Information Technology (IT)
Skills Incentive Program (SIP)
Standard Operating Procedure Manual

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 467

April 30, 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION – SKILLS INCENTIVE PROGRAM (SIP)

1.1 Background – In FY 1999, the Department of State (DoS) approved a leading initiative of the Federal government to offer recruitment and retention incentives for its Information Technology (IT) workers. With proof of specific certifications and evidence of other computer training in high demand for the foreign affairs mission, DoS computer specialists and its new recruits became eligible for retention and recruitment bonuses. Since that time, the DoS program has been highly successful in meeting its mission objectives that call for the support of a technical professional work force, with more than half of its IT personnel now participating.

In August 2000, USAID's Acting Assistant Administrator for Management (A-AA/M) approved a recommendation from USAID's Office of Information Resources Management (now the Office of the Chief Information Officer - M/CIO) to investigate ways to establish a similar program of retention incentives for qualifying USAID personnel. In coordination with a wider workforce planning initiative by USAID's Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (M/HR), the Bureau for Management, Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM) pursued the potential of a cooperative endeavor with DoS. In the intervening months, an agreement in principle was reached in discussions with DoS to have M/IRM become a sub-unit of the DoS IT Personnel Recruitment and Retention Program. As designed in this jointly operated initiative, each respective organization would contribute staff and support to administer the program, but pay all costs for its own employees.

In April 2002, the first USAID IT professionals entered a joint USAID/DoS pilot program. In October 2005, the pilot program was judged, by both USAID and DoS, to have been a complete success, and the IT Skills Incentive Program (SIP) was formally created. Since the Program has been in place, it has proven extremely successful in achieving its objectives. The SIP Program continues to have the full support of USAID M/HR, M/CIO and DoS.

1.2 Current Status of the SIP – The Department of State and USAID offer this incentive under 5 USC 5754 and 5 CFR part 575, subpart C. The IT Skills Incentive Program (SIP) pays Civil Service and Foreign Service IT employees serving in IT specific job series/skill codes either 10 or 15 percent of their pay based on attainment of specific IT credentials. An IT SIP Panel determines skills that qualify at each level and determines which applicants meet SIP requirements. Representatives from USAID M/CIO and the DoS (IRM, HR, Foreign Service Institute/School of Applied Information Technology (FSI/SAIT) and a Regional Bureau) compose the panel. A Senior Advisory (adjudication) Panel, consisting of the DoS Chief Information Officer (CIO), the Dean of the SAIT at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Human Resources (HR), approve policy changes recommended by the IT SIP Panel with a two-thirds majority vote. The DoS CIO chairs the Senior Advisory Panel.

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.   3

The SIP has been extremely successful in meeting its goals of

a) Retaining USAID and DoS IT employees, and

b) Improving the competencies of our IT professionals

The SIP is a catalyst for skills improvement in IT competencies. Today approximately 56% of USAID's eligible IT Professionals are receiving SIP retention incentives in recognition of new skills they have acquired. Approximately 80% of the DoS's eligible IT professionals are receiving SIP retention incentives. The significant increase in skills and competencies contributes to the morale of our IT professionals, better job performance, and improved support to USAID's and DoS's critical IT infrastructure.

The USAID M/CIO, in coordination with the Agency's HR, provides administrative services in support of the SIP. These services include receipt of applications, verification of employment status, verification of successful service, and review of qualification documents. Additionally, in support of the SIP, M/CIO staff prepares material for SIP Panel review, tracks the status of each application, maintains files, communicates with applicants, notifies applicants of SIP Panel decisions, and requests Administrative Management Staff (M/AMS) complete a Request for Personnel Action (SF-52) form to initiate the adjustment to the applicant's pay. AMS forwards the completed SF-52 form to HR which then processes a Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50) form.

2. SIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to receive the SIP retention incentive an employee must meet and adhere to specific criteria as defined below.

2.1 Civil Service Employees (GS):

- The employee must be career or career-conditional.

- The employee must be a GS-15 or below (SES not eligible).

- The employee must have a minimum of one year of continuous service with USAID or DoS. If an employee directly transfers into USAID or DoS from another federal agency, the employee must have at least six months of continuous service with USAID or DoS before becoming eligible for the SIP.

- The employee must submit his or her most recent performance evaluation indicating a minimum performance level of "Fully Successful."

- The credential submitted must have been completed **after** entry into service with USAID or DoS and be no more than five years old.

- The credential submitted must come from the approved lists of qualifying credentials.

- The employee must be serving in one of the following job series:

  GS-332 – Computer Operations
  GS-2210 – IT Specialist
  GS-334 – Computer Specialist
  GS-335 – Computer Clerk and Assistant
  GS-391 – Telecommunications
  GS-392 – General Telecommunications
  GS-854 – Computer Engineering
  GS-855 – Electronics Engineering
  GS-856 – Electronics Technician
  GS-1550 – Computer Science Series

2.2 Foreign Service Specialists: (DoS only)

- The employee must be career or career-candidate.

- The employee must be an FS-01 or below (SFS not eligible).

- The employee must have a minimum of one year of continuous service with DoS. If an employee transfers from a Civil Service position to a Foreign Service position, there is no mandatory waiting period. Nevertheless, because the employee has moved to a different pay system, he or she must reapply for the SIP using the same valid, current credentials. All other Foreign Service eligibility criteria still apply.

- The employee must submit his or her most recent performance evaluation indicating a minimum level of performance of "Satisfactory."

- The credential submitted must have been completed **after** entry into DoS service and be no more than five years old.

- The employee must be serving in an IT-related position. For example, an Information Management Specialist (IMS) or an Information Management Technical Specialist (IMTS) on a General Services Office (GSO) excursion tour is not eligible for an SIP retention incentive. Additionally, if the employee is receiving the SIP retention incentive and then accepts an excursion tour in a non-IT related position, his or her five-year clock does not stop even though they are no longer eligible. (See **section 3.3, SIP Five-Year Clock**)

- The credential submitted must come from the approved lists of qualifying credentials.

- The employee must be serving in one of the following skill codes:

          2880 – Information Management Specialist
          2882 – Information Management Technical Specialist
          2884 – Information Technology Manager

Should USAID decide at a later date to staff the IT function with Foreign Service employees, eligibility requirements for their participation in the SIP will be determined at that time.

2.3 Civil Service Employees and Foreign Service IT Specialists – In order to maintain eligibility, all SIP participating employees (both Civil Service and Foreign Service) must complete all continuing education requirements (whether mandated by the SIP Panel or by the certifying authority) **and** continue to maintain at least a "Fully Successful" or equivalent performance rating. In addition, if a participating employee (both Civil Service and Foreign Service) transfers from an approved job series/skill code, the employee will no longer be eligible for the SIP retention incentive.

3. SIP RULES AND REGULATIONS

DoS maintains a joint USAID/DoS Intranet Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, specifically dedicated to the IT SIP. This Web site is constantly updated and revised. If you have any questions about information posted on the Web site, please contact the IT SIP Panel via e-mail at **itprofessionalsp@state.gov**. Potential SIP applicants should read the entire site to ensure that they have correct and up-to-date information regarding the application and credentialing requirements. Remember, it is **always** the employee's responsibility to ensure that the information is passed to and from the IT SIP Panel.

3.1 SIP Monetary Payment Levels – Incentive payments for eligible employees are calculated as a percentage based on their rate of basic pay. According to the definition in U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulation 5 CFR 575.302

"Rate of basic pay means the rate of pay fixed by law or administrative action for the position to which an employee is appointed before deductions and including any special rate under 5 CFR part 530, subpart C, or similar payment under other legal authority, and any other locality-based comparability under 5 CFR part 531, subpart F, or similar payment under other legal authority, but excluding additional pay of any kind. For example, a rate of basic pay does not include additional pay such as night shift differentials under 5 USC 5343(f) or environmental differentials under 5 USC 5343(c)(4)."

Simply, the percentage of increase will be based on the employee's salary including any special rate or locality pay. Specific percentages are assigned based on the attainment of specific IT credentials. (For a current list, please visit the SIP website **http://sip.state.gov/**).

3.2 SIP General Rules and Regulations

- It is **always** the employee's responsibility to monitor his or her status as an SIP retention incentive recipient and to advise the Panel if he or she is no longer eligible or if there has been **any** change to his or her eligibility.

- It is **always** the employee's responsibility to ensure that the necessary documentation is submitted to the SIP Panel for consideration. If there is any question regarding the required documentation, the employee must contact the SIP Panel via e-mail to request clarification.

- It is **always** the employee's responsibility to repay an overpayment he or she received due to a change in status/eligibility.

- The SIP Panel and the Senior Advisory Panel have the right to make changes to the Program at any time based on the needs of USAID and DoS or for any other reason deemed relevant, such as the discontinuance of a certification or a change in fielded technology within USAID or DoS. The SIP Panel will submit changes to the Senior Advisory Panel for adjudication. The Senior Advisory Panel, on its own, can make changes to the Program with a majority vote. However, the Senior Advisory Panel should seek input from the SIP Panel during its deliberations and prior to making a final decision. The Senior Advisory Panel does not need concurrence from the SIP Panel to make these changes.

- USAID may terminate participation in the SIP based on the management needs of the Agency; for example, when the employee's position is affected by a reduction in force; when there are insufficient funds to continue the planned incentive payments; and when conditions no longer warrant further participation in the SIP and payment of this incentive.   M/CIO, in conjunction with HR, will review USAID participation on an annual basis and certify continuing need for the SIP and payment of the incentive.

- Any Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree must be conferred by an accredited institution. The SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, is the only authoritative location for ensuring proper accreditation.

- Representatives from USAID and DoS (IRM, CA, FSI/SAIT and a Regional Bureau) compose the voting members of the Panel. The Chairperson is the FSI/SAIT representative. A Senior Advisory (adjudication) Panel consisting of the DoS CIO, DoS Dean of the School of Applied Information Technology (SAIT), and the DoS DAS for HR approves changes recommended by the IT SIP Panel. (USAID does not currently have a representative serving on the SIP Senior Advisory Panel.)

- A minimum of four SIP Panel members must be present at each Panel meeting.

- The SIP Panel will meet once a month.

- It is **always** the employee's responsibility to ensure that the Panel has any and all necessary documentation by 10 a.m. EST on the business day that precedes

the date of the Panel meeting. Most Panel meetings are held on the first Monday of each month. This means that the deadline for submission will be at 10 a.m. ET the Friday before (provided that the Friday is not a holiday). Failure to meet this deadline will result in a delay of the review of the applicant's file.

- The SIP Panel has the authority to make decisions regarding an employee's eligibility and to advise HR whether to begin or end an employee's SIP retention incentive.

- All "policy" related issues, such as the inclusion of a new eligible credential or a change in the rules and regulations will be reviewed by the SIP Panel. The Panel Chairperson will forward the Panel's recommendations to the Senior Advisory Authority for final approval.

- All submitted certifications/credentials must have been conferred while the applicant was employed by USAID or DoS. An employee may not use, for example, a Master's Degree earned prior to service with USAID or DoS.

- Any certification/credential submitted to the Panel must not be older than five years old as of the date of the application.

- The effective date for Panel approved certifications/credentials will be the beginning of the **second** pay period immediately following the Panel meeting date.

- Appeals and Non-Approval: Applicants may appeal non-approval under the following conditions. If his or her application is denied, an applicant may submit additional documentation to the IT SIP Panel requesting a re-evaluation of his or her original application. An applicant may appeal the panel's second decision to the Senior Advisory Panel. To do so, the applicant must send a written request for review by the Senior Advisory Panel to the IT SIP via e-mail at **itprofessionalsp@state.gov**.

- New applications, regardless of the employee's past SIP history, relieve the employee from any current year or past year SIP Panel-mandated continuing education requirements. However, the employee must still complete any certifying authority (ISC2, for example) continuing education requirements.

3.3 SIP Five-Year Clock – All eligible certifications/credentials have a five-year lifespan provided that any/all continuing education requirements and recertification requirements imposed by the certifying authority (Microsoft, ISC2, for example) and the SIP Panel are met. The only exceptions to this rule concern some minor, technology-based certifications.   For example, if an applicant has been receiving the SIP retention incentive for a Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA) in Windows 2000 and upgrades to an MCSA in Windows 2003, the applicant's five-year clock will restart. However, if an employee upgrades from an MCSA in Windows 2000 to a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) in Windows 2000, his or her five-year clock will not restart, as this is an upgrade within the same technology series (Windows 2000).

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.   8

3.4 SIP Continuing Education (CE) Requirements – Each year the SIP Panel may require a Continuing Education (CE) credential be achieved in order to continue participation in the SIP. Failure to earn this CE, as defined by the SIP Panel, will result in an employee's removal from the SIP. **Please note that there is a defined CE requirement for FY 2008.** (For requirements beyond the date of this document please visit the SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, for the latest information.)

Currently, certifications that require their own CE credits to maintain eligibility are exempt from the SIP Panel-mandated CE requirements. For example, Project Manager Professional (PMP) has its own CE requirements, so if an employee is receiving a SIP retention incentive based on this credential, he or she is exempt from following the SIP Panel-mandated CE requirements (as defined in this section). Participants having qualifying credentials without their own CE requirements must complete one of the requirements listed below between October 1, 2006 and September 30, 2008. Any certifications, credentials, or transcripts presented to the SIP Panel that are dated outside this timeframe will be ineligible.

The following is a list of the eligible CE requirements for FY 2008. Participants are only required to complete one of these requirements.

- CompTIA A +

- CompTIA Network +

- CompTIA Server +

- CompTIA i-Net +

- CompTIA Project +

- Upper Level College Course – One, three-semester hour, upper-level course (300 series or above) from an accredited institution. The course must cover either IT project management or must be systems–related to current or future USAID or DoS IT projects. A link on the SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, allows employees to check whether their educational institution is accredited. Employees may also submit a description of the course to the SIP Panel for approval prior to taking the class if there is any doubt as to its eligibility.

- Nortel NCTS Real-time Networking – Eligibility: This is directed towards Foreign Service IMTS/Telephone but is open to all Foreign Service IMTS specialties.

- FEMA Independent Study Program – Eligibility: This is directed towards Foreign Service IMTS/Radio but is open to all recipients. Please do not submit individual proof of course completions. Submit them together once they have all been completed.

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.

MANDATORY:

o   IS-800, National Response Plan (NRP) – An Introduction

o   IS-100, FW Intro to the Incident Command System, I-100, for Federal Disaster, Workers (Note: IS-100 can be substituted for this course only.)

o   IS-200, ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents

o   IS-700, National Incident Management System (NIMS) – An Introduction

o   IS-292, Disaster Basics

o   IS-546, Continuity of Operations (COOP) Awareness Course

ELECTIVES *(***Choose Three***):*

o   IS-15.A, Special Events Contingency Planning for Public Safety Agencies

o   IS-208, State Disaster Management

o   IS-275, The EOC's Role in Community Preparedness, Response and Recover Activities

o   IS-288, The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management

o   IS-317, Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams

o   IS-547, Introduction to Continuity of Operations (COOP)

3.5 SIP Qualifying Credentials Currently Approved at 10% – As of the date of this document, the following qualifying credentials are approved for participation in the SIP at the 10% rate. (Please see the SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, for a current list of acceptable qualifying SIP credentials. This list is revised often, with credentials being added and/or deleted to the Program as required to best meet the overall goals of the SIP.)

•   Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA) in Windows 2000 or 2003

•   Bachelor's Degree (IT related)

•   Information Systems Security Professionals Certificate (NSTISSI No. 4011)

•   Global Information Assurance Certification (GIAC) Security Engineer (GSE)

•   Nortel Certified Support Specialist (NCSS) - The following three exams are required for this certification: Technology Standards and Protocols for IP Telephony Solutions; Communications Server (CS) RIS 4.0 (or higher) Hardware Installation and Maintenance; and Communications Server (CS) RIS 4.0 (or higher) Software Installation and Maintenance

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) General Radio Telephone License (Elements 1 & 3)

- Building Industry Consulting Service International (BICSI) Installer Level 2

- International Information Systems Security Certification Consortium (ISC2) Certification and Accreditation Professional (CAP) credential **and** CompTIA Security + (both certifications are required)

- ISC2 Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP)

- Master CIW Web Site Manager

- Master CIW Administrator

3.6 SIP Qualifying Credentials Currently Approved at 15% – The following qualifying credentials are approved for participation in the SIP at the 15% rate. (Please see the SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, for a current list of acceptable qualifying SIP credentials. This list is revised often, with credentials being added and/or deleted to the Program as required to best meet the overall goals of the SIP.)

- Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) in Windows 2000 or 2003

- Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP)

- Cisco Certified Security Professional (CCSP)

- Masters Degree (IT related)

- Federal Enterprise Architecture (Framework) Certification (FEA)

- CIO Certificate – National Defense University

- Project Management Professional (PMP) – Project Management Institute

- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)

- Oracle Certification Program (OCP) - Employees interested in this certification must obtain it with subsets in both Oracle 9i or 10g Database **and** Oracle Application Server 9i or 10g

- Nortel Certified Support Expert - The following five exams are required for this certification: Technology Standards and Protocols for IP Telephony Solutions; Communications Server (CS) RIS 4.0 (or higher); Hardware Installation and Maintenance Communications Server (CS); RIS 4.0 Software (or higher); Installation and Maintenance Technology Standards and Protocols for Converged Networks Communications Server 1000 RIS 4.0 (or higher).

- Building Industry Consulting Service International (BICSI) Technician Level Installer

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.

- BICSI Registered Communications Distribution Designer

- Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)

- ISACA Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)

- NDU Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) Certificate

- Citrix Certified Integration Architect (CCIA) for Citrix Presentation Server 4.0 (or higher)

- Citrix Certified Enterprise Administrator (CCEA) for Citrix Presentation Server 4.0 **and** CompTIA Network +

- Master CIW Enterprise Developer

3.7 Application Procedure – Please note that DoS employees can apply electronically via the DoS SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**. **This process is not currently available to USAID employees.** Therefore, it is necessary for all USAID employees to follow the procedures defined in this section of this document. It is hoped that within the near future USAID employees will be able to apply online through the DoS electronic application process.

Each SIP application is considered in a fair and consistent manner. However, each applicant must complete all required information in order to receive full consideration for entry into the SIP. Incomplete and/or inaccurate applications will be returned to the applicant.

3.7.1 SIP Application Form – An SIP Application Form (Attachment A) must be completed in full and submitted with the applicant's qualifying credential and accompanying eligible documentation. Please note that the SIP Panel reserves the right to request additional documentation to validate an applicant's submitted credential. Applicants must follow the application instructions carefully or the application process may be unnecessarily delayed.

3.7.2 SIP Submission of Application Package – Each USAID applicant must submit a complete SIP application package to the designated M/CIO representative. Each application **must** include the following:

- A signed and fully completed SIP Application Form.

- Documented proof of the qualifying credential sufficient for the SIP Panel to clearly establish that the credential satisfies all SIP entry requirements.

- A copy of the applicant's latest performance evaluation indicating a minimal rating of "Effective" or "Fully Successful" in a qualifying job series or skill code. (If this is not available, the applicant must provide documentation from his or her

current supervisor of performance at these levels while in a qualifying job series or skill code.)

- A copy of the applicant's latest position description indicating an SIP-approved job series or skill code.

- Applicants may include any other material they judge relevant to their application and that may serve the SIP Panel in making a decision on their credentials and/or acceptance into the SIP.

- Other materials, as requested by the SIP Panel, to ensure the applicant receives a full evaluation by the SIP Panel.

- Fully completed SIP application packages are presented to the SIP Panel at regularly scheduled meetings. These meetings usually occur on the first Monday of each month (subject to flexibility). Applicants should plan to submit a completed SIP application package well in advance of the next scheduled SIP Panel meeting in order to allow sufficient time to complete and/or correct any deficiencies in their application package.

4. SIP PANEL RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Duties of the Panel – The SIP Panel will review and vote on applications, decide to approve or disapprove the SIP retention incentive, and review the folders prepared by the Panel staff.

4.2 Privacy Protection of Individuals – The SIP Panel will protect all information provided by applicants, including any notes or additional documentation produced in the course of application consideration. The Panel will not discuss its proceedings with anyone who is not directly involved in the Program.

4.3 Request for Additional Documents –The SIP Panel may request additional information concerning an application. Requests can be made for information from HR, the applicant's supervisor, or the applicant. The Panel will document the applicant's folder and note the date and nature of the request. The Panel staff will compile the additional information and resubmit the applicant's revised folder to the Panel.

4.4 Decisions Regarding Program Issues – The SIP Panel may make decisions concerning the Program's management. These decisions concern such factors as meeting schedules, supporting documentation requirements, and what information should be retained for the purpose of managing and reporting on the Program itself.

4.5 Panel Membership – USAID M/CIO will have one representative (designated by the CIO) on the SIP Panel who will have one vote, when assessing the qualifications of an employee. This USAID representative will also act as a bridge, present Agency candidate cases to the Panel, and relay findings to the Agency. The SIP Panel will also consist of DoS officials from IRM, HR, CA, FSI/SAIT, and a Regional Bureau. The

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Associate Dean of FSI's School of Applied Technology (FSI/SAIT) or his or her designate will chair the Panel.

4.6 Meetings Schedule/Process – The SIP Panel will meet at least once a month (or more frequently if needed). SIP Panel meetings normally occur on the first Monday of each month (subject to flexibility).

4.7 Application Review and Voting Procedures – Panel members will review each applicant's folder and make a decision based on the following questions:

- Is the applicant requesting a SIP retention incentive for one or more of the approved credentials?
- Do the documents submitted support the applicant's request?
- Is the applicant in a position with an approved skill code or job series code?
- Are the Civil Service applicant's certifications or degrees for a SIP retention incentive directly related to the applicant's current position?
- Does the applicant have a minimum of one year combined continuous service with USAID or DoS? If the applicant is a direct transferee from another United States Government (USG) agency, does the applicant have six months of continuous service with USAID or DoS?
- Does the applicant have a "Fully Successful" performance rating of record or evaluation in a qualifying job series or skill code? If not, a performance assessment must be provided by the employee's supervisor (rating official).
- Does the applicant already receive an SIP retention incentive? If so, will approval of the new application give the applicant a higher percentage rate?

The SIP Panel will vote formally (by voice or show of hands) on each application. A majority of three (3) votes of the Panel is required to approve the retention incentive. A majority of three (3) votes of the Panel is required to deny the retention incentive.

Although the following list is not all-inclusive, the retention incentive can be denied for the following reasons:

- The skills certified are not on the approved list.
- The skill level certified is below the level on the approved list.
- FSI courses cannot be used to support the Technician certifications.
- Credentials that are "in process" cannot be used. The applicant must have completed the courses, testing, etc., and received the certificate(s).
- The applicant's position is not in an approved job series or skill code.
- The applicant has less than one year of combined continuous service at USAID or DoS or the employee transferred directly from another USG agency and has less than six months of continuous service with the Agency.
- The applicant already receives a retention incentive and this application will not give him or her a higher percentage rate.

- The employee does not have a performance rating of record, an interim rating, or a memorandum assessing performance in the job series or skill code for which he or she is applying for the retention incentive.
- The certifications, for which the applicant is requesting a retention incentive, are not directly related to the responsibilities of the applicant's current position.

4.8 SIP Panel Checklist Form – The SIP Panel uses the SIP Panel Checklist Form (Attachment B) to validate an applicant's credentials and to ensure all conditions for entry into the SIP have been met. The SIP Panel will complete this form during its review process. (Applicants do not need to complete this form.)

5. SIP CONTACT INFORMATION

SIP participants and applicants should access the SIP Web site, **http://sip.state.gov/**, prior to contacting the SIP Panel, as this Web site contains the latest information on the Program.

If additional assistance is required, please submit any questions and/or comments to the IT SIP Panel e-mail box at **itprofessionalsp@state.gov**. SIP staff will do their best to answer questions submitted via e-mail in an accurate and timely fashion. (Whenever possible, applicants should communicate with the SIP Panel and/or its staff via e-mail for comprehensive documentation and archiving purposes.)

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(APPENDIX A)
APPLICATION FOR THE SKILLS INCENTIVE PROGRAM (SIP)

1. Application Date:

_____

2. Full Name of Employee:

_____

3. Social Security Number:

_____

4. Organizational Symbol/Duty Station/Post:

_____

5. Position Title/Position Number:

_____

6. Skill Code/Pay Plan/Series/Grade/Step:

_____

7. Supervisor's Name and E-mail

Address:_____

8. Date Entered on Duty in the Agency:

[1] _____

9. Length of time in Current Job Series/Skill Code:
☐ **More than 120 days   or   ☐ Less than 120 days**[2]

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[1] All employees who are new <u>and</u> have completed the length of service requirement, but have not received a formal performance rating under the USAID or DoS Civil or Foreign Service performance evaluation systems must submit a performance assessment from his or her supervisor (rating official). This statement must certify that the employee's level of performance in their current position is, at least, fully successful.

[2] Employees who move from a job series or skill code not covered under the IT SIP to a job series or skill code that is covered by the Program may not apply for an incentive/allowance until their performance has been assessed in the new job series or skill code. Employees must work under their new work requirements/performance plan for a minimum of 120 days before their supervisor (rating official) can assess level of performance. A copy of the assessment must be submitted along with the application for an incentive/retention allowance.

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.

10. **List IT credentials and then attach copies of credentials you are submitting to support your consideration by the IT SIP Panel:**

    _____
    _____

11. **Retirement Eligibility Date (mm/yyyy)**

    _____

12. **<u>Briefly</u> describe the critical activities or functions that you are performing <u>or</u> attach a copy of your current position description to this request.**

    _____
    _____
    _____

13. **Purpose of Application:**   ☐ **Continuing Education**   ☐ **Upgrade**   ☐ **Other**

    _____
    Signature of Applicant

(APPENDIX B)

SIP PANEL CHECKLIST FORM

Employee Name: _____ **SSN:** _____

Date Received: _____

CATEGORY	YES	NO
Individual has submitted the USAID M/CIO-required Individual Qualifying Credential Approval Form		
Individual possesses the identified skill code/job series code and is serving in a position with an identified skill code/job series		
Individual has presented listed credentials		
Individual has presented acceptable corroborating documentation, i.e., work requirements statement, etc.		
Individual has at least one year of USAID/DoS service		
Individual is a direct transferee from another USG agency with six months continuous service with the USAID/DoS		
Individual has at least Satisfactory/Fully Successful performance rating		
Individual has served successfully for a minimum of 120 days in the qualified skill code or job series and supervisory assessment is attached		
Does individual have an existing incentive?		
Individual is approved for incentive/allowance		
Qualifying Credential is:		
Total allowance/incentive approved:		

Date File Reviewed by Panel: _____

Approved: _____ Disapproved: _____ Deferred: _____

SIP Panel Member Signatures:

_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

This reference has been substantively revised in its entirety.