

Mandatory Reference: 423
Supplementary Reference: N/A
File Name: 42355m1

Senior Executive Service Performance Management System (SESPMS)

Note: This document represents the appraisal system for the USAID Senior Executive Service (SES) as approved by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (USOPM) in 1988.

Chapter 1. OVERVIEW

Purpose

Senior USAID management's principle program and organizational and managerial objectives are defined through the use of performance plans. SES performance plans are expected to provide each executive with a clear understanding of special initiatives for the current appraisal period as well as management's expectation regarding the execution of continuing responsibilities.

Through resources managed by the executive, goals are translated into organizational objectives and integrated into the performance plans of subordinate staff. Evaluation of performance is based on the accomplishment of program and administrative major program initiatives as well as an indicator of overall cost effectiveness, efficient utilization of resources, and effective integration of the functions of each major Agency component.

The Agency's Performance Review Board is responsible for making certain that a strong positive correlation exists between the SES members' achievement of results and the awarding of performance bonuses, changes in individual SES pay levels and nominations for Presidential rank awards.

Definitions

Appraisal. The act or process of reviewing and evaluation the performance of an executive against the described performance standards.

Appraisal Period. The period of time established by an appraisal system for which an executive's performance will be reviewed. For most USAID executives, the appraisal period will be for one year, October 1 - September 30. An appraisal period may be as short as 90 days.

Appraisal System. A system that provides for the establishment of performances standards, identification of critical noncritical elements, communication of standards and elements to executives, establishment of methods and procedures to appraise performance against established standards, and appropriated use of appraisal information in making personnel decisions.

Critical Element. A component of a position consisting of one or more duties and responsibilities that contributes toward accomplishing organizational goals and objectives and that is of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in unacceptable performance in the position. The lowest rated critic element of an executive's performance appraisal indicates the overall final rating.

Final Rating. The rating of record assigned to an executive after the recommendations of the

Performance Review Board have been considered.

Initial Rating. The summary rating made by an executive's supervisor and provided to the Performance Review Board.

Noncritical Element. A component of a position that is of such significant that it should be included in a performance plan but is not so significant as to be designated a critical element.

Performance. An executive's accomplishment of assigned work in the critical and noncritical elements of the executive's position.

Performance Appraisal Report (PAR). The completed USAID form (Form AID 410-10) (9-986) used to document the performance plan, process review(s), modifications (if any), interim ratings and the rating record.

Performance Award (Bonus). A cash payment to an executive based on the executive's rating of record and degree of accomplishment relative to that of other career members of USAID's SES. On an annual basis, career executives rated Outstanding or Exceeds Fully Successful shall be eligible to receive a bonus of 5-20% of their annual salary. However, total compensation shall not exceed the scheduled annual salary for EX-01. Executives receiving Presidential rank awards shall not receive a bonus in the same calendar year.

Performance Award Budget for SES. A pool of funds from which SES performance bonuses may be awarded. The pool shall be comprised of 3% of the aggregate annual payroll of USAID's career SES population, as computed on the last day of the current fiscal year.

Performance Plan. The aggregation of an executive's written critical and noncritical elements and performance standards (Part I, AID form 410-10 (9-986)).

Performance Standard. A statement of the expectations or requirements established by senior management for critical and noncritical elements at the rating level of Fully Successful. Wherever possible, a performance standard should be derived from quantifiable measures of job performance based on such factors as quality, quantity, timeliness and cost reduction.

Progress Review. A review of the executive's process in achieving the performance standards. The review, in itself, is not a rating.

Rating. The level of performance the employee has attained for each critical and noncritical element. The five rating levels are Outstanding, Exceeds Fully Successful, Marginally Successful and Unsuccessful.

Rating of Record. The overall rating derived from the rating of performance elements. The five ratings of record are Outstanding, Exceeds Fully Successful, Fully Successful, Marginally Successful and Unsuccessful.

Special Act or Service. A nonrecurring contribution or accomplishment in the public interest that is within or outside of job responsibilities, a suggestion, a scientific achievement or an act of heroism.

Training

M/PM is responsible to make certain that executives and supervisors of executives understand USAID's performance appraisal systems and are competent at using the Agency's performance planning documents to develop and articulate organizational goals into meaningful performance requirements and standards to evaluate achievement. M/PM will provide new executives with formal training and written guidance on the proper completion and usage of performance-related documents. Performance Review Board members may, on an ad hoc basis, meet with individual executives to help revise SES performance plans or individual elements and standards the Board has deemed inadequate, vague or define responsibilities beyond the executive's control.

Executives will prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) on which formal training and developmental activities and strategies are outlined. The PRB may make suggestions to the executive or his/her supervisor on items to include in the IDP.

Performance Records

Completed PARs reviewed by the PRB and the summary rating approved by the Administrator shall be filed in a separate Employee Performance Folder (EPF) maintained for each executive for a minimum of five years. Upon transfer of the executive for minimum of five years. Upon transfer of the executive to another Federal agency, the documents shall be included with the Official Personnel Folder transmitted to the gaining agency; all appropriate performance related documents five years old or less shall be forwarded to the gaining agency. Justifications and documentation of awards other than those based on the PAR shall be retained in the EPF.

The executive shall review his/her appraisal and have an opportunity to comment on its content or on any aspect of his/her performance prior to transmittal to the reviewing official. The executive's comments, if any, shall be made available to the PRB. The executive shall be provided with a copy of his/her appraisal, including comments, if any made by the reviewing official at the time the reviewing official completes his/her review of the appraisal, coincidental with its transmittal to the PRB.

Managers must provide each executive a copy of the following documents at the time they are prepared: the initial rating, with notification of the right to respond in writing and to request a higher level review before the rating becomes final; comments and recommended changes by a higher level executive, and the final rating. All performance-related records must be maintained for five years from the date the rating is issued.

System Evaluation

The PRB will evaluate all aspects of the SES performance appraisal system. The PRB will evaluate the system on an annual basis and report its findings and recommendations to the Agency's Executive Resources Board (ERB). This usually will be done upon completion of the PRB's annual deliberations regarding review of final ratings and recommendations for bonuses, pay level adjustments and Presidential rank award nominations.

Chapter 2. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Applicability

This section applies to all USAID SES members serving under Career, Non-Career, Limited Term, and Limited Emergency appointments.

Performance plans, progress reviews, and subsequent appraisals will be prepared or conducted for all USAID SES members with the exception of those on detail away from the Agency or on long-term training.

Policies

1. Performance elements and standards are to be communicated to the executive at or before the beginning of the appraisal period. SES performance plans will be prepared in writing and provided to the executive at the beginning of the appraisal period or within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period. Additionally, within 0 days of entry into the SES or upon permanent reassignment, the executive will receive a written performance plan. Performance plans will be documented on the approved Performance Appraisal Report, AID form 410-10 (9-86).

2. Each performance plan must include at least two critical elements.

3. The appraisal period shall begin on October 1 and end on September 30. When an executive has not served the minimum 90 days as of the end of the rating period, the executive's appraisal period shall be extended for the time necessary to meet the 90-day requirement. The Administrator may terminate the appraisal period for an SES member at any time after a minimum of 90 days if it is believed there is adequate basis on which to appraise and rate the executive's performance. For a career SES member, no appraisal shall be made within 120 days of the beginning of a new Presidential administration.

4. Performance plans will be established in consultation with the executive and transmitted to the Executive Secretary, Performance Review Board. The supervising official has the final authority to establish performance plans.

5. Performance elements and standards will be based on the requirements of the executive's position and must include organizational objectives.

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7. All SES performance plans will contain mandatory elements (performance management, EEO, cost control and audit resolution) and standards that have been preprinted on AID Form 410-10 (9-86). The elements are intended to be noncritical. However, in individual cases, rating officials may develop unique elements and standards covering any of the above responsibilities and designate them as critical or noncritical.

8. Ratings will be based on a comparison of performance against written standards.

9. The SES performance appraisal system uses employs five rating levels: Outstanding, Exceeds Fully Successful, Fully Successful, Minimally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory.

10. Executives shall be given an opportunity to improve Minimally Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory performance through formal or on-the-job training, counseling or closer supervision.

11. There will be no predetermined distribution of ratings by level of performance.

12. A written rating of record of the rated executive's performance shall be reviewed for approval

by the Administrator or the Deputy Administrator on an annual basis after considering PRB recommendation.

Chapter 3. PROGRESS REVIEWS AND RATINGS OF RECORD

Progress Reviews

Progress reviews shall be conducted for each executive at least once during the appraisal period. The review will compare the executive's job performance against established performance elements and standards. Formal ratings will not be given as a result of the review. Although documentation of progress reviews is not required, reviews citing Minimally Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory performance should be documented by the rating official and a copy provided to the executive and the PRB Executive Secretary.

Ratings of Record

A rating of record must be prepared when an executive changes from a position that he/she held for 120 day or more. A summary rating prepared when an executive changes position during an appraisal period is not considered an initial rating, but shall be considered in arriving at the summary rating for the rating period in which performance occurred.

Each performance element must be defined. The only exception is for instances in which the executive did not have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate performance in the element in question. Often, this will be the case regarding the mandatory element for audit resolution.

Appraisal of job performance of executives on details or long-term training:

- When an executive is detailed within the Agency for a period expected to last 120 days or longer, a performance plan shall be prepared covering the performance requirements of the new position within 30 days of the effective date of the detail and shall be used in arriving at the rating of record for the appraisal period in which job performance occurred.
- When an executive is detailed away from the Agency, a reasonable effort will be made to obtain appraisal information from the outside organization; the information shall be considered in deriving the rating of record for the appraisal period in which job performance occurred.
- A long-term training assignment shall be treated the same as a detail away from the Agency.

Levels

The Senior Executive Service Performance Appraisal System uses a five-level system to rate executives:

Outstanding. Performance that is substantially higher than the standard for Fully Successful and represents a level of performance not all employees could be expected to achieve. a rating of Outstanding is meant to connote an extraordinary level of achievement and commitment in terms of time, technical knowledge and skill, ingenuity, creativity and initiative in the attainment of organizational objectives.

Exceeds Fully Successful. Performance that consistently and significantly exceeds the level of accomplishment that would otherwise be required to meet the standard for Fully Successful.

Fully Successful. Performance that fully and consistently meets the requirements and expectations of the job laid out for the Fully Successful standard.

Minimally Satisfactory. Performance that does not fully meet the performance standard set for Fully Successful. This may be evidenced by the need for greater supervisory review, or discussion and correction than is necessary at the Fully Successful level. When performance falls below Fully Successful, remedial action should be taken.

Unsatisfactory. Performance that clearly fails to meet a performance standard set at the Fully Successful level. When performance is Unsatisfactory on a critical element, corrective action must be taken.

Deriving Ratings of Record

Ratings of record must be based on how the executive performed on identified critical and noncritical performance elements. The executive's overall summary rating shall be derived as follows:

- Outstanding. All critical elements and the majority of noncritical elements shall be rated Outstanding;
- Exceeds Fully Successful, Fully Successful or Minimally Satisfactory. The majority of critical and noncritical elements should have the same individual rating as that of the summary rating. No critical element shall be rated less than one level below that of the summary rating.
- Unsatisfactory. When any one critical element is rated Unsatisfactory, the rating of record shall be Unsatisfactory.

Basis for Adverse Action

The following actions shall be taken for performance rated as less than Fully Successful:

Rating of Record	Action
One Unsatisfactory rating	Removal from SES position or SES
Two Unsatisfactory ratings within five consecutive rating years	Removal from SES
Two ratings below Fully Successful within three consecutive rating years	Removal from SES

Provisions of the Appraisal System

The appraisal system provides for:

- written initial rating of the executive's performance made by the executive's rating official, and provided to the rated executive;

-an opportunity for the rated executive to respond in writing to the initial rating:

-an opportunity for a reviewing official to review an executive's rating, unless there is no one at a higher level, before PRB review;

Performance Review Board

The PRB makes recommendations on executives' job performance.

Responsibilities

-Review and approve individual performance plans at the beginning of each appraisal period.

-Review standards and ratings of record for difficulty and strictness of application to ensure that only those executives whose job performance exceeds normal expectations are rated at levels above Fully Successful.

-Make recommendations regarding the approval of the rating of record for each executive.

-Make recommendations regarding the allocation of the performance award budget for SES including the amounts of individual performance bonuses.

-Make recommendations regarding the adjustment of an executive's individual SES pay level.

Addendum to PRB Functions added 1991 - Recertification

-Makes recommendations every third year (commencing in 1991) on recertification of every career SES member in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 3393a and 5 C.F.R. 317-504

PRB Responsibilities (continued)

-Make recommendations regarding nominations of executives for Presidential rank awards.

-Transmit copies of reviewing official's comments to rated executive and rating official.

Precepts

A comprehensive statement of the PRB's responsibilities and operations is contained in the PRB Operating Guidelines. The following precepts govern PRB appointment and operation:

1. The PRB will consist of at least three members appointed by the Administrator or Deputy Administrator;

2. Notice of appointment of an individual to the PRB will be published in the Federal Register;

3. PRB members will be appointed in such a manner as to assure consistency stability and objectivity in performance appraisal;

4. When appraising a career executive, the majority of the PRB shall consist of career appointees;

5. The PRB will review and evaluate the initial rating, the rated executive's written response and the written comments of a higher level executive, if any, and will conduct such further review as the PRB finds necessary;

6. Individual PRB members shall not take part in PRB deliberations involving their appraisals, or those of their immediate supervisor or executive under their immediate supervision;

7. The PRB shall make written recommendations concerning each executive's rating of record;

8. The PRB shall review and approve recommendations for incentive awards for SES members based on a special act or service, i.e. an invention, suggestion, act of heroism, or other one-time accomplishment that may or may not be a part of the executive's job responsibilities. In addition to determining that the act for an incentive award is one for which an executive may be recognized, the PRB shall adhere to all applicable guidelines of the Agency's Incentive Awards Program.

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