The purpose of this playbook is to provide the user with clear and concise guidance on incorporating the USAID Employment Framework into their programming. Employment is a crucial link between two key dimensions of a country’s capacity for self-reliance: the capacity of its people and of its economic institutions.

**WHEN DECIDING UPON THE RESULTS YOU ARE SEEKING TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEAR TERM, CONSIDER THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Increasing employment for those who want to work;
- Higher earnings; and
- Better and more inclusive jobs

**Users can Incorporate the Employment Framework into their Programming Utilizing Three Basic Steps:**

**Diagnose**

Diagnose economic growth and employment challenges in the country.

**Decide**

Decide within the Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) what employment-related intermediate results (IRs) you want to achieve, and how.

**Design**

Design appropriate interventions to promote employment opportunities in a given country to maximize effectiveness and reduce the need for future U.S. assistance.

**TIP:** Employment opportunities for today’s new entrants will probably be in the same sectors and segments as current employment, because employment transformation happens slowly.

**CONTEXT MATTERS:** In crisis and conflict settings, employment cannot improve until political stability returns.
Now, compare the expected growth of opportunities in the economy with labor supply growth (by education level if possible). Establish a clear picture of employment challenges and opportunities, even if some are outside of USAID’s current comparative advantage to address.

Note: There are three main categories of jobs in USAID host countries:

**WAGE OR SALARY JOBS:**
Wage or salary jobs, including (i) steady, regular jobs in a modern private firm or in the public sector; (ii) casual informal wage work on traditional production units such as farms or microenterprises, or seasonal work on construction sites or in factories; or (iii) wage work in households, such as security guards, housekeeping, or childcare. Jobs in modern firms (with higher productivity) pay better, and grow as a share of total employment as GDP grows.

**(SELF) EMPLOYMENT ON A FAMILY FARM:**
(Self) Employment on a family farm in the agricultural sector (including crop and livestock production, aquaculture, and similar activities), where at least 50 percent of the labor comes from family members. This category includes landless farmers.

**(SELF) EMPLOYMENT IN A HOUSEHOLD BUSINESS (MICROENTERPRISE):**
(Self) Employment in a household business (microenterprise). Household enterprises (HEs) are unincorporated nonfarm businesses owned by households, located in either rural or urban areas. This type of employment includes the notional business owner as well as any family members working in the business. Most HEs are one-person operations. Most employment in the gig economy falls in the self-employment category.

**TIP:** Because modern, private sector firms tend to produce the most formal, highest-paying jobs, the most effective strategy for increasing overall employment is to focus on growing employment in this sector. Providing the right skills and information to youth, women or disadvantaged groups are also important for making employment more inclusive and productive.

**STEP 2: DECIDE**
“What employment-related intermediate results are you seeking to achieve in the near term within the CDCS?”

Formal employment growth at the firm level occurs when production and sales are growing and investment is needed to expand, so it may be best to focus on IRs which ultimately lead to employment, rather than “new jobs” directly.

**TIP:** Focus on a subset of the opportunities identified through your diagnosis, ideally prioritizing growing labor demand of modern firms, by considering USAID’s comparative advantage in your host country as well as defining your target population, e.g. youth with a primary education; and request the right funding for effective interventions in budget planning.
GETTING EMPLOYMENT TO WORK: A PLAYBOOK FOR THE FIELD

STEP 3: DESIGN
“What interventions are most likely to be effective in achieving the results you chose?”

Key points:

The entry and growth of modern firms is critical for increasing demand for labor and generating better employment opportunities.

Increasing labor productivity is key to increasing opportunities and income, especially where agriculture is the primary source of livelihoods and employment.

Access to information (on opportunities, markets, input supply), capital or savings, skills (literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and specialized technical skills), and a location to work are critical to opening and sustaining a household enterprise (HE).

Skills improve employment prospects, even though they do not generate jobs directly or guarantee an increase in earnings.

In order to determine the interventions that would most likely be effective in achieving your chosen results, consider the following questions:

IS LABOR DEMAND WEAK?
In other words, is economic growth slow or negative, and is unemployment or underemployment high? Do you want to increase employment and earnings overall for current and potential urban residents, such as youth?

Does your Mission have a comparative advantage in support for modern firms in the country? If so, apply the respective evidence-based recommendations on improving government regulation, finance, market access, management and/or innovation on modern firms below.

Does your Mission have a comparative advantage more in support for household enterprises and farms in the country? If so, apply the respective evidence-based recommendations for improving agricultural market access, producer organization, technology adoption, risk mitigation, land markets, and/or household enterprise start-ups below.

IS LABOR DEMAND STRONG?
Do you want to achieve better or more inclusive jobs, i.e. improve earnings, working conditions, and/or inclusion for specific groups, such as women, rural residents, or out-of-school youth?
Does your Mission have a comparative advantage more in support for household enterprises and farms in the country? If so, apply the respective evidence-based recommendations for improving agricultural market access, producer organization, technology adoption, risk mitigation, land markets, and/or household enterprise start-ups below.

Does your Mission have a comparative advantage more in skills development in the country? If so, apply the evidence-based recommendations for improving skills below.

**TIP:** For more details on interventions and sources of evidence, please refer to Annex 1 of the full framework.

### Increasing Labor Demand: Modern Firm Entry and Growth

**The entry and growth of modern firms is critical for increasing demand for labor and generating better employment opportunities.**

In developing countries, smaller firms are unlikely to grow over time, and large firms tend to start as large firms. The key for any effective support is to encourage firms with the vision and capacity to grow to enter, survive, or expand.

**Recommendations for right-sized government regulation**

Facilitate the removal of systemic policy barriers to productivity, competition, trade, foreign direct investment, and infrastructure. Business registration should be far less of a concern than underlying firm growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Intervention</th>
<th>Evidence, Finding</th>
<th>Strength of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade facilitation and opening industries up to competition</td>
<td>Increases labor productivity and employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplifying taxes</td>
<td>Unclear impact on employment</td>
<td>Limited evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax incentives for FDI</td>
<td>Mixed impact</td>
<td>Very limited evidence on developing countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening land and property rights administration</td>
<td>Some association with investment and no evidence on link to employment</td>
<td>No evidence on developing countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplifying business registration</td>
<td>Negligible increases in formal firms and their employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO FINANCE
Increase access to finance by improving credit information and collateral systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSSIBLE INTERVENTION</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving credit information systems</td>
<td>Increases employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collateral systems reform, especially for movable assets</td>
<td>Increases employment in movable-intensive sectors</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching grants</td>
<td>Mixed record for employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit guarantees</td>
<td>Increases sales and profits but no evidence on employment</td>
<td>Limited evidence in developing countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE MARKET ACCESS
Provide market information and support the formation of firm consortiums to improve market linkages.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve market linkages through information or support for consortiums</td>
<td>Increases sales, employment, and sustainability of domestic operations</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN EXISTING FIRMS
Encourage firm profitability and expansion through targeted management consulting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business training</td>
<td>Classroom training has no effect on profits or sales</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management consulting</td>
<td>Increases employment, especially assistance focused on increasing sales</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION
Support product innovation, i.e., introducing a new good or service, which can open up new markets or increase market share for innovators.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for research and development</td>
<td>Increases employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interventions to Increase Income From Family Farms

WHERE AGRICULTURE IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT, INCREASING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY IS KEY TO INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES AND INCOME. Investments that enable farm households to produce more products and products of higher quality will free farm labor to move away from a less productive activity such as subsistence food production and toward more productive activities off of the farm (employment in farm-related value chains such as input supply and post-harvest processing, or the provision of consumer services to farm households that now earn more income).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL MARKET ACCESS

Improve market access by improving rural road networks and investing in electricity and information and communication technology.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve rural road networks</td>
<td>Increases productivity, growth, and employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other infrastructure improvements (electricity, ICT)</td>
<td>Increases productivity, growth, and employment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZING GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED PRODUCERS

Facilitate access to new technology and market integration by organizing geographically dispersed producers.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen producer organizations (cooperatives and associations)</td>
<td>Evidence points to better access to technologies and markets</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve services that cooperatives can offer: better integration with markets, more affordable inputs, training, transport, value addition, and credit</td>
<td>Better access to markets, ultimately improved productivity</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural credit</td>
<td>Does not increase earnings by itself</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Use innovations in communication technology to improve the use of innovations in agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase public sector R&amp;D for designing and disseminating innovations</td>
<td>Agricultural R&amp;D investments show high rates of return and positive impact on agricultural productivity and farmer incomes when disseminated and adopted.</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE RAINFED AGRICULTURE EARNINGS AND TO MITIGATE RISK

Where rainfed agriculture is common, increase earnings and mitigate risk by investing in irrigation systems and supporting opportunities in livestock production and nonfarm employment.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation systems</td>
<td>Reduces seasonal underemployment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock or nonfarm employment</td>
<td>Reduces seasonal underemployment</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE LAND RIGHTS AND LAND ACQUISITION

Improve access to land and develop land markets for agricultural employment and investment through land registration, rentals, and low-cost land sales.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inventory and registration of land (including communal and state land)</td>
<td>Once land is registered and titled, land rental markets can develop; land rental markets promote commercial farming and encourage the transfer of land to younger farmers</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land redistribution</td>
<td>Increased income in Malawi, disappointing results in South Africa</td>
<td>Mixed evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interventions to Help Household Enterprises Start and Stay in Business

THE KEY TO OPENING AND SUSTAINING A HOUSEHOLD ENTERPRISE (HE) IS ACCESS TO INFORMATION (ON OPPORTUNITIES, MARKETS, INPUT SUPPLY), CAPITAL OR SAVINGS, SKILLS (LITERACY, NUMERACY, SOCIO-EMOTIONAL, AND SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL SKILLS), AND A LOCATION TO WORK.

Young people in both rural and urban areas are especially stymied by the lack of accurate information about opportunities to open HEs and the difficulty of financing a business.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESS START-UP
Facilitate business start-up by building awareness of opportunities (and if necessary, socio-emotional skills to take advantage of them) and by providing access to finance (through microfinance institutions, for instance). These interventions are especially important for youth while still in school, but are also helpful for school dropouts and graduates.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microfinance or microcredit programs to provide start-up capital</td>
<td>These programs speed up start-up, although they tend to require some savings or collateral from credit recipients</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship and vocational training</td>
<td>Apprenticeships can succeed, whereas technical and vocational training is rarely cost-effective</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building socio-emotional skills</td>
<td>Positive Youth Development that builds socio-emotional skills and connects young people with mentors and networks works well</td>
<td>Strong evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building entrepreneurial mindset</td>
<td>Youth more likely to start a business, get a job</td>
<td>Limited evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES
Support the maintenance of existing businesses through grants and access to a workplace or sales location, or explore new approaches to increase their income.
Skills to Navigate the Labor Market and Work Environment

SKILLS IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS, EVEN THOUGH THEY DO NOT GENERATE JOBS DIRECTLY OR GUARANTEE AN INCREASE IN EARNINGS.

The skills that help people to find and keep a wage job, improve the productivity of the family farm, or open and maintain a business are diverse, complementary, and acquired in a range of settings (the family, community, school, technical and vocational programs, and the workplace). They include cognitive skills, socio-emotional skills, technical or vocational skills, and firm-specific skills. Individuals entering the labor market, especially women and young people, also need information about careers, employment opportunities, earnings in different jobs and occupations, and the behavior that is expected of them during the job search and on the job.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SKILLS

• Ensure that all labor force entrants have foundational cognitive and socio-emotional skills, including skills that support on-the-job learning and post-secondary technical training.
• Develop work-readiness behaviors and expose youth to workplaces, preferably while they are still in school.
• Finance technical training only with demonstrable value and additionality—in other words, only when the private sector is not already providing such training.


ENDNOTES

1. An economy based on flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving connecting with clients or customers through an online platform.

2. Defined as experimental and quasi-experimental studies in low or middle-income countries.
What Other Resources Can I Use?

MODERN FIRMS
Operating Units with relevant technical tools and other resources:

Debe E3/Economic Policy:
- Country Economic Review (CER)
- Inclusive growth diagnostic (IGD)

Debe E3/Trade & Regulatory Reform:
- USAID Trade Capacity Building Policy
- SME evidence review
- Women’s Wage Employment in Developing Countries: Regulatory Barriers and Opportunities
- Standard indicator guidance
- Marketlinks.org

Debe Lab/Center for Transformational Partnerships:
- PSE Policy
- PACE strategic review
- Aspen Network for Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE): research, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Mapping Toolkit, Ecosystem Snapshots, Decent Work and Economic Growth in the SGB Sector
- Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) research, case studies, working groups
- Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI)

Debe E3/Education:
- Key Approaches to Labor Market Assessment
- Key Soft Skills for Workforce Success
- What Works in Entrepreneurship Training and Education for Youth
- Systematic Review of Positive Youth Development Programs in LMICs
- Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) Policy Brief
- Measuring Skills for Youth Workforce Development Guidance Note

Debe E3/Gender:
- Women, Business and the Law (World Bank Group)
- Women’s Economic Empowerment and Equality Technical Assistance (WE3 TA): sector-specific gender analyses, including labor-related gender analyses
- Engendering Utilities toolkit

TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION UNITS: FARMS AND HOUSEHOLD ENTERPRISES
Relevant technical tools and other resources include:

Debe Feed the Future Project Design Guide for Youth-Inclusive Agriculture and Food Systems
Debe Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index
Debe USAID Wage Labor, Agriculture-based Economies, and Pathways out of Poverty: Taking Stock of the Evidence
Debe GFSS Supplemental Technical Guidance: Towards Digitally-Enabled Global Agriculture & Food Systems
Debe Digital Tools in USAID Agriculture Programming Toolkit
Debe USAID Engaging Youth in Agriculture through Information & Communication Technologies Case Study
Debe Guide to the Use of Digital Financial Services in Agriculture
Debe Mobile Access Diagnostic Tool
Debe Gender & ICT Survey Toolkit