



Returning to USAID in December 2023 to become the Agency's Chief Acquisition Officer, Senior Procurement Executive, and the Director of the Management Bureau's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA), I was impressed by the willingness of staff and leaders across the globe to speak openly about long-standing issues within the acquisition and assistance (A&A) function, and more importantly, how to fix them.

These conversations were the impetus that led to the March 2023 release of the [Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Strategy](#) and [Implementation Plan](#), efforts that build upon the 2018 A&A Strategy. The A&A Strategy and Implementation Plan are the foundation for a whole-of-Agency response to reduce burdens and infuse more efficiency into A&A processes, strengthen and grow our A&A staff, and expand connections with local partners, while making it easier for implementing partners to work with USAID.

Since March 2023, the Agency has made tremendous strides in seeking to fully realize the three core objectives of the 2023 A&A Strategy and Implementation Plan:

- **Objective 1:** An A&A workforce enabled, equipped, and empowered to advance USAID's development and humanitarian mission;
- **Objective 2:** A&A that is streamlined and effectively integrated throughout the Agency's development approach; and
- **Objective 3:** A more diverse set of partners engaged to implement locally led development solutions.

From January 2022 to April 2024, USAID has completed nearly 100 actions with more than 60 additional actions underway. I acknowledge our A&A staff for the work they have done under difficult circumstances. Their ability to manage a heavy workload and record-breaking obligations year after year is not only appreciated—it is why we seek to deliver on this plan.

Under Objective 1, we are seeking approval to authorize a retention incentive program for our Civil Service (GS-1102) and Foreign Service (BS-93) A&A professionals to remain with the Agency. In addition, we are expanding the Foreign Service National (FSN)/Cooperating Country National (CCN) administrative warrant program; have issued a Class Justification and Approval (J&A) authorizing more staffing flexibilities and opportunities for our locally-hired colleagues; and launched a leadership development program for our FSN/CCN A&A professionals. Addressing these hiring, retention, and professional development issues for our valued A&A personnel is crucial to USAID making progress on localization.

The launch of [A&A Accelerate](#) in March 2024 speaks to the Agency's determination to uplift and reinvigorate the A&A function and workforce with a specific emphasis on:

1. Rebuilding our A&A workforce;
2. Enhancing our surge capacity to be adaptive in responding to global crises;
3. Increasing Mission contracting office capacity through targeted investment in our valued FSN/CCN colleagues; and
4. Ensuring our A&A staff can build their skills and expand into leadership with robust professional development opportunities.

We remain equally focused on identifying and using technology and process improvements to eliminate redundant, manual, and time-consuming tasks for A&A professionals and our partners. Our staff and partners now work more effectively and efficiently to design, implement, and manage awards that change lives and communities, allowing people to live in safe, secure, healthy environments with dignity and respect.

Our efforts to support partners are evident in the evolution of [WorkwithUSAID.gov](#), which now has more than 500,000 users, more than 200 multilingual resources, and a partner directory that boasts more than 7,000 organizations from 163 countries. This platform is now available in [Arabic](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#). The November 2023 creation of the [USAID Translation Program](#) is also providing key resources to our partners, with ever-growing, free translations—currently in nine languages—of assistance documents such as Requests for Information (RFIs), Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs), amendments, and successful applicants' technical and budget applications.

All of these actions reflect the powerful collaboration across USAID in tackling long-standing and complex challenges. No individual Office, Bureau, or Mission could generate this energy, innovation, and creativity alone. We celebrate these successes, while also acknowledging there is much more work to be done. I am excited to see this collective effort to make things better for all involved: our staff, our partners—particularly new, local, and underrepresented ones—and ultimately those who benefit from impactful development outcomes worldwide.

Onward and upward,



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