



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# USAID OPEN GOVERNMENT PLAN

“The Agency is now creating the feedback loop needed to ensure that what we learn is built into everything we do. Our challenge going forward is to institutionalize this practice ... to ensure that we can drive with evidence, make mid-course corrections, scale what works and, importantly, be fully transparent and accountable.”

--Gayle E. Smith, USAID Administrator

USAID Open Government Plan v 4.0

[www.usaid.gov/open](http://www.usaid.gov/open)

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# I. Introduction

The U.S. Agency for International Development's fourth Open Government Plan (Plan v4) outlines initiatives and the progress made since issuance of the 2014 Open Government Plan (v 3.0). It provides updates on ongoing activities, an overview of new activities and Flagship Initiatives that relate to the key principles of open government -- transparency, participation and collaboration.

USAID has made significant progress in institutionalizing open government into the Agency culture. The development model focuses on creating public-private partnerships and harnessing science, technology and innovation to deliver measurable results. Additionally, open government principles are increasingly integrated into Agency operations. A few examples of USAID activities since 2014 are highlighted below:

- USAID issued its first-ever open data policy. Agency awards now stipulate that contractors and recipients of USAID funding must submit USAID-funded data on international development to the Agency's central, public-facing data repository, known as the Development Data Library (DDL). As of August 2016, USAID has received over a dozen datasets a month from its partners around the world and has released over 140 of these datasets to the public via the DDL.
- Through FY 2016, USAID implemented the first three phases of its International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Cost Management Plan (CMP) making considerable progress delivering on its IATI commitments. As a result of transparency efforts, USAID has seen substantial improvements in Publish What You Fund's (PWYF) Aid Transparency Index (Index).
- USAID reduced its year-over-year annual FOIA backlog by 10 percent in Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015. The FOIA request backlog was reduced by 36 percent and 51 percent respectively, while the administrative appeal backlog was reduced by 56 percent and 100 percent respectively.
- USAID hosted a first-of-its-kind Open Data Hack-a-thon focusing on crime and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. The event attracted over 100 participants from approximately 50 organizations worldwide.
- A Global Innovation Exchange was launched in 2016, providing a meeting place for approximately 4,600 innovations, \$200 million of active funding opportunities, and 10,000 collaborators.
- USAID implemented an online training series, How to Work With USAID, that currently has 14 modules in numerous languages that can be watched from around the world.
- Content on the external web pages is now available in nearly 30 languages making information on USAID activities accessible to people around the world.

The updated plan takes into consideration the concerns highlighted by civil society advocates during a joint stakeholder session sponsored by the Office of Management and Budget.

## II. USAID Mission and Goals

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent federal agency that receives overall policy guidance from the Secretary of State. USAID's mission is to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. The Agency accelerates human progress in developing countries by:

- Reducing poverty;
- Advancing democracy;
- Empowering women;
- Building market economies;
- Promoting security, responding to crises; and
- Improving the quality of life through investments in health and education.

With an official presence in 87 countries and programs in several other non-presence countries, the Agency's mission is supported by more than 2,100 Foreign Service employees and 1,750 in the Civil Service. Additional support comes from approximately 4,400 Foreign Service Nationals and 1,200 other employees.

USAID plans its development and assistance programs in coordination with the Department of State, and collaborates with other U.S. government agencies, multilateral and bilateral organizations, private companies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). USAID also works with host country partners to accomplish sustainable, country-led and -owned responses to their development challenges. USAID's development model focuses on creating public-private partnerships and harnessing science, technology, and innovation to deliver measurable results.

The Joint Strategic Plan for USAID and the Department of State for 2014 – 2017 lays out five strategic goals:

- *Strategic Goal 1* - Strengthen America's economic reach and positive economic impact;
- *Strategic Goal 2* - Strengthen America's foreign policy impact on our strategic challenges;
- *Strategic Goal 3* - Promote the transition to a low-emission, climate-resilient world, while expanding global access to sustainable energy;
- *Strategic Goal 4* - Protect core U.S. interests by advancing democracy and human rights and strengthening civil society; and
- *Strategic Goal 5* - Modernize the way we do diplomacy and development.

A performance goal under Strategic Goal 5 focuses on stakeholder collaboration and audience engagement. This goal aligns and drives the Agency toward greater transparency, collaboration and participation with our constituents and partners. USAID is promoting sustainable development through building high-impact partnerships. The Agency is collaborating with and directly

supporting host governments, the private sector, civil society and academia, all of which serve as engines of growth and progress for their own nations.

This updated plan outlines USAID initiatives that integrate open government principles into the Agency's core mission and operations. It details progress we have made and commitments to promote even greater openness in the Agency's work.

### III. New and Expanded Initiatives

The section addresses new or expanded initiatives since the issuance of the [OMB Memorandum M-10-06, Open Government Directive](#), including new areas specifically identified in [OMB Memorandum M-16-16](#).

#### A. Open Data

USAID is committed to treating the Agency's data as precious international development capital. As a data-driven agency, USAID understands the importance of enhancing access to data resources and promoting data sharing to foster innovative development outcomes. Since issuing its previous open government plan, the Agency fundamentally changed the way it does business. Open data efforts have the capacity to empower citizens, improve public service effectiveness and timeliness, create economic opportunities, and enhance government transparency. For example, in response to a drought in the Horn of Africa, USAID partners were able to reposition food supplies based on maps and visualizations created from open data. M-Farm, an organization in Kenya, created a mobile application using publicly available crop price data to connect farmers with markets and to help them select crop varieties likely to yield the greatest income. In addition to improving services and generating economic value, USAID's open data efforts enhance accountability and transparency by helping the public better understand U.S. foreign assistance investments around the world. USAID's open data initiatives are discussed below.

##### 1. USAID's Open Data Policy and Development Data Library (DDL)

In October 2014, USAID issued its first-ever open data policy. [Automated Directives System \(ADS\) 579 – USAID Development Data](#) specifically acknowledges that, "The value of data used in strategic planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of USAID's programs is enhanced when those *data are made available throughout the Agency and to all other interested stakeholders*, in accordance with proper protection and redaction allowable by law." Universal changes to Agency awards now stipulate that contractors and recipients of USAID funding must submit USAID-funded data on international development to the Agency's central, public-facing data repository, known as the [Development Data Library \(DDL\)](#).

USAID has embarked on a substantial initiative to strengthen the DDL as an open data platform and digital repository that will enhance the accessibility, discoverability, and re-use of Agency data over the coming years. Scheduled for launch in early 2017, it will streamline the process by which USAID partners submit data to the Agency and will increasingly reflect data management protocols used by the academic and data science communities. It will also enhance search and discovery for USAID data resources, preliminary data analysis and visualization, and the global public's ability to access data on international development for research and innovation.

As of August 2016, USAID has received over a dozen datasets a month from its partners around the world. These datasets focus on a wide variety of subjects from land rights to food security, microenterprise, health services, education, and genomic data for specific crops that can be used to mitigate malnutrition. USAID has released over 140 of these datasets to the public via the DDL.

Given the broad-reaching implications of USAID's open data policy, the Agency has committed to pursuing the federal rulemaking process to seek public comment on open data language proposed for USAID contracts. The proposed rule is expected to be released for public comment by the end of calendar year 2016.

## **2. Open Data Theory of Change and Responsible Data Management**

USAID's open data policy reflects the Agency's commitment to open access and transparency while balancing the responsibility to protect the vulnerable populations it serves. The policy articulates a data clearance process that guides the Agency's review of individual datasets and its actions to mitigate risks connected with public release. As the clearance process has matured, the Agency has begun to conduct research on assessing personal privacy risks associated with datasets received from implementing partners. USAID will bolster its efforts over the next two years to conduct rigorous, expeditious data privacy reviews that create strong privacy protections and enhance data usability.

The Agency is also investing in studies to identify and distill best practices for managing data responsibly across the entire data lifecycle. These studies will synthesize experiences and processes for responsible data collection and management (including storage, sharing, reuse, release and disposal) within field-based development programs that present varying benefits and risks related to data collection and use. These studies will also bring together USAID data suppliers with data users in workshops and round table discussions to better understand preconditions for the effective and responsible use of data in international development. Drawing from uses cases, which highlight the effective use of open data in developing economies, will also help to draft an evidence-based theory of change for the use of open data in international development.

## **3. Other Open Data Products**

USAID will not only bolster the extent to which it releases raw data for public use, but will continue to encourage data usage for outcome-based purposes by harmonizing its various analytical and visualization products fueled by open data.

- *Dollars to Results*

USAID created the [Dollars to Results](#) (D2R) website to provide visual and narrative data about USAID's impact around the world by linking foreign assistance spending and illustrative results by fiscal year (FY). Currently, D2R displays fiscal year (FY) 2011 through FY 2015 data for 44 countries. To make USAID information more accessible to the public, D2R displays results with reader friendly explanations. Users can also download data in a machine-readable format. Other U.S. Government agencies have lauded D2R for showcasing results in an easy to understand manner and have reached out to USAID for information about how to create similar websites.

- *Economic Analysis and Data Services (EADS)*

USAID's Economic Analysis and Data Services (EADS) facilitates access to and analysis of social, economic, and other statistical data and information related to the Agency's mission. EADS provides support services for reporting, data access and use, and statistical analysis and research. The EADS' staff maintain the following services and products, in addition to other data resources:

- The Trade Capacity Building (TCB) website reports all trade capacity building activities from the U.S. government. The site also includes a query tool and a dashboard that can be filtered by country, implementing agency, or category. It provides users within USAID and the general public with information on USG TCB support, activity by activity.
- The Microenterprise Results Reporting (MRR) website shows USAID's data for reporting of its microenterprise supporting activities in compliance with the Microenterprise Results and Accountability Act (MRAA) of 2004. The website allows users to not only obtain summarized information about individual microenterprise activities, but also provide links to activity documents included in USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).
- The International Data and Economic Analysis (IDEA) website collects country level economic and social data from around the world, from sources such as the World Bank, IMF, UN agencies, and US government sources as well (e.g. USAID's Demographic and Health Surveys). It brings these sources into one location and makes them easily accessible to USAID staff and the public, facilitating identification of appropriate and updated data to analyze country development and contextualize USG foreign assistance. The website includes a query tool, country profiles and will soon be including a country dashboard to allow users to benchmark country data by comparing with groups of countries in the same region or of similar income.

- *Foreign Aid Explorer*

Powered by an underlying database of all U.S. foreign assistance funding for the past 66 years from over 70 U.S. Government departments, agencies, and offices, Foreign Aid Explorer presents the multi-dimensional picture of U.S. foreign assistance through a highly visual and interactive website. The site presents a picture of historical U.S. foreign aid in accurate and understandable terms and makes it easy for users to find and retrieve the data they need. For the casual user, there are interactive maps and graphics that clearly lay out the details of foreign aid, allowing users to explore foreign aid data across countries, sectors, and over time. More advanced users can quickly download their desired data using our data query tools or by selecting from a choice of prepared files

- *ForeignAssistance.gov*

USAID, in partnership with the Department of State, Office of Foreign Assistance Resources (State/F), leads the effort to ensure greater transparency of U.S Government foreign assistance funding through the ForeignAssistance.gov (FA.gov) website. FA.gov allows stakeholders, both internal and external, the ability to search and visualize expanded, timely information about what,

where, how, and with whom USAID spends development dollars. Making data available in an easily readable format is part of the U.S. Government's commitment to transparency and accountability. Additionally, publishing data on FA.gov is a significant component in USAID's International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Cost Management Plan (CMP). Through FY 2016, USAID implemented the first three phases of the IATI CMP, making considerable progress delivering on its IATI commitments. Building on its success with being the first U.S. agency to publish transaction-level data on FA.gov in FY 2013, USAID reported on 16 new data fields and improved reporting on an additional 7 data fields in FY 2015. As a result of these transparency efforts, USAID has seen substantial improvements in Publish What You Fund's (PWYF) Aid Transparency Index (Index), which, in part, utilizes the data published on FA.gov.

- *Mapping for Resilience*

Mapping for Resilience is a signature program of the USAID GeoCenter that creates new geospatial data and makes it available on a web-based, open data platform for anyone to use. USAID engages local and global open mapping communities, along with university students in developing countries and the in the United States, to create data in unmapped areas of the world where USAID works. The newly created geographic data is openly shared in near-real time on the OpenStreetMap (OSM) platform. This timely mapping data has been used to assist USAID search and rescue teams that deployed to Kathmandu after the Nepal earthquake in 2015; to support food security program planning in rural communities in Bangladesh; and to improve campaigns to combat malaria in Mozambique.

## **B. Proactive Disclosures**

An integral part of the Freedom of Information Act is that agencies make their records publically available without waiting for specific requests from the public. USAID proactively discloses information on the [usaid.gov](https://www.usaid.gov) web page, including the Agency's directives system, reports, letters, statements and other materials. For all new FOIA requests, the FOIA Registrar searches the FOIA database to identify similar record requests. If a similar record is identified, and it has been released at least twice previously, the record is considered for proactive disclosure. Additionally, USAID routinely identifies data sets and proactively discloses such information pursuant to the Government's Open Data Initiative. Three of the most robust USAID open data websites are Dollars to Results (<https://results.usaid.gov>); Foreign Assistance.gov ([ForeignAssistance.gov](https://www.usaid.gov/foreign-assistance)); and Development Data Library (<https://www.usaid.gov/data>). In addition, the FOIA Office regularly collaborates with program offices, the Agency Information Governance Committee, and Chief Data Officer on subjects of interests (e.g., highly publicized media events such as Ebola and Zika) to determine if the subject(s) and the responsive material(s) is appropriate for proactive disclosure. A decision was made to proactively disclose Ebola information and Zika information as a result of this collaboration.

## **C. Privacy**

Transparency is a core and foundational tenant of privacy. ADS 508, Privacy Program and its supporting mandatory references outline the program's privacy compliance responsibilities and structure for meeting legal, regulatory, OMB, and NIST privacy requirements. The mandatory references include the templates and tools used by USAID to assess privacy risk and to support the



development of new privacy artifacts.

USAID's external web page for the [Privacy Program](#) provides public access to privacy compliance documents, including:

- [Systems of Record Notices \(SORNs\)](#) covering USAID's collection, use, maintenance, and disclosure of personal identifiable information (PII) subject to the Privacy Act of 1974; and
- Summarizes of [Privacy Impact Assessments \(PIAs\)](#) for USAID IT systems and programs, as required by Section 208 of the E-government Act of 2002.

Individuals seeking access to or amendment of their personal information may submit a [Privacy Act request](#) through USAID's Freedom of Information Act office. USAID's website provides information on the Privacy Act process and submission requirements. [USAID's website privacy policy](#) provides notice to the public of privacy expectations on USAID websites. Privacy Program staff work with website owners to ensure that privacy policies are posted on websites affiliated with USAID and that privacy notices are posted on web forms where personally identifiable information (PII) may be collected or submitted by the public.

#### **D. Whistleblower Protection**

USAID provided an on-line training module to all employees during 2015 to inform them of their rights and protections under Federal anti-discrimination and whistleblower laws. The Administration's second Open Government Action Plan requires covered agencies to participate in the Office of Special Council (OSC) Whistleblower Protection Act certification program. USAID expects to achieve the certification early in calendar year 2017.

#### **E. Websites**

USAID continues to enhance the outward facing websites to improve the users' ability to find information and broaden the audiences that have access to content on Agency activities. Recent enhancements include:

- Content managers in field missions are now able to add content to in-country sites in multiple languages. Content is now available in nearly 30 languages, making information more accessible to partners and stakeholders around the world.
- USAID is making web content more accessible to individuals with disabilities by providing web content developers more information and tools to guide the development of content that is 508 compliant.
- A new feature, the Program Update Hub, allows USAID missions and Washington offices to easily aggregate content around a program or topic.
- The Agency web site received upgrades that will help to optimize pages using Meta Data, Twitter Cards, and Facebook Previews. Meta Data is text in the code of a web page that is used by search engines when indexing content. The site now supports Twitter Cards, the thumbnail previews that appear when links to pages are posted to Twitter. In addition,

there is now more control when someone posts a link to USAID content on Facebook.

USAID participates in the General Services Administration's Digital Analytics Program. The program helps government agencies understand how people find, access and use government services online. It provides a window into how people are interacting with the Agency online. The [USAID page on analytics.usa.gov](#) reflected 1.7 million visits to the Agency's external web site over a recent 90-day period.

## F. Open Innovation Methods

New ideas are solving development problems and improving lives around the world at an unprecedented rate. As of 2015, USAID's Global Development Lab (Lab) programs had attracted over 15,000 applicants and funded the testing and innovations of 362 innovators. In addition, USAID missions and bureaus are using tools, approaches and mechanisms to promote science, technology, innovation and partnership in the Agency's work. Examples of open innovation initiatives are as follows:

- *Global Innovation Exchange*

The [Global Innovation Exchange](#) (the Exchange) is an online meeting place for innovators, funders and experts to connect and share valuable insights and resources to address humanity's greatest challenges. Initially conceptualized by USAID, the beta version was co-created with public and private sector partners and was released in October 2015 as a pilot. The Exchange officially launched in June 2016 at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit, and is the meeting place for approximately 4,600 innovations, \$200 million of active funding opportunities, and 10,000 collaborators.

The Exchange is supported by donors, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Korea's Office for International Cooperation. The Exchange is free to the global community and serves as a public good platform facilitating the sharing of relevant information and collaboration that supports the innovation ecosystem for international development. Users can add, search, discuss, and engage with innovations, funding opportunities, resources, programs, and many other types of content. Active match-making through the personalized dashboard serves up the right information at the right time to help innovators along their innovation journey.

The Exchange is written in open source language, Drupal 7, and embraces open data sharing and supports cross platform data integration through APIs. In addition, the Exchange supports a functionality called the *digital engagement platform* which is a template-based, reusable platform that not only allows for highly curated views of the data on the Exchange, but also an interactive engagement platform for communities of practice and prizes, challenges, and calls to action.

- *Innovation Incentive Awards*

In December 2015, USAID received new authority from Congress to use FY 2016 funds to make *innovation incentive awards*, defined as "funding on a competitive basis that—(A) encourages and rewards the development of solutions for a particular, well-defined problem related to the

alleviation of poverty; or (B) helps identify and promote a broad range of ideas and practices facilitating further development of an idea or practice by third parties.” The authority is limited for FY 2016 to no more than ten awards of no more than \$100,000 each.

This authority allows USAID to run prize competitions that award prizes to non-US citizens and better engage a broad network of problem solvers (including citizens of countries where we work) by offering streamlined procedures for awards. Prizes can now be used to target solvers who are best-positioned to produce a solution or take action against a given development challenge, but may face barriers interacting with USAID via traditional mechanisms.

USAID’s U.S. Global Development Lab is leading the strategy to deploy these awards and partnering with offices across USAID to use the awards to augment existing efforts towards office strategy or priorities. Current planned usages of the authority include:

- Via Partner Africa and their support for the Global LEAP initiative and Scaling Off-Grid Energy: A Grand Challenge for Development, the **Off-Grid Refrigeration Competition** will incentivize technical and/or design innovation in high-quality, energy-efficient, and affordable refrigerators that are appropriate for use with off-grid energy systems. Three \$100,000 innovation prizes will be awarded to products that demonstrate market-leading innovation in energy efficiency, overall value, and appropriate design/user experience.
- The Bureau for Food Security and the Global Development Lab are partnering around a **Precision Agriculture Prize** to induce the development of services or tools that can integrate multiple levels of information and localized data sources into a easy-to-understand and action-oriented farmer interface.

## G. Access to Scientific Data and Publications

The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) directed Federal agencies to develop a plan to increase public access to results of federally funded research. USAID has developed a Public Access Plan to make Agency-funded research products available and accessible to the public, industry and the scientific community. These research products include peer-reviewed research, publications, datasets and other supporting documents. The Plan leverages elements of the current knowledge management systems at USAID and will be implemented through the Development Data Library (DDL) and the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). It is expected that the Plan will be implemented in September 2016 and posted on the [Open Government webpage](#).

## H. Open Source Software

USAID is currently implementing OMB memorandum M-16-21 “Federal Source Code Policy: Achieving Efficiency, Transparency, and Innovation through Reusable and Open Source Software”, issued on August 8, 2016. This work will result in policy that defines rules for how USAID shares source code and ensures that new code is sharable whenever possible. The first version of an inventory of shareable code is planned to be published on the federal source code site ([code.gov](#)) in December 2016. The inventory will include code that can be shared with other federal agencies

and open source code that is freely available to the public. The inventory will be updated as new code is developed.

## I. DATA Act Implementation

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act) requires agencies to report additional financial information to USAspending.gov in 2017. USAID provided a DATA Act Implementation Plan to OMB and the Department of Treasury in 2016. The Agency is utilizing the Treasury-issued DATA Act Implementation Playbook for guidance in meeting the reporting requirements under the Act. USAID has completed 50 percent of the Data Act requirements placing the Agency ahead of schedule to meet the May 2017 implementation date. Implementation of the Act will fit more broadly into the Agency's open government work by improving the accessibility and reusability of financial data.

## IV. On-Going Initiatives

This section addresses the on-going initiatives initially identified in the OMB Open Government Directive (M-10-06). It provides updates on activities previously reported by USAID and examples of new activities to support openness.

### A. Transparency Initiatives

USAID is participating in the Federal transparency initiatives, as well as ensuring transparency by making data on USAID activities and performance readily available to the public. The initiatives discussed under "Open Data" as well as in other sections of this report highlight the scope of the Agency's transparency initiatives. Additional transparency initiatives are highlighted below:

Initiative	Description
IT Dashboard	USAID updates the IT dashboard on a monthly basis with information on major investments, non-major investments and projects associated with them. The objective of the IT Dashboard is to show the public how Federal IT Investments are performing.
Grants.gov	USAID fully participants in <a href="#">Grants.gov</a>
Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS)	Within two months of the <a href="#">Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS)</a> approval, the USAID Mission prepares a public version that is posted on the Agency's web site.
FedBizOpps.gov	USAID posts synopses of proposed contract actions and contract solicitations on FedBizOpps where vendors can access information to bid on contracts.
CFDA.gov	The <a href="#">USAID Page on the Catalogue of Federal Assistance</a> currently lists 12 programs available to organizations and institutions.
Development Experience Clearinghouse	USAID's <b>Development Experience Clearinghouse</b> is the largest online resource for USAID-funded technical and program documentation from more than 50 years of USAID's existence, with more than 155,000 documents available for viewing and electronic download.
Developer Resources	USAID has created <a href="#">www.usaid.gov/developer</a> to connect citizen developers with the tools they need to unlock USAID data to increase

Initiative	Description
	transparency, collaboration, and impact. USAID continues to add application programming interfaces (APIs) for its data to this site
Digital Strategy	USAID has launched a <a href="#">Digital Government Strategy</a> in response to the Presidential Directive on Building a 21st Century Digital Government.
Overseas Loans and Grants	Each year, USAID completes two major reports on all U.S. Government foreign assistance. The first is U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, commonly known as the Greenbook. In recent years, the online version Foreign Aid Explorer has provided a complete historical record of all foreign assistance provided by the United States to the rest of the world.
Official Development Assistance/Other Official Flows	USAID also reports its Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Other Official Flows (OOF) to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on behalf of the U.S. Government.
Geocoding	The Agency's innovation in transparency also includes the expanded use of geocoding across Bureaus and Missions worldwide. The upcoming Development Information Solution will include tools for tracking and reporting geospatial data, allowing for efficient and timely reporting to aid transparency efforts and the general public.

In addition, USAID produces a series of reports as part of our commitment to transparency regarding performance and to comply with the [Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010](#) and annually updated guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These reports include:

- [USAID and Department of State Strategic Plan FY 2014 - 2017](#)
- [Agency Financial Report \(AFR\)](#)
- [Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#)
- [Annual Performance Plan \(APP\)](#)
- [Summary of Performance and Financial Information](#)

## B. Public Notice

USAID notifies the public of important events and information through its web site, [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov), [Social Media Platforms](#) and other venues. Examples of efforts to keep the public informed are as follows:

- *USAID.gov* - The public can access a wealth of information and notifications of USAID activities by visiting the external web page. Under *News and Information*, we provide extensive information on USAID activities, including newsletters, Congressional testimony, speeches, and factsheets. The Agency's [Impact Blog](#) provides stories of success, failure, and mid-course corrections to help the world's poor. It also provides an opportunity for the public to comment on specific activities. The [Storytelling Hub](#) provides stories to inspire the end of extreme poverty.

- *Social Media Platforms* – USAID maintains an active presence on various social media platforms including, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Medium, Exposure, Storify, Vimeo, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn.
- *Rulemaking* - USAID uses the rulemaking process to create, amend, or repeal rules that involve notice to the public and the opportunity for the public to comment. All rules are publically accessible at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). As required, USAID gives notice to the public that it is considering a specific regulatory change that will alter the rights and interests of outside parties. USAID continues its commitment to transparency and public notice via the rulemaking process and partner and stakeholder engagement. USAID currently has eight rules in process, which will be identified in the 2015 Fall Unified Semi-Annual Agenda of Regulations. Most notably, USAID Partner Vetting sparked tremendous response from the implementing partner community. USAID, in support of continued environmental sustainability efforts, published a new National Environmental Protection Act regulation to completely address the Agency’s various funding sources. USAID is dedicated to maintaining public engagement, and the rulemaking process is an integral part of that effort.
- *Federal Register Notices* – The Agency publishes proposed and final regulations, announcements and other documents in the Federal Register.
- *Small Business Forecast* – USAID produces a quarterly business forecast providing a synopsis of upcoming funding opportunities. Two forecasts are published – one for Washington and another for overseas missions. The Forecast includes planned or currently open competitive acquisition and assistance opportunities above \$150,000.

### **C. Records Management**

USAID remains committed to supporting its mission through effective records management. In light of the Managing Government Records Directive (M-12-18) and the recent update to the Federal Records Act, USAID has taken several steps to update its records management policies and procedures to remain in compliance with Federal records management statutes, policies, and regulations. M-12-18 requires that Federal Agencies meet two major goals (1) require electronic recordkeeping to ensure transparency, efficiency, and accountability; and (2) demonstrate compliance with federal records management statutes and regulations.

USAID has made the following progress toward meeting the goals of the directive:

- Initiated implementation of NARA’s Capstone Approach to meet the December 31, 2016 deadline to manage all Federal email electronically;
- Assessing technical solutions in an effort to identify a tool to manage all email records;
- Updated records management policy to provide guidance to Agency employees that address the use of non-official agency electronic systems to conduct official business and records management instructions for departing employees; and

- Drafting records schedules for submission to NARA to comply with the December 31, 2019 mandate to manage all permanent electronic records in an electronic format.

USAID is in compliance with applicable Federal records management statutes, regulations, and the recent update to the Federal Records Act. The Agency uses a variety of approaches to ensure compliance with the initiatives:

- Named a Senior Agency Official with agency wide responsibilities and oversight of the records management department;
- Submitted annual Senior Agency Official Reports to the National Archives and Records Administration;
- Expanded policy to develop and implement plans to transition to electronically manage all permanent electronic records for transfer and accessioning to NARA, and taken steps to ensure that records that have been retained by USAID for more than 30 years are being identified for transfer to NARA;
- Updated USAID Directives, ADS 502, USAID's Records Management Program, as well as ADS 545, Information System Security, and ADS 549, Telecommunications Management;
- Completed and submitted Annual Records Management Self Assessments to NARA;
- Established various methods to inform employees of their records management responsibilities, including creating and updating policies, as well as developing and enhancing training and literature;
- Identified unscheduled records to ensure records schedules have been submitted to NARA for all existing paper and other non-electronic records; and
- Completed required courses and obtained NARA certificate of Federal Records Management Training as required for the Agency Records Officer and USAID records staff.

Moreover, USAID understands that the continued maturation of Federal records management requires a concentrated focus on meeting the milestones in the November 2011 Presidential Memorandum for Managing Government Records. Historically the records management lifecycle has focused on management of paper records, the digitization of paper records and the lifecycle of those stored records. Today, the focus has shifted to addressing the lifecycle management of electronic records.

#### **D. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests**

USAID's 2014 Open Government Plan detailed two FOIA initiatives: (1) reducing the backlog of FOIA requests; and (2) integrating a "presumption of openness" by identifying new technological resources that will ultimately strengthen FOIA response processes and improvements. To accomplish these initiatives, USAID management continually assesses the FOIA program and identifies opportunities to strengthen the response processes, in addition to improving customer service and response times to FOIA requests. For example, in FY 2014 and in accordance with Attorney General Holder's March 2013 FOIA guidelines, wherein the Attorney General indicated that the Department of Justice would defend an agency's denial of a FOIA request "only if (1) the agency reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one of the statutory exemptions, or (2) disclosure is prohibited by law." To ensure the presumption of

openness, USAID consistently applies this foreseeable harm standard to all FOIA requests and responses.

In addition, USAID established an “appeal proof” methodology to all of its release determinations, which encompasses: (1) application of the foreseeable harm standard; (2) ensuring analyses for all release determinations are sound and legal defensible; (3) citing to appropriate records dispositions where applicable; and (4) providing detailed and comprehensive determination letters. USAID also established an internal “Oldest Ten Taskforce” (Taskforce) which focuses attention on the Agency’s oldest ten FOIA requests, appeals, and consultations—which are routinely complex and include voluminous responsive documents. As a result, the Taskforce closed all of USAID’s oldest ten FOIA request, appeals, and consultations in FY 2014. Similarly, in FY 2015, USAID closed all of its oldest ten appeals and consultations and nine of the ten oldest FOIA requests.

Furthermore, USAID management has identified and implemented various steps to strengthen FOIA customer service and response times to FOIA requests, through several reforms and initiatives to FOIA administration, such as:

- **Staffing** - USAID expanded its FOIA staff to ensure continuity of operations and improve understanding of Agency initiatives, thus increasing efficiencies in FOIA processing. In FY 2015, USAID acquired FOIA surge support to assist the agency in reducing its backlog of requests. In addition, USAID expanded the roles of its FOIA professionals to include assessing the release of data in response to the Open Data Initiative.
- **Improved Search Capability** - USAID improved its record search capabilities through the use of e-discovery. The automated capability of electronic records searches using key words and search terms improves response times. When these documents are maintained in an electronic manner, it permits more efficient digital search versus manual searches of paper files in file cabinets and record retirement boxes. USAID also procured a tool to de-duplicate emails. This tool will facilitate FOIA professionals’ ability to more quickly discern responsiveness of emails and further eliminate duplicates contained in threaded emails. This tool should help to realize improvements in response times.
- **Training** - USAID added FOIA modules to its existing records management instructor-led training titled “Records Management and FOIA Access Training” as well as to the New Employee Orientation Training. Over 1,000 employees in Washington and field missions were trained in 2014 and 2015.

As evidenced above, USAID management remains committed to backlog reduction. The Department of Justice defines the FOIA backlog as the number of requests or administrative appeals that are pending at an agency at the end of the fiscal year that are beyond the statutory time period. Moreover, the 2016 Open Government Directive M-16-16 requests that agencies detail how the FOIA backlog will be reduced by 10 percent each year. At USAID, the backlog will be reduced year-over-year by at least 10 percent through the focused attention of the internal Taskforce. On day one of each fiscal year, we will identify and quantify the backlog and initiate immediate actions to bring these cases closure. This approach has proven to be very effective. The results of this effort for FY 2014 and 2015 are included in the table below:



YEAR	2014	2015
FOIA REQUESTS BACKLOGGED	265	301
FOIA BACKLOG REQUESTS CLOSED	96	153
PERCENT CLOSED	36%	51%
FOIA APPEALS BACKLOGGED	18	6
FOIA APPEAL CLOSED	12	6
PERCENT CLOSED	67%	100%

Equally important, USAID will continue to identify automated tools and solutions to assist with further streamlining preparation of records for review and processing (i.e., applying redactions, if the information is not appropriate for discretionary disclosure). Each of the aforementioned activities is ongoing. USAID remains flexible in its approach in order to effectively respond to FOIA trends. More information about USAID's FOIA program is available on the Agency's [FOIA web page](#).

### **E. Congressional Response**

USAID's [Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs \(LPA\)](#) is responsible for all of the Agency's external communications and provides overall coordination to respond to Congressional requests. The Congressional Liaison Division maintains close contact with members of Congress, keeping them informed of USAID development and assistance efforts and obtaining their views on related matters. Congressional Liaison Officers are responsible for facilitating communication between U.S. lawmakers and the Agency, transmitting USAID's messages in a transparent manner and ensuring that Congress understands the Agency's objectives abroad. Each Congressional Liaison Officer coordinates with Agency bureaus as well as Congressional committees to communicate the status of USAID's programs and policies. Additionally, Congressional Liaison Officers assemble materials representing the Agency's position on pertinent issues in preparation for Congressional hearings. USAID Congressional Bulletins, as well as Congressional reports are available on the external web page.

### **F. Declassification**

The USAID Declassification Program resides with the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services, Information and Records Division (M/MS/IRD). M/MS/IRD handles four types of Declassification:

- Mandatory Declassification Review (MDR) requests made by the public;

- Discretionary Declassification Review;
- Automatic Declassification Review; and
- Systematic Declassification Review.

USAID maintains the authority to declassify those documents that implicate the Agency where USAID has equity. USAID's classified records are generally automatically declassified after 25 years. USAID also receives Mandatory Declassification Review requests from Presidential Libraries pursuant to the FOIA and Discretionary Declassification Review requests from other federal agencies. Declassification is performed in accordance with Executive Order 13526 (Classified National Security Information).

USAID is currently evaluating the Declassification program to develop and strengthen related policy and training. This will in turn facilitate USAID's ability to update its webpage to disclose where the public will be to learn how to access declassified materials, provide information on what materials have been recently declassified, and how to provide input about what types of information can be prioritized for declassification, where applicable. We expect to update the page by the end of 2017.

### **G. Public Participation and Collaboration**

Public participation and collaboration are integrated into USAID's work, in both operational areas and in the implementation of sustainable development programs. USAID has more than 360 active public-private partnerships tackling a variety of issues across sectors and regions. The Agency provides opportunities for public engagement through an active presence on social media, blogs, meetings, town halls and feedback opportunities through the public web site. In addition, USAID's U.S. Global Development Lab casts a wide net to solicit new ideas to solve development issues. A few examples of how USAID is encouraging public participation include:

### **H. Federal Advisory Committees**

USAID utilizes advisory committees as one mechanism to inform and provide advice on development issues. Advisory committee meetings are open to the public except in limited circumstances and meeting notices are published in the Federal register. USAID has three advisory committees.

- The Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA) provides a link between the Federal government and private voluntary organizations active in humanitarian assistance and development work overseas. The Committee is comprised of up to 30 private citizens with extensive knowledge of international development.
- The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) advises USAID on agriculture and higher education issues pertinent to food insecurity in developing countries. The President appoints members, who primarily represent the academic community.
- The Global Development Council (GDC) was created to inform and provide advice to the President and other senior U.S. officials on issues including U.S. global development

policies and practices, supporting new and existing public-private partnerships, and increasing awareness and action in support of development.

### **I. Open Data Hack-a-Thon**

USAID hosted a first-of-its-kind Open Data Hack-a-thon focusing on crime and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. The event attracted over 100 participants from approximately 50 organizations worldwide. Participants across four different cities formed teams based on skill sets and interests to create eight unique projects in less than 48 hours. The projects illustrated how open data can help understand crime in the region, informing more responsive program design.

### **J. Youth Mappers Initiative**

USAID awarded a grant in October 2015 to support the strategic investment in generating open geospatial data while engaging students to support USAID development programs. The result of this grant is Youth Mappers, a global community of university students, faculty and scholars who create and use open geographic data to address locally-defined development challenges worldwide. The grant was awarded to three founding universities, which are working to create a global network of universities that contribute mapping in locations where USAID has a need for the geographic data. The consortium is well underway, with 30 plus chapters in less than a year. Recent mapping contributions in support of malaria prevention activities in Mozambique show how the student chapters conduct their mapping in support of USAID defined requirements.

### **K. LAUNCH**

USAID continues to support LAUNCH as a unique global initiative that was established in partnership with NASA, the US Department of State, and Nike to: (1) identify and support innovations poised to contribute to a sustainable future and (2) accelerate solutions to meet urgent challenges facing our society. USAID currently supports both the general LAUNCH platform as an innovative approach to public-private partnership, as well as a cycle focused on transformational change in food systems to reduce the global burden of under- and over-nutrition. The food cycle represents a partnership with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade via their innovationXchange.

### **L. Grand Challenges for Development**

USAID's Grand Challenges for Development is bringing global attention and resources to specific, well-defined international development problems and promoting innovative approaches to solving them. The Scaling Off-Grid Energy and Ebola Outbreak initiatives are examples of grand challenges.

- *Scaling Off-Grid Energy: Grand Challenge for Development*

In partnership with enterprises, investors, academics, governments, donors and other industry stakeholders, the *Scaling Off-Grid Energy* Grand Challenge for Development will incentivize technological innovation, fund early stage companies directly and through intermediaries, and support critical elements of the ecosystem.

- *Global Health – Ebola Outbreak*

Recognizing the need for tools that better supported local health workers, USAID launched the “[Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge](#).” This gave businesses, entrepreneurs, and students an opportunity to partner with USAID in creating new approaches to emerging challenges on the ground. For example, one of the technologies we were able to sponsor was [mHERO](#), a mobile phone and SMS based system to send and receive information to community health workers regarding lab test results, equipment availability, and training materials, on the back of existing health information systems.

- *Mobile Maintenance and Monitoring of Water Systems in Senegal*

In Senegal’s major cities, residents can be proud of their government’s achievements to bring them safe drinking water. Unfortunately, only 60 percent of its rural citizens enjoy the same privileges. The government’s efforts to provide clean water to its rural residents are crippled by a lack of comprehensive information on water infrastructure. To gather that critical information, USAID/Senegal is testing a SMS and cloud-based data management system that will allow the government to track its inventory of boreholes and water systems. This real-time information will help government officials both plan routine maintenance and be prepared for urgent repairs. In addition, it will give citizens of Senegal a voice by allowing them to report problems in their communities. USAID and its partners will use smart phones and open data software to collect water quality data from households. This household-level data will enable USAID to target communities most in need of behavior change communications, and make sure water stays clean from collection to consumption. With improved data, access to clean water can prevent diseases and improve the health of thousands of people.

## V. OPEN GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a vision and priorities for global development for the next 15 years. The Administration is committed to ensuring that efforts to implement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are open, transparent and undertaken in consultation with civil society. The [Third Open Government National Action Plan](#) includes commitments to harness open government and promote progress toward the SDGs. USAID is contributing to the achievement of specific commitments outlined in the action plan.

### A. Open and Accountable Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

The U.S. Office of the Chief Statistician within the Office of Management and Budget is leading an effort to assess what data each of the U.S. agencies currently collect on each of the goals, targets, and indicators and identify our data gaps. This assessment incorporates all of principal statistical agencies, including on the domestic side. USAID is contributing its relevant data to this assessment. With the data that currently exists, the U.S. will begin publishing initial national

reporting of data and statistics on a prototype SDG Open National Reporting Platform by September, 2016. The platform's contents will be publicly accessible, user friendly, and integrate data from multiple sources. The platform will inform future planning efforts to fill data gaps and build capacity for using data to achieve and monitor the SDGs, and will be refined as new data and statistics become available. Using open source technology, the platform will be adaptable by all countries.

## **B. Open Climate Data**

USAID's Climate Services for Resilient Development (CSRD) partnership provides technical assistance to enable the development of tailored climate services for decision-makers in developing countries to better manage climate risks and opportunities. CSRD supports climate services that are user-centric, collaborative, and that effectively harness the power of information, technology and innovation from around the world. Through its place-based activities, CSRD partners from the public and private sectors will generate good practices about how to transform data into actionable information for climate resilience efforts and will build local capacity to sustain these efforts.

## **C. Food Security and Data Sharing for Agriculture and Nutrition**

As part of the USG commitment to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Data, USAID will provide financial support to the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) secretariat to expand its work in promoting the opening of agriculture and nutrition data sets. USAID will also participate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other US agency partners on the USG GODAN working group.

The Agency will provide funding to the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) Hybrid Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Data Collection, Methodological Research, and Data Dissemination. This grant will support implementation of surveys on agricultural production, productivity, and socio-economic variables that support the Feed the Future Core Agricultural and Rural Data Surveys (CARDS) project. The project supports (1) methodological research aimed at improving the core set of country household data, and (2) training and dissemination activities to improve usability of country household data and to expand the use of the data in policymaking.

In *Section 6 Reports part (c) Public Availability of Information*, the Global Food Security Act of 2016 states that information "shall be made available on the public website of the United States Agency for International Development in an open, machine readable format, in a timely manner." As part of this effort, USAID and other US agency partners will convene a Data Working Group to coordinate on issues and processes around data use. The Global Food Security Strategy and agencies' implementation plans are due to Congress on October 1, 2016. Aggregated Feed the Future monitoring data and data from Feed the Future population-based surveys is currently made publically available in a non-proprietary, machine-readable format.

## **D. Data Sharing About Global Preparedness for Epidemic Threats**

In February 2014, the U.S. joined with other countries to launch the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS). GHS is an international effort to build capacity to prevent, detect and respond to infectious diseases, and to build political commitment to ensure appropriate action is taken when

needed. USAID strengthens and leverages key multilateral organizations, global partnerships, and private sector engagement focused on strengthening capacities across animal and human health sectors in disease surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, and disease prevention and control, to prioritize human and animal health outcomes as the central strategic objective within GHSA. Taking advantage of ongoing activities and a breadth of knowledge in prevention, detection, and response capacities spanning animal and human health, USAID is a key interlocutor and facilitator of the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) process, and has contributed technical experts on JEE missions. USAID works with host country public and private sector counterparts to ensure stakeholder engagement and participation throughout the evaluation process. Upon completion of the evaluation, USAID provides Technical Assistance in country through the [Emerging Pandemic Threats Program](#). This targeted approach contributes to supporting the implementation of the country-owned GHSA Roadmaps and country action plans for improvement across the 11 targets of the GHSA. Completed JEE reports and information on the process are available online at: <https://ghsagenda.org/assessments.html>.

### **E. Capacity Building for Extractives Transparency**

Since the launch of the Open Government Partnership, the Administration has been committed to implementing the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international standard aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in the payments countries make and the revenues governments receive for their natural resources. The EITI team will launch activities to share best practices and improve the capacity of the EITI implementing country constituency to more effectively participate in EITI Board proceedings that directly impact in-country implementation of the EITI Standard. The team will improve capacity at the local level for more effective collaboration within each country's EITI multi-stakeholder groups. USAID is providing funding for this work through an interagency agreement with the Department of Interior.

## **VI. FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES**

USAID is highlighting two flagship initiatives that are representative of the Agency's efforts to integrate a culture of innovation in addressing development challenges and to promote transparency and participation in USAID activities.

### **A. Innovation Design and Advisory Team**

An Innovation Design and Advisory Team was created in 2015 to advance USAID's culture of innovation for better outcomes and support the Agency and its partners to incentivize more people to innovate and solve development challenges with us. To achieve this goal, the Innovation Design and Advisory team:

- **Designs:** Supports Agency teams to reframe development challenges, reach new audiences and spur innovative thinking by designing opportunities that bring people together to discover, test and accelerate innovative solutions. Open innovation, collaboration, and adaptation are at the heart of the team's design approach. Throughout the program cycle, advisors can help teams apply innovation methodologies, such as prizes and challenges, collaboration and co-creation, participatory systems mapping, behavioral insights and user-centered design, and more into their work.

- **Equips:** Equips Agency teams with new skills in design thinking – a framework for reframing problems and finding solutions to complex problems - and help integrate open innovation methodologies into their work through training, mentorship and easy-to-use learning tools. The Innovation Design Training course builds innovation skills for Agency staff and partners and provides tools and resources to aid in designing and implementing innovation approaches. Over 30 mission personnel have been trained.
- **Facilitates:** Facilitates a dialogue on the practice of open innovation and design across the development enterprise by capturing evidence, stories and lessons from across the field. The team manages the Innovation Design Community of Practice to create a network of innovation practitioners within USAID. Over 300 USAID staff from 57 operating units are participating in the community of practice.

The Innovation Design and Advisory Team utilizes a results framework in order to consistently measure and assess the Agency's use of innovation methods and the team's progress. Success is defined as increasing the effective use of innovation methods by USAID. The team will measure the number of innovation activities that apply best practices and reach their goal at their conclusion. In addition, they will measure the total funding for innovation methods that has been unlocked through the advisory, mechanisms, and financing, and the number of system actors who have been engaged through innovation methods.

## B. Training Series – How to Work With USAID

USAID implemented an online training series, [How to Work With USAID](#), designed to answer some of the most frequently raised questions and concerns from organizations interested in partnering with USAID. The training provides open and transparent guidance straight from USAID staff. This how-to training is designed to provide practical tips and concrete examples on topics ranging from researching potential funding opportunities to effectively putting together a proposal or application, budget, or monitoring and evaluation plan. There are currently 14 modules in numerous languages that can be watched from around the world. The audience for the training series has been very broad and diverse. There are currently 400-500 views on the site per week. In order to solicit feedback on the training, USAID established the email box [howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov](mailto:howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov). The Agency has received very positive feedback from individual non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as from a membership association of over 300 NGOs and sector experts in the international development and relief community. Organizations are using the modules to train staff worldwide. USAID will measure performance and customer satisfaction based on feedback from the users. Customer feedback will also help drive decisions regarding additional modules.

## VII. CONCLUSION

USAID [Open Government Web Page](#) is continuously updated to ensure that the public has access to the open government topics, reports and projects described in the plan. Progress reports describing implementation progress will be posted annually by September 15.