ADS Chapter 261

Scientific Integrity

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ADS 261, Scientific Integrity
POC for ADS 261: See ADS 501maa, ADS Chapters and Point of Contact List

This is a new ADS chapter.

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ADS 261 – Scientific Integrity

261.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

This chapter describes the policies and required procedures for the application of scientific integrity principles at USAID. Scientific integrity is defined as the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities (see section 261.6, Definitions). Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence, as defined in section **261.6**, are hallmarks of scientific integrity.

Scientific integrity promotes knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Scientific and technological information, data, and evidence must be protected from distortion and inappropriate influence. They are central to the development and iterative improvement of sound policies, decisions, and programs. Since evidence-based decision-making guided by the best available science and data is integral to USAID's delivery of equitable and successful programs, a strong culture of scientific integrity will improve international development and humanitarian outcomes.

This policy establishes the principles, requirements, roles, and responsibilities that support USAID in conducting, managing, using, and communicating about the process and results of scientific activities. This policy will contribute significantly to fostering a culture of scientific integrity at USAID, ensuring informed decision-making, and enhancing both domestic and international public trust.

This policy applies to:

- USAID Operating Units (OUs) that engage in scientific activities or use the results of such activities for decision-making or in internal or external communication; and

- USAID employees who engage in, supervise, manage, use, or communicate about the results of scientific activities. USAID employees are defined as all direct hire personnel and personal service contractors (PSCs).

USAID employees are encouraged to consult with the Scientific Integrity Official (SIO) on questions relating to scientific integrity and the appropriate application of the principles of this policy in their work via **scientific-integrity@usaid.gov**. All allegations of misconduct by USAID employees should be submitted to the Office of Human Resources, Office of Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR) via "Report Misconduct" portal in LaunchPad.

This policy supersedes the 2012 *USAID Scientific Integrity Policy*.

261.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

a. The **Administrator**:

- Provides leadership for the Agency on scientific integrity such as leading through example, upholding scientific integrity principles, and regularly communicating the importance of scientific integrity;
- Designates the Agency SIO; and
- Designates the Agency Chief Scientist and supports their role as advisor on scientific issues.

b. The **Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources (DA-MR) serves** as the principal adviser to the Administrator on issues related to management and resources, pursuant to **ADS 103.3.4.1** and **ADS 101.3.1.1**. The DA-MR assists the Administrator in carrying out the Administrator's authority and responsibility for the overall direction, coordination, and supervision of Agency operations at Headquarters and abroad, including overseeing the Bureau for Policy, Learning, and Resources (PLR) and the Agency SIO located in PLR.

c. The **Agency Scientific Integrity Official (SIO)** in the Bureau for Policy, Learning, and Resources (PLR):

- Oversees the implementation and iterative improvement of this policy and related policies and processes;
- Chairs the Scientific Integrity Committee (see **ADS 261saa**);
- Provides leadership on matters of scientific integrity and serves as the primary Agency-level contact for questions regarding scientific integrity and reports of compromised scientific integrity;
- Ensures scientific integrity activities and outcomes are appropriately monitored and evaluated and leads on reporting the results, internally and externally;
- Ensures coordination with the:
  - Office of the General Counsel (GC);
  - Office of Inspector General (OIG);
  - Agency Cognizant Human Subjects Officer (CHSO);
  - Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM);
  - Bureau for Management (M Bureau);
  - PLR
  - Chief Data Officer;
  - Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA); and

- Other offices, as necessary

on matters pertaining to scientific integrity;

- Reports inquiries involving potential employee misconduct;
- Reports any behavior related to waste, fraud, or abuse to the OIG that is uncovered while responding to a scientific integrity inquiry;
- Ensures training and outreach initiatives are provided to facilitate employee awareness and understanding of this policy; and
- Oversees an assessment of policy and process-focused reports of compromised scientific integrity, following established procedures, to determine the validity and the appropriate handling of said reports (see **ADS 261sab**); and
- Sends reports of compromised scientific integrity relating to research misconduct to HCTM/ELR to oversee those reports.

d. The **Agency Chief Scientist**:

- Serves as the principal advisor to the Administrator on scientific issues and ensures that the Agency's research programs are scientifically well-founded and conducted with integrity;
- In cooperation with the Agency SIO, oversees the implementation and iterative improvement of policies and processes that govern how Agency-funded research is funded, managed, and used by USAID employees, as well as policies affecting the federal employees who support the research activities of the Agency.
- Encourages USAID leaders at all levels to build and appropriately utilize their scientific and technical workforce; and
- To the extent possible, is involved in high-level discussions and strategic planning on the recruitment, retention, development, and advancement of scientists to help ensure that scientific integrity is appropriately and carefully considered.

e. The **Scientific Integrity (SI) Committee**:

- As directed by the SIO, provides oversight for the implementation and iterative improvement of this policy;
- Members of the SI Committee representing Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs) are designated as the SIO's Deputies (DSIOs), acting as liaisons for their respective OUs and promoting compliance with this policy within their OUs;

- *Ex officio* members of the SI Committee represent Agency-wide expertise on issues relevant to scientific integrity; and

- Members of the SI Committee participate in resolution of allegations of compromised scientific integrity, as appropriate, and assist the SIO with policy assessment, updates, and amendments.

f. Mission Directors:

- Promote the principles contained in this policy, and lead through example by upholding scientific integrity principles and communicating the importance of doing so;

- When feasible, designate a “Mission Scientific Integrity Official” (MSIO);

- Consult, as appropriate, with the SIO, HCTM, Contracting Officers (COs), and GC, on the implementation of and actions taken under this policy.

g. Mission Scientific Integrity Officials (MSIOs) serve as points of contact (POCs) for Mission staff on issues of scientific integrity. MSIOs support the implementation of this policy in their Missions. MSIOs are not expected to be stand-alone positions but rather a role that an existing employee with appropriate qualifications is assigned to.

h. Managers and Supervisors:

- Promote the principles contained in this policy, by upholding scientific integrity principles and communicating the importance of doing so;

- Promote employee compliance with this policy;

- Consult, as appropriate, with the SIO, HCTM, COs, and GC, on the implementation of and actions taken under this policy; and

- May not fire, demote, harass or otherwise "retaliate" against an individual who discloses and/or reports compromised scientific integrity (see **5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8-9)**).

i. USAID Employees:

- Uphold and promote the principles contained in this policy and adhere to behavior standards for scientific integrity (see **ADS 261maa, Standards of Scientific Integrity**);

- Participate in training, as appropriate to their position, to become aware of principles contained in this policy and any changes to the policy;

- Are strongly encouraged to report any procedures and practices that deviate from the scientific integrity principles, as defined in **ADS 261maa**, and standards of information quality and research integrity to **scientific-integrity@usaid.gov**; and

- Report allegations of professional and ethical misconduct by USAID employees via the LaunchPad "Report Misconduct" portal.

j. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA)**:

- Includes the training on scientific integrity in the Contract Schedule by the cognizant CO or warranted Executive Officer (EXO), for contracts with the PSC personnel, as appropriate to their position; and

- Participates in discussions related to reports of compromised scientific integrity involving PSCs and holds the final authority on remedies.

k. The **Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation, Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, Research Division (IPI/ITR/R)**:

- Designates a research policy team to support the SIO on all operational matters relating to implementation of this policy;

- Serves as the Secretariat for the SI Committee and subcommittees convened to guide the assessment of compromised scientific integrity and provide technical expertise as requested;

- Develops and implements the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan for this policy;

- Supports Agency responses to requests for information relating to the status of scientific integrity at USAID and leads the response to Office of Science and Technology Policy requests on this policy;

- Produces reports on the status of scientific integrity at USAID for USAID leadership, staff, and the general public; and

- Coordinates with appropriate Agency stakeholders, pursuant to ADS **508** and **579**, on the disclosure and publication of USAID information to safeguard sensitive but unclassified information related to activities conducted under this policy, especially where it may be necessary to protect identities, deliberative processes and third-party confidential or proprietary information.

l. The **Office of the General Counsel** advises the SIO and other Agency designated officials on matters involving the Agency's legal responsibilities with respect to scientific integrity.

m. The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Office of Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR)** manages the Misconduct Reporting Portal and assists managers with addressing allegations of employee misconduct.

n. The **Office of the Inspector General (OIG)** addresses those cases of the loss of scientific integrity that involve fraud, waste, or abuse.

261.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

This policy provides the foundation and direction needed to build, enhance, promote, and maintain a continuing culture of scientific integrity at USAID. This policy establishes the expectations, principles, and requirements to promote the integrity of all aspects of scientific activities, including:

- Proposing, reviewing, managing, funding, conducting, and collaborating on scientific activities;
- Communicating about science and scientific activities;
- Strengthening scientific capacity in partner countries; and
- Using the results of science in programming and decision-making.

While there is a distinction between scientific processes and policy decisions informed by scientific results, adherence to the principles of scientific integrity applies to both.

Violations of scientific integrity significantly undermine decision-making and public trust. A culture of scientific integrity enables and reinforces an environment that is conducive to innovation and progress and protects scientists, scientific information, and the process of science by ensuring science is conducted, managed, communicated, and used in ways that preserve its accuracy and objectivity and protect it from suppression, manipulation, and inappropriate influence, including political interference (see section **261.6**). Scientific findings and products must not be suppressed, delayed, or altered for political purposes and must not be subjected to inappropriate influence.

261.3.1 Scientific Integrity Principles

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

The following are the core scientific integrity principles of USAID:

1. Protecting scientific processes,

2. Enhancing the free flow of scientific information,

3. Supporting decision-making processes, and

4. Promoting accountability and preventing retaliation.

261.3.2 Scientific Integrity Policy Requirements
Effective Date: 12/06/2024

The following sections operationalize scientific integrity principles into requirements under this policy.

261.3.2.1 Protecting Scientific Processes
Effective Date: 12/06/2024

USAID promotes honest scientific investigation, open discussion, refined understanding, and a firm commitment to building and using relevant, high-quality evidence. Right to scientific dissent and a peer review are also hallmarks of a robust scientific process. Science and public trust in science thrive in an environment that shields scientific data and analyses and their use in policymaking from political interference or inappropriate influence. This policy promotes the above through the following:

1. Prohibiting inappropriate influence, including a threat of reprisal, in the design, proposal, conduct, management, evaluation, reporting, and use of scientific data, research, and activities, and preventing supervisors, managers, and other Agency leadership from intimidating or coercing scientists to inappropriately alter scientific data, findings, or professional opinions or inappropriately influencing scientific advisory boards or technical evaluation committees.

2. Addressing research misconduct (see section **261.6**) (see **42 CFR § 93.103** for more information).

3. Requiring that employees adhere to the Standards of Scientific Integrity throughout all aspects of designing, conducting, communicating about, and using the results of scientific research (see **ADS 261maa**), and disclose any conflicts of interest (see section **261.6**) to their supervisors or other appropriate Agency official for their determination as to whether a recusal/disqualification, or other appropriate action is needed.

4. Requiring that USAID employees conducting or managing USAID-funded research involving the participation of human subjects and the use of non-human animals adhere to the applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines. These include applicable USAID operational policies and all applicable established laws, regulations, and ethical standards of the United States Government (USG). If Indigenous Knowledge is captured as part of the research activity, USAID employees managing research must ensure the research team consults with

Indigenous and traditional authorities and knowledge holders, to seek free prior informed consent for the research. As part of the process, the research team must provide information on how the research will be captured, stored, shared (especially publicly), and utilized so the Indigenous Community can best make informed decisions.

261.3.2.2 Ensuring the Free Flow of Scientific Information

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

Open communication of USAID science plays a valuable role in building public trust and understanding of USAID work. USAID facilitates the free flow of scientific and technological information and supports scientific integrity in the communication of scientific activities, findings, and products. This policy promotes this principle through the following:

1. Encouraging the free flow of scientific and technological information, while concurrently balancing privacy, security, and other sensitivities and restrictions to open data. Consistent with directives for Open Government (e.g., Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act) and public access to federally-funded research results (see **USAID Public Access Plan**), USAID expands and promotes access to scientific and technological information, including by making USAID-funded research products freely and digitally available and accessible to the public to the extent allowable by law and practicable, as defined under ADS **540**, **578**, and **579**.

2. Promoting accurate representation of scientific data, findings, and products in Agency communications. USAID employees must not intentionally misclassify findings as a way to suppress their public release (see **ADS 568.3.1.8** and **28 CFR § 17.22**).

3. Requiring that technical review and clearance processes of scientific communications include provisions for timely clearance and expressly prohibit censorship, unreasonable delay, and suppression of the objective communication of data and results without scientific justification, documented security, privacy, or other concerns (see **ADS 578** and **ADS 579**).

4. USAID OU communications teams are responsible for correcting errors pointed out by scientists whose primary or managed scientific work is represented in USAID social media and other official online communications. USAID employees should refer to **ADS 558** on use of social media for public engagement on USAID funded research.

261.3.2.3 Supporting Decision-Making Processes

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

In alignment with **The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018** and other relevant laws, USAID recognizes that relevant, recent, and high-quality

scientific information should be actively considered during decision-making, and that this requires having scientists participate actively in policy and management discussions, where appropriate. This policy ensures decision-making processes at USAID are supported with scientific information through the following:

1. Where feasible and appropriate, ensure that USAID employees support policy and decision-making with high-quality, recent, relevant, and transparent scientific information that resulted from well-established scientific processes and was reviewed by qualified experts. This includes making use of negative or unanticipated results and findings to improve both science and decision-making.

2. Ensure that outputs of automated systems used for Agency research or decision-making, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) systems, adhere to applicable governmentwide and Agency requirements and guidance, and are checked for accuracy and integrity to avoid compromising the integrity of science and evidence used in decision-making. This also includes validation of AI models and algorithms used in USAID's research and decision-making processes and requirements for transparency in model development, external audits for bias, and ensuring the reproducibility of AI-driven decisions.

261.3.2.4 Promoting Accountability and Scientific Integrity
Effective Date: 12/06/2024

USAID takes scientific integrity seriously and strives to protect from reprisal those individuals who disclose information which they reasonably believe evidences a loss of scientific integrity. Efforts will be made to protect the privacy of individuals involved in these reports. This policy supports accountability and protection from retaliation through the following:

1. Responsible OUs should correct the scientific record in the event of a compromise of scientific integrity.

2. USAID employees are encouraged to consult with the Agency SIO and/or DSIOs to seek advice on questions regarding scientific integrity, and to submit inquiries and questions regarding compromised scientific integrity to **scientific-integrity@usaid.gov**.

3. USAID OUs may not fire, demote, harass, or otherwise "retaliate" against an individual on the basis that they disclosed and/or reported practices and procedures that resulted in compromised scientific integrity (see **5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8-9)** and the **Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, PL 101–12, as amended**)

261.3.3 Monitoring, Evaluating, and Reporting on Scientific Integrity

261.3.3.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
Effective Date: 12/06/2024

The Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation, Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, Research Division (IPI/ITR/R) is responsible for designation of a research policy team. This team leads the development and implementation of the scientific integrity monitoring, evaluation, and learning (SI MEL) plan which includes:

- A roadmap of activities and expected outcomes,
- The steps for assessing the processes and outcomes,
- The methods and metrics used, and
- How the data are analyzed for ongoing improvement of SI processes, procedures, and policies.

The plan includes a timeline and frequency of data collection, analysis, review, recommendations, and implementation of recommendations.

The plan also includes a section on the periodic evaluation of the utility and effectiveness of this policy, including an assessment of the burden on staff, any gaps, implementation barriers, and opportunities, and an assessment of the impact, following **ADS 501sak, ADS Implementation and Impact Assessments**.

The MEL plan and associated reports must be published on **USAID scientific integrity website**.

261.3.3.2 Annual Reporting

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

IPI/ITR/R, with input from the Agency SIO and the USAID SI Committee, is responsible for generating and making prominently available on the Agency's public-facing website an annual report on the status of scientific integrity within USAID. The report highlights scientific integrity successes and accomplishments across USAID such as any new scientific integrity hires, training, and enhancements to scientific integrity policies, identifies areas for improvement, and articulates a plan for addressing critical weaknesses, if any. It also reports on progress toward achieving the critical criteria and metrics identified in the SI MEL Plan, including comparisons to the same metrics from prior years to show trends over time. The annual report also includes, to the extent feasible and consistent with law and policy, the number of submitted inquiries, questions, and reports of compromised scientific integrity and the de-identified status of the administrative assessments relating to compromised scientific integrity. The research policy team also submits a bi-annual report on the status of scientific integrity at USAID to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

261.3.4 Scientific Integrity Committee and Resolution of Compromised Scientific Integrity

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

261.3.4.1 Scientific Integrity Committee
Effective Date: 12/06/2024

The SI Committee is chaired by the Scientific Integrity Official and comprised of senior Agency employees. The SI Committee provides oversight for implementation of the policy, including serving as a liaison with Agency Bureaus and Offices. A committee charter outlines the membership and scope of the committee's activities (see ADS 261saa).

261.3.4.2 Resolution of Compromised Scientific Integrity
Effective Date: 12/06/2024

A loss of scientific integrity, or compromised scientific integrity, can result from any of the following (see **A Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice**):

- **Inappropriate interference in science** such as:

  (a) suppressing, altering, or otherwise impeding, the content or timely release of scientific or technological data, findings, or conclusions, unless explicitly required by an Agency or government-wide statute, regulation, Executive Order, Presidential Memorandum, security classification, or other legal authority;

  (b) not following award terms or agency best practices with respect to the use and alteration of researcher's products that are not yet finalized, including manipulating or distributing researcher's works prior to finalization; or

  (c) intimidating or coercing employees, contractors, recipients of financial assistance awards, or others to suppress, alter, censor, or otherwise impede the content or timely release of scientific or technological data, findings, or conclusions; or

  (d) implementing or causing the implementation of institutional barriers to cooperation and the timely communication of scientific or technological data, findings, or conclusions.

  Inappropriate interference in sciences also includes political interference, which is a scientifically unjustified intervention in the conduct, management, communication, or use of science perpetrated by political officials and/or motivated by political considerations. Examples of scientifically unjustified interventions include those undertaken to avoid controversy, press attention, or other forms of embarrassment to USAID or USG officials.

  - **Research misconduct** is fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results and does not include honest error, differences of opinion, or data

cleaning and interpolation according to established criteria (see **42 C.F.R. § 93.103**).

- An **honest error** can occur in any stage of the scientific process and can include inadvertently or mistakenly obtaining and using Indigenous Knowledge in USAID research, decision-making, or other activity without first obtaining consent; violations of ethics requirements relating to conducting research with human subjects or animals, including unintentional failure to obtain necessary approval or violating approved protocols; significant departure from the accepted standards of scientific research, publication ethics, and employee codes of conduct in the implementation, management, and use of science following the principles of scientific integrity (see **ADS 261maa**).

HCTM/ELR reviews and addresses allegations related to misconduct. The SIO and the SI Committee reviews and assesses reports of compromised scientific integrity not relating to research misconduct (see **ADS 261sab**).

A Federal agency cannot retaliate against an employee or applicant because that individual exercises their rights under any of the federal antidiscrimination or whistleblower protection laws. USAID strives to mitigate the risk of retaliation by treating the affected people's identities as confidential to the maximum extent possible and limiting access to the complainant and their reports to those with a need-to-know. Individuals, groups of individuals, or their authorized representatives who believe they are being retaliated against for pursuing an allegation should promptly notify OIG (see **5 USC 2302(b)**; and the **Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989**, as amended).

261.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

261.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

a. **5 CFR 2635 — Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch as Amended**

b. **5 USC 312 - Agency Evidence-Building Plan**

c. **28 CFR § 17.22 - Classification of information; limitations**

d. **41 USC § 4712 — The National Defense Authorization; Federal Contractor Whistleblower Protection Act**

e. **42 CFR 93.103 - Research misconduct**

f. **65 FR 76260-76264 — Federal Policy on Research Misconduct**

g. 67 FR 8451 — OMB Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Agencies

h. A Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice

i. America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act

j. eCFR :: 22 CFR Part 225 -- Protection of Human Subjects

k. Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge

l. M-20-12 — OMB Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices (2020)

m. OMB Bulletin 12-01 - Guidance on Collection of U.S. Foreign Assistance Data

n. OMB M-19-15 - Improving Implementation of the Information Quality Act

o. Pub. L. 106-554 — The Information Quality Act of 2000

p. Pub. L. 115-435 – The Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018

q. Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, as amended in 2017, and Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012

261.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

a. ADS 105, Federal Advisory Committee Management

b. ADS 109, Ethics and Standards of Conduct

c. ADS 200, Formulation, Implementation, and Governance of USAID Development and Humanitarian Policies

d. ADS 201, Program Cycle Operational Policy

e. ADS 261maa, Standards of Behavior for Scientific Integrity

f. ADS 540, USAID Development Experience Information

g. **ADS 557, Website Management and Public Information**

h. **ADS 558, Use of Social Media for Public Engagement**

i. **ADS 568, National Security Information Program**

j. **ADS 578, Information Quality Guidelines**

k. **ADS 579, USAID Development Data**

l. **AIDAR Subpart 727.70 - Digital Information Planning, Collection, and Submission Requirements**

261.5 ADDITIONAL HELP

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

a. **ADS 261saa, Scientific Integrity Committee Charter**

b. **ADS 261sab, Procedures for Addressing Compromised Scientific Integrity**

261.6 DEFINITIONS

Effective Date: 12/06/2024

Conduct of Science
The formulation of hypotheses, study design, testing, data collection, systematic review, statistical analysis, interpretation, formulation of findings, drawing of conclusions, peer review, and communication of evidence. (**Chapter 261**)

Conflict of Interest
Any financial or non-financial interest, including, personal, professional, ideological, legal or other, which may influence an individual's scientific activities or judgment by: (i) impairing the individual's objectivity; (ii) creating an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization; or (iii) creating the appearance of either (i) or (ii). Financial interest refers to any matter affecting a personal financial interest or a financial interest imputed to the individual (including, but not limited to, the individual's spouse, minor child, general partner, any entity for which the individual serves in a personal capacity as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee, such as due to fiduciary duties to the organization under state law), and any person or organization with whom the individual is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment (see 5 C.F.R. § 2635 - Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch). (**Chapter 261**)

Deputy Scientific Integrity Officials
Designated senior career employees representing the SIO in their respective Bureaus or Independent Offices. (**Chapter 261**)

Development Partner

Any USAID partner (contractor, grantee, partner government entity, public international organization, etc.) who works in collaboration with USAID, whether through contract, cooperative agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other type of collaborative arrangement. (**Chapter 261**)

Differing Scientific Opinion
A differing opinion or a divergent perspective about the scientific process or scientific evidence that is held by an employee who is substantively engaged in that science, including its interpretation or use, that may inform a USAID decision. It generally contrasts with a prevailing staff or external opinion included in a scientific product or science-based policy or decision under development or use. The differing opinion must concern scientific data, interpretations, or conclusions, not policy options or decisions, and should be accompanied by scientific arguments. (**Chapter 261**)

Fabrication
Making up data or scientific results and recording or reporting them. (**Chapter 261**)

Falsification
Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. (**Chapter 261**)

Honesty
Free of deceit, fraud, and untruthfulness. (**Chapter 261**)

Implementing Partner
An implementing entity (contractor, grantee, partner government entity, public international organization) that carries out programs with U.S. Government funding through a legally-binding award or agreement (see **ADS 201**). (**Chapter 261**)

Inappropriate Influence [Over Science]
The attempt to shape or interfere in scientific activities, or the communication about or use of scientific activities or findings against well accepted scientific methods and theories or without scientific justification. **(Chapter 261)**

Indigenous Knowledge
A body of observations, oral and written knowledge, practices, and beliefs that promote environmental sustainability and the responsible stewardship of natural resources through relationships between humans and environmental systems. It is applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems. Indigenous Knowledge has evolved over millennia, continues to evolve, and includes insights based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment and long-term experiences, as well as extensive observations, lessons, and skills passed from generation to generation. Indigenous Knowledge is a valid form of evidence for inclusion of federal policy, research, and decision making. (**Chapter 261**)

Interference [in Science]
(a) Suppressing, altering, or otherwise impeding, the content or timely release of scientific or technological findings or conclusions, unless explicitly required by an Agency or government-wide statute, regulation, Executive Order, Presidential Memorandum, security classification, or other legal authority; (b) Taking, distributing, or altering—without the researcher's knowledge or consent—works that are not yet finalized; (c) Intimidating or coercing employees, contractors, recipients of financial assistance awards, or others to suppress, alter, censor, or otherwise impede the content or timely release of scientific or technological findings or conclusions; or (d) Implementing or causing the implementation of institutional barriers to cooperation and the timely communication of scientific or technological findings or conclusions (also see **Political Interference [in Science]**). (**Chapter 261**)

Loss of Scientific Integrity/Compromised Scientific Integrity
The condition resulting from inappropriate interference in science (as defined above), research misconduct (as defined below), or honest error when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. (**Chapter 261**)

Misrepresentation of data
Deliberate or unintentional depiction of accurate data in a way that leads to incorrect interpretation or conclusions. Misrepresentation of data is different from fabrication of data (which is making data up) and falsification of data (which is changing data). (**Chapter 261**)

Negative or Null Results
Scientific results based on sound scientific theories and accepted scientific methodologies that contradict expectations developed from observed phenomena and/or predicted patterns. Such results may also contradict pre-existing or current research hypotheses, established scientific knowledge, and/or previous predictions. (**Chapter 261**)

Objectivity
The quality of being explicit, unbiased, honest, and impartial, such that results and conclusions can be defended based on sound data and evidence and are not based on personal opinion or beliefs. (**Chapter 261**)

Operating Unit
The organizational unit responsible for implementing a foreign assistance program for one or more elements of the Department of State's Foreign Assistance Framework. The definition includes all U.S. Government agencies implementing any funding from the relevant foreign assistance accounts (the 150 accounts). For USAID, it includes field Missions and regional entities, as well as regional Bureaus, pillar Bureaus, and Independent Offices in USAID/Washington that expend program funds to achieve DOs identified in a CDCS. In Chapter 201, field OUs are referred to as "Missions", and those

in Washington are referred to as “Washington OUs.” (**Chapters** 201, 260, **261**, 300, 304, 436, 540, 623)

Plagiarism
The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. This includes the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and Indigenous Knowledge. Under this policy, it is a loss of scientific integrity (i) when Indigenous Knowledge is obtained and included in USAID research, decision-making, or other activity without first obtaining consent; and (ii) when there is a failure to communicate USAID’s abilities and limitations regarding the protection of Indigenous Knowledge from disclosure or re-use when consent is given. (**Chapter 261**)

Political Interference [in Science]
Inappropriate, scientifically unjustified intervention in the conduct, management, communication, or use of science perpetrated by political appointees and/or motivated by political considerations. Examples of scientifically unjustified interventions include those undertaken to avoid controversy, press attention, or other forms of embarrassment or unwanted attention to USAID or U.S. Government officials (also see **Interference [in Science]**). (**Chapter 261**)

Professional Practices
The essential skills, norms, methodologies, values, and standards of conduct associated with a professional group. For scientists (anyone who collects, generates, or evaluates scientific data, analyses, or products), such practices include congruence with disciplinary best practices, “do no harm” principles, and adherence to research integrity. (**Chapter 261**)

Publication ethics
Standards of conduct when publishing results of scientific research or other scholarly work to ensure accountability for research accuracy, appropriate authorship, and a disclosure of conflicts of interest. These standards protect intellectual property, adhere to licensing and copyright requirements for published works, and prevent plagiarism. (**Chapter 261**)

Quality Assurance
The systematic monitoring and evaluation of scientific activities to ensure that standards of quality, information security and research integrity are being met. (**Chapter 261**)

Reproducibility/Replicability
The ability of a scientific process (e.g. experiment, analysis) to repeatedly generate or produce a consistent result. (**Chapter 261**)

Research
Systematic and creative activities undertaken to increase the knowledge base, including understanding of humankind, culture, environment, and society, and the application of

this knowledge base to devise new interventions. Being hypothesis-driven, testable, and independently replicable are often qualities of the research process. (**Chapter 261**)

Research Integrity
Active adherence to the ethical principles and professional standards essential for the responsible practice of research, which allows others to have trust and confidence in the methods used and the resulting findings. (**Chapter 261**)

Research Misconduct
Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Research misconduct can be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; it does not include honest error, differences of opinion, or data cleaning and interpolation according to established criteria (see 42C.F.R. § 93.103). (**Chapter 261**)

Retaliation/Reprisal
An adverse action taken against an employee for engaging in protected activity. (**Chapter 261**)

Science/Scientific Activities
The full spectrum of scientific endeavors, including basic science, applied science, evaluation science, engineering, technology, economics, social sciences, and statistics, as well as the scientific and technical information derived from these endeavors. Scientific activities refer to activities that involve the application of well-accepted scientific methods and theories in a systematic manner, and include the analysis, synthesis, compilation, or translation of scientific information and data, including statistical analyses. (**Chapter 261**)

Scientific Ethics
A set of rules and principles that those who work in science follow to uphold a standard of what is right and wrong in order to prevent misconduct, dishonesty, or morally questionable activities (also see **Research Integrity and Scientific Integrity**). (**Chapter 261**)

Scientific Information
Factual inputs, data, models, analyses, technical information, or scientific assessments related to the full spectrum of scientific disciplines. This includes any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms. (**Chapter 261**)

Scientific Integrity
The adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity. (**Chapter 261**)

Scientific Integrity Official (SIO)
Designated senior career employee that oversees implementation and iterative improvement of agency scientific integrity policies and processes. This is a federally mandated role. (**Chapter 261**)

Scientific Product
The results of scientific activities including the analysis, synthesis, compilation, or translation of scientific information and data, including statistical analyses, into electronic and hardcopy formats for use by others. (**Chapter 261**)

Scientist
An individual whose responsibilities include collection, generation, use, or evaluation of scientific and technical data, analyses, or products. This includes science and research advisors and managers, but does not refer to individuals with scientific and technical training whose primary job functions are in non-scientific roles (e.g., policymakers, communicators). (**Chapter 261**)

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