



## COVID-19: Enhanced Controls Could Strengthen USAID's Management of Expedited Procurement Procedures

### Why We Did This Audit

The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges to USAID's ability to provide U.S. foreign assistance worldwide. In March 2020, Congress allotted \$2.14 billion to support the Agency's efforts to respond to the pandemic and support the programs it impacted.

The Agency authorized the use of the Expedited Procedures Package for Responding to Outbreaks of Contagious Infectious Diseases (Outbreak EPP) to accelerate awards for COVID-19 programming. The Outbreak EPP deviates from the Agency's standard competitive procurement procedures by allowing USAID to issue new and modified contracts for COVID-19-related activities without resorting to full and open competition. Federal agencies are only allowed to award contracts noncompetitively under emergency circumstances to protect vital government interests, and COVID-19 constituted such a situation.

However, fraud risks are higher in emergency situations than under normal circumstances because the need to provide services quickly can hinder the effectiveness of existing controls and creates more opportunities for fraud.

We conducted this audit to determine the extent to which (1) USAID used the Outbreak EPP for COVID-19 programming and (2) selected USAID Operating Units met requirements for using the Outbreak EPP for COVID-19.

### What We Recommend

We made four recommendations to address weaknesses in how USAID tracks and reports Outbreak EPP information and assesses the continued need of the Outbreak EPP.

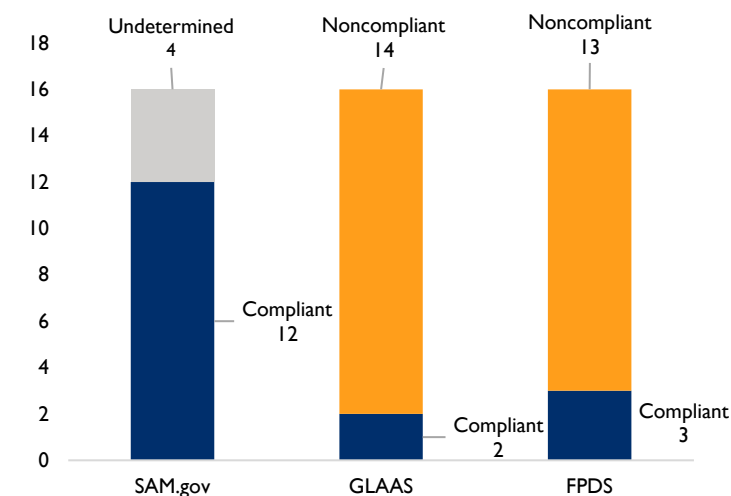
### What We Found

**USAID did not have complete and accurate information about how the Agency used the Outbreak EPP for COVID-19 programming.**

Specifically, USAID did not consistently track Outbreak EPP data, report Outbreak EPP use, or report how noncompetitive actions were used in Federal systems.

**The Operating Units we selected generally met the Outbreak EPP requirements. However, USAID did not have controls in place to assess the continued use of the Outbreak EPP.** Several Outbreak EPP award files did not have the documentation that Federal regulations require each time a noncompetitive process is followed. In addition, USAID lacked an established process for periodically reviewing the continued need of the Outbreak EPP for other disease outbreaks.

### Count of Awards Marked as Using Limited Competition Across Required Reporting Systems



Source: OIG-generated analysis results