

# InsideNGO Certificate in USAID Assistance Management

## Candidate Handbook



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# Introduction and Value Statement

For more than 35 years, InsideNGO has been a recognized leader and provider of training and education in the field of USAID Assistance (e.g., grants and cooperative agreements). As a trusted resource to more than 300 NGO member organizations around the world, InsideNGO is pleased to offer a professional development program and credential targeted to this critically important field.

## The InsideNGO Certificate in USAID Assistance Management

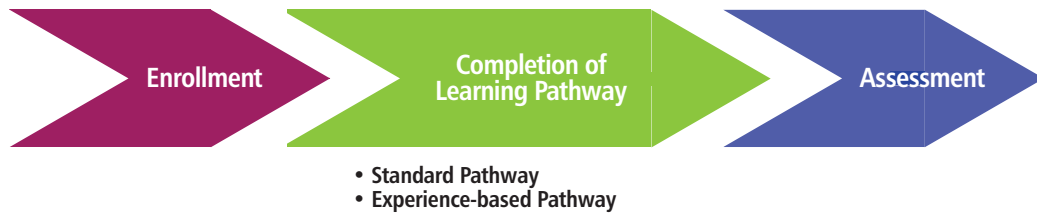
This Certificate represents InsideNGO's commitment to educating and supporting well-rounded professionals who are equipped with the knowledge and skill to successfully navigate the complicated environment of USAID Assistance funding and skillfully apply that knowledge in the workplace.

Successful Certificate Program participants, once **enrolled**, complete an appropriate **learning pathway** and after earning a passing score on the comprehensive, integrated **assessment**, become Certificate holders. Each learning pathway consists of one or more foundational training programs delivered by InsideNGO. Instructor-led training programs are supported through refresher and update webinars, online resources, and a collaborative online discussion group hosted by InsideNGO that connects program participants and facilitates peer-to-peer exchanges on timely and recurring USAID compliance, procurement, and financial management topics.

During the program, participants will develop more effective and efficient ways to approach USAID Assistance management, implementation, and administration.

Attaining the Certificate demonstrates commitment to an expert-validated standard of excellence. Certificate holders are recognized as problem solvers applying best practices and making sound decisions that will ultimately drive better results for their programs and their organizations.

# Program Description and Eligibility



## Enrollment

To begin the program as a Certificate Candidate, interested individuals must complete the Certificate enrollment process found at [www.INSIDEngo.org/Certificate](http://www.INSIDEngo.org/Certificate) and pay the Certificate Program fee (*see page 9*).

The fee includes access to practice tests, additional content and preparatory materials, and one exam registration. It does not include any course fees or additional exam attempts.

## Completion of Learning Pathway

To become eligible to take the integrated assessment and earn a Certificate, all participants must complete one of the two pathways described below.

### Standard Pathway

Following formal enrollment in the program, the Standard Pathway requires completion of coursework offered by InsideNGO in three core areas:

- USAID Rules and Regulations: Grants and Cooperative Agreements\*
- Procurement Planning and Execution: USAID Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- Financial Management for US Government Funding

The USAID Rules and Regulations course is a prerequisite for participation in the other two courses, but the remaining two courses can be completed in any order.

### Experience-based Pathway

Practitioners with at least eight years of experience managing USAID Assistance awards may pursue an alternative pathway to become eligible to take the integrated assessment. The applicant must first provide documentation of significant experience and responsibility in USAID Assistance management by completing the application for Experience-based qualification. Participants accepted into the Experience-based Pathway are still required to complete InsideNGO's USAID Rules and Regulations\* course in order to reinforce and refresh compliance-related knowledge and skills.

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\* Completion of InsideNGO's USAID Rules and Regulations workshop within two years of registration counts toward completion within the Certificate Program. InsideNGO strongly recommends participation in the Rules and Regulations workshop every two years.

## Program Description and Eligibility

Candidates pursuing the Experience-based Pathway are encouraged to consider enrolling in some or all of the offered training courses to enhance their skills and knowledge prior to sitting for the exam.

### Additional Support Available

Certificate Candidates have exclusive access to an online Candidate Portal with additional resources to deepen knowledge within the Certificate domains and help Candidates prepare for the Certificate Assessment. These resources include:

- Easy, one-stop access to current USAID and US government regulations related to the Certificate domains
- Practice test questions
- Online discussion group for Candidate questions and peer-to-peer support
- Lifetime access to resources and updates after successful completion of the Certificate requirements

### Assessment

Candidates who complete one of the two pathways described above earn eligibility\*\* to sit for the integrated assessment and demonstrate their knowledge and expertise in the three primary domains of the Certificate. Certificate Candidates have three years from their program enrollment date to complete coursework and pass the exam to earn the Certificate. *(NOTE: The terms “assessment,” “exam,” and “test” are used interchangeably throughout this handbook.)*

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\*\*Eligibility qualifications include completion of pathway and full payment of registration and all workshop fees.

# Certificate Assessment

## Test Overview

After successfully completing the requirements for either the Standard or Experience-based Pathway, Candidates will receive notification from InsideNGO confirming that they are eligible to register for the exam during a future testing window and explaining how to schedule the exam appointment.

The assessment will be offered during specific testing windows throughout the year that will be listed on the InsideNGO Certificate program website ([www.INSIDEngo.org/Certificate](http://www.INSIDEngo.org/Certificate)). Candidates must meet all required qualifications to be eligible to participate in the exam and must follow the procedure described in this Candidate Handbook to ensure that they are able to sit for the exam during their desired testing window.

Exams are conducted by InsideNGO's partners, Questionmark and ProctorU. When a Candidate is ready to take the exam, he or she will create an account within ProctorU's testing system to schedule and take the exam online. The exam is given online using an Internet connection to ProctorU's virtual testing center, requiring specific minimum technical requirements for each Candidate's computer and Internet connection. Candidates may take the exam at their convenience from anywhere in the world that can support these minimum technical requirements.

The assessment includes approximately 90 multiple choice questions on the three primary domains of the Certificate. Although most test takers will complete the assessment in two hours, participants will have up to four hours total to complete the test. *(NOTE: See Appendix for additional information about the three Certificate domains.)*

Periodically, InsideNGO may schedule testing at a designated testing administration center. InsideNGO will inform all eligible Candidates when such a session is scheduled and available for registration.

# Certificate Assessment

## Testing Registration

Candidates should visit [www.INSIDEngo.org/Certificate](http://www.INSIDEngo.org/Certificate) for upcoming testing windows.

After a Candidate has received email notification from InsideNGO that s/he has completed the eligibility requirements to take the exam, the Candidate should determine during which future testing window s/he would like to take the exam. Using the instructions in the eligibility confirmation email from InsideNGO, the Candidate must schedule an exam appointment with InsideNGO's online testing partners, Questionmark and ProctorU.

Exam appointments must be scheduled at least 72 hours in advance.

## Testing Process and Access

After scheduling an exam appointment with ProctorU, Candidates will receive an email confirmation and instructions for accessing the exam on the day and time of their appointment. This email also includes a link to a website to confirm that the computer and Internet connection meet the minimum technical requirements for the online exam.

*NOTE: It is very important to confirm that the computer set-up meets these minimum requirements prior to the exam, and Candidates will be required to pay a re-testing fee for any exam appointments that are interrupted and unrecoverable due to technical difficulties.*

At the date and time of the exam appointment, Candidates should click on the link in the appointment confirmation email to go to the Remote Proctoring Center of ProctorU to connect with the exam specialist who will serve as the Proctor throughout the testing period. The Proctor will connect with the Candidate using both audio and video capabilities on the computer to be used for the exam. The Proctor will walk the Candidate through a series of steps to confirm identity and ensure that the testing area is secure and free from materials that could invalidate the exam.

Following the Proctor security confirmation, the Candidate will be logged into the exam and will have four hours to complete the approximately 90 multiple choice questions. If at any point the Internet connection is interrupted, ProctorU will make every attempt to reconnect the Candidate to the virtual testing center and continue the exam without any deductions from the time limit. If reconnection is impossible, Candidates will be contacted by email with information about rescheduling the exam appointment.

Once a Candidate has completed and submitted the exam, the Proctor will confirm successful submission and disconnect the Candidate from the virtual testing center.

# Test Format and Scoring

Assessment questions evaluate mastery of knowledge related to the three domains of the Certificate Body of Knowledge (see Appendix for overview):

- USAID Rules and Regulations: Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- Procurement Planning and Execution: USAID Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- Financial Management for US Government Funding

## Format of Questions

All questions are multiple choice consisting of a question and four possible responses. Test takers should select the one response that most accurately answers the question or statement provided in accordance with USAID regulations and best practices. *Remember: correct answers will correspond to the USAID regulations and best practices contained in the Certificate Body of Knowledge training courses and not the specific policies or practices in place at the Candidate's organization.* (Enrolled Candidates can access practice test questions at [www.INSIDE.NGO.org/Certificate](http://www.INSIDE.NGO.org/Certificate).)

## Scoring Method

All correct answers are awarded one point, no points are awarded for skipped or incorrect answers, and there is no penalty for selecting an incorrect answer (i.e., additional points are not deducted for an incorrect response).

Assessments are scored electronically upon online submission of the test. Assessments or responses may not be revised after the test is submitted.

Candidates must obtain a passing score within each domain in order to pass the full exam.



# Resources Allowed during Test Taking

## Permitted Resources

In order to mirror the realities of applying USAID regulations in the work setting, Candidates are allowed and encouraged to consult the pertinent regulations that are described in the Body of Knowledge. Candidates taking the exam through Questionmark's virtual testing center will be provided access to electronic copies of the pertinent regulations through the testing portal which may be used at any time during the testing session. Candidates participating in a live testing session are allowed to bring hard-copy versions of the regulations that were provided during their coursework and are encouraged to consult [www.INSIDE.NGO.org/Certificate](http://www.INSIDE.NGO.org/Certificate) for current versions of the applicable regulations. Additionally, Candidates are permitted to use their InsideNGO course manuals and materials during the exam.

## Prohibited Items

No resources outside of the electronic (online testing only) or hard-copy (live testing only) resources listed above will be allowed in the testing environment. Such prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Cameras, cell phones, optical readers, or other electronic devices that include the ability to photograph, photocopy, or otherwise copy test materials
- iPods, MP3 players, headphones, or pagers
- Calculators, computers, PDAs, or other electronic devices with one or more memories

# What to Expect after Taking the Test

## Feedback Provided at Completion of Test

Upon submission of the online test, most Candidates will immediately receive notification of their score in each of the three domains and their pass/fail result for the full exam. Candidates must obtain a passing score in each domain in order to pass the full exam.

## Awarding of Certificate

After passing the assessment, Candidates will receive a personalized certificate. Certificates are printed and mailed to passing Candidates on a quarterly basis. InsideNGO will also provide Certificate holders with specific language for referencing their Certificate on a resume or describing their Certificate to a third party, including the date the Certificate was awarded.

*Note: The InsideNGO Certificate in USAID Assistance Management is not a certification and therefore must not be referred to as a professional certification. Such misrepresentation of the Certificate is grounds for revocation of the designation by InsideNGO.*

## Retaking the Examination

Candidates on the Standard Pathway who did not pass the exam are able to retake the test during any subsequent testing window following their initial attempt.

Candidates on the Experience-based Pathway who do not pass the exam are required to take the InsideNGO practitioner course that corresponds to the domain(s) in which they did not receive a passing grade in order to be eligible to schedule an exam appointment during a future testing window.

# Additional Information

## Fee Schedule

\$550	Fee for US-based staff
\$250	Fee for non-US based staff*

*\*Anyone who is based outside of the US is eligible for the non-US rate. This includes expats, third-country nationals, host country nationals, etc. If you are based outside of the US (and not just on extended travel), you qualify for the non-US rate.*

\$145 Re-Testing Fee (if Candidate does not pass the exam the first time )

Fees must be paid in US funds to InsideNGO by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or wire transfer.

## Certificate Program Registry

InsideNGO will maintain an online registry of Certificate holders for public access. During the enrollment process, Certificate Candidates can choose to be included in this registry upon successful completion of the Certificate requirements.

## Withdrawal of Program Enrollment

Following program enrollment, Candidates have three years to complete the eligibility requirements and pass the assessment. Candidates may choose to withdraw their enrollment in the program at any time by notifying [certificate@InsideNGO.org](mailto:certificate@InsideNGO.org). At the time of withdrawal, Candidates surrender all enrollment fees and re-registration at a later date will require payment of all requisite fees at InsideNGO's current rates.

## Revocation of the Certificate

InsideNGO reserves the right to investigate any potential misrepresentation of the Certificate and revoke the designation as Certificate holder for any individual who is found to have violated the terms of this Candidate Handbook.

## Candidate Agreement

As stated in the Certificate Program Enrollment process and at the beginning of the test session, the Certificate Candidate agrees to conduct him or herself in accordance with the policies and terms of this Candidate Handbook, including, but not limited to:

- prohibition of the sharing of test information;
- utilization of unauthorized resources during the exam;
- truthful representation of the Candidate's identity throughout the assessment eligibility and exam administration process.

## Additional Information

### Grievances Process

Candidates may report any grievances or concerns regarding the Certificate Program to [certificate@InsideNGO.org](mailto:certificate@InsideNGO.org). Reports are reviewed by the Certificate Advisory Panel on a quarterly basis. All grievance reports must include:

- Candidate name, organization, email address, and phone number
- Detailed description of concern or grievance
- Date of incident

InsideNGO will make every effort to address concerns in a collaborative and transparent manner. Detailed test information, including answer keys or detailed analysis of a Candidate's test performance, will not be shared under any circumstances.

### ADA Compliance

Reasonable accommodations provide Candidates with disabilities a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the areas measured by the assessment. Reasonable accommodations are decided based on the individual's specific request, disability, documentation submitted, and appropriateness of the request. Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the assessment.

Reasonable accommodations generally are provided for Candidates who have a physical or other impairment that substantially limits that person in one or more major life activities (e.g., walking, talking, hearing, and performing manual tasks); have a record of such physical or other impairment; or are regarded as having a physical or other impairment.

To apply for reasonable accommodations, the Candidate must request the accommodations and provide documentation from an appropriate licensed professional, on the professional's letterhead, that supports such request for reasonable accommodations. The documentation must include a diagnosis of the disability and specific recommendations for accommodations.

Requests for accommodations must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the preferred test date. It is recommended that this documentation be submitted at least 45 days prior to the preferred testing date. For more information regarding reasonable accommodations, please contact [certificate@InsideNGO.org](mailto:certificate@InsideNGO.org).

## Participant Privacy Policy

InsideNGO will keep all Candidate personal and program information confidential and will not sell or otherwise distribute Candidate information to any third parties except those explicitly stated within this Candidate Handbook.

Candidates may elect during enrollment to be included in the Registry of Certificate Holders upon completion of the Certificate. This designation may be changed at any time by contacting [certificate@InsideNGO.org](mailto:certificate@InsideNGO.org).

# APPENDIX

## 1 InsideNGO Certificate in USAID Assistance Management Body of Knowledge Overview 3

The Certificate will cover the following information in its three course domains:

### USAID Rules & Regulations: Grants & Cooperative Agreements

#### USAID Structure and Funding Instruments

#### Administrative Requirements

- Financial & Program Management
- Cost Share
- Program Income
- Revision of Budget & Program Plans
- Audits & Spending
- Property Standards
- Procurement Standards
- Reports & Records
- Suspension, Termination & Enforcement
- After-the-Award Requirements
- Marking and Branding

#### Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations

#### Agreement Package – Letter and Schedule

#### Standard Provisions

#### Source and Nationality Requirements (22 CFR 228)

### Procurement Planning & Execution: USAID Grants & Cooperative Agreements

#### Foundations of Procurement Planning and Execution

#### Procurement Regulations Overview

#### Procurement Plan Development

#### Budget-Based Planning

#### Prior Approvals and Waivers

#### Process Controls and Risks

#### Procurement Planning Steps

#### Managing Procurement Through Change and Revision

#### Fair and Open Competition

#### Procurement Documentation

#### Procurement in Disaster Situations

#### Procurement Tools

### Financial Management for US Government Funding

#### Elements of a Strong Financial Management System

#### Financial Management Regulations Overview

#### Daily Transactions

#### Internal Controls

#### Segregation of Duties

#### Timekeeping Systems

#### Supporting Documentation

#### Budget Management

#### Accounting Concepts

#### Indirect Costs

#### Financial Statements

#### Donor Audits