

## **“USAID to unveil new organizational chart on Thursday,” Michael Igoe, DEVEX, 4/4/18**

WASHINGTON — [United States Agency for International Development](#) Administrator Mark Green plans to unveil to staff on Thursday a proposal for a revised organizational chart aimed at better supporting his overall vision of ending the need for foreign assistance.

Among the broad goals this restructuring will aim to achieve are “strengthening and elevating humanitarian assistance,” “consolidating and elevating resilience,” “connecting budget and strategy,” and “having a more field-focused presence,” Jim Richardson, coordinator of USAID’s Transformation Task Team, told Devex.

Agency leaders want to be “pushing resources and decisions to the field and using Washington more as a consultative body to provide technical expertise and the innovation behind that,” he said.

While Richardson, a Trump administration appointee, would not reveal the proposed changes before a series of meetings planned with bureau staff this week, he said that none of the proposed changes should come as a big surprise.

“They’re either things that were started under the last administration, have been long-standing pain points, [or] things that we’ve talked about for a long time through the transformation effort,” he said.

Last week, the White House granted tentative approval of the plan. More than 300 USAID employees have been working for the last five months to narrow down a list of structural and process changes, Richardson said. Once the transformation team collects feedback on this proposed organizational structure, they will present a final plan in a congressional notification. Richardson said he expects that to happen sometime this summer.

While the specter of deep foreign aid [budget cuts](#) proposed by the White House has hung ominously over this reorganization process, USAID’s leaders are adamant the changes they are proposing are not aimed at cost savings. Even if Congress were to increase USAID’s budget 30 percent, the agency’s leadership would implement these same changes, Richardson said.

“We assume there will be efficiencies, and that’s good. From our perspective, we’re not looking to get to a budget number, we’re looking to send more resources into the field,” he said, adding that USAID’s position is that any cost savings that arise should be reinvested back into the agency’s programs.

“This isn’t a budget-driven exercise,” Richardson said.

## **State vs. AID**

Even if the budget is not a driving force behind the changes USAID's leadership is proposing, questions about the role U.S. global development programs would play under the Trump administration has created an uncertain context in which to implement a major reform.

According to a USAID inspector general review of the USAID redesign commissioned by three U.S. senators, the “looming question” of whether the administration would seek to merge USAID into the State Department, “not only distracted teams but further confused the direction of the redesign process.”

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s departure and Central Intelligence Agency Director Mike Pompeo’s [nomination](#) to replace him introduced yet another variable into the agency’s restructuring process. In a briefing last month, State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters that information about the joint redesign will be “bundled together” and given to Pompeo if and when he takes over.

“He can take a look at it and choose what he wants to do with it,” Nauert said.

Some in the development community took Nauert’s statement — and Tillerson’s departure in general — as a signal that the reorganization plans might never become reality.

Richardson, who previously served as Pompeo’s congressional chief of staff, stressed that the organizational changes USAID is presenting this week are all actions USAID’s administrator can take on his own.

“Everything we are working on as part of the internal transformation is really separate and apart from any type of joint activities that we were taking with the State Department,” Richardson said.

“We purposefully narrowed our scope to focus on things that were in the administrator’s control, and that’s what he’s rolling out,” he said.

What USAID could propose on its own, and what the agency was meant to do in coordination with the State Department, appears to have been a topic of some debate — and a source of tension during the redesign process.

USAID’s team submitted elements of this “supplemental plan” to the [Office of Management and Budget](#) last year. According to the inspector general’s review, “the State Department was not pleased with the supplemental plan, noting that some of USAID’s proposals should have been developed through the joint process.”

Asked about the current state of the relationship between USAID and the State Department, Richardson said, “where we are today, I am very optimistic about how we can work together with mutual respect.”

The same inspector general review highlighted staff complaints that decisions USAID officials thought they had already made were later revisited by the State Department. Some staffers also

questioned how inclusive and transparent a process billed as employee-led really was, according to the review.

Asked what he has learned about reforming major governmental bureaucracies through this process, Richardson said, “You’ve got to involve your whole agency. You’ve got to get people to be part of the solution, you have to tell a story about why we’re doing this … If it’s a good argument, people will follow that.”