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ADS 424

Senior Leadership Group

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****This is a new ADS chapter.***

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ADS 424 – Senior Leadership Group

424.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

This chapter provides the policy directives and required procedures governing the selection and assignment of Agency personnel to Foreign Service (FS) positions in the Senior Leadership Group (SLG). The SLG comprises the Senior Management Group (SMG) and the Senior Technical Group (STG). Overseas and in the United States, SMG positions carry executive-level responsibilities, while STG positions focus on high-level technical responsibilities.

The Agency prioritizes the assignment of qualified and available career FS and Senior Foreign Service (SFS) employees to SLG assignments. However, under limited circumstances, Civil Service (CS) employees, including General Schedule (GS) and Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, may be assigned to SLG positions under the eligibility criteria described in section **424.3.4**.

424.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

- a. The **USAID Administrator (A/AID)** or designee assigns personnel to SLG positions, including cancellation of assignments.
- b. The **USAID Deputy Administrator (DA/AID)**:
 1. Establishes and chairs the SLG Large and Small Panels, including naming rotating members;
 2. Approves SLG tour extensions or shortenings/curtailments greater than six months; and
 3. Establishes new and abolishes obsolete SLG positions.
- c. The **Agency Counselor** is the most senior member of the FS who:
 1. Provides executive leadership and direction on a broad range of policy and/or operational issues facing the Agency;
 2. Advises the A/AID and DA/AID in the overall management of the Agency and its role in the conduct of U.S. foreign relations, as well as assists other key management officials with policy, operational and personnel matters, including the strategic deployment of foreign service personnel;
 3. Is a permanent voting member of the SLG Small Panel;
 4. Advises the DA/AID on SLG assignments; and

5. Serves as the main interlocutor between the Small Panel Board and Bureaus.

d. Assistant Administrators (AAs), Assistants to the Administrators (AtAs), and Heads of Independent Offices in USAID/Washington (USAID/W) or their designees (often career FS Deputy Assistant Administrators [DAAs]):

1. Manage SLG personnel resources and positions in their respective Bureaus/ Independent Offices (B/IOs), and overseas posts; and
2. Participate in the SLG assignment process.

e. The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) in the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) or designee:

1. Provides overall management of the Agency's personnel authorities and systems, including the SLG processes;
2. Serves as a permanent member of the SLG Small Panel, or designates the most senior SFS Officer from HCTM to represent HCTM;
3. Makes recommendations to the A/AID on SLG Small Panel membership, as required;
4. Collaborates with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to ensure the SLG process aligns with the equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws, directives, principles and guidelines as well as the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) goals and objectives in accordance with the Agency's strategic plan;
5. Leads Agency efforts to identify, mentor, and prepare future USAID leaders;
6. Recommends to the SLG Small Panel and DA/AID approval or denial of requests to add or remove positions from the SLG based on workforce planning and input from the Foreign Service Center (FSC) Director; and
7. Approves waivers of the Mandatory Retirement Age (MRA).

f. The Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator (Foreign Service) in the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM/SDAA):

1. Approves curtailment and extensions of SLG tours of duty of six months or less, after consultation with the relevant cognizant B/IO, HCTM's Foreign Service Center (HCTM/FSC), and the employee; and
2. Determines changes to tour length designations with input from HCTM/FSC and regional Bureau AAs.

g. The Director, Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Foreign Service Center (HCTM/FSC):

1. Oversees the SLG assignment process and ensures that all assignment actions are in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and internal policies and procedures;
2. Serves as Executive Secretary of the SLG Panels; and
3. Reviews and recommends to the CHCO approval or denial of requests to add or remove positions from the SLG. This is done in consultation with HCTM's Office of Workforce Planning, Policy, and Systems Management (HCTM/PPSM) to ensure overall SLG position levels are appropriate given workforce projections and strategic plans, and in conformance with standards for what constitutes executive-level duties.

h. The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Foreign Service Center (HCTM/FSC):

1. Implements the SLG assignment process in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and internal policies and procedures;
2. Maintains, in consultation with the cognizant B/IO, a list of current overseas and U.S.-based (domestic) SLG positions;
3. Coordinates and provides staff support for the SLG assignment process, including compiling applicants' 360-degree feedback summaries, creating and maintaining personnel documentation announcing or effecting SLG assignments, and reviewing applicants' eligibility;
4. Assists and supports the HCTM/FSC Director in reviewing and recommending the creation or deletion of SLG positions;
5. Provides assignment counseling to employees and managers, as appropriate; and
6. Processes personnel actions for transfers, and makes logistical arrangements (i.e., medical clearances, training, and travel arrangements) for an employee's assignment to post.

i. The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Human Capital Services Center (HCTM/HCSC) and HCTM's Center for Performance Excellence (HCTM/CPE) manages the transition from a CS hiring mechanism to the FS after an SLG assignment is approved for a member of the CS (up to GS-15), SES, or Senior Level (SL) and Scientific and Professional (ST) categories, including notifications of

reemployment rights.

j. The **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** provides input, information, analysis, and appropriate recommendations to HCTM to support SLG assignments that are in accordance with equal opportunity principles and that contribute to a diverse and inclusive workforce.

k. The **SLG Review and Recommendations Panel (SLG Panel)** recommends to the A/AID selection of candidates for SLG assignments, tour extensions, and/or non-emergency curtailments greater than six months and supports the management of the SLG as outlined below. The SLG Panel is composed of two groups, which are described in Agency Notices issued each year:

- 1. SLG Large Panel:** Includes one senior leader, typically the most senior Foreign Service Officer (FSO), from each B/IO that has a position on the SLG bid list. Small Panel Members, as indicated below, also participate in the Large Panel meetings. The DA/AID or designee convenes the Large Panel to hear B/IOs' preferences for candidates to fill SLG positions in their B/IOs. The Large Panel does not make assignment recommendations.
- 2. SLG Small Panel:** Serves as a management board of the SLG assignment process and in the management of SLG positions. Rotating members on the SLG Small Panel serve for the entire duration of an assignment cycle. The Panel members meet on a quarterly basis or as needed. The Small Panel:
 - i.** Recommends SLG assignments to the A/AID while taking into consideration B/IO recommendations presented to the Large Panel;
 - ii.** Reviews tour extensions, and/or non-emergency curtailments of more than six months;
 - iii.** Recommends to the DA/AID approval or denial of requests to add or remove positions from the SLG;
 - iv.** Provides written advice to the DA/AID on non-competitive (directed) assignments; and
 - v.** Must be consulted on acting designations for SLG incumbent positions for periods exceeding three months, except for positions of Bureau leadership.

The SLG Small Panel's voting membership includes three permanent members and three rotating members, in addition to non-voting participants.

The permanent members are:

- i. DA/AID or designee who serve as the chair;
- ii. Counselor to the Agency; and
- iii. The CHCO.

The rotating members include:

- i. Two members from regional bureaus; and
- ii. One member from a pillar bureau.

The non-voting members include:

- i. HCTM's AtA;
- ii. The HCTM/SDAA, unless the SDAA is representing HCTM on behalf of the CHCO as its Small Panel member, in which case, the FSC Director serves as HCTM's non-voting member;
- iii. The Management Bureau's (M) Foreign Service DAA;
- iv. The Assistant General Counsel for Ethics and Administration (GC/EA), or their designee;
- v. Representatives from OCR and the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, or their designee(s); and
- vi. Others with relevant expertise, as needed.

Two alternates (one regional and one pillar/central bureau) must also be named in the event any of the rotating members are unable to participate. The rotating members must be career FSOs serving in SLG assignments, normally as SDAA, DAA, AA, or equivalent positions in their bureaus.

Members of the Large and Small Panels must recuse themselves from panel discussions or decisions on positions for which they are under consideration.

424.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES & REQUIRED PROCEDURES

424.3.1 Senior Leadership Group Positions

424.3.1.1 SLG Positions

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

SLG positions have broad responsibility for Agency policy formulation and execution, stewardship over resources, and relationship management with senior leadership

across the U.S. Government (USG), host governments, and other stakeholders. As such, SLG positions call for demonstrated communication, management, and leadership skills, in addition to executive ability and technical expertise. SLG position titles adhere to [ADS 456mab, Position Titles, Series, Backstops, and Position Classification Standards](#).

SLG positions may include, but are not limited to:

a. Domestic Senior Management Group

1. DAAs reporting directly to Bureau AAs, AtAs, or equivalent. The Administrator has the right to designate a person in a DAA position as senior, making the position SDAA. Such designations by the Administrator are made on a case-by-case basis;
2. Designated Office Director positions reporting directly to Bureau AAs and DAAs;
3. Independent Office Directors;
4. Senior Development Advisor positions at select Department of Defense (DoD) military commands and faculty positions at select DoD institutions; or
5. Other senior-level positions outside USAID (e.g., National Security Council, Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Development Diplomat in Residence).

b. Overseas Senior Management Group

1. Mission Directors and Deputy Mission Directors; and
2. USAID Representatives, Senior Development Advisors or Counselors who are in SMG-designated positions.

c. Senior Technical Group

Positions may include Senior Technical Advisors in Bureaus whose large sectoral portfolios (e.g., health, agriculture) or functions (e.g., financial management) require the highest level of backstop technical expertise and leadership on policies, programs, donor or interagency coordination in the Agency. These positions are non-supervisory.

d. Domestic Positions Appointed by the Administrator

The Administrator may directly appoint an FSO to a domestic senior-level position, including the Agency Counselor. Although such positions are not on the SLG bid list, if the officer remains in the FS, they are considered SLG and the SLG team in HCTM/FSC facilitates personnel actions for them.

424.3.2 Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

The SLG process adheres to the Agency's principles and USG policies regarding EEO and seeks to ensure DEIA throughout the entire SLG assignment process. HCTM, in collaboration with OCR, works with the Administrator's Office to ensure diverse representation on the SLG Panels and in SLG assignments.

The Agency strives to achieve and maintain a diverse SLG incumbent profile by ensuring effective outreach, recruitment, retention, and promotion of a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American population; creating an organizational culture that supports and fosters an inclusive, diverse workforce; and recognizing managers and leaders who create such a workplace. The Agency encourages all candidates who meet the eligibility criteria and have the qualifications outlined below to express interest in SLG assignments. Each B/IO should strive to recruit a diverse pool of SLG officers to help advance the Agency's overall objectives.

The SLG Panels recommend candidates based on an evaluation of their skills and competencies needed for the position. SLG Panels must consider all candidates with due regard for inclusiveness and equity, and must not disadvantage any candidate for reasons of race, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, or transgender status), age (except as indirectly limited by [Section 812 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#) as it relates to the MRA, explained below), religion, genetic information, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, status as a parent, geographic or educational affiliation within the United States, political affiliation, or plans or methods of entry into the FS. Retaliation for opposing unlawful discrimination or for engaging in a protected EEO activity is also prohibited. All persons identified in section **424.2** must make recommendations and decisions without regard to these factors and only on the basis of merit. This is in accordance with [Section 105 of the Foreign Service Act](#), as amended.

424.3.3 Eligibility for SLG Positions

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

The following categories of employees are eligible to apply for SLG positions:

- a. Tenured career FS members at classes FS-01 or above who:
 1. Are determined to be eligible bidders for the upcoming bidding cycle during the annual position validation process; and
 2. Have received a rating of A or B from their last Promotion or Performance Board review.

These FSOs can apply for SLG positions worldwide, subject to certain

restrictions regarding end-of-tour dates and MRA limits. Eligible bidders with the required technical expertise and experience are also eligible to bid on STG positions, subject to the same restrictions on end-of-tour dates.

In addition, FSOs whose end-of-tour dates fall outside the current assignment cycle period (who would not normally be eligible to bid) may submit a single bid at their current duty post (including USAID/W). If approved, the general expectation is that an overseas assignment is for one tour (i.e., two years in most countries). No combination of assignments may exceed a total of four years (48 months) at one post from the initial date of arrival, or eight years (96 months) in USAID/W.

- b. Career CS employees at the GS-15 grade who received a CS Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) summary rating of at least “Exceeds Fully Successful” for the last two rating cycles are eligible to express interest in domestic SLG positions as specified in each cycle’s bidding instructions (with the exception of DAA and SDAA positions and FSC Director).

CS employees are only considered for SLG positions that have been advertised at least two consecutive times in one or more FS assignment cycles and no assignment has been made.

- c. Career SES employees who received an SES performance rating of at least “Exceeds Fully Successful” for the last two rating cycles may express interest in domestic SLG positions (with the exception of any positions for DAA, SDAA, or the HCTM/FSC Director).

SES employees are only considered for SLG positions that have been listed at least two consecutive times in one or more assignment cycles and no assignment has been made. If the Administrator selects an SES for an overseas SLG position, they will receive a time-limited appointment in the FS at the SFS-equivalent class level, and be permitted to serve in that capacity for no more than one assignment.

To be considered for SLG positions, all candidates must have the required qualifications and follow the bidding rules and procedures outlined in this chapter and in the SLG Major Listing of Positions and Updates notices issued by HCTM throughout the assignment cycle. SLG bidders with the following qualifications are more competitive for SLG positions:

i. Tenured career FS members at classes FS-01 or above who have:

- At least two years of service at class FS-01 or higher;
- At least eight years of USAID overseas FS service; and

- At least two years of management experience (including supervisory experience).
- ii. Career CS employees at the GS-15 grade who have:**
- At least two continuous calendar years at the GS-15 grade level;
 - At least eight years of USAID GS experience; and
 - At least two years of management experience (including supervisory experience).
- iii. Career SES employees who have:**
- At least eight years of USAID experience; and
 - At least two years of management experience (including supervisory experience).

424.3.4 SLG Bidding Rules

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

Applicants must follow the SLG bidding guidance issued in Agency Notices. The following rules apply to employees who wish to be considered for SLG positions:

- FS or SFS employees currently assigned to an SLG position whose end-of-tour date falls within the upcoming assignment cycle are required to submit bids for new SLG or regular FS assignments in that cycle, unless they are planning to retire or separate from the Agency. They are eligible, but not required, to bid on new SLG assignments. A follow-on SLG assignment is not guaranteed.
- SLG incumbents or non-SLG incumbents who bid on SLG vacancies and have not been notified of their selection for an SLG assignment are required to bid on positions in the next regular (non-SLG) FS assignment cycle. Those who do not bid in the regular FS assignment cycle are not allowed to submit bids on SLG Update 1 or applicable bid phase. By not bidding, these individuals are indicating their worldwide availability per [ADS 436](#) and are subject to a directed assignment in the regular assignment cycle.
- The following provisions apply to bidders who will reach the MRA during the potential next assignment:
 1. FSOs must retire at the MRA unless they have a waiver. The end-of-tour date reflects the employee's mandatory retirement date. An employee cannot be assigned to an overseas SLG position if they would be at post less than 12 months on their mandatory retirement date.

2. If the Agency determines that additional service in the proposed position beyond the MRA is required for exceptional programmatic reasons, and the employee agrees to serve, HCTM must issue a waiver to extend the MRA per [ADS 414](#), or a recall appointment, per [ADS 414.3.3](#). The assignment must not be announced until the MRA waiver is approved by the CHCO or other authorized official.
 3. See [ADS 414](#) for further details.
- The following provisions apply to bidders who will reach their Time-in-Class (TIC) ([see ADS 440](#)) limit:
 1. Absent a promotion and/or Limited Career Extension (LCE), all FSOs must separate from the Agency upon reaching their TIC date.
 2. The end-of-tour date must reflect the FSO's TIC date.
 - An SLG incumbent whose tour ends during the upcoming bidding cycle and who intends to retire at the end of the current tour is not required to submit bids. However, if an SLG incumbent plans to retire after an assignment back to United States from overseas for more than six months, the employee should submit bids for domestic positions under the regular FS assignment process (see [ADS 436](#)) and inform their Assignment and Career Counselor (ACC) in HCTM/FSC of the intended date of retirement.
 - In deciding whether to bid on another assignment at their current post, FS employees should take into consideration that no combination of assignments at one overseas post location may exceed a total of four years (48 months) from the initial date of arrival at post, not including home leave.
 - FS employees whose end-of-tour dates fall outside the current assignment cycle period (who would not normally be eligible to bid) may submit a single bid at post. If approved, the general expectation is that an overseas assignment is for one tour (i.e., two years in most countries). No combination of assignments may exceed a total of four years (48 months) at one post from the initial date of arrival to that post, not including home leave.
 - In accordance with the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, Section 504\(b\), as amended](#), the Agency seeks to assign each career FSO, including FSOs in SLG positions, to a domestic, three-year assignment at least once during each period of 15 years that the member is in the FS, consistent with the needs of the service. Employees who have been overseas for 12 consecutive years or longer when their assignment ends must bid on at least two domestic assignments (unless stated otherwise in the bidding guidance).
 - Long-term Training (LTT) lasting one academic year is considered part of a

standard three-year U.S. rotation. As such, LTT incumbents must bid on domestic positions in conjunction with their LTT. LTT does not count as a domestic assignment if not combined with at least two additional consecutive years in a domestic assignment.

- All FS employees who have completed five consecutive years or more in the United States in the year that they become eligible to bid are required to bid on overseas positions (unless stated otherwise in the bidding guidance or approved by HCTM). Language training is not considered a domestic assignment for the purposes of this requirement.
- In submitting bids, employees should take into consideration whether they are medically cleared for the post or could receive a reasonable accommodation that would enable them to be assigned to the post, such as a post-specific medical clearance waiver pursuant to [ADS 414mab](#) (see [ADS 111, Procedures for Providing Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities](#)). Employees may seek assistance from their ACC in determining which posts are suitable given their clearance status.

424.3.5 Assignment Process

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

The SLG assignment cycle consists of the Major Listing and generally includes an Update 1 listing. Positions advertised in the Major Listing include all planned vacancies between issuance of the Agency Notice for the Major Listing through the end of the following calendar year. An Update 1 Agency Notice includes positions unfilled from the Major Listing selection process and new positions that become vacant following the Major Listing Notice.

The annual SLG bidding cycle commences with the SLG Major Listing position validation exercise held early each year. HCTM/FSC coordinates with B/IOs to determine which positions will become available in the upcoming SLG cycle. The validation includes any position from the previous cycle that has not been filled and for which the position need remains.

B/IO AMS offices request tour extensions or curtailments after consultation with the cognizant B/IO and the employee during the SLG position validation exercise. Once B/IOs validate their positions (e.g., concur with the position titles, vacancy dates, and position narratives to be announced), HCTM/FSC announces the start of the assignment cycle/phase via an Agency Notice. B/IOs can also request to add or eliminate SLG positions during the validation period. HCTM and the SLG Small Panel must review new positions, and the DA/AID must approve, before being advertised.

424.3.5.1 Applying for SLG Positions

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

The application process for SLG positions is described in the annual Agency Notices for

the SLG Major Listing and Update phases. Employees interested in bidding must review their eligibility in accordance with the guidance in the Agency Notice(s) and submit an application package as explained below.

Eligible FS and CS employees interested in applying for SLG positions are required to submit an application package (bid) by following the instructions detailed in the relevant Agency Notice(s). Employees are encouraged to contact the relevant B/IO contacts listed in the Agency Notice for more information on the positions and to indicate interest in those positions.

424.3.5.2 SLG Candidate Qualifications

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

SLG candidates are expected to demonstrate the leadership, management, and/or technical competencies that enables them to achieve results for USAID. They must have extensive management experience, including supervisory experience, and understand USAID's performance management processes and policies. They must be leaders who must maintain and build relationships within USAID and with other USG senior leaders, host country governments, and external partners, both public and private. Ideal SLG candidates have a balance of field and recent headquarters experience (beyond time spent in LTT).

FSOs assigned to SLG positions interact regularly with interlocutors at senior levels and must be perceived as credible representatives of the Agency and the Administration's vision. In addition to exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, SLG candidates must also exhibit superior judgment, discretion, integrity, and development expertise. SLG candidates serve as the Agency's role models, coaches, and mentors for future development professionals; therefore, they must demonstrate the highest standards of professional values and ethical behavior, skills, and competencies, as contained in the [FS/SFS Skills Framework](#).

424.3.6 Senior Leadership Group Selection Process

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

The Agency's policy is to select the best qualified SLG candidates, without regard to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, color, age (except as indirectly limited by [Section 812 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)), religion, national origin, genetic information, physical or mental disability (except when disqualified for any overseas duty by the U.S. Department of State's Office of Medical Services [State/MED]), and the disability cannot be reasonably accommodated at the available post(s), including through the grant of a medical clearance waiver pursuant to [ADS 414mab](#), plans or methods of entry into the FS, reprisal for participation in the EEO process, membership in or activity on behalf of an employee organization, marital and family status, or political affiliation. FSC reviews small panel recommendations to confirm that an individual with a restricted medical clearance is not disqualified for an overseas duty post by State/MED, or the disability cannot be reasonably accommodated at the available post(s), including through the grant of a medical

clearance waiver pursuant to [ADS 414mab](#).

Agency policy is to fill SLG positions through a competitive and collaborative process. This process includes as primary steps an application by interested candidates, the collection of 360 feedback, review of bids by B/IOs, review and recommendations by a Large and Small Panel, and assignment decisions by the Administrator or designee.

424.3.6.1 Senior Leadership Group Panel

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

The SLG Panel meets to review/recommend actions as discussed above. Attendance at SLG Panel meetings is strictly limited to the members listed in section **424.2.j**. Because of the confidential nature of the discussions, additional individuals are not permitted to attend meetings. In the event a designated member is not available, the alternative serves as a substitute. Attendees must observe total confidentiality of SLG Panel discussions.

424.3.6.2 Senior Leadership Group Selection Criteria

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

In making its assignment recommendations, the SLG Small Panel takes into account the following:

- Bidder's 360 feedback;
- The programmatic needs of the Agency;
- The Agency's commitment to EEO and inclusive diversity in its senior leadership, to include the SLG;
- The skill set and qualifications offered by the SLG candidate for the considered positions;
- The Bureau's certification; and
- The personal preferences of candidates.

While candidates' assignment preferences are taken into consideration, the SLG Small Panel may ask a candidate to consider a position they did not bid for if Agency needs indicate that the employee's skills are needed elsewhere.

Within this framework, the SLG Small Panel reviews each applicant and bases its recommendations on the strength of the candidate's application package (see section **424.3.5.1**) and SLG 360-degree feedback, with priority given to the following categories of applicants (in order of preference and subject to eligibility):

a. SFS and FS-01 officers:

- Who performed well according to SLG 360-degree feedback and ratings (Rating A and B) given by the FS/SFS Promotion or Performance Boards (HCTM provides the selection panels with the list of C-ranked candidates for SFS and FS for the last two years); and
 - Who are completing their tour during the annual SLG assignment cycle or who are bidding out-of-cycle on specifically designated vacancies per the bidding guidance.
- b. Current FS SLG incumbents and non-SLG incumbents who have not completed a full tour who want to bid on another position at their current post:** Normally, employees in the middle of their tour whose positions are not up for bid in the current bidding cycle are not considered eligible bidders; however, they may submit a single bid at post and be considered.
- Current FS SLG incumbents who have not completed a full tour:** Normally, SLG incumbents in the middle of their tour whose positions are not up for bid in the current bidding cycle are not considered eligible bidders (i.e., non-eligible bidder). However, in exceptional cases, unplanned vacancies occur and it is in the Agency's best interests to allow current SLG incumbents who are not eligible bidders to be directly assigned to these positions.
- c. Career SES employees:** SES employees are considered for SLG positions that have been listed at least two consecutive times in one or more assignment cycles.
- d. Career CS employees at grade GS-15:** CS employees are considered for SLG positions that have been listed at least two consecutive times in one or more assignment cycles.

Note: The DA/AID has the authority to make assignment decisions for all SLG positions irrespective of this order of preference (see [ADS 103.3.11](#)).

424.3.7 Worldwide Availability Effective Date: 05/09/2023

All FSOs applying for consideration for overseas SLG assignments have agreed to worldwide availability as a requirement of tenure (see [ADS 414, Foreign Service \(FS\) Appointments](#)). Candidates must notify HCTM/FSC of their restricted availability (i.e., State/MED's clearance determinations, tandem couples, educational needs of eligible family members etc.) during bidding if they want these factors to be taken into consideration. Bidders and incumbents should not expect to be approved for long-term remote teleworking while assigned to an SLG position.

424.3.7.1 Directed Assignments Effective Date: 05/09/2023

Directed assignments, which involve the A/AID exercising the right to make assignment decisions pursuant to [ADS 103, Delegations of Authority](#) and [ADS 422, Personnel Operations: Senior Foreign Service \(SFS\)](#), are considered outside of the regular SLG bidding process. The A/AID may approve a directed SLG assignment when, for example, an employee's specific skills, managerial and technical expertise, or the lack of available alternative candidates requires it. In these circumstances, where practicable, efforts are made to take into account the employee's personal needs, but the programmatic needs of the Agency are given the highest priority.

424.3.8 Assignment to Language Designated Positions (LDPs)

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

Before departure to post, all officers assigned to LDPs must meet the language proficiency level of the position. If they do not have the required proficiency, they must receive training by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), or one-on-one training by an instructor, as specified in [ADS 438, Foreign Language Program](#), to achieve the language proficiency requirement for the position. Exceptions to this requirement are considered in emergency situations (see [ADS 438.3.11](#) for policy and procedures for waivers). To facilitate the acquisition of needed language skills for the assigned officer, HCTM/FSC may work with the B/IOs involved to adjust the tour dates for the officer or the current incumbent of the position when needed to address Agency priorities.

424.3.9 Required Training

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

FSOs and CS employees selected for first-time overseas SLG assignments, including, but not limited to, USAID Mission Directors, Deputy Mission Directors, USAID Representatives, Senior Development Advisors to combatant command and other similar or successor positions, must take the [USAID-sponsored course](#) designed to prepare personnel new to such positions.

424.3.10 Length of Tours or Assignments

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

Domestic SLG assignments are for a period of three years for both FS and CS employees. Overseas SLG assignments are for the tour length of the post of assignment and are designated as one-year, one-tour (two years), or two-tour (four years) posts. LTT faculty positions are for two years. The HCTM/SDAA, with input from HCTM/FSC and regional Bureau AAs, determines changes to tour-length designations.

424.3.10.1 Other considerations for SLG tour lengths or assignments for Foreign Service Officers

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

a. Overseas

1. Single-bid or bid-at-post assignment

If a single-bid or bid-at-post assignment is approved at an overseas post (e.g., a Deputy Mission Director approved to move up to the Mission Director position), the expectation is that the new assignment will be for one tour (i.e., two years in most countries). No combination of assignments at one overseas post location may exceed a total of 48 months from the initial date of arrival at post and must not result in the employee being assigned continuously overseas for more than 36 months without home leave, or more than 15 years of continuous overseas service.

2. Tour extensions and curtailments

The HCTM/SDAA may approve requests to extend or curtail SLG tours for up to six months after HCTM/FSC consults with the cognizant B/IO and the employee. The SLG Small Panel reviews, and the DA/AID must approve requests for extensions or curtailments greater than six months. Tour extension requests that would result in an employee being assigned to any one post beyond 50 months will not be approved. Consistent with the needs of the Service, the Agency seeks to assign each career SFS member to a domestic position in USAID/W or another USAID position located in the United States at least once during each period of 15 years that the member is in the FS, as described in the [Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), Section 504.

b. United States

The standard length of a domestic SLG assignment is three years. However, because single bids may result in a new domestic assignment to an SLG position, the following guidelines apply to both SLG incumbents and non-SLG incumbents for tour lengths in the United States:

- If the SLG assignment begins in the first year of the employee's U.S. rotation, the SLG assignment is for three years.
- If the SLG assignment begins in the second or third year of the employee's U.S. rotation, the new SLG assignment is for two years.

Assignments in the United States for FSOs for any period of continuous service are generally limited to no more than eight years, according to the [Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), Section 504, unless specifically approved by the A/AID.

c. Authority to Shorten or Terminate Assignments

The A/AID or DA/AID have the right to curtail an SLG assignment at any time. As specified in section **424.2**, the CHCO may recommend to the DA/AID the termination or cancellation of an SLG assignment in consultation with the B/IO AA and the SLG Small Panel, when feasible, and the DA/AID may approve such termination without regard to

the standard length of an assignment. An incumbent whose SLG assignment is being shortened or terminated by the DA/AID may request the rationale for the decision by submitting an email to the DA/AID within seven calendar days of their receipt of the decision. The DA/AID must provide the incumbent a rationale for the decision at their discretion as soon as practicable.

d. Acting Officials for SLG Positions

B/IOs can nominate an Acting Official for an SLG position for up to three months without DA/AID, HCTM, and SLG Small Panel consultations. However, the B/IO must inform HCTM/FSC about the temporary delegation. If an SLG incumbent in a DAA or Mission Director position will be away from the position for longer than three months, the B/IO must inform HCTM/FSC about the absence at least two weeks before the incumbent leaves, and propose an Acting Official. HCTM/FSC must seek concurrence of the proposed acting delegation from the SLG Small Panel and inform the B/IO about the Panel's decision. The expectation is that Acting Official roles will be assigned to the next most senior FSO in the chain of command, or another FSO suitably qualified for the position if no FSO is available in the Operating Unit. Acting Officials in SLG positions should be FSOs.

e. Precedence of New SLG Assignment

Assignment decisions made under the SLG assignment process may affect existing end-of-tour dates for affected employees. In most cases, the start date of the onward assignment takes precedence and no further action is needed to formally shorten that employee's tour. In cases where there is a significant gap (three months or more), the SLG Small Panel must establish a recommended transition date after consultation with the gaining and losing B/IOs during the SLG bidding and assignment process.

f. Policies Associated with SLG Assignment Travel

1. FS and SFS members serving in SLG positions are subject to the regulations governing home leave and rest and recuperation (R&R) travel, including eligibility requirements and repayment liabilities.
2. FS and SFS members who voluntarily resign or retire from USAID before completing a full tour of duty overseas may be liable for the repayment of travel and transportation costs to and/or from the post.
3. The B/IO AA or head must approve travel of an incumbent (or acting) Mission Director or USAID principal officer at post outside the country or area of assignment (for regional officials). The Mission Director or principal USAID officer at post may approve the Deputy Director's travel, except for travel incident to a personnel action, home leave, or while the Deputy is serving as Acting Director.

g. Non-acceptance of assignments

Failure of an FS/SFS officer to accept an assignment is cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and may result in the officer no longer being considered for future SLG assignments (see [ADS 485, Disciplinary Action - Foreign Service](#) and [3 FAM 4300](#)). Failure to accept an SLG-approved assignment will result in a CS or SES employee no longer being considered for future SLG assignments.

424.3.10.2 Other considerations for SES, ST, SL, and GS-15 Employees Assigned to SLG Positions

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

a. Overseas and Domestic Positions

SLG positions encumbered by SES, ST, SL or GS-15 employees must be advertised at the end of the tour of duty (typically after two or three years). Incumbent SES, ST, SL or GS-15 employees cannot bid on the same SLG position to which they are assigned. Overseas positions are advertised in line with the normal assignment period for that post (e.g., at the end of four years for a two-tour, two-year-per-tour post).

b. Reemployment Rights

CS and SES employees assigned to overseas SLG positions are placed on FSL appointments for the duration of their assignments. In accordance with Section 310 of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980](#) and [5 USC 3597](#), a USAID CS employee who accepts a FSL appointment is entitled, upon the expiration or termination by management of the limited appointment, to be reemployed in that employee's former position or in an equivalent-graded position in Washington, D.C. Employees must obtain a re-employment rights letter prior to assuming the SLG position. For more information on exercising reemployment rights please refer to [ADS 412, Reemployment Rights](#). All SES and CS employees are granted reemployment rights for the duration of their limited FS/SFS appointment.

424.3.11 Impact of a Change in the Organizational Status of a Post/Country on the Status of the SLG Position/Incumbent

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

If there is an organizational change in the status of a country program (i.e., post) from a full USAID Mission (bilateral or regional) with a Mission Director to that of an office headed by a USAID Representative, the status (i.e., position title) of the officially assigned incumbent will not change during the duration of the employee's assignment. Upon the departure of the incumbent, the successor assigned to the position assumes the title of USAID Representative.

If, during the course of an assignment, a post (e.g., Office of the USAID Representative) is upgraded to a full Mission (bilateral or regional), then the incumbent USAID Representative must use the designated title of Acting Mission Director through the end

of their assignment unless and until the A/AID approves a reassignment action to the new position of Mission Director. An Acting designation must reflect the temporary nature of the change in position for the assigned officer, and the incumbent must have the authority of the Mission Director position to lead the respective mission, pursuant to [ADS 103, Delegations of Authority](#). Upon the departure of the incumbent Acting Mission Director, the successor will hold the Mission Director position title.

The above applies once all required approvals for the re-designation of the post have been obtained, including Congressional notification and updating of the staffing pattern.

424.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

424.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

- a. [3 FAM 2440](#)
- b. [5 USC 3597](#)
- c. [Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended](#)
- d. [Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 \(FAA\), as amended](#), Sections 631(b) and (c)
- e. [Foreign Service Act of 1980 \(FSA\)](#), as amended, Sections 101(a)(4), 101(b)(2), 202, 302,303, 305, 310, and 812.
- f. [Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended](#)
- g. [Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended](#)

424.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 05/09/2023

- a. [ADS 103, Delegations of Authority](#)
- b. [ADS 111, Procedures for Providing Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- c. [ADS 412, Reemployment Rights](#)
- d. [ADS 414, Foreign Service \(FS\) Appointments](#)
- e. [ADS 422, Personnel Operations: Senior Foreign Service](#)
- f. [ADS 423, Senior Executive Service](#)

- g. [ADS 440, Time-in-Class \(TIC\) Limitations and Limited Career Extensions \(LCEs\)](#)
- h. [ADS 456mab, Position Titles, Series, Backstops, and Position Classification Standards](#)
- i. [ADS 485, Disciplinary Action - Foreign Service](#)

424.5 **ADDITIONAL HELP** Effective Date: 05/09/2023

There are no additional help documents for this chapter.

424.6 **DEFINITIONS** Effective Date: 05/09/2023

Assignment Cycle

The period of January 1 through December 31 of each calendar year during which SLG positions are scheduled to become vacant. (**Chapter 424**)

Assignment Process

The steps in which all facets of SLG assignment-making (from validation through the point at which assignments are announced) are executed. (**Chapter 424**)

Mission

A USAID Mission or representative office in a cooperating country. (**Chapter 310** and **424**)

Senior Executive Service (SES)

The SES includes most managerial, supervisory, and policy positions classified above GS-15 or equivalent. A position meets the SES functional criteria if its incumbent engages in any of the following activities: directs the work of an organizational unit; is held accountable for the success of one or more specific programs or projects; monitors progress toward organizational goals and periodically evaluates and makes appropriate adjustments to such goals; supervises the work of employees (other than personal assistants); or otherwise exercises important policymaking, policy-determining, or other executive functions. Members of the SES serve in the key positions just below top Presidential appointees. SES members are the major link between these appointees and the rest of the Federal workforce. They operate and oversee nearly every government activity in approximately 75 Federal agencies. (**Chapter 423** and **424**)

Senior Foreign Service (SFS)

The SFS includes all members of the Foreign Service who have been commissioned by the President and promoted to the class of Counselor, Minister Counselor, or Career Minister. . Members of the SFS are appointed under section 302(a)(1) or 303 of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#). They are the corps of leaders and experts for the management of the Foreign Service and the performance of its functions. (**Chapter**

424)**Stakeholders**

Those individuals and/or groups who exercise some type of authority over USAID resources such as Congress, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), U.S. Department of State, and those who influence the political process (e.g., interest groups and taxpayers) (**ADS Chapters [102](#) and [201](#)**), and those affected by a development outcome or who have an interest in a development outcome. Stakeholders include customers (including internal, intermediate, and ultimate customers) but can include more broadly all those who might be affected adversely, or indirectly, by a USAID activity but who might not be identified as a “customer” (**Chapters [200](#), [201](#), [424](#)**).

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