To direct the President, in consultation with the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the Department of Defense, to establish guidelines for United States foreign assistance programs, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. GUIDELINES FOR UNITED STATES FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to evaluate the performance of United States foreign assistance programs and their contribution to policy, strategies, projects, program goals, and priorities undertaken by the Federal Government, to foster and promote innovative programs to improve the effectiveness of such programs, and to coordinate the monitoring and evaluation processes of Federal departments and agencies that administer such programs.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF GUIDELINES.—The President, in consultation with the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the Department of Defense, shall establish guidelines regarding the establishment of measurable goals, performance metrics, and monitoring and evaluation plans that can be applied on a uniform basis to United States foreign assistance programs, country assistance plans, and international and multilateral assistance programs receiving financial assistance from the United States. Such guidelines shall be estab-
lished according to best practices of monitoring and evaluation studies and analyses.

(c) OBJECTIVES OF GUIDELINES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Such guidelines shall provide direction to Federal departments and agencies that administer United States foreign assistance programs on how to develop the complete range of activities relating to the monitoring of resources, the evaluation of projects, the evaluation of program impacts, and analysis that is necessary for the identification of findings, generalizations that can be derived from those findings, and their applicability to proposed project and program design.

(2) OBJECTIVES.—Specifically, the guidelines shall provide direction on how to achieve the following objectives for monitoring and evaluation programs:

(A) Building measurable goals, performance metrics and monitoring and evaluation into program design at the outset, including the provision of sufficient program resources to conduct monitoring and evaluation.

(B) Disseminating guidelines for the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation programs to all personnel, especially
in the field, who are responsible for the design, implementation and management of foreign assistance programs.

(C) Developing a clearinghouse capacity for the dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned to United States development professionals, implementing partners, the international aid community, and aid recipient governments, and as a repository of knowledge on lessons learned.

(D) Distributing evaluation reports internally and making this material available online to the public. Furthermore, providing a summary including a description of methods, key findings and recommendations to the public online in a fully searchable form within 90 days after the completion of the evaluation. Principled exceptions will be made in cases of classified or proprietary material.

(E) Establishing annual monitoring and evaluation agendas and objectives that are responsive to policy and programmatic priorities.

(F) Applying rigorous monitoring and evaluation methodologies, choosing from among a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative
methods common in the field of social scientific inquiry.

(G) Partnering with the academic community, implementing partners, and national and international institutions that have expertise in monitoring and evaluation and analysis when such partnerships will provide needed expertise or will significantly improve the evaluation and analysis.

(H) Developing and implementing a training plan for aid personnel on the proper conduct of monitoring and evaluation programs.

(d) Role of Other Federal Departments and Agencies.—The President shall carry out this section in conjunction with the heads of Federal departments and agencies that administer United States foreign assistance programs.

(e) Report.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to Congress a report that contains a detailed description of the guidelines that have been developed on measurable goals, performance metrics, and monitoring and evaluation plans for United States foreign assistance programs established under this section.
(f) Evaluation Defined.—In this section, the term “evaluation” means, with respect to a United States foreign assistance program, the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics and outcomes of the program and projects under the program as a basis for judgments, to improve effectiveness, and to inform decisions about current and future programming.

SEC. 3. Internet Web Site to Make Publicly Available Comprehensive, Timely, Comparable, and Accessible Information on United States Foreign Assistance Programs.

(a) Establishment; Publication and Updates.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall establish and maintain an Internet Web site to make publicly available comprehensive, timely, comparable, and accessible information on United States foreign assistance programs. The head of each Federal department or agency that administers such programs shall on a regular basis publish and update on the Web site such information with respect to the programs of the department or agency.

(b) Matters To Be Included.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—Such information shall be published on a detailed program-by-program basis and country-by-country basis.

(2) TYPES OF INFORMATION.—To ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of United States foreign assistance programs, the information shall include country assistance strategies, annual budget documents, congressional budget justifications, actual expenditures, and reports and evaluations for such programs and projects under such programs. Each type of information described in this paragraph shall be published on the Web site not later than 30 days after the date of issuance of the information and shall be continuously updated.

(3) REPORT IN LIEU OF INCLUSION.—If the head of a Federal department or agency makes a determination that the inclusion of a required item of information on the Web site would jeopardize the health or security of an implementing partner or program beneficiary or would be detrimental to the national interests of the United States, such item of information may be submitted to Congress in a written report in lieu of including it on the Web site, along with the reasons for not including it in the database required under subsection (c)(2).
(c) Scope of Information.—

(1) In general.—The Web site shall contain such information relating to the current fiscal year and the immediately preceding 5 fiscal years.

(2) Database.—

(A) In general.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Web site shall also contain a link to a searchable database available to the public containing such information relating to fiscal years prior to the current fiscal year and the immediately preceding 5 fiscal years.

(B) Limitation.—The database shall not contain such information relating to fiscal years prior to fiscal year 2006.

(d) Form.—Such information shall be published on the Web site in unclassified form. Any information determined to be classified information may be submitted to Congress in classified form and an unclassified summary of such information shall be published on the Web site.