EBOLA RECOVERY

USAID Has Initiated or Completed Most Projects, but a Complete Project Inventory Is Still Needed for Evaluating Its Efforts

What GAO Found

As of September 30, 2017, of the $1.6 billion that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) had obligated for the Ebola outbreak, $411.6 million was obligated for 131 Ebola recovery projects. Of the $411.6 million, USAID obligated the largest amount—about $247.6 million (60 percent)—from the Economic Support Fund account for recovery projects to support health systems recovery, governance and economic crisis mitigation, and Ebola survivors, among others. USAID obligated about $118.5 million from the International Disaster Assistance account for food security projects, such as food assistance and agricultural market support, and $45.5 million from the Global Health Programs account for Ebola survivor and world health reform projects.

As of September 2017, USAID had completed 62 of its 131 planned Ebola recovery projects, had 65 projects that were ongoing, and had 4 planned projects that it had not yet started. Of the 62 completed projects, USAID had completed 39 within original time frames and budgeted costs and extended 23. Of the 65 ongoing projects, USAID expected to implement 46 within original time frames and costs, but had extended 19. USAID extends projects, in part, to complete host-government actions, hire staff, finalize project activities, and continue and expand food assistance.

In 2016, USAID contracted for an evaluation of its Ebola recovery activities. Although the contractor has completed some design elements for the evaluation, USAID had not ensured that a complete and accurate inventory of USAID’s Ebola recovery projects had been compiled for the evaluation as of December 2017. USAID intends to use the information and lessons learned from this evaluation to inform and improve its ability to respond to future global health emergencies. GAO’s comparison of the contractor’s inventory with USAID data provided to Congress found a number of discrepancies that USAID officials could not explain with certainty. USAID policy states that information collected should be of sufficient quality to be useful for the intended users. Until USAID ensures that the contractor develops a complete and accurate inventory of USAID’s Ebola recovery projects, USAID will not have assurance that the resulting evaluation will be of sufficient quality.

What GAO Recommends

The Administrator of USAID should ensure that a complete and accurate inventory of Ebola recovery projects is compiled for the ongoing evaluation. USAID concurred with GAO’s recommendation.

View GAO-18-350. For more information, contact David B. Gootnick at (202) 512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov.