

July 25, 2024

**Report to Congress on Rewarding USAID Staff Skills and Commitment to Local Partnerships
("Local Partnership Report")**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) submits this report pursuant to Section 7019(e) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. F, P.L. 118-47) and Senate Report 118-71, , which reads as follows:

Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of the Act, the USAID Administrator shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations, and post on the USAID website, a copy of USAID's policies and procedures for rewarding agency personnel who demonstrate the skills and commitment to building lasting partnerships with local government officials and community leaders to implement programs that encourage and support local initiative and local ownership, including, but not limited to, Centromerica Local and Local Works.

In fiscal year (FY) 2024, USAID instituted new professional evaluation and promotion performance criteria for Foreign Service Officers focused on their application of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in their work (see [Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Skills Framework, Mandatory Reference for Automated Directives System Chapter 461](#)). With this new criteria, employees will be evaluated on how they advance these principles along the "5 Ps" dimensions: people, partnerships, programs, policies, and processes.

The partnerships and programs elements, in particular, reflect efforts to support locally led and inclusive development. Proficiency indicators related to programs include the extent to which staff elevate or hold subordinates to account for elevating local knowledge and local leadership throughout the Program Cycle. Proficiency indicators related to partnerships include the extent to which staff pursue programmatic and strategic partnerships with diverse actors, including local actors.

By explicitly valuing those approaches, the new skill helps reinforce incentives for staff to advance work in locally led ways. The publically available Foreign Service (FS) Skills Framework, which outlines these skills, serves as the basis for FS Officer promotions and tenure decisions.

In addition to formal performance criteria, there are a number of other ways USAID recognizes staff efforts to advance locally led development.

In 2023, USAID created a new Advancing Locally Led Development Incentive Award, which recognizes USAID employees (up to three individuals and up to three groups) who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in advancing localization in pursuit of locally led development. This award acknowledges employees whose contributions to localization have helped USAID shift resources, agenda-setting, and decision-making power into the hands of local actors. The first set of nominations was collected in 2023 and awards will be issued in 2024.

USAID's Local Works program also recognizes peer-nominated staff who demonstrate outstanding commitment to locally led development as Locally Led Development Champions. Every six months, the Local Works team based in Washington, D.C. nominates staff from Local Works Missions who embody the spirit of the program through their commitment, dedication, innovation, advocacy, and initiative in advancing locally led development. Locally Led Development Champions are showcased in a feature article in the Locally Led Development Initiatives Newsletter. The [public edition of the newsletter](#)¹ reaches more than 12,000 people, and the internal USAID edition has over 2,100 subscribers.

USAID's Bureau for Planning, Learning, and Resource Management holds an annual case competition for Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA). In 2023, the CLA team highlighted localization as a theme of the case competition, receiving over 150 submissions. Similarly in 2024, a theme of the competition is integrating a learning culture around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, approaches that advance and reinforce working in locally led ways. The best submissions may receive awards or be featured in [webinars](#)² or [blogs](#).³

USAID's Management Bureau's Office of Acquisition and Assistance shares a weekly, internal newsletter that regularly features Missions or other operating units that have taken important steps to reduce barriers to partnership with local partners, including utilizing the Agency's [Translation Program](#),⁴ holding Industry Days with local organizations, and more. For instance, one newsletter featured USAID/Guatemala's efforts, as part of Centroamerica Local, to issue a Request for Information and accept responses in both Spanish and English.

¹ <https://www.usaid.gov/locally-led-partnerships/newsletter-archive>

² <https://usaideallearninglab.org/usaid-bite-sized-learning-series>

³

<https://usaideallearninglab.org/community/blog/reflections-bite-sized-learning-operationalizing-localization-through-cla>

⁴ <https://www.workwithusaid.gov/en/blog/usaid-translation-program-saves-partners-time-and-money>