EMPLOYEE

EVALUATION

PROGRAM

GUIDEBOOK

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ADS Chapter 462

I. Introduction

The ability of the U.S. Agency for International Development to achieve its mission depends upon its employees. The skills and abilities they use in carrying out their responsibilities determine how successful the Agency as a whole will be. Consequently, the Agency's Employee Evaluation Program promotes linkages among the Agency's goals, strategic objectives of the operating unit and the performance of unit employees. It also enhances accountability for results by linking employee performance plans to operating unit strategic objectives.

The Employee Evaluation Program applies to all Civil Service (CS), Foreign Service (FS), Senior Foreign Service (SFS), and Schedule C employees, and all employees whose salaries are administratively determined. It does not apply to Senior Executive Service (SES) employees and Presidential Appointees.

This Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook has been prepared to help employees and managers, both CS and FS, implement the Employee Evaluation Program. It provides USAID employees with an overview of the Employee Evaluation Program, procedures for carrying out the Program, and detailed instructions on how to complete the various forms involved in the evaluation process. This Guidebook consolidates the former Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook and the Appraisal Committee Supplemental Reference. This Guidebook complements, *but does not supersede,* the Policies and Essential Procedures contained in ADS Chapter 462.

Although the Agency has two personnel systems governed by different statutory requirements, the Agency's Employee Evaluation Program attempts to bridge the two systems by recognizing that *the total workforce is a significant resource which must be managed as a unified entity in order to achieve Agency objectives*. Toward that end, the Employee Evaluation Program requires substantial involvement of senior management. It adopts the concept of organizational appraisals and further attempts to bring objectivity, discipline, participation, accountability and transparency into the evaluation process.

Employee Evaluation Process

The EEP has a number of steps, starting with the development of individual performance plans and concluding with the development and review of the final written evaluation for each employee.

Start of the cycle

- ✓ Establish performance plans (work objectives and performance measures) with Appraisal Committee input
- ✓ Discussions between Rating Official and the employee of career enhancing assignments and career goals

Throughout the cycle

- ✓ Feedback and communication among the employee, Rating Official and Appraisal Committee

Middle of the cycle

- ✓ Mandatory mid-cycle review between the Rating Official and the employee

Completion of the cycle

- ✓ Employee self-assessment input to the Rating Official
- ✓ 360° input to the Rating Official
- ✓ Appraisal drafted by Rating Official and reviewed by Appraisal Committee
- ✓ FS nominations by Appraisal Committee for promotion or tenure
- ✓ CS and FS awards nominations by Appraisal Committee
- ✓ Performance feedback between the Rating Official and the employee

Roles and Responsibilities

In order for the EEP to be successful, a number of different parties must participate and share responsibilities on an annual basis. The roles and responsibilities of each of these parties are as follows:

USAID Principal Officer *Responsibility and Accountability*

- ✓ Communicate information on the evaluation process to the employees in the operating unit
- ✓ Establish internal deadlines for the operating unit, and ensure that the operating unit adheres to the EEP policies, procedures and schedules
- ✓ Establish membership and standard operating procedures for the unit's Appraisal Committee(s)
- ✓ Appoint an Appraisal Committee Coordinator to facilitate the EEP process, as appropriate
- ✓ Designate Rating Officials for employees

The Employee *Achieving Results*

- ✓ Participate in development of work objectives and performance measures with Rating Official
- ✓ Track progress against work objectives and performance measures
- ✓ Participate in mid-cycle review with Rating Official
- ✓ Provide input into appraisal (self-assessment) and identify 360˚ input sources
- ✓ Participate constructively in performance feedback session after appraisal is finalized
- ✓ Prepare Employee Statement

Rating Official (Supervisor) *Evaluation and Feedback*

- ✓ Develop work objectives and performance measures with each employee to be rated
- ✓ Observe and evaluate employee performance, providing constructive and supportive feedback to employees throughout the entire rating cycle
- ✓ Conduct a formal mid-cycle review
- ✓ Gather performance information from the employee's self-assessment, 360˚ input sources, direct observation of performance, etc.
- ✓ Draft the Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) and the Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW) and present them to the Appraisal Committee
- ✓ Finalize the AEF by obtaining Appraisal Committee input and signed approval
- ✓ Discuss final appraisal results and the SFW with the employee

Appraisal Committee Coordinator *Coordination and Oversight*

- ✓ Communicate information about the EEP within the operating unit
- ✓ Monitor internal deadlines to enable the operating unit to meet EEP deadlines
- ✓ Establish procedures necessary for the operating unit to carry out the process consistent with the guidance provided in this Guidebook and in ADS chapter 462
- ✓ Verify completion of the evaluations for all employees, as appropriate
- ✓ Supply information and submit completed forms to M/HR
- ✓ Serve as point of contact for M/HR concerning the EEP

Appraisal Committee *Organizational Perspective*

- ✓ Establish internal operating procedures and deadlines to assure fair treatment of all rated employees
- ✓ Review and approve performance plans for all employees at the start of the evaluation cycle
- ✓ Review, discuss, and recommend changes to the content of the AEF as appropriate and approve final AEF on all employees
- ✓ Ensure timely, properly prepared, equitable and objective evaluations for all employees
- ✓ Nominate FS candidates for promotion or tenure
- ✓ Recommend Meritorious Step Increases for CS and other performance awards for both FS and CS

Office of Human Resources *Guidance and Support*

- ✓ Oversee implementation of the EEP and ensure that policies/guidance are adhered to throughout the process
- ✓ Formulate policies, guidance, and training for the EEP
- ✓ Work closely with Appraisal Coordinators in each operating unit to implement the EEP
- ✓ Issue FS promotion profile and nomination guidance
- ✓ Establish procedures, precepts and membership of the FS Selection and Tenure Boards
- ✓ Take appropriate action when an employee fails to follow the policies, procedures, and/or schedules of the EEP

II. Appraisal Periods

The Agency's rating cycle is one year. All employees will be evaluated on their overall performance for the rating cycle. For the FS, the annual rating cycle runs from April 1 through March 31. For the CS, the annual rating cycle runs from January 1 through December 31. International Development Interns (IDI) are evaluated during their first year of rotation in USAID/W only using the "IDI Performance Evaluation Report for AID/W Training" (Form AID 460-7A). During this first year, IDIs do not receive an AEF.

The appraisal period begins when an employee arrives at post or when an employee reports to work in a USAID/W position.

For CS employees, the minimum appraisal period is 120 days. A rating of record is prepared once the minimum appraisal period has been met. If a rating of record cannot be prepared at the end of the rating cycle, the appraisal period shall be extended.

Interim Evaluations

An interim evaluation is an evaluation that covers less than the full annual rating cycle. The purpose of an interim evaluation is to document performance which will be considered by Rating Officials who prepare final end-of-year evaluations. It covers a period of performance that is long enough to require written documentation of performance against an established performance plan but not long enough to be considered representative of the employee's performance for the entire annual rating cycle.

Only sections 1, 2, and 3 of the AEF are prepared for interim evaluations.

It is the responsibility of the Rating Official to know when to complete an interim evaluation. Therefore, if a Rating Official and employee know in advance that either will be departing, plans should be made to establish work objectives and performance measures that capture expected performance and to allow the interim evaluation to be prepared and reviewed by an Appraisal Committee.

Interim evaluations shall be prepared prior to the departure of the Rating Official or the employee.

Less than 120 days:

If an employee is reassigned or changes positions after having served less than 120 days, no written interim evaluation is required. Performance during that period of time will be evaluated through the use of 360° input sources. Accordingly, at the end of the rating cycle, the Rating Official will contact 360° input sources from that period and discuss the employee's performance. The information that is received from 360° input sources will be incorporated into the final AEF.

120 days to 184 days:

When an employee has served in a position for at least 120 but no more than 184 days, a written interim evaluation will be prepared. If the Rating Official departs for whatever reason, the Rating Official will prepare written interim evaluations on all of his/her employees prior to his/her departure. All written interim evaluations are reviewed and approved by an Appraisal Committee.

For CS employees only, Rating Officials must assign an adjectival rating for each work objective. However, the Rating Official shall not complete the Civil Service Summary Rating block appearing on

page one of the AEF.

Employees shall be given a copy of interim evaluations after they have been reviewed and approved by the operating unit's Appraisal Committee. Employees are encouraged to prepare written comments on an Employee Statement, which is attached to the interim evaluation.

If an employee receives a full AEF (see below) prior to the end of the rating cycle and the employee is reassigned to a new position for 120 days or more, but less than 185 days, the Rating Official is required to complete an interim evaluation. For FS employees, the Rating Official will send the interim evaluation to M/HR, which will be included in the employee's performance file. For CS employees, the Rating Official will give the interim evaluation to the employee, who at their option may have the interim evaluation filed in their Official Personnel File.

Rating Officials who prepare full AEFs at the end of the rating cycle are required to consider all interim evaluations an employee may have received. Accordingly, Rating Officials who prepare interim evaluations are responsible for forwarding them to the next Rating Official. If the employee had received an interim evaluation from a previous Rating Official, both the most recently prepared interim evaluation and the earlier interim evaluation are forwarded to the next Rating Official.

All interim evaluations must be signed by the employee, the Rating Official and an Appraisal Committee representative.

Examples: An FS employee begins the rating cycle in USAID/Cairo. However, after 190 days, the employee is reassigned to USAID/Jordan, where he/she serves for 150 days before being reassigned to USAID/W. The USAID/Cairo Rating Official and Appraisal Committee prepare a full AEF because the employee has served in USAID/Cairo more than 185 days. The USAID/Jordan Rating Official prepares an interim evaluation. Because the employee received a full AEF during the first 185 days of the rating cycle, the interim evaluation is sent to M/HR, which will be included in the employee's performance file.

An FS employee begins the rating cycle in USAID/Cairo. However, after 150 days, the employee is reassigned to USAID/Jordan, where he/she remains until the end of the rating cycle. The USAID/Cairo Rating Official and Appraisal Committee prepare an interim evaluation which is sent to USAID/Jordan. The USAID/Jordan Rating Official considers the interim evaluation when preparing the full AEF. Only the Appraisal Committee approved full AEF is sent to USAID/W. The interim evaluation remains at post.

A CS employee begins the rating cycle in the Management Bureau. However, after 190 days, the employee is reassigned to the Global Bureau, where he/she serves for 150 days before being reassigned to the Africa Bureau. The Management Bureau Rating Official and Appraisal Committee prepare a full AEF and assign a summary rating. This summary rating will become the rating of record for the rating year. The full AEF is sent to M/HR. The Global Bureau Rating Official and Appraisal Committee prepare an interim evaluation which is given to the employee. The employee has the option of requesting M/HR to file the interim evaluation in his/her Official Personnel File.

A CS employee begins the rating cycle in the Management Bureau. However, after 150 days, employee is reassigned to the Global Bureau, where he/she remains until the end of the rating cycle. The Management Bureau Rating Official and Appraisal Committee prepare an interim evaluation which is sent to the Global Bureau. The Global Bureau Rating Official considers the interim evaluation when preparing the full AEF. The Global Bureau sends the full AEF to M/HR. The employee has the option of requesting M/HR to file the interim evaluation in his/her Official Personnel File.

Multiple Interim Evaluations for FS Employees

Because of changing Agency needs, some employees move from position to position throughout the year. These employees may not have been assigned to any one position for more than 185 days, the period when full evaluations are to be prepared. (See section on "Full Evaluations" below.) To prevent any adverse impact on an employee under these circumstances, the Rating Official at the end of the rating cycle is required to prepare a full evaluation. This AEF must evaluate the employee's performance for the entire year by relying upon:

- ✓ the Rating Official's own knowledge of the employee's performance;
- ✓ the interim evaluations prepared by the employee's previous Rating Officials;
- ✓ the employee's self-assessment; and
- ✓ 360° input sources.

When an employee has two or more interim evaluations, the Rating Official must attach copies of the interim evaluations to the completed AEF for review and approval by the Appraisal Committee. The approved AEF and the attached interim evaluations are official documents of the employee's performance and are sent to M/HR to be filed in the employee's Official Personnel File (OPF).

Example: An FS employee begins the rating cycle in Egypt. After 140 days, he is reassigned to Guatemala, where he serves for another 120 days. In each instance, the employee receives interim evaluations from his/her Rating Official. At the end of the rating cycle, March 31st, he/she is serving a four year tour in Costa Rica, having arrived at post 90 days prior to the end of the rating cycle. The Costa Rica Rating Official is required to prepare the final AEF summarizing the two written interim evaluations the employee received from the previous posts. The Costa Rica Appraisal Committee reviews and approves the AEF with the attached two interim evaluations. The Costa Rica Appraisal Committee also decides whether to nominate the employee for promotion. The AEF and attached interim evaluations are submitted to M/HR for filing in the employee's OPF.

Multiple Interim Evaluations for CS Employees

If a CS employee has not been in a position for more than 185 days and has been reassigned to several positions during a rating cycle, the final AEF is prepared by the Rating Official of record at the end of the rating cycle. This Rating Official is obliged to base the employee's summary rating on the appraisal of the performance plan that the Rating Official and the employee established together. The Rating Official may not include interim evaluations in the employee's summary rating, but must consider prior interim evaluations that the CS employee may have received and must factor those evaluations into the "Assessment of Overall Performance, Skill Areas, Potential and FS/SFS Areas for Improvement" (Section 4 of the AEF). Copies of interim evaluations for CS employees are not attached to the final AEF which is submitted to M/HR. However, the employee may request M/HR to file these interim evaluations in their Official Personnel File.

Full Evaluations
185 days to 365 days

Rating Officials are required to complete a full evaluation whenever an employee has served at least 185 days in a position. Should an employee (or Rating Official in the case of a FS employee being evaluated) depart after 185 days, a full AEF is required. Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the AEF are completed for full evaluations.

FS employees who depart post prior to the end of the rating cycle must also be considered for promotion nomination. When an employee departs post after having served in a position for more than 185 days, the Rating Official and the AC are to prepare an AEF. Once approved, the AEF is given to the employee to prepare an Employee Statement. Since the AC will not make nominations for

promotion prior to the end of the rating cycle, the employee's AEF must be retained so that it can reviewed with other mission employees at the end of the cycle. When the AC completes its deliberations regarding nominations for promotion, it sends the original AEF to M/HR and a copy to the employee.

Example: After serving in a position for 263 days, a CS employee is promoted, reassigned to another position and works for another Rating Official. The employee's previous Rating Official prepares the AEF, which is reviewed and approved by the Appraisal Committee of the employee's previous operating unit. The approved AEF becomes the employee's rating of record for the rating cycle. The new Rating Official does not prepare an AEF at the end of the rating cycle, December 31st. Further, no interim evaluation is prepared because the employee has not been in the position for more than 120 days by the time the rating cycle ends. This example also applies to FS employees (or their Rating Officials) who are reassigned after 263 days. The FS AEF becomes the rating for the rating cycle.

TDY

If an employee is on TDY at another duty station for 45 days or more, an appropriate official at the TDY duty station will prepare a written memorandum of performance which is sent to the employee's Rating Official. This memorandum is used as written 360° input in the preparation of the employee's final AEF, but is not attached to the final AEF when it is submitted to M/HR.

Language and Long-Term Training and Long-Term Details

No interim or final evaluations are required on employees who have been assigned to language training. However, both interim and final evaluations, as defined above, are required on employees who have been assigned to long-term training or who are on long-term details outside the Agency, although their evaluations are not reviewed by an Appraisal Committee.

III. Performance Plans

Performance Plans are a reflection of an employee's position and the major responsibilities assigned to the employee. Performance Plans establish the comprehensive standards of performance that are expected of an employee by the supervisor. These standards, known as work objectives and performance measures, are developed by Rating Officials (supervisors) in collaboration with employees within 45 days after the beginning of the rating cycle. Performance plans are also prepared within 45 days after an employee's assignment to a new position or when an employee is on a detail or on a temporary duty assignment expected to last more than 120 days. When a Rating Official knows in advance that an employee's assignment is not expected to last for more than 184 days, it is a good practice to set a performance plan that is achievable in the time available. Under these circumstances, Rating Officials should consider limiting the number of work objectives to 3 or fewer.

Work Objectives are results-oriented outcomes developed for two types of responsibilities: ongoing and specific, representing distinguishable tasks or units of work Ongoing responsibilities are continuing duties that are inherent to the position. Specific responsibilities involve results that can be achieved before the end of the rating period. The employee must have control over the function or activity. Do not develop work objectives which are not within an employee's control.

For FS employees, work objectives must be commensurate with the employee's personal grade, not the position grade.

For CS employees, work objectives shall be commensurate with an employee's official position and must be within the control of the individual to achieve. The work objectives shall be identified as either critical or non-critical. A critical work objective is defined as one which contributes toward accomplishing organizational goals and objectives and which is of such importance that unacceptable performance would result in an unacceptable performance in the position. A non-critical work objective is defined as one that, while sufficiently important to be documented on the AEF, would not result in an Unacceptable summary rating for the annual rating cycle if performance on this objective was unacceptable.

Performance Measures are objective, measurable statements that specify the duties that the employee is expected to perform and how well the employee is expected to obtain the described results, or the manner in which certain duties must be performed. Performance measures address the quantity, quality, timeliness and/or manner of achieving a work objective. For CS employees, Rating Officials are to establish performance measures at the effective level of performance.

Appraisal Committees are required to review and approve the work objectives and performance measures for all employees. During this review, Appraisal Committees should assure that the work objectives and performance measures are reasonable for the specific employee and consistent with the objectives of the operating unit. Appraisal Committees should also review performance measures to ensure that they are not impossible to achieve.

Work objectives and performance measures are documented in Section 2 of the AEF and signed by the Rating Official, the employee and the Appraisal Committee. Signature by the parties indicates that work objectives have been established, approved and communicated to the employee.

Developing Performance Plans

Performance Plans link the employee's expected performance to overall USAID goals and to the more specific strategic objectives of an operating unit. The Rating Official and the employee are encouraged to discuss the employee's career development needs and aspirations. The performance plan may reflect the results of these discussions by documenting progressively more challenging responsibilities and allowing the employee to demonstrate or develop his/her professional capabilities. Performance measures are intended to provide employees with fair and objective measures of the nature, timeliness and quality of work required to successfully fulfill an individual work objective.

Performance plans reflect the quantitative, qualitative, timeliness and/or manner of achieving aspects of performance. Quantitative measures may include results to be achieved within a specified time or may be direct linkages to Results Indicators in the operating unit's Strategic Plan. Qualitative measures include accuracy, quality of work, ability to coordinate, analyze, evaluate, etc. Almost all jobs involve both aspects of performance but in varying proportions depending on the nature of the job. Timeliness means the extent to which work must be accomplished within specified time frames or when or how quickly a task must be completed by the employee.

Performance plans should be collaboratively developed by the Rating Official and the employee. There are several ways in which a performance plan can be developed:

- ✓ The employee and the Rating Official discuss and develop the performance plan together;
- ✓ The employee provides a draft of a proposed performance plan to the Rating Official;
- ✓ The employee comments on a draft performance plan prepared by the Rating Official; or
- ✓ The performance plan is developed by the employee's work group or team and the Rating Official.

Although assignment of work is the primary responsibility of the Rating Official (supervisor), employee participation in developing work objectives is likely to promote fairer, more objective performance appraisals and result in improved work performance and motivation. Therefore, every effort should be made to encourage employee participation in the development of performance plans. If the Rating Official and employee cannot agree on specific work objectives and performance measures, the Appraisal Committee shall resolve the issue.

Preparing Work Objectives

Rating Officials and employees should consider the following when drafting work objectives:

- ✓ Does the activity have a link the operating unit's strategic objectives?
  - All employees may not be able to have responsibilities link directly to an operating unit strategic objective, but all employees can support the strategic objectives indirectly.

- ✓ Is the activity important enough to be evaluated?
  - Don't simply include work objectives to fill the space available.

- ✓ For the CS, is the activity in the employee's position description?
  - If an activity is not within the scope of an employee's position description, and it is not intended to provide the employee with an opportunity to demonstrate professional growth and potential, then it may not be an appropriate work objective.

- ✓ Does the employee have control over the function or activity?
  - Do not develop work objectives which are not within an employee's control.

Preparing Performance Measures

Rating Officials and employees should consider the following when drafting performance measures:

- ✓ Does the performance measure address the quantity, quality, timeliness or manner of achieving a work objective?
- ✓ Does the performance measure clearly explain how well a task must be performed?
- ✓ Does the performance measure require performance that is observable and measurable?
- ✓ Does the performance measure require reasonable but not perfect performance?
- ✓ Is the performance measure clear enough to be fully and completely understandable to the employee?

IV. Progress Reviews

The purpose of progress reviews is to ensure that efforts toward achieving results are progressing satisfactorily, and that Rating Officials let employees know how they are progressing. The progress reviews also are opportunities for employees to discuss career development goals and to promote rapport between the Rating Official and the employee. Rating Officials are encouraged to provide frequent feedback on performance because, at the end of the year, an employee's final evaluation should not come as a surprise. It is during progress reviews that Rating Officials and employees discuss the need for revising work objectives or performance measures and the need for adjusting performance. While continuous feedback is encouraged, it is mandatory that at least one progress review be held, normally at mid-point during the appraisal period. Rating Officials should not discuss an employee's performance with other employees in the same operating unit, except with members of the operating unit's Appraisal Committee, in their official capacity.

Roles and Responsibilities

By the mid-cycle progress review, employees shall provide the Rating Official with the names of customers, peers, subordinates (if any), and any other person with whom they may have worked during the rating cycle who can provide the Rating Official with information about their performance.

During progress reviews, the Rating Official should discuss the employee's performance against each work objective and performance measure, the skills being used to achieve results and any areas for improvement. The Rating Official and employee should ensure that the work objectives and performance measures established at the beginning of the rating cycle are still relevant. If changes need to be made, they must be discussed with the employee, documented on the AEF and reviewed and approved by the Appraisal Committee.

The Appraisal Committee is responsible for ensuring that progress reviews are held. Each employee, Rating Official and Appraisal Committee representative must sign in the Mid-cycle block in section 1 of the AEF.

Preparing for the Progress Review

To get the most out of a progress review, Rating Officials should be prepared. The Rating Official should seek feedback from the 360° input sources provided by the employee or from other informed sources prior to progress reviews. The Rating Official should also review an employee's performance plan and, if needed, amendments to work objectives and/or performance measures should be prepared. Rating Officials should make notes of their personal observations of performance and review the employee's work products.

From this preliminary planning, the Rating Official should be able to identify strengths and weaknesses. Rating Officials are strongly encouraged to use the Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW) (See Chapter X) as a tool for discussion. While the SFW can be an important tool, Rating Officials should be cognizant that for CS employees, summary evaluations must be derived from the ratings of work objectives and performance measures designated as critical elements. Therefore, discussion of specific skills should focus on how these skills are contributing to or hindering the achievement of results.

Employees should likewise be prepared for progress reviews. They should review any notes of their performance and past progress reviews and should prepare a list of points they want to discuss. These

points might include their accomplishments, tasks not accomplished and why, planned work that needs clarification and work performed but not planned.

Rating Officials are encouraged to document progress reviews and to share the documentation with employees. This encourages trust and ensures that the final evaluation will come as no surprise.

Conducting the Progress Review

When conducting progress reviews, Rating Officials should encourage the employee to provide feedback. These meetings should be held privately to allow for full and frank discussions.

The Rating Official should focus on job performance against work objectives and performance measures for the entire period and not just the most recent period. Rating Officials should focus on *patterns of performance* rather than one-time mistakes. Each point should be supported with specific observations whenever possible. It is important that Rating Officials identify any unforeseen impediments to performance and make adjustments accordingly. Importantly, Rating Officials should ask the employee why there may be gaps in the progress toward results. Equally important, Rating Officials should discuss specific plans for performance improvement.

If by mid-cycle an employee's progress towards achieving work objectives is unacceptable, the Rating Official shall notify the employee in writing of his or her performance and give the employee an opportunity to improve performance. (See Section IX, "Managing Performance Problems.")

The progress review should be concluded by summarizing the major points discussed and any actions that are to be taken. In this regard, the Rating Official, in consultation with the employee, should set specific dates for reassessing the progress the employee is making toward results.

Tips for a Successful Progress Review

✓ Contact 360° input sources prior to the progress review to obtain feedback on performance.

✓ Ensure that employees understand what is expected of them.

✓ Ask employees for a status report on progress on work objectives.

✓ Motivate employees to do their best work and give them prompt recognition for their accomplishments.

✓ Serve as a bridge between higher management and employees by providing both parties constructive and objective information on employees' performance, need for improvement (if appropriate), and development needs.

✓ Use progress reviews to motivate employees, facilitate accomplishment of work objectives, revise performance plans when necessary and obtain a broad range of information about performance.

✓ Resolve disagreements over work objectives and performance measures. If this is not possible, the points of disagreement need to be listed. If these disagreements are significant, the Rating Official and the employee should consult with the Appraisal Committee.

V. Sources of Appraisal Information

To obtain an accurate overview of the employee's performance, the Rating Official must gather and synthesize information from a variety of sources, including the employee's self-assessment, peers, customers, other managers, and subordinates. Such information is referred to as 360° input. This type of feedback provides information about the employee's performance on specific work objectives and appropriate skill areas. Additionally, gathering information from several sources reduces the potential for bias to enter into the performance ratings.

Since information about an employee's performance rests largely on feedback from 360° input sources in addition to direct observation and the employee's self-assessment, it is important that Rating Officials obtain information from individuals who have knowledge of the employee's performance. Obtaining such information should be done throughout the rating cycle. One means of accomplishing this is for employees to prepare a list of 360 sources, at the beginning of the rating cycle, for or with whom the employee believes he or she will be working and to give the list to the Rating Official who will periodically contact them throughout the rating cycle. Another way is to establish direct contacts with individuals whom the Rating Official believes can provide information about an employee's performance.

360 Degree Input Requirement

At the end of the rating cycle, all employees are required to submit to their Rating Official a written self-assessment and a list of 360° input sources. If the employee has previously supplied the Rating Official with a list of 360° input sources at the beginning of the rating cycle or by mid-cycle, the employee should validate or revise this list at the end of the cycle. Since it is expected that employees will list individuals who can provide information about their performance, Rating Officials are required to consider an employee's list of 360° input sources and to reach agreement with the employee on who will be contacted. Rating Officials must contact at least 3 individuals from an employee's list of 360° input sources, although they may contact more.

If a Rating Official and an employee cannot agree on the individuals who will be contacted, the Appraisal Committee shall be consulted to resolve the matter.

360° Input Sources

Feedback from 360° input sources should be occurring throughout the rating cycle. Listed below are several sources that a Rating Official may contact to gather information necessary to make informed judgments about performance.

Direct Observation and Work Products - Rating Officials should consider the quality and quantity of an employee's work products.

Self-Assessment - Since employees are required to prepare an assessment of their own performance, Rating Officials must consider what the employee states about his/her progress towards meeting the performance standards, what, if any, problems prevented an employee from meeting such standards, and the quality of performance.

Other Managers - Obtaining feedback from other managers who have spent any substantive time working with the employee during the rating cycle provides additional evidence about the employee's work.

Peers - Peer input provides the Rating Official with opinions, observations and judgments of co-workers or team members regarding an employee's performance. While peers may agree with each other when they observe the employee in the same context, it is possible that peers who interact with the employee for different reasons at different times may perceive the employee differently. These differences

provide the Rating Official with important distinctions.

Customers - With the focus on quality and meeting customer expectations, using customer input is an excellent way to evaluate performance. Customers that are served by the employee, ranging from other USAID operating units to host country counterparts, can provide information on the quality of the products and services that are delivered by the employee. However, care must be taken because the customer is not always right or unbiased in providing information about an employee's performance. Consequently, it is important to compare expectations with performance and to understand the ever-changing customer requirements.

Subordinates - Subordinates (U.S. direct hires, foreign service nationals, or personal service contractors) are able to provide feedback from a slightly different perspective than peers or other managers. They can provide reliable information about the employee's leadership, supervisory and other development skills and the employee's ability to manage performance and conduct. Discussions with subordinates might focus on the employee's ability to structure work, provide performance feedback, foster a positive work environment, provide necessary resources, arrange training, and support career development. It might focus on employee relations issues. Further, information from subordinates can be useful where an employee's management style actually works against the achievement of results.

Employee Self-Assessment

The purpose of the self-assessment is to give the employee the opportunity to provide written input to his/her appraisal by providing the Rating Official with relevant information about performance. Accordingly, all employees are required to provide Rating Officials with a written self-assessment *of reasonable length* whenever a written evaluation is going to be completed. Along with a self-assessment, employees are to provide a list or validate a previous list of managers, peers, subordinates, and/or customers the employee worked with during the rating cycle who can provide the Rating Official with an assessment of the employee's performance and accomplishments.

The employee should provide the Rating Official with information about the quality of his/her performance during the rating period as it relates to the employee's work objectives and performance measures. This information should be specific on the how, what, where and when of performance. In addition, the employee should provide an assessment of his/her strengths, motivations, disappointments, and frustrations. In order to convey the most valuable information, the employee should provide specific examples of events/activities that occurred throughout the rating period. The self-assessment will be more accurate if the employee has recorded dates and details of the accomplishment of work objectives.

A Rating Official is not obliged to consider an employee's self-assessment or list of 360° input sources if they are not submitted within reasonable time frames established by the operating unit. Under these circumstances, the Rating Official will evaluate an employee's performance based on the Rating Official's own direct observations and independently developed 360° input sources. Additionally, employees who do not respect the operating unit time frames may lose their opportunity to appeal to the Appraisal Committee regarding inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions in the final AEF. (See Section VI, "Appraisal Committees.")

Tips on Preparing a Self-Assessment

- ✓ Keep an accomplishments file during the year and add to it as work gets done.
- ✓ Review your work objectives and self-assess your performance against each objective.
- ✓ List 360° input sources for each work objective. This will help the Rating Official decide what to

ask the 360° input source. Provide current addresses and telephone numbers.

- ✓ Be specific and use examples. Explain what you did, how well you performed, what results you achieved, and what differences you made.
- ✓ Explain barriers which may have affected your performance.
- ✓ Be factual and concise.
- ✓ Keep self-assessments to a reasonable length.
- ✓ Be positive.

Obtaining 360° Input Sources Information

Rating Officials may gather 360° input information in a number of ways: through personal interviews, telephone calls, E-mail, or written responses to questions. While there is no preferred method of collecting information about an employee's performance, Rating Officials should be cognizant that Appraisal Committees have the responsibility for ensuring that appraisals are balanced, fair and accurate and may question a Rating Official about the performance findings. Appraisal Committees also are authorized to request from Rating Officials the names of individuals who were contacted and to call them.

Confidentiality

If the Rating Official decides to conduct an interview, it should be held in a private setting where interruptions are unlikely to occur. This will enhance the information exchange and will increase the comfort level of the participants. The Rating Official is encouraged to take notes during such a meeting; however, these are considered to be the personal, working notes of the Rating Official and there is no requirement to maintain or provide these notes to the employee. (These notes may be the basis for advising the employee of significant performance deficiencies.)

Judicious Use of 360 Degree Input

In order to uphold the ethical standards of USAID, Rating Officials should exercise discretion in seeking and using information through the 360° input process. Specific examples should be solicited, particularly in the case of outstanding or poor performance. The Rating Official should be alert for biased input or input that is based on the source's own self-interests. If a Rating Official has any concerns in this regard, he/she is advised to consult the Agency Ethics Officer.

Additional Sources for Certain FS Officers

Mission Controllers, Contracting Officers, and Regional Legal Advisors: When preparing AEFs, Rating Officials are required to consider brief statements (no more than one page) from the Offices of Financial Management, Procurement, and the General Counsel, regarding the performance of Mission controllers, contracting officers, and regional legal advisors, if submitted by an appropriate office. These statements shall not contain recommendations or references to suitability for promotion. Statements shall be attached to the AEF and then submitted to the operating unit's Appraisal Committee for review and approval. The Appraisal Committee, however, is not authorized to change or request changes in the statement. The statement shall be attached to the final AEF submitted to M/HR. Negative inferences shall not be made if an office does not submit a statement.

VI. Appraisal Committees

The responsibilities of an Appraisal Committee are to:

✓review and approve work objectives and performance measures at the start of the rating cycle;
✓ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the final written evaluations on all employees;
✓provide an organizational perspective to the evaluation on all employees;
✓certify that the mid-cycle progress review has been held;
✓review and approve any changes to work objectives and performance measures;
✓work with Rating Officials who have employees with performance problems;
✓resolve disputes regarding inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions in employees' final written evaluations;
✓make FS promotion and tenure nominations, and award nominations for CS and FS employees.

The Principal Officer of the operating unit (i.e., Mission Director, USAID Representative, Assistant Administrator, USAID/W Independent Office Director) is responsible for determining the number of Appraisal Committees for the operating unit and the members (and Chairpersons) of each. The Principal Officer, or his/her designee, will chair the Appraisal Committee and will be held accountable for ensuring that the operating unit adheres to the EEP policies, procedures and schedules. Ideally, all Appraisal Committee members will have first-hand knowledge of the performance of every employee being reviewed by the committee. However, at least one member of the Appraisal Committee other than the Rating Official, if a member of the Appraisal Committee, must know the work of any individual employee to be reviewed by the committee and all members of the Appraisal Committee must be familiar with the work of the operating unit. Given the critical importance of the Appraisal Committee's responsibilities and the often sensitive nature of the decisions it is called upon to make, considerable care should be exercised in the selection of Appraisal Committee members. Judgment, discretion and personal maturity are essential attributes for all Appraisal Committee members as is a commitment to treat all rated individuals fairly and the ability to respect the confidential nature of the personnel evaluation process. Appraisal Committee members should have experience in positions of trust and responsibility and demonstrated capacity for independent decision-making.

To the maximum extent practical, members of the Appraisal Committee should possess a broad understanding of the functioning of the Agency and its various programmatic and support functions as well as personal knowledge of the work of employees being reviewed. At least one member of the Appraisal Committee must have direct personal knowledge of the rated employee being reviewed. Field Missions should seek to insure that Appraisal Committees include members from support offices such as Financial, Legal, Executive, and Procurement as well as technical and program/project offices. It is also important that the composition of Appraisal Committees reflect the Agency's commitment to diversity.

Only US Direct Hire employees may be Appraisal Committee members. Probationary CS employees are not eligible to be Appraisal Committee members. Appraisal Committee membership will be drawn primarily from tenured staff. Untenured staff may be eligible for Appraisal Committee membership, however, to the extent they meet the criteria stated above and in the Employee Evaluation Program guidebook, and the Principal Officer deems their membership appropriate and desirable in view of their prior work experience, special knowledge, skills and/or roles and responsibilities within the operating unit. To the extent practical, the majority of the Appraisal Committee shall be comprised of tenured employees. In no event, however, shall any Appraisal Committee be composed entirely of untenured

employees.

While Appraisal Committees have responsibility for implementation of the EEP in their operating unit throughout the rating cycle, the following are the most significant periods for Appraisal Committee involvement:

Beginning of the rating cycle: The Appraisal Committee reviews and approves the work objectives and performance measures for all employees. The Appraisal Committee assures that the objectives are reasonable for the specific employee and consistent with the strategic objectives of the operating unit.

Mid-Cycle: The Appraisal Committee reviews substantive changes to employee performance plans and certifies that mid-cycle progress reviews were held for all employees. The Appraisal Committee also discusses and works closely with Rating Officials who have employees with performance problems.

End of the rating cycle: The Appraisal Committee reviews the draft AEFs of each employee within the operating unit, discusses with each Rating Official the evaluation of his/her employees, and approves the final AEF.

ESTABLISHING APPRAISAL COMMITTEE(S)

The Principal Officer of the operating unit is responsible for appointing the Appraisal Committee membership, which shall be comprised of no fewer than 3 members. Principal Officers are encouraged to name alternate members to Appraisal Committees. The Appraisal Committee should consist of knowledgeable U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) staff from an operating unit who are familiar with the unit's strategic objectives and who have knowledge of the performance of the employees being evaluated. USAID/W Appraisal Committees should consist of both CS and FS employees to the extent the operating unit has both categories of employees. It is the Principal Officer's responsibility to ensure consistency among the various Appraisal Committees, should there be more than one in an operating unit. For this reason, the operating unit Principal Officer should appoint an *Appraisal Committee Coordinator* to facilitate all activities with each Appraisal Committee Chairperson.

In a typical Mission, the Appraisal Committee might consist of the Mission Director as Chairperson, the Deputy Mission Director, and Office Directors. For a small Mission, where there are fewer than 3 U.S. direct-hire staff, a Bureau Appraisal Committee will be formed in USAID/W and should be comprised of members who know the post's program.

Multiple Appraisal Committees

USAID/W Bureaus and large Missions must form more than one Appraisal Committee to adequately deal with the employee evaluation workload. When multiple Appraisal Committees are established, the Principal Officer shall decide which employees will be reviewed by each Appraisal Committee. For FS employees, all nominations for promotion and recommendations for tenure are to be reviewed and approved by an Appraisal Committee comprised of the Chairpersons (or their representatives) of each of the Appraisal Committees and the Principal Officer.

Team-based Appraisal Committees

Many USAID operating units are moving towards "team-based" organizational structures. Under these circumstances, the team, or part of the team, may constitute the Appraisal Committee appointed by the Principal Officer. The use of a team Appraisal Committee may provide a broader range of input to the assessment of team members.

Deputy Assistant Administrators

For Deputy Assistant Administrators, an Appraisal Committee shall be formed consisting of the Agency Counselor, Assistant Administrators, Deputy Assistant Administrators and/or, as appropriate, the Deputy Administrator.

Mission Directors and USAID Representatives

Mission Directors and USAID Representatives will generally be evaluated by the cognizant Ambassador and Assistant Administrator (or Independent Office Head). (Exceptions may include USAID principal officers in such posts as Tokyo, Paris, Brussels, etc., and in some cases the directors of regional missions.) Ambassadors will complete an AEF and submit it to the Assistant Administrator, who will prepare a one-page summary assessment of the employee's performance to attach to the AEF. The Bureau Appraisal Committee, generally chaired by the Assistant Administrator or Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, will decide whether to nominate the employee for promotion.

Appointing Appraisal Committee Members

When appointing Appraisal Committee(s) members, the Principal Officer should consider the following desirable characteristics of an Appraisal Committee member:

- ✓ Possesses general knowledge of the duties of all the employees who will be reviewed by the Appraisal Committee;
- ✓ Has the confidence and respect of his/her peers;
- ✓ Has extensive experience in the Agency;
- ✓ Understands the strategic objectives of the operating unit;
- ✓ Understands and appreciates the roles of the organizational elements of the operating unit;
- ✓ Is known as being fair and objective;
- ✓ Has supervisory experience.

The Principal Officer also should plan around known assignment changes and appoint Appraisal Committee members who are likely to be able to serve for the full rating cycle.

The Number Of Members On An Appraisal Committee

Each Appraisal Committee must consist of a minimum of three members, who can review the evaluation of any employee. If routine absences and recusals reduce Appraisal Committee membership to less than three, the Principal Officer must designate more than three members. When appointing Appraisal Committee members, Principal Officers should make every effort not to appoint individuals who are expected to leave the operating unit as a result of reassignment, transfer or retirement prior to the end of the rating cycle.

Recusal of Appraisal Committee Members

Generally, all members of an Appraisal Committee also will perform the duties of a Rating Official. Appraisal Committee members must recuse themselves as Appraisal Committee members when the draft AEFs they prepared as Rating Officials are reviewed by the Appraisal Committee. The Rating Official should discuss the draft AEF with Appraisal Committee members but he or she should not participate in Appraisal Committee deliberations of the appraisal. This means that the Rating Official must leave the area where the Appraisal Committee is meeting. This should ensure that the deliberative process is not influenced by the presence of the Rating Official.

Vacancies and Absences on an Appraisal Committee

Appraisal Committee members cannot delegate their membership responsibilities. An Appraisal Committee member should notify the Chairperson of any anticipated absences which may affect the Appraisal Committee's operations. In instances where the absence is prolonged, it would be appropriate for the Principal Officer to name a qualified alternate who will participate in the activities

that the Appraisal Committee member will miss.

Confidentiality

The deliberations of Appraisal Committees are confidential and shall not be discussed with individuals not participating in the Appraisal Committee process. Rating Officials may be required to submit the names of 360° input sources to Appraisal Committees, but the feedback that was given to the Rating Official and the feedback that may be given to the Appraisal Committee is considered confidential and is not to be discussed with anyone else.

It is a violation of the EEP policies and procedures for Appraisal Committee members and other individuals participating in the deliberations of an Appraisal Committee to reveal Appraisal Committee discussions to those not authorized to receive such information.

Discipline

Principal Officers will advise the DAA/M/Human Resources of any instance where EEP policies, procedures or schedules have not been adhered to. The DAA/M/Human Resources will initiate disciplinary action against or deny bonuses to, any Appraisal Committee members, Rating Officials or other employees who fail to follow the policies, procedures and schedules of the EEP. These actions shall be noted in the employee's Official Performance File for one year.

Appraisal Committees shall not nominate an FS Rating Official for promotion if the employee has failed to adhere to the policies, procedures and schedules of the Employee Evaluation Program. Further, the DAA/M/Human Resources has the authority to take disciplinary action against Appraisal Committee members and Principal Officers if AEFs for which they are responsible are submitted after the established Agency deadline.

APPRAISAL COMMITTEE DUTIES

THE FIRST 45 DAYS OF THE RATING CYCLE

Reviewing Work Objectives and Performance Measures

Appraisal Committees are required to review and approve the work objectives and performance measures of all employees. This means that Appraisal Committees are to ensure that each employee's work objectives and performance measures are clear, concise and measurable. Appraisal Committees also are to ensure that work objectives are consistent with the Agency's goals and the operating unit's strategic objectives.

When preparing to review employee performance plans, all Appraisal Committee members should have the following:

- ✓ Each employee's draft work objectives and performance measures;
- ✓ Agency's goals and operating unit's strategic objectives; and
- ✓ Staffing patterns and position descriptions.

Appraisal Committee members should apply the standards of review established for work objectives and performance measures in Section III, Performance Plans, of this Guidebook.

DURING THE RATING CYCLE

Reviewing Revised Performance Plans

At any time during the rating cycle, Rating Officials and employees for a variety of reasons may need to revise the employee's work objectives and/or performance measures. All substantively revised performance plans must be reviewed and approved by the Appraisal Committee. An Appraisal

Committee member may authorize minor revisions of work objectives or performance measures. In cases where revisions are made to CS employees' performance plans within the last 120 days of the rating cycle, the rating cycle will be extended long enough to meet the minimum appraisal period.

Mid-Cycle Progress Review Certification

The Appraisal Committee must certify that formal mid-cycle reviews were held for each employee. An Appraisal Committee Representative should sign and date the appropriate block in section 1 of the AEF.

Appraisal Committees should counsel Rating Officials who fail to hold progress reviews and should inform the Principal Officer of all such Rating Officials.

END OF THE RATING CYCLE

Drafting AEFs

Rating Officials shall not share the draft AEF with the employees until after the Appraisal Committee has reviewed and approved the document, and in the case of FS employees, made its determination regarding promotion or tenure nominations, as appropriate.

Reviewing the AEF

The Appraisal Committee will review each employee's draft AEF and the Skills and Feedback Worksheet (SFW) and discuss both documents with the Rating Official. Appraisal Committee members should determine the following:

- ✓ Did the Rating Official accurately and objectively evaluate the employee's performance against his/her work objectives?
    - * Is there any conflict between the information in the AEF and what the Appraisal Committee knows about the employee's performance?
    - * Should the Appraisal Committee request additional information from the Rating Official or other sources to resolve the conflict?
- ✓ Did the Rating Official keep the draft AEF confidential and not share it with the employee?
- ✓ Did the Rating Official contact appropriate 360° input sources?
    - * Did the Rating Official contact at least the individuals agreed upon with the employee from the employee's self-assessment?
    - * Does the Appraisal Committee need to ask the Rating Official for the names of the individuals contacted?
- ✓ Did the Rating Official consider the self-assessment?
    - * Did the employee submit the self-assessment in a timely manner?
- ✓ Did the Rating Official consider an employee's interim evaluations?
    - * In cases where an employee did not serve in a position for more than 184 days, are all interim evaluations attached to the draft AEF?
- ✓ Did the Rating Official consider and attach any statements from the Offices of Financial Management, Procurement, or General Counsel?
- ✓ Is the AEF well written?
    - * Is it internally consistent?
    - * Is it free from inadmissible comments? (See table below.)
- ✓ Did the Rating Official discuss his/her assessment of the employee's overall performance, skill areas, potential and areas for improvement in section 4 of the AEF?
- ✓ For CS employees, has the Rating Official prepared adjectival ratings on all work objectives and performance measures for CS employees?
    - * Is the written narrative consistent with the adjectival ratings for each work objective and performance measure?

    * Does the written narrative state whether the employee met, did not meet, or exceeded the performance measure for each work objective?
    * Are there sufficient examples of specific performance?
    * For CS employees, are the adjectival ratings and narrative based strictly on the employee's performance against work objectives and performance measures?
    * For CS employees, is the summary rating noted in the appropriate block in section 1 of the AEF and was it derived from the rating of work objectives, consistent with

- ✓ For FS employees, is there reference in either Section 3 or 4 to promotion nomination that should be deleted?
- ✓ Has the Rating Official completed the Skills Feedback Worksheet?
- ✓ Is the employee a Rating Official who failed to follow the policies, procedures and schedules of the Employee Evaluation Program?
- ✓ Was the employee given a written notice of substandard performance at any time during the rating cycle?
    * Does the Appraisal Committee have copies of the written notice?

The Appraisal Committee has the authority to determine the content of the final AEF. In consultation with the Rating Official and/or based on information that is made available to the Appraisal Committee, draft AEFs will be changed to correct any inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions. The changes will be made either by an Appraisal Committee Representative or the Appraisal Committee may direct the Rating Official to make the changes. It is particularly important that Appraisal Committees carefully review all AEFs which document either substandard or exceptional performance to ensure that they are fair, balanced and accurate.

Examples of Inadmissible Comments:

- ✓ Reference to race, religion, sex (does not extend to the use of Mr., Mrs., Ms., first names or personal pronouns), national origin, political affiliation and age
- ✓ Retirement, resignation, or other separation plans
- ✓ Grievance, equal employment opportunity, or Merit Systems Protection Board or other proceedings/results
- ✓ Method of entry into the Agency (IDI, etc.)
- ✓ Reference to private U.S. citizens by name
- ✓ Participation or nonparticipation in any organization composed of employees which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with foreign affairs agencies concerning grievances, personnel policies, and practices
- ✓ Ratings for earlier periods prepared by other rating officials
- ✓ Reluctance to work voluntary overtime
- ✓ Leave record, except in the case of unauthorized absences that affect performance
- ✓ Letters of reprimand
- ✓ Negative reference to use of the dissent channel or direct or indirect reference to, or consideration of, judgments in dissent channel messages as a basis for an adverse evaluation of performance. When the rated employee's expression of dissenting views on policy, outside of the dissent channel, raises substantial questions of judgment relevant to the employee's performance, it may be the subject of comment. However, general comments may not be used to get around the proscription of this section. Specific instances must be cited.
- ✓ Negative or pejorative discussion of the performance of another identifiable employee. Rating officials cannot state "the employee quickly brought order out of the chaos left by his

predecessor." On the other hand, the description "the employee is the best administrative officer I have supervised in the past 10 years" is acceptable.

- ✓ Specific identification by rating officials of physical handicaps or medical problems (including alcoholism, drug abuse, or rehabilitation efforts). General reference may be made to confirm knowledge of a medical problem to the extent it affects job performance or ability to accept overseas assignments. Rated employees may discuss their health problems in specific terms if they believe it has affected their performance.

Assigning Adjectival Ratings for Civil Service Employees

Every CS employee must receive an adjectival rating for each work objective, and an overall summary rating (Exceptional, Excellent, Effective, Needs Improvement or Unacceptable). Appraisal Committees may not prescribe a distribution of summary rating levels within the operating unit (e.g. the Appraisal Committee may **not** require that no more than 5% receive Exceptional, 10% receive Excellent, etc.). The summary rating must be derived from the rating of performance of each work objective. See ADS Chapter 462.5.6, or Section VII of this Guidebook for instructions on how to derive a CS summary rating.

Resolving Discrepancies or Conflicts

Appraisal Committees will attempt to resolve differences of opinion about the content of AEFs with Rating Officials during Appraisal Committee meetings. However, Appraisal Committees are authorized to request the names of 360° input sources from Rating Officials and to call them. Appraisal Committees also are authorized to request a copy of the employee's self-assessment and to meet with the employee, if appropriate. Appraisal Committees may request documentation retained by the Rating Official and used by him/her to support an evaluation, or any other documentation it deems appropriate.

Appraisal Committees will consider recommendations from Rating Officials to revise AEFs, if requested by an employee. Appraisal Committees will limit their consideration to inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions in the final AEF. An employee may discuss the matter with an Appraisal Committee if the Rating Official does not recommend changes. An employee also may submit documents to the Appraisal Committee to support his/her request.

If an employee does not submit a self-assessment in a timely manner and the Rating Official prepares an AEF based solely upon his/her observations and documentation from the 360° input sources he/she developed, the employee may not request a Rating Official or an Appraisal Committee to revise his/her AEF.

Completing AEFs

If directed by an Appraisal Committee, the Rating Official should revise AEFs as soon as possible after the Appraisal Committee meeting to ensure that the employee will have ten (10) work days in which to review the AEF, request changes if appropriate, prepare an Employee Statement, and sign the AEF for timely submission to M/HR.

Small Missions

USAID/W Appraisal Committees which review employees of small missions are to discuss draft AEFs directly with Rating Officials. Conference calls between the Rating Official and Appraisal Committees are one way of meeting this requirement. Changes that need to be made should be made either in the field or in USAID/W. Final AEFs signed by the Rating Official and the employee may then be sent to the USAID/W-based AC for signature.

FS PROMOTION NOMINATION, TENURE NOMINATION, AND AWARDS

Promotion Nominations

After an Appraisal Committee has reviewed and approved the AEFs of all FS and SFS employees under its purview and before the AEFs are given to the employees, it will reconvene to nominate for promotion FS and SFS employees who have displayed exceptional performance and/or who have displayed potential to perform at the next higher grade. Based on world-wide promotion profile information that is provided annually by the Office of Human Resources and the nomination guidance containing suggested nomination percentages issued by the Office of Human Resources, the Appraisal Committee will nominate FS and SFS employees for promotion and indicate their decision in the appropriate block in section 1 of the AEF. While it is expected that Appraisal Committees will follow the guidance issued by the Office of Human Resources, there may be instances where Appraisal Committees will nominate more than the recommended percentage. In these instances, Appraisal Committees will rank order employees being nominated for promotion, and submit a rank ordered list of the nominees' names to M/HR.

Appraisal Committees shall not nominate for promotion any Rating Official who did not follow the policies, procedures and schedules of the EEP.

Nominating Employees For Promotion

Appraisal Committees should consider the following when deciding on promotion nominations:

- ✓ Does the employee exhibit the skills and potential to perform at the next higher class or grade (as per the FS promotion precepts found in ADS 463 "FS Boards")?
- ✓ Are there specific examples of performance that demonstrate potential to support a decision to nominate an employee for promotion?
- ✓ How does the employee's performance compare to other employees who conduct or have conducted similar job tasks?
- ✓ Did the employee's performance significantly advance the accomplishment of the operating unit's strategic objectives?

Nominations for promotion shall be based on merit. Appraisal Committees shall not consider an employee's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, handicapping condition, or sexual orientation. Additionally, Appraisal Committees shall not consider an employee's retirement eligibility, grade, time-in-grade, recency of promotion, whether the employee has submitted an application for Senior Foreign Service consideration, nor any other factor other than the employee's performance during the rating cycle when making promotion nomination decisions.

Rating Official Participation In Nomination Decisions

Appraisal Committees may obtain Rating Officials' views of employees being considered for promotion nomination. Rating Officials also may be requested to revise AEFs to support promotion nominations.

Tenure Nominations

At times during the year specified by the Office of Human Resources, Rating Officials will be required to complete full AEFs on career candidates who meet the criteria for Tenure Board review. All career candidates subject to Tenure Board review will have AEFs reviewed by an Appraisal Committee.

Appraisal Committees are to meet with Rating Officials of career candidates to discuss the AEF and determine whether it adequately discusses the employee's demonstrated potential to serve effectively as a USAID career FS Officer over a normal career span. Appraisal Committees also are to follow the guidelines noted in this chapter's section on "Reviewing AEFs."

After reviewing a career candidate's AEF, Appraisal Committees may support the employee for tenure, tenure deferral or denial of tenure.

Appraisal Committees will ensure that the AEFs of all career candidates discuss the employee's demonstrated skills in the following areas, as appropriate:

- ✓ Quality of Work
- ✓ Resource Management
- ✓ Teamwork/Interpersonal Skills
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Staff Development
- ✓ Professionalism

See ADS Chapter 463, Precepts for USAID's Foreign Service Boards, for more detail.

VII. Adjectival and Summary Ratings (CS)

ADJECTIVAL RATINGS
The work objectives and performance measures of all CS employees shall be assigned an adjectival rating, which is indicative of the employee's performance. The following rating scale shall be used to determine the adjectival ratings of all CS employees.

Exceptional Work performance always exceeds established performance measures and expectations.

Excellent Work performance almost always exceeds established performance measures and expectations.

Effective Work performance consistently meets and occasionally exceeds established performance measures and expectations.

Needs Improvement Work performance meets some established performance measures and expectations.

Unacceptable Work performance does not meet established performance measures or expectations.

SUMMARY RATINGS
For CS employees only, Rating Officials shall assign, and the Appraisal Committee shall review and approve, a summary rating based on the ratings of the employee's individual work objectives. The employee is given an adjectival Summary Rating based on the five-level scale below. The Summary Rating is derived directly from the ratings of individual work objectives and may not be based on other factors. The process of deriving a Summary Rating is described below.

Exceptional A summary rating at the Exceptional level must be assigned when all critical elements are rated at the Exceptional level and no critical element is rated lower than Exceptional.

Excellent A summary rating at the Excellent level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Excellent level and no critical element is rated lower than Excellent.

Effective A summary rating at the Effective level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Effective level and no critical element is rated lower than Effective.

Needs Improvement A summary rating at the Needs Improvement level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Needs Improvement level and no critical element is rated lower than Needs Improvement.

Unacceptable A summary rating at the Unacceptable level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Unacceptable level.

The Adjectival and Summary Ratings are entered as “pen and ink” notations on the printed AEF.

VIII. Employee Feedback

Rating Officials are required to conduct end-of-year performance reviews with employees, explaining the evaluation, discussing areas for improvement and considering possible career enhancing assignments for the next rating cycle.

Rating Officials must provide the employee with a copy of the Skills Feedback Worksheet. Rating Officials also are to allow an employee ten (10) days in which to review his/her AEF and to comment in the Employee Statement.

If an employee finds factual errors, inconsistencies or gross omissions in his or her AEF, the employee will notify the Rating Official immediately. The Rating Official will recommend to the Appraisal Committee either to approve or disapprove changes to the AEF. If a Rating Official does not recommend changes to an AEF, an employee can request a meeting with the Appraisal Committee and may submit documentation verifying the factual errors, inconsistencies or gross omissions. The Appraisal Committee shall communicate in writing its decision to the employee, which is final.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

A Rating Official should prepare for each feedback session. This involves determining which topics to discuss and the overall approach to be used. Following are some guidelines on how to give effective feedback.

Effective Feedback Suggestions		
Suggestions	**Examples**	
	Effective	**Ineffective**
Feedback should focus on behavioral, not personal characteristics.	*You tend to raise your voice with other team members during everyday discussions, and this behavior is inappropriate.*	*You have an abrasive personality.*
Give specific statements when possible; support general statements with specific examples.	*You rpresentation on the Hill demonstrated exceptional communication skills in describing how USAID coordinated with the State Department in the design of our democracy strategy.*	*You are a very good speaker.*
Use descriptive language rather than judgmental.	*When you close your door upon arrival to the office, and leave it closed most of the day, your coworkers see you as inaccessible and unfriendly.*	*You are lousy at interacting with others in the office.*
Effective feedback is clear, direct, and to the point.	*You need to reduce the use of informal language in your writing. For example, in this memo...*	*You need to work on your writing skills.*

Good feedback is directed toward actions within the employee's control.	*Your presentations would be more effective if you look up from your notes more and establish eye contact with the audience.*	*You would be a more effective officer if you had a Ph.D. in economics.*
Effective feedback is immediate.	*Yesterday you missed the reporting deadline again. This has happened four times since fall, and each time I brought it to your attention.*	*Last May you missed a reporting deadline and four others before that.*
Good feedback is carefully planned.	*I have carefully reviewed your objectives and performance to date and have specific topics I would like to discuss. my observations and 360 feedback with you.*	*I guess it's time to have a mid-period review. What shall we talk about?*
Avoid interpreting the employee's actions; summarize behaviors.	*I noticed that recently you missed the filing deadline on several reports.*	*You must really hate writing those reports since you skip them all the time.*

IX. Managing Performance Problems

When an employee's performance is substandard, the Rating Official should inform the employee immediately of his/her substandard performance and identify ways for improving prior to the end of the appraisal period. No performance appraisal should come as a surprise to the employee at the end of the rating cycle. For this reason, Rating Officials are encouraged to hold progress reviews throughout the rating cycle, not just one at mid-cycle.

Notifying the Employee and the Appraisal Committee

Throughout the rating cycle, Rating Officials should be requesting and receiving information from 360° input sources on an employee's performance. When there is sufficient evidence to indicate that an employee's performance is substandard and that he/she may not meet established work objectives and performance measures by the end of the rating cycle and/or for the FS, there are deficiencies in specific skill areas, the Rating Official must notify the Appraisal Committee that the employee has performance problems and that steps will be taken to seek improved performance by the end of the rating cycle. The Appraisal Committee may also provide advice and assistance to the Rating Official to increase the possibility that the employee will succeed in improving his/her performance. In all cases, the Rating Official must meet with the employee and discuss the performance and jointly determine ways for im*proving performance.*

If by mid-cycle an employee's progress towards achieving work objectives is unacceptable, the Rating Official shall notify the employee in writing of his or her performance and give the employee an opportunity to improve performance. (See below.)

If performance problems continue and it does not appear that performance will improve to an acceptable level by the end of the rating cycle, the Rating Official should inform the employee immediately. It is important to inform CS employees that poor performance may result in the denial of the within-grade increase or a notice of unacceptable performance.

When it appears that performance is not going to improve, it is absolutely essential that the Rating Official retain all documentation - from personal observations, examples of work products, information from 360° input sources - to support any further action. It is equally important that the employee also document his/her performance. The Office of Human Resource's Labor Relations staff (M/HR/LERPM) are available to provide advice and should be consulted when documenting performance problems.

Opportunities to Improve

When performance fails to significantly meet the performance measures established for a work objective, or, for the FS, performance is significantly affected by specific skill deficiencies, the Rating Official will notify the employee in writing that the performance is unacceptable and that the employee will be given an opportunity to improve. Employees should be provided with examples of poor performance.

Civil Service:

When an employee's performance is unacceptable in one or more critical elements, a notice of unacceptable performance will be prepared and given to the employee. The notice may be given to an employee at any time during the rating cycle, so long as the employee has been under established and approved work objectives and performance measures for no less than 120 days. If the employee's

performance is unacceptable near the end of the rating cycle, and the opportunity period given to the employee to improve performance extends beyond the end of the rating cycle, the rating cycle will correspondingly be extended. At the end of the opportunity period, the employee will be given a rating of record for the rating cycle and he or she will be notified as to whether performance improved to an acceptable level. While the opportunity period will vary with the nature of the performance problem, the employee should be given no less than 30 days to improve performance. The notice should identify:

- ✓ Which work objectives are being performed at the unacceptable level;
- ✓ What is needed to perform at a level above unacceptable;
- ✓ A definition of the performance measures at the Needs Improvement rating level;
- ✓ The assistance that will be provided;
- ✓ The period of time during which performance is to improve; and
- ✓ The consequences for failing to improve performance.

If the employee improves and demonstrates acceptable performance during the opportunity period, the notice of unacceptable performance will be retained by the supervisor for one year from the date the employee received the notice. At the end of the period, if performance has not improved, action will be proposed to remove, reassign or reduce the grade of the employee.

Foreign Service:

Whenever an employee's performance is failing significantly to meet specific performance measures of any work objective or is significantly affected by specific skill deficiencies, the employee shall be notified in writing. The purpose is to provide the employee with an opportunity to improve skills and performance prior to the end of the rating cycle. The notice must identify the work objectives and performance measures the employee may fail to achieve and/or what specific skill deficiencies the employee must improve. The employee also must be told what steps the Rating Official believes are necessary to fulfill the work objectives and performance measures or improve key skills.

The written notice shall be given to the employee when it becomes clear to the Rating Official that work objectives and performance measures will not be met or when specific skills are significantly deficient. It is expected that this notice should be given to the employee by mid-cycle. However, there may be some instances where a Rating Official may not be able to determine by mid-cycle whether an employee will meet his/her work objectives and performance measures. In this case, the Rating Official must immediately notify the employee whenever it becomes evident that established work objectives and performance measures may not be met and suggest ways for meeting the work objectives and performance measures within the time remaining in the appraisal period.

X. The Forms

The Employee Evaluation program utilizes the following three forms:

Document	***Purpose***
Annual Evaluation Form (AEF)	To document work objectives and performance measures, completion of the mid-cycle review, and the annual performance evaluation. This form is submitted to M/HR.
Employee Statement (ES)	To enable employees to comment on the evaluation of their performance. This statement is attached to the AEF and submitted to M/HR.
Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW)	To provide feedback and career guidance to employees. This worksheet is reviewed by the Appraisal Committee at the same time as the AEF, and then given to the employee. It is not submitted to M/HR. In completing this worksheet, the Rating Official and Appraisal Committee should take into account the personal grade (FS) or position grade (CS) of the employee.

Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the AEF should be completed for interim evaluations. All four sections are completed for a final annual evaluation. Although space is provided for two full pages of narrative in Sections 3 and 4 of the AEF, there is no requirement to fill the entire space. It is required that the work objectives and performance measures be addressed in Section 3 and that Section 4 contain an assessment of the employee's overall performance, skill areas, potential and at least one area for improvement.

When completing the AEF and ES, it is not permissible to exceed the space allowed. The forms shall be completed in 10 point "Universal" font only, or 10 or 12 pitch type when completed on a typewriter.