



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Protecting the Integrity of Science



Credit: International AIDS Vaccine Initiative

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY is the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity.

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT

Science and technology, including research and development (R&D), play a key role in advancing international development and improving humanitarian assistance. New knowledge, innovations, and technologies are critical to improving the well-being of people and nations by offering transformative, sustainable solutions to key development challenges. Scientific research also strengthens our collective understanding of both the development process and the context and behavioral motivations of the countries and people therein.

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY IS RELEVANT TO YOU

USAID is updating its policies and practices to establish the expectations, principles, key roles, and procedures required to ensure the integrity of all aspects of USAID's scientific activities, including:

- proposing, reviewing, managing, funding, conducting, and collaborating on scientific activities;
- communicating about science and scientific activities;
- hiring, retaining, utilizing, and promoting a scientific workforce;
- strengthening scientific capacity in partner countries; and
- using research evidence in programming and decision-making.

PRINCIPLES OF SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

- ACCESS TO SCIENCE
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- FREE FLOW OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
- RETALIATION PROTECTIONS
- SCIENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING
- SCIENCE PROTECTIONS
- SCIENTIFIC DISSENT
- TECHNICAL WORKFORCE
- TRANSPARENT FEDERAL S&T ADVISORY COMMITTEES

CONTEXT: USAID's forthcoming revised Scientific Integrity Policy will be consistent with U.S. federal requirements, draw from the collective experience of U.S. federal departments and agencies, and be informed by the engagement of stakeholders. It will be aligned with the 2022 guidance, *A Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice*, of the Scientific Integrity Framework Interagency Working Group of the National Science and Technology Council.

EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Scientific integrity at USAID is the responsibility of the entire USAID workforce, its partners, and its leaders. USAID leadership at all levels—including political leaders—must recognize, support, promote, and model scientific integrity.

□ WHY

USAID invests over \$550 million annually in innovations and scientific research and in strengthening the scientific capacity of our partner countries.

Additionally, science informs USAID's development priorities, from emerging disease threats to climate change, rural and economic development, democracy, human rights, governance issues, and more.

USAID and partners are not immune to interference in the conduct, communications, or use of science.

While there is a distinction between **scientific processes** and **policy decisions made based on scientific results**, adherence to the principles of scientific integrity applies to both.

□ HOW

USAID will promote a culture of scientific integrity among its leadership, staff, development partners, and host country partners

- by creating an empowering environment that is conducive to innovation and progress, and
- by protecting scientists, the process of science, and scientific findings and products.^{1,2}

Scientific findings and products must not be suppressed, delayed, or altered for political purposes and must not be subjected to inappropriate influence.

Scientific integrity training will be mandatory for all staff. Accountability will be maintained through an allegation and investigation structure overseen by Scientific Integrity Officials. Allegations involving high level leadership may require external oversight, which will be accomplished through the White House National Science and Technology Council.

□ SUPPORT

USAID will foster scientific integrity and research integrity through mutual learning and sharing of good practices by leveraging partnerships with researchers, research institutions, and other research sponsors supporting international collaborative research and training.

USAID research partners will be encouraged to quantify and develop responses to conditions in the research environment that may be linked to research misconduct and detrimental research practices.

USAID will encourage training for research partners that enables clear communication of findings to USAID, to policy makers within their organizations, to the public, and to stakeholders more broadly.

USAID will support local communities and organizations in building scientific integrity capacity in a manner that is inclusive, equitable, and rooted in local leadership and ownership. This includes supporting opportunities for professional development of local scientific and technical staff.

¹ “Scientist” here refers to anyone who collects, generates, or evaluates scientific data, analyses, or products.

² “Science” and “scientific” are broad terms that refer to the full spectrum of scientific endeavors.

“Scientific Integrity violations should be on par with ethics violations.”

-White House, Office of Science & Technology Policy

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