

SUBJECT: Persistent Cookies on USAID Web Sites

AMENDED: As of 06/19/2002 the Point of Contact for M/IRM changed. See below

NEW MATERIAL: Persistent cookies are not to be used on USAID public web sites, including those developed or operated by contractors on behalf of USAID, unless four specific conditions are met.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/23/2001

ADMINISTRATOR-POLICY

**USAID/General Notice
A/AID
05/23/2001**

Subject: Persistent Cookies on USAID Web Sites

This notice is especially for Contract Technical Representatives, contractors, and others who develop or administer USAID web sites.

There is a growing awareness of privacy issues as a result of increasing use of the Internet and other information technology. The specific issue of persistent cookies use has received a great deal of attention. A "persistent cookie" is a small bit of information that is placed on a web user's hard drive by a web site or Internet server, and becomes a privacy matter when uses of that technology can track the activities of users over time and across different web sites. Therefore, the presumption in USAID is that we will not use persistent cookies. We should be diligent in developing web sites without the use of persistent cookies, and, when they are critical to the task, we must be diligent in justifying their need.

Persistent cookies are not to be used on USAID public web sites, including those developed or operated by contractors on behalf of USAID, unless the following four conditions are met:

1. The site gives clear and conspicuous notice of their use;
2. There is a compelling need to use this technology on the site;
3. Appropriate and publicly disclosed privacy safeguards exist for handling any information derived from the cookies; and
4. I, as Administrator, give personal approval for their use.

I fully support the use of the Internet and other information technology to accomplish USAID's mission. At the same time, each of us must be sensitive to personal information that may be available to us through our use of such technology and take care to protect it in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and OMB policy. USAID has a privacy upgrade program, which is developing policies and procedures to address privacy protection in USAID, and we will be sharing this guidance with you over the next several months. Additionally, USAID will review emerging web technology to identify issues we will address to protect the public's privacy when visiting our public web sites. I know we will all work together to protect the privacy of visitors to our web sites, and to protect sensitive data under our control.

Additional guidance was provided in the USAID General Notice issued November 9, 1999, by LPA/IC, entitled **Notices for USAID Web Sites**, and amplified in [INTERIM UPDATE #24](#) in the 500 Series. See also [OMB Policy Memorandum M-00-13](#) of June 22, 2000, on Privacy Policies and Data Collection on Federal web sites. Attachment 1 contains hyperlinks to those and related documents.

For additional information, please contact:

- Margaret Alter Miller, M/AA, at (202) 712-1054 on policy-related privacy issues and on procedures for obtaining my approval for the use of persistent cookies;
- **Information System Security Engineer, M/IRM, at (202) 712-0199** on technical issues related to privacy, or on security matters for protecting privacy; or
- Joe Fredericks, LPA/IC, at (202) 712-0502 on policy matters concerning the operation of USAID web sites accessible to the public.

Point of Contact: Any questions concerning this Notice may be directed to Margaret Alter Miller, M/AA, 202-712-1054.

Andrew S. Natsios

Attachment #1

Hyperlinks Related to USAID Web Privacy Policy
May 10, 2001

1. [Link to USAID ADS chapter 557, Public Information](#)
2. [Link to USAID Policy Notice date 11/09/1999 concerning website privacy policies](#) (Note: This link is only available to USAID employees who have access to the intranet.)
3. [Link to USAID website Privacy Notice](#)
4. [Link to OMB M-99-18, Privacy Policies on Federal Web sites, June 2, 1999](#)
5. [Link to OMB M-00-13, Privacy Policies and Data Collection on Federal Web sites, June 20, 2000](#)
6. [Link to OMB's September 5, 2000 memorandum to Roger Baker](#)

File name	Notice Date	Effective Date	Editorial Revision Date	ADS CD No.	Remarks
iu5_0111_052901_cd24	05/23/2001	05/23/2001	N/A	ADS CD 24	New
iu5_0111_062002_cd28	--	05/23/2001	06/20/2002	ADS CD 28	POC changed in Info Notice