



Integrated Country Strategy

Papua New Guinea, Solomon
Islands, and Vanuatu

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities 2

2. Mission Strategic Framework 4

3. Mission Goals and Objectives 5

4. Management Objectives 10

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Working within the Indo-Pacific strategy, the Mission's overarching goals are inclusive growth through the promotion of market-based economics and strengthened rule of law in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands. By pursuing these goals, the Mission will create more opportunities for U.S. business, protect U.S. citizens, and enhance regional security, including freedom of the seas and skies. Strong American action and more effective government institutions will mitigate the growing influence of China, encourage positive democratic development, and help countries tackle emerging infectious diseases. Our on-the-ground presence allows us to advocate for U.S. policies and positions and to reassure governments that we will continue to uphold the rules-based order in the region. Consistent and adroit public diplomacy articulates U.S. interests and informs local citizens of our desire to remain reliable friends while promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu account for 70% of the Pacific Islands Countries (PIC) population and over 60% of their GDP. Papua New Guinea is home to the region's largest American investment (ExxonMobil's \$19 billion, PNG LNG project) and sits astride vital sea lanes. It is the only Pacific Island country that is part of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and the only ASEAN Dialogue Partner from the PICs. PNG increasingly sees itself as a leader in the Pacific region and a bridge between Asia and the Pacific, and its 2018 hosting of APEC will help to cement that position. Through our partnership with the Foreign Commercial Service, we will work to level the playing field for American companies and American products. We will advocate for American businesses in PNG and encourage others to consider doing business in our three countries.

The U.S. and PNG share important historical and commercial links, people-to-people ties, and defense partnerships. However, PNG's democracy is characterized by weak political parties and a nascent civil society. The country lacks the institutional strength and professional civil service to combat pervasive state corruption.

The Mission aims to enact positive change in PNG by engaging with and supporting those people and institutions who endeavor to improve governance in the country. In 2019, the autonomous region of Bougainville will hold a referendum on independence from PNG, providing an opportunity for the Mission to support peaceful and democratic outcomes.

We also seek to deepen our security cooperation with the country to ensure that the U.S. and our close allies remain security partners of choice for PNG through expansion of IMET and small project funding as well as opening a Defense Attaché Office in Port Moresby. Health programming in Papua New Guinea is having an outsized impact, serving as a model for care and an example of the U.S. government's ongoing commitment to promoting sustainable development. Our Women's Forums, and focus on gender equality, are helping to improve living conditions for women in all three countries. And finally, we are seeking to build community resilience to natural disasters, both catastrophic and slow-moving.

In Solomon Islands, the upcoming retirement of our long-serving and very effective Consular Agent will leave a gap that will be difficult to fill. The country's recovery since it was overtaken by civil unrest from 1998 to 2003 has been remarkable, and our ability to maintain influence has largely been driven by the physical presence of the Consular Agency. In order to maintain the same level of influence, access and assistance, the Mission will need to make additional efforts in Solomon Islands. Similarly in Vanuatu, the lack of a full-time diplomatic presence challenges our ability to maintain U.S. influence and work for desired outcomes. As reflected herein, our team will continue to engage with the people of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu through social media, phone and electronic communication, and frequent visits. In line with U.S. priorities in the Indo-Pacific region, we must also consider both traditional and innovative ways of maintaining strong commercial, security, and educational links, including the potential for opening new U.S. Embassies in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Sustained and Inclusive Economic Growth and Prosperity

Mission Objective 1.1: Advance economic governance reforms, ensuring a level playing field for U.S. companies, while promoting free, fair, and reciprocal trade practices

Mission Objective 1.2: Strengthen public health capacity to achieve more sustainable health outcomes

Mission Objective 1.3: Increase environmental resilience in Pacific Island countries

Mission Objective 1.4: Support programs and policies that allow women to be more safe, more secure, and to play an increasing role in economic and civic life

Mission Goal 2: A Rules-Based Order that Advances Democratic Governance and Builds Civil Society

Mission Objective 2.1: Assist governments to promote strong governance practices and democratic institutions that are resilient, transparent, accountable, responsive and respectful of human rights and religious freedom

Mission Objective 2.2: Support the emergence of an informed, educated and empowered civil society that has space to advance democratic development, human rights, religious freedom, and social cohesion.

Mission Goal 3: Enhanced Regional Security and Protection of U.S. citizens

Mission Objective 3.1: Increase security capabilities and cooperation with security forces, including local police, to support and promote a rules-based order in the region, including in the maritime and cyber domains

Mission Objective 3.2: Expand consular outreach to U.S. citizens and visa applicants

Management Objective 1: Improve operational effectiveness in management processes and build human resources capacity.

Management Objective 2: Transition to a New Embassy Compound (NEC) and upgrade Government-owned residences

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 Sustained and Inclusive Economic Growth and Prosperity

Description and Linkages: Promoting U.S. goods and services in all three countries contributes directly to Pillar 2 of the National Security Strategy of stimulating American prosperity. This larger goal is directly aligned with Goal 3 of the EAP and USAID/ASIA Joint Regional Plan, which recognizes that promoting healthy and resilient communities where women are allowed to play an equal role will increase regional stability and increase opportunities for U.S. companies. Health outcomes and statistics on gender-based violence in all three countries point to a great need for U.S. leadership and investment to help improve conditions.

Mission Objective 1.1 Advance economic governance reforms, ensuring a level playing field for U.S. companies, while promoting free, fair, and reciprocal trade practices

Justification: Papua New Guinea is already home to the successful \$19 billion ExxonMobilled PNG LNG project, and there is additional potential for natural resource development in the country. The anticipated recovery in world commodity prices and upcoming natural gas and mining projects will present opportunities for U.S. companies in the extractive industries and auxiliary services. An associated uptick in the overall economy will mean additional consumer spending for U.S. consumer goods. In order to ensure that U.S. companies are positioned to be successful in all three countries, the Mission will advocate for fair and equitable trading practices, a regulatory environment that is favorable to U.S. companies, and strengthened host government capacity to address security and human rights issues that might affect U.S. investment. Should this objective not be achieved, corruption and non-tariff barriers may frustrate on-going or potential investment and trade opportunities, particularly for U.S. companies.

Mission Objective 1.2 Strengthen public health capacity to achieve more sustainable health outcomes

Justification: The Mission is dedicated to strengthening public health capacity in the nations of PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu so they may become more productive and economically stable. These nations consistently have poor health indicators and health systems that are inadequate to meet the needs of the population. In PNG, in particular, the leading causes of mortality are perinatal conditions; pneumonia, malaria, tuberculosis (TB), meningitis, heart diseases, diarrhea and diseases of the digestive system. PNG has the largest number of people living with HIV (48,000) in the Pacific. HIV is concentrated in the Highlands Region and in the National Capital District (NCD). In four Highlands provinces, HIV prevalence is increasing and remains above 1%. In the NCD, HIV prevalence is 1.52% (an increase from 1.29% in 2016). HIV prevalence among key populations is much higher. Recent data from three cities - Port Moresby, Lae, and Mt. Hagen - showed high HIV prevalence rates of 14.9%, 11.9% and 19.6% respectively among key populations. PNG has the highest TB prevalence in the Western Pacific

Region (and 10th highest globally), with an estimated incidence in 2015 of 432 per 100,000, according to the World Health Organization. Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is also a growing burden. The proportion of TB patients screened for HIV progressively increased from 8% in 2008 to 36% in 2015. In 2018, the World Health Organization re-listed Papua New Guinea as a polio outbreak country, prompting Australia to impose disease-related travel restrictions on PNG residents. Risks associated with not achieving this objective include disease-related disruptions to travel and trade, diversion of scarce national resources to mitigate the impact of human illnesses, and a heightened human toll among vulnerable populations.

Mission Objective 1.3 Increase environmental resilience in Pacific Island countries

Justification: PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu are already experiencing a host of environmental challenges, including sea level rise, erratic rainfall patterns, increasing storm frequency and intensity, and damage to coral reefs. Communities are also threatened by the unsustainable use and exploitation of natural resources through such practices as illegal and unsustainable logging practices. U.S. government programming, already funded by USAID, will work with government partners to draft and implement policies to achieve adaptation goals, access more international climate change adaptation funding, and improve capacity to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. In PNG specifically, U.S. government resources will help address the threats and drivers of biodiversity loss by improving the capacity of key stakeholders to better manage natural resources. Should this objective not be achieved, the three countries' natural resources base will erode, national and community resilience in the face of environmental change will weaken, and the scientific, cultural and economic benefits of biodiversity will be lost to the three countries and the world.

Mission Objective 1.4 Support programs and policies that allow women to be more safe, more secure, and to play an increasing role in economic and civic life in Pacific Island countries

Justification: Gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV) are rife in all three countries. In a 2015 World Health Organization report, approximately 70% of women in PNG reported that they had experienced rape or sexual assault in their lifetime. Numbers are similarly dire in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. Due to stigma, fear of retribution, and limited trust in authorities, most women do not report sexual or domestic violence. Of five countries in the world with no women elected to public office, two (PNG and Vanuatu) are covered by Embassy Port Moresby. Supporting women candidates, undertaking public awareness campaigns to encourage voters to support women, and urging the government to enact measures to increase women's political participation are all strategies Post will pursue to try to reverse this worrying trend. Risks associated with not achieving this objective include heightened difficulty in confronting crime and human rights violations rooted in gender discrimination, economic loss associated with the failure to incorporate women into the national economy, and a public policy agenda that gives short shrift to issues affecting women and families.

Mission Goal 2 A Rules-Based Order that Advances Democratic Governance and Builds Civil Society

Description and Linkages: The crux of the Indo-Pacific strategy is pursuing a free and open Indo-Pacific, where all nations can live in prosperity, security, and liberty. This will only be possible through the promotion of rules-based systems within these nations, where democratic institutions respond to the needs of an empowered civil society. This mission goal also supports Goal 5 of the EAP and USAID/ASIA Joint Regional Strategy.

Mission Objective 2.1 Assist governments to promote strong governance practices and democratic institutions that are resilient, transparent, accountable, responsive and respectful of human rights and religious freedom.

Justification: We seek to help Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu become stable U.S. partners and full participants in the international community. The countries have young democracies, weak institutions, a shaky commitment to respect for human rights and little citizen input into decision making. Irregularities in the electoral system have undermined government credibility and led to increasing citizen frustration. Through international initiatives like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and Open Government Partnership, businesses can partner with government and civil society to promote accountability and transparency. The Bougainville referendum on independence, currently scheduled for June 2019, will offer another opportunity for the Mission to engage on an issue of grave importance to regional stability. Should this objective not be achieved, public confidence in government could be undermined, the likelihood of missteps by the government in dealing with alienated groups would grow, and vulnerability to corruption will grow.

Mission Objective 2.2 Support the emergence of an informed, educated and empowered civil society that has space to advance democratic development, human rights, religious freedom and social cohesion.

Justification: Political parties and public institutions have a narrow understanding of citizen priorities and offer only minimal opportunities for public input into the policy process. Respect for human rights, dignity for all and tolerance for diverse viewpoints is lacking. Faith-based groups are strong in service delivery, but other special interest groups need more funding and encouragement to play a larger role in society and government. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include growing restiveness among sidelined communities and a distorted and unresponsive public policy debate.

Mission Goal 3 Enhanced Regional Security and Protection of U.S. citizens

Description and Linkages: This mission goal aligns with Goal 1 of the EAP and USAID/ASIA Joint Regional Strategy and Pillar 1 of the National Security Strategy. Enhancing regional security in

the three countries covered by Embassy Port Moresby requires that we devote more resources to partnering with host country security organizations. Through ship visits, training opportunities, and high-level engagement, we will ensure that the U.S. remains a security partner of choice in the region. In addition, our work to expand consular outreach to U.S. citizens resident or traveling in the three countries will help ensure that consular services are protecting and promoting the needs of U.S. citizens who reside in the three countries.

Mission Objective 3.1 Increase security capabilities and cooperation with security forces, including local police, to support and promote a rules-based order in the region, including in the maritime and cyber domains

Justification: The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the Regional Security Office, and other law enforcement agencies will continue to engage with the security and law enforcement forces of each of the three countries. The Mission expects that exercises and training, including shiprider opportunities with host nation security forces, will reinforce ties with our Pacific Island partners while enhancing their capabilities. The three countries have limited assets and information to effectively counter transnational threats, especially in their vast EEZs, where they encounter illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and illicit trafficking. The U.S. military consults with Australia's defense establishment on virtually all defense-related matters in the South Pacific. With regard to aviation, the Mission seeks to ensure that that countries are a net security contributor in the region by securing international flights from their airports and meeting basic ICAO requirements. The Mission will help provide opportunities to share aviation security best practices across the region. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include increased vulnerability to transnational crime, a vulnerable transportation network, reduced effectiveness and higher costs in developing a regional security approach, and greater interest in the region by countries seeking alternative security arrangements.

Mission Objective 3.2 Expand consular outreach to U.S. citizens and visa applicants

Justification: Protecting the welfare of Americans residing in or visiting the three countries covered by U.S. Embassy Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) remains our highest priority. Managing a consular district this size is challenging, and a major share of travel resources go towards regular American Citizen Services (ACS) visits to the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. An estimated 3,000 Americans reside within the tri-national Consular borders, and the numbers of both U.S. visitors to the region, and locals travelling to the United States continue to grow each year. The Embassy in Papua New Guinea and the Consular Agency in the Solomon Islands serve the American residents and visitors by documenting citizenship, facilitating passport renewals, processing citizenship applications, providing notarial services, and preparing for and providing emergency services in times of disasters and health emergencies. Through effective adjudication of over 2000 visas annually, to both locals and over 45 different third country nationals, the Embassy extends its concern for the safety of American citizens to our own borders. To protect the integrity of the visa function, ensure reciprocity of services, and comply with applicable legislation, the Embassy will

work with the host government to facilitate the return of host government nationals subject to deportation from the United States, align visa fee and periods of validity standards, and adhere to information-sharing and identity-management protocols. Should this objective not be achieved, U.S. businesses, universities, mission organizations and individuals will be hindered in their promotion of economic activity, delivery of services or conveyance of American values.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 Improve operational effectiveness in management processes and build human resources capacity

Justification: Port Moresby has historically been challenged with high turnover in local staff, inconsistencies in conforming to Department guidelines in our Management processes and an inability to achieve uniform service standards in our customer service performance metrics. By moving to merit-based compensation and increasing proficiencies in the Department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and performance metrics, we can build greater capacity and resiliency in our local ranks. We can also increase the effectiveness of our supervisory staff by recruiting more experienced mid-level officers and pursuing more Third Country National (TCN) positions. Lastly, by continuing to improve and reshape our processes to be more compliant to Department and ICASS standards and streamline them with new IT capabilities, we will provide a more reliable, consistent and transparent support structure to assist the Mission in attaining its goals and objectives. Leveraging metrics and educating our internal service providers and customers on their responsibilities in our ICASS processes will greatly improve Management's responsiveness to Mission requirements. Should this objective not be achieved, the Mission risks diverting precious resources into re-creating staff capabilities at the expense of investment in modernization, organizational resiliency, and customer satisfaction.

Management Objective 2 Transition to a New Embassy Compound (NEC) and Upgrade Government-owned Residences

Justification: OBO continues to make progress on the construction of the New Embassy Compound with full occupancy slated for late 2019. The move from our current location into the NEC will be Management's most important endeavor in 2019. The NEC will provide state-of-the-art facilities that will allow the Mission to function at its full potential, without the distractions and limitations that exist in our current undersized and outdated facility. The NEC will engender a greater sense of pride in our community, increase the security of our workforce and property and improve the efficacy and efficiency of our operations. The Embassy maintains three government owned residential properties: the Chief of Mission Residence (CMR), the Deputy Chief of Mission Residence (DCR) and the Staff Compound. All three properties are dated (circa 1990s) and require substantial renovations to bring them up to modern standards. Post will continue to work with OBO to find a replacement for the CMR and pursue renovations at the Staff Compound to modernize the living spaces and amenities to be more consistent with other properties in post's housing pool and the city. Should this objective not be achieved, post's ability to support a growing range of interested agencies, attract talent, and deepen our relationship with the three countries will be compromised.