



Integrated Country Strategy

RWANDA

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities	1
2. Mission Strategic Framework	3
3. Mission Goals and Objectives	4
4. Management Objectives	13

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi ethnic group, Rwanda has risen from a state of collapse to rebirth as a country that invests both foreign assistance and domestic revenue in socio-economic development and aspires to attain upper-middle income status by 2035 and high-income status by 2050. The Government of Rwanda (GOR) has achieved massive gains in public health, security force professionalization, economic growth and climate adaptation, and effective governance. Rwanda is a test case for how a results-driven and evidence-based approach to development, supported by international assistance and the private sector, can foster marked gains.

At the same time, many observers have raised serious concerns about aspects of Rwanda's governance model related to democracy, human rights, and civil liberties. There are also questions about whether Rwanda's relatively closed political climate is dynamic enough to ensure accountability and address the challenges the country continues to face.

The United States is Rwanda's largest bilateral donor and our relationship is close but complicated. Our investments in health, peace and security, the protection of American citizens, economic growth, education, and democracy and governance continue to build institutions, form partnerships, and increase shared prosperity. All of the U.S. government's (USG) goals, priorities, and efforts in Rwanda are designed to improve the health and functioning of Rwandan institutions and systems. Moreover, progress on these goals is interrelated and interconnected, and for that reason, the Embassy does not explicitly prioritize them. That said, our ICS strategy starts with our public health goal, which is appropriate given the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reality that the bulk of our Foreign Assistance goes into health-related programs. More broadly, the mantra of promoting a healthy nation and bilateral relations – across all ICS priorities – is overarching.

Looking forward, U.S. engagement faces an array of opportunities and challenges. For example, U.S. assistance has supported tremendous advances in the health sector leaving Rwanda better prepared to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 and its emerging variants. U.S. financial and technical support for laboratory testing has enabled Rwanda to detect and swiftly respond to case clusters. U.S. vaccine donations and technical assistance helped Rwanda become one of only six countries in Africa to reach the WHO target of 40 percent vaccination by the end of 2021. This builds upon long-term U.S. investments in Rwanda's health sector that have helped reduce malaria incidence by more than 50 percent and assisted Rwanda in making tremendous progress towards achieving epidemic control of HIV/AIDS. In sum, because of U.S. assistance, millions of Rwandans are healthier and free from disease, and the systems that provide these health services are stronger and more financially sustainable.

Among other challenges, the August 2020 arrest of a high-profile U.S. lawful permanent resident (LPR) has centered global attention on the government's history of harassment, arrest, and abuse of political opponents, human rights advocates, journalists, and individuals perceived

to pose a threat to government control and social order. President Paul Kagame's 2017 re-election to a third seven-year term was marked by widespread irregularities during voting and the tabulation process. Constitutional amendments adopted in 2015 paved the way for Kagame to remain in office until 2034, when he will turn 77.

The Embassy's strong interagency team benefits from the good infrastructure afforded by our Embassy Compound, which was completed in 2008 and provides accessibility to persons with disabilities. Crime rates, while trending upward in recent years, remain relatively low for Central Africa. This and other quality of life factors have contributed to a high tour of duty extension rate among American officers. Still, given the broad array of U.S. foreign policy objectives with respect to Rwanda, prioritization of effort is a challenge in relation to our limited staffing levels. We can do more to improve and promote diversity, equality, inclusion, and accessibility, and need to deploy recruitment strategies to hire more people with disabilities. We also need new investments in technology and physical infrastructure to ensure we can best implement this strategy's Mission Goals and retain the Embassy's status as a top employer in Rwanda.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Strengthen public health to support Global Health Security.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats boosted. (CDCS DO1)
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Sustainability and capacity of the health system to deliver quality services increased while morbidity and mortality reduced. (CDCS DO1)

Mission Goal 2: Advance regional peace and security and the protection of U.S. citizens.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Regional stability and the United States' fight against [emerging] transnational threats supported by Rwanda.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Safety of U.S. citizens in Rwanda and at home enhanced.

Mission Goal 3: Increase economic growth and strengthen human capital.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Rwanda's resilience and self-sufficiency fortified through inclusive green growth, trade, and private sector investment. (CDCS DO3)
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Workforce skill and education levels improved. (CDCS DO2)

Mission Goal 4: Promote democracy, good governance, and rule of law.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Citizen participation deepened by strengthening representative institutions, civil society, and civic education. (CDCS DO4)
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Transparent governance supported to expand rule of law and respect for human rights and civil liberties. (CDCS DO4)

Management Objective 1: Invest in workforce talent development and diversity, equality, inclusion, accessibility, and mental health wellness.

Management Objective 2: Leverage technology to optimize resources, strengthen internal controls, allow for mobile diplomacy, improve security, and reinforce the quality of ICASS service delivery.

Management Objective 3: Augment key building infrastructure areas for a safe, secure, climate-friendly environment to work and live.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Strengthen public health to support Global Health Security.

Description | A public health threat anywhere is a public health threat everywhere. To protect the health and wellbeing of American citizens abroad and at home, Rwanda must be able to effectively prevent, detect, and respond to global health threats. To do that, the Rwandan health system must be able to provide care and support to all its citizens in a sustainable manner. If the United States can support the GOR to ensure they have a resilient and sustainable health system capable of providing quality health services to all Rwandans, then American interests will be served as well as that of the Rwandan population.

Objective 1.1 | Capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats boosted.

- **Justification |** The COVID-19 pandemic shows an isolated public health threat can rapidly paralyze and affect the global community. Individual countries need to adopt the principles of the Global Health Security Agenda (GSHA). A reliable, responsive world-wide alert network will only emerge if the individual country's health system is strengthened. U.S. assistance supports the goals and principles of the GSHA. Post will continue to support programs for improved surveillance of known and emerging health conditions, capacity building, a sustainable supply chain, and data use for decision making.
- **Linkages |** This objective is aligned with the 2021 Interim National Security Strategy, the draft State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy (11/2021) Objective 4.1, and with USAID's 2020-2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Objective 1 THRIVE. Additionally, this objective aligns with the draft State-USAID 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1.
- **Risks |** Rwanda and its neighboring countries have recently been exposed to serious health threats such as Ebola Hemorrhagic fevers, Rift Valley fevers, and COVID-19. Other emerging health threats may appear with the changing environment and the impact of global warming. It behooves the USG to remain vigilant and to properly invest in and develop these alert systems to avoid the occurrence of such disasters and to act swiftly when they appear. Failure to do so will likely result in loss of human life and serious economic hardship. Rwanda is not a GSHA priority country which limits the funding for Global Health Security efforts.

Objective 1.2 | Sustainability and capacity of the health system to deliver quality services increased while morbidity and mortality reduced.

- **Justification |** A key challenge to the health sector lies in the lack of sustainability of the current public health systems and commodity security. The USG approach strengthens governance and public financing of the health system through a more robust and financially sustainable Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) Scheme and increased mobilization of domestic resources for health. The USG has invested heavily in ensuring the quality of services for certain conditions (e.g., HIV/AIDS) provided at health facilities is of good standard, gaining the trust of the communities who access them. The USG supported the development/roll-out of information systems over the past decade and on-going investments are needed to ensure interoperability of existing data systems, improved usage of data systems, including developing and refining new data systems. While Rwanda made significant progress during the last decade in combatting diseases and expanding its health infrastructure, it still struggles with controlling certain conditions as evidenced by a flattening of downward curves of certain indicators (maternal mortality, infant mortality, malnutrition). Disseminating appropriate preventative health education messages is an important tool to educate the communities and encourage them to adopt healthier lifestyles. The USG partnership with the private sector to improve the provision of safe water and sanitation services, is a critical contribution to supporting Rwanda's journey to self-reliance. The approach to this Mission Objective includes improving human resource (HR) management; strengthening commodity security and supply chains; strengthening the GOR's capacity to respond to global health threats; and increasing the private sector's support for sustainable health care and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services; to enable the government to provide higher quality health services improving health outcomes.
- **Linkages |** This objective is aligned with the 2021 Interim National Security Strategy and with USAID/Rwanda's CDCS Development Objective 1 THRIVE. The objective further aligns with the interim Strategy's guidance to defend equal rights of all people — of women and girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals, indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and people of every ethnic background and religion.
- **Risks |** A health system heavily reliant on external support is only a short-term solution and cannot be sustained in the long term. A self-reliant system that generates income by collecting insurance fees and/or affordable user fees is a better approach. However, quality of services rendered is a key aspect for the population in order to use these facilities and pay user fees. If the services are of bad quality, the population is less likely to visit the health facilities and agree to pay fees resulting in a loss of revenue. This may result in underutilization of health facilities, delay care seeking, and the health system becoming increasingly dependent on external support. For example, the increasing rise of non-communicable diseases (e.g., diabetes, hypertension) will start to

have an impact on the health sector if healthy lifestyles are not being adopted. To counter this, maternal mortality, malnutrition, and vaccine-preventable diseases should be reduced to a minimum. Failure to do so will have a direct impact on society with more children who have lost their mother and poor development of malnourished children.

Mission Goal 2 | Advance regional peace and security and the protection of U.S. citizens.

Description | The U.S. Embassy collaborates with Rwanda to combat emerging transnational threats, to urge Rwanda to promote stability on the African continent by contributing to multilateral peacekeeping efforts, and to pursue harmonious relations with its neighbors. We partner with the Rwandan government to ensure the safety of U.S. citizens in Rwanda and to disrupt the travel of individuals who pose a risk to the United States. Our aim to bolster the international security order is carried out by enlisting Rwanda's support for key candidates and initiatives at multilateral organizations and by employing strategic communications to combat misinformation. Lastly, through a strategic communications program, our focus is to foster a local environment rich with positive dialogue about the United States and active in countering misinformation, better ensuring long-term protection of U.S. citizens at home through positive, friendly sentiment among the people and the GOR.

Objective 2.1 | Regional stability and the United States' fight against emerging transnational threats supported by Rwanda.

- **Justification |** Rwanda is an able and willing partner in countering terrorism and violent extremism, and in health issues like fighting COVID-19, Ebola, and other infectious diseases. Rwanda's military and police are highly capable, and Rwanda is the fourth largest contributor to global UN peacekeeping operations—a feat given the relative size of its population. The Embassy plans to expand existing areas of bilateral military-to-military and security sector cooperation even as we partner with Rwanda to combat emerging transnational threats like cybercrime. At the same time, recognizing Rwanda's strained ties with some of its neighbors often means limited regional cooperation on counterterrorism and other key security matters, we urge Rwanda to pursue harmonious relations in the region and abide by its international commitments. This includes engaging Rwanda, an active diplomatic actor in the region and on the continent, on opportunities for coordination on risks to both regional and global peace and security. Even as the Embassy strengthens U.S. partnerships with Rwanda and helps its security forces and justice sector to expand their capacity to respond to emerging threats, we push Rwanda's military and police to respect human rights and the rule of law. Our continued efforts to train, deploy, and sustain Rwanda's peacekeeping forces, with a particular focus on augmenting rapid-response capabilities

in UN peacekeeping operations grants us partnership opportunities. Moreover, Rwanda supports U.S.-backed candidates and initiatives and is well-placed to encourage other African countries to display similar openness.

The Embassy's leverage of this dynamic seeks to continue Rwanda's backing for key aspects of the United States' multilateral agenda and to reject attempts by antagonistic anti-democratic powers to erode existing international norms and institutions to the detriment of both our countries.

- **Linkages** | This objective draws from the White House's March 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the 2018 National Defense Strategy, and the 2018 National Military Strategy, as well as the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) Campaign Plan. This goal also aligns with the draft State-USAID 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan, the draft Africa Joint Regional Strategy (11/2021), and USAID/Rwanda's 2020-2025 CDCS.
- **Risks** | Remote and poorly governed spaces in the region continue to provide refuge to violent extremists and terrorist organizations. Weapons smuggling and other illegal smuggling into the region strengthens violent extremists and fuels regional instability. State fragility, corruption, poor economic governance, institutional weaknesses, unsustainable management of natural resources, and poverty place many of Rwanda's neighbors at a disadvantage in dealing with global and regional problems. Infectious diseases, including the COVID-19 pandemic, remain a particular threat, given continued weaknesses in African health systems. The U.S. ability to advance human rights, rule of law, and civilian control of the military is affected by the degree of partner country leadership and political will to enact reforms. Additionally, events in the United States over the past few years have potentially undermined our credibility in the region. Perceived failures in Afghanistan may undermine U.S. efforts to advance this objective. Fluctuations in our partnerships with host-country counterparts shaped by U.S. statutory requirements, policy differences, or evolving priorities negatively influence opportunities for productive engagement.

Objective 2.2 | Safety of U.S. citizens in Rwanda and at home enhanced.

- **Justification** | Around 7,500 U.S. citizens live and work in Rwanda, and prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. citizens made up a large portion of international tourists visiting the country. As Rwanda's economy emerges from the pandemic, the number of U.S. citizen residents and visitors is growing again. The Embassy seeks to ensure the safety of these U.S. citizens and members of the official Embassy community by enhancing our ability to provide comprehensive consular services. To achieve this objective, the Embassy conducts regular outreach to U.S. citizens, deploys effective messaging in times of crisis (coordinating with Rwandan authorities as needed), and builds relationships with relevant public and private Rwandan institutions. In line with the Embassy's aim of promoting people-to-people ties through two-way travel, trade, and investment, the Embassy offers efficient visa services to facilitate

legitimate travel. At the same time, through rigorous enforcement of U.S. immigration law, we identify prospective travelers who pose a risk to U.S. national security and prevent them from entering the United States. Another aspect of security for U.S. citizens at home is the sentiments of people and governments around the world towards our country and people, including in Rwanda. These sentiments are often the foundation of political

will to engage on issues pertinent to U.S. citizens' safety and security. To this end, the Embassy engages in strategic communications to increase positive sentiment about the United States in Rwanda and to counter misinformation.

- **Linkages** | This objective aligns with the White House's March 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the draft State-USAID 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan, and the draft Africa Joint Regional Strategy (11/2021).
- **Risks** | Despite progress across the region, events such as war, terrorism, and civil disturbance still occur and have impacts ranging from temporarily disrupting Embassy operations to threatening the physical safety of U.S. citizens in Rwanda. We also face risks from the disruption caused by natural disasters. Long-standing understaffing and long personnel gaps hinder the USG's ability to respond quickly and effectively.

Mission Goal 3 | Increase economic growth and strengthen human capital.

Description | U.S. government efforts to improve the investment climate in Rwanda, increase U.S.-Rwanda private sector ties, modernize agriculture, confront climate change, and mitigate risks through improved resiliency and self-sufficiency are key to achieving our strategy and align with White House priorities. In addition, increased learning outcomes, improved literacy, and expanded skill development opportunities for youth creates a new generation of Rwandans with the skills needed to propel their country toward its vision of achieving high-income country status by 2050. The Embassy's work fosters inclusive and sustained economic opportunities for all Rwandans and reduces hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. In doing so,

we will develop institutional capacities, increase adoption of climate smart and productivity enhancing technologies in the agri-business sector, foster employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth, women, and persons with disabilities, harness green energy resources, and take advantage of opportunities provided by regional integration to expand market-driven growth and support Rwanda's economic advancement. The Embassy is focused to increase literacy skills of boys and girls through grade three of primary education to build the systemic foundations to improve human capital in Rwanda. Collaborating with the GOR nationwide, our goal is to improve the quality of early grade literacy instruction by building the capacity of teachers and equipping classrooms with learning materials. To accomplish this, we will address education systems management at national and individual school levels and involve parents and community members more directly in education governance.

Objective 3.1 | Rwanda's resilience and self-sufficiency fortified through inclusive green growth, trade, and private sector investment.

- **Justification** | Rwanda has sustained an average annual growth rate of over seven percent for more than two decades. The primary driver of this impressive economic growth is massive public sector investment in large-scale infrastructure. But this has not always been inclusive growth, nor has it generated off-farm employment, accelerated poverty reduction, or sustained structural transformation. An estimated 70 percent of Rwandans still gain their livelihoods from subsistence-oriented agriculture and the sector accounts for more than 30 percent of GDP, but farming is a precarious enterprise with increasing land scarcity, growing fragmentation, and exposure to climatic shocks that have compromised productivity gains. Agricultural wage laborers with little or no access to land are a growing and vulnerable rural population, and the number of rural microentrepreneurs and informal service providers have shrunk. To sustain its growth trajectory, recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, address climate change, and achieve its own ambitious development targets, Rwanda must continue to embrace green growth, improve conditions for private sector investment, modernize agriculture, and expand opportunities for entrepreneurship. Agriculture remains the principal source of employment for Rwandans over the life of this strategy. Agriculture's contribution needs to shift from primarily supplying commodities for domestic use to producing higher-value and value-added goods as an integral part of food supply chains linked to regional and international markets.
- **Linkages** | This objective aligns with the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the State-USAID 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan and State Africa Bureau Strategy, and the USAID/Rwanda 2020-2025 CDCS Development Objective 3 – PROSPER: Increased inclusive and sustainable private sector-driven growth.
- **Risks** | Regional instability and cross-border conflicts increase. New or continuing health threats such as Ebola and COVID-19 could have negative effects on economic growth and regional integration. Climate change and pest-induced shocks threaten agricultural livelihoods. Macroeconomic risks and global economic trends such as commodity price declines, inflation, and exchange rates. Many U.S. companies report although it is easy to start a business in Rwanda, it can be difficult to operate a profitable or sustainable business due to a variety of hurdles and constraints. These include the country's landlocked geography and resulting high freight transport costs, a small domestic market, human capital shortages, limited access to affordable financing, and payment delays with government contracts. After Rwanda implemented higher tariffs on imports of secondhand clothing and footwear in 2016, the USG partially suspended African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) benefits for apparel products from Rwanda, effective May 2018. Many other Rwandan exports to the United States are still eligible for trade preferences under the Generalized System of Preferences and AGOA.

Objective 3.2 | Workforce skill and education levels improved.

- **Justification |** A nation with an educated and skilled workforce supports and creates rich economic opportunities for all. The poor quality of the basic education service delivery in Rwanda undermines the formation of the necessary educated and skilled workforce Rwanda needs to meet its development goals and to compete in the regional and global knowledge economy. Research has demonstrated this causal link between literacy outcomes, basic education quality, and economic growth. A nation's economic prospects follow the learning curve of its children, and a 10 percent increase in the share of students reaching basic literacy translates into a 0.3 percentage point higher annual growth rate of that country. Economic growth requires an investment in workforce development through the provision of education for children who constitute tomorrow's labor force. Post will implement foreign assistance programs to improve education outcomes in literacy at the primary school level, invest to improve instruction and learning of the English language, and provide youth with employable skills to open employment opportunities to support their enthusiasm for productive participation in Rwanda's economic development. Gender and disability perspectives are integrated into these investments to ensure an inclusive economic development for all Rwandans.
- **Linkages |** This goal reflects the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2, Objective 2.2; the USAID/Rwanda 2020-2025 CDCS Development Objective 2 LEARN and 3 THRIVE; and the State-USAIDAF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 4.
- **Risks |** If COVID-19 significantly hinders the timing and methods of data collection and the context for our results, then our ability to accurately gauge learning outcomes and the impact of our programming as originally intended will be affected. If major education system changes continue to be made outside of strategic planning processes, they will diminish our ability to achieve intended results as they place additional strain on teachers and local systems to adjust. If prolonged and possible later school closures occur due to COVID-19, then the limited reach of distance learning coupled with the impacts of other COVID-19 related stresses on households will further exacerbate inequalities in learning, especially for Rwanda's poorest, more rural leaders, and for children with disabilities.

If climate change and natural disasters are not mitigated, their shocks will have negative impacts on learning. If the youth bulge and underemployment are not addressed, this could present risk to political stability, further impacting access to education and employment opportunities. The GOR recently required that English be used as a medium of instruction in all levels of education. However, teachers' levels of English are very low and therefore limit effective teaching and learning. The sector also experiences frequent turnover of ministry and local government staff, and this disrupts continuity and institutional capacity. The GOR noted recently there is ongoing, unmitigated absence of students from schools at all levels, exacerbated by the pandemic and other hardships. Various barriers in the school environment will hinder teachers from

applying their improved capacity for instruction. If budget allocations to the education sector are not sufficient, there will be a lack of relevant resources to support children with disabilities or literacy related special education needs. If there are continued concerns over damage or materials going missing, students and teachers will be prevented from accessing reading materials, thus bearing a negative impact on continuous learning.

Mission Goal 4 | Promote democracy, good governance, and rule of law.

Description | The Embassy supports initiatives that contribute to a political climate reflecting U.S. democratic principles, ensuring political participation, good governance, and the promotion of human rights and civil liberties for all Rwandans. Through these efforts, the Embassy will develop the capacity of political parties, civil society, the justice sector, and the media to contribute to Rwanda's stable democratic development, while calling on the government to make space for and invest in such efforts itself, particularly in view of Rwanda's 2024 elections. The Embassy will also continue to deepen its relationships with USG exchange alumni and pursue new opportunities for people-to-people exchanges to strengthen voices advocating for democratic values.

Objective 4.1 | Citizen participation deepened by strengthening representative institutions, civil society, and civic education.

- **Justification |** If citizens can participate in government decision-making at all levels, then Rwanda will become a more democratic and resilient society, fostering durable peace and development. Inclusive and substantive dialogue and understanding among citizens, advocacy groups, and the government are necessary for developing an understanding of differences, reconciliation with the past, and consensus on solutions to problems that affect all Rwandans. Post will leverage the government's stated interest in civic engagement to encourage greater participation and consultation with civil society in decision-making. Post will call for protections of political participation and increased capacity for those involved in political processes, invest in media literacy and civic education, encourage more participatory planning with local populations, and support improved community relationships and cohesion, mindful of the need to place emphasis on promoting equality, inclusion, and empowerment for marginalized groups, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, or LGBTQI+ persons.
- **Linkages |** This goal reflects the U.S. Interim National Security Strategy's priority on good governance and democratic institutions. It supports the draft State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.3, the draft State-USAID Africa Joint Regional Strategy Goals 3.1 and 3.3, the draft State Africa Bureau Strategy (11/2021) Goals 3.1 and 3.3, and USAID/Rwanda's 2020-2025 CDCS Development Objective 4 ENGAGE, Intermediate Results 4.1 and 4.3.

- **Risks** | The primary risk to achieving this objective is any constraints from the government on independent (and at times critical) voices. For example, civil society organizations, social media users, and journalists often report pressure to conform to government positions.

Objective 4.2 | Transparent governance supported to expand rule of law and respect for human rights and civil liberties.

- **Justification** | Transparency and inclusivity are fundamental to a government maintaining the trust and consent of its people. By encouraging transparency into government operations and ensuring those implementing the government's decisions include individuals of all backgrounds, the people will gain greater confidence in the fairness of the government's policies and their implementation in a manner which fosters clean government and counters corruption. An important aspect of rule of law is transparency and inclusivity in elections and government transitions. Post seeks to encourage transparent, inclusive elections in future years to facilitate the peaceful transitions of government officials within a stable, democratic, multi-party system to consolidate Rwanda's economic progress and ensure its continued leadership in the region. It will also undertake to strengthen judicial independence by building the capacity of judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and other law enforcement professionals to conduct their functions according to the highest standards. Further, Rwanda's 2021 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) provided an opportunity for Rwanda to engage on some of its most important issues with respect to human rights and civil liberties, including citizens' constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of association, expression, and access to information. The GOR accepted many UPR recommendations, but also declined to do so in a number of other areas. We will continue to advocate the GOR to respect human rights, civil liberties, political freedoms, and media independence. Post will continue to advance internet freedom as a component of human rights, given the rapid development of digital media and the importance of digital tools and communications in political and media activities.
- **Linkages** | This goal reflects the U.S. Interim National Security Strategy's priority on good governance and democratic institutions. It supports the draft State-USAID 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Strategic, the draft State-USAID Africa Joint Regional Strategy (11/2021) Goals 3.1 and 3.4, and USAID/Rwanda's 2020-2025 CDCD Development Objective 4 ENGAGE, IR 4.2.
- **Risks** | The primary risks to achieving this objective are GOR resistance to transparency on government processes and government actions affecting the openness of future elections. Additional risks include resistance to addressing questions related to human rights or civil liberties.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Invest in workforce talent development and diversity, equality, inclusion, and accessibility, and mental health wellness.

- **Justification** | Making critical investments in talent management is a key management priority. People are Embassy Kigali's greatest asset. The Embassy's adoption of innovative strategies to recruit, retain, train, and energize the best available talent creates a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive candidate pool, including persons with disabilities. This approach also ensures our workforce has the right tools and skills to meet ever-evolving demands and enhances morale and productivity. The Embassy maximizes individuals' potential and expands professional opportunities, promotes both physical and mental wellness, increases workforce effectiveness, and helps staff contribute positively to the communities they serve while focusing on USG priorities in Rwanda.
- **Linkages** | 15FAM 630 Maintenance, Repair and Custodial Responsibilities; NFPA 70E Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace; 16 STATE 49446 Work De-Energized Policy 2016; E.O. 14035 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce; newly formed Office of Diversity and Inclusion (S/ODI) mandate; 13 FAM Training and Professional Development; 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); TalentCare@state.gov and Global Talent Management's Office of Employee Relations (GTM/ER) mandates; Launch of the TalentCare Awareness Month.
- **Risks** | Failure to accomplish this objective is counter to the Embassy's goal to be a leading employer in Rwanda. If we do not enhance our internal workforce development programs, we cannot as effectively develop leadership and managerial skills, improve communication between peers and supervisors alike, and continuously advance customer service skills. By rolling out training and leadership options Embassy-wide, not just focusing on one section or agency and collectively looking for ways to include other agencies in training opportunities, it highlights we are serious about our One Team, One Mission posture. Improving supervisory skills boosts our team's productivity and morale. Failure to improve our supervisory and leadership skills risk seeing staff fall into bad habits instead of practicing the skills developed in specialized training. Without giving wellness, mental health and diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility the attention it deserves, we risk failing to meet USG requirements and mandates while not providing for the needs of all staff, both current and future. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce, and a more diverse and inclusive team promotes American values.

Management Objective 2 | Leverage technology to optimize resources, strengthen internal controls, allow for mobile diplomacy, improve security, and reinforce the quality of ICASS service delivery.

- **Justification |** To enhance overall Embassy productivity, improve the quality of ICASS services, promote the use of data-driven decisions, and strengthen internal controls, the Embassy plans to fully leverage the use of technologies. The use of transitional technologies helps manage costs, improve internal controls, lead to more responsive cybersecurity posture, and enhance the quality of services. A more mobile and remote diplomatic mission requires the use of cutting-edge technology. Our investment in our information technology (IT) platform, is a mission-critical service directly impacting nearly every engagement and project. Post prioritization of upgrading systems and the use of interagency platforms to enhance information sharing and avoid redundancies, also minimizes system vulnerabilities. Strategic IT hiring, issuance of equipment for a mobile diplomatic posture, bandwidth enhancement and deployment of Enterprise Wi-Fi are priorities. ICASS's use of the copious amount of data available to make data-driven decisions results in an enhanced experience for all customers while lowering overall costs. By addressing these IT focused areas, we assist the Embassy in achieving overall our ICS goals and objectives.
- **Linkages |** EO 14028 Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity; 21 STATE 110168 Message from the Secretary: Modernizing American Diplomacy for the 21st Century; Advance Diplomatic and Development Effectiveness to Increase Accountability to the American Taxpayer.
- **Risks |** Without an updated compound WiFi system and a continued focus to promote secure mobile diplomacy, the Embassy is unable to fully accomplish its ICS. All employees need the right tools to accomplish their job. Cost or the lack of staff to support these new devices should not be the deciding factor from realizing our goals. Proper training on how to safely use all this new equipment is paramount to keeping our networks secure. Many tools are already available but often go unused. If we do not train our staff in modern IT initiatives, we risk requiring more direct intervention by IRM for routine issues.

The Embassy's current ICASS support/management platform must include an additional Information Management Specialist (IMS) to support the current, as well as ever-increasing, ICASS customer base and IT duties. The 2020 Office of Management Strategy and Solutions (M/SS) Overseas Presence review supported the addition of this position. The lack of sufficient IRM USDH supervisors to manage a growing workload hobbled efforts to promote a robust information security posture and to prevent cases of internal fraud, malfeasance, and theft, presenting possible future risks to the USG.

Management Objective 3 | Augment key building infrastructure areas for a safe, secure, climate friendly environment to work and live.

- **Justification |** Buildings are key to the Embassy’s ability to achieve its ICS Goals. The Embassy compound is now 15 years old, a period when key infrastructure components start needing replacement. By ensuring all our buildings meet current OBO, DS and IRM standards, we must provide a safe, secure, and hospitable place to live, work, and play. This priority is not only for our Embassy compound, but it extends to our residential housing pool of both leased and owned properties. Space is also becoming an issue as the size of our Embassy grows. With staffing levels having grown sustainably over the past decade, Post will look to make strategic decisions on how best to accommodate current and future growth. Focusing on a key USG priority, Post will continue to actively pursue Embassy compound and residential “greening” initiatives, including the installation of an Air Quality Monitor. These include things such as increased use of solar energy, air quality monitoring, embassy-wide recycling initiatives, fuel efficiency, water conservation and reduced reliance on non-recyclable materials. The goal is to be a model embassy when it comes to eco-centric approaches, one that can both help the Embassy in its local outreach campaign and serve as an example for other regional missions, while making sure energy related cost savings are realized.
- **Linkages |** EO 14008 - Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad; Council on Environmental Quality: Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings and Associated Instructions; M/SS Greening Diplomacy mandate; A/LM Guidance on Clean and Zero-Emission Vehicles/Overseas Fleet Electrification; Clean Air Act of 1970; EO 13990 - Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis. 15FAM 900 Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program Abroad; DS, IRM and OBO mandated safety and security checklists, audits, inspections, and reports.
- **Risks |** Acquiring safe and secure housing is significantly constrained by the availability of quality housing that can be brought up to USG safety standards. Apart from challenges with finding landlords willing to put additional work into their properties, Post is at risk of losing current houses due to contractual issues with difficult/absentee landlords. Most leased houses need overdue upgrades and repairs, and expatriate landlords often devolve responsibilities to family members instead of professional management companies. The Embassy Compound is 15 years old, and items continue to break/need repair.
Without a LE building engineer, the Facility Manager is forced to continue to address issues that require advanced knowledge, even if this is only to troubleshoot until OBO can send a team. This limits FAC’s ability to focus on management controls, section performance management, and long-term projects. An embassy that does not meet all DS, OBO and IRM requirements is at risk of a security, cyber, or safety related incident.

Without a strong greening strategy, the Embassy not only fails USG priorities, but it misses out on potential cost saving opportunities. Implementation of greening activities depends on local market capacity for replacement parts and expertise, as well as on funding and volunteers within the Embassy to contribute to these efforts. Greening must be an Embassy-wide priority and cannot fall solely on ICASS to execute.