



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## ADS Chapter 461

# Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Performance Management & Development Programs

Partial Revision Date: 05/01/2019  
Responsible Office: HCTM/CPE  
File Name: 461\_050119

**Functional Series 400 – Human Resources**  
**ADS 461 – Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Employee**  
**Performance Management & Development Programs**  
**POC for ADS 461: Martha Lappin, (202) 712-4104, [mlappin@usaid.gov](mailto:mlappin@usaid.gov)**

## Table of Contents

<b><u>461.1</u></b>	<b><u>OVERVIEW .....</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
<b><u>461.2</u></b>	<b><u>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES .....</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>461.3</u></b>	<b><u>POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES .....</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>
<b><u>461.3.1</u></b>	<b><u>Policy and Procedures for Foreign Service Employees .....</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>
<u>461.3.1.1</u>	<u>FS Employee Performance &amp; Development Program (EP&amp;D) Details .....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>461.3.1.2</u>	<u>FS EP&amp;D Cycle .....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>461.3.1.3</u>	<u>FS EP&amp;D Quarterly Conversation Record (QCR) .....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>461.3.1.4</u>	<u>Annual Review Conversation .....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>461.3.1.5</u>	<u>Foreign Service/Senior Foreign Service Skills Framework .....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>461.3.1.6</u>	<u>Foreign Service Skills Assessment .....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>461.3.1.7</u>	<u>Foreign Service Annual Performance Evaluation Form .....</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>461.3.1.8</u>	<u>Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR) .....</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>461.3.1.9</u>	<u>Submission of Annual Performance Materials .....</u>	<u>17</u>
<b><u>461.3.1.10</u></b>	<b><u>Soliciting Input from 360 Degree Input Sources .....</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>
<u>461.3.1.11</u>	<u>Exceptional Performance .....</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>461.3.1.12</u>	<u>Employee Conduct Problems .....</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>461.3.1.13</u>	<u>Training .....</u>	<u>19</u>
<b><u>461.3.2</u></b>	<b><u>Policy and Procedures for Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Employees ..</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>
<u>461.3.2.1</u>	<u>SFS Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) Details .....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>461.3.2.2</u>	<u>SFS Employee Evaluation (EEP) Cycle .....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>461.3.2.3</u>	<u>Rating Officials .....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>461.3.2.4</u>	<u>Appraisal Committees (ACs) .....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>461.3.2.5</u>	<u>SFS Annual Performance Evaluation .....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>461.3.2.6</u>	<u>Performance Plans .....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>461.3.2.7</u>	<u>Work Objectives .....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>461.3.2.8</u>	<u>Performance Measures .....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>461.3.2.9</u>	<u>Review and Approval of Performance Plans .....</u>	<u>24</u>
<b><u>461.3.2.10</u></b>	<b><u>Progress Reviews .....</u></b>	<b><u>24</u></b>
<u>461.3.2.11</u>	<u>Employee Self-Assessments .....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>461.3.2.12</u>	<u>360 Degree Input Sources: Employee Submission of Names .....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>461.3.2.13</u>	<u>360 Degree Input Sources: Agreeing on 360 Degree Input Sources .....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>461.3.2.14</u>	<u>360 Degree Input Sources: Soliciting Input from 360 Degree Input Sources .....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>461.3.2.15</u>	<u>Foreign Service/Senior Foreign Service Skills Framework .....</u>	<u>26</u>

<u>461.3.2.16</u>	<u>Foreign Service Skills Assessment .....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>461.3.2.17</u>	<u>SFS Appraisal Input Form (AIF).....</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>461.3.2.18</u>	<u>Employee Statement.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>461.3.2.19</u>	<u>Gathering Appraisal Information .....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>461.3.2.20</u>	<u>Final AEF.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>461.3.2.21</u>	<u>AC Review of the Final Evaluation.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>461.3.2.22</u>	<u>Submission of Annual Evaluation Forms .....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>461.3.2.23</u>	<u>Exceptional Performance.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>461.3.2.24</u>	<u>Deficient Performance .....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>461.3.2.25</u>	<u>Managing Performance Problems .....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>461.3.2.26</u>	<u>Training.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>461.3.2.27</u>	<u>Waiver of the Final AEF for Senior Foreign Service .....</u>	<u>31</u>
<b><u>461.4</u></b>	<b><u>MANDATORY REFERENCES .....</u></b>	<b><u>31</u></b>
<b><u>461.4.1</u></b>	<b><u>External Mandatory References .....</u></b>	<b><u>31</u></b>
<b><u>461.4.2</u></b>	<b><u>Internal Mandatory References .....</u></b>	<b><u>31</u></b>
<b><u>461.4.3</u></b>	<b><u>Mandatory Forms.....</u></b>	<b><u>32</u></b>
<b><u>461.5</u></b>	<b><u>ADDITIONAL HELP .....</u></b>	<b><u>32</u></b>
<b><u>461.6</u></b>	<b><u>DEFINITIONS.....</u></b>	<b><u>32</u></b>

## ADS 461 – Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Employee Performance Management & Development Programs

### 461.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The Foreign Service (FS) Employee Performance & Development Program (EP&D) and Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) are two separate performance management programs through which USAID involves its employees in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of the Agency's mission and goals by:

- Establishing clear linkages among the Agency's goals, Operating Unit strategic objectives, and employees' work;
- Improving communications about the relationship between organizational objectives and individual career goals and performance;
- Developing the capacity of employees to perform;
- Engaging employees in ongoing feedback and coaching to motivate them to work more effectively, improve their skills, and prepare themselves for increased responsibilities;
- Correcting deficiencies and providing both positive and constructive feedback; and
- Providing a basis for cash awards, bonuses, and pay adjustments based on performance, and other non-monetary awards for performance.

Employee performance and development is a shared responsibility between employees and their supervisors/Rating Officials.

This chapter applies to all FS and SFS employees under the authority of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#). This includes FS and SFS employees assigned outside of the Agency who have reemployment rights to USAID, as well as Civil Service (CS) and other employees serving on non-career Foreign Service limited appointments. Any Rating Official of an FS or SFS employee who rates or reviews FS employees' performance is required to follow this guidance.

This chapter is not applicable to Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), Personal Service Contractors (PSCs), Civil Service (CS) employees (including Schedule C employees and employees whose appointments are administratively determined (AD)), Presidential Appointees, Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, or experts and consultants under the authority of [5 USC 43](#) and [5 CFR 430](#). See [ADS 462, Employee Evaluation Program, Civil Service](#) for the performance management program for CS employees.

**ADS 463, Foreign Service Promotion Eligibility Requirements and Performance Boards** contains information on the FS and SFS Promotion Boards and Performance Standards Board.

The sections immediately below cover the policies and procedures for FS employees, and are followed by the policies and procedures for SFS employees (see [section 461.4](#)).

## **461.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Effective Date: 05/01/2019

### **The following are the Primary Responsibilities for Foreign Service EP&D:**

**a.** The **Principal Officer of an Operating Unit** is responsible for managing his or her Operating Unit's EP&D program. This includes communicating objectives, goals, policies, procedures, and deadlines; ensuring compliance with the program; designating employees to play particular roles in the program; and keeping the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management/Center for Performance Excellence (HCTM/CPE) abreast of important information concerning the EP&D program.

**b.** The **Rating Official** is responsible for working closely with individual employees throughout the performance appraisal cycle/period to create work and skill development objectives, provide feedback, revise expectations and objectives as needed, and evaluate performance. The Rating Official must provide informal feedback and coaching throughout the performance period, but must meet with each employee at least once per quarter and document the date of the conversation in the Quarterly Conversation Record (QCR). The Rating Official collects feedback from 360 sources (e.g., peers, subordinates, superiors, etc.) familiar with an employee's work to inform their assessment of an employee's performance and skill proficiency at least once per rating cycle, but preferably throughout the year at natural points in the work or program cycle. **The Rating Official is prohibited from directly or indirectly soliciting feedback from implementing partners on the performance of Contracting/Agreement Officers (COs/AOs) and Contracting Officer's Representatives/Agreement Officer's Representatives (CORs/AORs).** These actions culminate at the end of the performance appraisal cycle/period in the Rating Official's responsibility to:

- 1) Complete an assessment of the employee's skill proficiency (based on the FS/SFS Skills Framework and documented in the Foreign Service Skills Assessment);
- 2) Determine whether the employee's overall performance is satisfactory/unsatisfactory (documented in the FS Annual Performance Evaluation);
- 3) Review and sign the employee-prepared Annual Accomplishment Record or document the reasons for declining to sign; and

**4) Conduct the Annual Review Conversation (date documented in the EP&D QCR).**

In most cases, the Rating Official is the employee's direct supervisor. For employees in long-term training, the Rating Official is located in the Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation. For employees in non-traditional assignments, the Rating Official is identified in the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and the receiving organization. For employees in language training, the Rating Official is the rater of record for the most recent assignment of 120 days or more.

**c.** The **Employee** is responsible for actively participating in their own performance and development planning from beginning to end. This includes helping to develop and document their work and skill development objectives, identifying and working to address professional development priorities, working to meet expectations and objectives, actively participating in review and feedback discussions, documenting quarterly conversation dates in the QCR, and completing their Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR) at the end of the performance appraisal cycle/period.

**d.** The **Reviewing Official** is responsible for reviewing and either concurring or not concurring with a determination by a Rating Official that an employee is performing at an unsatisfactory level at the end of the performance period (as documented in the FS Annual Performance Evaluation form). The Reviewing Official is also responsible for deciding whether to concur or not to concur with a Rating Official's determination about whether an employee failed a Performance Improvement Plan. The Reviewing Official is normally the supervisor of the employee's Rating Official, but may in some cases be a Principal Officer of the Operating Unit, or his/her designee.

**e.** The **Administrative Management Specialist (AMS) of each Bureau and Independent Office (B/IO), Executive Officer (EXO) or other employee designated by the Principal Officer** is responsible for providing guidance to employees and their supervisors on EP&D requirements and the ePerformance System. In addition, they will track adherence to requirements and ensure that Annual Accomplishment Records (AAR) submitted via email are uploaded into ePerformance and Annual Performance Evaluations (APE) submitted via email are submitted to HCTM/CPE for retention in the employee's Official Personnel File (eOPF). The AMS, EXO, or other employee designated by the Principal Officer must also ensure that the approved Operating Unit Context Statement is uploaded to the appropriate location in ePerformance.

**f.** The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management/Center for Performance Excellence (HCTM/CPE)** is responsible for the EP&D program's formulation, monitoring, modification, and training. Additionally, as appropriate, HCTM/CPE is responsible for ensuring compliance with all aspects of the program and determining what action is appropriate in cases where required procedures are not followed.

**g.** The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management/Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR)** is responsible for supporting supervisors when employee

misconduct issues arise.

**h.** The **Office of General Counsel/ Ethics and Administration (GC/EA)** is responsible for reviewing Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) and providing legal support to HCTM and supervisors regarding all aspects of this ADS chapter.

**The following are the primary responsibilities for the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Employee Evaluation Program:**

**i.** The **Principal Officer** of an Operating Unit is responsible for managing his or her Operating Unit's performance evaluation program. This includes communicating objectives, goals, policies, procedures, and deadlines; ensuring compliance with the program; designating employees to play particular roles in the program; and keeping the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management/Center for Performance Excellence (HCTM/CPE) abreast of important information concerning the Employee Evaluation Program (EEP).

**j.** The **Rating Official** is responsible for working closely with individual employees throughout the review cycle to create performance plans, evaluate performance, provide feedback, and revise plans as appropriate. These actions culminate in the Rating Official's responsibility to provide completed Annual Evaluation Forms (AEFs) to the Appraisal Committee and HCTM/CPE.

**k.** **Employees** are responsible for participating in their own evaluation from beginning to end. This includes helping to develop their performance plans, working toward the goals specified in the plan, evaluating themselves, and participating, orally and in writing, in review and feedback sessions.

**l.** The **Appraisal Committee (AC)** reviews and discusses AEFs with Rating Officials, provides input to the evaluation, and formally approves the AEF. The FS/SFS Skills Assessment must be completed, shared with the employee, and made readily available for possible AC review. ACs will review the Skills Assessment if requested by the employee or Rating Official, and may review the Skills Assessment if they choose. Throughout the evaluation process, the Appraisal Committee and individual members of the committee ensure that Rating Officials comply with the policy directives and required procedures in this chapter. The Appraisal Committee provides assistance to, and helps to resolve conflicts for Rating Officials and employees.

**m.** The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Center for Performance Excellence (HCTM/CPE)** is responsible for this program's formulation, monitoring, modification, and training. Additionally, as appropriate, HCTM/CPE is responsible for action against those who fail to comply with this program, including critical letters when appropriate.

**n.** The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management/Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR)** is responsible for supporting supervisors and employees when

the employee is not performing to performance standards or when misconduct issues arise.

**o.** The **Office of General Counsel/ Ethics and Administration (GC/EA)** is responsible for reviewing PIPs and providing legal support to HCTM and supervisors regarding all aspects of this ADS chapter.

### **461.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Please note that this section is broken down into policy directives and required procedures for (1) Foreign Service employees and (2) the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Employee Evaluation Program.

#### **461.3.1 Policy and Procedures for Foreign Service Employees**

##### **461.3.1.1 FS Employee Performance & Development Program (EP&D) Details**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Implementation of the EP&D Program begins with the Principal Officer of each Operating Unit. The Principal Officer:

- Establishes overall Operating Unit strategic objectives and communicates to employees the relationships between Agency goals and the Operating Unit's strategic objectives;
- Communicates information on the EP&D process to all employees in the unit, including establishing and publicizing internal deadlines and procedures for completing each phase of the process;
- Emphasizes the importance of supervisors and employees engaging in ongoing feedback and coaching, addressing performance deficiencies, and establishing work objectives and expectations that are relevant to the Operating Unit's priorities and appropriate to the employees' grade levels to guide, motivate, develop, and assess employees over the course of the performance appraisal cycle/period;
- Ensures the Operating Unit's adherence to Agency policies, procedures, and schedules governing the EP&D program; and
- Notifies HCTM/CPE when employees in the Operating Unit fail to adhere to the policies, procedures, and schedules of the EP&D program (i.e., a supervisor fails to hold quarterly conversations, an employee fails to cooperate in the EP&D process, etc.).

In turn, HCTM/CPE in coordination with HCTM/ELR initiates appropriate action against Agency management officials and employees who fail to comply with the policies,

procedures, and schedules of the EP&D program. HCTM/CPE also monitors implementation and evaluates the effectiveness of the EP&D program and adjusts policies, procedures, guidelines and training as needed.

To understand the policies and procedures for each part of the EP&D cycle, employees must first familiarize themselves with all aspects of the program. See [ADS 461mab, EP&D Guidebook for Supervisors](#) and [ADS 461mac, EP&D Guidebook for Employees](#) for detailed guidance, tip sheets, and resources for implementing the program.

#### **461.3.1.2 FS EP&D Cycle**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

USAID has established a performance appraisal cycle for the FS EP&D process that runs for one year from April 1 through March 31. The Rating Official for the employee must complete and sign the Annual Performance Evaluation (APE) anytime between March 1 and April 30. However, the APE may be completed up to 120 days prior to the end of the cycle if an employee will be on extended leave or in language training at the end of the rating period. In these cases, the Rating Official should ensure that the APE is completed before the employee leaves. The annual performance appraisal cycle may be extended up to 60 days in order to allow an employee to complete a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) before they receive their official rating of record for the performance appraisal cycle. Supervisors may not initiate a PIP during the last 30 days of a rating cycle.

#### **461.3.1.3 FS EP&D Quarterly Conversation Record (QCR)**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The Rating Official and employee will use the EP&D QCR in the automated performance management tool, ePerformance, throughout the year to record work objectives, skill development objectives, notes from quarterly conversations, and dates of those conversations.

The QCR contains the three following sections:

- **Section 1 – Employee Information**

The employee completes this section at the beginning of the performance appraisal cycle/period, or ensures that pre-populated fields are correct.

- **Section 2 – Objectives**

During the first quarter of the performance appraisal cycle/period or start of a new assignment/supervisor, the employee and Rating Official work together to set work objectives and one skill development objective, and through a conversation, clarify expectations around how and when the work will be accomplished. The objectives can be easily modified throughout the year to reflect changing priorities and circumstances.

- **Section 3 – Quarterly Conversations**

On a quarterly basis, the employee and Rating Official meet to discuss priorities, progress, and performance. The QCR for each quarter includes text boxes with conversation prompts the employee and supervisor may use to frame their conversation and record notes. Once the conversation has taken place, the employee enters the date of the conversation in the appropriate block, and both parties must confirm the date before the conversation for that quarter will be recorded as having been completed. If either party does not agree that a substantive conversation took place on the date entered, they need to schedule a second conversation. If either party fails to confirm a conversation date by the last day of the quarter, the record for that quarter reverts to “read only” and the status will reflect that one or both did not confirm a conversation date.

- a. **Objectives**

Objectives are prepared jointly by the Rating Official and employee, and consist of statements about performance expectations and results to be achieved.

In most cases, the Rating Official and employee draft objectives and establish expectations during the first Quarterly Conversation of the performance period. This conversation can occur any time between April 1 and June 30. However, anytime an employee receives a new supervisor or starts a new assignment, the supervisor and employee should meet within 30 days of the start date to discuss expectations and objectives. Throughout the performance appraisal cycle, objectives should be updated or modified as needed to reflect new priorities or changing circumstances. Objectives are intended to serve supervisors and employees by guiding work activities and performance conversations; they are not included in the documentation submitted to the Promotion Boards.

Employees in language training, long-term training, and assignments with non-USAID supervisors are not required to complete the QCR during these assignments, but are encouraged to seek quarterly feedback on an informal basis.

There are two types of objectives: Work-related Objectives and Skill Development Objectives.

- 1) **Work-related Objectives:** No more than two work-related objectives are recommended, although more may be appropriate if an individual has multiple separate work streams or projects. The Rating Official and employee should agree on what makes sense based on the nature of the work and the context in which the work is performed; however, the supervisor has the final decision on the objectives. Objectives can be long term and/or short term.
- 2) **Skill Development Objectives:** Employees and their Rating Officials must define at least one skill development objective for the performance appraisal

cycle/period. This objective may relate to the development of technical/substantive expertise per the backstop-specific competencies contained in the [Agency's Competency and Proficiency Catalog](#), or the improvement of a skill or subskill in the, [ADS 461mad, FS/SFS Skills Framework](#). Feedback received by the employee at the end of the last performance appraisal cycle/period will be particularly relevant to establishing the skill development objective for the new performance appraisal cycle/period.

See [ADS 461mab, EP&D Guidebook for Supervisors](#) and [ADS 461mac, EP&D Guidebook for Employees](#) for further instructions on developing and using objectives.

#### **b. EP&D Quarterly Conversations**

The EP&D quarterly conversations are mandatory informal meetings between the employee and Rating Official. Although it is expected that conversations will occur frequently throughout the performance appraisal period, at least one conversation per quarter is mandatory and the date of the conversation must be documented in the QCR. There are no set requirements for the format or topics of discussion during these check-ins, other than the requirements that (a) objectives are discussed in the first quarter of the appraisal period or new assignment, and (b) performance during the appraisal period, including skill proficiency levels, is discussed in the last quarter of the performance appraisal period. General quarterly conversation topics may include:

- Performance and progress to date;
- Circumstances that may warrant adding or modifying objectives, expectations, or priorities;
- 360 feedback that the supervisor may have received, and any recent Multisource Rating summaries;
- Performance problems that have occurred and possible remedial actions;
- Developmentally-oriented topics, such as:
  - a. Opportunities to deepen skills in the FS/SFS Skills Framework.
  - b. Strategies to master technical competencies.
  - c. Training courses to be taken.
  - d. Alignment of work with USAID's mission and strategy.
  - e. Behaviors to start/continue/stop in order to achieve results.
- Challenges that the employee has encountered; and

- Resources or support that the employee may need from the supervisor or the work unit to succeed in achieving work objectives and meeting expectations.

The QCR provides a convenient place to record notes from these conversations.

Consistent performance feedback is the best way to prevent performance problems from developing. In most cases, an open line of communication between the Rating Official and employee can resolve or improve performance problems. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily against established work objectives and expectations or is displaying deficiencies in specific FS skill areas or technical backstop competencies, the Rating Official must conduct a counseling session with the employee and inform him/her that his/her work is not meeting standards. If an employee continues to fail to meet performance expectations during the performance appraisal cycle/period, the Rating Official should consult with HCTM to establish that the issue is performance and not misconduct, and to confirm that a formal PIP is warranted.

#### **461.3.1.4 Annual Review Conversation**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The Annual Review Conversation occurs during March or April (NLT April 30). To prepare for this conversation, the supervisor should review notes on performance (quarterly conversations, 360 feedback, etc.) throughout the year, and consider how best to encourage honest self-reflection and capture lessons learned that can support the employee's professional development in the future.

The employee should also reflect on past performance and future career goals in preparing for the conversation, in addition to completing his/her Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR). The employee and supervisor should discuss the AAR before the employee submits it to the supervisor for signature.

The supervisor must also complete the [FS Skills Assessment form \(AID 461-3\)](#) during the Annual Review Conversation and confirm the date of the conversation in the QCR. The automated performance management tool, ePerformance, tracks the completion status of the end-of-cycle forms (the AAR and the Annual Performance Evaluation) that must be reviewed and signed by the supervisor.

Ongoing or systemic performance issues should not be addressed for the first time in an end-of-year review conversation unless the Rating Official only became aware of the issues in the current quarter.

See [ADS 461mab, EP&D Guidebook for Supervisors](#) and [ADS 461mac, EP&D Guidebook for Employees](#) for further guidance on the Annual Review Conversation and the required end-of-cycle forms.

#### **461.3.1.5 Foreign Service/Senior Foreign Service Skills Framework**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials must use the [ADS 461mad, FS/SFS Skills Framework](#) to prepare for annual review conversations and completion of the FS Annual Performance Evaluation form. The FS/SFS Skills Framework consists of four skill areas with three to five subskills each. The four skill areas are:

- Leadership,
- Results and Impact Focused,
- Professionalism, and
- Talent Management.

The FS/SFS Skills Framework defines all the skill and subskill areas, and provides proficiency indicators that define how each subskill should be demonstrated across the grade levels.

#### **461.3.1.6 Foreign Service Skills Assessment**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The [FS Skills Assessment Form \(AID 461-3\)](#) must be completed by the Rating Official at least once per performance appraisal cycle (NLT April 30). The Rating Official must use the FS/SFS Skills Framework in completing this evaluation. The FS/SFS Skills Framework defines all the skills and subskills and the proficiency indicators that define how each subskill should be demonstrated across the grade levels.

The FS Skills Assessment contains the two following sections:

- **Section 1 – Employee Information**  
The Rating Official completes this section with the appropriate information.
- **Section 2 – FS Skills Assessment**  
The Rating Official completes this section and rates the employee's performance against the standards for his/her personal grade.

The purpose of the FS Skills Assessment is to identify the extent to which an employee is performing at the level expected for his/her personal grade as described in the FS/SFS Skills Framework, and to provide a foundation for discussing the employee's growth and development. This assessment is not part of the official rating of record and it is not provided to the Promotion Board.

HCTM requires employees and supervisors to discuss the employee's career development goals and complete an Individual Learning and Training Plan (ILTP) annually. For efficiency and timeliness, supervisors should consider having this discussion in conjunction with establishing the employee's objectives in the first

quarterly conversation of the rating cycle. The staff in the Center for Professional Development (HCTM/CPD) is available to offer assistance to supervisors and employees in identifying training and learning activities for the ILTP. For more information please refer to [ADS 458, Training and Career/Professional Development](#).

#### **461.3.1.7 Foreign Service Annual Performance Evaluation Form**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The online [FS Annual Performance Evaluation form \(AID 461-1\)](#) must be completed by the Rating Official and Second Level Reviewer (if required) no later than April 30 as part of the annual evaluation. The employee must have been in a Foreign Service position in the Agency for a minimum of 120 days in the rating cycle in order to receive an Annual Performance Evaluation. If the employee has been in a Foreign Service position for less than 120 days, an Annual Performance Evaluation is not required. The Annual Performance Evaluation may be completed up to 120 days prior to the end of the cycle if an employee will be on extended leave or language training at the end of the rating period.

The FS Annual Performance Evaluation form contains the three following sections:

- **Section 1 – Employee Information**

The Rating Official completes this section with the appropriate information or corrects any pre-populated information.

- **Section 2 – Annual Overall Evaluation**

The Rating Official and Second Level Reviewer (if required) completes this section, which includes the rating of the employee's overall performance throughout the performance appraisal cycle/period. The rating scale in Section 2 includes two options:

- 1) **Satisfactory:** A rating of Satisfactory indicates that the FSO consistently met work expectations established for his/her role, made substantive contributions to the work unit, and consistently demonstrated the level of proficiency required for his/her grade on the FS skills and subskills throughout the performance appraisal cycle/period.
- 2) **Unsatisfactory:** A rating of Unsatisfactory indicates that the FSO did not meet many of the established work expectations for his/her role, his/her contributions to the work unit were minimal or deficient based on his/her grade and position, and/or the FSO did not consistently demonstrate the level of proficiency required for his/her grade on the FS skills and subskills throughout the performance appraisal cycle/period.

An Unsatisfactory rating may only be provided if the employee has received at least one counseling session, was placed on a formal

Performance Improvement Plan, and received an unsatisfactory assessment at the end of the PIP. In this case, the Rating Official must provide a narrative explanation, including a rationale for the unsatisfactory rating and which actions were taken to address poor performance.

- **Section 3 – Signatures for Annual Performance Evaluation**

The employee, Rating Official, and Second Level Review (if required) complete this section.

Prior to signing, an Annual Review Conversation must be held in which the employee and supervisor discuss the employee's performance against work expectations, achievements, contributions, strengths, and skill development areas. Additional guidance on preparing for and engaging in this discussion can be found in [ADS 461mab, EP&D Guidebook for Supervisors](#) and [ADS 461mac, EP&D Guidebook for Employees](#).

The employee signs and dates to acknowledge that: 1) an Annual Review Conversation was held with his/her Rating Official and the ratings from the FS Skills Assessment were discussed, 2) the employee reviewed the overall evaluation with the Rating Official and provided comments (if applicable), and 3) the employee reviewed comments from the Second-Level Reviewer (if applicable). By signing, the employee is not necessarily indicating concurrence with the comments.

The Rating Official signs and dates to indicate that the Skills Assessment and overall evaluation were discussed with the employee and the rating accurately represents the employee's performance during the performance appraisal cycle/period.

If the Rating Official gives the employee an unsatisfactory rating, the dates of the PIP must be included and a Second Level Reviewer (typically the Rating Official's supervisor) must indicate whether he/she concurs with the rating. The Reviewer should indicate concurrence or non-concurrence based on a review of PIP documentation, the quarterly check-in documentation, FS Skill Assessment, and the employee's AAR. If the Reviewer does not concur, a narrative explanation is required, but non-concurrence does not overturn the unsatisfactory rating from the Rating Official

All signatures must be obtained by April 30 after the end of the performance appraisal cycle/period.

#### **461.3.1.8 Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR)**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The [Annual Accomplishment Record, \(AAR\) \(AID 461-5\)](#) documents the employee's individual accomplishments and contributions over the course of a performance

appraisal cycle. If the employee had the same supervisor for the entire year, there will be only one AAR for that year, completed at the end of the performance appraisal cycle/period and signed by April 30. However, any time there is a change of supervisor and the employee will be working under that supervisor for at least 60 days before the end of the performance appraisal cycle, a new AAR must be started. The intent is to ensure that the supervisor responsible for the employee when accomplishments and contributions were completed is the supervisor who signs the AAR. If the employee is in an assignment or under the supervision of a Rating Official for less than 60 days during the rating cycle, an AAR is not required for that period of time.

The requirement to complete an AAR for assignments of 60 days or more applies to employees in long-term training and non-traditional assignments. It does not apply to employees in language training. Employees in language training are not expected to complete an AAR for that time period.

Instructions for obtaining signatures from supervisors without access to USAID systems are included in ePerformance.

The AAR consists of the following four sections:

- **Section 1 – Employee Information**  
The employee completes this section with the appropriate information.
- **Section 2 – Position Information**  
The employee completes this section, providing brief descriptions of exceptional or unusual challenges faced, position duties and responsibilities, and the number of employees supervised, by hiring category. More general information about the Missions or B/IOs will be included in the annual Operating Unit Context Statement that Missions and B/IOs will prepare each year at the end of the performance cycle.
- **Section 3 – Significant Contributions and Accomplishments**  
The employee completes this section to briefly (no more than 75 word limit per block, first-person language) describe significant contributions and accomplishments, including contributions through management or support of key operational activities. It is expected that an employee will have up to five accomplishments for a full performance appraisal cycle/period, so AARs covering a shorter time period are not expected to include five accomplishments, although the number to include (up to five) is left up to the employee.

Employees and Rating Officials are encouraged to discuss and revise entries as needed until both parties agree that Section 3 accurately represents the employee's significant contributions and accomplishments during the performance appraisal cycle/period.

If the employee and Rating Official cannot come to an agreement on the accomplishments described, then the Rating Official can decline to sign and indicate the reason in the block provided; the employee can then also provide additional input.

- **Section 4 – Signature**

Once Sections 1, 2, and 3 have been completed and reviewed by both the employee and the Rating Official, the Rating Official must sign and date the AAR. The signature indicates agreement that the AAR accurately represents the employee's significant contributions and accomplishments while he/she was under the supervision of the Rating Official during this performance appraisal cycle/period. If the Rating Official declines to sign the AAR, he/she must check the box indicating this, and provide an explanation.

If the Rating Official declines to sign in Section 4, the employee has an opportunity to provide a short statement with relevant information.

#### **461.3.1.9 Submission of Annual Performance Materials**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The two forms that must be signed by supervisors in the Employee Performance and Development process (the AAR and APE) can be completed, signed, and stored in ePerformance. When an employee or Rating Official does not have access to ePerformance, forms may be downloaded, signed, scanned, and returned via email to the employee's EXO or AMS officer. The AMS, EXO, or other employee designated by the Principal Officer must then follow procedures outlined in ePerformance to ensure that forms are uploaded to the appropriate location in ePerformance. Annual Performance Evaluations (APE) received via email must also be forwarded to HCTM/CPE for retention in the employee's Official Personnel File (eOPF). The AMS, EXO, or other employee designated by the Principal Officer must also ensure that the approved Operating Unit Context Statement is uploaded to the appropriate location in ePerformance.

HCTM/CPE will annually issue an Agency Notice with instructions and due dates for submitting materials for the Promotion Boards. The Principal Officer of an Operating Unit is responsible for ensuring that all annual performance materials are submitted to HCTM/CPE in a timely fashion.

Any AARs or APEs submitted after the prescribed due date must include a statement explaining the reasons for the late submittal. HCTM/CPE reviews these statements to determine whether the delays have been adequately explained. If HCTM determines that the delay was not justified, HCTM/CPE must refer the matter to the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, who will decide what action should be taken.

**461.3.1.10 Soliciting Input from 360 Degree Input Sources**

Effective Date: 05/01/2019

Rating Officials are expected to solicit timely, specific and developmentally oriented feedback from a variety of sources throughout the year. They must focus their questions on job-relevant discussions of work and skills and ensure that feedback providers have been in a position to observe and assess employees in key situations. It is the Rating Official's responsibility to reconcile any differences of opinion and determine which viewpoint is most likely to be valuable for the employee's learning and development. **Rating Officials are prohibited from directly or indirectly soliciting feedback from implementing partners on the performance of COs/AOs and CORs/AORs.** It is not appropriate for the Rating Official to convene a meeting of 360 degree input sources to discuss an employee in order to resolve conflicting input.

Rating Officials' notes on feedback from 360 degree input sources are personal working notes. There is no requirement to maintain these notes or provide them to the employee. However, if significant performance problems are identified during the process that will result in an employee failing to meet his or her work objectives or being deficient in one or more skill areas, then the Rating Official must maintain supporting documentation obtained from all sources.

**461.3.1.11 Exceptional Performance**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials are encouraged to provide timely and appropriate feedback and recognition to employees who demonstrate exceptional performance. Feedback is always best provided as soon after the action or occurrence as possible. Recognition may be provided through acknowledgement of the special act or contribution privately to the employee, publicly in staff meetings, and/or through the Agency's awards program (see [ADS 491, USAID Incentive Awards Program](#) and Mandatory Reference [491maa, Descriptions of Incentive Awards](#)). Recognition for sustained exceptional performance can also be made through the awards program and in the Rating Official's written statement on the Promotion Input Form when employees are eligible for promotion. [ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service](#) provides the policies and process for Meritorious Step Increases.

**461.3.1.12 Employee Conduct Problems**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Misconduct is generally a failure to follow a workplace rule (whether written or unwritten), including, but not limited to those related to hours of work, treatment of fellow employees, use of systems and property, and ethics rules. Although it is common for performance and misconduct to be interrelated, it is important to recognize the difference between the two. On issues of misconduct, the Rating Official must seek guidance from the Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR) staff.

**461.3.1.13 Training**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

All Agency employees will have access to training and information about the EP&D program. Information includes a guidebook. See [ADS 461mab, EP&D Guidebook for Supervisors](#) and [ADS 461mac, EP&D Guidebook for Employees](#) describing the operation of the program and the roles and responsibilities of employees and Rating Officials. In addition to this and Agency-sponsored supervisory and managerial courses and other learning activities, B/IO and Missions may request special briefings or training sessions on the program from HCTM.

**461.3.2 Policy and Procedures for Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Employees****461.3.2.1 SFS Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) Details**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Implementation of the Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) for SFS begins with the Principal Officer of each Operating Unit. The Principal Officer:

- Establishes overall Operating Unit strategic objectives and communicates to employees the relationships among Agency goals and the Operating Unit's strategic objectives;
- Communicates information on the evaluation process to all employees in the unit, including establishing and publicizing internal deadlines and procedures for completing each phase of the process;
- Emphasizes the importance of providing ongoing feedback and coaching and the value of establishing and implementing performance plans that are relevant to the Operating Unit's priorities and appropriate to the employees' grade levels to guide, motivate, develop and assess employees over the course of the rating cycle;
- Ensures the Operating Unit's adherence to Agency policies, procedures, and schedules governing the EEP; and
- Notifies HCTM/CPE when employees in the Operating Unit fail to adhere to the policies, procedures, and schedules of the EEP.

In turn, HCTM/CPE initiates appropriate action against Agency management officials and employees who fail to comply with the policies, procedures, and schedules of the EEP. HCTM/CPE also formulates employee evaluation policies, procedures, and guidelines after monitoring the operation and evaluating implementation of the EEP, and the related pay and awards systems affected by this program.

To understand the policies and procedures for each part of the evaluation cycle, employees must first familiarize themselves with all aspects of the EEP.

**461.3.2.2 SFS Employee Evaluation (EEP) Cycle**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

USAID has established an appraisal period for Senior Foreign Service employees of one year, which runs from April 1 through March 31. The Rating Official must complete written performance appraisals at the end of the rating cycle to be submitted no later than April 30.

The minimum appraisal period is 120 days. All employees who are on an active performance plan of 120 days or more will receive an [Annual Evaluation Form \(AEF\) Senior Foreign Service, AID 461-6 Form](#) at the end of their evaluation period.

**461.3.2.3 Rating Officials**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The Principal Officer of the Operating Unit designates the Rating Official. For SFS Officers serving as Mission Directors or AID Representatives at bilateral posts, the Rating Official is the Ambassador. Rating Officials play an essential role in the EEP since they accomplish the following:

- Develop work objectives and performance measures for each rated employee;
- Observe, evaluate performance, and provide ongoing feedback to each employee;
- Provide negative feedback in a timely manner and in writing;
- Conduct at least one mandatory mid-cycle review with each employee;
- Review the employee's self-assessment narrative and work products, gather additional performance information from relevant sources (AIFs and other 360 degree input), draft Sections 5 and 7 of the AEF (AID Form 461-6) [FS Skills Assessment form \(AID 461-3\)](#) and discuss both forms with the Appraisal Committee (AC), if requested, except at the end of the rating cycle;
- Submit the AEF to the AC for review and signature; and
- Discuss the final AEF and FS Skills Assessment form with each rated employee.

Rating Officials and ACs have the authority to request the Principal Officer to forward to HCTM/CPE for appropriate disciplinary action the name of any employee who fails to adhere to the policies, procedures, and schedules of the EEP.

**461.3.2.4 Appraisal Committees (ACs)**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Appraisal Committees (ACs) provide an organizational perspective of an employee's performance. The committees also ensure that all AEFs are fair and objective. An AC or AC Representative is involved in every aspect of the EEP, if requested, but service by the AC members is mandatory at the end of the rating cycle.

### **AC Functions**

ACs are responsible for the following:

- Reviewing and signing performance plans, when requested by either the Rating Official or employee, and ensuring that work objectives and performance measures are reasonable and attainable;
- Reviewing substantive changes and signing mid-cycle performance reviews, when requested by the Rating Official or employee;
- Assisting Rating Officials with employee performance problems, when requested by the Rating Official or employee;
- Reviewing and discussing draft AEFs and FS Skills Assessment Form with Rating Officials, and recommending changes. This review includes:
  - 1) Ensuring that Rating Officials obtained 360 degree input and used it appropriately;
  - 2) Ensuring that Rating Officials reviewed and considered employee self-assessments; and
  - 3) Ensuring that evaluations are properly prepared and are equitable and objective; and
- Recommending changes to AEFs. When the AC and Rating Official cannot agree on appropriate language, the Principal Officer must attempt to resolve differences. If the Rating Official and AC still do not agree, the AC may document its recommendations on the AEF, Section 8b.

### **Who is on the AC?**

ACs are established at the beginning of the rating cycle and must include at least three members, not including Rating Officials (Rating Officials who are members of an AC must recuse themselves as members and may not participate in AC deliberations when the AC reviews the AEFs they prepared as Rating Officials and when the AC reviews their own AEF).

The Principal Officer for each Operating Unit must establish the AC. The Officer must appoint only U.S. Direct-Hire career employees to ACs. Foreign Service Limited employees and probationary Civil Service employees are not eligible to serve on ACs.

Career candidates and FS employees appointed under the Recall authority (Section 308 of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)) are eligible to serve on ACs, but there can only be one of each per AC and neither can serve as the committee chairperson.

At least one member of the AC must be familiar with the work of the rated employee whose performance the AC will review. AC members also must be familiar with the EEP process and able to serve as objective reviewers of the AEF documents. Large Operating Units may establish more than one AC to effectively review all employees.

#### **461.3.2.5 SFS Annual Performance Evaluation**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) ([AID Form 461-6](#)) is used to evaluate the performance of all SFS employees. The Rating Official and AC prepare, approve, and sign all AEFs.

See ADS [461maa, EEP Guidebook Part 1, Senior Foreign Service](#), for detailed information on the annual evaluation process for Senior Foreign Service Officers.

When completing the AEF, do not exceed the space allowed. Complete the forms in 10 point Arial font only.

The AEF consists of the following eight sections:

##### Section 1 – Administrative Data

Rating Officials complete this section, providing basic information, at the beginning of the rating cycle.

##### Section 2 – Authentication of Final Annual Evaluation

Rating Officials complete this section by having appropriate parties sign to show that the final AEF has been put in place.

##### Section 3 – Role in the Organization

Rating Officials describe the employee's role in the organization in terms of organizational setting, continuing responsibilities, and functions within the Operating Unit, including resources managed.

##### Section 4 – Performance Plan

Rating Officials establish one to three work objectives and no more than one to two performance measures for each work objective.

##### Section 5 – Formal Mid-Cycle Review

Rating Official documents mid-point progress review meeting, which includes any changes that have been made to work objectives and performance measures.

### Section 6 – Description of Accomplishments

Employees complete this section by describing their key contributions and accomplishments during the rating period, including the impact they had on advancing the Operating Unit's strategic priorities.

### Section 7 – Assessment of Performance, Skills, and Potential

- a. Rating Officials prepare a written assessment of the employee's performance, skills, and potential. Rating Officials may not recommend an employee for promotion.
- b. Reviewing Statement: If the employee reviewed is a Mission Director whose AEF was completed by an Ambassador, the Assistant Administrator of the regional Bureau will prepare a written statement assessing the performance and contributions of the employee.
- c. The Rating Official assesses whether the rated employee met the standards of his/her class (check box).
- d. The Rating Official indicates whether the employee properly protected classified and sensitive information (check box for met/not met/N.A.).
- e. The Rating Official indicates which 360 sources were used.
- f. The Rating Official indicates which mandatory additional 360 sources were used (as appropriate).

### Section 8 – AC Members and Comments

The AC provides written comments of any recommended changes to the Rating Official.

#### **461.3.2.6 Performance Plans**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Performance plans are statements of performance expectations and results to be achieved that are documented in Section 4 of the AEF Form (AID 461-6) and prepared by the Rating Official in consultation with the employee. The plan informs the employee of the measures by which his or her performance will be judged. Performance plans consist of work objectives and performance measures.

The Rating Official writes and approves the performance plan and gives it to the employee within 45 days of the beginning of the annual rating cycle or the employee's assignment to a new position. The AC reviews and signs performance plans only if requested by the employee or Rating Official.

#### **461.3.2.7 Work Objectives**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Employees and their Rating Officials must collaborate in the development of work objectives. Employees must have at least one work objective and no more than three. Work objectives must be characterized by the following:

- Must be within the employee's control to accomplish; and
- Must reflect the strategic and/or operational priorities of the Agency or Operating Unit.

#### **461.3.2.8 Performance Measures**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Employees and their Rating Officials must define no more than two performance measures for each work objective. Performance measures address quantity, quality, timeliness, or the most cost-effective or sustainable way of accomplishing the work objective.

#### **461.3.2.9 Review and Approval of Performance Plans**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

An AC Representative is assigned to each Operating Unit to serve as a liaison among employees, Rating Officials, and the AC. The AC Representative, when requested, will:

- a. Review, provide input, and approve performance plans for all employees in the Operating Unit; and
- b. Review and approve any substantive revision of work objectives or performance measures during the rating period. An employee's performance plan becomes effective when the Rating Official and employee sign the AEF. If an employee declines to sign the AEF, the Rating Official will annotate the AEF with an "x" in the employee signature block. If this is the case, the AC Representative also signs. The date that the Rating Official and AC Representative annotate the AEF is the date that the performance plan becomes official.

#### **461.3.2.10 Progress Reviews**

Effective Date: 05/01/2019

Rating Officials must conduct at least one progress review with each SFS employee, normally at mid-cycle during an appraisal period, and are encouraged to provide progress reviews to employees on a continuous basis throughout the rating cycle.

For the mid-cycle progress review, employees must provide the Rating Official with 360 degree sources (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. **COs/AOs and CORs/AORs must not include implementing partners as 360-degree sources.**

During progress reviews, Rating Officials and employees must discuss the employee's progress toward achieving work objectives. If an employee is failing to meet a work objective, the Rating Official must counsel the employee and document in writing his or her deficient performance.

Rating Officials must document on the AEF in Section 5 – Formal Mid-Point Progress Review AEF – any revisions, additions, or deletions to work objectives or performance measures.

The Rating Official and employee must sign the AEF, indicating that a mid-cycle progress review took place. The AC Representative will be brought into the process and sign the AEF, if requested. However, if the employee has failed a work objective or is deficient in a skill area (“Not Met”), it is mandatory that the Rating Official notify the AC. If an employee declines to sign a mid-cycle review, the Rating Official will check the box in Section 6. If this is the case, the AC Representative will also sign. The review then becomes part of the official rating of record.

#### **461.3.2.11 Employee Self-Assessments**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

At the end of the appraisal period, employees must provide Rating Officials with a written assessment of their performance during the appraisal period.

#### **461.3.2.12 360 Degree Input Sources: Employee Submission of Names**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

At the end of the appraisal period, employees must 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 appraisal period who can provide the Rating Official with information about their performance. Rating Officials must contact at least three of these sources for performance information.

#### **461.3.2.13 360 Degree Input Sources: Agreeing on 360 Degree Input Sources**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials and employees are required to agree on at least three individuals whom the Rating Official will contact to gather performance information. Rating Officials are free to contact more than three individuals on the employee's list or other sources deemed appropriate to the Rating Official. AC members may be consulted.

Rating Officials of supervisors must contact no fewer than two of the supervisor's subordinates for information about the supervisor's human resource management skills.

#### **461.3.2.14 360 Degree Input Sources: Soliciting Input from 360 Degree Input Sources**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials must focus their questions on job-relevant discussions of work objectives and performance measures. It is the Rating Official's responsibility to reconcile any differences of opinion and determine which viewpoint is most accurate. It is not appropriate for the Rating Official to convene a meeting of 360 degree input sources to discuss an employee in order to resolve conflicting input. Rating Officials must maintain confidentiality of 360 feedback information.

Rating Officials' notes on feedback from 360 degree input sources are personal working notes. There is no requirement to maintain these notes or provide them to the employee. However, if significant performance problems are identified during the process that will result in an employee failing to meet his or her work objectives or being deficient in one or more skill areas, then the Rating Official must maintain supporting documentation obtained from all sources.

#### **461.3.2.15 Foreign Service/Senior Foreign Service Skills Framework**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials must use the FS/SFS Skills Framework to prepare end-of-year AEFs. The Skills Framework consists of four skill areas with four to five sub-skills. The four skill areas are:

- Leadership,
- Results and Impact-Focused,
- Professionalism, and
- Talent Management.

The Skills Framework defines all the skill areas and breaks down each skill into four to five subskills. Each subskill area provides behavioral indicators demonstrating what the employee is expected to do according to his or her personal grade level.

When Rating Officials prepare the end-of-year AEF, they must not make recommendations for promotion. However, they should ensure that the AEF covers all four skill areas and show how the employee made an impact on the overall USAID Mission or sector. They should also discuss the employee's willingness to be innovative, take on non-traditional or hardship assignments, or take calculated risks.

#### **461.3.2.16 Foreign Service Skills Assessment**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The [FS Skills Assessment Form \(AID 461-3\)](#) must be completed by the Rating Official at least once per performance appraisal cycle (NLT April 30). The Rating Official must use the FS/SFS Skills Framework in completing this evaluation. The FS/SFS Skills Framework defines all the skills and subskills and the proficiency indicators that define

how each subskill should be demonstrated across the grade levels.

The FS Skills Assessment contains the two following sections:

- **Section 1 – Employee Information**  
The Rating Official completes this section with the appropriate information.
- **Section 2 – FS Skills Assessment**  
The Rating Official completes this section and rates the employee’s performance against the standards for his/her personal grade.

The purpose of the FS Skills Assessment is to identify the extent to which an employee is performing at the standards for his/her personal grade as described in the FS Skills Framework, and to provide a foundation for discussing the employee’s growth and development. This assessment is not part of the official rating of record. The Rating Official gives this form to the employee at the same time that the employee receives his/her final AEF. It is not submitted to HCTM for filing in the employee’s Performance Evaluation File. When completing the FS Assessment, the Rating Official must base the assessment on the personal grade of the employee.

#### **461.3.2.17 SFS Appraisal Input Form (AIF)**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The Rating Official who is supervising the employee on March 31 is the “Rater of Record” and must complete the final AEF, regardless of the number of days the employee has been under his/her supervision. The Rating Official of record must use AIFs and any other 360 degree information to complete the final AEF.

The raters of an employee must complete the [Appraisal Input Form \(AID 400-1B\)](#) when either the supervisor or employee changes assignments or responsibilities and when the employee has been supervised for at least 30 calendar days. The AIF records progress towards established work objectives and performance measures. The Rating Official must act as follows:

- Complete the AIF at least two weeks before either the employee or the Rating Official changes jobs;
- Provide the employee with the AIF at least five days prior to the performance feedback meeting;
- Hold a mandatory meeting with the employee to review the AIF; and
- Forward the AIF, with optional employee response, to the employee’s next Rating Official (or Administrative Officer, EXO, or other employee designated by the Principal Officer) within two days after completion.

If an employee is on temporary duty (TDY) at another duty station for 30 days or more, an appropriate official at the TDY duty station must prepare an AIF on the employee's performance for the employee's Rating Official.

Employees who spend the majority of the rating cycle in language training and less than 120 days at any assigned post are not required to have an AEF. Employees who do not have a current AEF will receive an automatic "B" from the Performance Boards.

#### **461.3.2.18 Employee Statement**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The [Employee Statement Form \(AID 461-2\)](#) is used to enable employees to comment on the evaluation of their performance

#### **461.3.2.19 Gathering Appraisal Information**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials must base employee performance appraisals on multiple sources of information, including the following:

- Direct observation of performance and evaluation of representative work products;
- The employee's self-assessment of performance;
- Information solicited from individuals who can provide informed views of the employee's performance during the rating cycle (360 degree input sources);
- If rating a supervisor, the Rating Official must receive comments from at least two subordinates; and
- All AIFs received from prior Rating Officials during the rating period.

#### **461.3.2.20 Final AEF**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Using the multiple sources of information described in **461.5.13**, the Rater of Record must prepare the final AEF. Rating Officials must determine whether the employee met or did not meet the performance measure(s) of each work objective.

#### **461.3.2.21 AC Review of the Final Evaluation**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

ACs are responsible for reviewing and discussing each employee's end-of-year AEF with the responsible Rating Official. A Skills Framework Assessment must be completed, shared with the employee, and made readily available for possible AC review. ACs will review the Skills Assessment Framework if requested by the employee

or Rating Official and may review the Skills Assessment Framework if they choose.

When reviewing an employee's evaluation, ACs have the authority to review self-assessments, contact anyone (including the employee and selected 360 degree input sources), and review documents relied on by the Rating Official in order to make appropriate recommendations.

ACs are responsible for ensuring that AEFs are balanced, fair, and accurate.

ACs do not have the authority to direct or make substantive changes to an AEF, but may make recommendations to the Rating Official. If the AC and Rating Official cannot agree on appropriate language, the Rating Official's Supervisor must attempt to resolve differences. If the Rating Official and AC still do not agree, the AC must document its recommendations on the AEF, Section 8b.

AC members who reviewed final AEFs must sign the final AEF.

#### **461.3.2.22 Submission of Annual Evaluation Forms**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

The AMS, EXO, or other employee designated by the Principal Officer must forward approved AEFs to the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management/Center for Performance Excellence, for retention in the employee's Performance Evaluation File (PEF) and distribution as appropriate. The Principal Officer of an Operating Unit is responsible for ensuring that all AEFs are submitted to HCTM/CPE.

All AEFs submitted after the prescribed due dates must include a statement explaining the reasons for the late submittal. HCTM/CPE reviews these statements to determine whether the delays have been adequately explained. If it is determined that the delay was not justified, HCTM/CPE must refer the matter to the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), HCTM, who will decide what action should be taken. The CHCO may decide to issue a critical letter, which will be placed in the employee's Performance Evaluation File for two years. If deemed warranted, this letter will serve to deny or reduce any award or performance bonus for the year in which the AEFs were due.

#### **461.3.2.23 Exceptional Performance**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Rating Officials are encouraged to provide timely and appropriate feedback and recognition to employees who demonstrate exceptional performance. Feedback is always best provided as soon after the action or occurrence as possible. Recognition may be provided through acknowledgement of the special act or contribution privately to the employee, publicly in staff meetings, and/or through the Agency's awards program (see [ADS 491, USAID Incentive Awards Program](#) and Mandatory Reference [491maa, Descriptions of Incentive Awards](#)). [ADS 422, Personnel Operations-Senior Foreign Service](#) provides the policy for performance pay for Senior Foreign Service Officers. Employees who demonstrate skills and performance beyond their

individual grade should also be encouraged to seek promotion to the next higher grade when they are eligible (see [ADS 463, Foreign Service Promotion Eligibility Requirements and Performance Boards](#)).

#### **461.3.2.24 Deficient Performance**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

If an employee is not performing satisfactorily against established work objectives and performance measures or is displaying deficiencies in specific skill areas, the Rating Official must provide early and constructive feedback in writing, outlining the measures that the employee must take to improve.

#### **461.3.2.25 Managing Performance Problems**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

Misconduct is generally a failure to follow a workplace rule (whether written or unwritten). Although it is common for performance and misconduct to be interrelated, it is important to recognize the difference between the two. On issues of misconduct, the Rating Official must seek guidance from the Labor and Employee Relations (HCTM/ELR) staff. When the issue is primarily a performance problem, the Rating Official must communicate expectations and performance problems to the employee.

Consistent performance feedback is the best way to prevent performance problems from developing. In most cases, an open line of communication between the Rating Official and employee can resolve or improve performance problems. When the Rating Official determines that there is a performance problem, the Rating Official must conduct a counseling session with the employee. In the counseling session, the Rating Official must cover the following topics:

- a. Specify in which work objectives or performance measures the employee is performing poorly;
- b. Communicate the “Met” level of performance for the objective or measure; and
- c. Specify, in writing, how the employee can improve to achieve the “Met” level of performance.

#### **461.3.2.26 Training**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

All Agency employees receive training and information about the EEP. Information includes a guidebook (see [ADS 461maa, Employee Evaluation Program \(EEP\) Guidebook](#)) describing the operation of the program and the roles and responsibilities of employees, Rating Officials, and ACs. In addition to this and Agency-sponsored supervisory and managerial courses and other learning activities, Missions and B/IOs may request special briefings or training sessions on the program HCTM/CPE.

**461.3.2.27 Waiver of the Final AEF for Senior Foreign Service**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

SFS employees who plan to retire or resign by the end of the calendar year in which the Foreign Service Performance Boards are meeting may waive their final AEF, provided that they have not received two “C” ratings within a five-year period and have submitted a request to the Director, HCTM/CPE, requesting that an Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) not be prepared for the rating cycle ending during that calendar year.

**461.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES****461.4.1 External Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

- a. [5 CFR 430, Subpart B, Performance Appraisal for General Schedule, Prevailing Rate, and Certain Other Employees](#)
- b. [5 USC 43, Performance Appraisal](#)
- c. [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)

**461.4.2 Internal Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 06/26/2018

- a. [ADS 422, Personnel Operations-Senior Foreign Service](#)
- b. [ADS 458, Training and Career/Professional Development.](#)
- c. [ADS 461maa, Employee Evaluation Program \(EEP\) Guidebook, Part 1, Senior Foreign Service](#)
- d. [ADS 461mab, Employee Performance & Development Guidebook for Supervisors](#)
- e. [ADS 461mac, Employee Performance & Development Guidebook for Employees](#)
- f. [ADS 461mad, FS/SFS Skills Framework](#)
- g. [ADS 461mae, Civil Service, Foreign Service, and Foreign Service National Competency and Proficiency Catalog](#)
- h. [ADS 462, Employee Evaluation Program, Civil Service](#)
- i. [ADS 463, Foreign Service Promotion Eligibility Requirements and Performance Boards](#)

- j. [ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service](#)
- k. [ADS 491, USAID Incentive Awards Program](#)
- l. [ADS 491maa, Descriptions of Incentive Awards](#)

**461.4.3 Mandatory Forms**  
Effective Date: 06/26/2018

- a. [AID Form 400-1B, Appraisal Input Form](#)
- b. [AID Form 461-1, Foreign Service Annual Performance Evaluation Form](#)
- c. [AID Form 461-2, Employee Statement](#)
- d. [AID Form 461-3, Foreign Service Skills Assessment Form](#)
- e. [AID Form 461-4, EP&D Quarterly Conversation Record](#)
- f. [AID Form 461-5, Annual Accomplishment Record](#)
- h. [AID Form 461-6, AEF Senior Foreign Service Form](#)
- g. [AID Form 463-4, Promotion Input Form \(PIF\)](#)

**461.5 ADDITIONAL HELP**  
Effective Date: 06/26/2018

There are no additional help documents for this chapter.

**461.6 DEFINITIONS**  
Effective Date: 05/01/2019

See the [ADS Glossary](#) for all ADS terms and definitions.

**360 degree sources**

Customers, peers, other managers, subordinates, and other individuals with whom or for whom an employee may have worked who can provide feedback, from their various perspectives, about the employee's performance during any period of performance currently being evaluated. (**Chapters 461, 462**)

**Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR)**

The form completed by Foreign Service Officers at the end of the performance period, or prior to changing assignments or supervisors, to document key accomplishments and contributions, plus any special challenges or circumstances that affected performance during the period. (**Chapter 461**)

**Annual Evaluation Form (AEF)**

The form used to evaluate Senior Foreign Service employees under the Employee Evaluation Program (EEP). (Chapters [415](#), [461](#), [462](#), [463](#))

**annual rating cycle (Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service)**

A one-year evaluation period, also known as the performance period, which is April 1 - March 31. (Chapter [461](#))

**Appraisal Committee (Senior Foreign Service)**

A committee that reviews and provides management input into employee work objectives and performance measures (if requested), reviews mid-point performance (if requested), and reviews end-of-year AEFs (mandatory). (Chapter [461](#))

**Appraisal Committee Representative (Senior Foreign Service)**

A member of the Appraisal Committee (AC), who acts as liaison to the AC for a specific employee and his/her Rating Official. (Chapters [461](#), [462](#))

**Appraisal Input Form (AIF) (Senior Foreign Service)**

An evaluation form covering 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. (Chapters [461](#), [462](#))

**core skills**

The four core skills that are required for all Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Officers are Leadership, Results and Impact Focused, Professionalism, and Talent Management. (Chapter [461](#))

**feedback**

Communicating to employees the extent to which their performance does not meet, meets, or exceeds expectations, the adequacy of their relevant skills, and their progress toward career development goals. (Chapters [461](#), [462](#))

**Implementing Partner**

An organization or individual with which/whom the Agency collaborates to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives and to secure participation of ultimate customers. Partners include host-country governments, private voluntary organizations, indigenous and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, other U.S. Government agencies, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, professional and business associations, and private businesses and individuals. (Chapters [421](#), [425](#), [461](#), [462](#))

**mid-cycle review (Senior Foreign Service)**

A mandatory progress review to be held by the Rating Official and SFS employee at the mid-point in the appraisal period. (Chapters [461](#), [462](#))

**minimum appraisal period**

The minimum performance period that must be completed before a performance rating can be given. (Chapters 461, 462)

**performance appraisal cycle**

The 12-month cycle during which performance is appraised. In some circumstances, the performance appraisal cycle can be split into multiple performance appraisal periods. (Chapter 461)

**performance appraisal period**

Periods of performance appraisal that occur within the performance appraisal cycle, initiated when an employee changes supervisors or assignments. (Chapters 461, 422)

**Performance Evaluation File (PEF)**

An evaluation file established for each foreign service officer as part of the employee's Official Personnel File (eOFP). (Chapter 461)

**performance measure (Senior Foreign Service)**

Criteria (qualitative and quantitative) that measure an SFS employee's achievement of a given work objective. (Chapter 461)

**performance plan (Senior Foreign Service)**

The completed Senior Foreign Service Annual Evaluation Form at the beginning of the performance cycle, which consists of work objectives and performance measures. (Chapters 461, 462)

**Principal Officer**

The most senior officer in a USAID Operating Unit, who establishes the Appraisal Committees for that Operating Unit, e.g., Assistant Administrator, Independent USAID/W Office Director, Mission Director, or USAID Representative. (Chapters 461, 462)

**progress review**

Progress reviews are held periodically throughout the rating cycle, during which the Rating Official provides feedback to the employee about performance or progress toward career development goals. Also see mid-cycle review. (Chapters 461, 462)

**Rating Official**

The employee's immediate supervisor or team leader, as designated by the Principal Officer. (Chapters 461, 462)

**Rater of Record (Foreign Service)**

The Rating Official who supervises the employee at the end of the evaluation period, March 31st. (Chapter 461)

**Reviewing Official**

The second-level supervisor (supervisor of the rating official) who will review and concur/not concur on any end of year evaluation in which the Rating Official determines that the rated employee is at risk of not meeting the standards of his/her class.

**(Chapter 461)**

**skill development objectives**

Expectations for how an employee will work to develop or enhance skills or subskills during the performance period, as established through discussions between the supervisor and employee. **(Chapter 461)**

**skill level**

The level that an employee is rated against to determine whether he or she is meeting or exceeding the expectations of his/her personal grade. **(Chapter 461)**

**Skills Framework**

A chart that provides the core skill area and subskill definitions as well as proficiency indicators that describe the requirements across the FS grade levels and SFS.

**(Chapter 461)**

**subskills**

Specific skills that are aligned to a core skill and defined within the Skills Framework, reflecting the requirements of Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Officers.

**(Chapter 461)**

**work objectives (Senior Foreign Service)**

Expectations for an employee established by management for a particular rating period.

**(Chapters 461, [462](#))**

**work objectives (Foreign Service)**

Expectations for the work that an employee will accomplish, as established through discussions between the supervisor and employee. Work objectives may be short or long-term (e.g., annual) and updated as needed throughout the performance period. While employee participation in the development of work objectives is encouraged, the Rating Official maintains the final authority to set work objectives. **(Chapters 461, [462](#))**

461\_050119