

USAID's Industry Liaison

External Communications and Engagement Strategy

FY 2020

Situational Analysis of Partner Communications

Over the last five years, USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) has taken a proactive approach towards communicating with partners -- creating content, engagement opportunities, and avenues to reach target audiences. Some of the highlights include: the [annual M/OAA Progress Report](#), the live-feed [Business Forecast and quarterly engagements](#), [revamp of content on USAID.gov](#), public release of [Procurement Executive Bulletins](#), launch of the [@USAIDBizOpps](#) twitter handle, the creation of the [Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Updates email distribution list](#), and more. These efforts have helped to lay a foundation of communications channels and open dialogue between USAID and its partners.

Since January 2018, the Agency has refocused efforts on engaging with partners through the [Effective Partnering and Procurement Reform \(EPPR\)](#) initiative. Proactively engaging with partners has been a pillar of EPPR. With the launch of the Agency's first-ever [A&A Strategy](#) in December 2018, the need to communicate and engage with partners has only increased. As the Agency reforms its business processes, communicating the new way of doing business is vital to the success of the A&A Strategy.

With the launch of the [New Partnerships Initiative](#) in March 2019, the Agency will need to double down on its efforts to not just engage with its existing partners but to focus on identifying new and underutilized partners. These partners include U.S. small businesses, community and faith-based organizations, local and locally established partners, and other NGOs. With specific funding opportunities targeting new partners, opportunities exist to engage with these groups more effectively.

The "[How to Work with USAID](#)" section of USAID.gov is in need of significant work. Over time, with a number of Agency priorities, the content has been reorganized and shifted creating confusion as to where to look for information. In addition, while there exists a large library of content on how to work with USAID on the Agency's website, much of it is out of date. For existing partners, the Agency has built a robust library of content under the "[Resources for Partners](#)" section. However, these sections of the website do not take into account best practices for dynamic web-based content.

Finally, the M/OAA Communications Director has been appointed as USAID's Industry Liaison as outlined in the [fourth Myth Busting memo](#) issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP). The purpose of the Industry Liaison is to serve as an entry point into USAID. With this new role, M/OAA has an increased mandate to expand its current partner communications activities.

Landscape Analysis of Partners and Funding

Each year, USAID obligates over [\\$17 billion through A&A mechanisms](#)¹ to development programs in over 100 countries. Typically, around one-third of funding is obligated through contracts, another third through cooperative agreements, and the final third through grants. In addition, the Agency works in a wide range of sectors, including: global health, education, environment, humanitarian assistance, democracy and governance, agriculture, and economic growth.

The Agency works with a diverse range of more than 4,000 organizations on a yearly basis, including small and large businesses, U.S. and non-U.S. based organizations, for-profit and not for profit organizations, universities, community and faith-based organizations, and diaspora groups.

In FY 2019, the Agency obligated more than \$790 million to U.S. small businesses, the most ever for the Agency.

One of the guiding principles of the new A&A Strategy is to diversify USAID's partner base, which is also a part of [EPPR's Agency Priority Goal \(APG\)](#).

Another APG is related to [Category Management](#) CM, which seeks to consolidate services provided to the government in centralized contracts. As the Agency looks to diversify its partner-base, balancing the goals of CM will require clear communications on how organizations can work with USAID.

Objectives

1. To create dynamic and engaging content that informs new organizations on how to partner with USAID and strengthens existing partners relationship with the Agency.
2. To support the Agency Priority Goals of expanding the Agency's partner-base and Category Management, by developing engagement strategies that connect, inform, and engage new partners to funding opportunities.
3. To ensure that existing Agency partners have information, tools, and resources needed to effectively manage and deliver development results.

Engagement Tactics

Supporting USAID priorities and achieving the objectives outlined in the strategy will involve a multifaceted approach to engagement. This communications strategy outlines a series of engagement tactics that build on current best practices and take advantage of technology to reach a wide range of audiences. Just as important as engaging digitally, is face to face interaction between the Agency and its partners. The tactics outlined below are intended to create a regular drumbeat of opportunities for USAID to communicate to its partners, but also provides opportunities for organizations to communicate with USAID.

¹ M/OAA FY 2018 Progress Report

Business Forecast Engagement

The Agency will continue its quarterly best practice of soliciting partners questions on the Business Forecast and holding a conference call to discuss major themes around the Forecast. The quarterly Forecast calls help to level the playing field for new, small, and underutilized organizations by providing them opportunities to gain insight into upcoming Agency procurement opportunities. Following the current practice, the Agency will post answers to all of the Forecast questions along with a recording of the call on USAID's [Business Forecast page](#).

Timeline: Quarterly

Ask the Procurement Executive Call

USAID will reinstitute the [Ask the Procurement Executive](#) conference call. The purpose of this call is to answer non-funding related to questions on how to work with USAID. Following the practice of the Business Forecast call, questions and responses, as well as a recording of the call will be posted on USAID's [Ask the Procurement Executive page](#).

Timeline: Biannual

USAID Industry Liaison Webpage and Email Box

To provide an entry point for organizations wanting to work with USAID, we will establish an Industry Liaison webpage and email box (IndustryLiaison@usaid.gov). The purpose of this webpage will be to explain the role of the Industry Liaison and provide contact information for organizations wanting to reach out to USAID.

Timeline: December 2019

Social Media Engagement

The [@USAIDBizOpps](#) Twitter handle was launched in 2017. The tool has been used for sharing updates, links to funding opportunities, and tips and resources on how to work with USAID. USAID will continue to use the tool to share updates with the partner community. In addition to Twitter, the Agency will review other social platforms, such as LinkedIn, to determine if they are better suited to communicate information on acquisition and assistance. Additionally, to support partner engagement, the Agency's main social media handles will be used to promote resources for working with USAID.

Timeline: Ongoing

Partner Association Engagements

The Agency has developed strong relationships with the platforms and associations that represent many of USAID's partners. The partner associations are an important relationship for USAID and provide opportunities to engage with large groups of partners. USAID will continue its practice of meeting in person with partner associations on a bi-annual basis.

Timeline: Biannual

New Partner Meetings

To support the Agency's goal of engaging with New Partners, USAID will hold bimonthly new partner meetings. These meetings will be opportunities for new organizations to meet with Agency staff and traditional partners, and learn more about the work of USAID.

Timeline: Start in January 2020

Webinars

To reach a wider audience outside of Washington, DC, and to provide opportunities for new and existing partners to engage on a range of topics, the Agency will begin hosting partner webinars. These webinars will cover a range of topics that are of interest to Agency partners.

Timeline: Start in November, Will take place at a minimum bimonthly

A&A Updates Newsletter

We will launch a bimonthly A&A Updates Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform partners of major updates, policy changes, etc. within USAID's acquisition and assistance world. USAID currently has an email distribution list of partners which is used on an ad hoc basis. Developing the A&A Updates Newsletter will create a regular drumbeat of communications with Agency partners.

Timeline: First issue in December 2019

Content Development

One of the objectives of this communications and engagement strategy is to develop content that helps new organizations understand how to work with USAID and strengthens the Agency's relationship with existing partners. Outlined below are the key priorities for content development in FY 2020.

Progress Report on Acquisition and Assistance

M/OAA will continue to produce its annual fiscal year end progress report, highlighting how the Agency's acquisition and assistance dollars have been obligated. In addition, the report will highlight reform efforts and updates on major A&A trends at USAID.

Timeline: December 2019 for FY 2019 Report

Reorganization of USAID.gov

The Agency will reorganize the [Work with USAID](#) section of USAID.gov. The purpose of this reorganization is to make it more user-friendly and accessible to organizations that are unfamiliar with

the Agency. As a part of this reorganization, the Agency will conduct an analysis to determine what additional information should be added to USAID.gov.

Timeline: Second Quarter FY 2020

Revamp of How to Work with USAID Trainings

The Agency will begin revising all of the [How to Work with USAID](#) trainings that are currently available on USAID.gov. The revamping of these trainings will focus on making more dynamic trainings, with more easily digestible information. In addition to revising the current training offerings, the Agency will consult with its partners to identify additional courses.

Timeline: Throughout FY 2020

Partner Perspectives

The Agency will launch a new content series called Partner Perspectives. These stories will focus on best practices for working with USAID throughout the procurement and implementation process. The goal of these stories is to highlight the diverse ways to partner with USAID and give new and underutilized partners perspectives from existing USAID partners.

Timeline: Launch Second Quarter FY 2020 with stories published at least every other month

#TermTuesday Content

M/OAA will revive its weekly [#TermTuesday](#) digital content with a focus to explain the terms organizations need to know about working with USAID. This content will be posted on the [@USAIDBizOpps](#) twitter handle and will be shared with other Agency social media platforms to further amplify.

Timeline: December 2019

#WorkwithUSAID Content

M/OAA will create a series of evergreen digital content to be used by Agency social media handles with information on how to work with USAID. This content will be accessible for all Agency social media handles and will include infographics as well as information on where to find funding opportunities, trainings, and more. The purpose of creating this content is to help reach the Agency's digital audiences with tools and resources for partnership.

Timeline: January 2020

Fact Sheets and Infographics

USAID will develop Fact Sheets and Infographics on key A&A processes, policies, and updates to help communicate how it does business with partners.

Timeline: Ongoing

Work with USAID Video Clips

To help explain partnership opportunities with USAID, the Agency will create a series of short informational videos. These videos will be evergreen content that can be shared across digital platforms, including the Agency's website, social media handles, and YouTube channel.

Timeline: Third Quarter 2020

Digital Work with USAID Guidebook

To support organizations that are wanting to work with USAID, a digital "Work with USAID" guidebook will be developed and available for download on USAID.gov. This book will provide information and resources on all of the requirements to receive funding.

Timeline: Fourth Quarter 2020

Key Agency Stakeholders Executing Strategy

M/OAA will ultimately be responsible for the implementation of this communications strategy. However, M/OAA will partner with the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), the Global Development Lab, the Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives (CFOI), the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), and others to execute the activities outlined in the document. In addition to these offices, this strategy will be enhanced by other ongoing efforts and responsibilities within M/OAA such as the Agency's A&A Ombudsman, the Acquisition Innovation Advocate, A&A Labs, and Professional Development and Training and Policy Divisions.

Additional Information

Questions related to the strategy can be directed to USAID's Industry Liaison at IndustryLiaison@usaid.gov.