

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

Embracing innovation and adopting new and cutting-edge approaches to help our partners, support Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) staff, and enhance development outcomes have always existed at USAID.

However, the rise of a global pandemic in early 2020 combined with a need to expand and diversify USAID's partner base to address complex development issues has put pressure on an A&A workforce that for too long has been tasked with designing, implementing, and managing a growing number of awards with fewer staff.

The Foreign Service Contracting Officer (FSCO) and Civil Service Contracting Officer (CSCO) workforces at USAID are hampered in their ability to accomplish expected A&A work requirements. The need to generate more complex awards designed to address overlapping humanitarian and development challenges has vastly outpaced increases in the A&A workforce. Meanwhile, USAID is also seeking to expand partnerships with new and local partners, which increases the number of individual awards A&A staff manage. While expanding our partner base is important for effective programming, new partners sometimes require more guidance and staff time on how to work with USAID compared to long-standing partners.

USAID's A&A workforce is essential to the Agency's ability to design, award, and implement its programs to maximize the impact of localization, burden reduction, and other key initiatives. The relentless high workload contributes to burnout and attrition.

Without sufficiently increasing the number of A&A professionals, USAID will continue to be challenged in ensuring that contract and assistance instruments are awarded on time; provide adequate oversight for existing awards, including the management of ongoing Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) audits; and expedite the closeout for expired awards in order to de-obligate critically needed funds for reprogramming.

The most recent [Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Strategy](#) and [Implementation Plan](#) released in March 2023, outlined key steps to be taken to address these immediate and interconnected challenges, placing responses under the [three Strategy core objectives](#).

This update to the 2023 A&A Implementation Plan covers prior accomplishments and ongoing efforts of the most recent A&A Strategy, including what actions have been initiated and completed and the work that remains to be done throughout 2024 into next year.

USAID CO/AO OBLIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUE TO BREAK RECORDS ANNUALLY

In FY23, a Contracting Officer or Agreement Officer (CO/AO) at USAID on average obligated **\$106.2 million**, while a CO at the Department of Defense (DOD) on average obligated **\$16.9 million**. This means some USAID CO/AOs obligated more than six times the amount of their DOD counterparts—a gap that has increased over the years as USAID's obligations have grown.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

Overall Trends/Highlights

Between January 2022 and April 2024, nearly 100 actions encompassing a wide range of A&A Strategy implementation efforts tied to multiple Agency initiatives were completed.

To see pre-A&A Strategy release (January 2022 - March 2023) actions, go to [Annex 3 - Detailed Implementation Plan Actions spreadsheet, Tab 1](#) (USAID internal link).

Highlights of Year 1 (April 2023 - April 2024) include:

- A full revision of [ADS 303sam, Non-U.S. Pre-Award Survey \(NUPAS\) Guidelines](#), a process that was initiated in September 2023.
 - Crafted by M/OAA Policy, the NUPAS is an optional tool that was updated to align with USAID's new Risk Appetite Statement, the Local Capacity Strengthening Policy and Burden Reduction efforts.
 - Updates redefined the NUPAS to emphasize its use as a tool to help Agreement Officers (AOs) make informed decisions about partnership risk and enhance the ability of a potential partner to implement the activity. Key changes include:
 - › Emphasizing AO's discretion to tailor the criteria relevant to a specific award;
 - › Redefining the tool so it is not pass/fail but a means of identifying and mitigating potential risk to the Agency;
 - › Removing the numerical rating system; and
 - › Incorporating more guidance on the structure, role, and responsibilities of the survey team.
- Targeted efforts resulting in increases in new hires for Foreign Service CO/AOs (BS-93s) and Civil Service Contracting Specialists (GS-1102s) as part of the Agency's long-term goals to hire 215 Foreign Service CO/AOs by 2026 and 198 Civil Service Contracting Specialists (GS-1102s) by 2026.
 - M/OAA has made progress in working to restore the A&A professional staff among all employment mechanisms, although the ability to advance key Agency development initiatives remains at risk due to continuing levels of burnout and attrition.
- Increases in warranted staff across all A&A employment mechanisms between January and April 2024.
- Creation of the [USAID Translation Program](#) in November 2023, which strengthens support for local partners and streamlines award development and implementation. The program has helped reduce the language barrier between USAID and local partners by translating nearly 200 assistance award-related documents into Amharic, Arabic, Chichewa, French, Hausa, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Swahili.
- The launch of the Acquisition Workforce Certification Fellows Program (AWCFP), in conjunction with Fayetteville State University, to attract a more diverse pool of applicants to join USAID's A&A workforce.
- Modernization of the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Course Program to update the attainment and maintenance of certification and continuous learning under new FAC-C Professional Certification requirements.
- USAID's contribution to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) revisions to several chapters of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR). The final revisions, announced in April 2024, clarify and

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

simplify requirements for federal assistance, reduce burdens on Agency staff and partners, and provide exciting new award flexibilities to USAID as it continues its localization efforts.

- Creation of the Technical and Budget Support (TABS) Pilot Program in M/OAA to support technical and contracting teams at the Pre-Solicitation and Evaluation stages of their procurement to develop high-quality solicitation sections and other documentation.

Year 2 of the A&A Strategy Implementation, from May 2024 to May 2025, currently has more than **60 A&A Strategy implementation actions** in progress, with more actions regularly being added. Some highlights during Year 2 include:

- Continued support and mentoring for nine Fayetteville State University students selected under the newly created AWCFFP to diversify the A&A professional staff by helping the students successfully pass the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Professional exam by December 2024.
- Active engagement to implement the Senior Procurement Executive Skills Development Retention Program (SDRP) to strengthen Civil Service (CS) and Foreign Service (FS) retention for GS-1102 and BS-93 employees through retention incentive payments.
- The March 2024 launch of [A&A Accelerate](#), an M/OAA-based initiative designed to promote, celebrate, and provide substantial support to our Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) workforce.
- Continued momentum from Year 1 to create more automated solutions to eliminate repetitive administrative tasks and save time for the A&A workforce.
- Establishing two separate A&A leadership development programs - one for FSNs/CCNs and the other for employees at the GS 9-13 level.



Photo Credit: Manoj Sahoo, Aman Raj

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

- Launch of the [Unsolicited Submissions Portal](#) on WorkwithUSAID.org to automate/simplify the process through which the Agency receives, reviews, and responds to unsolicited proposals and applications.
- The Translation Program's plans to double translation offerings in FY25 from nine to 18 languages, including more translation in Asian languages, while continuing to lower the language barrier for local partners across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The program will continue to focus on translating assistance award documents but with flexibility to respond to opportunities to support local partnerships.
- Completing the process of fully implementing OMB's revisions to 2 CFR by fully revising the supplemental USAID regulation (2 CFR 700), updating ADS 303 and its many mandatory references and help documents to correspond to the revisions, and continuing to socialize the changes and new flexibilities with A&A staff across the Agency.
- Continued momentum from Year 1 to create more automated solutions to eliminate repetitive administrative tasks and save time for the A&A workforce.
 - These automation efforts build off the fall 2023 release of Acquisition Modification Negotiation Memorandums for contracts and Assistance Award Memorandums, which are now pre-populated with certain [GLAAS](#) data fields, reducing the number of manual entry fields A&A staff must enter to create a Negotiation Memorandum.


















Photo Credit: Ashish Magar/IFES Kathmandu

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

The broad nature of the A&A Strategy and Implementation Plan allows for M/OAA leadership and other Agency decision makers to track and promote numerous actions beyond those exclusively developed within M/OAA, which is home to USAID’s A&A professional staff across the globe. Actions in the A&A Strategy are part of other Agency initiatives with specific focus areas. This Implementation Plan update references some initiatives — namely the [Foreign Service National \(FSN\) Empowerment Plan](#) (USAID internal link), the [USAID Translation Program](#), and the [A&A Accelerate Initiative](#) — that significantly advance Agency priorities such as Localization, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA), and Burden Reduction. Actions within this A&A Strategy Implementation Plan are carefully selected for completion as each action either directly or indirectly corresponds to at least one or more Agency initiatives seen below:

Agency Initiatives Aligned with the A&A Strategy and Implementation Plan

 <p>A&A Accelerate Empowering, Equipping, and Elevating A&A at USAID</p> <p>A&A ACCELERATE</p>	 <p>DEIA (USAID internal link) AND THE EQUITY ACTION PLAN</p>	 <p>USAID TRANSLATION PROGRAM</p>	 <p>LOCALIZATION</p>
 <p>FSN/CCN EMPOWERMENT (USAID internal link)</p>	 <p>BURDEN REDUCTION PROGRAM (USAID internal link)</p>	 <p>PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT</p>	 <p>USAID RISK APPETITE STATEMENT</p>
 <p>LOCAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING (LCS)</p>	 <p>NEW PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE (NPI)</p>	 <p>HIGH IMPACT SERVICE PROVIDER/CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (HISP/CX)</p>	 <p>CLIMATE STRATEGY 2022-2030</p>
 <p>KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING (KMOL) POLICY</p>	 <p>BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (BPI) (USAID internal link)</p>	 <p>GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (GDPI)</p>	 <p>CONNECTING DESIGN TO AWARD (D2A) (USAID internal link)</p>