

Panel Executive Brief: How to Mobilize the SAR from CSOs & Implementers

The most challenging aspect of the SAR is its implementation. As a community of stabilization practitioners, it is incumbent upon us to translate this Washington-based product into field-based implementation with real results on the ground.

Speakers

Melanie Greenberg - *President and CEO, Alliance for Peacebuilding*

Megan Doherty - *Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Mercy Corps*

Amb. Charles Ries - *Vice President, International, RAND*

Moderator: Alexa Courtney - CEO, Frontier Design

Key Issues/Problems discussed:

- There are numerous bureaucracy-related challenges inherent in stabilization.
- In order to achieve results on the ground, we need to collapse the space between Washington and the field and be inclusive.
- One problem is that civil society is not easily coordinated – among government and international organizations, civil society space has shrunk; it's especially dangerous to be a civil society group in dissent.
 - How do we keep that space open, to allow relationships to flourish where we can create social cohesion and weave together civil society?
- What is the actual plan for civil society and non-USG for implementation, at both the Washington and country levels?
- How can we help build adaptability and partnership together in an incremental process?
- Definition of stabilization is going to look like an end-state, long-term vision. How do we reconcile that vision, while also understanding that we're going to need short-term benchmarks?

Key Recommendations:

- Civil society partnerships, transparent and proactive communications with key national actors, and engagement with local community leaders are essential to the planning and implementation processes – local buy-in and ownership is key.
- Be clear about what we expect, what we can offer, and how we wish to utilize their expertise.
- Management of expectations – both our own and that of our partners and allies.
- Would be greatly beneficial to build adaptive learning into contracts – make sure that implementers are able to adjust in a rapidly moving context.
- Make small, realistic commitments – rushing in can fail.
- We are most successful when we are being led at the field level by people who understand local dynamics – we need to put structures in place that support this realm of success.

Significance of SAR:

The SAR succeeds in creating a framework for USAID, DoD, and DoS coordination, which is necessary to move forward. A joint political strategy is paramount to effective implementation of the SAR. The SAR

calls for innovation in ways and means, not necessarily in instincts. We have a better chance of success if there is a joint policy approach in Washington of supporting implementers in the field.