

Why GAO Did This Study

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake struck Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, causing an estimated 230,000 deaths and displacing about 2 million persons. According to the Department of State, U.S. government agencies have allocated \$4 billion to earthquake-related efforts, including \$2.7 billion for reconstruction. USAID, which is responsible for over half of reconstruction funding, has directed its efforts to eight sectors: energy, shelter, ports, education, governance and rule of law, economic security, health, and food security.

GAO was asked to review U.S. reconstruction efforts in Haiti. This report examines (1) USAID's allocations, obligations, and disbursements of reconstruction funding; (2) USAID/Haiti's progress in implementing planned reconstruction activities; and (3) USAID/Haiti's efforts to ensure the sustainability of these activities. GAO analyzed funding data; reviewed documents; interviewed U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., and Haiti; and visited reconstruction activity sites. GAO focused its review on 23 key activities, each with allocations exceeding \$10 million.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that USAID/Haiti perform sustainability analyses for noninfrastructure activities during design. GAO also recommends that USAID provide guidance for identifying projects for which sustainability must be certified and specifying information that these certifications should include. USAID agreed with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-15-517](#). For more information, contact David Gootnick at (202) 512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov.

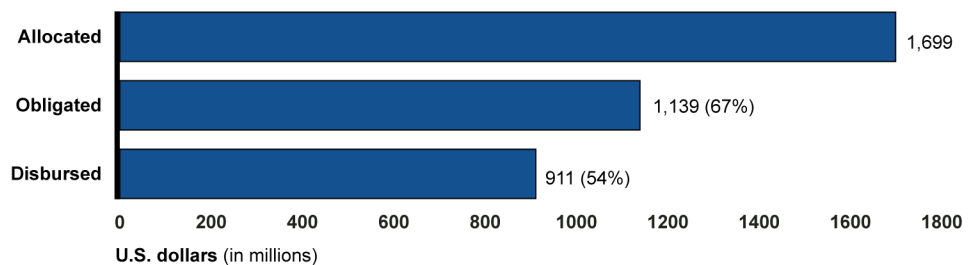
HAITI RECONSTRUCTION

USAID Has Achieved Mixed Results and Should Enhance Sustainability Planning

What GAO Found

As of September 30, 2014, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) had allocated \$1.7 billion to the Haiti reconstruction effort, directing more than half of this funding to the health and food security sectors. USAID had obligated two-thirds and disbursed more than half of all allocated funding.

USAID Funding for Haiti Earthquake Reconstruction as of September 30, 2014



Source: GAO analysis of USAID funding data. | GAO-15-517

Note: GAO defined obligations as orders placed, contracts awarded, and similar transactions during a given period that will require payments during the same or a future period. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) categorizes these as "subobligations," because it considers these funds to have been obligated through a bilateral agreement with Haiti to deliver assistance.

Most of the 23 reconstruction activities that GAO reviewed have achieved mixed results and some have faced delays, leading USAID's Haiti mission (USAID/Haiti) to extend its reconstruction time frame. The mission reduced planned outcomes for 5 of the 6 key infrastructure activities and encountered delays in 4 of these activities, including port improvements. USAID/Haiti also reduced planned outcomes for 3 of the 17 key noninfrastructure activities, including providing access to basic health care. Key noninfrastructure activities met or exceeded the target for half of all performance indicators and met at least 75 percent of the target for nearly a quarter of all indicators. Mission officials said that factors affecting results and causing delays included inadequate staffing and unrealistic initial plans. As a result, USAID/Haiti has increased staffing and extended its reconstruction time frame by 3 years, to 2018.

USAID/Haiti has taken steps to ensure the sustainability of its reconstruction activities, but sustainability planning could be enhanced. The mission planned activities to address sustainability risks that it identified, such as the Haitian government's low technical and budgetary capacity. The mission also plans to conduct sustainability analyses to determine how to address risks for infrastructure activities. However, the mission plans to conduct such analyses when designing new noninfrastructure activities only after it begins operating under a new strategy in October 2018. In addition, USAID does not have agency-wide guidance for completing required certifications of the sustainability of large capital assistance projects, including infrastructure activities. Partly as a result, USAID/Haiti may not have completed all required certifications and included inconsistent information in those it completed. A USAID report found that 21 percent of required certifications were completed agency-wide from 2011 to 2013. Federal internal control standards call for agencies to assess risks to achieving their objectives and to communicate information that enables management and others to achieve compliance with laws and regulations.