

**3rd Quarter FY 2023
Business Forecast and Partner Update Webinar
June 14, 2023
9:00-10:00 AM ET
As Prepared**

USAID Participants

- Sarah Rose, Senior Advisor for Localization, Office of the Administrator
- Mark Walther, Director, Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance
- Josh Kaufman, Director, Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, Office of Policy
- Diana Prieto, Director, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub
- Mohamed Abdel-Kader, Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Director for the Innovation, Technology, And Research (ITR) Hub
- Kimberly Ball, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
- Deb Broderick, Deputy Director, Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance
- Matt Johnson, Communications Director and Industry Liaison, Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance

Conference Call Transcript

Welcome and Introductions from Matt Johnson

Hello everyone and thank you for joining us today's Business Forecast and Partner Update webinar. My name is Matt Johnson. I am the Agency's Industry Liaison and Communications Director for USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance.

We are excited to have you join today's webinar – where we will be sharing updates on a number of things happening around USAID.

We will be recording today's session. If you would like, you can turn on closed captioning by clicking the "cc" button in the bottom left corner of the webex screen. Throughout the event, we will be sharing links in the chat box. However, note that we will not be taking questions during the event.

We would like to know a bit more about who is at our event today, so I am going to open up a short poll for you to share information about your organization.

A few weeks ago we solicited questions from you, our partners, around USAID's planned activities on our Business Forecast. Our team around the world have been busy answering the more than 2,000 questions we received this quarter

If you're new to one of our Business Forecast calls, we use this webinar to cover Agency priority topics. Later today, we will plan to post responses to the majority of the questions we have received on USAID.gov, along with a recording and transcript from this call. Once we have posted these resources, we will notify you through our Industry Liaison Updates email distribution list, and our social media channels. My colleagues can drop the links in the chat box for you to sign-up if you are not already following us.

Before I turn things over to our speakers, I would like to share a few updates regarding Business Forecast functionality. First – we have released an excel template that allows you to easily format your downloaded business forecast results. This template is available for download with instructions on our Business Forecast page. We will share the link in the chat box to download the excel template.

<https://www.usaid.gov/business-forecast/search/instructions>

Secondly, I'm pleased to share that we have just released a feature that allows you to receive email alerts twice a week (on Mondays and Wednesdays) with a recap of activities that have

been updated or added to the Business Forecast. We also will drop the link in the chat box for you to sign-up and will also be adding the sign-up form to our Business Forecast page later today.

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USAIDHQ/subscriber/new?topic_id=USAIDHQ_497

If you have any questions or issues with these new features, please feel free to contact us at BusinessForecast@usaid.gov

And with that, I would like to first turn the call over to Sarah Rose to share a few updates. Over to you, Sarah.

Remarks from Sarah Rose, Senior Advisor for Localization, Office of the Administrator

Hello everyone. It's a pleasure to speak with you all today and provide some updates on localization. As a reminder, when USAID talks about localization, what we're referring to are the steps the Agency is taking to implement our commitment to shifting funding and decision-making power to the people, organizations, and institutions that are driving change in their own countries and communities.

As you may recall, in 2021, Administrator Power announced two targets related to localization. The first is that USAID will strive to channel a quarter of its funding directly to local partners by FY 2025. And the second is that by 2030, at least half of USAID programs will enable local actors to exercise leadership over priority setting, activity design, implementation, and defining and measuring results.

I'm very pleased to let you know that on Monday this week, we released our first localization progress report documenting recent progress toward these goals. You can find the report online at usaid.gov/localization and I'd encourage you all to check it out.

I'll take the next couple of minutes to, first, give a brief overview of our progress on direct local funding and second, introduce the new framework for tracking local leadership that we are beginning to roll out.

The report focuses on three types of direct funding that support our localization priorities: direct funding to local partners, direct funding to regional partners, and government to government assistance. The biggest of these is direct funding to local partners.

In FY 2022, USAID recorded the highest level and percent of Direct Local Funding in over a decade, following what has been a generally increasing trend over the previous four years.

We are currently at just over 10 percent Direct Local Funding. So, we have a way to go to reach our 25 percent target. But I want to highlight that between FY 2021 and FY 2022, direct funding to local partners increased by \$623 million. This is a 66 percent year-on-year increase in dollar value terms and a 38 percent increase in the percentage of funding going to local partners.

I'll also highlight that USAID directed another nearly \$60 million to local organizations working in their broader region.

I'll turn next to government-to-government—or "G2G"—assistance. USAID partners directly with select governments to help strengthen their systems and support their capacity to deliver public services.

In FY 2022, USAID provided \$199 million in project-based G2G assistance to 17 countries, mostly in support of health objectives but also economic growth, education and other objectives.

The progress report also outlines how USAID will begin to track performance against its second target: that at least half of our programs will elevate local leadership. This target and the direct funding target complement one another and are of equal importance to USAID's localization efforts. Direct funding is important but we also need to think about how we create space for local leadership across many different types of relationships we have with local actors, whether they are prime awardees, subawardees, participants in a USAID-funded program, or part of a community affected by USAID programming. This underscores the key point that there is a role for everyone in advancing locally led development and humanitarian response.

We engaged a wide range of stakeholders to understand which actions and practices meaningfully and visibly create space for local actors to exercise leadership in USAID's procurement processes and program cycle. These engagements informed a new framework for measurement that focuses on four categories of approaches. These categories look at:

First, the number of activities with a direct local prime awardee (A&A or G2G); this complements the dollar value we're tracking with our direct funding indicator

Second, how we partner with local partners: how we co-design, co-create, and encourage partner-designed activities in ways that elevate the agency of the local partner.

Third, how we leverage and elevate existing local capacity and invest in strengthening local capacity and.

And fourth, how we engage communities directly through inclusive and participatory approaches.

As you will see, under each of these four categories are several good practices that USAID and/or its implementing partners may use throughout priority setting, design, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation processes. We will report each practice separately. We will also track the percent of activities that utilize at least two practices across at least two different categories.

Not all of the listed practices will be relevant for all programs, all award or agreement types, or all operating contexts. Nor is this an exhaustive list of ways that USAID and implementing partners can create space for local leadership. The range of practices included are a set of options that emerged from consultations as particularly meaningful for elevating local leadership. USAID, implementing partners, and local actors can reference and leverage them, in combination with other efforts to elevate local leadership, as relevant given specific needs, opportunities, and constraints

This is a new indicator. We will share more details in the coming weeks and months. And this our first year of reporting and it will be a learning year.

I'll close here, but I encourage you to check out the report for more details. There you will find direct local funding data by sector, region and country, detailed definitions of funding indicators, more discussion of the Locally Led Programs indicator, and more. Thank you so much.

Remarks from Mark Walther, Director, Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance

Thank you Sarah for the update. It is a pleasure to speak with so many partners on today's webinar. Thank you to everyone who submitted questions in advance of today's webinar. Thank you for joining the event. This morning I would like to provide a number of updates.

A&A Strategy

First, I'd like to start with the A&A Strategy. Thank you for your feedback on the strategy and its implementation. It was a pleasure to meet with many of you -- a total of 7 partner groups -- and receive emails directly from additional individuals and organizations about how USAID can best achieve the objectives of the A&A Strategy.

We heard broad support for the A&A Strategy and Agency's localization initiative. Actions that received particular support from partners include revising the NUPAS; efforts to simplify and streamline the SAM registration process; and all actions to ensure partners can recover their full costs of implementing USAID awards.

You also provided feedback that you felt USAID staff were requesting documentation and reports that are not required -- and some provided specifics, which are very helpful for us so we can see where we might reduce onerous requirements.

We intend to use the collective feedback to update the A&A Strategy early in the next fiscal year. If you want to provide feedback, email your feedback to: IndustryLiaison@usaid.gov.

In the meantime, we are proceeding with the actions outlined in the A&A Strategy implementation plan. We have already completed 6 actions, and 60% of actions are completed or in progress.

Highlights include: continued efforts to update A&A templates and guidance resulting in the intranet webpage where these resources are housed being the 9th most visited on our intranet. We have also made more ADS documents available in writable format -- a time saver for our A&A staff; and one we believe will result in more consistent use of the most up-to-date Standard Provisions.

And last week, we reminded all USAID staff about the importance of refraining from requesting additional reporting under assistance beyond what is required under 2 CFR 200.329.

Sub Reporting

Next, I want to highlight the [notice that issued on March 24](#) regarding subcontract and subaward reporting requirements. The notice issued, which we can link in the chat box, was a reminder for prime contractors and recipients of their responsibilities to report certain subawards and subcontracts in the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Subaward Reporting System (FSRS).

In addition to being a statutory requirement, this reporting is also vital for USAID to track and monitor the implementation of Agency-funded activities.

Compliance with FSRS reporting helps advance the Agency's localization efforts. In particular, FSRS reporting promotes transparency and accountability of Agency-funded activities, as well as visibility in how subcontracts and subawards expand our partnerships with local entities in the countries we serve.

Unfortunately, USAID has identified a number of cases of missing data or other inaccuracies with the data reported by prime contractors and recipients in FSRS, resulting in imprecise information presented on USASpending.gov. For example, USAID analyzed the "Percent of Prime

Award Obligated Amount” metric available on an individual award’s page on USASpending.gov and found that — in multiple cases — the data indicates a higher amount of subcontracts/subawards (by dollar value) than the dollar amount obligated under the prime award. The negative impact of this missing and inaccurate data is significant and affects USAID’s ability to monitor and achieve Agency goals.

As a reminder, we are requesting that all prime contractors and recipients ensure proper procedures are in place to comply with FSRS reporting requirements in their awards and enter the necessary information accurately for all applicable subcontracts and subawards. If a prime contractor or recipient is not fully compliant with applicable FSRS reporting requirements under their award, USAID may apply standard remedies available under the award for failing to meet award requirements.

[On April 19th, we also shared a letter](#) on the importance and requirements of eSRS reporting related to prime contractors with U.S. small business subcontracting plans which we have been making a more concerted effort to review semi-annually .

We appreciate your efforts to ensure that applicable subcontracts and subawards are accurately reported in the FSRS and eSRS systems as applicable. If you have any questions regarding these reporting requirements, please contact your cognizant Contracting Officer or Agreement Officer.

In addition to the reporting requirements, I also wanted to take a moment to highlight the [Sub-Opportunities portal on WorkwithUSAID.org](#). The portal, which was launched a little over two months ago, is for USAID’s prime contractors and recipients to post their sub-opportunities. In addition to working directly with USAID, there are many opportunities to work with the contractors and recipients that are currently receiving USAID funding. Since we launched the portal, we’ve had more than 80 opportunities posted.

For our prime contractors and recipients on the call, thank you for sharing your opportunities with us. We encourage you to continue to do so. For organizations on this call that are new to USAID, we encourage you to check out this portal to find additional funding related to USAID projects. New opportunities are being posted on a regular basis.

A&A Staffing

Next, I would like to take a moment to provide an update on our hiring efforts within our A&A workforce.

Our Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) workforce play an essential role in design, development, and implementation of our activities around the world. However, as Administrator Power testified before Congress, we are experiencing a staffing crisis within our contracting backstop. As our budgets and programs have continued to grow, our staffing levels in the contracting backstop have not kept pace. We are working to immediately address the shortage through a multi-pronged approach.

The Agency is making progress in staffing up our A&A workforce. For example, we have onboarded 27 new civil service Contract Specialists and internally promoted 6 Contract Specialists so far in FY23, with plans to fill an additional 43 positions over the next few months.

On the Foreign Service Side, since June of 2020 we have hired 55 new Career Candidate Corps (C3) officers, 8 of which are now warranted Contracting Officers. The remaining 47 new hires are fully engaged in job training either in Washington or at their first tour overseas assignment.

To help increase surge capacity, the M Bureau launched a *COs without Borders Initiative* this past year, to draw on CO support across Missions, provide gap coverage, surge support, and specific expertise that may not be present in an individual Mission.

In addition, Disaster Surge Authority program funding has been allocated to hire COs to support procurements related to crisis response for the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS).

We have also been piloting an initiative for Foreign Service National/Special Immigrant Visa (FSN/SIV) holders. Launched in July 2022, the pilot helped to expedite the hiring of former FSN A&A Specialists. We will be expanding the program to 10 additional slots for M/OAA for a total of 22.

Lastly, we have been working to increase the number of FSN/CCNs with administrative warrants, and we have successfully doubled the number of warrant holders from 19 in FY22 to 40 in FY23 to date.

Institutional Support Contract (ISC) Solicitations

In looking ahead, we will be further exploring in future ISC solicitations approaches to encourage and evaluate various types of benefits such as those related health benefits and a framework for benefit standards. Please note that this relates specifically to ISC solicitations where the employees under ISCs work alongside our direct-hire workforce. Please stay tuned.

Closing

As many of you know, I will be retiring at the end of this month. It has been an honor and a privilege to spend my career at USAID within the Office of Acquisition and Assistance.

The A&A professionals at USAID represent the best of the Agency – working hard day in and day out to help USAID achieve its Mission. I want to thank them for their dedication to their craft and the outstanding work that they do.

To our partners, thank you for the work that you are doing on behalf of the Agency and on behalf of the American people. We truly view you as our partners and your collaboration with me and our team has helped to expand what is possible in development.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support. I wish you all of the best.

Remarks from Josh Kaufman, Director, Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, Office of Policy

Hello, my name is Josh Kaufman and I am the Director of the Office of Policy in the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning, or PPL. My team and I spent the last year or so working with many of you and your organizations as we gained input and public comment from key stakeholders as we drafted the new USAID Policy Framework which Administrator Power launched in March.

I wanted to join you today to go over the Policy Framework in more detail. [USAID's new Policy Framework: Driving Progress Beyond Programs](#) connects our major policy initiatives, our strategies to recruit new partners, and our internal reform efforts, and provides a comprehensive guide for the Agency to operationalize our vision to achieve progress beyond just programs - progress that cannot be delivered by USAID funding alone.

The Policy Framework is USAID's highest-level policy document. It lays out USAID's collective vision for international development. It translates U.S. national security and foreign policy goals into Agency priorities and promotes coherence among our development, humanitarian, and crisis-response work.

For USAID staff overseas and in headquarters, the Policy Framework is the basis for strategy, program, budget, and operational planning. For our partners, it clarifies USAID's objectives and

how we aim to achieve them, and it supports collaboration and mutual accountability among USAID, our partners, and the people and communities we serve.

The Policy Framework establishes three overarching priorities to drive progress through and beyond our programs: first, to confront the greatest challenges of our time; second, to embrace new partnerships; and third, to invest in USAID's enduring effectiveness.

1. **Confronting the Greatest Challenges of Our Time:** To drive the progress we seek in more than 100 countries in which we work, we have to align on specific objectives and adopt new strategies to achieve them. USAID will:

Respond to complex emergencies, build peace and resilience, and invest in lasting food security: USAID is working with our international partners to mobilize the resources, reforms, and action required to meet people's most urgent needs while leading on initiatives to achieve lasting recovery, peace, growth, and food security. We will deliberately pair immediate disaster assistance with longer-term humanitarian and development efforts that will support early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience, as we strengthen broader coherence among humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities.

Help countries withstand the effects of a changing climate and secure a net-zero future: USAID is supporting countries and communities around the world in adapting to and managing the impacts of climate change. We are fostering adaptation action around the world and are enabling economic growth that is less reliant on fossil fuels, deforestation, or land degradation while strengthening energy security, independence, the preservation of natural ecosystems, and a just transition. USAID must take ambitious action both to significantly scale our work to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to help communities adapt to the shocks and harms already upon them.

Stem the tide of authoritarianism, counter corruption, fight digital repression and disinformation, and spur democratic renewal: USAID is the leading provider of democratic assistance in the world, and we are turning our focus toward new and crucial fronts in the fight to strengthen democracy. These activities are part of the bold, coordinated action the U.S. government is undertaking with its allies and partners to strengthen accountable governance and the rule of law, fight authoritarian influences, protect human rights, and combat corruption, including in the [Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal](#).

Bolster health security, improve primary care, and reverse the decline in global life expectancy: USAID is leveraging its substantial global health presence and financial resources, technical expertise, and targeted advocacy to strengthen systems to meet urgent needs while strengthening health systems for the long term.

Address economic headwinds and promote inclusive economic growth: USAID is drawing on its global presence, partnerships, and versatile toolkit to help partner countries manage economic challenges, while strengthening the rights, opportunities, and systems that underpin inclusive and sustainable development. We are also working with partners, especially local ones, to help close gender, racial, and other gaps that impede inclusive progress.

2. **Embracing New Partnerships:** USAID currently programs nearly \$30 billion in foreign assistance each year, but given the scope of today's problems, aid alone is not enough. We must mobilize collective action with governments and form new linkages with the private sector and local actors. USAID will:

Elevate the practice of development diplomacy: Through USAID's convening power, our global footprint, our standing in key multilateral institutions, our linkages to the private sector, our strategic communications channels, and America's influence as a global power, we have the potential to drive collective action far beyond the scope of our programming.

Deepen engagement with private companies and organizations: To drive the development progress we seek and address the scale of need in the world, we must therefore deepen engagement with the private sector, from multinational corporations to private companies and entrepreneurs within the countries where we work.

Significantly expand our support for locally-led development: Through a set of internal reforms, actions, and behavior changes, USAID will expand space for actors based in the communities in which we work to lead, strengthen local systems, and respond to local needs.

3. **Investing in USAID's Enduring Effectiveness:** To make the maximum impact with our programming and drive significant progress beyond it, USAID must transform ourselves with urgency to meet the moment. We must rebuild a depleted workforce, inform our work with the latest development thinking and evidence, and dismantle bureaucratic burdens that diminish our impact. USAID will:

- Expand, diversify, retain, and empower our workforce
- Strengthen and modernize our communications
- Ground our responses in evidence
- Reduce burdens so staff can focus on the work that matters most.

The Policy Framework prioritizes an ambitious agenda for organizational change and inclusive development. USAID works to embed **diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility** principles in our work at every level so that our programs, people, processes, policies, and practices are inclusive, reflect the diversity of our nation, advance equity, and enhance accessibility. These principles will help deliver the significant development gains we seek, and to make sure that those gains are truly inclusive—benefiting all individuals, including women and girls and people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, and people of all backgrounds, ages, disability statuses, and racial, ethnic, religious, caste, and socioeconomic groups.

For more information, or to download the Policy Framework, please go to <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/policy-framework>. Thank you.

Remarks from Diana Prieto, Director, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub

I appreciate the opportunity to be here to present on the [newly updated Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy](#), including key changes to our requirements as captured in the revised ADS205.

The policy provides the vision for USAID's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment around the world. It builds on decades of foundational work, on the ground experience, strong evidence from global research, and key legislative/policy advancement

It reaffirms gender equality as a human right, and stresses that investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformational scale and drive sustainable development. And further, deliberate action is required to advance gender equality

As part of this commitment and recognition, Administrator Power has called for a doubling of gender equality investments by FY23

The Policy is purposefully more inclusive in its language and framing, emphasizing that gender inequality affects all individuals - women and girls, men and boys, and gender diverse. Policy has included new principles/updated objectives. And has also new requirements that will enable greater accountability and alignment with legal requirements.

Seven guiding principles provide the foundation for USAID's gender equality work moving forward. This includes incorporating an intersectional gender lens into our programming,

recognizing that our programming will be stronger when we strategically address the impact of gender and other inequalities. It also includes an emphasis on transformative and locally-led programming to address power structures, norms, and systems that perpetuate gender inequalities.

The principles are applied to programming to advance the Policy's four overarching strategic objectives. Three objectives are from the 2012 Gender Policy

1. To Reduce Gender Disparities
2. Strive to Eliminate GBV and Mitigate its Harmful Effects
3. Increase Women's and Girls' Agency

And one new objective reflecting a commitment to advance structural changes to address the root causes of inequality and transforming inequitable gender norms.

The Policy also underscores the relevance of gender and the need to integrate gender in programming across all sectors where USAID works. For each sector, the policy provides the most recent evidence of the impact of gender inequality and promising approaches. Will be developing implementation resources to assist w/programming.

And lastly, the Policy outlines steps USAID will take to strengthen its systems, tools, and resources, including expanding its gender technical expertise; identifying and addressing gender inequalities; demonstrating how it is investing in gender; tracking gender equality results. Most of the requirements have been in place in previous Gender Policy and/or are Congressionally mandated through WEEE Act of 2018

The ADS205 Chapter has been updated to conform w/ Gender Policy. As you may know, this dedicated ADS chapter outlines how gender will be integrated at every step of the Agency's program cycle, including in the different sections you see on the slide:

- Details roles and responsibilities for all operating units.
- Explains gender analyses and requirements.
- Reqs on gender integration designs/solicitations/implementation.
- Guidance on integrating gender into MEL, Operational Plans (OPs), and Performance Plans and Reports (PPRs).

Many of the updated requirements are primarily targeted to USAID's internal practices, partners and stakeholders. Most are requirements that existed in previous iteration of the Policy, but we wanted to carefully consider what needed to be strengthened and expanded regarding the requirements to make for stronger programming.

NEW Gender analyses must now be conducted for activities in addition to strategies and projects (already required).

NEW Minimum Level of Effort (LOE) requirements for Gender Advisors in Missions, Regional Missions, and Washington Regional and Pillar Bureaus. An expanded set of core definitions on gender terminology

NEW a requirement for all Agency staff to complete the [updated Gender 101 e-learning course](#) within one year of the policy's release, or start date.

We also have an updated template for the already required Mission Order, which has to be updated within a year, and the **NEW** Washington Bureau Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The Policy includes strong encouragement for implementing partners to use Gender Plans of Action.

Remarks from Mohamed Abdel-Kader, Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Director for the Innovation, Technology, And Research (ITR) Hub

Introduction and ITR Overview

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, depending on where you're joining us from today. My name is Mohamed Abdel-Kader, the Agency's Chief Innovation Officer and Director of the Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub.

In my role, I am leading the agency's efforts to help our partners around the world harness the power of innovation, technology, and scientific research to achieve their development goals. By advancing innovative, evidence-driven, and often locally-designed and led approaches and helping our partners to responsibly incorporate the latest digital tools, we aim to deepen USAID's development and humanitarian impact and improve people's lives worldwide.

ITR's mission is two-fold: One, we produce breakthrough development innovations by sourcing, testing, and scaling proven solutions. Two, we are transforming development by opening it to people everywhere with good ideas, promoting new and deepening existing partnerships, bringing data and evidence to bear, and harnessing scientific and technological advances.

Partnership Opportunities with ITR

The work we do depends on the partnerships we build with innovators worldwide. Let me walk you through a few partnership opportunities across our three divisions.

Innovation

Our Innovation Division tests new ideas, takes strategic risks, builds evidence of what works, and advances the most effective solutions to some of the world's greatest development

problems. We open up the development process by working with new, local, and non-traditional partners who are closest to the problems we aim to solve.

We do this through two complementary programs: the Development Innovation Ventures (known as “DIV”) and Exploratory Programs and Innovation Competitions (known as “EPIC”).

DIV: DIV is what we call an open innovation program. Anyone, anywhere can apply for a DIV grant at any time. DIV offers tiered funding to pilot, test, and scale promising solutions. We do this through fixed amount awards, a type of Federal grant instrument that is designed to pay for results through milestone payments, not just reimbursing costs like traditional grants. If you or someone you know is interested in applying for a DIV grant, I recommend reviewing our Annual Program Statement on USAID’s website at [usaid.gov/div](https://www.usaid.gov/div). The annual program statement contains information on DIV’s three core principles and how they apply to each stage of funding. The website also has a wealth of resources and FAQs.

EPIC: Through our Exploratory Programs and Innovation Competitions (also known as EPIC), USAID designs, launches, and implements results-driven open innovation competitions: through prizes, challenges, Grand Challenges, and hackathons. You can apply to participate in one of our challenges or prizes. For more information on EPIC, email epic@usaid.gov.

Research

Our research division invests in research and in helping practitioners apply the results through the partnerships we have built with higher education institutions in the United States and partner countries. This investment is foundational to discovering, testing, and scaling up development solutions to maximize their impact.

The Research Division released a request for information (RFI) on “programming to increase the generation, translation and utilization of scientific research to improve development outcomes” in March and received a large number of responses from industry. We are currently analyzing responses, as well as evidence and previously gathered stakeholder perspectives, to understand what sorts of programming may further our goals in terms of partnering with local and higher education partners to support research evidence use. Contingent on the availability of funds, once we have identified a path forward, any subsequent grant or contract opportunities in the coming years will be published on the Business Forecast so that our partners can review and respond to opportunities of interest.

Technology

I will conclude with a description of how we are advancing digital transformation. Here at USAID, we are working toward a future where digital technology solutions are standard tools to

promote inclusive growth, foster resilient and democratic societies, and empower everyone, everywhere—a true vision of inclusive development for a digital age. Our Technology Division is on the cutting edge of digital development and is working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to advance the responsible use of technology in development and humanitarian assistance programs and to support open, inclusive, and secure digital ecosystems.

Digi Awards

In that vein, we are pleased to announce that the application for the 2023 Digital Development Awards – or, as we like to call them, the Digis – will be open very soon. In case you’re unfamiliar with the program, the Digis recognize and celebrate USAID projects and activities that embrace the Agency's strategic goals of improving development and humanitarian assistance outcomes through the responsible use of digital technology and strengthening open, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystems.

Last year’s winners trained youth on digital safety and cybersecurity best practices in Mongolia and across Southeast Asia, deployed a suite of digital tools to improve malaria control in Zambia, connected local artisans to online markets in Georgia, and more.

USAID staff and partners are critical to achieving our goal of building a digital future that benefits and empowers all, so I hope you will consider applying for a Digi Award this year and letting us highlight the impressive work that you all are doing to drive digital development forward. Please visit the Digis webpage at www.usaid.gov/digis or reach out to us at digitaldevelopment@usaid.gov to learn more.

Conclusion

I will stop there since I know we are short on time. If you are interested in learning more about the Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, partnership opportunities with the Hub, and USAID’s commitment to evidence-driven, innovative approaches to development, please visit our website to learn more.

Remarks from Kimberly Ball, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Good Morning Everyone. First, let me thank Mark for the focus his team has put on subcontracting compliance. And let me reiterate the importance of setting aggressive SB goals in our contracts at the top level as well as within the socio-economic categories and ensuring that you are in compliance as you continue performance under your contracts. Year-over-year compliance ensures that you don’t reach the end of the contract without accomplishing the goals established as a part of your contract. WorkwithUSAID is an excellent way to locate small

business partners using both its partner directory as well as- as noted by Mark - the subaward portal that allows you to post your sub opportunities.

I would like to also highlight [M22-03 Advancing Equity in Procurement Executive Order](#). We have an increased focus on increasing small business utilization – particularly small and disadvantaged businesses utilization.

We will be hosting a sub-contracting event in the coming weeks, that we would invite you to attend.

On June 21st, we will host our Annual Small Business Conference. This virtual event is still open for registration if you would like to attend. The registration link can be found on the WorkwithUSAID site. We will start the day with video remarks from our Administrator and will continue with information from Senior leadership as well as breakout sessions on the Successes and Challenges faced by our successful small business partners, a discussion of the A&A strategy, a listening session where we are open to hearing your concerns and suggestions about USAID and its work with U.S small businesses. We will also have a section focused on Chatting with Our Leaders and a virtual exhibit hall. If you are an implementing partner who would like to participate as a table host at the exhibit hall, please email us at OSDBUOutreach@USAID.gov. This is an excellent opportunity to meet more small business partners in light of my aforementioned comments on Subcontracting.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you at our conference next week.

Remarks from Deb Broderick, Deputy Director, Bureau for Management Office of Acquisition and Assistance

Thank you for the opportunity to share. I would like to provide a brief update related to USAID's Category Management Efforts.

USAID continues to make progress in the area of Category Management (CM). Through the end of May, USAID's Spend Under Management (SUM) was \$2,400 Million or 81.3% of its total acquisition obligations of \$2,900 million. USAID remains ahead of its targeted spend of 70% by year's end. USAID's spend on the Best In Class (BIC) solutions is \$127.8 million, or 4.3% of total obligations. USAID's is trending behind its goal of 6.3% of spend. In the area of CM training, USAID has trained over 511 USAID professionals or 89% of its targeted goal.

Category Management continues to also support USAID's Small Business targets. Through May, of the total recorded SB obligations of \$316.4 million, over \$296.5 million or 93% also supported USAID's CM spend totals (\$68 million went to BIC solutions).

Thank You from Matt Johnson

Thank you again to all of our speakers who provided updates today as well as our audience who took time to tune-in to listen. I wanted to highlight a few additional ways you can stay engaged with USAID.

First, if you haven't already, please visit WorkwithUSAID.org and register your organization in our Partner Directory. On the platform you will find a host of resources that will help prepare your organization to partner with USAID, connect you with other organizations, as well as connect you with funding.

Additionally, if you're not following us on social media, you can connect with us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube – my colleagues will drop the links to each of those platforms in the chat. You can also sign-up for our monthly newsletter and industry liaison updates email distribution list through the link in the chat.

As a reminder, we will be posting the recording of today's event, along with the questions and response to our business forecast later today. We will notify everyone through our social media channels and email list once the resources have been posted.

As always, if you have any other questions. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at: IndustryLiaison@usaid.gov.