

**REVISED DRAFT**

**Board for International Food and Agricultural Development**  
**and**  
**United States Agency for International Development Cooperation:**  
**Strengthening the Partnership**

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**BIFAD and USAID Cooperation:  
Strengthening the Partnership**

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## **BIFAD and USAID Cooperation: Strengthening the Partnership**

### **I. Introduction**

Higher education institutions have played an historic role in contributing to United States foreign policy objectives through their expert advice to leaders, innovative ideas and knowledge-based publishing, international education programs, basic and applied research, extension and outreach and support for international assistance. Since the inception of United States international economic assistance programs, United States higher education institutions have been important partners in carrying out the nation's development agenda. This has taken various forms and shapes over the years, including education of international participants, implementation of aid programs, research and extension activities, faculty exchanges, etc. Many higher education institutions have independently established their own links to international institutions and some have stressed the importance of association with international work to their long-term mission by creating international program departments or similar units.

The major mechanism for international involvement by higher education institutions in international development programs has been their partnership with United States government agencies, particularly the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). State governments that provide funds to universities to subsidize graduate student education are principal investors in developing countries and, therefore, important partners with universities and the federal government in international development. The relationship between USAID and higher education institutions was strengthened greatly with the enactment of legislation that created the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD). Subsequent to this legislative initiative was the establishment of a cooperative agreement between USAID and the Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development (ALO), which is comprised of the nation's six major higher education associations representing 2,600 institutions.

BIFAD provides an excellent institutional and communication link with USAID, although program collaboration between USAID and higher education institutions has fluctuated greatly over the years. The purpose of this paper is to review the reasons for the fluctuations in this relationship and, where appropriate, offer suggestions on ways to reinvigorate the partnership and strengthen cooperation between USAID and higher education institutions.

### **II. Legislative Background**

In December 1975, the Title XII amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 created the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development. The purpose was to "strengthen the capacity of United States land-grant and other eligible universities in program-related agricultural institutional development and research" in order "to apply more effective agricultural sciences to the goal of increasing world food

production.” It focused on increased and longer term support to solving food and nutrition problems of developing nations.

The first major amendment to the Title XII legislation was 25 years later. The Title XII amendment of 2000 broadens provisions of the Act “to achieve the mutual goals among nations of ensuring food security, human health, agricultural growth, trade expansion, and the wise and sustainable use of natural resources.” This new mandate more broadly defined agriculture and related sciences. It emphasized (1) global research on problems affecting food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries; (2) improved human capacity and institutional resource development for the global application of agricultural and related environmental sciences; (3) agricultural development and trade research and extension (including outreach) services in the United States and other countries to support the entry of rural industries into world markets; and (4) providing for the application of agricultural sciences to solving food, health, nutrition, rural income and environmental problems, especially in low-income and food deficit countries.

A significant change set forth in the amendment was a shift from “strengthen the capacities of United States universities” to “mobilize the capacities of United States universities” to carry out the provisions of the Act. Another important modification was expansion of participating institutions from primarily land-grant universities in the original Title XII to land-grant universities, including Native American land-grant colleges; other eligible universities; and public and (broadly defined) private partners of universities in the amendment; thereby expanding potential participation to a much larger number of higher education and other institutions. Since the Amendment expanded the term extension to include “outreach” (296(d)), it allows many eligible non-land-grant institutions to participate in the benefits of Title XII through application of their research and teaching capabilities.

As a result of the Title XII amendment of 2000, this paper will consider the broader mandate under the legislation, as summarized above. More specifically, it includes recommendations that are applicable to many in the higher education community, beyond land-grant universities, and to sectors and disciplines included in the broader definition of agriculture as defined in the Amendment (296(g)). However, it appropriately stresses cooperation related to agriculture because it remains the predominant sector of importance in most developing countries.

### **III. Recent Trends**

The last decade has seen a significant decline in USAID resources allocated for agricultural development and participant training. The number of long-term participants has decreased from 9,100 students a decade ago to the current 1,200 students. Furthermore, the USAID technical staff in agriculture or agriculture related fields has declined significantly. These shifts in USAID emphasis have had a major impact on the level of program cooperation between USAID and universities.

Universities have also felt the consequences of lower levels of resources and cooperation with USAID. Reduced USAID programs in areas of mutual interest has resulted in dissolution of university consortia, declining numbers of international program departments, decreased participation in development programs, and less international travel. This has resulted in diminished relationships with developing countries and loss of university capacity to carry out international programs. There has been a decline in the number of faculties who have participated in USAID programs and have a working knowledge of development challenges in the field. This has serious consequences on the ability to teach and conduct research on international development issues.

There are many reasons for this declining level of program cooperation during the past decade, including changes in priority of political commitment to agricultural development, overall reduced USAID budget, shift in funding away from the agricultural sector, reduced flexibility by USAID in budget allocation due to Congressional earmarks, institutional barriers and others. The USAID focus on short-term results and narrowly defined outcomes has had a major impact on the diminution of research and training, which has affected the level of collaboration with universities.

However, the past two years have brought about a positive change in the political and administrative environment regarding support for agricultural development and strengthened USAID relationships with the higher education community. The university community has led efforts to increase funds allocated for agricultural programs and to expand cooperation between USAID and universities. In addition, the ALO cooperative agreement has offered many higher education institutions additional opportunities to participate in development cooperation through linkage grants with developing country universities.

#### **IV. Convergent or Divergent Goals?**

The primary mission of USAID is to implement effective development programs that improve the quality of lives for people in cooperating countries within the United States foreign policy framework. USAID has demands and limitations placed on it by Congress. They have strategic objectives that guide program planning and are often required to achieve program results in a relatively short time. Its budget cycle, management systems, funding mechanisms and implementation tools are structured to achieve these objectives.

Higher education institutions are focused principally on educating students, producing new knowledge and ideas for improving society, and advancing the use of that knowledge through extension and outreach. The organization of these institutions, staffing, research and its governing rules and regulations are structured to accomplish these goals.

However, these goals do converge in many areas. USAID focuses a significant part of its development cooperation program on long-term efforts to strengthen human and institutional capacities, which are areas universities can make important contributions. There are many disciplines and sectors common to both USAID and universities, including agriculture, health, nutrition, population, education, environment, energy, information technology, communication, law, economics, business, trade, etc. Importantly, increased globalization and cross border issues are areas of mutual concern to both USAID and higher education. Separation of domestic and foreign issues has increasingly dissolved and international interdependence continues to expand. Such global integration has particularly affected efforts to promote and broadly share economic growth and income. The key to cooperation is identifying those specific areas of mutual interest and applying them to achieve objectives of both parties. Successful implementation of programs may require modified and flexible application of institutional management systems and regulations that affect the activities.

The convergence of goals is emphasized in the USAID document entitled Foreign Aid in the National Interest, January 7, 2003. It states: “The US should seek to influence development processes primarily by engaging in policy dialogue, producing and disseminating new knowledge, and as an advocate for trade-led growth both at home and abroad.” It goes on to say: “US foreign assistance can speed economic growth by . . . producing new knowledge about development through research and project activities. Policy dialogue and knowledge generation should be seen as mirror images that require coordinated, integrated support over long periods.” Further, it states: “Our university system is the best in the world at training scientists in basic biology and applied agricultural fields. We have the opportunity to provide the next generation of these scientists for the entire world.”

Agriculture dominates the economies of most developing countries and has a critical impact on stimulating overall national economic growth, especially rural income, as well as a major influence on poverty alleviation and agriculture-related sectors such as health and child survival, nutrition, trade and exports, and environment and natural resources. Therefore, agriculture has had an important role in the USAID - higher education partnership and it is increasingly recognized that it should remain a central element of cooperation. Many United States universities have excellent international experience and ability to support development of research and outreach systems; strengthen the capacity of national universities and other institutions; provide agricultural science knowledge and skills to support agricultural development programs; provide degree and skills training to strengthen international human resource development; and provide other knowledge-based support to developing countries. International experience of higher education institutions also has many benefits domestically to the United States, including applying relevant international knowledge to globalization and other issues, expanding interest and knowledge about development and developing countries, providing universities with access to unique international research sites, increasing the number of students trained in internationally related disciplines, enhancing bilingual and bicultural capacities in the nation, developing greater levels of international competence, and achieving higher levels of cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross-national

knowledge. Indeed, a strong international dimension is essential to the excellence of contemporary United States universities and development is one of the most important global issues.

## **V. Strengthening the Partnership**

### **A. Coordination and Communication**

The amended Title XII legislation envisions a broad strategic relationship between USAID and higher education institutions, far beyond that of the more formal contractor-contractee or grantor-grantee relationship. It states that the BIFAD Board shall participate in the planning, development and implementation of and initiating recommendations for activities. In return, the universities must demonstrate that they have the commitment, capacity, experience and ability to contribute to the international development programs. This broader strategic relationship has not yet been fully established.

The process of fulfilling the strategic aspects of the USAID – university relationship as outlined in the Title XII mandate will take considerable time and require expanded dialogue between the parties. Both need to understand the limitations of the other and focus on their common goals and capacity to support each other. For example, USAID is often driven to focus on tangible, relatively short-term program results, while universities are looking for a long-term relationship structured around programs that generate new knowledge or build human or institutional capacity. These are not intractable or mutually exclusive issues, but do require careful introspection, flexibility and understanding of the objectives and limitations of the other party.

Although there are a wide range of issues affecting cooperation between USAID and higher education institutions, improved coordination and communication is an essential requirement to strengthen the partnership. Overall coordination of university programs and liaison with the university community within USAID is not currently being adequately addressed. Avenues to enhance coordination and communication can often be achieved by removing internal institutional barriers and making structural or policy changes to resolve specific impediments.

**Recommendation A.1:** USAID should establish an Office of Coordinator of Higher Education to serve as the locus of central coordination and liaison with the higher education community. The Office should be led by a senior USAID officer (Mission Director level) with a relatively small office staff. The Office should be independent or attached to the Deputy Administrator's Office, as its functions would concern multiple bureaus and sectors. The Higher Education Community Liaison position established in 2001 currently in the Office of Education of the EGAT Bureau with its important functions should be incorporated into the Coordinator's office. Universities should consider a cost-sharing arrangement to place some of their representatives in the Coordinator's office as part of the staff. A principal function of this office would be to serve as the central liaison and communication point within USAID for the university

community, particularly BIFAD, SPARE, ALO, NASULGC (including its committees), CRSP Council and other associations. Representatives of this office should participate in meetings of these organizations, councils and committees. The office would also have the responsibility to know what USAID programs are underway involving universities and serve as an information coordination point for these programs, as well as track and manage proposals from universities. It is stressed that routine backstopping, liaison, and required USAID oversight for individual programs would remain decentralized and embedded in appropriate technical bureaus and offices. The Coordinator would serve as the principal advisor to the Administrator and senior management on matters of USAID – university relations. He/she would arrange and lead dialogue and consultation between USAID and the higher education community in areas of mutual interest.

**Recommendation A.2:** Interactive dialogue between USAID and the higher education community should be expanded. Broadly representative groups from the higher education community and USAID should engage in regular dialogue and consultation on relevant strategy papers and major planning and program documents. Strategy papers are usually available on the USAID web site and therefore accessible to universities throughout the country. The USAID office of the Coordinator for Higher Education should provide the organizational structure for establishment of a dialogue process and periodic meetings with BIFAD, ALO and NASULGC. The university community should be encouraged to voluntarily offer policy and strategy suggestions to USAID. USAID should view written and verbal inputs from the higher education community as important and give them serious consideration. Communications with universities about the broader goals and strategic direction of USAID would be enhanced by participation of senior USAID officials at regional or national university conferences, workshops and joint seminars.

**Recommendation A.3:** USAID should demonstrate its organizational commitment to cooperation with higher education institutions through specific statements and notices from the Administrator and senior managers, citing the collaboration required under Title XII and implementation of policies outlined in ADS Functional Series 200, Programming Policy, Chapter 216 regarding Higher Education Community Partnerships.

**Recommendation A.4:** Higher education institutions should show their sustained commitment to USAID cooperation and support for international programs by specifically defining the capabilities and personnel skills that it possesses, which are consistent with USAID objectives. It also needs to adjust some of its management and administrative flexibility to participate more effectively in such programs.

**Recommendation A.5:** The number of universities, colleges, non-governmental organizations and public and private institutions involved in international programs should be expanded. Opportunities exist for increasing eligible universities with the Title XII Amendment provision that defined extension to include “outreach.” It also may open more opportunities for involvement by Native American and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. BIFAD should ensure that its roster of eligible universities is current (as required under 298c of the Amendment) and USAID should encourage establishment

of state-level networks of eligible universities, non-governmental organizations, state agencies and private organizations, possibly through a pilot program.

**Recommendation A.6:** Information about successful CRSP activities should be disseminated widely within USAID as an example of excellent collaboration. This topic should become part of the university–USAID senior level management dialogue so that USAID leadership becomes aware of the important contributions of CRSPs and so that universities understand the importance of ensuring each CRSP is focused on high priority specific objectives of USAID, which evolve over time. USAID needs to demonstrate its commitment to address long-term development processes of human capacity development, public sector institutional development, and research – all areas of strength in the CRSPs. Since the CRSP model has worked well, USAID should consider emulating this model in other sectors such as health, nutrition, governance and information technology.

**Recommendation A.7:** AID/W should assist universities to increase contacts, linkages and communications with USAID missions by sending notices, arranging meetings and visits. Universities with international programs should routinely keep missions informed about their programs and make visits to mission offices.

Although Congress and AID/W make sectoral and country funding allocations, USAID field missions make most country-level program and project funding decisions. Higher education institutions do not have frequent or direct contacts with missions, unless they have an ongoing activity in that country. Universities also face problems of funding travel and providing faculty with the time necessary to establish a relationship with USAID missions. Therefore, AID/W assistance is of critical importance.

AID/W should send periodic written reminders to missions of USAID’s responsibility under Title XII. AID/W should also ensure that BIFAD, ALO and other higher education associations are informed of mission program initiatives and the associations should establish a system to routinely inform their member universities and colleges. Information about potential overseas procurement opportunities is available on the USAID web site; however, universities need to be much more aggressive in taking advantage of this information.

USAID Desk Officers should make arrangements for representatives from ALO, NASULGC (Commission on International Programs, Commission on Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy) or other associations to meet with Mission Directors during their visits to AID/W. The associations need to ensure information from these meetings is transmitted to their member universities and other appropriate entities, such as the CRSP Council.

When traveling to overseas missions, it should become part of the routine agenda of USAID technical staff, program officers, desk officers and staff of the Office of the Coordinator of Higher Education to inform missions about USAID’s Title XII

responsibilities, especially if planned mission procurement is well-matched with university capabilities.

Universities that have ongoing international programs in USAID program countries should ensure that they establish open and regular communications with USAID missions, including visits to mission offices when in the country and sending missions copies of their reports. This could also lead to potential mission buy-ins into ongoing programs.

## **B. Procurement**

In the current environment of close oversight of the procurement process, it is difficult for USAID to justify non-competitive procurement, such as new large set-asides. Congressional earmarks are also unsatisfactory to USAID because they are often inconsistent with the program objectives and the results that it is committed to achieve. Earmarks also often severely limit flexibility of USAID to rationally program its funds. Due to the slow budgetary process and short time to obligate funds at the end of the fiscal year, USAID is increasingly using procurement mechanisms that are quick and efficient. Some of the available mechanisms include the following:

a. Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC). This is a principal contractual mechanism used by AID/W to provide technical support services to AID/W and USAID missions. Although universities *do* have the ability to compete for contracts such as an IQC, they seldom bid on them or form consortia to bid on competitive contracts. Reasons for this are likely lack of knowledge and familiarity with competitive mechanisms and the cost and time required to prepare proposals. The IQC is competitive and the contract duration is for up to five years. Once a contract has been signed, there are opportunities for multiple task orders of work to be performed under the contract.

b. Annual Program Statement (APS). The APS is prepared by technical staff and sets forth a relatively broad scope of work. It is then advertised with a minimum response time of six months. Proposals received are selected through a competitive review process by technical staff. The APS offers maximum flexibility and is not tightly deadline driven, but is for only one year. This mechanism is used largely by missions. For additional information, refer to ADS Chapter 303.5.4a.

c. Sub-Contractor Partnership. Some universities find serving as a sub-contractor in partnership with a consulting firm allows them to provide staff and services focused on their comparative advantages, while leaving other tasks and administrative responsibilities to the primary contractor. This option may be particularly useful to smaller universities or colleges.

d. Leader/Associate Grant. This is a relatively new mechanism that can be either a grant or cooperative agreement. It is flexible and is normally five years with a possible extension to ten years. Once a Leader Grant (or Cooperative Agreement) is issued, Associate Grants for activities can be issued without competition, if they fit within the description of the broader Leader Grant. The Leader Grant has substantial potential to increase mission and university collaboration, in part, because of the greatly simplified method of issuing Associate Grants. For additional information, refer to Contract Information bulletin 99-10 issued on May 14, 1999.

e. Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSP). The CRSP is mandated under Title XII. The current nine CRSPs involve about 57 universities and 80 international research institutions. They conduct competitive grants for program activities. The CRSP programs have been viewed as highly successful by the participating universities, USAID and developing country partners. They have made significant contributions to capacity building and introduction of important research results to developing economies. However, issues remain on effective implementation of these programs including lack of flexibility, inconsistent levels of funds, delays in disbursement, cost-sharing amounts, management, etc.

f. Collaborative Assistance Method. This is a specialized method of contracting with eligible educational institutions under Title XII. It provides increased implementation authority and responsibility for the Title XII institution and the developing country government and host institution. It encourages collaboration among all of the parties - USAID, university and host country. It is used when long-term technical assistance is required to carry out a program, and usually includes participant training and other inputs. Competition is only among eligible Title XII institutions. For additional information, refer to ADS, Part 715.370-1, 715.370-2 and Appendix F.

g. Cooperative Agreements and Unsolicited Proposals. These mechanisms are used primarily with non-governmental organizations, including higher education institutions. Many universities are familiar with cooperative agreements and unsolicited proposals. For additional information, refer to ADS, Part 303.5.

**Recommendation B.1:** The USAID Office of Procurement officers should provide short-term training to a core of university contract and technical personnel on how to prepare a responsive proposal to USAID requests. Although the ability of universities to compete for USAID contracts declined over the past decade, they *do* have the ability to compete for contracts and their capacity to do so can be further strengthened. To encourage and support them in competitive procurement, basic proposal preparation should be offered to selective university personnel and those trained should do regional training of other university personnel. Initial training could be arranged by ALO with the Office of Procurement. Perhaps one of the associations or a

group or universities could employ a person familiar with USAID procurement who could give seminars about USAID contracts, program implementation and management and also assist offices concerned with international development procurement at several universities. There are opportunities to compete under a variety of contractual mechanisms, including those listed above.

**Recommendation B.2:** Universities need to coalesce under an umbrella organization such as the ALO or NASULGC to qualify, bid and compete on an appropriate IQC. This would provide a mechanism to utilize the services of any association member, provide flexibility to undertake a variety of tasks, and establish an instrument to receive funds at the end of fiscal years.

**Recommendation B.3:** USAID should ensure the schedule of the procurement planning process provides adequate time for universities to participate in the competitive bidding process. Time is a driving force behind USAID's procurement process. Actions are often a factor of the budget cycle, fiscal year deadlines, meeting interdependent requirements, staff availability, etc. Universities often consider USAID timeframes unrealistic and it limits their ability to be responsive in submitting proposals. It is suggested that USAID increase its efforts to do longer term planning and scheduling in carrying out the procurement process, which would allow the universities to be more competitive. This is particularly important in requesting short-term consultancies, when universities are often required to go outside the university system to meet the request.

## C. Personnel

### USAID Personnel

**Recommendation C.1:** USAID should increase the number of its technical staff, particularly in agriculture. Their knowledge is critical in drafting, analyzing, reviewing and managing technical scopes of work, program documents, strategies, evaluations and advising senior managers. Importantly, strengthened capacity of the Office of Agriculture is essential for it to be an effective voice and advocate for agricultural programs within the Agency, a primary sector of activity in many USAID program countries. The depletion of those with technical backgrounds over the past decade has had a deleterious effect on university partnerships. It is recognized that numbers of USAID staff are limited by a ceiling on numbers of overall staff in AID/W and space limitations, but priority should be given to selected technical positions. USAID technical staff can be increased through the New Entry Professional (NEP) program, IPAs or as part of the AAAS program, which can bring science fellows to the Agency.

**Recommendation C.2:** USAID should avail itself of non-tenure mechanisms to augment its technical and program staff. This includes increased use of the IPA mechanism, graduate students as volunteer interns, and exploring the establishment of an arrangement with ALO similar to the one with the AAAS. The importance for universities to understand USAID's goals, programs, regulations, limitations and opportunities, and for USAID to have the same knowledge about universities cannot be

underestimated. The strength of this partnership is based upon knowledge of the other party and open communication. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to exchange personnel.

The Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) is a mechanism that can be used for temporary assignment of university personnel to USAID. USAID should use the IPA mechanism to expand the number of university personnel assigned to selected positions in USAID. This applies to RSSAs in AID/W and PASAs on overseas assignments. Universities need to help identify appropriately qualified faculty or other personnel and ensure that there are incentives for them to undertake such assignments. The 1994 Farm Bill allows USDA to arrange such assignments on a non-competitive basis and for 10 percent of the overhead to be provided to the participating university. Furthermore, the arrangements can be made directly between bureaus in USAID (not the procurement office) and departments, schools or other sub-entities at universities (not the university contracts office).

Although USAID is unable to pay interns, many American graduate students are interested in short-term assignments in USAID. The intern program is of mutual benefit to both universities and USAID and the students are often stimulated to consider careers in international development. It is recognized that foreign students are ineligible for internships in the Federal Government, however, universities should encourage highly qualified eligible graduate and undergraduate students to volunteer for internships at USAID and value their experience by giving them credit or other inducements.

USAID should explore the possibility of establishing an arrangement with ALO similar to the one they have with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which permits junior professionals to work at USAID for a year or more and receive remuneration.

### **University Personnel**

Although universities request that their collaboration with USAID be on a long-term basis, they often have difficulty in assigning faculty and other staff on long-term overseas assignments to participate in management and implementation of USAID programs. USAID often cannot afford senior tenured faculty on a long-term basis and many universities do not provide junior faculty with credit toward tenure or promotion and it is not common for them to publish while overseas. Since absence from campus is often an issue, faculty members usually spend only a limited duration on international assignments (with a few notable exceptions) or, alternatively, individuals are employed from outside the university community. This is inconsistent with the goal of many universities to strengthen their capacity and experience in international development and their vision to expand knowledge of globalization. This issue is of particular importance when universities are involved extensively in direct implementation of USAID programs.

**Recommendation C.3:** Universities should consider modification of tenure and promotion rules to include time worked by faculty on international development programs as credit toward promotion and tenure status at their home institutions. Assignments involving USAID international development projects should be seen as being advantageous to the university through the experience and knowledge gained by its faculty members.

**Recommendation C.4:** When possible, USAID should design and structure programs involving university faculty that allows incumbents to advance toward achieving tenure. During program planning and development, USAID should make every effort to structure programs that include long-term faculty positions in a way that enables individuals to meet or advance towards basic tenure requirements.

**Recommendation C.5:** USAID should explore with the USDA Office of International Programs strategies and mechanisms to support training and maintenance of a cadre of international development specialists in the university pipeline.

#### **D. Participant Training**

The AID/W participant training office has declined in recent years due in part to the sharp reduction of numbers of long-term international students from approximately 9,100 a decade ago to 1,200 now. Short-term training has continued to increase significantly, due to its relatively low cost, ability to target needed program skills and ease of implementation. Statistical data on students should improve markedly with the introduction of a new computerized tracking system, which is currently underway. USAID should renew efforts to expand the number of long-term participants, as those educated under these programs frequently become important managers of sector programs and national leaders. Long-term education is the most critical element of human and institutional capacity development, provides a foundation for economic development, promotes important foreign policy objectives, and is a key part of the BIFAD mandate. Currently, the major agricultural and environmental USAID supported degree education is carried out within the CRSP framework.

**Recommendation D.1:** USAID should institute a new participant training policy initiative that includes a major increase in the numbers of long-term international participant trainees. This will require strong personal support from the Administrator and senior USAID managers. Additional funding should be requested from Congress for international educational degree programs, an essential ingredient for economic growth and development.

**Recommendation D.2:** USAID should endeavor to increase the number of participants through such means as ensuring that consideration is given to long-term educational activities in the design of new projects and programs, developing new projects that focus primarily on long-term participant training, increasing support for distance learning and “sandwich” programs, and seeking fellowships from foundations,

private firms and other donors. The initiative by BIFAD for “Renewing USAID Investment in Global Long-Term Training in Agriculture and Rural Development” can serve as a model for programs that target participant training. Consideration should be given to adapting and using the CRSP model in new projects. Graduate students should be encouraged to conduct project related research and write dissertations on subjects associated with project activities.

**Recommendation D.3:** All universities with USAID funded participant trainees should be required to use the USAID “TraiNet” computerized database system in order to have common and accurate statistical information. In cooperation with BIFAD and ALO, USAID should support training of university personnel in use of “TraiNet.”

## VI. Closing Notes

There are many opportunities for strengthening the partnership between USAID and the higher education community. Some can be achieved by undertaking the suggestions outlined in this paper. Many simply depend upon the positive commitment and interest of individuals and institutions involved in the relationship.

Several collaborative opportunities have or are about to present themselves and need to be acted upon. For example, the new USAID agricultural strategy is an excellent entry point for a dialogue that should be the focus the attention of all parties. In addition, USAID has renewed interest in Youth Development Programs and the land grant universities have extensive experience in working with 4-H clubs through their agricultural extension services. This appears to be a potential match of interests. Another program, the Millennium Challenge Account could provide extensive opportunities for international work by universities. Furthermore, mission buy-ins have not been fully explored by leaders of ongoing programs. Mission and university liaison can be developed and enhanced. In a variety of programs, there is significant potential for new contracts or grants through collaborative efforts between USAID and universities.

In sum, revitalization of the USAID–university partnership can be accomplished with a higher level of commitment by both parties, by strengthened and more regular communication between them, and by a willingness to make adjustments to remove internal institutional barriers and facilitate the needs of each other where there are common objectives and mutually supporting capacities.

**Next Steps:** A final suggestion is that a small joint BIFAD and USAID working group be established to explore ways to strengthen their partnership. Implementation of the recommendations in this paper could serve as a focus for the initial discussion. Some are administrative and could be carried out with mutual agreement of the parties, while others will require review and approval of the Administrator.

## Summary of Recommendations

### A. Coordination and Communication

**A.1** USAID should establish an independent Office of the Coordinator of Higher Education to serve as the locus of central coordination and liaison. **Action:** USAID (with support from BIFAD and ALO)

**A.2** Interactive dialogue and consultation between USAID and the higher education community should be expanded. USAID managers should participate in higher education activities and the Coordinator's Office should sponsor policy and strategy meetings that include higher education officials. **Action:** USAID, BIFAD and ALO

**A.3** USAID should make known its commitment to collaboration with higher education institutions through specific statements and notices from the Administrator and senior managers. **Action:** USAID

**A.4** Higher education institutions should demonstrate their commitment to cooperation with USAID by defining the capabilities they possess that match USAID requirements, show additional management and administrative flexibility, and update its roster of eligible universities. **Action:** BIFAD and higher education institutions.

**A.5** The number of universities, colleges, non-governmental organizations, public and private institutions involved in international development should be expanded. **Action:** USAID, BIFAD and universities

**A.6** Information about successful CRSP activities should be disseminated widely within USAID as an example of excellent collaboration. **Action:** USAID, BIFAD, CRSP Council

**A.7** AID/W should assist universities to increase contacts, linkages and communications with USAID missions by sending notices, arranging meetings and visits. Universities with international programs should routinely keep missions informed about their programs and make visits to mission offices. **Action:** USAID and universities

### B. Procurement

**B.1** USAID Office of Procurement should train a selective group of university contract and technical personnel on preparation of responsive USAID requests for proposals. **Action:** USAID, BIFAD and ALO

**B.2** Universities should bid on appropriate Indefinite Quantity Contracts through one of its umbrella organizations. **Action:** BIFAD and NASULGC

**B.3** USAID should ensure the schedule of the procurement planning process provides adequate time for universities to participate in the competitive bidding process. **Action:** USAID

## **C. Personnel**

### **USAID Personnel**

**C.1** USAID should increase the number of its technical staff, particularly in agriculture. **Action:** USAID

**C.2** USAID should avail itself of non-tenure mechanisms to augment its technical and program staff. This includes increased use of the IPA mechanism, graduate students as volunteer interns, and exploring the establishment of an arrangement with the ALO similar to the one with the AAAS. **Action:** USAID

### **University Personnel**

**C.3** Universities should consider modification of tenure and promotion rules to include time worked by faculty on international development programs as credit toward promotion and tenure. **Action:** Universities

**C.4** When possible, USAID should design and structure programs involving university faculty in a way that allows incumbents to advance toward achieving tenure. **Action:** USAID

**C.5** USAID should explore with USDA mechanisms to support education of international development specialists to create a pipeline for making critical skills available for USAID programs. **Action:** USAID

## **D. Participant Training**

**D.1** USAID should institute a new participant training policy initiative that includes a goal for a major increase in the number of participant trainees. **Action:** USAID

**D.2** USAID should endeavor to increase the number of participants through such means as ensuring that consideration is given to long-term educational activities in design of new projects, developing new projects that focus primarily on long-term participant training, increasing support for distance learning and “sandwich” programs, and seeking fellowships from foundations, private firms and other donors. **Action:** USAID

**D.3** Universities with USAID funded students should be required to use the USAID “TraiNet” database system to have common and accurate statistical information. **Action:** Universities and USAID