain sectors or may be longer in duration, requiring multi-sectoral approaches and multi-year investments. Meanwhile, BHA's resilience activities, including Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs), are typically multi-sectoral in approach and require multi-year investments.

This document provides a strategic framework for our ER4 work, including strategic objectives, guiding principles, definitions, and technical approaches, emphasizing the diversity of programming and approaches within the ER4 realm.

¹ This Framework uses the terms programs, projects, and activities as defined in [USAID's Automated Directives Services \(ADS\) Chapter 201](#).

Framing BHA's ER4 Approach

Overarching Goal

The goal of BHA's ER4 efforts is to improve the well-being of vulnerable people—from the individual to country level—by strengthening their capacities to manage risk; to anticipate, withstand, recover from, and adapt to shocks and stresses; and to support positive, transformative change. BHA is committed to integrating ER4 programming into our responses wherever and whenever appropriate and to ensuring strong linkages with humanitarian and development actors on local, national, and global scale. Our efforts in this space reflect USAID's core mission, ultimately promoting resilience and enabling people to take ownership of their own humanitarian and development outcomes.

Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives support the overarching goal and guide BHA's ER4 work, both at policy and programmatic levels. BHA staff and partners must consider these objectives in developing ER4 strategies, plans, programs, and activities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Individuals, households, communities, nations, and systems have strengthened abilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises and recurrent shocks without losing development gains.

BHA strengthens the abilities of individuals, households, communities, nations, and systems to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises and recurrent shocks. BHA achieves this objective through consistent and robust ER4 investments. This necessitates strategic planning at policy and program levels and requires incorporation of ER4 into budgetary processes. BHA treats ER4 investments as high priority and strives to maintain appropriate funding levels, even when humanitarian response needs persist. BHA works with local organizations and national governments to build disaster response institutions, thereby helping reduce reliance on international assistance. Wherever possible, BHA's ER4 programs, activities, and funding are sequenced, integrated, and layered across humanitarian and development efforts, fostering resilience through longer-term, sustainable, and transformative outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience are elevated as critical dimensions of global humanitarian assistance.

BHA staff are global thought-leaders and respected advocates for ER4 efforts, promoting all components of ER4 as critical dimensions of humanitarian assistance and working with stakeholders across all levels of the humanitarian and development communities. We use our convening power to advocate for increased investments from partners, donors,

national and local governments, the United Nations (UN) system, and other stakeholders, leading by example with a strong commitment to ER4 programming. BHA encourages development actors to incorporate ER4 approaches into their strategies, plans, and programs, working together with humanitarians to build a solid foundation for transformative and sustainable change.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

New and innovative ER4 approaches emerge alongside evidence-based programs and activities.

BHA supports evidence-based approaches which have a demonstrated ability to achieve intended ER4 outcomes and objectives. BHA leverages this evidence to drive innovation at local, national, and global levels by investing in knowledge development, research, and applied learning. BHA encourages collaboration with new partners, and deliberately explores the adoption of new procurement tools, including innovative financing mechanisms. BHA embraces bold approaches to develop new tools and methodologies, accepting the risk that programs may fail to achieve intended impacts or outcomes, while also abiding by the Do No Harm principle. In some cases, current approaches and existing activities will be sufficient to meet BHA's intended objectives, without the need for substantial investments in innovation.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Populations acutely vulnerable to climate impacts will be more resilient and better able to adapt to a changing environment.

Aligned with the Agency climate strategy, BHA will address urgent climate actions as well as transformative shifts toward equitable, climate resilient communities and societies. BHA accomplishes this objective by adopting the use of a climate lens for all of its ER4 initiatives, both at a programmatic and policy level. This entails assessing current and future risks driven by climate change, their potential impacts on populations, and the increasing levels and types of vulnerability faced by specific populations, while integrating these assessments into our planning and programming. Where contextually appropriate, we ensure climate adaptation measures are systematically reflected in ER4 activities, by ensuring that populations have the ability to monitor, anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate-related events. While addressing these impacts will take a whole-of-USAID approach, BHA will focus its assistance on support for climate adaptation programs targeting the poorest and most marginalized populations particularly vulnerable to severe impacts. We will ensure alignment with USAID strategic objectives related to climate, building on and scaling up proven successes for mitigating and adapting to climate impacts.



BHA partner ACDI/VOCA built floating gardens in San Pedro, home to more than 800 rivers and waterways, to help the community be more resilient to flooding during Paraguay's rainy season. Photo courtesy of ACDI/VOCA

Guiding Principles

BHA has developed a set of cross-cutting guiding principles specific to our ER4 work. These guiding principles are enduring, irrespective of changes in priorities or strategic objectives, and collectively seek to maximize the impact, efficiency, and effectiveness of all of BHA's work. The common thread across these principles is that they reflect the values and vision of our Bureau and our global commitment to those who are most in need of humanitarian assistance.



COMMITMENT TO HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The well-established principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence enable humanitarian organizations to provide life-saving assistance to reach people most in need. BHA supports our partners as they apply these principles, including in our ER4 work. Effective ER4 programming often requires close coordination with local and national institutions. In complex emergencies, marked by conflict and civil unrest, this may be especially challenging where governments are party to the conflict. In all cases, BHA's ER4 programming will remain committed to the foundational Do No Harm principle and work to facilitate and safeguard humanitarian principles. When ER4 activities are associated with a humanitarian response, humanitarian principles will remain a cornerstone. Stand-alone ER4 programs, including risk-based

programming approaches, outside of a response context will also work to facilitate humanitarian principles. This allows BHA assistance to be delivered on the basis of assessed need, in hard-to-reach or under-served areas, and in a way which preserves security for aid workers in highly insecure environments. Efforts to advance programming across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus through short- and long-term humanitarian and development assistance must maintain a commitment to protect humanitarian principles.



ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

AAP involves placing affected communities, especially the most vulnerable individuals, at the center of all our humanitarian programming and ensuring their meaningful influence and voice across all stages of the program cycle. While AAP applies to all of BHA's work, ER4 programming provides enhanced opportunities for the meaningful representation and involvement of affected communities in planning, design, and decision-making, as ER4 activities are typically longer in duration and allow for more advanced planning than traditional humanitarian response programs and activities. BHA is committed to working with partners who engage affected communities in key decisions, ensuring that their programs reflect the perspectives and experiences of these communities.



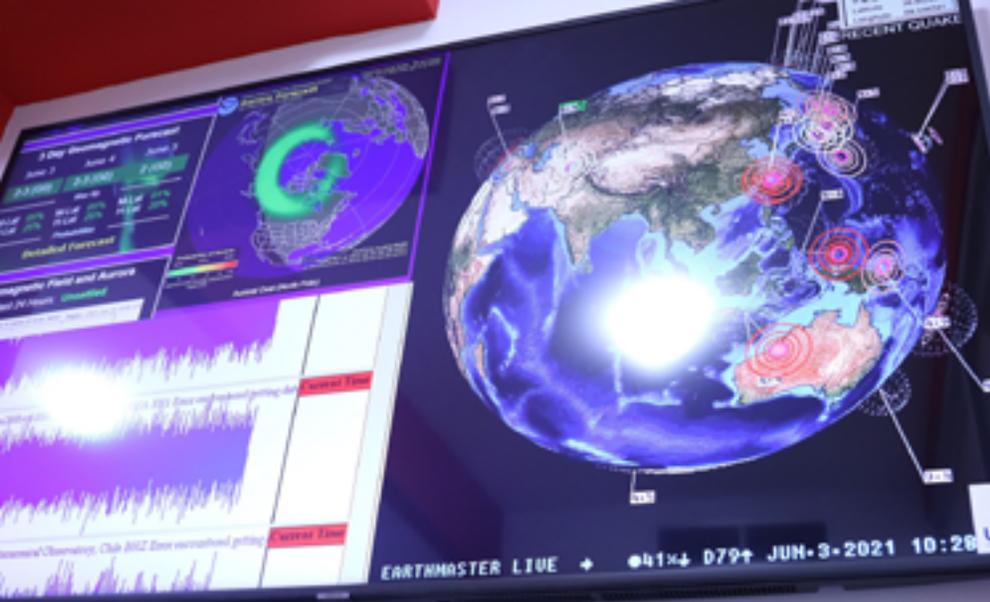
DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

BHA's ER4 work occurs through diverse and inclusive partnerships, ranging from local organizations to broad-based international institutions. Because of the complexity of ER4 programming, different partners with different skills and comparative advantages will be needed, depending on the mix of ER4 components. We will continue to seek new partners who bring unique skills, backgrounds, and capacities, including groups that address the vulnerabilities and barriers facing certain individuals and communities. We will prioritize funding to local actors, where possible, and seek other ways to include local actors in the international humanitarian system as equal partners. Our ER4 work will also support the efforts of governments to take on greater ownership of disaster response and mitigation efforts in their countries. More broadly, BHA recognizes that equity and inclusion are critical in achieving ER4 objectives. BHA understands that equitable action centers on people in geographically and socially vulnerable situations and empowers their unique knowledge as irreplaceable sources of solutions and agents of positive change.



STRIVING FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

BHA recognizes that supporting USAID's broader mission requires a collaborative approach, working to ensure that our ER4 efforts are aligned not only internally across USAID, but also sequenced, integrated, and layered on other development work funded by a range of stakeholders. BHA is committed to engaging in joint planning to maximize the collective impact of all stakeholders.



BHA's ER4 activities help people, communities, and systems to prepare for and reduce the risks and impacts of disasters before they strike, like in Albania, where BHA partnered with IFRC to establish emergency operations centers throughout southeastern Europe—or in Indonesia, where BHA helped train firefighters after peat fires burned more than 6.4 million acres of land. BHA also supports early recovery programs that build upon humanitarian response efforts and lay the foundation for sustainable recovery. In Haiti following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, we supported income-generating activities such as rubble removal that enabled families to buy needed items at local markets, thereby bolstering the local economy. BHA's resilience programs enable communities to take anticipatory and early action in the face of stresses and shocks, like in the Central African Republic, where we're supporting flood mitigation efforts by supporting workers digging trenches alongside roads. In Colombia, communities are learning agriculture and livestock techniques to improve production.

Clockwise from top right: Albania - USAID Albania; Haiti - photo courtesy of CHF; Indonesia - photo courtesy of Andri Tambunan/UN-REDD Programme; Central African Republic - photo courtesy of Concern Worldwide; Colombia - photo courtesy of Acción Contra el Hambre/Spain





The Contribution of ER4 to USAID’s Mission

USAID’s Mission is, on behalf of the American people, to promote and demonstrate democratic values abroad, and advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world. In support of America’s foreign policy, USAID leads the U.S. Government’s international development and disaster assistance through partnerships and investments that save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people emerge from humanitarian crises and progress beyond assistance.² USAID orients its strategies, partnership models, and program practices around this mission, placing efforts to build resilience front and center. USAID is committed to working with countries and communities to support efforts that increase local capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to development challenges.

USAID defines resilience as “the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.”³ USAID programming helps to build resilience so that the communities where we work are prepared and able to take anticipatory and early action in the face of stresses and shocks. In the event that a crisis results, resilient communities will be able to respond effectively and build back better than before. BHA’s ER4 programming builds resilience by focusing on absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities—as described later in this framework—strategically sequencing, integrating, and layering with past or present activities.

USAID is committed to the global efforts to better link humanitarian, development, and peace actors, known as “the HDP Nexus”. Under this agenda, actors working in humanitarian, development, and peace realms aim for coherence, where appropriate, by mutually informing strategic frameworks; pursuing coordinated or joint planning; sequencing, integrating, or layering programmatic activities; and leveraging each other’s respective comparative advantages (see [page 44](#) for more details). While BHA has traditionally collaborated with development actors, the Bureau is scaling up its efforts to better link with peace actors, while continuing to adhere to humanitarian principles.

Relationship to BHA’s Mission

BHA’s mission is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the impact of disasters by helping people in need become more self-reliant. Our programs do more than respond to disasters. Our ER4 activities help people, communities, and systems to prepare for and reduce the risks and impacts of disasters before they strike, enable people to recover after a crisis by restoring and protecting basic systems and services, and help populations to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a way that reduces chronic vulnerability.

BHA considers all of its programs and activities to be **humanitarian assistance**, targeting the segments of populations most vulnerable to the impacts of shocks and stresses. BHA’s humanitarian assistance consists of two major conceptual areas, which may frequently be interlinked programmatically and strategically.⁴

² See USAID’s Mission, Vision and Value statement

³ See USAID Resilience Policy, *Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis*, December 2012.

⁴ See *Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 251*



The first area is **humanitarian response** pursuant to a Declaration of Humanitarian Need (DHN). Humanitarian response is characterized by urgent action, including quick assessment of needs, logistical support to local and national actors, rapid provision of funding to partners to meet critical needs, and deployment of teams of disaster response experts.

The second conceptual area is focused on longer-term efforts aimed at mitigating chronic vulnerability. This area encompasses **ER4** efforts, which may be integrated with humanitarian response programming, or may be stand-alone activities happening outside of the context of urgent response. ER4 programs and activities are cost-effective, reducing the need for future humanitarian assistance, and may lay the foundation for longer-term development programming.

BHA's Unique Role in the ER4 Space

BHA has a unique role to play in the ER4 space, based in part on the following areas and characteristics:

Targeting the most vulnerable – BHA has a long history of providing support to individuals, households, communities, and systems that are most vulnerable to shocks and stresses. As a bureau focused on providing principled humanitarian assistance to this target population, BHA pays specific attention to those who need this assistance to meet basic survival needs or to reduce the long-term impacts of crises. While other parts of USAID may have development activities that overlap with BHA ER4 activities, BHA targets populations that may be excluded from these development activities, including ultra-poor households that are most vulnerable to the impacts of shocks and stresses.

Deep understanding of the impact of crises – BHA has a deep understanding of the impact of crises on populations, and can leverage that understanding across different disaster phases to best support populations in preventing, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from crises. BHA does this through both nimble, short-term responses, as well as longer, planned initiatives and then pivoting in real time as necessary. BHA applies this understanding to the benefit of BHA's targeted populations, both in humanitarian response and ER4 realms.

Intimate relationships with host government disaster management agencies – BHA has long-standing relationships with sub-national and national disaster management agencies (NDMAs). Over the years, BHA has invested substantially in building the disaster management capacities of these institutions and has also collaborated closely with them to lead responses to crises and disasters of all kinds. The ultimate aim of these investments is to position NDMAs to lead disaster management across all phases without the need for international assistance. Under this strategic framework, BHA will continue to serve as USAID's focal point in supporting these institutions, in close coordination with USAID Missions in the field.

Multiple, un-earmarked funding sources – BHA benefits from multiple funding sources and instruments, most of which are not earmarked. BHA can use these funding streams strategically to create integrated, layered, and sequenced programs. The different sources of funding have different characteristics, flexibilities, and requirements, allowing for a diversity of programming approaches.

ER4 Components: Defining the Terms

Early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience are not linear, nor are each of the components discrete and separate stages that follow a progression from crisis to development. All are interrelated and may overlap with each other and be integrated with response activities. The following definitions represent BHA's understanding of ER4. While these definitions serve as a guide, they are not intended to restrict BHA staff and partners in activity design and development, since flexibility in programming is key to the success of BHA's ER4 efforts.

Early Recovery⁵ – Early recovery is an approach that addresses recovery needs that arise during the humanitarian phase of an emergency, when saving lives is still an urgent and predominant need. Early recovery programming supports communities impacted by crises to protect and restore basic systems and service delivery, building on response efforts and establishing the initial foundations of long-term recovery. Early recovery activities are implemented for a specified, appropriate timeframe that assists populations recovering from an identifiable shock. The outcomes of early recovery activities include: the establishment of strong foundations for building resilience in post-crisis settings; contributions to durable solutions that lead to nationally- or locally-led development; and efforts to rebuild community capacity.

Risk Reduction – Disaster risk is expressed as the potential loss of life, injury, or damage and destruction of assets that could occur to a system, society, or community in a specific period of time. It can be expressed as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity. Risk reduction is the prevention of new disaster risk, reduction of existing risk, including mitigating impacts, and management of residual risk, which contributes to strengthening resilience. Effective risk reduction programming can both reduce disaster risk, including associated mortality and economic losses, and improve local or national disaster management capacities. Preparedness and early warning systems are important components of reducing disaster risk.

Resilience – Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. Resilience programming can serve as a connection between humanitarian response and long-term development assistance, addressing the vulnerabilities that make people susceptible to recurrent shocks and stresses. While all of BHA's work contributes to resilience, the resilience programs described in this framework refer to those programs and activities that focus on transformative change.

⁵ While BHA has the express statutory activity to carry out reconstruction activities, the bureau generally leaves this to USAID missions and regional bureaus.

ER4 Snapshot: St. Vincent

Saint Vincent island's La Soufrière volcano erupted on April 9, 2021, shooting ash clouds miles into the air. BHA had been expecting—and preparing for—La Soufrière's eruptions for months. After the eruptions, BHA worked with partners in the Caribbean to help people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stay safe during evacuations, as well as help them recover and rebuild after their return home. Here is how our ER4 approach, integrated with BHA's immediate humanitarian response, provides support to the people of Saint Vincent.



Disaster Risk Reduction: Early Warning

La Soufrière started rumbling in December 2020. Soon after, BHA's Volcano Disaster Assistance Program—a partnership that taps into U.S. Geological Survey's science and data—donated special seismic activity monitoring stations to the University of the West Indies' Seismic Research Center to help keep a close eye on the situation. This support helped provide the early warning that allowed local disaster authorities to start mass evacuations the day before the first big eruption.



Humanitarian Response: Shelter, Food, Water

La Soufrière erupted repeatedly for two weeks, forcing more than 23,000 people to evacuate—many to emergency shelters operated by local authorities. BHA provided immediate support for evacuations, as well as an initial tranche of humanitarian aid to the local Red Cross for emergency food, safe drinking water, and basic hygiene and shelter supplies for evacuees. We also sent a ship carrying additional emergency supplies from our Miami warehouse, and asked the UN World Food Program (WFP) to set up a logistics hub to receive, store and distribute aid to people in need. Additional BHA funding provided emergency food, safe drinking water, hygiene supplies, sanitary latrines, and essential household items for thousands of people in St. Vincent. The new funds also provided essential medical supplies and support to health facilities—and hygiene promotion activities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases in emergency shelters and communities.



Early Recovery: Supporting Clean-Up and Helping People Return Home

La Soufrière grew quiet but Saint Vincent was covered in a thick layer of volcanic ash that polluted air and water, collapsed roofs, and destroyed crops and pastures. In April 2021, BHA sent in a three-person Americas Support Team to provide technical and logistical support to the UN-led environmental assessment. In May, BHA and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies started preparing evacuees to return home and resume livelihood activities like fishing and farming. This includes providing growers whose fields were destroyed by ash access to seeds and tools.



A view of the eruption of La Soufriere Volcano from Lennox Lampkin farm steaming in the distance at Rose Hall in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on April 21, 2021. The United Nations launched an appeal on April 20, 2021 for donations of more than \$29 million to help Saint Vincent and the Grenadines following several devastating volcanic eruptions that have turned the landscape of the Caribbean nation “apocalyptic.” The La Soufriere volcano erupted for the first time in 40 years on April 9.

Photo by Kingsley Roberts/AFP

North

Map of Catchment Area.

ক্যাচমেন্ট এলাকার ম্যাপ
মনথানা সরকারি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়
উখিয়া, কক্সবাজার।

out of catchment area



ক্যাচমেন্ট এলাকা
 মোট আয়তন = ১০০০
 মোট জনসংখ্যা = ১০০০
 মোট বাড়ি = ১০০
 মোট গাছ = ১০০
 মোট পুকুর = ১০০
 মোট সড়ক = ১০০
 মোট কানাল = ১০০
 মোট ব্রিজ = ১০০
 মোট শিক্ষালয় = ১০০

In Bangladesh—a country prone to natural disasters, including cyclones, landslides, and monsoon-related floods—BHA partners work closely with local governments and disaster committees to help prepare communities for storms. One critical activity is to create an evacuation plan, like this one. *Photo courtesy of IOM*

Context Analysis

BHA is issuing this ER4 Strategic Framework in the context of the lingering impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and concurrent global economic challenges. In 2020, extreme poverty rose for the first time in 22 years, with unemployment rising and food insecurity worsening.⁶ These impacts were compounded by climate change, internecine conflict in multiple regions of the world, and intensifying displacement and migration. According to the [Global Humanitarian Overview for 2021](#), a record 235 million people require humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, with humanitarian caseloads likely to rise even further as development gains erode.

BHA recognizes that shaping its ER4 agenda for the future requires fresh thinking, new approaches, and flexibility to change as the global humanitarian context evolves. With this in mind, BHA has undertaken a broad global context analysis, considering known major factors that will shape humanitarian assistance over the next several decades. While contextual factors may differ across regions, the global trends highlighted below are powerful and pervasive, shaping how BHA approaches ER4 policies and programs moving forward. Viewed together, these trends highlight the critical importance of ER4 in helping address and reduce humanitarian need.

Climate Change

Addressing the humanitarian impacts of climate change will require transformative and systemic changes to humanitarian and development assistance, including increased emphasis on and investments in the ER4 space. Climate-induced disasters are occurring more frequently, at higher intensities, and in locations where populations have not experienced certain hazards before. During the last 20 years, the number of climate-related disasters has nearly doubled compared to the previous two decades, with over 90% of natural disasters attributable to climate change. In addition, climate-related disasters caused over 500 million fatalities and affected about four billion people during the same period.⁷

In its 2022 report⁸, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that global temperatures have already increased by 1.1° Celsius—compared to pre-industrial levels—and are on track to reach warming of up to 1.5° Celsius. Scientists warn that this level of warming will lead to catastrophic increases in natural disasters, including extreme temperatures; the frequency, intensity and amount of heavy precipitation; the frequency and intensity of droughts; and continued sea level rise in many regions. Potential humanitarian impacts include displacement, food and water insecurity, inland and coastal flooding, fire risk and consequent air pollution, increased threat of disease, and damage to coastal ecosystems.

While climate change impacts may vary by region, impacts will be most severe for the ultra-poor and most vulnerable, deepening inequalities and exacerbating instability, violence, and displacement. Due to the globalized and interconnected nature of the world economy and production, impacts in one geographic location will have ripple effects on other locations, thereby increasing systemic risk.

BHA recognizes that humanitarian response alone will not be able to keep pace with the increasing

⁶ See UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), [Global Humanitarian Overview for 2021](#)

⁷ See CRED, [UNDRR Human Cost of Disasters: An overview of the last 20 years \(2000-2019\)](#)

⁸ See Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability 2022](#)

needs that result from climate change. Our ER4 programs focus on urgent climate action as well as transformative shifts of climate adaptation through advancing early warning systems, helping communities better prepare for and manage climate risks, supporting efforts to enhance and diversify coping capacities, and reducing recurrent impacts of climate-related events in line with the agency climate strategy. We must also work to build capacities at all levels, so that individuals, households, communities, nations, and systems can meet their own humanitarian needs, particularly in response to small- and medium-scale disasters.

See [Alignment with USAID Policies, Frameworks, and Guidance](#) for more information on how BHA's climate initiatives align with the USAID Climate Strategy (2022-2030).

Conflict, Fragility, and Increasing Complexity

Global conflicts show no signs of abating and are becoming increasingly complex, with both state and non-state actors using more extreme tactics. Conflict zones are becoming more difficult to access, and humanitarian actors continue to face increasing threats to their programming and to their lives. The erosion of humanitarian space often requires new programming approaches, including a shift towards reliance on third-party monitoring, remote management, and innovative data collection techniques. However, these new approaches may transfer the security risks associated with active conflicts to national staff and organizations, increasing the risk to local partners.

The complexity of programming in rapidly changing, fragile, and conflict-affected environments requires intense coordination, systematic safe programming, and the need to plan strategically with various stakeholders. Guided by this strategic framework, BHA will work with stakeholders across sectors to ensure joint risk and needs assessments, coherent programming and monitoring, and scaled-up best practices that protect lives and development gains. In many instances, BHA will be able to program ER4 activities in conflict settings, including in situations of internal displacement. However, in many other instances, displaced or conflict-impacted people may not be willing or able to make significant long-term investments. In these instances, BHA's ER4 programs may still be integrated with response efforts. Furthermore, BHA's ER4 programs may strengthen the local capacity of these populations in inter- and intra-group dispute resolution and problem solving, negotiation around access to and use of land and other resources, and—more broadly—strengthening group dynamics and social cohesion.

Without simply transferring risk to local partners, BHA remains committed to expanding its menu of options for programming in complex emergencies, including exploring innovative ER4 approaches that might require multi-year investments. Through its ER4 programming in conflict-settings, BHA will also contribute to broader U.S. government (USG) policy priorities, to meet the requirements under the Global Fragility Act of 2019 and the Elie Weisel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act.

See [Alignment with USAID Policies, Frameworks, and Guidance](#) for more information on how BHA's initiatives in this area align with International Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus.

Infectious Disease Outbreaks

In the past decade, there has been a rise in disease outbreaks that require humanitarian response. In many cases, such as the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa and the current COVID-19 pandemic, these outbreaks have been widespread and not confined to a single country. The

humanitarian system has struggled with these disease outbreaks, which have eroded development gains, particularly by disrupting essential health services. These disruptions to essential health services have had spillover effects, reversing progress made in combating communicable diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis (TB), malaria, and cholera. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe economic impacts, including disruption of supply chains, cessation of trade in essential commodities, reduced remittances, and diminished tourism revenue, drawing communities back into precarious economic situations and ultimately reducing household food security. Even as the global community has grappled with and is overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be other major disease outbreaks which will have humanitarian consequences.

Within USAID, the Bureau for Global Health (GH) leads health systems strengthening initiatives to build resilient health systems and holds responsibility for executing USAID's role within the [Global Health Security Agenda](#). Working closely with GH and USAID missions, BHA provides robust assistance to improve readiness within the humanitarian community for efficient and effective multi-sectoral responses to large-scale infectious disease outbreaks. In addition, our ER4 programming can prevent or mitigate secondary humanitarian impacts that may result from these outbreaks such as food insecurity, malnutrition, increased protection risks, and negative livelihood impacts.

Global Food Security

The world is experiencing a global food security crisis—with severe impacts on nutrition, health, and protection closely following the onset of crisis levels of acute food insecurity. The combined effects of Russia's war on Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term complex emergencies, and climate extremes have pushed levels of acute food insecurity to crisis levels. Up to 40 million people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity in 2022 as a result of the war, and up to 95 million more people could be pushed into extreme poverty by the combined effects of the war, the pandemic, and inflation.⁹

Before Russia invaded Ukraine, the food security situation for hundreds of millions of people across the globe was already extremely fragile in 2021: 193 million were facing crisis, emergency, and catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity; 40 million were in emergency or above levels and 570,000 were experiencing famine.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing alarming levels of acute food insecurity, with the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) warning that the “threat of starvation looms” for millions in the region. In addition to the severe crisis in the Horn, acute food insecurity continues to grow in Afghanistan, the Sahel, and Yemen.

Acute food insecurity is a leading indicator of imminent crises in nutrition, health, and protection. The globe is seeing alarming increases in severe wasting—the final and most life-threatening stage of starvation. Periods of acute food insecurity also lead to increases in gender-based violence (sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and sex-selective feeding) and child protection risks (family separation, child labor, and child recruitment into armed groups). BHA's emergency response to the global crisis is multisectoral, aiming to address the most life-threatening risks to affected populations by providing food assistance, nutrition treatment, health services, and protection programming. This crisis, however, will be a long-term one. BHA is prioritizing emergency activities in the initial response of the crisis, given its widespread and life-threatening impacts in a number of countries. As

⁹ See: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/global-report-food-crises-2022>

our response continues and as emergency needs become less acute, we will support programs in the ER4 realm, including those aimed at recovering from the devastating impacts of the crisis at the community level. In the future, BHA will also support activities that will aim to increase community-level resilience to future droughts and price shocks.

Critical to BHA's response to the crisis is its consistent engagement and coordination with USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) in the analysis, program planning, and policy levels in Washington, D.C. and in the field. RFS leads USAID's long-term response to the global food crisis with an expansion of Feed the Future (FTF) countries as a centerpiece of their programmatic response. BHA's ER4 activities, in particular, will be closely coordinated and aligned with FTF activities and areas of focus. USAID's emergency and resilience programs will remain aligned and coordinated in order to effectively respond to this global crisis.

Global Migration

Global migration continues to grow as a result of continued complex crises, extreme poverty, increasing inequality, and climate change. The scale of international migration is at an all-time high¹⁰, with the number of international migrants estimated to be approximately 281 million globally.¹¹ With the growing impacts of climate change, both internal and cross-border migration is likely to increase at unprecedented levels over the next few decades. The vast majority of these migrants and displaced populations will be among the very poor and the most vulnerable to crises and shocks. Protracted internal displacement is also growing more common, emerging from a variety of triggers, and resulting in complex humanitarian situations. BHA's ER4 efforts are a means to mitigate and meet the growing needs arising from migration and displacement, particularly in relation to longer-term resilience.

Urbanization

Global migration will be coupled with increasing urbanization. Currently more than half the world's population lives in urban areas, and this proportion is projected to grow to more than two-thirds of the global population by 2050.¹² In addition, urban systems, such as housing, electricity, water, transportation, and communications, are potentially vulnerable to significant damage or disruption resulting from crises, increasing the exposure of urban populations to disaster risk. Historically, humanitarians have focused primarily on providing assistance to rural populations or those in camp settings, leaving humanitarian action in urban areas primarily to local municipal authorities. With increasing urbanization and an unprecedented number of disasters occurring in urban environments, BHA and its partners are both mitigating and responding to urban crises more frequently. Unfortunately, with the most rapid and unplanned urbanization occurring in countries characterized by weak governance and fragile institutions, the vulnerability of urban populations to shocks and stresses is growing. In fragile states, local and national governments will likely not be able to meet potential humanitarian needs of their citizens, let alone refugees and other persons who are displaced in urban settings. In nations with stronger governments, ER4 programming will be critical to build the capacity of local and national institutions to provide assistance to their own people and to reduce vulnerability. BHA will continue to work with other thought leaders to identify new

10 The conflict in Ukraine, alone, is responsible for the movement of over 5.5 million people into neighboring countries in search of safety, protection, and assistance. [UNHCR's Operational Data Portal, July 2022.](#)

11 See International Organization for Migration (IOM), [World Migration Report 2022.](#)

12 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [2018 Revision of the World Urbanization Prospects](#)

approaches for delivering humanitarian assistance in urban settings, prioritizing working with local stakeholders to reduce risks and build resilience.

Systemic Risk

Humanitarian crises are no longer contained as singular events within one geographic area. They are happening across multiple regions and at larger scales than previously experienced. Subsequently, new risks are emerging in unanticipated ways. Systemic risks are a consequence of multiple events across geographic, administrative, institutional, and sectoral boundaries. Due to the interconnectedness of our global systems, shocks and stresses that impact one area can be transmitted through entire systems, disrupting supply chains, market and financial systems, communications, and transportation systems, affecting areas far from where a disaster strikes. Consequences of these crises are hard to predict, but frequently exacerbate issues of inequality, insecurity, and instability. Those who are already the most vulnerable and marginalized will be the hardest hit.

Using a risk-informed approach, BHA programs must continue to take into account multi-hazard risks to ensure an effective response. For example, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the U.S. must prepare for and mitigate the potential impacts of tropical storms—many of which will intensify in strength as oceans are warming—while currently addressing the impacts of COVID-19. In 2020, populations that were evacuated or sheltered during hurricanes were at increased risk of COVID-19, since the evacuation sites were not equipped to prevent the spread of a highly transmissible disease. Furthermore, economic impacts of COVID-19 contributed to household vulnerability and increased risk of further economic decline and marginalization.

BHA's ER4 programs are uniquely suited to deal with issues of systemic risk and multi-hazard vulnerabilities, given that systems approaches and integrated programming will be key components in their design. In many regions of the world, BHA has invested heavily in building the capacity of national disaster management organizations as a way to address systemic risk. Nevertheless, our risk assessments must ensure that we recognize the complexity of infrastructures and systems, their intrinsic vulnerabilities to shocks, and the likely propagation of impacts across a country or region. Lack of preparation, planning, and an enabling environment can lead to a deeper impact and a more difficult recovery, potentially destabilizing already fragile areas.

Environmental Degradation

Cutting across all of these contextual issues is the persistent degradation of the environment, caused by the misuse of natural resources. Environmental degradation can cause, exacerbate, and result in natural disasters, intensifying and contributing to climate change impacts, worsening conflict, contributing to migration, and impacting systemic risk. Heavy reliance on natural resources can lead to environmental degradation, which may include deforestation, losses in soil fertility, loss of biodiversity, and changes to marine ecosystems, all of which directly impact livelihoods, increase disaster risk, and reduce resilience. BHA's ER4 programs provide opportunities to significantly reduce degradation by reducing the use of environmentally-harmful negative coping strategies. Climate smart agriculture, nature-based solutions to disaster risk, and various drylands initiatives to improve livelihood strategies are all strong examples of how our programs can manage disaster risk and build resilience, while reducing environmental impacts.

ER4 Snapshot: Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, floods, cyclones, and landslides put vulnerable people at risk and force tens of thousands of people to flee to safety every year. 2020 was no exception, as historic floods in July and August covered over 40 percent of the country. While BHA provided emergency assistance in response to the 2020 floods, the real success story started the previous year, as we worked to help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change, through efforts that combined the various components of ER4.

Disaster Risk Reduction: Preparedness



Many communities benefited from disaster preparation carried out by BHA and its partner CARE. They learned how to use an early warning system piloted in Bangladesh, and vulnerable families worked to build plinths—raised mounds of earth that elevate homesteads above flood waters. The plinth-building effort began after severe floods hit Bangladesh in 2019. Community consultation and engagement were crucial in determining from where soil should be sourced while also protecting the environment.

Early Recovery: Restoration of Livelihoods



Members of vulnerable households were hired as laborers in line with a Government of Bangladesh short-term labor plan. This BHA-funded cash-for-work project had two benefits: It provided an income to families who had lost everything, and the plinths they built helped prepare them to be more resilient to future floods. The community used materials and equipment available locally, including: shovels, wheelbarrows, baskets, bamboo sticks, and concrete hammers to compact the soil. Village workers harvested soil from dried canals, ditches, ponds, and unused land. It took about nine days to complete a plinth taller than the highest flood level recorded in the past 30 years. An average plinth measures about 1,200 square feet—large enough for a house for a family of six with enough space for a small vegetable garden and a livestock pen. This also helps ensure that families' ability to earn income is not washed away with the flood waters.

As part of the 2019 flood response, BHA and CARE raised plinths for 1,744 households, or about 10,500 people. The plinths were put to the test when flooding again engulfed northern Bangladesh in July 2020, affecting at least 30,000 families in low-lying areas. In the immediate flood zone, these plinths helped protect about 5,500 families, as well as their livestock and belongings, from being lost. Even more critical: Families were able to keep emergency supplies dry during the floods. Those with homesteads on plinths opened their homes to neighbors whose homes had flooded—a critical lifeline for families worried about staying in crowded evacuation centers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resilience: Building Plinths Builds Resilience



In addition to constructing plinths, BHA and CARE worked with communities to change farming practices to make them more resilient to flooding. They taught families how to grow vegetables in portable “grow bags” that can be moved out of the way of rising floodwaters and help ensure that families continue to have enough to eat. In some cases, people were able to plant enough vegetables to sell, enabling them to get back on their feet. The plinths have been so successful that the government is now working to replicate the plinth-building program so even more Bangladeshis can benefit.



During the 2019 flood response, USAID partner CARE worked with communities to build enough plinths to help more than 10,000 people.

Photo courtesy of CARE



In southern Madagascar, sand dunes cover large areas along the coast. CRS' HAVELO Project works with farmers like Marambao to plant sisal, a type of Agave plant, as well as cactus plants to stabilize the dunes to keep them from blowing onto farmland and villages. *Photo courtesy of CRS*



ER4 Technical Considerations

BHA's ER4 activities may stand alone or be integrated with humanitarian response programming and may also link with and support longer-term development efforts. In designing our ER4 programs and activities, BHA must take into account specific technical considerations detailed below.

Investing in Resilience Capacities

Efforts to invest in improving the absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of people, households, communities, and nations, thereby helping them become more resilient over time, are at the heart of BHA's ER4 programming efforts. Resilience capacities can be cumulative and sequential; programs that invest in strengthening multiple capacities through appropriately integrated, layered, and sequenced activities can create more transformative change than programs that invest in strengthening only one type of capacity. Capacity building is also at the heart of both risk reduction and early recovery, ensuring that all populations and countries can take control of their own disaster management.

ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY

Sometimes called “coping capacity,” absorptive capacity refers to the ability to minimize exposure and sensitivity to shocks and stresses through preventative measures to avoid permanent, negative impacts. ER4 programs and activities may increase absorptive capacity by reducing risk through preparedness, mitigation, and prevention, including disaster risk financing or other financial interventions. Absorptive capacity can also be addressed through helping people build their savings and assets, through resource transfers, and through other interventions, to increase the ability of a household to manage shocks or weather a crisis.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Adaptive capacity refers to the ability to make proactive, informed choices and changes in livelihood and other strategies in response to longer-term change, as well as to adjust or adapt to shocks and stresses. Important avenues to increasing adaptive capacity include the availability of economic opportunities, varied livelihood strategies, innovative and resilient construction practices and settlement planning, adequate nutrition and health services, access to education, and conservation of the environment. BHA-funded ER4 programs and activities strengthen adaptive capacity for vulnerable communities within all of our ER4 program components.

TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY

Transformative capacity occurs when the necessary conditions or enabling environment for systemic change is in place and refers to the ability of a household, community, or system to holistically and fundamentally change, such that their capacities can be reconstructed, reconfigured, or enhanced. Transformative capacity allows for long-term, sustainable improvements to systems and communities. BHA's ER4 programs and activities focus on increasing transformative capacity and can provide initial support to the systems and structures that can lead to long-term change, either following a disaster



(Top) Communities at Horu Huhuru Village in Papua New Guinea participate in an evacuation drill run. (Bottom) Clam shells built into a defensive wall stop the ocean from eroding the land. Papua New Guinea is highly vulnerable to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, storms, and volcanic eruptions. BHA supports ER4 interventions that bolster community-based early warning systems and disaster risk management planning. *Photos courtesy of IOM*

or for vulnerable populations. These activities, which often support longer-term development programming, can be transformative if they are part of a local, sub-national, or national development agenda, or have strong buy-in or commitment from the national government, including NDMAs. For BHA, retaining a strong focus on targeting those most vulnerable to shocks and stresses and working specifically on capacities that build resilience to recurrent shocks can help distinguish our programs from those funded by our development colleagues.

Advancing Technical Approaches

Adherence to technical standards, whether in the humanitarian response or ER4 realms, remains a key tenet of BHA's work. There are a number of critical technical approaches BHA applies in its ER4 programming, outlined below.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

Integrated programming is a multi-sectoral approach that combines mutually supportive interventions from different sectors into a holistic activity. When designing an integrated activity, BHA considers the needs and priorities of the communities themselves, taking into account underlying and often multi-faceted root causes. Integration is also critical in achieving coherence across HDP objectives and collective outcomes.

While BHA may at times fund an ER4 activity focused only on one sector, a number of characteristics make ER4 activities suitable for integration across sectors. For instance, ER4 programs and activities can be planned in advance, allowing for the complexity of integrated program design. In addition, ER4 programs often have longer periods of performance that allow increased opportunities to bring in a range of sectors and approaches in a holistic manner to tackle underlying root causes of shocks and stresses. When designing an ER4 activity, BHA staff and partners should explore whether or not integrated programming will lead to better outcomes.

Some key advantages of integrated programming include decreased duplication of outcomes across sectors, while ensuring that interventions in one sector are designed to complement or add value to those in another sector, as well as the alignment of interventions to achieve a common goal, with each sector ensuring that its actions will have the potential to contribute to that goal.

SYSTEMS APPROACH

The complexity of ER4 programming and the overarching goal of our work in this space require a renewed commitment to an integrated systems approach.¹³ Systems-thinking helps BHA identify linkages between different types of systems, enabling BHA to prevent unintended consequences of interventions and highlighting potential leverage points to make interventions more effective. Many BHA programs already use elements of systems thinking. For instance, BHA has an in-depth understanding of technical systems—whether international, institutional, context-specific, or sector-specific—and their relationship to broader social systems and applies this knowledge to increase the quality of ER4 programs.

Systems approaches are integral to implementing this ER4 Strategic Framework. Supporting our partners in the use of systems-thinking approaches and funding the innovative programs that result from the partners' in-depth understanding of the systems they are engaging with may require a significant change in mindset regarding type of activity, which actors to work with, and at what levels—from conventional household-focused programming to institutional-level interventions.

¹³ A *system* is a collection of interconnected components that jointly produce a particular outcome. *Systems thinking* is a competency used in addressing complex problems and is exercised by applying a set of systems approaches, including looking at the interrelationship and interconnectedness of a system's components, rather than sum of individual components itself.

OTHER TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

BHA staff and partners must consider several additional technical issues in designing ER4 activities:

Activity duration

The duration of an ER4 activity will have implications for activity design, as well as choice of procurement mechanism. Activity design for a longer-term or multi-year, multi-sector activity is not the same, from a technical point of view, as the design of an activity that is initially funded for a shorter time frame but then runs for multiple years through cost-extensions or new grants. There will be a conceptual variance between them, and the lens used to design them will also likely differ. System-level programming is doable for the former and less so for the latter.

Programming in a protracted crisis or a complex emergency

Response programs implemented in long-term protracted crises or complex emergencies may benefit from additional activities that fall into the space between response and development. In these cases, incorporating some or all components of ER4 and broadly linking them to response and development may be the most useful approach.

Ensuring a contextually-appropriate response

In emergencies, BHA best practices are consistently used to address vulnerabilities and to meet basic needs. For ER4 interventions, ensuring culturally sensitive programming that responds to specific needs is paramount to supporting recovery, reducing risk, and building resilience. Likewise, mainstreaming conflict and gender sensitivity across all programming is essential. Local input, particularly through local partners working with affected populations, as well as from affected communities themselves, should be integrated into our understanding of the context. Where possible, BHA should work with and through these local organizations, which have strong networks and community ties and a nuanced understanding of the situation and what is most needed to ensure long-term sustainability.

Adaptive management

While all BHA programs can benefit from adaptive management, the longer-term nature of many ER4 programs allows a great deal of room for adjustment of activities if the context changes or if the activity is not successful in achieving the desired outcomes. Adaptive management includes building in processes and practices to fully understand the current context, to reflect on what has worked in the past, and to anticipate potential future changes creates opportunities to proactively plan for needed adaptations. Adaptive management also allows BHA staff and partners increased flexibility in dynamic or changing environments.

Intentional and strategic integration of humanitarian and development funding

To increase the likelihood of positive collective outcomes, our ER4 programs and activities should be linked with emergency response or development activities, allowing us to better reduce and respond to the impacts of conflict, climate change, and other drivers of crises. Strategic integration of funding mechanisms allows us to overcome the funding gap that frequently exists between various kinds of programming. As we seek predictable, flexible, and blended finance, layering and integrating our funding instruments will improve our ability to provide consistent and deliberate support to those most impacted by disasters.



EXIT, TRANSITION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

BHA seeks to maximize the long-term impact of ER4 activities by developing and implementing effective and realistic sustainability and exit strategies. These strategies build the capacity of host-country entities, whether private or public, and may foster linkages with development partners to continue to provide essential goods and services and strengthen resilience without interruption and without reducing their quality after external assistance ends.

BHA seeks to create, wherever possible, models that will continue to spread under their own momentum both during and after the activity. We expect that these models will be adopted and adapted by a significant proportion of the target population. This may not be possible in protracted complex crises, because of the absence of an enabling environment or due to the required time to bring widespread community- or systems-level changes. In these situations, ER4 activities may need to link with a longer-term development program. Where crises are recurrent, this linkage increases the sustainability of ER4 activities, reducing the need for humanitarian assistance in that area in the future.

BHA staff engage in dialogue with USAID Mission staff and development colleagues regarding what elements of the activities can either integrate into existing resilience or development activities or segue into new stand-alone activities. In some instances, BHA ER4 activities may provide the foundation to allow other USAID or external actors to layer development activities and scale up to strengthen resilience. BHA has extensive experience with piloting and adapting transition and sustainability approaches that can provide valuable information in developing sustainability and exit strategies.

USAID's work in risk reduction over the past 30 years includes increasing the capacity of countries to respond to disasters in their own country and around the region, including in Latin America and the Caribbean. Following the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador, more than 70 percent of the search and rescue personnel who came to help from neighboring countries were trained by USAID.
Photo by USAID

ER4 Snapshot: South Sudan

South Sudan continues to experience the protracted impacts of conflict, food insecurity, and flooding, exacerbated in 2021 by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Household assets have been eroded, families remain displaced, and sub-national violence continues to impede access to humanitarian assistance. The return of South Sudanese families and refugees from conflict in neighboring Sudan is adding strain to already scarce resources, as the new arrivals struggle to rebuild lives and livelihoods. While BHA continues to respond to emergency needs, the examples below illustrate how BHA adopts an integrated approach to ER4, working with multiple partners, alongside existing response programs.

Disaster Risk Reduction: Preparedness



Through BHA and its partners, communities and local governments are working together to better understand and manage potential hazards and risks. Through the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), communities are meeting regularly to share information related to climate and early warning, and are working to understand their vulnerability to risk and their capacity for response. BHA and World Vision, along with a consortium of partners, are helping to improve DRR systems at the local level, and to knit together both traditional and modern early warning systems. BHA partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is conducting area-based Participatory Disaster Risk Assessments, and using this information to work with communities to develop DRR plans.

Early Recovery: Restoration of Livelihoods



As BHA responds to emergency needs in South Sudan, early recovery through livelihood restoration is of paramount importance to help people become self-sufficient. BHA partners NRC, World Vision, CRS, and Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany are working in local communities to improve farming and marketing techniques, increase production, develop and support new and existing businesses, provide technical and vocational skill training, develop local savings and credit groups to expand market-based opportunities, and integrate agriculture and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs to reduce the strain on natural resources. Livestock restocking, as well as technical support for livestock and fishery programming, is helping affected people to recover assets and to offset massive livestock losses due to flooding.

Resilience: Building Capacities



Building resilience in South Sudan is critical to protect gains from our early recovery programs, even in the face of shocks and stresses. BHA works with our partners to build capacities at all levels, focusing on programs that bolster economic success through village savings and loans programs, access to markets, diversification of livelihoods, and access to improved nutrition and WASH services, all of which reduce the need for humanitarian support within vulnerable households. Our programs also foster an environment whereby communities become more resilient to recurring shocks and chronic stresses.



In a region South Sudan affected by the country's ongoing civil war, BHA partner World Vision has worked with 60 women in four villages to turn a barren place into a thriving garden. The women of Kodok County have been taught to farm and care for livestock, allowing them to provide food for their families and raise extra income for household needs.

Photo courtesy of World Vision

Parameters and Criteria for ER4 Funding

ER4 Planning and Programming

Decisions

BHA field staff will usually take the lead in strategic planning and program planning decisions, in coordination with geographic counterparts in Washington and with input from USAID Missions and BHA technical staff where appropriate. BHA field staff may assess disaster risk in specific locations in order to understand the drivers of vulnerability, exposure, and hazards. Many of these drivers can best be addressed by long-term development activities, but, particularly in areas prone to disaster, ER4 activities are uniquely placed to reduce serious damage or death from hazards that can impact the most vulnerable. Thus, location-specific hazard- and vulnerability-mapping can help BHA and partners in designing and targeting ER4 activities.

Where the proposed ER4 program is global in nature and seeks to advance certain technical aims across multiple countries, regions, and operating contexts, BHA staff in Washington may take more of a lead role in planning. Regardless of who takes the lead, BHA staff take into account the nature of the crisis or humanitarian need, the broader operating context, capacity of local and national governments, availability of implementing partners, and availability of funding. BHA staff planning ER4 activities should consult with BHA's Offices of Technical and Program Quality (TPQ) and Field and Response Operations (FARO) and other office staff with relevant expertise in a sector or technical area at the earliest planning phase. Their knowledge of already existing resources for early warning systems, hazard mapping, and climate risk can save time and effort in planning ER4 activities.

Key Criteria for Decision-Making

BHA has established certain criteria to help guide staff in making data- and evidence-driven decisions about engaging in ER4 programming. Prior to providing funding for an ER4 activity, BHA staff and partners must ensure that the activity and context meet **both** criteria #1 and #2 below. This applies to both stand-alone ER4 programming and ER4 programming integrated into humanitarian response activities.

1. LEVERAGE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE OR REDUCE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.

Globally, the cost of disasters far outweighs the funding spent on development assistance, with the greatest impacts of disasters most felt by those who are already struggling in poverty. BHA ER4 activities should either build on or work together with ongoing humanitarian response activities, deliberately seek or result in the reduction of humanitarian needs, or work to reduce the humanitarian impacts of potential disasters in areas most prone to shocks and stresses.

2. HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE OUTCOMES OR IMPACTS.

BHA ER4 activities should focus on positive outcomes, significant impacts, or the potential for systemic change, whether by building capacities at the local level or through transformation of institutions at the national level. Careful consideration should be made regarding the enabling environment and the potential to build upon and establish synergies and linkages with investments from other donors and other parts of the USG.

In addition, BHA staff and partners must ensure that ER4 activities meet criterion #3 **or** criterion #4 below. In some, but not all cases, the ER4 activity will meet both of these criteria.

3. TAKE PLACE IN CONTEXTS PRONE TO PROTRACTED OR RECURRING HUMANITARIAN CRISES.

While BHA activities target the most vulnerable, our programs are intended to address contexts of ongoing and protracted crises or recurring crises, resulting in humanitarian need and eroding the coping capacities of impacted populations. BHA ER4 activities should not and will not take the place of development in addressing issues of sustainable economic growth or long-term investments in social protection. In return, development activities should not be viewed as a substitute for humanitarian response or ER4 activities, since they may have different targeting methods and different modes of assistance. The exception to this is explored in criterion #4 below.

4. TAKE PLACE IN CONTEXTS WITH PRE-EXISTING VULNERABILITY AND RISK.

In some cases, high levels of vulnerability or the exposure to risks and hazards may exist, but may not yet have caused a crisis. In these cases, well-placed ER4 activities that focus on reducing vulnerability and risk may mitigate the need for future humanitarian assistance, as well as increase local capacity and reduce the loss of human lives and potential negative impacts on the local economy and natural or built environments. Where existing development mechanisms are in place, BHA will leverage these networks to address the underlying factors and systemic root causes of vulnerability.

Integration of ER4 into Planning Efforts

BHA recognizes that in some circumstances, particularly in the aftermath of a sudden onset emergency, there may not be adequate time and space to deliberately incorporate ER4 planning. Nevertheless, BHA will seek to include ER4 components in strategic and programmatic planning processes to the extent possible—including during active humanitarian responses. This also entails consideration of ER4 in budget planning and resource allocation discussions, as well as ensuring integration with USAID Mission programs and activities, where possible. Where appropriate, BHA will encourage our partners to include ER4 activities in designing response programs.

Budget Planning

Unlike humanitarian response activities implemented pursuant to a new DHN, ER4 programs and activities, especially those with a risk reduction or resilience component, can often be planned in advance. BHA staff should build ER4 activities, including ongoing RFSAs, into their annual budget planning process. Approval of annual country or regional standalone ER4 budget requests will constitute BHA management approval to carry out ER4 activities in that country or region, as specified in the related BHA country or regional strategy documents.

Please note that funding for ER4 programs and activities integrated into humanitarian response programs due to unforeseen emergencies, including those where new DHNs are issued, can be requested as part of an overall response plan and budget request process for that emergency and does not need to wait until the next Fiscal Year (FY) annual budget process to begin. In addition, early recovery programs cannot always be planned in advance, as they are often tied to unforeseen disasters, and thus they can also be requested as part of an overall response plan and budget request. This makes them distinct from risk reduction and resilience programming, which can be planned for as part of an annual budget planning exercise.

Integration into BHA Country and Regional Strategies

BHA develops country-focused and sometimes regional strategies and response plans, particularly for contexts which have protracted or recurrent crises. BHA country or regional teams engaging in ER4 programming should include this as part of their overall BHA country or regional planning processes, which will depend on whether the proposed ER4 program falls under a specific BHA country or cuts across multiple countries and therefore sits within a separate regional planning process. If an ER4 activity is country-specific, it should be included in the BHA country response plan and budget, whereas if it is a regional activity, it should be included with other regional activities in the regional ER4 plan.



Integrating with USAID Missions

In undertaking ER4 programming, BHA staff, in both the field and at headquarters, must work very closely with USAID regional and pillar bureaus and Missions, particularly given the strong linkage with longer-term development programs and activities. This collaboration includes BHA engagement on the development of Integrated Country Strategies and Regional/Country Development Cooperation Strategies (R/CDCSs) to identify programming synergies. BHA should seek to ensure that the Bureau's programming contributes to the achievement of one or more R/CDCS Development Objectives or Intermediate Results, to the extent practicable.

In countries where BHA has a major portfolio of programs, including RFSA activities, BHA staff are even more involved in the development of CDCSs, helping to ensure that resilience outcomes and reduction of humanitarian caseloads are reflected in the development objectives. Moreover, when significant program overlap exists, BHA collaboration with Missions should include participation in activity approval and design processes, as applicable, to facilitate the identification of tangible programmatic synergies. Joint planning between BHA and Missions helps ensure integration between BHA funded and Mission-funded programming. This is important not only because of the linkages between ER4 and development activities, but also because USAID Missions may be funding their own ER4 programs. Joint monitoring of programs and participation in portfolio reviews is also important to maximize alignment of BHA and Mission programming.

Communities in flood-prone Nepal practice evacuation procedures during a disaster drill run by BHA partner Practical Action. These drills build up the ability of local governments and community members to act decisively when disasters strike to save lives. *Photo courtesy of Practical Action*

ER4 Snapshot: Ethiopia

For over 30 years, responses to food insecurity in rural Ethiopia were dominated by emergency food aid, and while this saved lives, it did not protect livelihoods or build resilience. In 2005, Ethiopia launched the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), providing food and cash in exchange for labor, to increase food consumption while providing a food safety net. The Joint Emergency Operation for Food Assistance (JEOP) supports households that face food insecurity during lean seasons, but do not meet the targeting criteria of the PSNP. Together, the PSNP and JEOP prevent widespread hunger through an integrated humanitarian and development effort. In 2021, a new five-year phase of the PSNP was launched. BHA invested significantly to support a scalable shock-responsive safety net by integrating the legacy PSNP mechanism with the Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) mechanism. These investments illustrate how BHA-supported ER4 programs in Ethiopia contribute to the well-being of vulnerable people.



Disaster Risk Reduction: Natural Resource Management via Conditional Public Works

Through this program, households provide labor in the form of public works projects such as soil and water conservation measures, which can reduce drought risk. Through our support to the Ethiopia RFSAs, BHA has also strengthened local and national level early warning and assessment systems.



Response: Addressing Transitory Food Needs

The PSNP supports the HFA response mechanism, which is often beyond the financial capability of the government. BHA, through a consortium led by partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS), responds to additional transitory needs of families outside of the PSNP via the JEOP, in cooperation with Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and the UN World Food Program (WFP). When possible, WFP and NDRMC purchase food locally from small-holder farmers.



Early Recovery: Livelihood Diversification and Community Asset Building

The PSNP program also supports community projects such as the building or rehabilitation of social infrastructure, water point development, or road rehabilitation. Adults learn new skills and livelihoods to diversify their income sources away from reliance on agricultural systems. BHA and its implementing partners are also providing technical and entrepreneurial training in such areas as livelihood and income-generating activities, business skills, marketing, and financial literacy. In some cases, a subsidized asset or cash transfer may be provided to a household to help kick-start a specific economic activity.



Resilience: The Graduation Approach

The graduation approach provides the poorest households with financial stability, enabling them to take small risks to increase their income and diversify their livelihoods. Within the PSNP model, graduation means that a household can meet its needs for all 12 months of the year without assistance, and is able to withstand small-scale shocks. These families no longer require the assistance of a safety net to be self-reliant. BHA-funded RFSAs also work with PSNP households to improve maternal health, influence infant and child feeding behaviors, train households in livelihood activities both on- and off-farm, improve behaviors related to water, sanitation, and hygiene, and develop disaster risk management capacities.



For over 30 years, responses to food insecurity in rural Ethiopia were dominated by emergency food aid. BHA invested significantly to support a scalable shock-responsive safety net by integrating Ethiopia's legacy Productive Safety Net Program mechanism with the Humanitarian Food Assistance mechanism. These investments illustrate how BHA-supported ER4 programs in Ethiopia contribute to the well-being of vulnerable people.

Photo by USAID

Statutory and Procurement Considerations

ER4 programs, by their nature, may be integrated and complex and may require significant attention to detail when it comes to procurement issues. Not only are they funded under different statutory authorities and funding sources, but those funds often come with different timelines, indicators, requirements, and monitoring efforts. Detailed guidance for staff and partners will be provided by BHA's Office of Humanitarian Business and Management Operations (HBMO) and will be issued in a separate document. The various areas for consideration are described below:

Statutory Authority and Funding Source

BHA's statutory authorities and the source of funding used for each activity shape BHA's ER4 programming. In broad terms, BHA's ER4 programming is authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, or the Food for Peace Act, and may be funded by International Disaster Assistance (IDA), Food for Peace Title II (Title II), or Community Development Fund (CDF) (i.e. Development Assistance) resources. Different funding streams may influence programmatic considerations.

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE II EMERGENCY FUNDS

BHA receives funding from two primary sources, the IDA and Title II accounts. BHA can use these funds for ER4 programming insofar as a direct link can be drawn between the proposed ER4 activity and a humanitarian shock or disaster. For example, IDA resources may be used for an ER4 activity with a risk reduction component, so long as the component seeks to reduce risk attributable to a hazard that might create a humanitarian shock or disaster. Title II emergency funds may be used for an ER4 activity insofar as it can be linked to a program utilizing U.S. agricultural commodities. Early recovery activities typically seek to promote recovery directly from a humanitarian shock.

In contrast, for ER4 resilience programming, IDA resources may be used only if BHA staff and partners can demonstrate that the proposed activity seeks to build resilience to a particular type of humanitarian shock or stress, with Title II emergency resources also requiring a link between the proposed activity and a program utilizing U.S. agricultural commodities. More generalized resilience approaches are likely to be more developmental in nature and thus not appropriate for these accounts.

FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE II NON-EMERGENCY FUNDS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS (CDF)

BHA utilizes Title II non-emergency funds and CDF for RFSAs. CDF resources are allocated to the USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security and are obligated into BHA-managed RFSAs to complement Title II resources and support community-level development activities aimed at increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable and accelerating their participation in food security and nutrition activities. As part of BHA's commitment to the USAID Resilience Agenda, through the Resilience Leadership Council, BHA's non-emergency funding is prioritized to align with USAID Resilience Focus

Countries. See [Alignment with USAID Policies, Frameworks, and Guidance](#) for more information on how BHA aligns with the USAID Resilience Agenda.

In rare cases and subject to availability of funds, BHA may also authorize use of Title II non-emergency resources to support public international organization (PIO) programming that addresses similar medium to long-term resilience and food security and nutrition outcomes. This programming must be consistent with the authorizing law, where the PIO possesses unique capacities or in-country relationships that would enable activities that would not be possible for BHA to support through the standard RFSA design and procurement processes.

USG Regulations and Policy Flexibilities

Emergency and humanitarian response programs are exempted from several regulations and Agency policies that must be followed for longer-term, non-emergency ER4 programs. For example, while USAID encourages competition in the award of grants and cooperative agreements to non-governmental organizations in ADS 303, following a disaster or shock BHA may determine competition is impractical and hampers BHA's ability to timely obligate emergency IDA and Title II funding to respond to humanitarian needs. On the other hand, competition may be appropriate for longer-term, non-emergency ER4 activities commonly funded by Title II non-emergency and CDF funds since there are generally fewer time constraints for implementation.

Similarly, federal regulations outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) regarding Agency Environmental Procedures may not uniformly apply based on the funds utilized. For example, IDA funded activities are exempt under 22 CFR 216 and ADS 204 and therefore do not require the environmental review process outlined in Agency policy. Other funding such as Title II emergency may qualify for an exemption from further environmental review under 22 CFR 216, while Title II non-emergency awards generally must fully comply with Environmental Procedures and determinations documented in an initial environmental examination (IEE).

Another example is the difference in the process for agricultural commodity procurements reflected in ADS 312. Agricultural commodities procured under emergency humanitarian assistance activities using IDA and Title II emergency food aid have fewer procedural requirements, while most agricultural commodity procurement requirements do apply to CDF-funded non-emergency awards. Furthermore, source and nationality requirements for agricultural commodities outlined in ADS 310 also differ. IDA, Economic Support Fund (ESF), and CDF-funded non-emergency awards in Sub-Saharan Africa may procure agricultural commodities from geographic code 935, while CDF-funded non-emergency awards outside of Sub-Saharan Africa must follow geographic code 937, absent a waiver. ADS 310 also does not apply to Title II food aid programs since Title II funded agricultural commodities must generally be procured in the United States, however in certain circumstances Title II funds may be used for local, regional, and international procurement of food commodities to establish or enhance Title II programming, pursuant to BHA Functional Policy 20-03.

BHA's [Emergency Application Guidelines](#) (EAG) contain additional information about the overarching policy and statutory framework that guides BHA's work.



Awards and Multi-Year Funding

BHA generally issues urgent humanitarian response awards pursuant to DHNs for shorter-term time durations, typically up to one year period-of-performance. BHA provides these funds primarily through non-competitive processes, in compliance with BHA's Non-Competitive Emergency Application Guidelines (EAG). Currently, the scope of the EAG also applies to non-competitive ER4 programs, and BHA will continue to use the EAG for non-competitive ER4 programming. Prospective applicants interested in securing funding for an ER4 program through the non-competitive processes articulated in the EAG should engage in discussions with BHA field representatives early on, at the concept paper stage.

In line with the [USG's Grand Bargain](#) commitments, the EAG also encourages applicants to consider multi-year funding, but additional requirements exist for programs longer than 12 months. The EAG also stipulates that for activities longer than 18 months, applicants should provide additional justification to BHA. Though BHA may make multi-year ER4 awards, standard practice is to obligate funding incrementally on an annual basis or similar duration, consistent with USG fiscal year and BHA planning and reporting cycles. In some instances, BHA may decide to fully fund a multi-year award upfront. This is more often the case for smaller activities with lower dollar values. BHA retains flexibility to determine the exact incremental obligation amounts based on the availability of funding, as well as programmatic needs.

While the EAG will continue to cover non-competitive ER4 programming, USAID's broader policy direction is to maximize competition wherever possible. There are many advantages to using competitive procurement processes, including the ability to more deliberately plan for multi-year funding, require specific elements of program design, or seek innovation from the partner community. Competitive procurement mechanisms may also include the ability to build in co-creation and better enable BHA to partner with the private sector.

Consistent with the Strategic Objectives, guiding principles, and technical approaches detailed in this



framework, BHA is seeking to foster innovative approaches and deliberately planned, multi-year programs. In these cases, BHA will increasingly issue competitive solicitations through Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), which include Annual Program Statements (APSs) and Requests for Applications (RFAs). The NOFO will state the aspects of the EAG that may apply to a particular NOFO solicitation.

With respect to RFSAs, BHA typically enters into 5-year awards through competitive NOFO RFAs. These are high dollar value, multi-sectoral, integrated awards with complex program designs spanning multiple years. These factors require BHA to award them through competitive means.

Because of the broad range of ER4 programming and the vastly different contexts depending on region, geography, hazard, and vulnerability levels, BHA will preserve flexibility in deciding what type of procurement mechanism to use in a given context.

Considerations for Applicants Regarding Multi-Year Funding

Regardless of the competitive award mechanism used, when designing activities and applying for multi-year funding, applicants should include an activity design and budget for the entire proposed activity duration. The activity should be designed as a multi-year investment, built on long-term planning, and should demonstrate how later stages of the activity will evolve from and build strategically upon earlier stages. Applicants should include annual work plans and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan, including results frameworks and indicators, covering the entire proposed duration of the project. Prospective applicants should review specific NOFOs, RFAs, and other competitive solicitations for multi-year funding. Prospective applicants should review specific APS and RFA documents for multi-year funding.

Disaster simulations in the Philippines—like this one run by BHA partner Catholic Relief Services—help communities prepare for floods, typhoons, and earthquakes, as well as build the capacity of local responders and local governments to prepare for the worst. *Photo courtesy of Tiffany Tsang/CRS*



In Haiti, BHA works with partners to pre-position relief supplies to ensure they're quickly available to help vulnerable communities. Our partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM) stocks emergency commodities including shelter materials, blankets, hygiene kits, household items, and water purification equipment. *Photo courtesy of IOM*

Strategic Alignment

BHA's ER4 work is a critical component of our overall humanitarian assistance mandate and is rooted in the U.S. National Security Strategy and the [2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance](#). Our ER4 work aligns with and complements broader USAID and USG policies, strategies, and frameworks, as well as existing international agreements. BHA also seeks linkages with Mission and Embassy strategic approaches and alignment with the host country's agenda where appropriate. By carefully considering the interplay between our ER4 work and other agendas, we avoid working at cross-purposes, duplicating efforts, and wasting time and limited resources.

Alignment with USAID Policies, Frameworks, and Guidance

Within USAID, a wealth of policies, frameworks, and guidance documents are available to provide staff and partners with guidance and direction. BHA's ER4 efforts align with the guidance provided in each of them and strengthens USAID's commitment to each of these areas of work. Among the most notable are the following:

USAID'S CLIMATE STRATEGY

USAID has developed an Agency Climate Strategy (2022-2030) with an understanding that climate change is an existential crisis, particularly for the most vulnerable, increasing humanitarian needs and putting more than 60 years of development gains at risk. The [USAID Climate Strategy \(2022-2030\)](#) guides a whole-of-Agency approach to reduce global greenhouse emissions, help partner countries build resilience to climate change and improve our operations, describing six high-level ambitious targets for achievement by 2030. BHA's ER4 efforts will prioritize adaptation, working with communities and households to strengthen capacities to absorb and adapt to climate shocks, in line with the whole-of-government President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) Initiative. Our work will also address risk reduction, particularly in areas where climate shocks are producing new kinds of crises, and impactful early recovery programming to rebuild communities and restore household livelihoods after a disaster occurs. Working with our development colleagues, BHA will ensure that our ER4 Strategic Framework and our programming aligns with the tenets and foundational principles of USAID's Climate Strategy.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The [Environmental and Natural Resources Management \(ENRM\)](#) Framework provides guidance on how USAID can coordinate, unify, and elevate environment, climate change, and natural resources management work across the Agency. Although much of BHA's activities fit within Priority Area 1 of the ENRM Framework—Improving Natural Resource Management for Self-Reliance—there are emerging opportunities under Priority Area 2—Improving Urban Systems for a Cleaner Environment and Enhanced Human Well-Being. ENRM interventions in humanitarian response focus on resource protection and restoration while ER4 activities deepen household and community commitments to conservation; both approaches build on the understanding that a sound environment and functioning ecosystems are critical to human well-being. BHA's portfolio of natural resources management activities, particularly within ER4, align to the vision and priorities within the ENRM Framework, and our work can lay the foundation for the development efforts of USAID or other partners.

USAID RESILIENCE POLICY

This ER4 Strategic Framework aligns with USAID's [2012 Resilience Policy](#) which seeks to sequence, layer, and integrate humanitarian and development efforts in areas of ongoing or recurrent crises. Under that policy, humanitarian and development actors are required to engage in joint problem analysis, coordinated strategic planning, and mutually-informed project designs and procurements. Since the policy was enacted, USAID has made strides in bringing humanitarian and development efforts closer together, particularly in select USAID Resilience Focus Countries. BHA's ER4 programs, and especially its RFSA programs, have been key contributors to the implementation of this policy. USAID is in the process of updating this policy to broaden its scope, both in terms of technical focus and geographic reach, and to reflect lessons learned over the past ten years.

GENDER, PROTECTION, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Disasters and crises amplify existing inequalities, including gender inequality, protection risks, and other vulnerabilities experienced by marginalized populations—such as women; children; persons with disabilities; ethnic and religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people; Indigenous People; and older persons. While these populations face barriers to support, access, and resources, as well as increased violence during a crisis and higher mortality rates in the wake of natural hazards, marginalized groups also make critical contributions to crisis prevention, response, and recovery. Their perspectives and capacities are valuable to the success of ER4 programming.

The protection and empowerment of disaster-affected populations, including marginalized groups, is a USAID priority. These commitments are codified in the [U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security \(WPS\)](#) and USAID's [WPS Implementation Plan](#), the [USG Action Plan on Children in Adversity](#), the [USG Safe from the Start Initiative](#), the [USAID Policy on Countering Trafficking in Persons \(CTIP\)](#) and numerous executive orders. To fulfill these commitments, BHA requires partners in all programs and sectors to integrate gender, protection, and inclusion considerations and analyses. Partners must demonstrate that ER4 activities will mitigate unintended negative effects through thoughtful activity designs and meaningful efforts to address access barriers, uphold accountability to affected populations, and champion participation and empowerment.

For example, gender mainstreaming must factor into activities from program activity design to implementation through quality gender analysis, consulting with women and girls, as well as men and boys, throughout the program cycle and incorporating gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation. In ER4 programming, these approaches increase participation in decision-making at household and community levels, address inequitable access to resources and improved livelihoods, and support efforts towards greater equality over time.

By adhering to BHA's gender, protection, diversity, and inclusion standards, ER4 programming supports the safety and dignity of marginalized populations and promotes opportunities for the equality and empowerment of the diverse groups we serve.

LOCALIZATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Localization of development and humanitarian assistance is a top priority for USAID, which has renewed its commitment to localization and to shifting leadership, decision making, and implementation to local people and institutions to drive change in their own countries and communities. As part of this commitment, USAID emphasizes strengthening local capacity of communities, local organizations, and host government entities, ultimately contributing to local ownership and the sustainability of programmatic activities. The effectiveness of local capacity development efforts depends on our ability to understand the context in which we program and how this context will enable or constrain community and government action.

BHA's ER4 efforts are critical areas through which it can advance localization. Local actors are particularly effective in designing and implementing DRR programs, as these programs often require substantial community involvement and trust, significant understanding of the local context, long-term presence in the program area, and strong relationships with local governments and civil society organizations. In addition, effective DRR and resilience programs typically require multi-year investments and the sustained presence of local actors enables them to implement over longer time horizons and to ensure that these initiatives are sustainable and do not conclude with the end of the program.

BHA is also working through [USAID's New Partnerships Initiative](#), which focuses on simplifying access to USAID resources to enable new partners to bring fresh ideas and innovation, with a particular focus on identifying local partners, leveraging private sector energy and resources, and fostering innovative ideas. This initiative informs BHA's approach to ER4 and augments our efforts to engage with the private sector and local leaders.

PRIVATE-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The [Private-Sector Engagement Policy](#) is an Agency-wide call to action and a mandate to work hand-in-hand with the private sector to design and deliver our development and humanitarian programs and activities across all sectors. Private-sector entities provide goods, services, and employment, and they are not immune to the impacts of any disaster, shock, or crisis. Depending on the crisis, supply chains may be interrupted, customers and workers may be affected or lost, or infrastructure may be damaged. As BHA plans and structures its work within the ER4 Framework, we anticipate the involvement of private-sector entities in ER4 programming, either as activity implementers or as recipients of assistance. Strong public-private partnerships will catalyze private-sector resources, enhance risk reduction, and provide opportunities for innovative financing mechanisms.

Alignment with USG Interagency Priorities

INTERIM NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIC GUIDANCE (NSS) 2021

The [NSS](#) reflects the Biden administration's national security priorities and strategy and directs agencies and departments to align their actions with this guidance. The current draft strategy calls for U.S. federal agencies and departments to strengthen US alliances, invest in the economic development of foreign countries, strengthen international health systems, and to defend the rights of all people. The document outlines a strategic environment of multiple crises, chiefly a global pandemic, an economic downturn, threats posed by climate change, as well as rising nationalism, receding democracy, and a growing rivalry with China and other authoritarian states. It identifies protracted humanitarian crises and extreme weather events brought on by climate change as threats to U.S. National Security and directs U.S. agencies and departments to provide foreign assistance to promote global stability.

JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN (JSP) 2022-2026

The Department of State and USAID [Joint Strategic Plan](#) (JSP) supports the policy positions set forth by President Biden in the NSS, sets forth the vision and direction for both organizations, and presents how the Department and USAID will implement U.S. foreign policy and development assistance. It is used as a management tool to define and measure success in international diplomacy and development. BHA's ER4 work will contribute to achieving the goals of the JSP through: (1) strengthening global health security, combating infectious disease threats, and addressing priority global health challenges; (2) boldly addressing climate change through our mitigation and adaptation programs; and (3) enhancing U.S. humanitarian leadership and provision of timely and lifesaving protection and assistance in response to international disasters and humanitarian crises overseas. Our work will strengthen our alliances while advancing human dignity, freedom, and equality around the globe.

GLOBAL FRAGILITY STRATEGY (GFS)

The [GFS](#) sets forth a framework for USG interventions to enhance efforts to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent widespread violence and fragility. The Global Fragility Act of 2019 requires enhanced interagency efforts and authorized up to \$200 million each year for a new Prevention and Stabilization Fund (PSF) through 2024.

Through this law, USAID serves as the lead implementation agency for non-security U.S. prevention and stabilization assistance in support of U.S. policy objectives and the lead agency in coordinating and sequencing various contingency and long-term, non-security assistance. BHA has longstanding investments in fragile contexts and complex crises, including in the ER4 realm. As part of these investments, BHA will mainstream conflict sensitivity into its assistance, while also ensuring that ER4 programming is appropriately aligned with humanitarian principles, taking into account best practices around risk mitigation.

U.S. GOVERNMENT GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY (GFSS) 2022-2026

The [GFSS](#), reflects the unique skills, resources, and lessons learned from U.S. federal departments and agencies that contribute to global food security, as well as input from partners throughout the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society. It charts a course for the USG to contribute to the achievement of global food security and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) together with partners across the globe. It focuses on three main objectives: (1) inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth; (2) strengthened resilience among people and systems; and (3) a well-nourished population, especially among women and children. BHA's ER4 programming reflects the significant contributions and technical leadership that the Bureau brings to food security programming, including through agriculture, food security, health, nutrition, and economic development programs and activities. BHA's RFSA and emergency food security activities are programmed in GFSS countries and deliberately link to and partner with GFSS activities in-country whenever viable strategies are identified that could increase the sustainability and impact of BHA investments, as well as increase the reach of other GFSS activities to vulnerable populations. RFSA results are also included in the GFSS results reporting.

Alignment with International Frameworks

In addition to aligning with internal Agency and USG strategies and policies, the BHA ER4 Strategic Framework is also committed to ensuring support for international frameworks and agreements. Our position within the international humanitarian community provides us with great opportunities for leadership. Addressing the pledges and obligations within these frameworks allows us to lead by example, setting standards for excellence in programming and policy.

HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE (HDP) NEXUS

As noted earlier in this framework, BHA's ER4 work is a critical dimension of its contributions to the HDP Nexus. At the [World Humanitarian Summit](#) in 2016, participants discussed the role of humanitarian action in contexts of chronic crises, focusing on structural and political root causes. This resulted in a commitment to a "new way of working" based on linking humanitarian, development, and peace efforts. Participants identified three critical approaches: (1) reinforce, rather than replace, local systems and solutions; (2) transcend the humanitarian-development divide; and (3) anticipate and act upon crises before they emerge. The focus of BHA's ER4 work

on strengthening local capacities, reducing risk, and building longer-term resilience aligns with these main tenets. In pursuit of HDP coherence, BHA abides by the following key principles:

- Create and strengthen communication, coordination, and learning platforms across humanitarian and development assistance and peace building efforts;
- Plan jointly and seek collective outcomes when possible;
- Strategically sequence, layer, and integrate humanitarian and development assistance, and peace building efforts where appropriate;
- Promote shock-responsive programming and data-driven adaptive management, such as joint risk assessments and analysis;
- Work across mandates, sectors, and institutional boundaries with a diversity of partners;
- Support national and local capacities whenever possible.

GRAND BARGAIN

The [Grand Bargain](#), resulting from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, is an agreement between donors and humanitarian organizations to reform humanitarian financing to make emergency aid finance more efficient and effective. Commitments include greater transparency, more support to local and national responders, increased use of cash-based programming, joint needs assessments, inclusion of aid recipients in decision-making, increased collaborative humanitarian multi-year—defined as 24 months or more—planning and quality funding, simplified reporting requirements, and increased engagement between humanitarian and development actors. BHA’s ER4 programs and activities address many of these commitments, focusing on fostering sustainable change which relies on strong partnerships and engagement with local and national actors, being responsive to the needs of communities, and creating direct linkages with humanitarian and development funding.

SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) (2015-2030)

The [Sendai Framework for DRR](#) was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides countries with concrete actions to reduce disaster risks and protect development gains from the risk of disaster. The expected outcome of the Sendai Framework is the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health, as well as in the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities, and countries. BHA’s ER4 programs and activities, particularly those with a risk reduction component, are specifically designed to align with the goal and priorities of the Sendai Framework.

Conclusion

ER4 activities are a critical means for supporting the most vulnerable households and communities and reinforcing national systems to strengthen resilience and disaster response, thus reducing the future need for humanitarian assistance. While BHA’s humanitarian response activities save lives and prevent further suffering among disaster-impacted populations, our ER4 programs focus on supporting people and governments to solve their own challenges, to strengthen local and national capacities to absorb, adapt, and transform in the wake of crises, and to build a stronger and more prosperous future. BHA is fully committed to all efforts within its mandate of providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people, and our ER4 efforts are vital dimensions of this work.

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