



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID OPEN GOVERNMENT PLAN

"Our objective each day is to seek out best practices, learn from them, and adapt them to everything we do. We are committed to transparency in both our successes and our failures—viewing both as opportunities to learn and improve."

--Dr. Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator



USAID Open Government Plan v 3.0

www.usaid.gov/open

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I. Executive Summary

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has a well-established commitment to the democratization of information. Before publishing the Open Government Plan v 2.0 in 2012, the Agency supported the largest online resource of USAID-funded technical and program documentation, the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). Currently, the DEC houses more than 170,000 electronic documents spanning over 50 years of USAID's work worldwide. The Agency is dedicated to enhancing the public's experience and access to information through the use of new technologies and tools that support transparency, collaboration, and citizen and stakeholder participation.

This updated Open Government Plan will focus on three principles of the Presidential Open Government Initiative:

- **Transparency:** providing information to enable the public to view USAID's initiatives and ensure accountability for results;
- **Participation:** enabling the public to engage on issues of importance and make their voices heard; and
- **Collaboration:** sharing information and ideas and working cooperatively with our partners worldwide to promote prosperity worldwide.

USAID launched seven flagship initiatives since Plan v 2.0:

- U.S. Global Development Lab (the Lab)
- Public Access Link (PAL)
- Open Data Governance
- Dollars to Results
- MyUSAID
- Learning Lab
- AIDtracker Plus

II. Introduction

The following sections of USAID's third version of the Open Government Plan (Plan v3) outline initiatives and progress USAID has made since the publication of the first plan. Plan v3 provides status updates, highlights of new and ongoing activities, and planned Flagship Initiatives that relate to the key principles of Open Government -- transparency, participation and collaboration.

USAID recognizes that the Open Government Initiative is about more than just tools and technology but culture and policy as well. To ensure the full benefits of the Open Government Initiative are realized, USAID is engaging by focusing on fourteen operational areas¹ to create and institutionalize Open Government as a valuable part of the Agency's culture.

The requirement to develop an Open Government Plan initially gave USAID the opportunity to present a comprehensive view of programmatic and operational activities already underway that supported principles outlined in the Open Government Initiative. Since USAID released its first plan we have completed several important transparency initiatives:

- USAID improved its [outward-facing website](#), enhancing its functionality and user friendliness through better organization and more intuitive link titles, making information easily accessible to site visitors.
- Publicly available data assets, accessible at www.usaid.gov/data and www.data.gov, increased threefold from 21 in FY 2012 to 72 by the second quarter FY 2014.
- [Geocoded maps](#) available on the website now include 60 countries.
- The [Dollars to Results](#) webpage has improved stewardship and transparency of public funds, increasing accountability by making data linking dollars dispersed to results achieved available for 36 countries with over one thousand indicators.
- The Agency's first-ever crowd-source initiative pinpointed the location of [USAID Development Credit Authority loan data](#) allowing the public to see where these loans have an impact.
- An executed strategy to close the Agency's ten oldest Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, reduce administrative appeals and consultations, as well as reduce a long-standing backlog yielded measurable successes in these areas over the past year.
- The [Foreign Assistance Dashboard](#) (FAD) is publishing detailed, disaggregated data and information at the individual transaction level, adding approximately 15,000-20,000 records every quarter. In July 2013, USAID was the first agency to release disaggregated transaction-level data onto the FAD. This newly accessible information consisted of about 75,000 records for all of FY 2013. USAID's release of disaggregated spending data connects financial information across 30 qualitative fields, including vendor, award title, and more.
- The Agency has taken steps to improve its records management program, including the designation of a Senior Agency Official for Managing Government Records who has overall compliance responsibility.

¹ Strategic Planning; Internal Directives and Policy; Legal; Performance; Evaluation; Employee Relations; Public Affairs; Agency Operations; Partnerships; Security and Privacy; Infrastructure; Enterprise Architecture; Program Management; and Policy.

- The Agency is consistently identifying permanent records 30 years or older for transfer to National Archives and Record Administration (NARA) and is offering a comprehensive records management training course to all staff.

Plan v3 will continue to provide a comprehensive view of initiated, completed, and planned projects as they relate to achieving the strategic objectives of transparency, participation, and collaboration.

III. Mission

USAID's mission statement highlights two complementary and intrinsically linked goals: partnering to end extreme poverty and promoting the development of resilient, democratic societies. We fundamentally believe that ending extreme poverty requires enabling inclusive, sustainable growth; promoting free, peaceful, and self-reliant societies with effective, legitimate governments; building human capital; and creating social safety nets that reach the poorest and most vulnerable. USAID's staff and partners are demonstrating the principles of open government on a daily basis as we focus on our mission and implement the goals outlined in the USAID Department of State Strategic Plan FY 2014-2017:

- Strengthen America's Economic Reach and Positive Economic Impact;
- Strengthen America's Foreign Policy Impact on Our Strategic Challenges;
- Promote the Transition to a Low-Emission, Climate-Resilient World While Expanding Global Access to Sustainable Energy;
- Protect Core U.S. Interests by Advancing Democracy and Human Rights and Strengthening Civil Society; and
- Modernize the Way We Do Diplomacy and Development.

At the core of our mission is a deep commitment to work as a global partner in fostering sustainable development. Rather than impose, our open government strategy seeks to empower participation through collaboration and Agency support. We work hand-in-hand with those we seek to assist as well as others striving to support the most vulnerable nations and communities to be able to meet the needs of their citizens by providing health care, education, or economic opportunity.

USAID's efforts directly enhance American—and global—security and prosperity. The United States is safer and stronger when fewer people face destitution, when our trading partners are flourishing, when nations around the world can overcome crisis, and when societies are freer, more democratic, transparent, and inclusive, protecting the basic rights and human dignity of all citizens. By focusing on these two goals, together, we position ourselves to meet the challenges of today while mitigating the risks of tomorrow.

IV. Vision

For over five decades, USAID has saved lives and improved human welfare around the world. As the leader in global development, our Agency has amassed a wealth of knowledge that we believe is important to share publicly. By making our data, programs and evaluations easily accessible, we are helping to create a global commons that grounds development practice in evidence and shares knowledge to inform significantly new approaches in development. We take transparency and

accountability in foreign aid seriously, and we are working hard to ensure that we effectively communicate our efforts to the American people, our stakeholders and our partners at home and abroad.

USAID is embracing the Presidential Open Government Initiative and is increasingly sharing more information with the general public, broader U.S. government, international donors, implementing partners, host countries, and beneficiaries—all with the objective of addressing development needs. USAID is implementing this initiative throughout the organization, both in Washington and the field. USAID's impact can be measured in over 100 countries around the world. The Agency is also a "learning" organization that seeks to gain insight from partners and stakeholders, to maximize our development goals. The learning experience requires the full extent of the Agency's own knowledge be made available in a way it can easily be shared without borders, across countries and development sectors.

V. New and Expanded Initiatives

i. Open Data

On May 9, 2013, White House Executive Order 13642 and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Open Data policy [M-13-13](#) required all agencies to manage data as an asset, making it open and readable by default. The overarching goals of the policy are to increase public access to government information, improve services, and increase operational efficiencies at reduced costs. For data to be considered open, it must be machine readable and comply with a government-wide common core metadata standard. USAID successfully established M-13-13 core deliverables prior to the November 30, 2013, deadline:

- A public data listing at <http://www.usaid.gov/data>, which USAID continually updates with machine readable data;
- An Enterprise Data Inventory supplied directly to OMB, containing not only its public data listing but other USAID data assets that are not publicly releasable;
- Points of contact throughout the Agency to ensure that USAID's data is open to the public to the extent permissible by law and to communicate the value of open data;
- A schedule for expanding, enriching, and opening its data;
- A structured data publication process; and
- A mechanism for customers to engage with USAID on its data assets, found at [USAID's Digital Government Strategy](#) webpage.

USAID has also established an Information Governance Committee (InfoGov) and a Permanent Working Group (PWG) to institutionalize open data best practices as part of the Agency's culture.

ii. Proactive Disclosures

The Agency posts speeches, reports, letters, statements, blogs, and other materials that might assist the public in understanding the work of USAID under the "[News and Information](#)" tab

on the [USAID.gov](https://www.usaid.gov) website. While USAID has long worked to release materials proactively in the past, the Agency has significantly increased information posts since the 2012 Open Government Plan.

USAID has committed to public disclosure of non-sensitive² evaluation reports of USAID projects and programs. Evaluation reports are published on the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#).

Additionally, the USAID Freedom of Information Act³ (FOIA) office queries its FOIA database to identify similar request for records. If a similar record is identified, and has been released at least two times previously, that record is then considered for proactive disclosure.

iii. Privacy

As required by the Presidential Open Government Initiative, USAID ensures the legitimate protection of information whose release would invade personal privacy. USAID incorporates a full analysis of privacy risks into each stage of the information life cycle to identify personally identifiable information (PII) that should be protected from disclosure beyond a need to know.

In order to ensure that USAID personnel fulfill their PII protection responsibilities, the Privacy Office uses the USAID Open Data Privacy Analysis (ODPA) Template to determine how USAID programs handle PII under OMB open government guidance. The Privacy Office works with the program office responsible for the information to complete the ODPA Template before sharing information with the public.

The Privacy Office uses the ODPA Template to (1) determine whether particular information involves privacy risks; and (2) identify what privacy protection actions the program must take before it shares the information with the public. The program then complies with all privacy protection requirements specified in the ODPA, such as removing PII from the information and any metadata associated with that PII, before sharing the information with the public.

USAID manages its information as an asset throughout the information life cycle to promote openness and interoperability, to provide appropriate information privacy protections, and to ensure that information shared with the public is easy to find, accessible, and usable.

iv. Whistleblower Protection

In accordance with the No FEAR Act⁴, USAID provides all employees with training to inform them of their rights and protections available under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws. In addition the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity updates statistical Equal Employment Opportunity data on a quarterly basis on our public website. The Office of the General Council (GC), has also committed to add an additional whistleblower protection training module into the Agency's FY 2015 Ethics Education

² In rare cases evaluation reports may be redacted to protect proprietary data owned by third parties, or the safety or privacy of individuals.

³ The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a law that gives the public the right to access information from the federal government.

⁴ The No FEAR Act is intended to reduce the incidence of workplace discrimination within the federal government by making agencies and departments more accountable.

curriculum. GC facilitates an active ethics education program and holds regular, in-person sessions throughout the year for employees in Washington and in the field. It is USAID employee policy, as detailed in the Automated Directive System ([ADS Chapter 109](#)), that every employee receives ethics education annually.

v. Websites

As part of the Website Redesign Project, USAID made targeted changes to the outward-facing website's interface based on the results of usability testing of USAID.gov conducted on December 20-21, 2011. The changes improved the users' abilities to find information housed on the home page and within the site. These changes included improved functionality in the three priority areas identified in the Usability Testing Findings Report, and listed below:

- **Utility Navigation:** In the version of the wireframes used during testing, the Utility Navigation contained too many links for users to effectively scan and discern the content. To address this problem, USAID reduced the number of elements listed in the utility navigation to provide a more focused grouping of links. The sections that were removed from the Utility Navigation, "Organization" and "News and Information," were moved into better-related areas in the Main Navigation. The "Organization" section is now listed in the "Who We Are" section because it deals with structural aspects of the Agency. The "News and Information" section was relocated as a top-tier Main Navigation element to more prominently accommodate some of the common information-seeking tasks shared by several of the user personas.
- **Main Navigation:** Users in the testing environment had difficulty understanding the meaning of two labels used in the main navigation: "Core Strategies" and "Global Issues." Both of the problematic labels dealt with the work that USAID performs. To improve navigational comprehension, USAID combined the sections under the label "What We Do." This plain language alternative clearly sets the expectation for the content of the section. USAID then moved the "News and Information" link into the Main Navigation to occupy the now-available navigation placement and more prominently accommodate some of the common information-seeking tasks shared by several of the user personas.
- **Priority Area Showcase:** Content on the tested version of the Home Page was presented as vertically stacked rows with buttons to drive the user further down the page (i.e., anchor links). Because users found the scrolling layout to be cumbersome, and thought that the anchor link labels (e.g., "Results" and "Reform") did not offer enough context to be immediately relevant, USAID combined the content into a feature area under the main carousel. This menu-driven approach allows users to select a defined Priority Area without leaving the home page.

[Future planned updates](#) will include feature enhancements, additional translation capabilities, and additional language support.

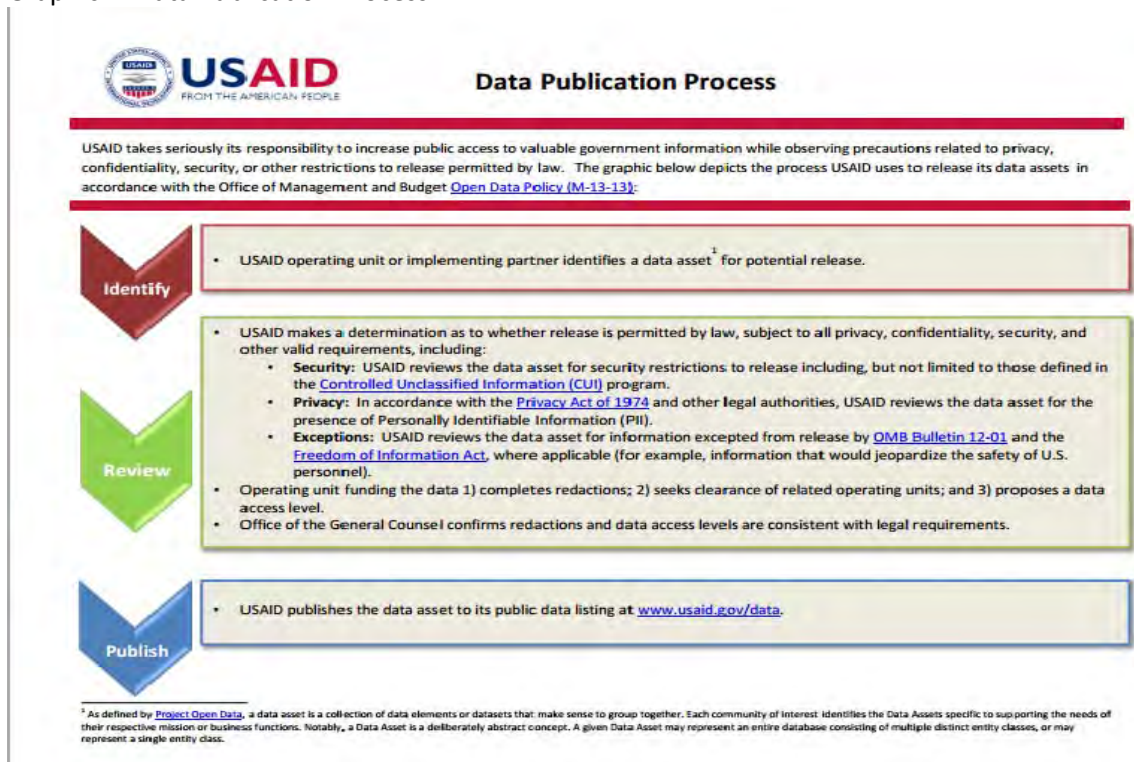
VI. Participation in Transparency Initiatives

“Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing.” – Presidential Open Government Initiative

Since the early 1990s, USAID has maintained a public Web presence to enable openness by publishing information online for sharing with the general public, broader U.S. Government, international donors, implementing partners, host countries, and beneficiaries. Dating back to its establishment in 1975, the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#) has strengthened development activities by making development experience documents available to a wide variety of audiences. To further our transparency efforts, USAID, in partnership with the Department of State, Office of Foreign Assistance Resources (State/F), is leading the effort to ensure greater transparency of U.S Government foreign assistance funding through the Foreign Assistance Dashboard (FAD) website. The goal of the FAD is to give a wide variety of stakeholders, both internal and external, the ability to examine, research, and track U.S. Government foreign assistance investments in an accessible and easy-to-understand format.

Under the Open Government Initiative, USAID has been moving beyond information contained in published documents and reports, to information created on demand in the process of performing the Agency’s work. Based on the Open Government Initiative, the presumption will be in favor of openness to the extent permitted by law and subject to valid privacy, confidentiality, security, or other restrictions. Below is graphic that demonstrates the process by which USAID is publishing data:

Graphic 1: Data Publication Process



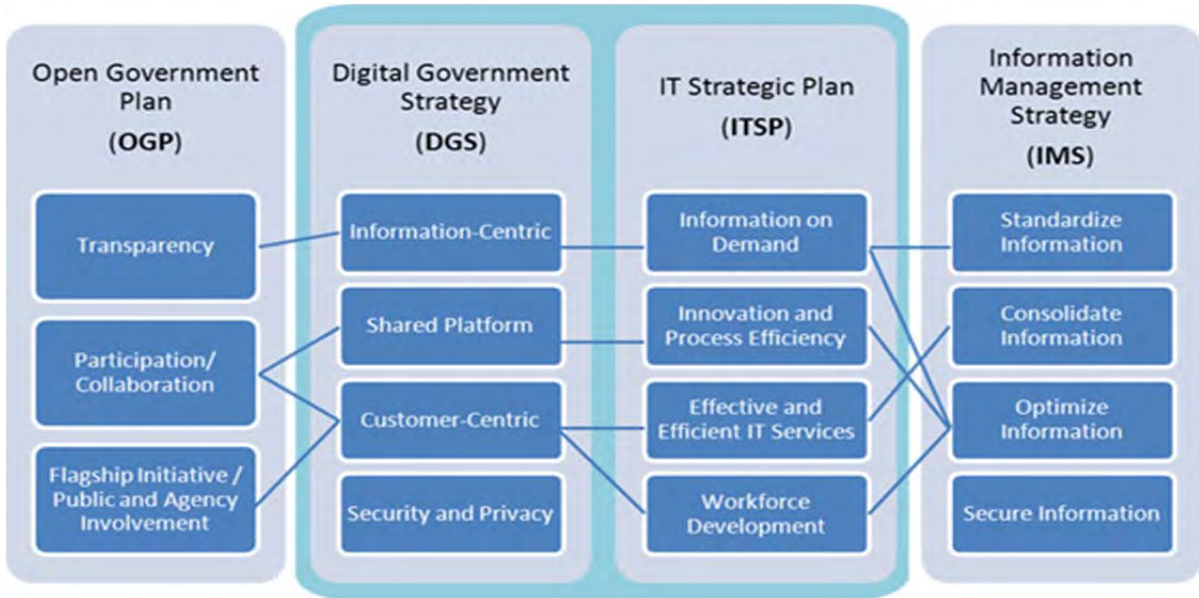
USAID will strive towards publishing more information online in an open format that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, and searched by commonly used web search applications.

The transparency projects and commitments outlined in this section build on the steady progress made over the past two years. USAID recognizes that transparency by publishing high-value information online and in open formats where available, can be very valuable to staff and partners alike. The Open Government Initiative defines high-value information as information that can be used to:

- Increase Agency accountability and responsiveness;
- Improve public knowledge of the Agency and its operations;
- Further the core mission of the Agency;
- Create public economic opportunity; and
- Respond to needs and demands as identified through public consultations.

USAID is crafting an Agency-wide policy on open data, in concert with the Agency’s existing Digital Government Strategy. The Office of the Chief Information Officer continues to review business requirements for new technologies that the Agency is considering to improve its ability to organize, aggregate, and publish data and information in a timely and accurate manner. Below is a graphic that displays a number of related USAID strategies and their place in the larger Open Government Plan.

Graphic 2: Open Government Plan



i. USAID’s Transparency Objectives

By making our information accessible to the public, we are:

- Contributing to greater understanding on the part of the **tax-paying public** of the depth and breadth of USAID’s work in international development;
- More actively engaging **stakeholders** in the foreign assistance dialogue as both successes and failures are appropriately noted and analyzed;
- Making our data available to **implementing partners** as they work with us to address development challenges; and
- Putting information in the hands of **people who benefit from our assistance** thus empowering them with information that could lead to their own solutions.

ii. Status of Transparency Initiatives

Initiative	Description
International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Status: Completed (compliance ongoing)	<p>In November 2011, the United States became a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). IATI is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative that includes donors, partner countries, and civil society organizations whose aim is to make information about foreign aid spending easier to access, use, and understand. Late in 2012, the U.S. Government published its IATI implementation schedule and first IATI-compliant data files, which included a timetable and frequency of data publication and an overview of the types of data to be published.</p> <p>USAID plays a leading role in ensuring that the U.S. Government meets its commitments under IATI to publish up-to-date information in a common, open format that makes it easy for stakeholders to find, use and compare with other donors' information about foreign aid spending. USAID will investigate the costs of fulfilling additional IATI reporting requirements and publish a cost management plan which elaborates the findings.</p>
Open Data Listing Status: Completed (compliance ongoing)	<p>USAID’s Open Data Listing (www.usaid.gov/data) is USAID’s entry point for open, machine-readable development data and contains dozens of datasets representing USAID’s programs and operations. In its early response to the Open Government Initiative, USAID posted a number of high-value datasets directly to the Data.gov website. Now, the two sites are seamlessly integrated, with the Data.gov website harvesting data directly from USAID’s Open Data Listing on a daily basis.</p>
Developer Resources Status: Completed (compliance ongoing)	<p>USAID has created www.usaid.gov/developer to connect citizen developers with the tools they need to unlock USAID data to increase transparency, collaboration, and impact. USAID continues to add application programming interfaces (APIs) for its data to this site.</p>
Digital Strategy Status: Completed (compliance ongoing)	<p>USAID has launched a Digital Government Strategy available at www.usaid.gov/digitalstrategy in response to the Presidential Directive entitled Building a 21st Century Digital Government. As of</p>

Initiative	Description
	2013, this page now includes USAID’s Data Inventory Schedule, Data Publication Process, and mechanisms for Customer Feedback regarding USAID’s publicly available data.
Data.gov Status: Completed, updated daily	This website has a listing of machine readable data made public by USAID, which is now harvested directly from www.usaid.gov/data.json .
eRulemaking Status: Completed (compliance on going)	The website allows visitors to submit comments on proposed regulations and related documents published by the U.S. Federal government. The site can also be used to search and review original regulatory documents as well as comments submitted by others.
IT Dashboard Status: Completed (compliance on going)	Government-wide advanced web-based collaboration, information sharing, data collection, publishing, and analytical capabilities for Federal agencies and partners.
Recovery.gov Status: Completed (compliance on going)	The website , created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, displays information about the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board's activities, as well as data related to the \$840 billion stimulus bill and information about the distribution and spending of Hurricane Sandy funds.
USAspending.gov Status: Completed (compliance on going)	<p>USAspending.gov was first launched in December 2007 to fulfill the requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006. The Act requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establish a single searchable website, accessible to the public at no cost, which includes for each Federal award: the name of the entity receiving the award; the amount of the award; information on the award including transaction type, funding agency, etc; the location of the entity receiving the award; and a unique identifier of the entity receiving the award.</p> <p>Prime award information shown on the website is provided by Federal Agencies through four main source systems (see Sources of Data). USAspending.gov receives and displays data pertaining to obligations (amounts awarded for federally sponsored projects during a given budget period), not outlays or expenditures (actual cash disbursements made against each project). Read the latest OMB-issued memoranda M-09-19, "Guidance on Data Submission under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act" as it provides guidance to agencies on how to report information to USAspending.gov.</p> <p>USAspending.gov was updated in October 2010 to display of first-tier sub-award data (subcontracts and sub-grants). Sub-award information shown on the website is provided by FSRS (see Sources of Data). The latest guidance documents pertaining to sub-award reporting can be found under News.</p>
GovBenefits.gov Status: Completed (compliance on going)	This website is the official benefits website of the U.S. government. It is meant to inform citizens of benefits they may be eligible for and provides information on how to apply for assistance.
Foreign Assistance	Through the Foreign Assistance Dashboard (FAD), members of the

Initiative	Description
<p>Dashboard Status: Completed (compliance is on going to implement a whole-of-government approach to reporting IATI data by submitting a unified report from all U.S. agencies that manage and/or implement a foreign assistance portfolio. To find more information on IATI and to access the U.S. Government's IATI-compliant data files, please visit the IATI section on the FAD)</p>	<p>public can search and visualize detailed, timely information about what, where, how and with whom we spend our development dollars. These financial data are available on the FAD, which is managed by the Department of State and is the repository for all U.S. Government data on foreign aid. Publication of these data is part of USAID's commitment to increasing our transparency and accountability and is required by the OMB Bulletin 12-01 [PDF], published in September 2012.</p> <p>The first release of USAID data on the FAD in December 2010 consisted of consolidated Department of State and USAID budget and appropriation data from fiscal years 2006-2011, as available in the Congressional Budget Justification. In June 2012, USAID began publishing obligation and disbursement data by operating unit and sector starting from fiscal year 2009. In July 2013, USAID was the first agency to release disaggregated transaction-level data onto the FAD. This newly accessible information consisted of about 75,000 records for all of FY 2013. USAID's release of disaggregated spending data connects financial information across 30 qualitative fields, including vendor, award title, and more.</p>
<p>The Development Experience Clearinghouse Status: Completed (compliance on going)</p>	<p>Program evaluation findings are shared as widely as possible, with a commitment to full and active disclosure, per the USAID Evaluation Policy. At a minimum, final USAID evaluation reports are made available to the public at the Development Experience Clearinghouse. Users can search for evaluations by key words, by country, and by sector or topic area.</p>
<p>U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants Status: Completed (compliance on going)</p>	<p>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 has provided a complete historical record of all foreign assistance provided by the United States to the rest of the world.</p>
<p>Official Development Assistance/Other Official Flows Status: Completed (compliance on going)</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Geocoding Status: Completed (compliance on going)</p>	<p>The Agency's innovation in transparency also includes the expanded use of geocoding across Bureaus and Missions worldwide. USAID's website currently includes geocoded maps of projects in 56 countries. In addition, in June 2012, the Agency launched its first-ever crowdsourcing initiative to pinpoint the location of USAID Development Credit Authority (DCA) loan data. Geo-Visualization of these loans allows donors, host governments, and the public to see where USAID helps enhance the capacity of the private financial sector by making loans to entrepreneurs, acting as a gauge for trends or signaling areas for cooperation.</p>
<p>Country Development Cooperation Strategies</p>	<p>Transparency is also reflected in the development of the Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS). Within two months of a</p>

Initiative	Description
(CDCS) Status: Completed (compliance on going)	CDCS approval, the USAID Mission prepares a public version that is posted on the Agency's web site. The public version provides the basis for dialogue with Congress, host country partners and other stakeholders in the private sector as the Mission moves forward in project design. In keeping with President Obama's commitment to the relationship between transparency and good governance abroad as well as at home, USAID's foreign assistance programs help countries to be more open and accountable to their stakeholders.

iii. Performance Reporting

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

- [Agency Strategic Plan](#)
- [Agency Financial Report \(AFR\)](#)
- [Annual Performance Plan \(APP\)](#)
- [Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#)
- [Summary of Performance and Financial Information](#)
- [U.S. Agency for International Development and Department of State Program Inventory for Foreign Assistance](#) [PDF, 210kb]

iv. Public Notice

Stakeholders and the general public can engage with USAID in a number of venues. USAID's Public Information, Publications, and Online Services division engages the public through written correspondence. The public can also provide feedback and suggestions on [USAID's Open Data Listing](#) through [USAID's Github account](#) or via a dedicated open data email address at opendata@usaid.gov.

USAID endeavors to engage with the public in a variety of ways to ensure the public participates in the activities and efforts of the office. The Agency encourages participation through the web as well as through social media platforms.

v. Records Management

USAID recognizes the importance of incorporating efficient and effective processes, along with sound policy to manage one of the government's most important assets – its records. The USAID Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services, Information and Records Division (M/MS/IRD) oversees the Agency's records management program. Policies and procedures are currently in place to manage the full lifecycle of records, regardless of media format, in accordance with the Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended⁵. The

⁵ The Act establishes the framework for records management programs in Federal agencies.

effective management of the Agency's official records results in improvements in accessibility, accountability, efficiency and overall performance of agency functions.

Realizing the proliferation of electronic records, USAID is making a very assertive effort to put additional tools in place to address the emphasis placed on managing government records by President Obama in his Presidential Memorandum from November 28, 2011 on [Managing Government Records](#) and the accompanying [Managing Government Records Directive](#) issued jointly by [National Archives and Record Administration](#) (NARA) and [Office of Management and Budget](#) (OMB). The Obama Administration has emphasized automation and harnessing current technological advances to facilitate openness, transparency, participation and collaboration. In this vein, USAID is working to update records schedules applying "media-neutrality" to any format (e.g., paper, digital), adopting NARA's Capstone Approach to manage all agency email records electronically, and considering viable solutions to automate lifecycle management of agency records.

USAID has met several goals outlined in the Records Management Directive including:

- Designating a Senior Agency Official with agency-wide responsibilities regarding records management;
- Identifying permanent records 30 years or older for transfer to NARA;
- Identifying all known unscheduled records in the agency; and
- Offering a comprehensive records management training course available to all staff.

Progress toward future directive goals includes:

- **December 31, 2014:** 2.3 - Agency Records Officer must obtain NARA Certificate of Federal Records Management training.
 - USAID's Records Officer is on track to complete the required training by December 31, 2014. Additionally, all other members of the Bureau Management, Office of Management Services, Information and Records Division (M/MS/IRD) records team are taking the certificate courses.
- **December 31, 2016:** 1.2 - By 2016, federal agencies will manage both permanent and temporary email records in an accessible electronic format.
 - USAID will implement NARA's Capstone Approach to manage all email records in an electronic format. This approach groups employees into tiers of responsibility as the basis for applying disposition to their emails. USAID will use three tiers and is actively working on defining the employment categories that each will contain.
- **December 31, 2019:** 1.1 - By 2019, Federal agencies will manage all permanent electronic records in an electronic format.
 - USAID is drafting media-neutral and "big-bucket" records schedules for submission to NARA. These schedules will improve USAID's ability to more efficiently effect lifecycle management of electronic records.

vi. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

The FOIA function is centralized in the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services, Information and Records Division (M/MS/IRD) at USAID. This division receives and processes all FOIA requests for the Agency. M/MS/IRD maintains the full authority and responsibility to make *release* or *withholding* determinations for all FOIA requests.

USAID is very committed to FOIA administration, focusing on reducing the backlog of cases. As such, the USAID FOIA program is continually assessed to identify opportunities to improve response times to FOIA requests. An executed strategy to close the Agency's ten oldest FOIA requests, reduce administrative appeals and consultations, as well as reduce a long-standing backlog yielded measurable successes in these areas over the past year. USAID reduced the number of administrative appeals received. In Fiscal Year 2012, USAID received 18 administrative appeals, and this number was reduced by 50 percent to 9 administrative appeals received in Fiscal Year 2013. The adoption of an "appeal proof" approach, entailing sound and legally defensible analyses yielded comprehensive, detailed release determinations letters and redacted records which led to the reduction of appeals.

USAID launched a "Records Management and Access" agency-wide training. The Records Management Training has been a long-standing training at USAID. However, to build upon the importance of records management when searching for agency records in response to a FOIA request, the "Access" or FOIA component was added to what is now a week-long training. The FOIA portion expounds upon the importance of FOIA for all agency staff and not just the Government Information Specialists who process FOIA requests 100 percent of the time. The training includes a FOIA overview, how to scope a request, how to conduct a search for responsive records, and the importance of an administrative record. This strategy and targeted goals, engaged numerous FOIA professionals, agency staff at all levels, and agency partners.

USAID's plan to further integrate a "presumption of openness" is iterative and will identify new technological resources and reforms that will ultimately strengthen response processes and improvements.

Additional information on the USAID FOIA program including: 1) a description of staffing and organizational structure for FOIA with specific contact information for the agency Chief FOIA Officer, FOIA Public Liaison(s), and other public points of contact; (2) the process for responding to FOIA requests; and (3) links to agency FOIA reports including the Annual FOIA Report and Chief FOIA Officer Report can be found at the [FOIA webpage](#).

vii. Congressional Response

Every year Congress asks USAID to submit a series of reports on various matters of concern. In an effort to provide a maximum of transparency to the general public, these reports are being made available on the USAID Public Affairs website managed by USAID's Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA).

viii. Declassification

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

also handles Mandatory Declassification Review requests made by the public in accordance with [Executive Orders 12958](#) and [13526](#) (Classified National Security Information). USAID maintains authority to declassify those documents that implicate the agency, where USAID has equity. These individuals follow the guidance established in [Executive Orders 12958](#) and [13526](#).

- **Mandatory Declassification Review (MDR):** Under the provisions of Executive Order 13526 (which replaced Executive Order 12958 and its amendments) an individual may request the declassification review of specific classified material that (s)he is able to identify so that the agency may retrieve it with reasonable effort. MDR is appropriate for any classified materials including materials such as Presidential Papers which are not subject to the FOIA. Some researchers prefer filing MDRs instead of FOIAs.
- **Declassification Priorities:** As permanent record series become 25 years old, USAID conducts a mandatory review for declassification. These record series are described in our Records Disposition Schedules. Generally, the agency establishes priorities among the eligible series based on inventory provided from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- For additional information about USAID’s Declassification program, see Automated Directive System [Mandatory Declassification Review](#).

VII. Participation and Collaboration

i. Researchers, Scientists and Innovators

The international development landscape is changing to include many more participants, “solution holders” and willing collaborators than ever before. USAID encourages the academic, scientific, and entrepreneurial communities to pioneer solutions to the most challenging development problems.

USAID is open to ideas from anyone passionate about finding innovative solutions to achieve development goals and recognizes that development breakthroughs can come from anyone:

- Researchers or students in universities;
- Scientists and engineers working in the public and private sectors;
- Individuals or organizations that have deep contextual knowledge of a region’s specific needs and have creative solutions to the challenges; and
- Entrepreneurs with bold ideas.

Global development solutions cannot be catalyzed and brought to scale until experienced scientists and engineers, researchers, students, private entrepreneurs, teachers in academic institutions and development experts are connected, focused, and engaged with each other and systematically share knowledge and resources to achieve specific outcomes. USAID is engaging with these communities by:

- Spurring open innovation through global competitions such as [Grand Challenges for Development](#) and other prize competitions;

- Supporting [transformation and collaborative research](#);
- Uncovering innovative ideas and multi-disciplinary approaches for more effective development by engaging with higher education communities around the globe;
- Using a venture capital style fund, [Development Innovation Ventures](#) (DIV) to test cost effective, scalable ideas in any sector and any country in which USAID operates; and
- Leveraging the power and reach of [mobile technology](#) to accelerate social and economic development.

For example:

- Our [Saving Lives at Birth Grand Challenge](#) has already sourced a number of innovations designed to save mothers and babies in the critical hours around birth, including a suitcase-like device that provides solar power to clinics where electricity is scarce and a foil pouch that delivers critical medication for HIV prevention.
- Our [LAUNCH](#) partnership with NASA, the Department of State, and NIKE identifies visionaries, like Gram Power, an Indian company using “smart” micro-grid technology to provide electricity to poor rural villages with no access to power.
- Through our [Higher Education Solutions Network](#), the [College of William and Mary](#) is building a world-class research consortium that will use geospatial and other forms of data to help USAID and other stakeholders make evidence-based policy and resource allocation decisions.
- Through [DIV](#), we are investing in an innovative social enterprise to build and franchise sanitation centers. Designed by MIT engineers and architects, these low-cost, modular hygienic latrines can be used to collect waste and process it as fertilizer and biogas.

ii. Universities

A strong higher education system builds human capital and advances scientific and technological knowledge critical to economic, social, and political development. Higher education institutions can be models of good governance, beacons of hope for marginalized populations, and pillars of stability in times of rapid change, conflict, or crises. Development organizations like USAID depend heavily on higher education for deep regional and technical expertise, well-resourced laboratories, rigorous research and fresh perspectives to both deliver assistance and improve our policies and practice.

Mutually responsive and supportive partnerships between USAID and higher education communities in the United States and abroad are vital to achieving broad and ambitious global development objectives.

In recent years, USAID has sought to increase its engagement with institutions of higher education and their partners as part of a renewed commitment to evidence-based programs; an elevated focus on science and technology; an imperative to broaden our partner base; and an interest in developing the next generation of development professionals. Examples of that work include:

- The [Higher Education Solutions Network \(HESN\)](#), a global interdisciplinary network of labs designed to solve distinct development challenges. These labs are helping USAID and the development community discover more innovative, results-driven, efficient, cost effective and accessible solutions to global development challenges in areas such as global health, food security and chronic conflict.
- [Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research \(PEER\)](#) is helping to level the playing field by directly funding scientists and engineers in developing countries who have formed collaborations with high-caliber researchers funded through other U.S. federal research agencies, like the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.
- The [Collaborative Research Support Programs](#) address hunger and agriculture through a network of over 500 collaborating institutions with projects implemented in more than 55 host countries. This long-term collaborative research aims to improve agricultural productivity and marketing systems and to enhance food security. These programs have trained over 3,700 students in the agricultural sciences.
- The [American Schools and Hospitals Abroad \(ASHA\)](#) program has been expanding educational and medical opportunities across all regions that USAID works for more than 50 years by supporting institutions that demonstrate U.S. educational and medical standards. Since its inception, ASHA has assisted 257 institutions in over 76 countries.

These central mechanisms and initiatives build on decades of strong partnerships with and support for higher education institutions in a wide range of partner countries. For example:

- In Vietnam, universities and the private sector have joined together to build policies, practices, curriculum and regional centers of excellence to support the Government of Vietnam's plans to hire 30,000 social workers by 2020.
- University researchers contributed to the training of Haitian small-scale farmers-40 percent of who were women-on conservation agriculture techniques that increased soil health and yielded more food for both the farmers' families and commercial sale.
- Under the Africa Education Initiative, five U.S. universities worked with partner countries in Africa to improve primary grade learning. The program provided training for 165,000 teachers, developed 500 new books in 13 languages, and printed over 25 million textbooks and learning materials.

VIII. Ongoing Activities

i. U.S. Government Agencies and Military

USAID works closely with the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury and Justice, and other government agencies to carry out development programming around the world. The Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review (QDDR) and the Presidential Policy

Directive on Global Development set a clear framework for interagency coordination and have elevated the importance of international development and poverty alleviation as a pillar of U.S. national security.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of State, USAID works to implement the President's foreign policy and shape a freer, more secure and prosperous world. Together we are working on momentous initiatives such as Feed the Future, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Health Initiative, the Global Climate Change Initiative, Power Africa and Trade Africa, and the Young African Leaders Initiative, which will make profound differences in the lives of people across the globe.

USAID coordinates with the Department of Defense (DoD) to address complex challenges in fragile states, particularly in conflict situations, to ensure that diplomatic, development and defense efforts are mutually reinforcing. Through a robust personnel exchange, the Agency hosts military officers at our headquarters, while USAID Foreign Service Officers are embedded at the Unified Combatant Commands and the Pentagon. USAID also staffs civilian Humanitarian Assistance Advisors at each of the Unified Combatant Commands and within the Joint Staff.

USAID coordinates with a number of other U.S. Government agencies in an effort to bring a "whole-of-government" approach to its work. By cooperating with agencies that have specific areas of expertise, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the Overseas Private Investment Cooperation, we can increase the impact we have in promoting both sustainable economic development and thriving, democratic societies.

The following are examples of USAID work with partner agencies and the U.S. military include:

- USAID is collaborating with the Millennium Challenge Corporation and other government agencies on the [Partnership for Growth Initiative](#) to accelerate and sustain broad-based economic growth among a select group of high performing developing countries.
- Together with the U.S. Peace Corps, we support [community-level development projects](#) in sectors ranging from health to agriculture to small enterprise development.
- USAID is working with the U.S. Geological Survey on the [Volcano Disaster Assistance Program](#), which seeks to save lives by monitoring volcanic activity and helping communities around the world prepare for future eruptions.
- USAID's [Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation](#) facilitates Agency coordination with key DoD doctrine and plans, such as the Guidance of the Employment of the Force, the Quadrennial Defense Review and theater campaign and contingency plans.
- USAID's Office of [U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance](#) provides extensive training to DoD staff through the Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC), which was developed to teach key U.S. military personnel how the U.S. Government responds to international disasters. Of the 70 foreign disasters USAID responds to on average every year, about 10 percent involve support from DoD. USAID may request U.S. military assistance to meet a specific need, such as deploying helicopters to

transport emergency relief commodities within a disaster-stricken area.

Through closer collaboration with federal agencies and the U.S. military, USAID is working to cooperatively and efficiently maximize the U.S. Government's collective impact.

ii. Public Participation

USAID recognizes that new ideas, solutions, and models of development are needed to tackle the most intractable development challenges and realize our vision of eradicating extreme poverty worldwide. We are reaching out in new ways to source ideas that have promising potential.

In the context of policymaking, the benefits of public participation include not only stronger, richer, and better informed policy products, but also greater buy-in from stakeholders, and accountability for results. For these reasons, USAID has institutionalized a process to allow public comment on draft policy documents. While there is no standard process for soliciting public comment, recent policies— including those on urbanization, biodiversity, civilian-military cooperation, and support for LGBT individuals—have been made available on the USAID website during the drafting phase, along with mechanisms for the public to provide comment (e.g., survey links, dedicated email addresses, etc.). Input from the public has been considered in the final revision of these documents prior to their release as Agency policy.

We also invite individuals and organizations to share their ideas on how to address challenges in areas such as food security, global health and climate change. Here's how to share your ideas and/or apply for funding:

- [Development Innovations Ventures](#) is an open competition that provides staged funding for breakthrough cost-effective solutions to the world's most pressing development challenges- interventions that could change millions of lives at a fraction of the usual cost;
- Organizations can also submit [Unsolicited Proposals and Grant Applications](#);
- USAID has also established its own [GitHub account](#) where developers of computer applications can share innovative ways to leverage USAID's data to improve development outcomes. Github allows individuals to interact freely, share computer code with co-workers, friends, classmates or the general public, and revise each other's projects. Users can post questions about or make requests for USAID data using the GitHub site; and
- For more information on responding to specific solicitations throughout the Agency, visit the [Search our Opportunities page](#).

iii. Grand Challenges

USAID is exploring how to use prizes to access untapped solutions and solvers for specific development problems. Through a variety of initiatives, USAID challenges the world to find solutions to the largest solvable problems that are holding back progress for individuals and communities in the developing world.

The [Grand Challenges for Development](#) (GCD) initiative is rooted in two fundamental beliefs

about international development:

- Science and technology, when applied appropriately, can have transformational effects; and
- Engaging the world in the quest for solutions is critical to instigating breakthrough progress. Under the GCD initiative, the Agency will focus on defining problems, identifying constraints, and providing evidence-based analysis.

iv. Social Media

Stay connected with USAID through our [social media platforms](#):

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/USAID>

Twitter: @USAID

IX. Flagship Initiatives

i. Global Development Lab

USAID has created a new entity, the U.S. Global Development Lab (the Lab), to bring together a diverse set of partners and to foster public innovation and use of USAID's data. The Lab engages with a multitude of partners to increase public knowledge about USAID; to further the Agency's core mission of ending extreme poverty; and to improve financial inclusion and economic opportunity worldwide.

Ensuring continued access to USAID's data is a key element to ensuring the success of these partnerships. USAID makes its data assets publicly available via download at www.usaid.gov/data and continues to add application programming interfaces (APIs) for its data at www.usaid.gov/developer.

ii. Public Access Link

On December 14, 2005, [Executive Order 13392](#), titled "Improving Agency Disclosure of Information," specifically called upon federal agencies and their administrations to improve FOIA operations with both efficiency and customer service in mind. In response to the Executive order, USAID will introduce a FOIA Public Access Link (PAL) to improve FOIA operations in the third quarter of FY2014.

The PAL is a public-facing web portal that complements USAID's current IT system and allows requesters to submit their FOIA requests on-line; attach supporting documents; correspond with the Government Information Specialist assigned to the request; receive status updates; view the request submission history; and receive the final response letter and records. The PAL will also allow the public to download frequently requested records from USAID's FOIA Library, which is supported by the portal.

Through this collaborative tool, the FOIA requester community will be able to provide and receive continuous feedback. This will be measured yearly and reported annually in the Chief FOIA Officer Report to the U.S. Department of Justice. Overall, the PAL will increase transparency and offer FOIA requesters status updates and unprecedented access to FOIA

processes; it will facilitate decreased response times; and enhance USAID's FOIA customer service and FOIA administration overall.

iii. Open Data Governance

USAID has created an Information Governance Committee (InfoGov) and a Permanent Working Group (PWG) to facilitate ongoing, proactive release of its data in machine-readable formats, to the extent permissible by law. These groups are overseeing the appointment of Data Stewards in USAID operating units worldwide to help catalog and publish the Agency's extensive data assets. The Data Steward's primary role is to guide the operating unit on USAID's implementation of the [Executive Order](#) and [OMB Policy](#) on Open Data, in accordance with newly-created guidance that is specific to the Agency's context. Data Stewards are the primary conduits to USAID operating units for technical guidance on open data. At the same time, they are the conduits to open data leadership regarding needs for specialized training and feedback on the Agency's open data governance framework.

- **Information Governance Committee (InfoGov):** InfoGov is comprised of executive and senior agency leadership who oversees open data processes and provides policy direction to encourage proactive release of data pursuant to the Open Data Executive Order. The body defines policies around data release, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and provides guidance for engaging the public, entrepreneurs, and innovators. The group oversees the appointment of Data Stewards in each USAID operating unit to coordinate the identification and clearance of USAID's data assets for public release. InfoGov issues periodic requests to the broader Agency to systematically inventory USAID's data assets that are public, non-public, and restricted. The group is also overseeing the creation of an Agency-wide policy on open data as well as updates to USAID's procurement instruments to ensure the Agency's access to and accountability for the data which it funds.
- **Permanent Working Group (PWG):** The PWG manages the day-to-day open data workflow, including reviews for privacy, security, and access levels. This group reaches out to Data Stewards on an ongoing basis to identify data assets and facilitate public release. The working group also responds to public feedback received at [USAID's Github account](#) or via a dedicated open data email address at opendata@usaid.gov.

iv. Dollars to Results

As part of its response to the President's Open Government Initiative, USAID is linking its spending to results for the first time in the organization's history. At the USAID Administrator's direction, USAID created Dollars to Results to improve stewardship and transparency of public funds, and increase accountability by making the information publicly available. USAID will also use the information to respond to public and Congressional inquiries regarding USAID's use of funds and the results achieved.

Dollars to Results provides a visual overview of USAID's impact around the world by linking spending (dollars) to output and outcomes (results). Data are available for eight sectors in 37 countries, with new countries added each year. Representative sectors include:

- Democracy and Governance;
- Economic Development;
- Education and Social Services;
- Environment;
- Health;
- Peace and Security;
- Humanitarian Assistance; and
- Program Management.

Spending and results data are separated by country, with further breakdowns by sector for each country. USAID updates Dollars to Results annually to link spending in a particular fiscal year to results reported to USAID/Washington for that same year. The information is available via USAID's external website, which also includes information on each of the countries and the programs that USAID operates within each country. Links to other relevant websites such as USAID country missions and presidential initiatives are also available.

v. MyUSAID

This spring marked the launch of "MyUSAID," the Agency's new dynamic intranet that will be rolled out in waves to approximately 12,000 USAID employees over the coming months. MyUSAID is a multi-phase, multi-year effort that is meant to increase communications leading to greater productivity.

MyUSAID is the Agency's new social and content collaboration platform that will serve as the primary internal communication and knowledge management solution. This cloud-based platform will enable USAID employees to better connect, collaborate and locate the information and resources needed to execute our mission to aid the world's most vulnerable citizens anytime and anywhere.

vi. Learning Lab

The Learning Lab is a collaborative space where USAID staff and partners jointly create, share, refine and apply practical approaches in order to ground our programs in evidence and adapt quickly to new learning and changing contexts, maximizing development outcomes. This online community is designed to generate collective learning for the ultimate goal of increasing the relevance and sustainability of our programs

Learning Lab features key tools for USAID staff, partners and members of the public to share their experiences and support each other's efforts to develop a more dynamic approach to programs by:

- Connecting with a growing number of development practitioners using learning approaches;
- Contributing learning approaches, models, and resources;

- Accessing papers and tools from the Learning Resources and Technical Resources libraries and get suggestions on related resources;
- Collaborating with a community of practice;
- Participating in regular online discussion forums, Speakers Corners, and Seminar question and answers sessions; and
- Meeting experts in the field of organizational learning and knowledge management.

These tools and others function to enhance the way USAID staff and partners already collaborate, learn, and adapt. Supporting the behind the scenes work of development – strategic planning, project design, implementation, performance monitoring, and evaluation – is critical to strengthening the technical knowledge base on which development programs are created.

vii. AIDtracker Plus

The Agency is also piloting a tool to help Missions track information about their project performance and locations, known as AIDtracker Plus.