



# Integrated Country Strategy

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Moldova

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**Table of Contents**

1. Chief of Mission Priorities ..... 2

2. Mission Strategic Framework ..... 4

3. Mission Goals and Objectives ..... 6

4. Management Objectives..... 9

## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Although Moldova has significantly strengthened ties with Europe in recent years, it continues to struggle with significant challenges to its stability and prosperity, including corruption at the highest levels and malign Russian influence. The Government of Moldova's (GOM) capacity to withstand these threats ultimately depends on the strength of Moldovan civil society, access to free and unbiased media, efforts to combat corruption at all levels, rule of law resistant to outside influence, and the resilience of its democratic institutions.

Our primary Mission goal is to help Moldova become a fully democratic, economically prosperous state that is fully integrated into Europe, secure within its internationally recognized borders, and with an effective government that is accountable to the Moldovan people. While the nullification of the 2018 mayoral election shook public and Western confidence in Moldova's democracy, many voters continue to demand accountability and transparency -- including in the upcoming national parliamentary elections.

Sustained Mission efforts to reinforce effective and democratic governance by empowering the Moldovan people are needed to ensure Moldova's continued progress.

Our engagement is focused on uprooting the culture of corruption, self-interest, and state capture. The highest priorities continue to be strengthening key democratic institutions, increasing transparency, stabilizing financial regulatory systems, and supporting independent voices in civil society and media. These priorities are reflected in our longer-term focus on justice sector reform, growing the Moldovan economy, and improving the country's ability to secure its borders given regional and transnational security challenges. The Mission works closely with a range of stakeholders, including government institutions that are committed to reform. Addressing these core priorities can help put Moldova's progress on firmer footing and inoculate its fledgling institutions against corrosive and malign influences inside and outside Moldova.

Economic growth, greater opportunity and improved living standards are critical to stem the flight of Moldova's human capital, to entice those who have left to return, and to facilitate the country's gradual shift towards Europe. The Mission prioritizes improving the regulatory climate, enhancing private sector competitiveness, developing high-value agriculture for export, promoting energy security and reduced dependence on Russian energy, increasing trade and investment in key agricultural and non-agricultural industries, enhancing the business enabling environment, strengthening the fiscal environment, increasing access to finance, and improving workforce productivity. The Mission is also supporting effective public-private partnerships and efforts to strengthen Moldova's cyber security and infrastructure.

In order to empower citizens, the Mission is supporting efforts to ensure that Moldovan citizens have access to objective sources of information. Mission priorities are to sustain accountability and democracy through partnering with a strong and effective civil society; supporting creative,

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independent media and professional journalism, and to emphasize media literacy as a tool for citizens to discern between factual reporting and propaganda (internal and external). The Mission also works to facilitate greater Moldovan access to U.S. culture and society through our exchanges, Alumni networks, and multi-themed programming through the five American Corners throughout Moldova.

The Mission actively seeks to support a whole, secure Moldova that is at reduced strategic risk to Russian malign influence and other transnational threats. The Mission works to promote confidence building measures to resolve the Transnistrian conflict, and people-to-people contacts that can help bridge divides between the two sides; strengthen Moldova's ability to secure its borders and to prevent/respond to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) related trafficking and other illicit trade; and develop sustainable, professional defense capabilities that enhance Moldova's security and can contribute to United Nations and other international peacekeeping operations.

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## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

### **Mission Goal 1:** Reinforce Effective & Democratic Governance

**Mission Objective 1.1:** More *effective government management and regulation* improves the business climate and public service delivery, and reduces the perception of government as an obstacle to be overcome. (Incorporates CDCS DO2)

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Promote *accountable, just, and democratic governance* with a sustained focus on battling corruption, promoting media pluralism, law enforcement and justice sector reform, and protecting marginalized and vulnerable populations. (Incorporates CDCS DO1)

**Mission Objective 1.3:** Moldova is an *effective partner in European and international security* through its commitment to the Transnistrian settlement process, developing sustainable Armed Forces capabilities, securing its borders and preventing WMD proliferation.

### **Mission Goal 2:** Empower the Moldovan People

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Generate *economic opportunities* through increased investment, trade, and private sector engagement. Promote reforms that create a conducive business and investment climate. (Incorporates CDCS DO2)

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Partner with civil society to *reinforce the role of citizen engagement* in advocating for accountable governance that is inclusive of all segments of the population, and ensuring each citizen's right to information that is unbiased and accurate. (Incorporates CDCS DO1)

**Mission Objective 2.3:** Promote *independent voices* by supporting the development of editorially-independent media outlets and empowering Moldovans to present their own perspectives more effectively (Incorporates CDCS DO1)

**Management Objective 1:** Enhance the long-term *safety and security* of all Mission personnel through the identification and acquisition of a site on which a New Embassy Compound (NEC) can be constructed.

**Management Objective 2:** Provide *safer working conditions* for Embassy personnel and improve routine/emergency communication capabilities by renovating chancery space and enhancing Embassy's telecommunications and radio infrastructure. Create a safe secondary means of egress with appropriate space to accommodate current staff and planned growth.

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**Management Objective 3:** Ensure adequate *human capital* to maintain aging Embassy facilities and infrastructure and to provide support services to the growing interagency presence implementing the Mission's Goals and Objectives.

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5

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

More effective, just governance and a population empowered to make their future here and hold leaders to account will *anchor Moldova as a bulwark on Europe's eastern frontier*. To get there, the Moldovan people will need to see reduced corruption, improved economic opportunity and more resilient democratic institutions. Long-term social grievances casting doubt on Moldova's chosen European path will also need to be addressed.

#### **Mission Goal 1: Reinforce Effective & Democratic Governance**

**Description and Linkages:** The Moldovan government must prove a more effective steward of resources and partner in securing Europe's frontier. Citizens deserve a government capable of effectively (and honestly) providing services and managing resources – basic requirements for prosperity and to be a useful European security partner. Continued reform, with a focus on implementation/service delivery and meaningful success in battling endemic corruption are needed to restore legitimacy in the eyes of the Moldovan people. The government must also sustain recent progress in the Transnistrian settlement process and securing Moldova's borders. The most effective weapon against Russian and other malign influence is demonstrating the value of Moldova's European path and deepened partnership with the West to its citizens.

**Mission Objective 1.1: More *effective government management and regulation* improves the business climate, public service delivery, and reduces perception of the government as an obstacle to prosperity.**

**Justification:** Moldova has had a mixed reform record, with vested interests and corruption negatively affecting public/private sectors, disaffecting its citizenry, and showcasing institutional weaknesses. U.S. assistance is closely tied to our support for Moldova's reform agenda, European integration, democratic governance, and spurred economic growth. Opportunities for improving Moldova's business climate include streamlined laws and regulations; greater public procurement transparency; improvement in electronic commerce and trade; improved competitiveness, transparency and stability of the financial sector; decentralized governance to boost local effectiveness and accountability, and structures to ensure fairer competition.

**Mission Objective 1.2: Promote *accountable, just, and democratic governance* with a sustained focus on battling corruption, promoting media pluralism, reforming law enforcement and the justice sector, and protecting marginalized/vulnerable populations.**

**Justification:** Entrenched endemic corruption and low public confidence in the justice sector undermine European integration and a stable, prosperous country. Law enforcement entities, the prosecution service, the judiciary and legal professions retain Soviet-era structures and

practices. Comprehensive reform can better serve Moldovan citizens and improve the rule of law. The lack of independent media hinders efforts to expose corruption and hold officials to account, facilitating the atmosphere of impunity for vested interests. The June 2018 judicial invalidation of the Chisinau mayoral election starkly highlighted political influence over the judiciary. Greater public confidence in these institutions will promote investment and encourage Moldovans to build a future here. A more resilient justice sector will also discourage transnational organized crime. Modernizing vital rule of law entities will help speed Moldova's transition towards the European Union. Activities to support this goal include training for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers, capacity-development support for vital institutional reforms, and technical assistance/equipment donations.

**Mission Objective 1.3: Moldova is an *effective partner in European and international security* and securing its borders, preventing the proliferation of WMD and the illicit transfer of related materials through its commitment to: the Transnistrian settlement process, developing the capabilities of its Armed Forces, and securing its borders.**

**Justification:** The Transnistrian settlement process made significant progress since late 2017 with increased political commitment. Maintaining this progress is important as it reduces the risk of political instability, improves border security and weakens Russian influence. Improved security includes supporting the sustainable development and professionalization of Moldova's armed forces in alignment with U.S. priorities.

## **Mission Goal 2: Empower the Moldovan People**

**Description and Linkages:** Moldovans ultimately decide Moldova's future – and they are the key for expanding economic opportunity, creating accountability, and challenging corruption and malign influences in society. Entrepreneurs and private sector development will build productive businesses, create jobs, and tie Moldova to Europe and the world through trade. Strong civil society and independent media voices are critical elements in creating accountability and countering the influence of propaganda and disinformation.

**Mission Objective 2.1: Generate *economic opportunity* through increased investment, trade, and private sector engagement.**

**Justification:** Moldova is making strides in building a strong, diverse and export-oriented economy, with improved competitiveness and efficiency in key industries. U.S. assistance works with the private sector to improve productivity and enhance Moldovan business product and service quality, making them more competitive domestically and abroad. We are supporting the development of a high-quality workforce, innovative industry excellence centers, consolidating domestic markets/building new export markets, and catalyzing private/public investment to promote innovation and new technologies. Combined with structural reforms, these initiatives will create jobs, reduce outward migration, and improve the economic well-being of all Moldovans.



**Mission Objective 2.2: Partner with civil society to *reinforce citizen engagement* in demanding accountable governance that is broadly inclusive and ensures citizen rights to information that is unbiased and accurate.**

**Justification:** Civil society holds continued promise in Moldova’s democratic development; Many Moldovan CSOs demonstrate a strong commitment to reform and a clear understanding of the difficulties to be addressed. However, the sector is not self-sustaining or largely capable of independent development. USG assistance supports a range of capacity building, including hands-on technical assistance, mentoring, and consultancy facilitate their engagement with constituents, the public, and the media. Our efforts also help CSOs improve their internal governance, financial management, procurement, and fundraising abilities. Finally, the USG supports CSO advocacy for legal and regulatory reforms to help them grow and become more independent. Altogether, our work will result in better governed, more accountable, and more sustainable CSOs.

**Mission Objective 2.3: Promote *independent voices* by supporting the development of editorially-independent media outlets and empowering Moldovans to present their own perspectives more broadly and more effectively**

**Justification:** Support independent media development and sustainability to provide timely, objective and accurate information to expose corruption and propaganda.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1: Enhance the long-term *safety and security* of all Mission personnel through the identification and acquisition of a site on which a New Embassy Compound (NEC) can be constructed.**

**Justification:** The acquisition of land for an NEC is vital towards providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of diplomacy in Moldova. Once land is acquired, the next steps towards constructing an NEC in Moldova can take place, and upon completion this will safeguard U.S. personnel and information appropriately.

**Management Objective 2: Provide *safer working conditions* for Embassy personnel and improve the routine and emergency communication Mission capabilities by renovating chancery space and enhancing Embassy telecommunications/radio infrastructure. Create a safe secondary egress and appropriate space to accommodate current staff and planned Mission growth.**

**Justification:** The Chancery building is old, outdated, and does not meet a number of requirements pertaining to safety and security. The stairwell project will provide an appropriate means to traverse between the first and second floor of the Chancery as well as direct access to the roof. This is essential from a safety and security standpoint. A number of U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) and Locally Employed (LE) staff work in buildings that were designed to be temporary but have become permanent fixtures at Post. These office spaces lack appropriate authorization from the Department and should be relocated as soon as possible to maximize the security of Mission personnel. The Service CAC must be upgraded to be in compliance with various FAM/FAH and Department requirements. Once upgraded, this will provide a more secure entrance and exit to the Embassy compound and improve security for Mission personnel. The TSU is necessary to bolster Embassy security measures and will improve security for Mission personnel.

**Management Objective 3: Ensure adequate *human capital* to maintain aging Embassy facilities and infrastructure and to provide support services to the growing interagency presence implementing the Mission's Goals and Objectives.**

**Justification:** To ensure support services are not overwhelmed, closely monitor staffing levels and ensure appropriate ICASS support platforms are in place prior to creating any new positions. The Chancery is at maximum capacity and no additional desks should be added until an NEC is constructed. This should help to improve security at the Chancery.