USAID/MALAWI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is USAID?

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential.

President John F. Kennedy created USAID in 1961 by executive order. USAID's programs are authorized by the Congress in the Foreign Assistance Act, which the Congress supplements through directions in annual funding appropriation acts and other legislation. Although technically an independent federal agency, USAID operates subject to the foreign policy guidance of the President, Secretary of State, and the National Security Council of the United States.

Spending less than 1 percent of the total federal budget, USAID works in over 100 countries to:

> Promote broadly shared economic prosperity;
> Strengthen democracy and good governance;
> Protect human rights;
> Improve global health;
> Advance food security and agriculture;
> Improve environmental sustainability;
> Further education;
> Help societies prevent and recover from conflicts; and
> Provide humanitarian assistance in the wake of natural and man-made disasters.

2. How does USAID do its development work?

In general, USAID works through four mechanisms:

a. Budget Support Grant to a Government Agency, Institution, or Ministry

This funding agreement takes the form of a letter from USAID's Mission Director, countersigned by the recipient agency, explaining (in annexes to the letter) the agency's objectives, the amount of USAID's financial commitment, the specific expenditures to be financed by USAID's grant, and other operational aspects of the agreement.

b. Contract for technical assistance to a government agency

As the host government's agency is usually specialized in services to the beneficiary population (medical services, for example), its staff may not be equipped to undertake investments called for in the agency's program, such as construction, equipment, or management of training and study tours. The government agency might therefore request USAID's assistance in these

areas, and USAID could respond by contracting with a firm to supply the services or technical assistance requested.

c. Grant to finance NGO services to a beneficiary group

Non-governmental organizations are, like their government counterparts, usually already engaged in service provision in areas where USAID wants to assist, and they often have unique abilities that complement public programs. Therefore, USAID technical-office staff might set aside a budget and, with the help of the mission's contracting office, publish a solicitation for applications from NGOs. One or several grants could be made to selected NGOs by the contracting office's "Agreement Officer." Similar to the case of a contract, a technical-office staff member would be assigned as the Agreement Officer's Representative to monitor progress in the NGOs' implementation of grant-funded activities and to arrange for external evaluations. USAID grants require recipient NGOs to contract for external audits.

As some local NGOs may be small and young organizations with no prior experience in receiving awards from USAID, the USAID mission's financial management office conducts a careful review of the grant applicant's administrative system to ensure that it is capable of managing United States Government funds. Where necessary, USAID can devote part of the grant to the NGO's internal organizational strengthening to help the NGO qualify for USAID's financing and build the capacity of the organization in the process. Disbursement of the portion of USAID's grant financing the NGO's project would follow completion of the NGO's internal organizational development.

d. Grant or contract to an international NGO for technical assistance

USAID provides financial assistance (grants) to support other organizations' programs when those programs correspond to the areas that USAID wants to support, while USAID uses contracts to procure services (or products) for the benefit of USAID and its partner stakeholders.

In addition to the funding mechanisms described above, USAID uses various other assistance mechanisms for different U.S. objectives. Budget agreements with other USG agencies, which differ from contracts and NGO grants, are common in supporting collaboration between the U.S. and other countries on global issues.
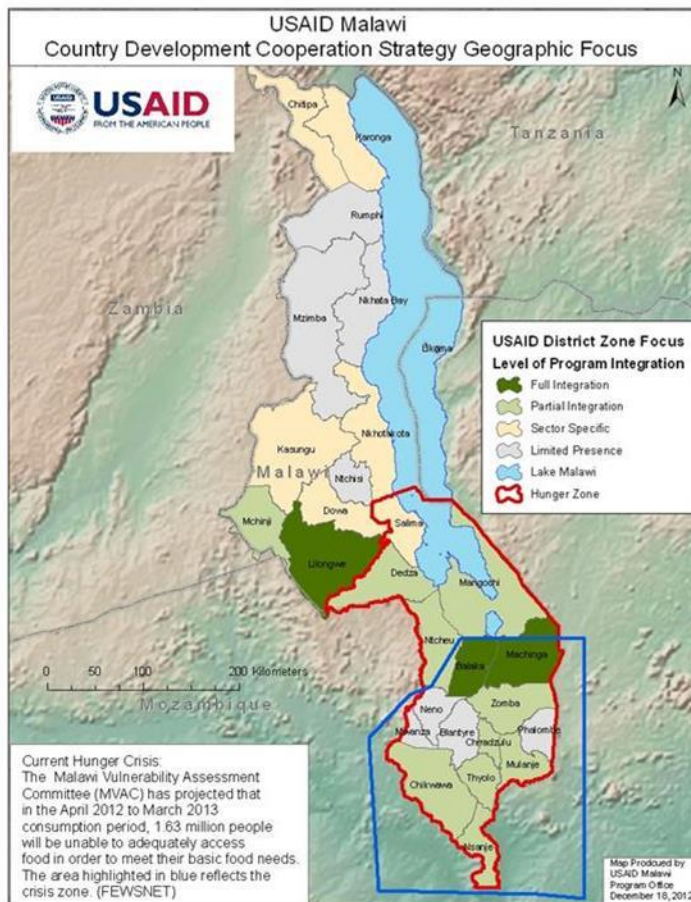
3. When did USAID start operating in Malawi?

USAID/Malawi opened in Lilongwe in 1979. Programs included agricultural development, private sector expansion, strengthening health and family planning services, improving transport infrastructure, and human resource development.

In 2013, USAID/Malawi launched a five-year, $700 million [Country Development Cooperation Strategy](#) that promotes integrated development with the goal of "Malawians' quality of life improved" and three objectives: 1. Social Development Improved, 2. Sustainable Livelihoods Increased, and 3. Citizen Rights and Responsibilities Exercised.
http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/malawi-cdcs-2013-2108.pdf

4. In which areas and sectors does USAID work in Malawi?

USAID/Malawi works across the country, with a particular focus on Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe Rural.

USAID/Malawi has four technical offices: health, economic growth, education, and democracy and governance.

Health, Population and Nutrition (HPN)

Over the last two decades, Malawi has made gains in most health indicators. It is one of only a few countries to have achieved Millennium Development Goal 4 for child survival ahead of the target year, 2015. These broad gains, however, mask important realities and structural dynamics in the health system that must be addressed if the advances of the past two decades are to continue.

In the health sector, USAID/Malawi works in HIV/AIDS; tuberculosis; family planning and reproductive health; orphans and vulnerable children; health systems strengthening; water, sanitation, and hygiene; nutrition; malaria; supply chain management; and maternal, neonatal, and child health.

Sustainable Economic Growth (SEG)

In general, SEG offices worldwide focus on improving agricultural techniques and marketing, development of microfinance industries, streamlining of customs administrations (to accelerate growth of exporting industries), and modernization of government regulatory frameworks for industry in various sectors (telecommunications, agriculture, etc.) [Environment](#) and [Food for Peace](#) teams are often housed in the SEG office. Environment teams typically focus on projects for tropical forest conservation, protection of indigenous people's lands, regulation of marine fishing industries, pollution control, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and helping communities adapt to climate change. Food for Peace responds to humanitarian food needs when floods or drought affect a country and also works to reduce poverty and malnutrition among the most vulnerable populations.

Agriculture, nutrition, and climate-resilient growth are top development priorities for USAID/Malawi. In Malawi, [Feed The Future](#), a Presidential initiative to sustainably reduce rural poverty and improve nutrition, invests in the groundnut, soya and orange-fleshed sweet potato value chains, as well as nutrition behavior change efforts for pregnant and lactating women and children under three. Through partnerships with the Government of Malawi and local non-governmental organizations, USAID/Malawi is spearheading innovative programs to strengthen smallholder farmers' economic and climatic resiliency.

Education (EDU)

USAID has supported Malawi's education sector since independence in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), increasing access to education, particularly for girls, and building capacity in the education sector. Building on this strong partnership, USAID remains committed to working with the Ministry, development partners, and civil society to address the educational challenges facing the country today.

USAID now focuses its education interventions on early grade reading, in recognition that reading is the foundation of learning. Learning to read at an early age helps guide children's future educational success.

Through the Early Grade Reading Project, USAID/Malawi is working with the MoEST to enhance the quality of primary education through targeted early grade reading interventions. Activities strengthen teaching methodologies, develop appropriate learning materials, increase parental and communal support for reading, and improve the policy environment for reading to help government, schools, and communities build a stronger foundation for learning for all students.

Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG)

USAID's Democracy and Governance programs promote a better and more informed electorate, work to ensure fewer irregularities during the election process, and spur higher voter turnout by increasing citizens' opportunities for engaging with government officials. DRG activities cultivate democratic legitimacy and promote inclusion in local development processes.

Currently, USAID/Malawi is implementing Supporting the Efforts of Partners (STEPS) Project with the goal of strengthening local civil society organizations' ability to deliver services and carry out their objectives. Through STEPS, USAID helps local organizations provide stronger, better-integrated responses to the country's most urgent needs by focusing on capacity building and improved service delivery.

5.   I have been invited to attend a local or international gathering (summit, convention, conference, symposium, and workshop) and I need an air ticket, participation fees, accommodation, and allowances for my trip.

USAID does not have an independent source of funding to accommodate individuals. Funding is intended for officially registered organizations.

6.   I need funds/scholarship to study for my Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, or PhD at a local/foreign academic institution.

USAID does not have an independent source of funding to accommodate individuals. Funding is intended for officially registered organizations.

7.   I am a Member of Parliament/Councilor/Village Development Committee chairman. I would like to request USAID funds to construct a bridge/school block/road/pit latrines/market/court (etc.) in my area for my people.

USAID works closely with the Ministries of Health and Population and Irrigation and Water Development in strengthening the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector to provide clean water and adequate sanitation for improved health outcomes. However, through its

current agreements with the Government of Malawi, USAID currently does not support ad-hoc requests.

8.   I am a professor in nursing. My Kamuzu College of Nursing colleagues and I are doing research/census/data analysis on the impact of contraceptives on women's general health. I wish to request funding for this research. The findings will be shared with USAID for your policy planning and implementation.

The United States Government's bilateral assistance to Malawi is governed by and delivered through agreements with the Government of Malawi. Funds are then channeled through programs whose activities are planned according to the availability of funds. USAID does not have an independent source of funding to accommodate individuals. Funding is intended for officially registered organizations

9.   We are a religious organization interested in eradicating poverty in rural communities through an integrated and holistic approach to life advancement. We have programs in health, agriculture, safe motherhood, environment, HIV/AIDS, and family planning. Could you please fund our programs?

The United States Government's bilateral assistance to Malawi is governed by and delivered through agreements with the Government of Malawi. Funds are then channeled through programs whose activities are planned according to the availability of funds.

To solicit help for programs that have already been designed, USAID uses requests for applications (RFAs) and requests for proposals (RFPs). USAID publishes information about these public solicitations on http://www.fbo.gov/ and http://www.grants.gov/. In all cases, a request for applications or a request for proposals will provide an adequate time for a potential implementing partner to respond.

An RFA or RFP is used when USAID has a specific type of program in mind to meet our development assistance goals. An RFA results in a grant or cooperative agreement; an RFP results in a contract. These requests can be issued any time for any activity or program. RFPs and RFAs are advertised in local newspapers as well. Interested organizations should submit their bid as per the guidance in the advertisement. This is a competitive process.

All unsolicited proposals will be received and reviewed for funding. Given the huge demand for resources, however, USAID will be able to approve only a small number of them for funding.

For more information about submitting unsolicited proposals, please visit: http://www.usaid.gov/doing-business-usaid.

If you would like to learn more about the award process in general, please visit: http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process.

Please visit Grants.gov for opportunities posted as Annual Program Statements or Request for Applications, which can lead to a grant or cooperative agreement award.

Please visit FedBizOpps.gov for opportunities posted as a Request for Proposals or Request for Quotes, which can lead to a contract award.

10.   I have seen newspaper stories in which USAID/Malawi has awarded scholarships to some Malawians to study in the United States or other African universities. How can I apply for those scholarships?

USAID supports a number of scholarship programs. Scholarships that are supported by USAID are advertised in local newspapers and are open to all people who qualify. Whenever the next scholarships are available, they will be advertised publicly and if anyone qualifies, they are welcome to apply. You may also visit https://mw.usembassy.gov/education-culture/study-usa/ for more information.

11.   My question has not been captured above, and I need to speak to someone in USAID. Who can I contact for something general?

Please contact USAID/Malawi Program Development and Analysis (PDA) section by phone at 01 772 455 or by FAX at 01 773 181.