



EMPLOYEE

EVALUATION

PROGRAM

GUIDEBOOK

Part 2, Civil Service

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I. Introduction

The ability of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to achieve its mission depends upon its employees. The skills and abilities they use in carrying out their responsibilities will determine how successfully the Agency performs its overall mission. The Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) provides a linkage between an employee's performance and achievement of the Agency's mission and goals. The performance plan provides a framework to establish accountability for achieving results within an individual operating unit in accord with the unit's strategic objectives.

The EEP applies to all Civil Service (CS), Foreign Service (FS), Senior Foreign Service (SFS), Schedule C employees, and all employees whose salaries are Administratively Determined (AD). It does not apply to Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, Presidential Appointees, consultants, or experts.

The EEP consists of two different personnel systems, FS (Part 1) and CS (Part 2) - which are governed by different statutory requirements and ADS Chapters. Each system has its own policies and procedures to evaluate and measure employee performance. Although the systems have some similarities, the EEP Guidebook details different processes for the CS and FS evaluation programs. Furthermore, the Guidebook provides CS and FS employees, rating officials and appraisal committee members with an overview of the program's policies and procedures, and detailed instructions on completing the Annual Evaluation Form (AEF). This EEP Guidebook Part 2 is a Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 462.

Snapshot of the EEP Process

The EEP has a number of steps, starting with the development of individual performance plans and concluding with the completion of the final written evaluation for each employee.

- ***Start of the evaluation period***
 - ❖ Rating Official and employee discuss new performance plan (Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements) and professional development opportunities (work assignments, career and personal goals, and training)
 - ❖ Rating Official establishes performance plan with optional Appraisal Committee (AC) input
 - ❖ Rating Official presents final performance plan to employee for signature
 - ❖ Rating Official discusses professional development with employee
- ***Throughout the evaluation period***
 - ❖ Rating Official provides employee feedback and communication on performance progress
- ***Middle of the evaluation period***
 - ❖ Rating Official conducts a mandatory mid-cycle review with employee to discuss performance progress, 360° input and, as appropriate, makes written adjustments to the performance plan
- ***Completion of the evaluation period***
 - ❖ Upon request from the Rating Official, employee submits self-assessment and 360° sources to Rating Official

- ❖ Rating Official uses Appraisal Input Form(s) (AID 462-4), 360° input, and employee's self-assessment to draft evaluation
- ❖ Rating Official shares draft evaluation with the employee
- ❖ AC Review - Rating Official submits "Needs Improvement" or "Unacceptable" evaluations to AC for review or when the employee or Rating Official has requested AC involvement in the AEF process
- ❖ Rating Official finalizes AEF and provides it to the employee with performance feedback
- ❖ Employee submits optional Employee Statement in response to final AEF

Roles and Responsibilities

In order for the EEP to be successful, a number of different parties must participate and share responsibilities on an annual basis. The roles and responsibilities of these parties are as follows:

Principal Officer

Responsibility and Accountability

- Manage the Operating Unit's performance evaluation program by adhering to Agency EEP policies, procedures and schedules
- Disseminate information on the EEP to Rating Officials and employees in the operating unit
- Establish operating unit AC membership, standard procedures and internal deadlines
- Designate Rating Officials, who in most situations will be the employee's supervisor
- Ensure the timely submission of AEFs to the Office of Human Resources (HR)
- Ensure that all operating unit employees have written performance plans

The Employee

Achieving Results

- Participate in developing optional Performance Elements and their Performance Standards with Rating Official
- Self-monitor progress towards achieving Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements
- Participate constructively in performance feedback sessions and mid-cycle review
- Submit a written self-assessment and identify 360 degree input sources
- After reviewing the final AEF with the Rating Official, prepare and submit optional Employee Statement

Rating Official

Evaluation and Feedback

- If appropriate, develop optional Performance Elements and their Performance Standards with each employee
- Observe and evaluate employee performance, providing constructive and supportive feedback to employees throughout the entire evaluation period
- Conduct a formal, face-to-face mid-cycle review
- Gather performance information from the employee's self-assessment, 360 degree sources, direct observation of performance, AIF, if any, and other information supervisor feels is relevant.
- Draft the AEF and Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW) and present them to employee for review
- Make revisions, as appropriate, and present AEF to employee, unless evaluation is "Needs Improvement" or "Unacceptable," then AC review of the draft evaluation is mandatory

- Discuss with the employee final evaluation results and the SFW
- At the end of the rating cycle prepare the final AEF, regardless of how long he/she has been the supervisor of the rated employee.

Appraisal Committee (if required or requested)

Organizational Perspective - Review

- Adhere to the EEP policies and procedures to ensure fair treatment of evaluated employees
- Upon request by Rating Official or employee, conduct review of the performance plan, mid-cycle review, and/or end-of-cycle AEF.
- Unilaterally remove inadmissible comments from appraisal
- Ensure timely, accurate, equitable, and objective evaluations for all employee AEFs reviewed
- Make recommendations concerning employee requests for AEF reconsideration
- The AC is authorized to make any change in the AEF, including adjectival ratings or the summary rating.

Office of Human Resources

Guidance and Support

- Formulate & oversee implementation of the EEP policies, guidance, and training
- Work closely with managers/supervisors in each operating unit to implement the EEP
- Take appropriate action when Rating Officials, AC members or employees fail to follow EEP policies, procedures, or schedule

II. Evaluation Period

The Agency's evaluation period is one year. The period runs from January 1 through December 31. All employees who are on an active performance plan of 120 calendar days or more will receive an AEF at the end of the evaluation period. If an employee has not been on a performance plan for 120 calendar days or more at the end of the evaluation period, the period will be extended to reach the 120 calendar days minimum.

At the end of each evaluation period, the Rating Official of Record will prepare the AEF. There is no minimum time period a Rating Official must serve as the employee's Rating Official. The key issue is whether the employee has been on a performance plan for 120 calendar days or more.

The Rating Official will coordinate the AEF input from prior supervisors and/or rating officials (See Section V - Preparing & Completing the AEF for information on the Appraisal Input Form).

Annual Evaluation Period

Employment Category	Annual Evaluation Period Starts	Annual Evaluation Period Ends
Civil Service, including GS and AD	January 1	December 31

III. Performance Plans

Performance Plans (AEF- Section 2) establish Performance Elements, Performance Standards and optional Performance Elements and their Performance Standards that link an individual employee's accomplishments to the achievement of organizational goals. A Rating Official must develop any discretionary portions of the performance plan in direct collaboration with the employee. The Rating Official has 30 calendar days to get the performance plan in place. For employees who change jobs during an annual evaluation period, Rating Officials will develop performance plans within the respective periods from the day the employee arrives on the new assignment. For example, if an employee changes jobs to another bureau/office midway through the annual evaluation period, the new Rating Official has 30 calendar days from the employee's arrival to finalize the performance plan. A performance plan is officially in effect when the Rating Official and employee sign the AEF (Section 1). If an employee declines to sign the AEF, the Rating Official will annotate the AEF with an "x." If this is the case, the Rating Official will sign and an AC Representative will initial. The day after the Rating Official and AC Representative annotate the AEF is the date the Performance Plan becomes official.

Performance Elements (AEF - Section 4) are a set of common work responsibilities that all employees perform. All employees have six general Performance Elements. Additionally, all supervisors have three mandatory supervisory and managerial Performance Elements.

Performance Elements (optional) (AEF- Section 2) are to be used for special assignments or projects and are results-oriented outcomes developed for types of responsibilities representing distinguishable tasks or specific units of work. Specific responsibilities involve results that can be achieved before the end of the rating period. The employee must have control over the function or activity. Do not develop Performance Elements that are not within an employee's control. Performance Elements must be commensurate with an employee's official position. One or two optional Performance Elements can be established.

Performance Standards are objective statements that communicate to the employee the acceptable performance level of a given performance element. Performance Standards address the quantity, quality, timeliness and/or cost-effectiveness of accomplishing the performance element. Rating Officials will establish optional Performance Standards at the "Fully Successful" level. In other words, Performance Standards describe the acceptable levels of performance on a performance element an employee must achieve to receive a "Fully Successful" rating for the objective.

Critical Performance Elements are of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in the employee receiving an overall unacceptable annual evaluation and could be a basis for adverse action. At least one performance element must be critical. The Rating Official will determine, in consultation with the employee, which Performance Elements are critical. Beyond the designation of at least one of the standard elements as critical, the three supervisory and managerial Performance Elements are each considered critical.

Appraisal Committee review of the performance plan is optional. An employee or Rating Official may request AC involvement in the performance planning process. Upon request for involvement, the AC will assist with the establishment of the optional Performance Elements and Performance Standards and will sign the AEF prior to the employee signing the form. To request AC involvement, the employee will send a written request (email is sufficient) to the Rating Official, who will request the AC's involvement. If the Rating Official requests AC involvement, the Rating Official will send the written request to the AC Chairperson and a copy to the employee.

Performance Planning Steps - Follow these steps to develop a performance plan:

- **Step 1 - Look at the Overall Picture**
 - ❖ Begin process by looking at the Agency/Bureau's goals and strategic objectives
- **Step 2 - Determine Operating Unit Accomplishments**
 - ❖ Determine which Agency/Bureau goals and strategic objectives affect the operating unit and how the operating unit's accomplishments (results-oriented outcomes) help the Agency/Bureau reach its goals and strategic objectives, and thus the operating unit's goals and strategic objectives
- **Step 3 - Determine Individual Accomplishments that Support Operating Unit's Goals and Strategic Objectives**
 - What must the employee accomplish or produce (results-oriented outcomes) to support and/or link to the Operating Unit's goals and strategic objectives? Incorporate this information into "Role in the Organization" section.
- **Step 4 - Incorporate Performance Elements and Optional Performance Elements into Performance Plan**
 - ❖ Identify which individual accomplishments should be included as optional Performance Elements in the performance plan
 - ❖ Determine which Performance Elements should be critical or non-critical
 - ❖ Communicate through the performance standard the acceptable level of performance the employee must achieve to receive a "Fully Successful" rating.
- **Step 5 - Determine Individual Performance Standards**
 - ❖ Determine how to measure the performance level for each optional Performance Element; use the measures of quality, quantity, timeliness and/or cost-effectiveness to develop specific standards for the optional performance element(s).
- **Step 6 - Determine How to Monitor Performance**
 - ❖ Determine how to monitor the performance, e.g. what data to collect, data sources, when to collect the data and how to collect it
 - ❖ Determine how to provide the employee with on-going performance feedback (e.g., monthly meetings)
- **Step 7 - Check the Performance Plan**

- ❖ Review the plan to ensure Performance Elements are aligned with goals, attainable, fair, applicable, clear, within the employee's control, and challenging
- ❖ Ensure that optional Performance Elements are consistent with parameters of position description
- ❖ Ensure that the Performance Standards are observable, quantifiable, clear, avoid negative standards (describe negative performance), and avoid absolutes (no room for errors)

**Adapted from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) A Handbook for Measuring Employee Performance*

Summary of Performance Planning

The following table summarizes evaluation periods and performance planning:

Performance Planning	
Annual Evaluation Period	January 1 - December 31
Establishment of Performance Plan at Beginning of Annual Evaluation Period	Within first 30 calendar days
Performance Plan is Officially in Effect on the	Day After Employee Signs AEF*
Performance Elements are Commensurate with Employee's	Official Position Grade and Position Description
Number of Individual Performance Elements	Up to 2 optional Performance Elements
Performance Standards Written to Performance Level	Fully Successful
Performance Elements, Including optional	Performance Elements are either Critical or Non-critical. At least 1 Performance Element must be critical
Supervisory/Managerial Performance Elements	For all Supervisors, Supervisory/Managerial Performance Elements are Critical
AC Review of Performance Plan	Optional
Rating Official, AC (if requested) Employee sign AEF	Section 1

* If the employee declines to sign the AEF (Section 1), the Rating Official will annotate the AEF with an "x" and date it. If this is the case, an AC Representative will initial. The day after the Rating Official and AC annotate the AEF is the date the Performance Plan is officially in effect.

Remember this wise, old performance planning adage:

"An ounce of performance planning is worth a pound of performance counseling."
Keep this adage in mind when developing a performance plan. A well-written, communicated and monitored performance plan with attainable Performance Elements and quantifiable Performance Standards will assist employees in meeting, or even exceeding, their annual evaluation standards. Then, the Rating Official will not have to be concerned with addressing poor performance issues during the evaluation period!

IV. Progress Reviews & Employee Feedback

Progress reviews and employee feedback offer the Rating Official an opportunity to discuss an employee's progress in accomplishing his/her Performance Elements and Performance Standards. There is one mandatory progress review at or as near as feasible to the mid-point of the evaluation period. However, to make progress reviews and feedback effective, the Rating Official must conduct feedback sessions on a periodic and regular basis. Rating Officials are advised to conduct employee feedback sessions throughout the evaluation period, as appropriate:

- **Start of Annual Evaluation Period** - Rating Official and employee discuss the annual Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements,
- **Mid-Cycle** - Mandatory, documented progress review, and
- **End of Annual Evaluation Period** - Rating Official presents the employee with final AEF.

Question: What is the true test of an effective employee progress review and feedback program?
Answer: When an employee is not surprised by his/her final AEF.

Formal Mid-Cycle Progress Review

- **Preparing for Progress Review** (See pages 16 and 17 for 360° Assessment Procedures and Tips)
 - ❖ Rating Official requests at least three 360 degree sources from the employee
 - ❖ Employee provides 360 degree sources to Rating Official, e.g., names of customers, peers, etc.
 - ❖ Prior to the meeting, Rating Official and employee, individually, review Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements, and make notes to prepare for the meeting
 - ❖ Rating Official gathers 360° input and creates an outline to guide progress review
- **Conducting the Progress Review**
 - ❖ To foster an environment for open, frank discussion, the Rating Official will -
 - Conduct the review privately with the employee
 - Solicit and encourage the employee to ask questions and discuss performance successes, impediments and concerns and career aspirations
 - ❖ To objectively review the employee's job performance, the Rating Official will focus on -
 - Comparing performance to Performance Standards and optional Performance Elements for the entire evaluation period versus concentration on the employee's most recent performance
 - The overall pattern of performance and no emphasis on isolated one-time mistakes
 - Identifying any unforeseen impediments to performance and making adjustments to the Performance Elements and Performance Standards as appropriate
 - Assessing progress towards achieving Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements, and determining any performance gaps
 - Discussing performance gaps and developing, with employee input, a course of action

- If performance is at the "Needs Improvement" or "Unacceptable" level, all parties must consult with Labor and Employee Relations and Benefits (M/HR/LERB), (See Section 7)

➤ **Complete Mid-Cycle Progress Review (Section 1A)**

- ❖ Rating Official conducts a mid-cycle progress review which includes assessment of progress to date by indicating an adjectival rating in Section 7
- ❖ Rating Official, AC (if requested) and employee sign and date the AEF in Section 1A
- ❖ If an employee declines to sign the mid-cycle review, the Rating Official will annotate the AEF with an "x" and date it. If this is the case, an AC Representative will also initial. The review is then part of the official record.

Tips for a Successful Progress Review

- Hold the progress review in person
- Use two-way communication and active listening skills
- Ensure that employees understand performance expectations
- Give specific examples when there is a performance problem
- Listen to and directly address employee performance concerns
- Determine if performance gaps are within the employee's control
- Recognize employees for good performance
- Document the progress review and share notes with employee

Effective Employee Feedback

Consistent, timely and effective feedback from the Rating Official can help an employee reach his/her highest performance potential. Feedback focuses on performance. The following are some examples of effective feedback:

Suggestion	Effective Examples	Ineffective Examples
Avoid feedback on personality characteristics	"You tend to raise your voice with other team members during everyday discussions. This is inappropriate."	"You have an abrasive personality."
Give specific statements when possible and support general statements with specific examples	"Your presentation on the Hill demonstrated exceptional communication skills in describing how USAID coordinated with the State Department in the design of our democracy strategy."	"You are a very good speaker."

Make feedback clear, direct, and to the point	"You need to reduce the use of informal language in your writing. For example, in this memo..."	"You need to work on your writing skills."
Direct feedback toward actions within the employee's control	"Your presentations would be more effective if you establish eye contact with the audience."	"You would be more effective if you had a Ph.D. in economics."
Conduct feedback immediately	"Yesterday, you missed the reporting deadline. This has happened four times since last fall, and each time I brought it to your attention."	"Last May you missed a reporting deadline and four others before that."
Plan feedback carefully	"I have carefully reviewed your performance to date and I would like to discuss my observations and the 360 degree feedback with you."	"I guess it's time to have a mid-cycle review. What shall we talk about?"
Avoid interpreting the employee's actions and summarize behaviors	"I noticed that recently you missed the filing deadline on several reports."	"You must hate writing those reports since you skip them all the time."

V. Preparing & Completing the AEF

To prepare the final AEF, the Rating Official will gather and synthesize information from a variety of sources to evaluate an employee's performance against the established Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements. A cornerstone of the AEF process is the 360 degree assessment, which provides multi-source feedback on an employee's performance and accomplishments. 360 degree assessments typically come from supervisors, peers, customers, managers, subordinates and other stakeholders in the employee's performance. An equally significant part of the 360 degree assessment is the employee's self-assessment of his/her own performance and accomplishments. Rating Officials will annotate the final AEF to indicate the 360 degree sources received (Sections 1B & 1C).

The AEF (AID Form 462-1) is used to evaluate the performance of all Civil Service employees. All AEFs must be prepared and signed by the Rating Official, signed by the employee, and if requested, approved and signed by the AC Representative.

The following are the steps to be followed in the annual evaluation process:

1. The Rating Official determines if there will be optional Performance Elements and, if appropriate, works in collaboration with the employee within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the rating cycle. Performance Elements are general and have been set.
2. If AC participation is requested by the Rating Official or employee, the AC has final approval authority.
3. If AC participation is not requested by the Rating Official or employee, the Rating Official has final approval authority.
4. The Rating Official, the AC Representative (if requested), and the employee sign section 1 of the AEF to authenticate the performance plan. AC involvement is optional unless the employee declines to sign. If this is the case, the Rating Official annotates the AEF with an "X" and dates it, and an AC Representative will initial. The day after the date the Rating Official and AC annotate the AEF is the date the AEF becomes official.
5. The Rating Official asks the employee to provide at least three 360 degree sources, which will be used for the mid-cycle review. If the employee is a supervisor, the Rating Official also requests the names of at least two subordinates for 360 degree input.
6. At the mandatory mid-cycle review the Rating Official discusses with the employee the progress made or any deficiency shown. The mid-cycle review includes comments from 360 degree sources. Other feedback sessions should also be held, as appropriate.

7. If the employee's performance is at the Needs Improvement level, the Rating Official outlines the deficiencies in writing in Section 7 of the AEF and counsels the employee. The maximum allowance for improvement to the Fully Successful level or higher is 120 calendar days. Depending upon the time left in the rating period and the severity of the deficient performance, this time may be less than the 120 calendar day period. If performance has not improved to the Fully Successful level by the end of the rating cycle, the employee's next Within Grade Increase may be withheld.
8. If the employee's performance is at the Unacceptable level at any time during the rating cycle, the Rating Official outlines the deficiencies in writing in Section 7 of the AEF and counsels the employee. However, at this point, the employee is to be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The maximum allowance for improvement to the Needs Improvement level or higher is 120 calendar days.
9. If the employee's performance is at the Needs Improvement or Unacceptable level at any time during the rating cycle, the Office of Human Resources, Labor and Employee Relations and Benefits Division must be contacted by the Rating Official.
10. If the employee's performance is at the Needs Improvement or Unacceptable level, the Rating Official, AC Representative, and employee will sign the bottom of Section 5.
11. If the employee's performance improves to a level of Fully Successful or above by the end of the rating cycle, Section 5 of the AEF is removed and is not forwarded to M/HR or placed in the employee's official Performance Evaluation File.
12. The Rating Official and the employee sign section 1A to authenticate the mid-cycle review. AC involvement is optional, unless the employee declines to sign. If this is the case, the Rating Official annotates the AEF with an "X" and dates it, and an AC Representative will initial. The date the Rating Official and AC Representative annotate the AEF is the date the mid-cycle review occurred.
13. In preparation of the final AEF, the Rating Official again requests 360 degree sources, including mandatory 360 degree comments from at least two subordinates if the employee is a supervisor, as well as an employee self-assessment.
14. Unless an "Unacceptable" rating is required, if the summary rating permissibly varies from the majority or average of adjectival ratings, the Rating Official will provide a mandatory justification in Section 5 of the AEF.
15. The Rating Official writes the draft AEF and SFW using 360 degree input sources, AIF information, and the employee self-assessment and shares the draft AEF with the employee. Sharing the draft AEF with the employee is mandatory.

16. The Rating Official discusses the draft AEF with the employee.
17. The employee has five work days, after receipt, to review the draft AEF for inconsistencies, factual errors, and gross omissions to provide any type of beneficial input.
18. The Rating Official, absent documented good cause, has two work days to revise the AEF, as appropriate.
19. The Rating Official gives the AEF and SFW in hard copy to the AC, if participation is requested or if level of performance is Needs Improvement or Unacceptable.
20. If the Rating Official and employee cannot agree on the content of the AEF and either requests participation of the AC, the Rating Official and employee may provide written justification to the AC.
21. The AC may recommend and/or make changes in the AEF, including adjectival ratings or the summary rating, if participation is requested.
22. The Rating Official discusses the final AEF with the employee and gives the employee a copy.
23. The employee has five work days to review the final AEF, sign the original, and write an optional Employee Statement.
24. The Rating Official does not have a right to see the Employee Statement (as part of this process), unless the employee desires to share it. This means that no other party, including an AMS officer, should share the Employee Statement without permission of the employee.
25. The employee submits the Employee Statement to the Rating Official, the appropriate Administrative Management Services Officer, or Principal Officer's designee.
26. If an employee declines to sign, the Rating Official annotates the AEF with an "X" and dates it, and notifies the AC. An AC Representative will initial the employee signature box. The date the Rating Official and AC Representative annotate the AEF is the date the AEF becomes final.

360 Degree Assessments Procedures and Tips

➤ **Rating Official Requests 360 Degree Information**

- ❖ Rating Official requests from the employee a list of potential 360 degree sources (Done both at the mid-cycle progress review and at the end of the evaluation period)
- ❖ Employee submits a list of potential 360 degree sources

➤ **Rating Official Contacts 360 Degree Sources**

- ❖ 360 degree interviews can be done through personal interview, telephone call, or e-mail
- ❖ Conduct interviews in a private setting to protect confidentiality

- ❖ Notes must be recorded during the 360 degree interviews in order to accurately record information received
 - ❖ Focus on getting specific examples of performance and accomplishments
 - ❖ Rating Officials will contact a minimum of three individuals from the employee's list
 - ❖ Rating Officials can, and should, contact more than three individuals to get a well-rounded picture of the employee's performance
 - ❖ Rating Officials of supervisors must contact at least two subordinates for 360 degree input
- **Rating Official Interprets 360 Degree Information**
- ❖ Rating Officials are responsible for ensuring that 360 degree information relates to an employee's job performance and accomplishment of Performance Elements and optional Performance Elements
 - ❖ Rating Officials must be on alert for inaccurate, unfair, or biased input
 - ❖ Rating Officials must fairly weigh the 360 degree input
- **360 Degree Information - Comparing Mid-Cycle and End of Evaluation 360 Degree Sources**
- ❖ At the end of the evaluation period, Rating Officials may want to check with some of the same 360 degree sources used during the mid-cycle review to offer the 360 degree sources an opportunity to comment on any changes in the employee's performance from the mid-cycle review

Employee Self-Assessment

Another piece of valuable information for the Rating Official to consider is the employee's self-assessment. The self-assessment gives the employee the opportunity to provide input on his or her evaluation and job performance. It is the employee's responsibility to provide the Rating Official with a written self-assessment. The Rating Official must notify the employee, in writing, and allow the employee ten (10) work days to submit the self-assessment.

Tips for the Employee on Preparing the Self-Assessment

- Keep a record of accomplishments and potential 360 degree sources throughout the evaluation period
- Review Performance Elements and standards and optional Performance Elements periodically to monitor progress
- Provide a list of 360 degree sources with contact information to the Rating Official
- Be specific and use examples to address how you accomplished the Performance Elements and optional Performance Elements
- Explain what you did, how well you performed, what results you achieved and what differences you made for the operating unit or office, etc.
- Explain any barriers that may have affected your performance
- Acknowledge weaknesses and discuss what you are doing to enhance your job knowledge and performance
- Keep the self-assessment short; be thorough and factual, but concise - do not lose the Rating Official with an overly long self-assessment
- Don't be shy; it is "OK" to brag about your accomplishments!

- Proofread your self-assessment before submitting

Appraisal Input Form

The Appraisal Input Form (AIF), AID 462-4, is used whenever an employee or Rating Official changes jobs within an annual evaluation period. The AIF documents a specific period of performance that will be incorporated into the employee's final AEF. The AIF is not part of the final AEF. It is not filed with the final AEF or reviewed by the AC (unless requested by the Rating Official or employee).

- **Guidelines for completing the AIF**
 - ❖ Rating Official must have supervised the employee for at least 30 calendar days
 - ❖ Rating Official completes AIF at least two weeks before either the employee or the Rating Official changes jobs (unless M/HR/LERB grants a waiver)
 - ❖ AIF records performance for all applicable Performance Elements
 - ❖ Rating Official provides employee with AIF at least five work days prior to performance feedback meeting
 - ❖ Rating Official holds mandatory meeting with employee to review and discuss AIF
 - ❖ Employee may provide a written response to the AIF

- ❖ Rating Official forwards AIF, with optional employee response, to employee's next Rating Official (or Administrative Officer) within two work days after completion

The AIF will also be used for employees who go on extended TDY (more than 30 calendar days) as a means to record performance in a temporary assignment. The TDY supervisor will complete the AIF and follow all the applicable EEP rules and guidelines.

Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW)

The SFW is a helpful tool that guides the Rating Official during the employee feedback session. It is mandatory to be mindful to use the SFW throughout the evaluation period. The SFW is not reviewed by the AC (unless participation is requested by the Rating Official or employee) nor is it part of the official rating of record.

Drafting the AEF

The Rating Official prepares the AEF by gathering the employee's self-assessment, 360 degree information and AIFs (when applicable). The Rating Official will use written and verbal input, along with his/her own direct observations, to evaluate the employee's performance against the current Performance Elements and Standards and optional Performance Elements.

Tips on Writing the AEF

- **General Tips**
 - ❖ AEFs are about performance
 - ❖ Report on the performance only within the current evaluation period
 - ❖ Proofread draft AEFs to eliminate "typos," grammar, and editing errors

- ❖ Do not rush the AEF process; stick to the established schedule

➤ **Inadmissible Comments**

- ❖ Are not authorized on the AEF
- ❖ AC has the authority to strike out any inadmissible comments
- ❖ Examples of inadmissible comments include reference to an employee's race, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, age, sexual orientation, method of entry into the Agency, retirement plans, medical condition (including pregnancy), or disability
- ❖ Do not use the employee's first name unless in a direct quote
- ❖ Do not refer to the results of a grievance, equal employment opportunity complaint, or other proceedings
- ❖ Do not make reference to conduct issues unless it directly affects performance
- ❖ Reference to an employee's leave record is only admissible in cases of unauthorized absences that affect performance

➤ **Performance Elements and Performance Standards**

- ❖ Describe what the employee did, how they did it and what difference it made
- ❖ If the Performance Element is a unit-wide objective, clearly articulate the employee's individual accomplishments
- ❖ State the employee's accomplishment on the Performance Elements and optional Performance Elements in terms of the Performance Standards - as a rule of thumb, if the employee achieved the Performance Standards, they achieved a "fully successful" on the standard or performance element

➤ **Role in the Organization - (AEF, Section 2)**

- ❖ Describe the employee's role in the organization by specifying unique features of the organizational setting, alignment of the position with Agency and unit goals, resources managed, e.g. personnel, financial, budgets, acquisition and assistance instruments or physical assets and continuing responsibilities within the operating unit
- ❖ Specify dollar amounts of any resources managed and number of any personnel managed

Principal Duties - (AEF, Section 2)

Principal duties are the main job-related responsibilities actually assigned to the employee during the rating cycle.

Professional Development - (AEF, Section 3)

Professional development includes but is not limited to activities, training, details, assignments, projects, that alone or with others, provide learning opportunities for career growth.

Check List - Is the AEF Complete?

Before proceeding, it is recommended that the Rating Official answer the following questions:

- ⇒ Has the employee's performance on each Performance Element been fully documented and an adjectival rating assigned? (AEF, Section 4)
- ⇒ If there are optional Performance Elements, has the performance been documented and an adjectival rating assigned? (AEF, Section 2)
- ⇒ Has a summary rating been assigned? (AEF, Section 1C)

Completing the AEF (AEF - Section 5)

Once the Rating Official completes the draft AEF, the Rating Official will review the draft with the employee. This is the employee's opportunity to point out any discrepancies, inconsistencies, omissions or concerns about the AEF. The Rating Official may change the AEF based on the employee's comments. For AEFs with a Summary Rating of Needs Improvement or Unacceptable or if an employee or Rating Official requests involvement of the AC, the Rating Official will submit the draft AEF and SFW to the AC for review and signature. The AC may meet with and ask the Rating Official to revise the AEF. If AC participation is requested, the Rating Official is mandated to make the requested changes, as the AC has final approval authority.

Once the AEF is signed by the Rating Official and AC Representative, as appropriate, the Rating Official will meet with the employee to review the final AEF. The employee has five work days from date of discussion of his or her AEF in which to submit documentation, etc., regarding this matter. The Rating Official has two work days to revise the AEF, as appropriate.

Signing and Dating the AEF

- Rating Official, AC Representative, if required, and Employee signs and dates AEF, Section 1B
- An employee's signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the AEF, not necessarily concurrence
- An employee may decline to sign the AEF; however, the AEF will still remain the Rating of Record

Employee Statement

Employees are highly encouraged to complete an Employee Statement. The Employee Statement gives the employee an opportunity to respond to the final AEF. The employee has 5 work days to complete the statement and submit it to the Rating Official, appropriate Administrative Management Services Officer, or Principal Officer's designee.

Tips to Assist Employees on Completing the Employee Statement

- Specify how you made a contribution to the Agency or operating unit instead of how good you are
- Highlight accomplishments that the Rating Official may not have covered
- A certain degree of modesty is important, but do not be shy about your contributions
- Stick to the facts of your performance for the evaluation period
- Address any areas of improvement that the Rating Official may have addressed in the AEF
- Make the statement constructive; it is not the place to air grievances, discrimination complaints, etc. - there are formal processes to present grievances and complaints
- Proofread the statement before submitting

Tips to Successfully Complete the AEF

- Gather the Employee Self-Assessment, 360 degree information and use the SFW
- Get an AIF if the employee was TDY for at least 30 calendar days or there was a change of Rating Official during the evaluation period, e.g., employee or Rating Official moves
- Adhere to the tips on writing AEFs on pages 12 and 13 of the EEP
- Make timely revisions based on AC input
- Give employees at least the mandatory period of 5 work days to review final AEF and complete the Employee Statement

Timeframes

Each year, the Office of HR will set, in writing, the actual "due" dates for CS AEFs prior to the end of the evaluation period. Normally, Rating Officials can expect that AEFs will be due between 30 to 45 calendar days after the end of the annual evaluation period. Rating Officials are responsible for submitting all AEFs within the established timeframes.

Waiver of the AEF

If the effective date of an employee's separation date from USAID is before the date of the end of the rating cycle, the employee may waive a final AEF. However, the employee must first speak to the M/HR/EM staff to determine if he/she qualifies for a waiver of the final AEF. If approved, the employee must complete a waiver statement. The waiver statement follows:

I, _____ would like to waive my final Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) for the _____ rating cycle. I understand that by waiving my final AEF for the ____ rating cycle, I am waiving my right to be reviewed by my Rating Official and/or Appraisal Committee, including any performance-based bonus. I am waiving my right to grieve any possible outcome which might have arisen from my not having an AEF prepared for the _____ rating cycle.

VI. Appraisal Committees (AC)

The AC is an optional mechanism, engaged by either the Rating Official or employee, except when the Rating Official gives the employee a summary rating of Needs Improvement or Unacceptable. The AC provides an organizational perspective to the AEF process and ensures accuracy and objectivity for reviewed AEFs. **The AC can recommend changes to the AEF and has final approval authority.**

The Principal Officer of the operating unit (e.g., Assistant Administrator, or USAID/W Office Director) is responsible for establishing and determining the number of ACs for the operating unit and members (and Chairpersons) of each AC. **The Principal Officer, or designee, is accountable for ensuring that the Operating Unit adheres to the EEP policies, procedures, and schedules.** Ideally, all AC members will have first-hand knowledge of the performance of every employee being reviewed by the committee, but at least one member must be directly familiar with the work of the employee.

Establishing Appraisal Committees

The Principal Officer of the Operating Unit appoints the AC Representative and the AC membership. The AC will be comprised of no fewer than three members. Principal Officers are encouraged to name alternate members to ACs. The AC should consist of knowledgeable career U.S. direct-hire (USDH) staff from the Operating Unit who are familiar with the unit's strategic objectives and have knowledge of the performance of the employees being evaluated. Every consideration should be given to the inclusion of peers on the AC. USAID/W ACs may consist of both CS and FS employees to the extent that the Operating Unit has both categories of employees. If there is more than one AC in an Operating Unit, the Principal Officer must ensure consistency among the ACs. For this reason, the Operating Unit Principal Officer should appoint an AC Coordinator to facilitate all activities with each AC Chairperson.

Deputy Assistant Administrators

For Deputy Assistant Administrators, the AC must consist of the Agency Counselor, Assistant Administrators, Deputy Assistant Administrators, and/or, as appropriate, the Deputy Administrator.

Criteria and Attributes for AC Membership:

- Only U.S. Direct Hires - only FS tenured and CS employees; no probationary CS employees; no untenured FS employees. Approved by the Principal Officer.
- The AC must consist of no fewer than three members
- At least one AC member must be directly familiar with the work of the employee and operating unit and how it relates to the overall Agency functions
- Members must have demonstrated ability to exercise judgment and discretion
- Members must be trustworthy, responsible, fair, and objective
- Members must have the confidence and respect of their peers
- The composition of the AC reflects the Agency's commitment to diversity

AC's Duties and Responsibilities

The following are the most significant periods for AC involvement:

Period	AC Duty - optional	
Beginning of the Evaluation Period	Reviews and signs performance plans. Ensures that Performance Elements and Performance Standards are reasonable and attainable.	AC reviews and signs performance plans when requested by either the Rating Official or employee. AC ensures plan is consistent with position grade.
Middle of the Evaluation Period	Reviews substantive changes to performance plans and progress. Works with Rating Official on performance problems.	AC reviews and signs mid-cycle review when requested by Rating Official or employee. Works with Rating Official on performance problems when requested.
End of the Evaluation Period	Reviews and discusses draft AEF with Rating Official. Strikes out inadmissible comments.	AC reviews and signs AEF when requested by Rating Official or employee.
	AC Duty Mandatory	Mandatory review for a Needs Improvement or Unacceptable Summary Rating. When invoked, the AC has final approval authority on content and ratings.

Confidentiality

AC deliberations are strictly confidential and governed by the Privacy Act. Thus AC members, including Rating Officials and ratees, must not discuss the AC proceedings with anyone other than AC members or the Rating Official of the employee being reviewed. It is a violation of the EEP confidentiality and Privacy Act rules to reveal AC discussions to those not authorized to receive such information. Disciplinary action will be initiated when a violation of confidentiality or privacy is confirmed.

Recusal of AC Members

AC members must recuse themselves as AC members, and leave the room, while a draft AEF that they prepared as a Rating Official is being reviewed. They may respond to questions from the AC, but they cannot participate in or influence the AC's deliberations. Additionally, AC members must recuse and absent themselves if their own AEF is being reviewed by the AC committee or if they believe they cannot be objective.

Absences from the AC

AC members may not delegate their AC responsibilities during absences. If an AC member anticipates a prolonged absence, the Principal Officer or designee will replace the AC member.

VII. Adjectival and Summary Ratings

Adjectival Ratings

The Rating Official will assign an adjectival rating for each performance element and optional performance element(s), which is indicative of the employee's performance. Use the following rating scale to determine the adjectival ratings:

Adjectival Rating	Description
Outstanding	Work performance consistently exceeds established Performance Elements and Standards
Excellent	Work performance usually exceeds established Performance Elements and Standards
Fully Successful	Work performance consistently meets and occasionally exceeds established Performance Elements and Standards
Needs Improvement	Work performance meets some but not all established Performance Elements and Standards
Unacceptable	Work performance does not meet established Performance Elements and Standards

Summary Ratings

Rating Officials will assign an overall summary rating based on the ratings of the employee's individual Performance Elements and optional Performance Elements. The Summary Rating is derived from the adjectival ratings of individual Performance Elements and optional Performance Elements. Because we are asking folks to use judgment in close call situations, "other factors" like the relative importance of on Element versus others may well be considered. With the exception of an "Unacceptable" Summary Rating (which is required if a critical element's adjectival rating is "Unacceptable"), supervisors are encouraged to use judgment in assigning a Summary Rating, and may be required, as specified, to briefly explain a Summary Rating that varies from the majority, preponderance or average of adjectival ratings. The employee is given an adjectival Summary Rating based on the five-level scale below. When supervisors choose to or are required to explain a Summary Rating, a brief written explanation is included with the rating form.

Summary Rating	Description
Outstanding	A majority of critical Performance Elements and optional Performance Elements are rated Outstanding AND none are rated below Fully Successful, unless the supervisor briefly explains the basis for assigning any other permissible Summary Rating.
Excellent	A majority or preponderance of critical Performance Elements' adjectival ratings are Excellent or are averaged to Excellent, unless the supervisor briefly explains the basis for assigning a different permissible Summary Rating.
Fully Successful	A majority or preponderance of critical Performance Elements' adjectival ratings are Fully Successful or are averaged to Fully Successful, unless the supervisor briefly explains the basis for assigning a different permissible Summary Rating.

Needs Improvement	A majority or preponderance of critical Performance Elements' adjectival ratings are Needs Improvement, unless the supervisor briefly explains the basis for assigning a different permissible Summary Rating.
Unacceptable	Any one critical Performance Element or Optional Performance Element is rated Unacceptable

Use "pen and ink" notations to indicate the adjectival and summary ratings on the AEF.

VIII. Managing Performance

For most employees, their performance is fully successful, excellent or even outstanding; however, what happens when an employee's performance is Needs Improvement or Unacceptable? What does the Rating Official do to help the employee overcome the performance problem?

There are three major steps to addressing performance problems. But first, a Rating Official must answer this question, "Is this poor performance or misconduct?" OPM states:

"Misconduct is generally a failure to follow a workplace rule (whether written or unwritten). Examples of misconduct include tardiness and absenteeism, insubordination, and falsification. Poor performance, on the other hand, is simply the failure of an employee to do the job at an acceptable level. The acceptable level is usually, but not always, documented in written Performance Elements and is typically defined in terms of quality, quantity, or timeliness. Although it is normal for performance and misconduct to be interrelated, it is important to recognize the difference between the two."

On issues of misconduct, the Rating Official will seek guidance from the M/HR/LERB staff. When the issue is primarily a performance problem, the Rating Official will follow this three-step process:

Step 1 - Communicate Expectations and Performance Problems

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

- Specify Performance Elements the employee is performing poorly
- Communicate the acceptable level of performance
- Specify how the employee can improve to an acceptable level of performance

Step 1 - Helpful Tips for the Rating Official

- ❖ Review the performance problem with the M/HR/LERB staff
- ❖ If the performance issue is with an optional Performance Element, the Rating Official will review the Performance Element prior to the counseling session to ensure the element is clear and reasonable
- ❖ Begin the counseling process early, when performance starts to decline
- ❖ Conduct the counseling session in a private place
- ❖ Focus on poor performance, not personalities
- ❖ Consider whether additional training can help the employee improve
- ❖ Seek confirmation from the employee that he/she understands the situation, the steps to improve performance and what an acceptable level of performance is
- ❖ Focus the session on assisting and helping the employee to improve his/her performance

Remember: Do not wait until the end of the evaluation period to address performance issues. Start the process when a performance problem is identified. Early intervention - counseling and/or training - can often resolve or improve an employee's performance. If not, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2 - Providing an Opportunity to Improve

Rating Official completes the following steps:

Step 2 Process	
Determination of "Unacceptable" performance is made in	1 or more critical Performance Elements (Unacceptable)
Notify M/HR/LERB	Mandatory
Notify AC of the "unacceptable" performance and steps being taken to improve performance	Mandatory for "Unacceptable" performance
Issue written notice of Opportunity Period* and specify in writing * Opportunity Period also may be called "Performance Improvement Period"	Specify: the Performance Element for which performance is Unacceptable
	What is needed to bring the performance up to the Needs Improvement level
	What assistance will be provided
	What are the consequences of failing to improve during the Opportunity Period
Formal opportunity period to improve	Employee must bring performance up to the Needs Improvement level
	Specify number of days for performance improvement period - minimum 120 days
	Specify progress reviews - minimum 1 during opportunity period

Determine performance improvement	Consider the evidence of performance and compare it to the standards and expectations outlined in the Opportunity Period to determine if performance has improved to the Needs Improvement or higher level
	If yes, notice of Unacceptable performance will remain in the evaluation file for 1 year from the start of the Opportunity Period; after the year, if performance is Unacceptable, go to step 3
	If no, go to Step 3

At the end of the Opportunity Period, the Rating Official evaluates the employee's performance and provides a summary rating for the Opportunity Period.

Helpful Tips for the Rating Official

- ❖ Document employee's performance problems and progress made on improving performance during the Opportunity Period
- ❖ Provide appropriate assistance to help the employee in performance improvement
- ❖ The Opportunity Period does not eliminate the need for the regularly scheduled performance appraisal . The Rating Official will complete the AEF as usual for the entire performance cycle.

Step 3 - Taking Action

If there is a final determination that the Summary Rating is Needs Improvement, the Supervisor must work with the employee to bring the Needs Improvement elements up to the Fully Successful level.

When there is a final determination of Unacceptable performance on one or more critical Performance Elements, the Rating Official has the authority to take action under two authorities for employees: Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 432, Performance Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions, or Part 752, Adverse Actions. There are distinct differences between 5 CFR Part 432 and Part 752, which the M/HR/LERB can further explain. Briefly, the differences are:

- **5 CFR 432** -(Used for Unacceptable Performance Only) - Requires an Opportunity Period, used for unacceptable performance only; requires established Performance Elements; actions are demotion or removal and action may not be mitigated; burden of proof is lower than for 5 CFR Part 752 cases.

- **5 CFR 752** - Does not require an Opportunity Period; used to promote efficiency of the service; can be held to ad hoc standards such as explicit instructions or work assignments; actions are suspension, demotion or removal and action may be mitigated. Burden of proof is preponderance of the evidence.

As with Step 2, M/HR/LERB's involvement is mandatory at Step 3. M/HR/LERB will explain, assist and guide the Rating Official through the "Take Action" steps. When going to M/HR/LERB, it is critical to bring all copies of performance documentation, written notification, supervisory and counseling notes, Performance Elements, etc.

A Note to Rating Officials - Taking action on a poor performer is hard. No one wants to do it, but it is a Rating Official's responsibility as a supervisor to hold all employees accountable to meet their Performance Elements and Standards. When an employee does not meet the established Performance Elements or optional Performance Elements, the Rating Official *must* take the appropriate action to resolve the problem. The Rating Official is not alone in this difficult process. Go to M/HR/LERB early in the performance management process. Do not wait until the end of the evaluation period to determine that there is a performance problem. M/HR/LERB can guide and assist Rating Officials in resolving performance problems - hopefully to a successful resolution for both the employee and management!

IX. Resources

The following is a list of various resources and reference materials for the EEP:

- ADS Series 400, Chapter 462 - <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/400/>
- OPM has an excellent website on Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance Problems;
Go to - <http://www.opm.gov/perform/poor/index.html-ssi>
- Another OPM website that helps with overall CS performance management, is -
<http://www.opm.gov/perform/index.asp>

➤ Other references

[5 USC 43](#)

[5 USC 75](#)

[5 CFR 430](#)

[5 CFR 432](#)

[5 CFR 752](#)

[5 CFR 531](#) (Within Grade Increases)

X. The Forms and AEF and AIF Instructions

The following section contains all the forms used in the EEP:

- 1) Annual Evaluation Form - ([AID Form 462-1](#))
- 2) Employee Statement - ([AID Form 462-2](#))
[Highly encouraged for all employees to complete]
- 3) Skills Feedback Worksheet - ([AID Form 462-3](#))
[Mandatory for all employees]
- 4) Appraisal Input Form - ([AID Form 462-4](#))
Used for all employees who are reassigned to a new job, traveling on extended TDY or when there is a change of Rating Official
- 5) Waiver Statement