Accountability Mechanism Report to Congress - 2022

Pursuant to the Joint Explanatory Statement (JES) accompanying Division K of P.L. 116-260, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2021 ("SFOAA"), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is providing you an update of the Agency's progress in implementing an accountability mechanism . USAID continues work on designing an accountability mechanism that considers the existing statutory/regulatory requirements for accountability, such as the Office of Inspector General (OIG). This report includes progress towards developing the Agency accountability mechanism in 2022.

USAID notified Congress of funding to develop an accountability mechanism in CN #235, dated August 31, 2022. As USAID proceeds with creating a robust and comprehensive accountability mechanism, including drafting Standard Operating Procedures, we look forward to continued dialog with all partners.

Led by a full-time dedicated employee to serve as the Agency Accountability Mechanism Official (AMO), who's hiring is in progress, USAID intends to implement its Agency Accountability Mechanism (AAM) Program consistent with international best practices, including features such as:

 (1) a compliance review function to ensure project adherence to environmental, social, and other policies and standards;
 (2) a dispute resolution function;
 (3) an advisory function to report lessons learned;
 (4) adequate staffing for the mechanism, and
 (5) transparent status reporting.

The AAM program will be shared broadly with implementing partners, NGOs, and other international partners and posted on the USAID website to facilitate communicating and responding to concerns. Additionally, per USAID's Agency Equity Action Plan, USAID is also considering a "Beneficiaries Bill of Rights," which would help communicate the existence of the accountability mechanism.

In 2023, to further the goals of USAID's AAM program , we plan to :
  ● Complete the hiring of a dedicated FTE AMO to implement and manage the program.

- Convene the AAM program AM Working Group, which currently meets bimonthly, to drive progress towards these goals

- Finalize the pilot AAM program standard operating procedure (SOP.)
- Consult with external stakeholders on the accountability mechanism SOP and revise as needed.
- Establish linkages between the accountability mechanism and the Agency's Enterprise Risk Management, Issue Owner Policies and Agency Learning Agenda.
- Implement a pilot based on the SOP to confirm the best breadth of the accountability mechanism and the resources needed to implement effectively. (As part of the AAM program pilot, USAID will use the accountability@usaid.gov already established for the accountability mechanism, allowing for a continuity of communication with accountability mechanism staff while the pilot is rolled out.)
- Develop a plan to ensure sustained funding to develop, operationalize, and staff the accountability mechanism.
- Communicate and conduct outreach to implementing partners, USAID staff, and project-affected communities on the existence and function of the accountability mechanism.

USAID is committed to implementing an accountability mechanism that serves the needs of our partners and beneficiaries.