



Research tells us that when an employee succeeds it is often because they possess the right combination of behavioral competencies and technical skills necessary for success. In international assignments it is imperative that we screen for more than technical skills as the fellow must adapt not only to a new manager and organization, but often to a different country and culture. In order to find the best fit for your opening it is important to look for the right match in terms of:

- Technical skills
- Behavioral skills
- The organization's culture (USAID and your particular unit or mission)
- Your management style
- The candidate!

### Technical Skills

Before interviewing your candidates it is advisable to review the SOW and determine:

- What are the 5-7 key areas or responsibilities that the fellow will be responsible for?
- What technical skills are necessary to get the job done?
- What should the successful candidate have in their background that will help them do this job?
- What will you expect the fellow to accomplish in the first six months of the job?
- What will you expect the fellow to accomplish by the end of the fellowship?
- What will the job look like when it is being done successfully?

### Behavioral Competencies

In addition to considering the technical skills and experience of the successful candidate, it is also necessary to think through what behaviors, knowledge, or motivational factors will determine success in this job. A way to assess a candidate's competency is to ask specific questions geared to uncovering that behavior. A short list of competencies that PLP has established as being important for success in the fellowship program includes:

- Teamwork
- Influence skills
- Ability to build collaborative relationships
- Flexibility
- Cultural awareness
- Initiative

Additional behavioral competencies may be important in USAID fellowship positions. A more comprehensive list and sample questions are included for you to review as guidelines. This is not an exhaustive list, but it may be helpful for you to determine what the 5-7 key behaviors are that are most important in this position. Once you determine what they are, you can pose questions that will uncover those competencies.

### LIST OF BEHAVIORS

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS

#### Organizational Fit

Also important is determining what the organizational culture is like (USAID and your specific office or mission), and drawing out the candidate's adaptability to your organization.

#### Organizational Culture

- How is the office/mission structured? (distinct roles and responsibilities or a less-defined structure)
- Is the office/mission open to new approaches and change?
- Does the office/mission focus more on tasks or people?
- Why have people left this organization in the past?
- How would you describe the communication style of the office/mission?

#### Management Style Compatibility

Consider also your management style and what kind of employee will work best with your style. For example, If you are a manager who will have a remote relationship with this fellow, you will need someone who is self-directed, writes and communicates well, but does not need constant approval and attention.

#### Management Style

- Do you have a remote relationship or do you want the employee to check in daily, weekly, monthly?
- Do you give verbal feedback frequently?

- Do you allow the employee to set own pace and goals?
- How much authority are you willing to delegate?
- How would you describe your management style?

Once you have determined what you and USAID require of this position, it is important to understand the candidate's preferences and expectations to ensure that you will be making a good match for all concerned. By giving the candidate sufficient time to ask questions, you may learn a lot about their concerns and you may uncover basic gaps in their understanding of the scope of work.

#### Candidate Preferences

- Based on this interview, what is your perception of this job?
- How is it similar or different from other positions you have held?
- What questions do you have for us?
- What support (from USAID/PLP/others) will you need to perform well in this position?
- What have been your most frustrating experiences in your past positions?
- What are your references likely to say about you?
- What is your timeframe in terms of leaving your current position?

Now that you have explored the key result areas and behavioral competencies and you have assessed the organizational culture, your own style of managing people, and the needs of the candidate, you are ready to put together your questions for the interview and review them with the interview team. It is important that each member of the interview team is clear about what to look for during the interview process so that each can contribute an assessment of the candidate based on the same criteria. After the interview, each interview team member should complete the interview evaluation sheet. The HAR will want to review all the scores and discuss the ratings with the interview panel before making the final selection.

### [SAMPLE INTERVIEW EVALUATION SHEET](#)



## **SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES:**

### **1. Technical Expertise**

(Experience in Family Planning/Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, or other technical area)

- Starting from your first position in FP/RH and ending with your most current, please tell us about your experience with ...
- What do you consider your greatest accomplishment in each position?
- What were some of the obstacles you had to overcome in each position and how did you overcome them? What was the result?
- What do you consider to be the biggest issue in ...today?
- How do you keep current in state-of-the art knowledge about FP/RH ?

### **2. Teamwork**

- Can you tell me about an experience you have had as part of a team that was successful? What was your role and the roles of others on the team? Why do you think the team was successful?
- Have you had to lead a group of diverse people or groups towards a particular goal? What did you do? What was the result?
- How do you get cooperation from groups or people you do not have direct supervision over?

### **3. Program Management**

- Tell us about your experience in designing, managing, or implementing programs in developing countries.
- What countries have you worked in? What were the particular challenges of that country? How did you resolve them?
- Have you held positions where you were responsible for program management including design, funding, management of staff, and resources? If so, what was the most satisfying aspect of this job? What parts were most difficult for you?
- How do you track progress of programs you have worked on? What are the benchmarks you use to determine progress?

4. **Communication (oral)** *This skill can be observed and evaluated during the interview: does the candidate establish eye contact, listen well, respond to questions in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner? Does the candidate establish rapport with the interviewers?*

- Communication with a variety of agencies (governmental and non-governmental) is important in this position. Can you give us an example of your communication style with these agencies?
- Were there any particular challenges with the agencies? How did you resolve them?
- How did you communicate results and work progress to your superiors in your past position? How often did you meet with your superiors? How often with staff members?

**Communication (written)**

- What kinds of reports have you written? Who was the audience? What was the result?
- Can you give us copies of documents you have written? Can you send us an email following this interview with your ideas on ...?

5. **Presentation Skills**

Tell us about a time when you had to present your ideas to an audience. Who was the audience? How well was the presentation received? What types of questions or objections did the audience have to your ideas?

6. **Interpersonal Awareness/ Cultural Awareness**

- What experience have you had with people from developing countries? How do you make yourself understood when you do not speak the language fluently?
- How do you prepare yourself for an assignment overseas?
- What do you know about the history of the country (where the position is located) and the culture that is important and relevant to the assignment there?
- Can you tell us of a time when you were having difficulty communicating with someone? What did you do to resolve the communication issue? What was the result?

7. **Influence Skills**

- Can you tell us about a time when you had to convince someone or a group of people of something which they did not agree with? How successful were you? Why or why not were you successful?

8. **Building Collaborative Relationships**

- This position requires a great deal of collaboration—with others at USAID, with governmental agencies, NGO's and the Ministry of Health in country. Can you tell us about how you worked with these types of agencies in the past. Were there any particular challenges with those agencies? If so, how did you overcome them and establish effective working relationships?
- Tell us about a relationship with an NGO or host governmental agency that you are particularly proud of.

## 9. Information Gathering

- In this position you will have the opportunity to work with missions and the ongoing work being done there. How will you go about learning about the work being done there?
- What is your process for gathering relevant information from people? How do you get the information you need when someone is reluctant to provide the information? Can you give us an example?

## 10. Analytical Thinking

- What is one of the most difficult problems you have had to solve in one of your positions? How did you go about resolving the issue?
- In this position you will have the opportunity to analyze and evaluate the work being done in the overseas mission, tell us about the process you will undertake to review and evaluate the work being done. Have you done this before? What was the result?

## 11. Conceptual Thinking

- What differences and similarities have you found in each of the positions you have held?
- How would you explain USAID's approach to ...?

## 12. Strategic Thinking

- What do you consider as the major technical challenge facing countries in this geographical region?
- What would your approach be to developing a program in the face of these issues?
- How would you go about convincing people in USAID or on the Hill about the need for a particular approach or program to support your goals in the mission?

## 13. Initiative

- Can you tell us about one of the ideas or concepts that you have promoted to senior management. Why did you believe it was important? What happened?
- Tell us about a time when you took the initiative to change something that had been the same for many years. How did you promote the change? Was it successful? Why or why not?
- Can you give us an example of a project that you were responsible for starting. What did you do? Did it work out?

## 14. Results Orientation

- What goals would you set for yourself in this position?
- How would you measure your success in this position?

- Tell us about your last position...what were your personal and professional goals? Were they met? Why or why not?
- How do you measure the results of others work that you have supervised?
- Have you had an experience where some of the people you were working with were not meeting the expectations of the project? What did you do? How did it work out?

#### **15. Monitoring and Evaluation Skills**

- What do you look for when evaluating a program? What criteria do you look for?
- How do you monitor progress of projects?
- What is your process for keeping track of other people's work on the team?
- Tell me about a program evaluation you have done. What was the process?
- What recommendations did you make? How well were the recommendations accepted? What was the result?

#### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

- **Why do you wish to leave your current position?**
- **What frustrates you in a job?**
- **What has your experience been with USAID?**
- **What support would you need to get this job done well?**  
**From PLP? From USAID? From Others?**
- **What questions do you have for us?**
- **What is your timeframe in terms of leaving your current position?**
- **Who are your references?**
- **What are your references likely to say about you?**



## Population Leadership Program

### **BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES:**

Sample list of competencies necessary in USAID fellowship positions:

- 1. Technical Expertise:** Ability to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skill in particular technical area (family planning/reproductive health; HIV/AIDS) and the commitment to continued study in state of the art knowledge.
- 2. Teamwork, Team Leadership** Ability to work cooperatively as part of a team or work effectively in leading team towards positive outcomes.
- 3. Program Management** Ability to lead people and resources towards successful outcomes.
- 4. Communication-Oral and Written** Ability to speak and write clearly.
- 5. Presentation Skills** Ability to speak persuasively and credibly to groups.
- 6. Interpersonal Awareness/Cultural Awareness** Ability to notice, interpret, and anticipate others' concerns and feelings.
- 7. Influence Skills** Ability to gain the necessary support for ideas, proposals, projects, and solutions.
- 8. Building Collaborative Relationships** Ability to develop, maintain, and strengthen partnerships with others, NGOs, governmental organizations, foreign ministries.
- 9. Information Gathering** Ability to identify information needed to clarify or assess situations.
- 10. Analytical Thinking** Ability to tackle a problem by using a logical, systematic, sequential approach.
- 11. Conceptual Thinking** Ability to find effective solutions by taking a holistic, abstract, or theoretical perspective.
- 12. Strategic Thinking** Ability to develop and propose long-term approaches for problem resolution.
- 13. Initiative** Ability to identify what needs to be done and doing it before the situation requires it.
- 14. Results Orientation** Ability to focus on the desired result of one's own work or one's unit work, setting challenging goals, focusing effort on the goals, and meeting or exceeding goals.
- 15. Monitoring and Evaluation Skills** Ability to track progress of projects and to assess, compare, and contrast the success or failures of various approaches.

Senior Technical Advisor, Monitoring and Evaluation HIV/AIDS Program

PLP PROGRAM CRITERIA	PLP SCORE	PLP COMMENTS	HA SCORE	HOST AGENCY COMMENTS
Master's degree in relevant field or equivalent degree/certification (10 pts.)				
Minimum five years of experience post graduate in FP/RH with three years directly involved in evaluation of programs (10 pts)				
Overseas experience (5)				
<b>TOTAL: PLP CRITERIA (25 PTS.)</b>				

POSITION CRITERIA	PLP SCORE	PLP COMMENTS	HA SCORE	HA COMMENTS
<b>EXPERIENCE: (50 PTS.)</b>				
Experience in developing , administering and monitoring evaluation programs 20 pts.				
Research and reporting skills and experience (15 pts.)				
Experience working with Highest level of US Mission office, host country Ministries, Ambassadors, USAID donors ( 15 points)				
<b>SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES (25 pts)</b>				
Strong computer skills: Word processing, database, statistics, spreadsheets				

(15 Pts.)				
Excellent communication skills (5 pts)				
Strong teamwork, presentation and interpersonal skills (5 pts.)				
<b>TOTAL: POSITION CRITERIA (75 PTS.)</b>				
<b>OVERALL SCORE (100 PTS.)</b>				