



Human Capital and Talent Management's
Foreign Service Center

Foreign Service Career Mapping Toolkit

A guide to help you navigate your Foreign Service Career at USAID

June 2015

*People First, Mission Always
Developing a 21st century workforce*

Human Capital and Talent Management

Office of Human Capital and Talent Management Office

About

The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) manages the human capital and talent management functions of the Agency. The office is headed by the Chief Human Capital Officer, who serves as USAID’s chief policy adviser on all human resources management issues and is charged with selecting, developing, training and managing a high-quality, productive workforce. HCTM has three primary roles: internal operations, partnerships, and support of other government and inter-agency initiatives. Within these roles, HCTM strives to deliver premier services and exceptional customer experiences using innovation, best practices, and provision of modern employment services and talent management programs. It provides consultative, analytical, and strategic approaches to talent management at USAID by applying a “best fit” model and partnering on Agency initiatives to improve organizational performance and staff productivity.

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Career Map and Ladder

Foreign Service Career Mapping Toolkit

What is the Career Map Toolkit?

The Career Map Toolkit serves as an informational guide and resource for Foreign Service employees to use in identifying assignment and career development strategies that meet the requirements of USAID as a foreign affairs agency. **It does not replace existing Agency regulations or Agency processes.**

Core Competencies

In order to progress successfully throughout a career, USAID FSOs need to possess and continue to build on four complementary key skill sets or core competencies:



Career management requires strong officer initiative and a solid understanding of relevant Agency policies and processes. Officers can use tools such as career maps to set career goals specific to their backstop, family situation, and other personal work-life management factors. The Agency uses a career progression ladder to set reasonable expectations and inform the position grading and officer assignment processes.

Career Map and Ladder

What is a Career Map?

As officers plan their future they may use a variety of tools to explore career development goals in the short and long term. One tool is a “map” that is constructed using the following elements:

- Identification of personal skills and values as they relate to career goals and a specific job
- Answers to open-ended questions about organization and individual goals
- Assessments of the individual’s personal skills, knowledge, experiences and values
- Solicited feedback
- Other exercises such as brainstorming or reflection.

It is noteworthy that USAID gives special value to **using feedback** in all its professional development and performance management processes.

How to Use a Career Map?

A good map helps an employee to:

- Build and craft a consistent professional profile
- Plan and manage career elements to enhance performance and develop competencies
- Balance individual with organizational values and goals
- Align personal learning and professional development with the skills needed to help subordinates grow
- Understand Agency staffing needs in order to project future assignment options and plan accordingly.

An individual’s career map is expected to change and should be updated periodically. A career is like a journey, and the next leg of the journey may take a new direction due to changing interests and expertise from a particularly rewarding regional or Washington assignment, a detour in the form of a cross-over assignment, or unexpected circumstances brought about by pressing agency needs (service on a disaster response task force, new initiative, or critical country assignment) or family circumstances.

Career Map and Ladder

Career Elements

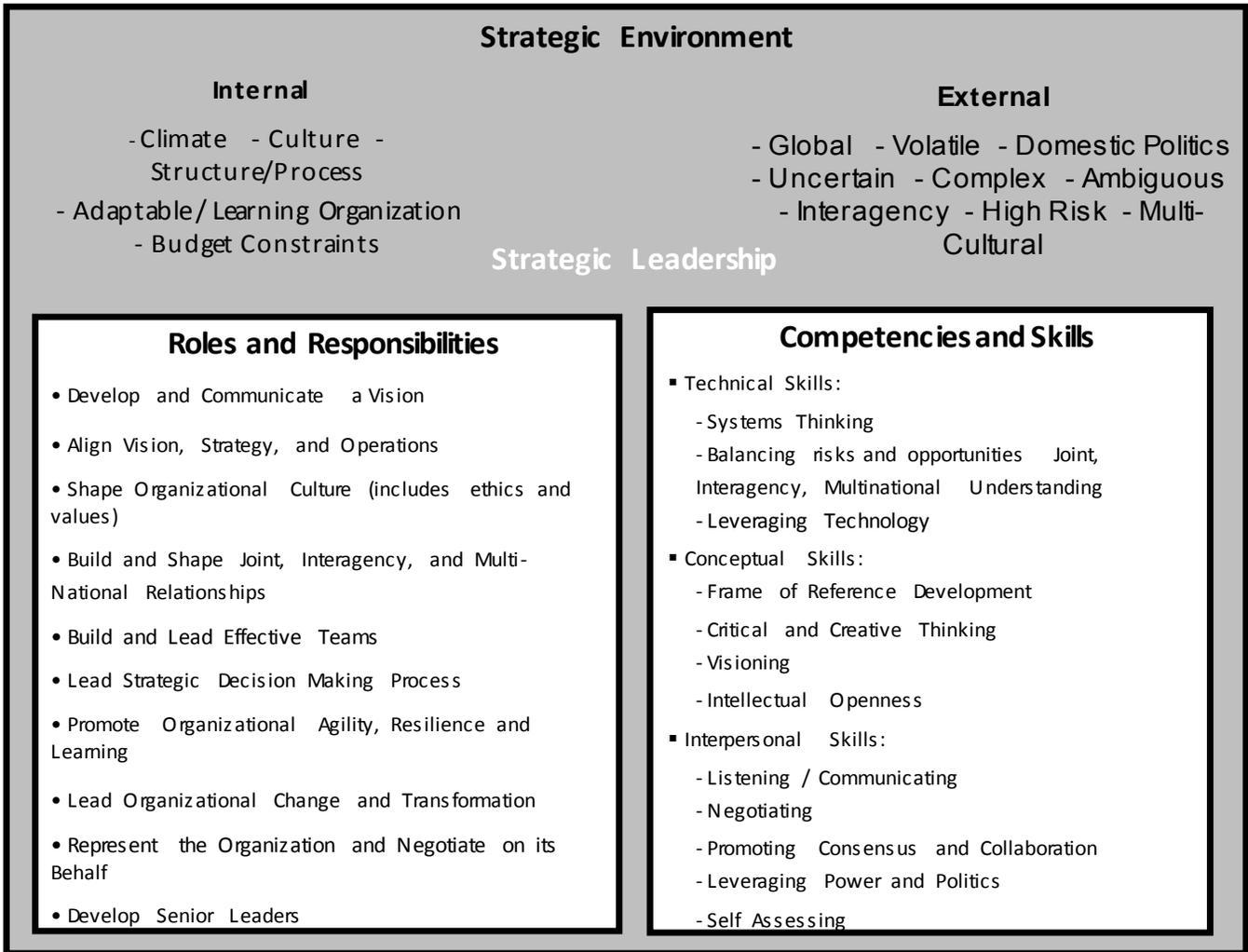
A successful career is built on “career elements.” These track closely with the Foreign Service Core Competencies and include:

- **Strengthening self and environmental awareness** including an understanding of the organization’s business systems, its history and development experience, and workforce management
- Building from an appropriate educational foundation a **depth of knowledge** of one’s backstop field, development theory and practice, and the Agency’s business practices, resulting from study and experience, and growing competencies wherein formal training becomes only one element of learning
- Building **networks** with peers, mentors and those in the internal and external environments that influence outcomes in one’s area of responsibility and beyond
- Strengthening and broadening of knowledge and experiences through both regular and **rotational assignments** outside of one’s “home office” (or backstop)
- Seeking opportunities to **mentor others** (as well as be mentored by others)
- Demonstrating **readiness** to fulfill a variety of tactical and operational responsibilities at the next higher level
- Demonstrating **sound judgment** in an increasingly complex world
- Effectively serving in critical assignments, which is reflected in official **performance records** called [the Official Personnel Files \(eOPF\)](#).

Career Map and Ladder

Growing Responsibilities and Competencies

USAID operates in an extremely complex environment. Its goals and objectives are formed by strategic national interests and involve policies to promote diplomacy, sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. A successful officer will perform at successively higher levels of responsibilities and demonstrate the ability to look at the whole “system” or environment. Those thought ready for promotion have shown that they are able to perform at the next highest level of responsibility. The following chart illustrates the finely honed skills USAID’s senior leaders need to influence others in highly complex strategic environments.



Career Map and Ladder

Growing Responsibilities and Competencies (continued)

The Agency needs to produce strategic leaders who are able to ultimately understand and frame both the operational environment, and the problem before resolving it. Agency leaders need to be prepared to operate “at the highest levels and in all branches of the federal government with international partners, in academia, and with various centers of thought and practice.”*

Over time, the Agency has developed its **Core Competencies** based on its experience of those attributes that consistently produced strong leadership. The competencies are embedded in several of the tools in this kit, including:

- The **Career Ladder Matrix** (on page 10): For each FS class the matrix columns list: (1) illustrative job responsibilities; (2) skills and competencies needed to succeed; (3) bridge and rotational assignments; and (4) mandatory and recommended learning or training. This matrix can help you understand the progression of responsibilities and competencies needed to “climb” the career ladder.
- **Foreign Service Core Competencies Summary** (on page 14): This table is a one-page guide summarizing the standards for each rank in the service. It does not replace the FS Skills Matrix (or SFS Skills Model), but instead synthesizes the many sub-skills included in the Competencies.
- The [Foreign Service Matrix](#) and [SFS Skills Model](#). These two documents summarize the mandatory performance standards for the four competencies.

Together these tools help answer the question of “what is expected of me after my first tour and thereafter?”

* Paraphrased from General Martin E. Dempsey, Commanding General of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, “Building Critical Thinkers: Leader Development Must be the Army’s Top Priority,” [Armed Forces Journal](#).

Career Map and Ladder

Career Ladder Matrix

| RANK | ILLUSTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES | ROTATIONS/STRETCH ASSIGNMENT | LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|---|--|---|
| ALL SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE – ALL SMG & STG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a compelling vision and strategy that focuses on the future; solves complex problems; identifies and promotes innovations, initiatives and reforms Mobilizes and leverages resources* by forging non-traditional alliances and partnerships Improves efficiency and effectiveness of Agency systems, programs or technologies to enable or achieve highest level USG and Agency goals; accountable for results of complex operating units (OUs) or Communities of Practice (COPs) Identifies and mentors emerging leaders; nurtures learning and curiosity; may teach USG agency courses Represents Agency, negotiates and influences at the highest developmental, diplomatic or international levels, including other elements of USG, Congress, academia, the private sector, host country or media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIT Seminar 21 DOD Instructor Positions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEI Senior Executive Seminar; eligible on assignment to BS-01 EEO and Diversity Training- Managers Ethical Decision Making National Security Seminar (FSI) Leading in a High Stress Post (FSI) Navigating Transitions (FSI) Advanced Negotiations (FSI) Design/Deliver Lectures or Training Publication of best practices and lessons learned Serve as a mentor in an existing mentoring program Receive 9-12 hours of executive coaching upon completion of FEI Senior Executive Seminar |
| SFS MANAGEMENT TRACK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads complex OU; creates and implements compelling vision of the future inside the OU and among external stakeholders (Agency, donors, Country Team, Congress) and implementing partners to accomplish USG and Agency-wide goals often in high-stress, ambiguous or quickly-changing situations Directs complex programs optimizing resource allocation across multiple objectives and units; accountable for OU results; leverages and combines resources in new ways; finds alternative approaches or creative solutions Coaches team, develops others; holds subordinates accountable for achieving goals; ensures fairness; Represents Agency in advocating strategy or policy; resolves significant problems to ensure results May spearhead Agency Reform or Initiative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail to other USG Second/Assign to International Orgs as principle USG representative Sabbatical to teach, develop curricula, write/publish on topics of importance to Agency Detail to provide expertise to other USG organizations (e.g., NSC, NDU, DOD) Development/Diplomat-in-Resident | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking with Media and Congress FSI senior leadership courses, including Influencing Strategy for Inter-Agency Results Development Studies Program (Under development; Eligible upon promotion to FS-01; Subject to the availability of funds) Serve as a mentor in an existing mentoring program. |
| SFS TECHNICAL TRACK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Washington, leads major COP as chief policy advisors for <u>at least</u> one sector or operational principles; defines and leads Agency technical strategies and research agenda for COP; sets quality standards for effectiveness; decides use of new technologies; ensures consistency of technical and policy messages Overseas, serves as senior advisor to Chief-of-Mission, Head of Agency or Host Government on high foreign policy or development priorities Has principle responsibility for negotiating and leveraging policy, institutional or technological reforms in sector(s); influences partner to adopt compatible policies and approaches Teaches and mentors technical officers; coaches STG candidates May spearhead policy/program Initiative or systems reform Frequently briefs inter-agency, COP and inter-disciplinary audiences; clearly communicates compelling rationale for change or innovation; offers new insights to influence partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail/second/assign to external organization requiring highly specialized expertise (World Bank, bilateral partner, academic, think-tank, private sector or other implementing partner) Award all-star junior technical officers as temporary intern based on board rankings of exceptional technical mentors Sole USDH in Micro post when assistance limited to one or two sectors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Studies Program (Under development; Eligible upon promotion to FS-01; Subject to the availability of funds) Participate in peer exchanges (symposia presentations, teaching days, publishing, conferences, and professional license/certification) on issues of high priority to Agency. Author peer-reviewed publication on applied development experience, innovative application of technology within and across sectors. Serve as a mentor in an existing mentoring program. |

Career Map and Ladder

Career Ladder Matrix (continued)

| RANK | ILLUSTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES | ROTATIONS/STRETCH ASSIGNMENT | LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| TEACHERS FS-01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads and directs multiple operating units (OUs)/teams; creates vision and supporting strategy; aligns activities with objectives using strategic and operational plans; allocates resources among objectives and OUs; realigns resources based on policy and effectiveness Leverages unit resources by creating linkages and cultivating relationships across the Agency and externally with other US or host country agencies, the private sector, civil society or academia Represents Agency as senior subject matter expert in developing or implementing new Agency-wide policies, technical guidance or systems improvements Identifies and solves complex developmental or management problems; resolves conflict and difficult performance issues firmly and fairly Leads OU teaching and mentoring; gives expert advice to others; provides challenging assignments to and coaches emerging leaders; participates or teaches in Agency training and learning programs; responsible for growth of subordinates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-away to complete mandatory courses Time-away to serve on boards Tour in different Bureau/Region/Backstop Long-term training to refine/develop new skills or expertise of high Agency priority Opportunity to significantly affect policy, partnership agreements, negotiate system-wide change Second to university, industry, NGO or international organization Award exceptional mentoring using 360 feedback to identify emerging senior leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEI Senior Executive Seminar "Innovation and Leadership" and Development Studies Program (Both subject to the availability of funds) On-line course (USAID University) on Innovation and Leadership Advanced Project Design and Delivery FEI Leadership Development A&A for Senior Managers EEO and Diversity Training-Managers Ethical Decision Making Understanding the Inter-Agency (FSI) "How To" Course for Deputies Strategy Framework for Programs and Projects Various FSI courses, including Senior Executive Threshold Seminar, Executive Overview to Employee Relations Design/Delivery of Lecturing/SME Serve as a mentor in an existing mentoring program |
| MASTER FS-02 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans, defines and supervises work of OU or multiple teams; strategically manages assigned resources or directs service delivery; aligns resources among competing objectives based on performance and coherence with OU objectives Teaches team or unit; is responsible for performance of subordinates; helps others solve problems to achieve OU objectives; resolves differences and performance problems; achieves consensus on policy or operational approaches; produces accurate and clear documentation for OU; makes persuasive case for recommended actions Advises and trains junior officers as expert in backstop and Agency business systems; shares new learning and applies best practices; assesses potential of subordinates; recommends training and rewards Represents OU at mid-levels with other units or host country to develop consensus, resolve conflict or problems, manages resources or service delivery Represents backstop in recommending strategies, management, policy, program or process guidance May represent OU in inter-agency, Country Team or partners; forges collaborative work relations with other OUs to accomplish shared objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term skill specific training to address skill/competency gaps Consider cross-over assignment to broaden technical, sector or managerial experience Allow 1-YR rotations during 3-year Washington assignments to gain perspective, understand other units and broaden experience Time-away to serve on boards, obtain/broaden professional certifications, or fill gaps Detail as "Acting" to unit with staffing gap In exceptional cases, long-term training to refine/develop new skills or expertise of high Agency priority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Core Competency Courses (COTR, PFA, PDM, and Supervisory Training) All Backstop Competencies Obtained/Certified FEI Emerging Leaders "How To" Course for Deputies Credit for participation in training as SME/presentation Serve as a mentor in an existing mentoring program |

Career Map and Ladder

Career Ladder Matrix (continued)

| RANK | ILLUSTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES | ROTATIONS/STRETCH ASSIGNMENT | LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| JOURNEY FS-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans, manages and establishes deadlines for work of OU sub-unit, team or partner; uses budget, procurement and other tools to implement and monitor multiple activities or services; realigns resources as necessary to achieve OU objectives • Translates technical, programmatic or administrative guidance into operational plans; ensures compliance, outcomes, timely and accurate submission of work products and mandatory reports • Works with other internal units, partners or customers to plan, coordinate and do assigned work; helps others achieve and report results • Contributes to forming OU objectives, strategy or systems improvement; ensures quality of OU work; shares learning and best practices with COP and OU • May represent unit in external working groups or team from COPs, inter-agency or host countries • Fills skill and competency gaps; meets any remaining requirements for tenure eligibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-away to complete all remaining certification/competency requirements for B/S and Agency core courses • Boards/APCs may suggest ad hoc performance counseling for candidates who appear to be stuck or demonstrate skill gaps in B/S • Opportunity for TDYs or short-term rotations that deepen skills or broaden experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in completing Backstop Competencies • Strategic Planning and Program Management Planning • Supervision Seminar within one year of becoming a supervisor • If not already completed: COR/AOR certification classes • Project Design and Management • GLAAS Certification • Understanding the Inter-Agency (FEI) • Emerging Leader (FEI space available) • Take remedial writing course • Improve oral communications (e.g. participate in Toastmasters) • Develop new tools or improve practices • Evaluation Workshop |
| APPRENTICE FS-6/5/4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans work and manages assigned resources; applies Agency guidance and policies, aligns resource with OU strategic or management objectives • Prepares specific work products, including data gathering, summarizing and analyzing program, management or technical needs; recommends technical and management options • May research development or management issues to deepen skills or broaden understanding of operations; may lead internal and implementing partner teams to find solutions to developmental or organizational problems • Volunteers for duties; helps others in OU or COP • May serve rotation as intern to senior leader • Makes substantial progress toward tenure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow an SFS or FS-01 for a month • Rotational or temporary assignment into stretch opportunity • Time-away to complete requirements for tenure, including language <p>Note: All first overseas tours are directed assignments.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language for tenure and/or language for language-designated positions • Backstop requirements vary • Leadership at Every Level (FEI) • GLAAS Certification • Programming Foreign Assistance |

Career Map and Ladder

Courses – Mandatory and Recommended

| Mandatory Courses | Duration |
|--|-----------------|
| FS Orientation to USAID | 5 weeks |
| Working Across Cultures | 1 day |
| Introduction to USAID Programming | 1 day |
| ADS Overview course /ADS/Clearing Officer Training | ½ day |
| Gender Training | 3 hours |
| Foreign Assistance Overview (F Overview) | ½ day |
| Global Development Alliance (GDA) | ½ to 1 day |
| Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) | 2 hours |
| Security Overseas Seminar (SOS) | 2 days |
| Introduction to Working in an Embassy | 5 hours online |
| Language Training | varies |
| Backstop Training | varies |
| Programming Foreign Assistance | 5 days |
| Project Design & Management | 2 weeks |
| Acquisition Management for COTR/AOTRs (A&A 104) | 2 weeks |
| Supervision Seminar | 5 days |
| Recommended Course | |
| Environment Matters | 1 day |
| Financial Management Course | 5 days |
| Internal Controls | 5 days |
| GLAAS 101 Requesting (for new Users) | varies |
| Environmental Compliance | 2 days |
| Protocol & U.S. Representation Abroad | 1 day |
| Explaining America | 1 day |
| OPS Master (integrated financial planning tool) | |
| Finding & Using Development Data | 1 day |
| Getting to Post with HR | 1 to 2 hours |

Career Map and Ladder

Foreign Service Core Competencies Summary

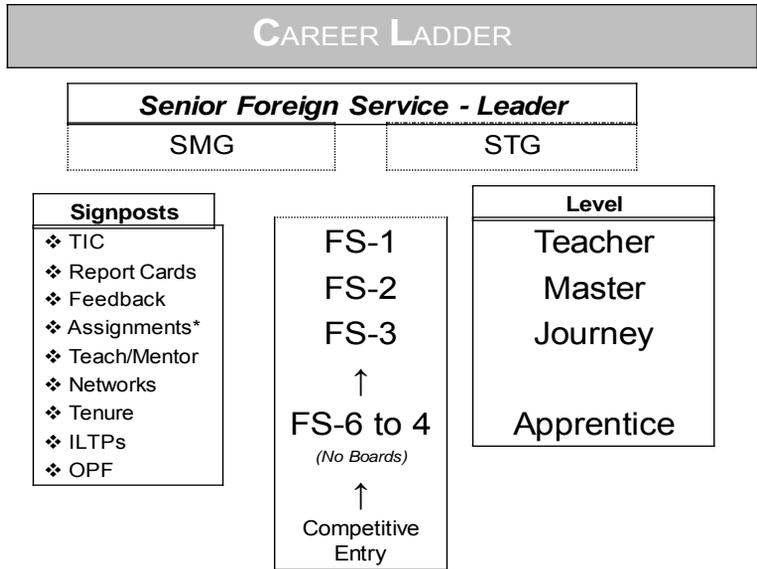
| RANK | LEADERSHIP | RESOURCE MANAGEMENT/ RESULTS | TECHNICAL AND ANALYTICAL | TEAMWORK AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| LEADER SFS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creates compelling vision -Represents/negotiates/builds consensus at highest development and diplomatic levels -Forges new partnerships -Coaches and mentors emerging leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accountable for results of multiple OUs or Communities of Practice (COP) -Mobilizes and combines resources* in new ways -Accountable for results at Agency, sector or country level -Innovates to solve significant problems; uses exceptional judgment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Broad and deep development knowledge -Guides a unit in continually learning and applying best practices -Highly effective communicator in external environments; uses foreign language adeptly | <u>MODELS CORE VALUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Impeccable integrity; ensures standards of OU met -Inspires and motivates others -Practices inclusivity -Embraces creative change; encourages innovation and risk taking; champions reform |
| TEACHER FS-01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leads multiple operating units (OUs); produces strategic and operational plans; assesses effectiveness of programs in complex environments -Represents Agency in inter-agency and public fora as SME; negotiates changes or consensus -Forges alliances; influences beyond OU or COP -Creates a learning environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establishes performance target for multiple OUs in context of Agency goals -Prevents and resolves performance problems; improves customer service -Ensures transparency and integrity of systems -Leads teaching and learning in OU; develops others -Encourages learning, innovation and responsible risk-taking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Combines deep development knowledge with knowledge of Agency; serves as backstop SME -Leads COP; influences critical outcomes -Uses learning to inform recommendations or new solutions; shares learning -Communicates expertly in internal and external fora; effectively communicates in foreign languages | <u>TEACHES CORE VALUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sets highest ethical standards for self and others; ensures transparency and impartiality -Builds teams by example and instruction -Attracts and cultivates diverse teams; removes barriers to participation; ensures fairness -Anticipates change; manages proactively |
| MASTER FS-02 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plans and defines work of OU; manages resources to achieve objectives; aware of external environment -Represents OU at most Agency levels and some external functions -Forges external peer alliances; influences other OUs, partners and COP; builds consensus and explore alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Balances needs of OU with those of others; guides work of subordinates and partners; gives advice on how to use business systems; uses new approaches to improve outcomes -Assesses competencies of staff to allocate and delegate work; ensures accountability for supervisory standards and performance -Effectively balances demands; sets priorities; suggests improvements -Uses new approaches; takes calculated risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Masters backstop requirements; translates knowledge into analysis, operational plans and documentation to manage core business systems -Uses new approaches to improve outcomes or resolve complex problems -Communicates persuasively to small groups, including in foreign languages | <u>PROMOTES CORE VALUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sets high ethical standards for self and others -Guides team through differences; encourages dissent; builds consensus -Reliable under pressure; responds quickly to opportunities -Leads diverse teams, fosters inclusivity; values different perspectives |
| JOURNEY FS-03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Directs work of self and unit; thinks strategically -Forges external peer alliances; influences others -Shares learning; explores alternative solutions -Delegates meaningful work; motivates participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prepares budget analyses; broadens knowledge of policy and business systems -Revises ILTP; prepares for supervisory certification; suggests opportunities for professional growth of others -Guides multiple partners' work; is accessible; meets deadlines -Uses judgment to consider calculated results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gains practical experience in applying approaches to work -Identifies and analyzes problems; translates knowledge into practical applications or operational plans; uses best practices -Communicates persuasively; writing reflects essentials -Completes remaining tenure or competency requirements; builds language proficiency as able | <u>PRACTICES CORE VALUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supports team publicly; understands ethics regulations; volunteers -Is steady -Treats others fairly and with respect; values different perspectives |
| APPRENTICE FS-04/5/6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shows initiative; Is self-aware; listens and learns from others -Understands OU objectives -Builds peer network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Masters budget cycle; learns basic goals, policies and procedures -Prepares statements of work or requirements; monitors partner compliance -Uses ILTP to fill skill gaps and obtain tenure; learns from others -Uses authority judiciously while learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meets basic backstop competencies; deepens development knowledge -Locates and analyzes data; monitors and evaluates; learns from mistakes -Writes clearly, succinctly; obtains language for tenure | <u>LEARNS CORE VALUES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is conscientious and ethical; dependable; helps others -Accepts the constancy of change; adapts -Listens and respects others' views -Appreciates team and individual differences |

*RESOURCES include knowledge, financial, technical human or capital assets; competencies are cumulative from entry level.

Career Map and Ladder

What is a Career Ladder?

The Agency Career Ladder is below. The center column shows the rungs in the ladder. The column to the right shows the equivalent nomenclature used in the Foreign Service Skills Matrix. On the left are critical “signposts” that occur throughout a career. These signposts provide important feedback and signals for mapping your career.



**Regular assignments, plus rotations, details and assignments above personal rank.*

Missing in signposts is years overseas. It does include assignments, but with one-year CPC assignments, years overseas again becomes important

What Can I Expect?

Over a career, an FSO will have the opportunity to earn promotion through the ranks passing through “Master” in one’s backstop (FS-2) to “Teacher” at the FS-01, which is considered the full performance level for an FSO. On average about ten percent of FSOs with exceptional leadership qualities gain entry into the Senior Foreign Service.

The next matrix is a summary of the Core Competencies at each rank. It does not include those qualities that lead to excellence, rather it is a concise reference of expectations at each rank. In other words, at these ranks, it is assumed you can “do” these things. Officers who find themselves at one personal rank but with current performance or performance measures that reflect a lower level in the matrix should seek career counseling to understand the reasons why, and to determine whether their Individual Learning and Training Plan (ILTP) should be revised to address any gaps.

Career Map and Ladder

Assessing Potential

Because the legal framework for the Agency’s Foreign Service personnel is an “up-or-out” system, similar to the military, it is designed to make FSOs compete within their classes. The Performance Boards (*see below*) look not only for excellence within the class, but also assess whether FSOs are able to perform successfully at the next higher level. Working at successively higher levels requires increasing knowledge of how the Agency works and how it is inter-connected to other foreign affairs agencies involved in conducting US foreign policy. This is an essential competency when assessing potential from moving from an FS-02 (Master) to the FS-01 (Teacher) and becomes mandatory for entry into the SFS.

“(FILL IN YOUR NAME) HAS CAPACITY FOR SEEING THE BIG PICTURE, FOR TAKING THE PARTICULARS OF A SITUATION AND PUTTING THEM IN THE CONTEXT OF A LARGER VISION, HELPED TO SHAPE CRITICAL OUTCOMES.”

^[1] Adapted from a variety of external sources, including those used at NDU with students, CY 2011.

The following chart contains character traits and behaviors exemplifying USAID core values. The more an employee is proficient in these areas, the greater likelihood that he or she will be successful and rise to higher levels. These are ideals we embrace.

INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL*

Thinks Two Levels Up **AND** Out – Can see a bigger picture; tries to appreciate the boss’s perspective; views other teams as potential contributors and partners

Does More Than Required – Volunteers to do things that help others; uses a strong work ethic to benefit the organization; is counted on 100%

Is Steady – Mentally tough; accepts criticism maturely and non-defensively; embraces new things sensibly; knows what is important; remains positive in the face of adversity and change; acknowledges the emotions of others; uses common sense

Offers Solutions – Doesn’t pass problems to the boss; makes recommendations and displays initiative; demonstrates deep understanding of issues; learns new things quickly

Gets Along With Others – Is a true team player; is friendly and compassionate; compromises; gets around personal feelings; develops and influences others from the bottom up

Communicates Well – Writes and speaks well, candidly and briefly; argues persuasively without alienating others; builds networks; offers to help or teach

Creative – Presents innovative solutions to problems; understands the box, but can think outside it; balances demands using new methods, ideas or approaches; has fun; is imaginative

Totally Dependable and Trustworthy – “Answers all the mail” from everyone; gives attention to detail; is on-time and cool under pressure; is technically competent; manages self and takes responsibility for the performance of others. Walks the talk

Loyal – Promotes and supports others, the group and subordinates, first; is self-effacing; generates enthusiasm and respect from partners, peers and subordinates alike

Ready Now – Mature and proficient enough to immediately assume the duties of supervisor; is tactically competent and appreciates organizational context

*Padraig O’Malley, *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa*, Viking Press, 2007.

Career Map and Ladder

Roles and Responsibilities

The Career Map Toolkit is based on the principle of self-assessment; i.e., the employee is in the best position to document his/her experience and attest to his/her compliance with the identified requirements. There are two reasons for self-assessment: first, we do not want to create unnecessary administrative hurdles, and second, we want to underscore the principle that career development is primarily the responsibility of the individual employee.

The Employee: FSOs need to take much of the responsibility for their own career development. These responsibilities include using this Toolkit and other references to thoroughly understand the Four Core Competencies and their respective backstop competencies and training requirements – this is especially true for movement into Senior Technical Group (STG) positions. In addition, FSOs must ensure that the work objectives and performance measures in their AEFs accurately and thoroughly reflect their work, which in turn should demonstrate the qualities and capacities for which officers are promoted. FSOs should seek out and appreciate honest and constructive feedback from supervisors, senior managers and peers. They should pay particular attention to the Skills Feedback worksheets completed by supervisors along with their AEFs. FSOs should collaborate with their supervisors in developing, regularly updating, and fulfilling tailored [Individual Learning and Training Plans \(ILTP\)](#) that prioritize addressing gaps in competencies.

The Foreign Service Center (FSC) ensures that USAID's development objectives are achievable with the right FSO talent while also addressing and advocating for employee needs in an equitable and transparent manner.

- **Assignment and Career Counselors (ACCs):** ACCs advise FSOs at the rank of FS-01 and below on future assignments, and on mandatory training needed to develop skills and broaden their experience. They ensure that the assignment process considers the employee's interests, preferences, and career development needs. The ACC serves as an advisor to and an advocate for the employee in the assignments process.
- The client-ACC relationship is shaped by the individuals themselves. Employees decide how much contact they wish to have with their ACC. The ACC informs clients of all relevant requirements, deadlines and opportunities.
- **You can expect your ACC to be fully cognizant of Agency career mapping requirements and to be a source of insight and guidance in devising strategies to meet Agency competency and training requirements. At assignment panels, the ACC is aware of the FSO's unmet training and certification requirements and helps ensure that these are considered in planning assignments.** They are happy to discuss and provide counsel regarding the requirements, but **they will not certify that an individual assignment will result in the FSO acquiring a particular competency or skill.**
- **The Foreign Service Staffing Division** is responsible for processing personnel actions on transfers and making all logistical arrangements, i.e., medical clearances, training, and travel arrangements once an assignment has been made.

Career Map and Ladder

Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

Career Development Officers (CDOs) in the Center for Professional Development are another resource for officers seeking help in planning their careers. CDOs provide both group training and individual counseling on resume writing, interview techniques and other career planning tools.

The **Foreign Service Assignment Board** consists of representatives from Washington Bureaus and Independent Offices management staff, Technical Bureaus, Management Bureau and the Director, Division Chief and staff of Foreign Service Staffing (HCTM/FSC/FSS) and the Division Chief and staff of Assignments and Career Counseling (HCTM/FSC/ACC). This team assists and supports the Center Director for FSC in making assignment decisions by reviewing individual cases and making assignment recommendations in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, policies and procedures. FSOs should know and work with their Backstop Coordinators who may be of assistance both in identifying assignments and in advocating for employees during the Assignment Board meetings.

Five Tips for Career Mapping, Success and Satisfaction*

1. **KEEP THE CONTEXT** within which you are working clearly in mind. USAID works in a complex environment. Countries are different, not just in language, social organization and culture, but also political values, competitive advantage and the degree of development. US diplomatic objectives and development strategies also differ from country to country. Tailor your suggestions and actions to the context of the situation you are facing. In crude terms, one doesn't usually succeed if s/he proposes a long-term solution to a short-term problem and vice versa. Remember, however, it's hard to be a successful swimming coach with a team of aqua-phobes.
2. **STUDY PEOPLE** – The complex environment means almost everything you do will be done as part of a team of people – in some teams you will lead, and in others you will contribute. You are very likely to meet the people on your team today again sometime in the future, probably in different roles. Keep your networks and don't burn your bridges. Study the habits of people who have success in leadership roles.
3. **DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS ARE INVESTMENTS** – Learn about the resource side of the business! Everything you attempt or recommend has resource implications. It takes people, time, energy, money, and shared dedication and commitment to make positive development change. One has to plan for them all. More projects fail from lack of sufficient resources and time than any other factors, except host country commitment.
4. **USAID'S SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE** as a bilateral donor is its in-country presence and ability to make significant changes to projects and programs as they are being implemented. Pay attention to implementation constraints! Know what your unit's authorities are that could facilitate dynamic implementation actions.
5. **DEVELOPMENT IS ABOUT THE FUTURE** – Frame objectives in the future tense. Learn from the past and make your experience in the present evaluable and useful for those who will be learning from you.

* With acknowledgement and thanks to George Hill, Retired USAID Senior Foreign Service Officer, now at USAID Alumni Association, December 2011.

Training and Development

Training and Development

The Agency's training and professional development programs are intended to:

- Increase knowledge and skills to improve employee job performance
- Develop employee potential to assume greater responsibilities and enhance their value to the Agency
- Hold employees accountable for their continual learning through:
 - Completion of Agency and backstop training
 - Certification in Core Competencies
 - Professional and technical training that may be required to maintain knowledge and skills
 - Meeting professional certification requirements that are valued by the Agency
- Offer progressive levels of training for executives, managers and supervisors that emphasize effective performance at their current level and assess their potential for development at higher levels of technical, program management and management leadership.

Individual Learning and Training Plans (ILTPs)

An ILTP is a personal action plan, jointly agreed to by the employee and supervisor. It identifies the employee's short and long-term career development goals and learning needs, including:

- Core Competencies and other required backstop competencies, career development, and/or professional growth objectives
- Methods of training that may include classroom training, e-learning, on-the-job activities, rotations that may involve duty or non-duty hours
- Plans for timing of training in light of human and funding availability, greatest need, workload and course availability.

Generally, the ILTP is an under-utilized career development tool even though it is required for all employees.* The ILTP is a critical component in the employee's Career Map Toolkit. FSOs must be the proactive partner in developing the ILTP. This means you should take the initiative to discuss a draft with your supervisor and, once completed, ensure that a copy is on file with your Management Office. Once established, ILTPs should be reviewed and updated annually, first by the employee and then with the supervisor. As FSOs take responsibility for their career development, they should continually use the ILTP to revise career strategies and training priorities.

[To learn more about ILTPs, please visit HCTM's ILTP page.](#)

*ADS 458.3.3.5 refers to the IDP, the old name for ILTPs. (Effective date 5/30/08.)

Training and Development

Training and Learning Policy

- The Agency does not guarantee training beyond that deemed mandatory for Agency or backstop certification
- Completion of ILTP activities or award of training does not lead to a promotion presumption
- The ILTP **shall not** be used to address performance deficiencies
- Supervisors should discuss the employee's career development goals **at least once annually** in conjunction with the employee's Annual Performance Plan
- HCTM/CPD conducts annual assessments of overall Agency competency levels and assists employees with preparing ILTPs

Training and Certifications

The recommended training and certifications for FSOs are contained in the Career Ladder Matrix on page 10. The matrix also includes requirements by class in the core business processes of the Agency as well as other mandatory ethics, supervisory and diversity training. The Career Ladder Matrix does **not** include backstop requirements and certifications. These are the responsibility of your "home backstop" bureau.

Career Candidate Training

The training and learning requirements for Career Candidates are found in [ADS 461](#) (or for GS, [ADS 462](#)):

- the Mandatory Reference Manual
- a List of Mandatory and Recommended Training
- Training Requirements by Backstop

These references give a comprehensive listing of the learning requirements for Career Candidates. This includes new hire junior and mid-level officers. Prior to their first overseas posting, these officers are encouraged to do short rotations outside their destination or home backstops. The nature of rotations is defined by the "home bureaus." They help the new hire understand backstop requirements and interactions with other elements of the Agency that manage its major business systems and programs.

Training and Development

Mandatory Supervisory Training

The Agency's leadership has placed increased emphasis on the value of mentoring, training others, clear supervision and quality performance management in part because new hires comprise a significant portion of its workforce. This means that at every level, officers are expected to meet high standards to supervise and mentor. **Officers are required to demonstrate competency in Human Resource management.**

Supervisors are required to complete mandatory training for supervisors within one year of appointment to supervisory position, and retrain every three years. The minimum standards for supervisory performance apply within one year of becoming responsible for writing a performance evaluation of another Agency employee. The performance management metrics are the ability to:

- Counsel new hires on performance and tenure and other career milestones
- Make effective use of ILTPs for oneself and others
- Meet deadlines for submission of performance evaluations, awards and other performance management tools
- Write effective and fair AEFs and other performance management documents to reward and encourage subordinates

[To learn more about Mandatory Supervisory Training, please visit the Supervisor Training page.](#)

Language Training

Language training may be on a full or part-time basis in Washington, DC and/or at post, and usually is not continued beyond the S-3/R-3 (R-0) proficiency level. Priority for language training is given to employees who do not have the required proficiency for tenure or are assigned to language designated positions (LDPs). Training is provided before departure for post, by the Foreign Service Institute or at a USAID/Washington contracted training facility. Priorities for language training in USAID/W are (in descending order):

- Foreign Service employees assigned to LDPs and career candidates who have not met the USAID language requirements for tenure
- Foreign Service employees assigned to non-LDPs at posts where English is not the primary language
- Foreign Service employees who need training in languages determined by HCTM to be in critically short supply within the employees' respective backstops
- Civil Service employees who need training in languages designated in the position description as positions requiring language proficiency
- Spouses of Foreign Service employees assigned to LDPs.

Training and Development

Language Training (continued)

Specific language training policy directives and required procedures for Foreign Service career candidates, Foreign Service career employees, and employee spouses are as follows: [ADS 438.3.4](#) language testing, and mandatory reference, USAID Incentive Languages, and 438.3.7 (for training time limits).

Annually the Agency awards a few individuals with long-term training (LTT) assignments, primarily to the Armed Forces' universities. Awardees are selected based on their demonstrated potential as future Agency management and technical leaders. Candidates nominated for LTT must have the experience, background, and past performance indicating this potential.

[To learn more about Language Training, please visit the Language Training page](#)

Faculty Positions

Senior Foreign Service Officers who have senior overseas and leadership experience and have demonstrated an expert level of country-specific, regional, language and/or technical expertise may be considered for teaching positions in selected institutions. Currently most assignments are available at the Armed Forces' universities. However, the Agency hopes to expand these opportunities in tandem with creation of the Senior Technical Group track into the Senior Foreign Service. Faculty assignments are considered on a case-by-case basis for Senior Executive Service members, GS-15s or FS-01s.

Important Role of Rotations and Cross-Over Assignments

Important Role of Rotations and Cross-Over Assignments

The career mapping literature confirms that rotation assignments are important career elements and serve as opportunities to strengthen and broaden knowledge and experiences. The 2010 “Mission Director Career Pathing Survey” confirmed that cross-over assignments are an important career element in gaining entry into senior management. The survey shows that most Mission Directors have served in multiple backstops and bureaus. More than three-quarters of Mission Directors have served in three or more bureaus or regions.

| # Backstops Served | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 4: | 28% |
| 3: | 17% |
| 2: | 55% |

These results illustrate the importance of working beyond one’s backstop if an FSO aspires to senior management. Similarly, a technical officer is expected to develop multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary expertise.

When planning a rotation, it is important to understand the distinction between a detail and a cross-over assignment. A detail is a temporary assignment, either within or outside the Agency. Details of less than 90 days are not administratively difficult if the sending and receiving supervisors agree or when there is compelling Agency need. A cross-over assignment entails changing one’s primary backstop. Cross-overs usually occur within the Agency, but there is also some experimentation with cross-overs to State and other foreign affairs agencies. **Note:** Career Candidates must remain in the backstop in which they were hired until 1) they obtain tenure; or 2) their backstop is changed at the Agency’s option ([ADS 459](#)).

| # Regions/ Bureaus Served | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 5: | 17% |
| 4: | 43% |
| 3: | 17% |
| 2: | 17% |
| 1: | 6% |

When is it best to broaden skills through a longer rotational assignment?

Before considering a long rotation, the FSO needs to be well on the way to mastering Agency and backstop competencies. A critical consideration is whether field experience to date forms an adequate basis to achieve mastery in the home backstop, in which case an FSO might want to consider a cross-over assignment. For example, technical officers wanting to study other sectors might bid on General Development Officer (GDO) assignments or positions in different backstops that also covers their home backstops. In some backstops, unless special circumstances exist, cross-over assignments are generally not encouraged. This is usually because of the high degree of specialization and often the related fiduciary responsibilities that require specialized training and certifications (e.g., Controllers and Contracting Officers).

While it may not be possible to schedule more than a couple of initial Washington rotations before tenure, as scheduling permits, FSOs should seek exposure to the work of the following important Washington organizational units:

- The Desk – the geographic offices that backstop field missions
- Program Offices – the strategy, planning and budget office found in all bureaus and led by Policy Planning and Learning (PPL)
- Technical Offices – the “centers” of technical excellence (DCHA, GH, EGAT, BFS) or a technical office in a geographic bureau
- Business Systems Offices – Acquisitions and Assistance, Financial Management, Administrative Management and Human Resources

Important Role of Rotations and Cross-Over Assignments

The length of rotation and details need to be tailored to meet the respective needs of the Agency and the FSO's career map goals. Once backstop competencies have been obtained, officers might consider a Washington assignment to broaden and deepen development and management expertise. Otherwise TDYs, details and Home Leave consultations are opportunities to build an understanding of how these offices serve the field and accomplish work in the inter-agency setting, with Congress and other stakeholders.

Choosing which experiences most benefit the individual and Agency depends on a range of factors. For example, the FSO should consider the following:

- With which offices will I likely interact most in a mission setting?
- Have I demonstrated adequate progress in acquiring Agency and backstop competencies?
- Is my field experience sufficiently broad and deep in my backstop?
- Are my language skills solid?
- Does the rotation serve the Agency and help my career development?

And, for the Agency, has the FSO:

- Met rank and backstop competency requirements?
- Demonstrated s/he is "Ready Now" for next level responsibilities?
- Unique skills that are needed for an important job that serves the Agency's interests?

TIP#3:
USE A COMBINATION OF
TDYs, DETAILS OR
"EXCURSION"
ASSIGNMENTS AS WAYS TO
GAIN MEANINGFUL
ROTATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

Workforce Management Policies

Workforce Management Policies

USAID has a set of existing policies that guide the management of its Foreign Service workforce; these are contained in the Administrative Directive Series 400, entitled “Personnel.” Many of the policies for the Foreign Service are derived from statute that provides for the unique needs of foreign affairs agencies. ADS chapters are revised often so it is important to check General Notices or contact HCTM if you have questions. The most important chapters for FSOs include :

- [ADS 414: Tenure](#)
- [ADS 422: Personnel Operations: SFS](#)
- **ADS 424:** SLG (in draft status)
- [ADS 436: Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty](#)
- [ADS 440: TIC/LCE](#)
- [ADS 458: Training and Career/Professional Development](#)
- [ADS 459: USAID’s Foreign Service Career Candidate Program- Mandatory Reference, Manual for New Foreign Service Officers](#)
- [ADS 461: Employee Evaluation Program](#)
- [ADS 463: Foreign Service Boards](#)
- [ADS 486: Grievances](#)
- [ADS 487: Table of Offenses and Penalties](#)

Together these policies and precepts have become part of the Agency’s culture, and comprise some of the management tools that affect an employee’s career progression. Officers at the rank of FS-02 are expected to fully understand and apply these policies, procedures and mandatory references. All employees are expected to have a basic familiarity with these policies, including Career Candidates, before their first overseas assignment. This toolkit summarizes some of the key provisions in these ADSs, but it **does not substitute** for the FSO’s and supervisor’s responsibility to consult the ADS references when making career decisions or counseling others.

Employee Evaluation Program (EEP)

[ADS 461.1](#) provides a systematic process by which the Agency involves employees in improving its mission and goals. The program is intended to increase the performance of both the employee and the Agency by:

- Establishing clear links among the Agency’s goals, operating unit strategic objectives, and employees’ work
- Improving communications about organizational objectives and individual career goals
- Documenting achievements and performance of core competencies
- Developing the capacity to perform
- Providing feedback to employees to motivate them to work more effectively, improve their skills, and prepare for increased responsibilities
- Correcting deficiencies and giving constructive feedback (negative feedback must be in writing)
- Providing a basis for cash awards, bonuses and pay adjustments based on performance, and other non-monetary awards for performance

Workforce Management Policies

Employee Evaluation Program (continued)

Summary of Elements and Documents

These documents and elements are to help you manage performance. All FSOs must understand and use these documents individually and to help others manage their performance.

Annual Evaluation Form – AEF (AID Form 461-1) that includes:

- Organization and the employee roles
- Employee’s individual work objectives that establish management expectations for a rating period
- Formal and informal supervisory feedback, including a documented formal mid-term review
- Use of 360 feedback at all levels
- End-of-rating period performance evaluation

Tools and References:

- Rating Officials must use the [Skills Matrix](#) to assess performance and potential
- The [Skills Feedback Worksheet](#) is a feedback tool that guides the Rating Official during the employee feedback session; it is not part of the official rating of record, but must be used
- [Individual Learning and Training Plan \(ILTP\)](#)

Performance Boards and Report Cards*

Each Spring, HCTM convenes Performance Boards to review Performance Evaluation Files (PEFs) and judge employee performance competitively compared to other class members. A “class” is a group of FSOs at similar grades and responsibilities. The combined (C) Board reviews all SFS Officers; FSO-01s are reviewed by the Threshold Board (see page 26). For all others (FS-02 and below), classes are formed by grouping similar backstops (e.g., Controllers, Executive and Contract Officers of similar ranks). By law, Boards have Public Members and the C Board has a retired SFS member.*

The Boards use the Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) together with certain other information in your [Official Personnel File or eOPF](#). This may include the Employee Profile, letters of commendation or discipline and awards. The Boards use this information, called the PEF, to assign “grades,” rank-order candidates for promotion and for the SFS, make recommendations for Limited Career Extensions and Performance Pay. The Boards may also refer a PEF to the Performance Standards Board (PSB) or Tenure Board for further review.

*[ADS 463](#) further describes classes and board composition.

*FS-05 and 06 promotions are administratively determined.

Workforce Management Policies

Performance Boards and Report Cards (continued)

At the end of this process, each employee receives a “report card” that represents the Board’s findings. Each report card contains the grade awarded to an FSO and may contain brief comments. FSOs “ranked” for promotion receive an “A.” Those meeting performance standards receive a “B.” A Board may also refer a PEF to the Performance Standards Board (PSB), which determines whether an FSO has met or failed to meet the standards of the class. FSOs failing to meet standards receive a “C.” (See ADS 463: [Precepts for Performance Standards Board](#).)

TIP# 1: ALL EMPLOYEES SHOULD PERIODICALLY REVIEW THEIR [eOPF](#) TO ENSURE IT IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE. IF YOU ARE PLANNING RETIREMENT, YOU SHOULD DO THIS WELL IN ADVANCE SO THAT THERE IS TIME TO CORRECT OR RETRIEVE RECORDS.

TIP: #2 IT IS MANDATORY TO MEET AGENCY CLASS SKILL STANDARDS. THE BOARD LOOKS FOR THOSE THAT ARE EXCEEDING STANDARDS OF THE CLASS AND FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE FAILING. FSOs COMPETE WITH OTHERS ONCE THEY ARE “RANKED FOR PROMOTION.” THE RELATIVE NUMBERS ASSIGNED TO AN A REPORT CARD, DETERMINES THE RANK ORDER ELIGIBILITY FOR PROMOTION.

Senior Threshold Board Responsibility

- Reviews all FS-01 officers in a single combined class rather than by classes formed by backstop
- Makes judgments about the readiness of officers for the SFS, regardless of whether one is competing for promotion (i.e., has “opened one’s window”)

As the Agency begins introducing the Senior Technical Group there may be some changes to the structure of this board. Regardless of the structure, it is important to understand that this Board assesses leadership potential whether technical or managerial.

Workforce Management Policies

Performance Boards and Report Cards (continued)

HCTM’s Responsibility

- Calls a meeting of its staff with representatives of AFSA and the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity. Promotion recommendations are now compared to the “promotion numbers” that are developed before the boards meet.
- Delivers sealed envelopes to AFSA for safeguarding throughout the period when the panels “are sitting.”
- Therefore, the panels do not know the number of FSOs that could be promoted. For each “class”, a separate envelope containing the promotion number is opened, the number of promotions announced and a line drawn on the list of FSOs ranked for promotion. For example, if there are 10 promotions, the ‘line drawing’ is after number 10.

Time Before Promotion

Agency policies for tenure and promotion stress the potential leadership and technical skills needed for a successful Foreign Service career. All FSOs are expected to understand these standards. One common question is whether there are requirements for amount of **time in a class** before promotion is possible. The answer is, yes, there are requirements for both time and service overseas. These are contained in ADS 463 and summarized in “Promotion Eligibility,” below.

HCTM produces a “Semi-Annual Workforce Profile Report” in March and September each year. This document provides data at each FS class for the average age, time-in-grade, time-in-service, gender by number and percent of officers. It is instructive to review this report, because it can help inform career mapping and aid in setting realistic expectations about the pace of advancement in the Agency’s Foreign Service career ladder.

Promotion Eligibilities (ADS 463)

For some classes, eligibility for promotion includes time-in-class and/or time overseas. The general requirements are summarized in the table below. However, the application of the rules may depend on your last promotion date. Therefore, FSOs should carefully review the [ADS 463](#).

| TIME-IN-CLASS FOR PROMOTION | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FOR PROMOTION TO CLASS | YEARS REQUIRED | YEARS OVERSEAS AS USDH |
| SFS-CM | 2 years as MC | |
| SFS-MC | 2 years as OC | |
| SFS-OC | 2 years as FS-01 | 8 years |
| FS-01 | 2 years as FS-02 | 4 years |
| FS-02 | 2 years as FS-03 | 4 years |
| FS-03 | 1 year as FS-04 | None |
| FS-04 | 1 year as FS-05 | None |
| FS-05 | 1 year as FS-06 | None |

Workforce Management Policies

Limits on Promotion

ADS 463.3.5.1 requires that those nominated for promotion shall not be “the subject of an investigation, proceeding, or discipline involving loyalty, security, misconduct or malfeasance.”

Foreign Service Open Assignment Process*

The goal of the assignment process is to strategically align the Agency’s human resources with its program, technical and administrative work requirements. HCTM's goal is to get the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time and at the right cost to further the Agency’s mission. At the same time, the Agency wants to deepen the experience of FSOs and to afford them challenging assignments while, to the extent possible, accommodating employee preferences. The structure of the assignment process ensures that the Agency’s critical and priority positions are filled before assignments to all other positions are made. Foreign Service positions are designated as: 1) critical positions; 2) priority positions; or 3) all other Foreign Service positions. FSOs should understand the differences in how these priorities are established and their impact on the timing of assignment actions. Employees will want to consider in their mapping when it is best to fulfill the Agency’s expectation that all officers will do their “fair share” of difficult-to-staff posts.

HCTM sets an annual calendar for the Open Assignment process. Employees should be aware of the dates set in this notice and the implications for planning individual career development and team needs in the next “bidding” cycle. **If special circumstances apply** (e.g., you or an Eligible Family Member has a medical clearance issue), employees should alert their ACC as early as possible to obtain advice on the implications for the bidding cycle.

*See Draft ADS 424.3.5.4. (e) that is required by law pursuant to Section 504 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. This provision states: “Consistent with the needs of the service, the Secretary shall seek to assign each career member of the Service who is a citizen of the United States....to duty within the United States at least once during each period of 15 years that the member is in the Service.” ADS 463.

Workforce Management Policies

Senior Leadership Group (SLG)

The Agency's Senior Foreign Service leadership cadre is represented in two executive-level groups. While these assignments are vetted by a senior panel, the Administrator decides upon SMG and STG appointments.

The Agency requires a steady stream of qualified officers to serve in Senior Leadership Group (SLG) positions worldwide. The SLG Panel looks for well-rounded officers who possess the qualities to lead others in complex settings. The Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Skills Model is the basic tool used to measure these qualities. The SFS Skills Model includes three core skill areas and 13 sub-skill areas, as follows:

Core Skill Area 1: Leadership

- Strategic Vision
- Building Coalitions and Partnerships
- Political Astuteness
- Credibility
- Values and Seeks Diversity

Core Skill Area 2: Management for Results

- Accountability for Results
- Substantive Knowledge
- Problem Solving

Core Skill Area 3: Team Building and Interpersonal Skills

- Team Building
- Developing Others
- Exhibiting Integrity and Honesty
- Interpersonal Skills
- Communication

An officer applying to an SLG position completes a self-assessment of the skill areas contained in the SFS Skills Model. Additionally, 360 sources – superiors/supervisors, peers, subordinates, and FSNs – also complete an assessment of the applicant's competency in those skill areas.

Workforce Management Policies

Senior Leadership Group (continued)

Starting with the 2016 SLG Major Listing, applicants will, as part of the application process, be asked to submit three short statements on their experiences and abilities to take on SLG assignments as follows:

- **Personal Statement (250 words or less):** Summary of why the candidate is interested in the specific positions bid upon, and why s/he should be considered well-suited for an SLG assignment.
- **Leadership Statement (250 words or less):** Summary of the candidate's leadership experience as a change agent both with USAID and with other organizations. Respondents are asked to describe their specific role, what they did, and how it turned out. Examples might include, but are not limited to, standing up a Mission or significant new program, downsizing or closing a Mission/program, leadership during a traumatic period (i.e., evacuation, civil unrest, natural disaster, death of an officer), or leading an operating unit to advance new reforms (USAID Forward, Local Solutions, STIP, Presidential initiatives).
- **Management Statement (350 words or less):** Summary of candidate's management experience and impact. Respondents are asked to specifically address experience in: Personnel management (dealing with performance/conduct issues, service on performance boards, mentoring/coaching, team-building, etc.); Budget and financial management (CBJ, MRR, audit/internal controls, FMFIA); Procurement management (planning, executing, oversight, COR, AOR), and Program management (strategic planning – CDCS and ICS, Development Objective Agreements, interagency relations/alliance-building – PEPFAR, Partnership for Growth; and evaluation and learning – leveraging other donor resources, etc.).
- The self-assessment, 360 feedback, written comments, review of the personal statements, review of the depth and breadth of geographic bureau/technical/backstop/managerial/ leadership experience, awards, and all other relevant information is looked at together to determine applicants' readiness to assume greater leadership and management responsibilities.

Senior Management Group (SMG) is comprised of the Agency's highest executive-level positions occupied by senior leaders and managers in Washington and overseas. In the SMG, development competency merges with responsibility for Agency policy, stewardship, and building productive relationships that leverage resources with an array of other partners. These partners include those within the Agency, and with other USG senior managers and development partners and host countries.

Workforce Management Policies

Senior Leadership Group (continued)

The Senior Technical Group (STG) is comprised of the highest technical level positions occupied by senior leaders in the development specialties of the Agency in Washington technical and policy bureaus. Overseas, they serve primarily in regional platforms. At the STG level, expert-level technical competencies and knowledge merge with responsibility for the Agency's research and development learning agenda and teaching others.

For both groups leadership competencies become imperative attributes: impeccable ethics, good judgment, discretion, executive ability, credibility and knowledge of the Agency's systems. Because SMG and STG officers interact with other senior leaders, including political appointees and stakeholders (in Congress, the interagency, the host country and country team), they must act and be perceived as credible senior leaders. This entails combining deep development expertise and the ability to influence others, bolstered by a broad understanding of the organizational systems and processes.

Eligibility: Career members of the Foreign Service (FS-01 and SFS) and Civil Service (GS-15 and SES) are eligible candidates for SMG or STG designated positions.

Illustrative Positions: There are about 220 SMG positions and the Agency is creating new STG positions. Examples include Office Directors reporting directly to Bureau AAs and DAAs and teaching as USAID-sponsored faculty at Department of Defense universities or colleges. Overseas SMG positions include all USAID Mission Directors who report directly to Ambassadors and/or Bureau Deputy AAs, Deputy Mission Directors and a few senior positions in international organizations. Illustrative STG positions both in headquarters and overseas:

- Senior Technical Advisor to the Bureau for Global Health
- Senior Technical Advisor to the Office of Health Systems
- Senior Technical Advisor for Health Systems to the Regional Dev. Mission for Asia
- Senior Environmental Management Advisor to the Regional Dev. Mission for Asia.

Assignment Limitations

Based on Sec. 504 of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), HCTM established and codified in ADS [436.3.11.4](#) and [ADS 436.3.12.1](#) maximum length of continuous overseas and Washington service. An officer who has served eight years overseas should rotate to Washington on the next assignment. An employee who has been overseas for 12 years continuously is strongly encouraged to take a US-based assignment. Similarly, an officer serving continuously in Washington for more than six years must bid only on overseas assignments. SFS/FS Officers should never plan on serving more than 15 years overseas unbroken by a USAID/W assignment. A waiver to this rule must be approved by the Administrator.

Workforce Management Policies

Time In Class Limits and Limited Career Extensions (LCEs)

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, establishes the legislative framework for the “rank-in-person” system that the Agency uses to appoint FSOs. Agencies with FSA hiring authority must establish workforce planning requirements and limitations consistent with the needs of the Service. Limits on time-in-class (TIC) are an important tool for managing the steady flow of FSOs up through the ranks. LCEs help balance the “up-or-out” with the periodic needs of the Service to retain experience and expertise.

TIC limits may apply to time spent in a single class or time spent in multiple classes (cumulative TIC, or “career TIC”). The TIC comes into effect when an FSO is not promoted into the SFS. The TIC also applies to someone already in the SFS who is not promoted to the next higher class. Limits do not apply to FS-05 and FS-06.

While there are exceptions to the rules, generally, from the time of appointment (promotion) to FS-04 (or the date of career appointment, whichever is later), an FSO has the following time limits in each class. For example, if you are an FS-04 and are not promoted within 25 years, you must mandatorily leave the Agency. If you meet retirement eligibility, you will receive an annuity upon separation. The TIC rules for the SFS are more complicated but, in general, the “7-5-4” for years to promotion to each grade within the SFS rule applies depending on the appointment dates.

If you were appointed to the Foreign Service before February 15, 1981, a different formula is used. Recommendations for LCEs for SFS Officers who have a TIC (or previous LCE) expiring during the next calendar year are made by the C Board. Based on the Board’s recommendations, the Administrator can approve a maximum extension of three years on a single LCE. The maximum allowable time on multiple LCEs is five years unless the FSO is promoted. When serving on an LCE, an FSO remains eligible for promotion consideration.

Workforce Management Policies

Time In Class Limits and Limited Career Extensions (continued)

If you are concerned about your career or TIC, or the status of your LCE, consult your ACC or HCTM's performance management staff. As the end of these time limits approach, it is important to review your OPF to make sure that both you and the Agency have the same understanding of your status. Remember, errors can happen in calculating dates and service time. Understanding how the rules and exceptions apply to individual cases requires explanation by an expert when FSOs face career choices affected by these policies.

| TIME IN CLASS LIMITATIONS | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| CLASS | TIME-IN-CLASS (from appointment to Class 4) | CUMULATIVE TIC |
| SFS-CM | 4 | Cumulative SFS TIC of 16 yrs. |
| SFS-MC | 5 | Cumulative OC/MC TIC of 12 yrs. |
| SFS-OC | 7 | |
| FS-01 | 18 | |
| FS-02 | 20 | |
| FS-03 | 22 | |
| FS-04 | 25 | |

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Section 607(d)(2) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 provides for an up-to-one-year-temporary extension of a career appointment for a career Foreign Service Officer whose maximum time in class or LCE has expired. The decision to grant a temporary extension under this provision must be in the "public interest" and is granted only in special circumstances. Employees extended under this authority are NOT eligible for promotion or LCE.

Workforce Management Policies

Penalties

[ADS 487](#) contains a table of penalties for misconduct, misuse of property or other character problems, including sexual harassment. FSOs should aspire to build an impeccable record of ethics and integrity. It is thus useful to review this table to understand the nature and severity of offenses that can in the most serious cases lead to separation from the Service.

Mandatory Retirement Age

The Foreign Service Act, Sec. 812, provides that the Mandatory Retirement Age for Foreign Service Officers is at the end of the month in which the participant reaches age 65 and has at least five years of service credit. Though Sec 812(b)(2) does provide an exception to the mandatory age requirement, waivers should only be granted when it is in the public interest to do so.

As Foreign Service Officers plan their careers, it is critical they understand retirement date options and requirements and plan accordingly, particularly concerning the below :

1. Mandatory retirement age should be factored in as part of the decision process when bidding on new assignments, extending an assignment, or responding to the needs of the Agency. See ADS 436.3.1. FSOs should discuss options with their Assignment and Career Counselor (ACC) before bidding or consider Washington-based assignments if unable to serve a full tour before reaching the mandatory retirement age. FSOs should obtain any MRA decisions in writing and retain those documents as part of their files.

2. The Career Transition Program provides a personal benefit to Foreign Service employees preparing for retirement. This training should be taken, if possible, prior to reaching the mandatory retirement age. Mandatory Retirement Age waivers will not be granted to take advantage of the Retirement Planning Seminar or the Job Search Program.

Mandatory Age Waivers are a rare exception and not the standard.

Workforce Management Policies

Retirement Planning

The following courses offered by the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, previously known as the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), are for both Civil and Foreign Service Personnel.

- **2-Day Mid-Career Retirement Planning Seminar** – This course is tailored to those within 10 to 15, or more years of eligibility.
- **4-Day Retirement Planning Seminar** – This course is designed for employees whose retirement is less than 10 years away. No per diem is authorized. The Retirement Planning Seminar can be taken within five years of retirement eligibility--priority is given to employees facing mandatory retirement.
- **Job Search Program (JSP)**– This comprehensive program focuses on all aspects of transition and job search, including self-assessment of skills, values and interests, resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and networking. This course helps participants evaluate their post-retirement options and develop the skills needed for a successful transition from federal government employment. JSP may be taken immediately prior to retirement, in the final 30 days of active service for Civil Service, and the final 60 days of active service for Foreign Service personnel. JSP may also be taken in non-paid status within 12 months of the employee's retirement date, as long as registration for the course is completed prior to the retirement date. Your Retirement and Benefits Counselor will enroll you in the course.
- For those FSOs who do not take advantage of the Job Search Program prior to mandatory retirement, the course is available after retirement, as long as the employee's application for available course dates is submitted prior to the date of retirement. Such participation must occur within one year of retirement and no salary, per diem, or other reimbursement will be authorized.
- All Agency employees should submit their retirement applications no later than 90 days prior to their retirement date in order to avoid delays in processing their application and annuity payments. This will facilitate meeting the processing requirements of the Department of State and the US Office of Personnel Management.

References

Tenure Eligibility

A Career Candidate becomes eligible for consideration for tenure when the s/he has:

- Attained class FS-04
- Completed 36 months of continuous service in USAID as an Foreign Service career candidate
- Served a minimum of 18 months overseas as a US direct-hire Career Candidate in USAID (temporary duty for continuous and consecutive periods of at least six months or more may count toward the 18-month requirement if the work was directly related to the FSO's backstop)
- Satisfied foreign language proficiency requirements
- Satisfied other conditions regarding tenure eligibility, for example, medical and security clearances, the absence of any unresolved administrative or Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigations, and completed certification as to availability for worldwide service

Recommendations for Tenure: The **sole criterion** for a positive tenure recommendation is the candidate's demonstrated potential, assuming typical career growth and development, to serve effectively as a USAID career FSO over a normal career span, extending to and including class FS-01 (the full performance level for the Foreign Service).

The most important skills in assessing whether a candidate is likely to serve over a normal career span are whether s/he:

- Understands the political, social and economic context of USAID development activities, particularly those related to the candidate's functional backstop
- Functions collaboratively in teams within USAID field and headquarter environments, showing respect for different cultural and political sensitivities
- Translates functional or technical expertise into effective management of assigned resources (knowledge, people, funds, assets) using Agency business systems for program management and/or management support
- Serves customers well
- Learns continually, demonstrates adequate backstop competencies, develops and implements ILTP, sharing knowledge with others
- Uses suitable writing, listening and negotiating skills

Tenure Eligibility (continued)

- Business systems include, for example, budgeting, program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; developing and interpreting procedures, policy and legal frameworks; contracting and grant administration, logistics and information management, administrative support; and Agency and functional backstop reporting requirements.
- Unlike rankings for promotion, for tenure the candidate's skills are assessed individually, rather than comparatively with those in the class.
- Documented deficiencies that may be grounds for recommending against tenure include, but are not limited to:
 - reluctance to accept responsibility
 - failure to carry out properly assigned tasks within a reasonable time
 - low productivity or work poorly done
 - lack of adaptability
 - refusal to accept or carry out legitimate directives from properly authorized officials
 - inability to work fairly and cooperatively with supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, or foreign counterparts
 - ineffectiveness in managing subordinates; indifference, delinquency, or lack of honesty in preparing evaluation reports on self or subordinates
 - lack of courage and reliability under conditions of hardship and danger
 - lack of understanding and/or sensitivity for the traditions, feelings and aspirations of host countries, their institutions and peoples; other workforce categories; or other equal opportunity requirements as mandated by law.

Assignments and Career Counseling Division

Overview

The Assignments and Career Counseling (ACC) Division manages the recruitment and placement of the Agency's Foreign Service workforce, while providing counsel and guidance to FSOs throughout their careers. Select services include the following:

Foreign Service Hiring: The Career Candidate Corps

- The Career Candidate Corps (C3) is a program to sustain the size of USAID's Foreign Service workforce. The primary objective is to increase the size of USAID's overseas presence, enhancing the Agency's capability to effectively deliver US foreign assistance.
- [ADS chapter 459](#) outlines the mandatory policies and required procedures for newly hired employees entering USAID as Foreign Service Career Candidates. This chapter also applies to Career Candidates hired under the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) recruitment effort from 2008-2012. The Career Candidate Program is intended to enable USAID to maintain a robust, highly qualified overseas workforce, especially in key technical areas.
- Career Candidates include Junior Officers (JOs) and a limited number of Mid-level Officers (MLs). The program provides Career Candidates with an orientation to USAID, selected training courses on Agency operations, and any necessary language training, followed by a directed assignment overseas.

The Foreign Service Assignments Process

- The primary goal of the assignments process is to support the strategic allocation of Agency human resources to meet Agency requirements. The assignments process ensures that the Agency's Critical and Priority positions are filled before assignments to all other positions are made. The process also ensures that, to the extent possible, employee preferences and the career development needs of USAID's Foreign Service workforce are considered in the allocation of available assignments. For a complete description of the assignments process please review [ADS 436](#).

For specific questions about this toolkit, or regarding your career, please contact your Assignment and Career Counselor. A current list of Assignment and Career Counselors is available at the following [link](#), under the Foreign Services Center: <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/staff-directory>

Other Resources

Employee Resource Groups:

American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) www.afsa.org

American Indians and Alaska Native Employees (AI/AN)

Asian Pacific American Employee Committee (APAEC)

Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN)

Blacks in Government (BIG)

Brown Bag Luncheons (arranged by DLI Training Coordinator and various backstop coordinators)

Global Health Bureau Mentoring Program

<http://ghintranet.usaid.gov/GHNET/Pages/PDMS/PersonalEffectiveness/Mentoring/Index.aspx>

Employees with Disabilities (EWD)

Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA) www.glifaa.org

Hispanic Employment Council for Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA)

Jewish Affinity Group (JAG)

OHR Situational Mentoring http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/university/Situational_Mentoring.cfm

Women@AID wag@usaid.gov

Post Options for Employment and Training: Training at FSI, employees' spouses eligible

Contact the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity for contact names for the above resources.

USAID Staff Care Program

The [Staff Care Center](#) was established in 2012 to further the Agency's goal of creating a 21st century work environment. Staff Care provides services designed to strengthen the personal and organizational resilience of the entire USAID workforce through a range of in-person, telephonic and online services that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year for every USAID employee and their eligible family members anywhere in the world.

For more information, visit <http://staffcare.usaid.gov/index.html>.

Direct Dial: 919-645-4960

Reverse Charge Calling: +44-0-208-987-6200

Email: support@usaidstaffcarecenter.net

Website: www.staffcare.usaid.gov

For more information on a Foreign Service career at USAID, please visit the Foreign Service page on the [HCTM intranet](#).

For specific inquiries contact: hr-helpdesk@usaid.gov or

For general inquiries, contact: hctmquestionsandanswers@usaid.gov

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