U.S. Agency for International Development

Fiscal Year 2009 Chief FOIA Officer's Report

October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009

I.   Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

1. In the spirit of openness, USAID provides a number of resources for the public to obtain information. On our FOIA web page, located at www.usaid.gov, we have a number of valuable links to USAID information. The public can find information concerning our Automated Directives System (ADS), Business opportunities, and the Development Experience System – USAID's Institutional Memory. On that same page are useful FOIA-related resources for the public's review.

Publicizing
An Agency-wide notice announced the President's FOIA Memorandum and Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines. We will add guidance concerning these documents in our Automated Directive System.

Training
The FOIA team met with General Counsel's office regarding the implementation of the new guidelines. The FOIA team had subsequent meetings to go over the guidelines.

2. FOIA requests and administrative appeals responses

FOIA requests	FY 2008	FY 2009
Number of partial releases made	91	119

Some examples of partial releases are FOIA logs, procurement information, assessment reports, operational plans and export food and commodity information.

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Number of full grants released	58	60

> ## II. Steps Taken to Ensure that Your Agency has an Effective System for Responding to Requests

Address the key roles played by a broad spectrum of agency personnel who work with FOIA professionals in responding to requests:

FOIA Contact Officers (FCO): The FCO is the first point of contact in the bureaus, offices, or missions. They direct the request for documents to the appropriate office and keep track of its progress. The FCO informs the FOIA specialist of any delays or if another office can better respond to the request.
Action Officers in the Bureau/Office/Mission: The action officers search for the documents and provide recommendations on the release and/or withholding of information.
General Counsel (GC) Office – The GC office provides advice and clears the FOIA requests.
Declassification Team – The Declassification team reviews and provides recommendations requests, consultations, or referrals that include classified documents over 25 years old.
IT Support/FOIAXpress Support – The FOIA office works with and receives support from the Chief Information Office (CIO). The CIO provides assistance with computers including malfunctions, updates and repairs.

> ## III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

Proactively posting information online
USAID will include additional frequently requested documents on our web site as soon as we receive at least three requests for the same information. Examples of these types of documents are located on our web site. They include credit card holders' information, Iraq reconstruction information, and audit regarding antiterrorism vetting procedures.

> ## IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

1. Does your agency currently receive requests electronically? Yes.
2. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency establishing a mechanism to receive requests electronically? N/A
3. Does your agency track requests electronically? Yes.
4. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency utilizing a system to track requests electronically? N/A
5. Does your agency use technology to process requests? Yes.
6. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency utilizing technology to process requests? N/A

7. Does your agency utilize technology to prepare your agency's Annual FOIA Report? Yes.
8. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency utilizing technology in preparing your Annual FOIA Report? N/A

V. Steps Taken to Reduce Backlogs and Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests

1. If you have a backlog, report here whether your backlog is decreasing. That reduction should be measured both in terms of the number of backlogged requests and administrative appeals that remain pending at the end of the fiscal year, and in terms of the age of those requests and appeals.

FOIA Requests	FY 2008	FY 2009
Number of backlogged requests At end of fiscal year	116*	233
Number of backlogged requests At beginning of fiscal year	107	116

Appeals		
Number of backlogged appeals At end of fiscal year	5	10
Number of backlogged appeals At the beginning of fiscal year	1	5

*USAID reviewed the FY 2008 figures and found we reported the backlog requests of the contractor staff only. The FY 2009 figure includes all cases assigned to specialists and contractors.

Oldest pending request	1044 days	1956 days
Oldest pending appeal	387 days	875 days

2. If there has not been a reduction in the backlog, describe why that has occurred and what steps your agency is taking to bring about a reduction.

USAID has a small staff. We received a number of complex requests during the fiscal year. This calls for additional reviews and consultations. We have put in a request to hire additional staff to help reduce the backlog.

3. Describe the steps your agency is taking to improve timeliness in responding to requests and to administrative appeals.

We have put in a request to hire additional staff to help reduce the backlog. This will help to improve our timeliness in responding to requests.