

**Comments of Brian Frantz about USAID, former senior AID FSO.** *Devex*, 23 March 2026

### **Lingering questions**

The feelings over USAID's closure and the reshuffling of its functions — and the purported reasons behind it — are still raw.

“Let's be clear, what happened to USAID was not about making U.S. development and humanitarian assistance 'better.' Had it been, the administration would have had a plan for replacing USAID. It did not and still does not,” writes **Brian Frantz**, a former USAID senior foreign service officer, [in an opinion piece for Devex](#).

Frantz had a front-row seat to **what he describes as the administration's “sham” Foreign Assistance Review**, writing that he was “asked to identify and justify the highest-priority programs I recommended for retention to advance administration foreign policy objectives among the over 800 USAID-managed development programs in Africa.”

**Every program he recommended was canceled.** And “virtually all of the programs the [State] department was preparing to absorb would expire within a year of their transition,” he writes.

He recalls asking: “What should guide transition planning beyond the expiring programs? I was stunned to be told, ‘All we can do is plan for what we know’ – i.e., just the remaining programs with near-term end dates. That was the only meeting of the assistance transition working group to which senior USAID career officers were ever invited.”

The transition may now be mostly complete, **but fundamental questions still linger** for Frantz. “If the administration had wanted to do development and humanitarian assistance 'better,' why would it discard initiatives such as Power and Prosper Africa, which seemed to fit squarely within the administration's vision of advancing economic partnerships?” he asks.

“Why would it completely shut out the career USAID officers who were best-placed to help it reform the system? And, most importantly, why would it have **dissolved USAID before developing a clear plan to replace it** with something better?”

**Opinion:** [Stop pretending USAID's takedown was about doing development better](#)