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**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

***FY 2007 Annual Performance Report Scorecard  
U.S. Agency for International Development (Pilot Agency)***

<b>SCORE SUMMARY</b>	
<b>Transparency:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Public Benefits:</b>	<b>10</b> Minimum <i>per category</i> = 4, minimum <i>total</i> = 12
<b>Leadership:</b>	<b>10</b> Maximum <i>per category</i> = 20, maximum <i>total</i> = 60
<b>Total:</b>	<b>32</b>
<b><u>Score (1-5)</u></b>	<b>TRANSPARENCY</b>
<b><u>5</u></b>	<b>1) Is the report easily accessible and easily identified as the agency's Annual Performance Report?</b>
<p>The agency's home page has a prominent, direct link to the joint State Department/USAID highlights report, which is downloadable in a single 8.9 megabyte PDF file. This link does not produce prior year USAID performance reports. However, the prior year reports can be accessed via a home page search for "performance reports." There is no online contact information, but page 44 of the hard copy provides extensive report-specific contact information for State and USAID.</p> <p>The agency's web site had no specific fiscal year 2007 performance-related documents other than the highlights report and the financial report at the time of our review. Therefore, with one exception, we limited our review to the highlights report. With respect to criterion 11, we did consider the inspector general's presentation on major management challenges as set forth in the financial report, since the highlights report makes specific reference to it.</p>	
<b><u>4</u></b>	<b>2) Is the report easy for the layperson to read and understand?</b>
<p>As noted above, USAID and the State Department issued a joint highlights report for fiscal year 2007. The report is 44 pages long and includes 101 performance measures. In the aggregate, 50 of the measures apply to State and 51 apply to USAID. (See page 13.) The body of the report focuses on 28 "illustrative" measures, which cover the seven strategic goals. All 101 measures are listed on pages 34-37 along with their results. The report provides no further information about the non-illustrative measures.</p>	

The administrator’s brief transmittal letter (page 2) lists several specific agency accomplishments for 2007. While most are outputs, the first item references lives saved through the agency’s programs. The report is visually appealing and easy to read as far as it goes. However, as discussed hereafter, it conveys little substantive information to assist the reader in understanding the agency’s program performance.

1

**3) Are the performance data valid, verifiable, and timely?**

The administrator’s transmittal letter certifies that the report’s data are complete and reliable. However, the body of the report provides nothing to back up or elaborate on this certification. The report does not describe data sources or other background; nor does it describe verification and validation methods. This omission is particularly troublesome in the case of certain measures that need further explanation. (See, for example, the measures on pages 27 and 28.)

The report includes fiscal year 2007 results for 44 of the 51 USAID performance measures. See page 13. It appears that two results were missing due to data unavailability. See the second footnote on page 13.

2

**4) Did the agency provide baseline and trend data to put its performance measures in context?**

The report offers little prior year or trend data. It points out (page 13) that many of the measures are baselines for fiscal year 2007 and thus lack prior year data. The 28 illustrative measures are formatted to provide prior year results back to fiscal year 2005, but fewer than half of them have such data. No prior year results are presented for any of the other measures. In terms of context, one positive feature is that the report shows future targets for fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

**Transparency Subtotal: 12**

<u>Score (1-5)</u>	<b>BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY</b>
<u>3</u>	<b>5) Are the goals and objectives stated as outcomes?</b>
	<p>State and USAID adopted a new joint strategic plan for fiscal years 2007-2012, and its seven strategic goals are listed on page 12. The new strategic goals are less specific and results-oriented than the set used in prior years. Most are stated in high level and sometimes vague terms with little indication of the measurable results that flow from the agencies' work. For example: "Achieving Peace and Security," "Governing Justly and Democratically" and "Promoting Growth and Understanding." One, "Investing in People," reads more like a slogan than a measurable strategic goal. The report provides no strategic objectives to assist in fleshing out the goals. There is a list of "strategic priorities" for each goal, but they add little substance to the goals. There is no separate set of annual performance goals.</p>
<u>3</u>	<b>6) Are the performance measures valid indicators of the agency's impact on its outcome goals?</b>
	<p>The 28 illustrative performance measures are described on pages 14 through 31. Perhaps one-third of these measures capture intermediate or end outcomes. Most are numbers that relate to outputs or activities. Several would be more outcome-oriented if expressed as a percentage rather than a raw number. (See hectares of drug crops eradicated on page 16 and number of people in targeted areas with access to improved drinking water on page 21.) The rest of the 101 measures are listed on pages 34-37 without any accompanying narratives. Thus, it is difficult for the reader to get much sense of them.</p>
<u>3</u>	<b>7) Does the agency demonstrate that its actions have actually made a significant contribution toward its goals?</b>
	<p>The report's performance metrics are average at best in terms of outcome-orientation. Other weaknesses are the absence of any discussion for the non-illustrative measures and the lack of baseline and trend data.</p>
<u>1</u>	<b>8) Did the agency link its goals and results to costs?</b>
	<p>The report links budget resources only at the strategic goal level. See pages 39 and 43.</p>
<b><u>Benefits Subtotal: 10</u></b>	

<b><u>Score (1-5)</u></b>	<b>FORWARD-LOOKING LEADERSHIP</b>
<b><u>3</u></b>	<b>9) Does the report show how the agency’s results will make this country a better place to live?</b>
<p>Like the performance metrics, the narratives in the report are average at best. Of the report’s 44 pages, less than half are devoted to the agencies’ program performance and substantive accomplishments. These portions are essentially limited to the agency head transmittal letters and the discussion of programmatic strategic goals and illustrative performance measures on pages 13 through 26. They do, however, provide some insight into the public benefits that flow from the agencies’ work.</p>	
<b><u>2</u></b>	<b>10) Does the agency explain failure to achieve goals?</b>
<p>The report uses a somewhat misleading system of categorizing results by which a result is described as “on target” even if performance fell up to 9 percent short of the target. (See page 13.) Curiously, the result for one measure is designated as “on target” even though the reported result was more than 10 percent below the target. (See page 14.) Where the report concedes performance shortfalls, it provides some narrative. However, the quality of the narratives varies. Some provide useful explanations concerning the cause of the shortfall and planned remedial actions. (See pages 20-21 and 25-26.) Others are less insightful. For example, the discussion on pages 16 and 17 of future action, or more accurately, lack of action, in response to shortfalls gives the impression that the measures were not high priority. This leaves the reader to wonder why they were designated “illustrative” measures.</p>	
<b><u>3</u></b>	<b>11) Does the report adequately address major management challenges?</b>
<p>The report does not include the inspector general’s presentation on major management challenges pursuant to the Reports Consolidation Act. Instead, this presentation appears in the agencies’ financial reports for fiscal year 2007. The highlights report includes one page for each agency which lists the challenges identified by the respective inspector general, along with a brief statement of remedial actions taken by the agency and remaining actions to be taken. It references and provides a link to the financial report for the full statement.</p> <p>The USAID inspector general’s presentation in the financial report focuses on five challenges and gives the agency credit for making significant progress on most of them. His presentation includes a useful table that breaks down each challenge into significant issues and then describes actions taken in fiscal year 2007 to address each issue and remaining actions needed. This table reinforces the impression that the agency is making good progress on many of the issues. In fact, as the highlights report also notes, the agency has completed all action items for one challenge.</p>	

USAID's scores on the core items on the President's Management Agenda are slightly higher than last year but still mixed:

President's Management Agenda "Status" Scores as of 9/30/07				
Human Capital	Competitive Sourcing	Financial Management	E-Governmen t	Budget/perf Integration
Y	R	G	G	Y

2

**12) Does the report describe changes in policies or procedures to do better next year?**

Except for several informative explanations of remedial actions for specific performance shortfalls, the report has little content on changes to improve program performance. There are brief descriptions of actions to address management challenges.

**Leadership Subtotal: 10**