Integrated Country Strategy

SAUDI ARABIA

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States and Saudi Arabia have a robust and longstanding bilateral relationship that spans political, economic, commercial, and security spheres. It encompasses some of the most critical and challenging U.S. priorities: regional stability, energy security, trade and investment, and human rights and women’s empowerment. Saudi Arabia is one of the world’s largest economies and a leading voice in the Middle East and Islamic world, giving the bilateral partnership global impact. Over the next four years, Embassy Riyadh, Consulate Jeddah, and Consulate Dhahran will advance a range of shared regional security and economic priorities. The Mission will encourage adherence to international human rights standards and the inclusion of women and marginalized communities in its engagements with Saudi public and private sector entities. Expanding and upgrading the Mission’s physical infrastructure will unlock the full potential of the Mission’s staff in pursuit of these objectives.

We will enhance U.S. security and regional stability by maintaining a strong security partnership with the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia is a key partner in the Middle East in advancing U.S. national security objectives, including ending the conflict in Yemen; countering an increasingly hostile Iran; combatting terrorism and threats from non-state actors; and protecting infrastructure and energy supplies essential to the global economy.

We will encourage Saudi Arabia’s role as a constructive partner in the resolution and prevention of regional conflicts. The Mission will facilitate the expansion of regional security cooperation among likeminded partners, within the Gulf Cooperation Council and beyond, to deter Iranian aggression and malign activities, as well as to promote regional stability.

We will grow the robust U.S.-Saudi relationship in the areas of counterterrorism and law enforcement to disrupt terrorist networks and violent extremism, and combat corruption and transnational organized crime.

We will promote regional stability within a security framework, in which the United States is the leading partner in Saudi Arabia’s defense acquisitions, training, and transformation. Training

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programs with U.S. experts will support increased professionalism in Saudi security institutions, ensuring the safety of both U.S. and Saudi citizens.

**We will strengthen our bilateral economic and commercial ties with Saudi Arabia while supporting its clean energy and environmental goals.**

Saudi Arabia is a vital partner, and its continued economic prosperity and social stability are key to U.S. interests. Building on the momentum of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 reforms, we will aim to enhance bilateral trade, investment, and commercial ties contributing to job creation and economic growth in both countries. We will strengthen Mission advocacy for U.S. companies to play an integral role in Saudi Arabia’s drive toward economic diversification and expansion of new sectors, including tourism and entertainment.

We will promote the alignment of Saudi energy and environmental policies with U.S. economic, security, and climate goals. We will encourage Saudi Arabia to adhere to its pledge to reduce carbon emissions. U.S. support for the Kingdom’s goals to diversify into clean energy technologies will enhance its ability to address domestic energy demands while remaining a reliable partner in ensuring stable global energy markets.

**We will reinforce Saudi efforts to build institutions and develop civil society in a manner that reflects U.S. interests and international human rights standards.**

For the promotion of long-term stability and continued social progress in the Kingdom, it is in the U.S. interest to ensure Saudi Arabia balances national security concerns with respect for human rights, individual freedoms, and good governance. In addition to engagement with Saudi society and institutions, engagement with multilateral organizations based in Saudi Arabia, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), will ensure U.S. interests and values are represented in the greater Muslim world.

We will encourage increased space for civil society, improved mechanisms for public participation, and expanded space for free expression. Furthermore, through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges, we will capitalize on and build strong relationships that

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support our mutual interests for generations to come. In engagements with the Saudi public and private sector, we will advocate for the rule of law and the inclusion of women and marginalized communities.

We will continue to provide consular support and services to U.S. citizens and expand legitimate travel to and from the United States. Members of the American community in Saudi Arabia represent American values and American solutions at a time of significant cultural change in the Kingdom, and the travel of Saudi citizens to the United States facilitates the people-to-people engagements that have been at the core of our enduring bilateral relationship.

**We will maximize our resources, improve our efficiency, and promote greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.**

The Mission will strive to improve human capital resources by prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace, as the Mission recruits and develops staff. We will plan and execute ongoing infrastructure projects, including a new embassy compound in Riyadh, facility upgrades for the new consulate compound (NCC) in Jeddah, and completion of the NCC in Dhahran. Additionally, we will enhance services for ICASS customers and continue to optimize support for the Yemen Affairs Unit. We will increase the efficiency and quality of our service by streamlining management controls and capitalizing on regionalization, while strengthening cybersecurity and our internet infrastructure.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework


- **Mission Objective 1.1**: Advance regional stability within a security framework, in which the United States is the leading partner in Saudi Arabia’s defense acquisitions, training, and transformation, so that it becomes a more capable ally for the United States.
- **Mission Objective 1.2**: Disrupt and degrade terrorist networks, transnational organized crime, and corruption through increased counterterrorism and law enforcement cooperation, as well as increased professionalism of Saudi security institutions.
- **Mission Objective 1.3**: Facilitate the expansion of regional security cooperation efforts among likeminded regional partners to deter Iranian aggression and malign activities, as well as to promote regional stability.

Mission Goal 2: U.S.-Saudi bilateral partnership strengthened through broad, robust economic, clean energy, environmental, and commercial relationships.

- **Mission Objective 2.1**: Increase bilateral trade and investment, create U.S. jobs, and contribute to economic growth in the United States and Saudi Arabia by leveraging the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and opportunities created by Vision 2030.
- **Mission Objective 2.2**: Align Saudi Arabia’s energy and environmental policies with U.S. economic, security, and climate goals. Additionally, encourage Saudi Arabia to adhere to its Nationally Determined Contributions obligations, as well as other international agreements, address domestic energy demands, and continue cooperation with the objective of stable global energy markets and prices.
- **Mission Objective 2.3**: Strengthen Mission advocacy for U.S. companies contributing to Saudi Arabia’s economic diversification, job creation, and GDP growth to support U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia’s long-term economic and social stability.

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- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Enhance good governance and recognition of individual freedoms and human rights, including increased space for civil society and improved mechanisms for public participation.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Strengthen U.S.-Saudi ties through greater engagements between the Saudi and American peoples, including through education and cultural programs and exchanges.
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Provide consular support and services to American citizens and expand legitimate travel to and from the United States through enhanced visa procedures and cooperation with Saudi law enforcement partners.

Management Objective 1: Improve human capital resources by prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace, as the Mission recruits and develops staff.

Management Objective 2: Enhance services for ICASS customers and continue to optimize support for the Yemen Affairs Unit.

Management Objective 3: Plan and execute ongoing infrastructure projects, including a new embassy compound in Riyadh, facility upgrades for the new consulate compound (NCC) in Jeddah, and completion of the NCC in Dhahran.

Management Objective 4: Increase the efficiency and quality of service deliverables by streamlining management controls and capitalizing on regionalization, when feasible, and strengthening cybersecurity controls and internet infrastructure.

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3. Mission Goals and Objectives


Description: Robust Mission engagement ensures Saudi Arabia is a key, reliable partner in the Middle East for advancing U.S. national security interests, including ending the conflict in Yemen, countering an increasingly hostile Iran; combatting terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational organized crime; and maintaining the stability of global energy supplies. Saudi Arabia, with U.S. support, projects security and stability beyond its borders, while Mission engagement counters efforts by strategic competitors to gain influence in the region. Due in part to close collaboration with the United States, Saudi Armed Forces have significantly reduced civilian casualties in Yemen, while U.S.-guided defense transformation efforts promote military transparency, accountability, and interoperability with U.S. forces. Strengthening Gulf unity in the face of growing Iranian threats to the region is a joint priority.

Objective 1.1: Advance regional stability within a security framework in which the United States is the leading partner in Saudi Arabia’s defense acquisitions, training, and transformation, so that it becomes a more capable ally for the United States.

- Justification: Demographically and economically the largest country in the Gulf and the home to the holiest sites in Islam, Saudi Arabia wields political, economic, religious, and cultural influence far beyond its borders. By developing Saudi capacities to project security and stability and ensuring it remains a key partner in a challenging but vital region, the United States can leverage Saudi capabilities to further its own national interests.

- Linkages: State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 1.4; Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (2021); Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (2022) Objective 1.3.

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• **Risks:** Tensions in the bilateral relationship could lead to a diminished U.S.-Saudi security partnership that could undermine cooperation on shared priorities and allow China and Russia to expand their influence. This can be mitigated through enhanced collaboration on the Kingdom's primary security concerns – Yemen, countering Iran, and counterterrorism.

**Objective 1.2:** Disrupt and degrade terrorist networks, transnational organized crime, and corruption through increased counterterrorism and law enforcement cooperation, as well as increased professionalism of Saudi security institutions.

• **Justification:** The United States and Saudi Arabia enjoy a longstanding security relationship, and counterterrorism cooperation remains strong. The Saudi Arabian government works closely with the United States to disrupt and degrade terrorist groups and networks, supporting enhanced bilateral cooperation to ensure the safety of both U.S. and Saudi citizens.


• **Risks:** Domestic opposition to the domestic reform agenda or aggressive engagement by strategic competitors China and Russia could distract Saudi focus from the U.S. security relationship. This can be tempered through strengthening existing relationships and enhanced public messaging promoting the U.S-Saudi security partnership and countering Russian and Chinese narratives.
Objective 1.3: Facilitate the expansion of regional security cooperation efforts among likeminded regional partners to deter Iranian aggression and malign activities, as well as to promote regional stability.

- **Justification:** Demographically and economically the largest country in the GCC, Saudi Arabia is positioned to lead regional efforts and project security and stability beyond its borders. The January 2021 resolution of the Gulf rift restored greater unity among GCC countries in the face of continued Iranian aggression. The GCC and the United States resumed discussions on key GCC security issues in November 2021.

- **Linkages:** State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan Strategic (FY 2022-2026) Objective 1.4; Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (2021); Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (2022) Objective 4.3.

- **Risks:** Growing Iranian threats, such as ballistic missiles or use of Yemeni territory for attacks against the Kingdom, could impose costs or policy differences sufficient for Saudi Arabia to curtail cooperation. Unmitigated, a resurgence of intra-GCC tensions or adverse developments between Israel and the Palestinians could create obstacles to regional coordination.

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**Mission Goal 2:** U.S.-Saudi bilateral partnership strengthened through broad, robust economic, clean energy, environmental, and commercial relationships.

**Description:** The U.S.-Saudi economic and commercial relationship is a fundamental pillar of the overall bilateral partnership and key to the United States remaining Saudi Arabia’s “Partner of Choice.” Expanding our economic ties through increased trade and investment and other means will advance U.S. national interests with a vital regional partner in a broad variety of ways to open new markets, increase U.S. exports, improve the local investment climate, secure contracts for U.S. companies, create jobs for American citizens at home, and increase U.S. prosperity. We will promote a safe and transparent financial system that abides by U.S. sanctions, has a strong anti-money laundering/counterterrorism regime, and prioritizes cybersecurity to remain an attractive market for U.S. businesses. We will promote a trade relationship with Saudi Arabia that contributes to a robust and secure U.S. economy. Our robust economic and commercial partnership with Saudi Arabia will advance the U.S. interest in ensuring that Saudi Arabia remains a prosperous, stable partner and a reliable supplier of energy to global markets.

**Objective 2.1:** Increase bilateral trade and investment, create U.S. jobs, and contribute to economic growth in the United States and Saudi Arabia by leveraging the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and opportunities created by Vision 2030.

- **Justification:** Saudi Arabia has the 19th-largest economy in the world, and it is the only Arab country in the G20. Saudi Arabia is the United States’ largest goods trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa region, and our 30th largest goods trading partner in the world. These statistics reflect a rich, diverse economic relationship with Saudi Arabia that serves as a fundamental pillar of our overall partnership with the Kingdom. There is great potential to strengthen our economic relationship even further over the next four years as the Saudi government pursues its ambitious Vision 2030 economic reform plans. The scale and breadth of this program will open tremendous trade and investment opportunities for U.S. businesses and carry

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the potential to create jobs and wealth in both nations. Saudi Arabia continues to adjust its trade policies and practices to international norms, providing the United States with the opportunity to engage Saudi officials to shape rules, standards, and procedures in a manner that facilitates U.S. exports, increases market access for U.S. goods and services, and improves the local investment climate.

• **Linkages:** Interim National Security Strategy (2021); State / USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026), Goals 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

• **Risks:** The United States loses market share, bilateral trade declines, economic influence declines, and economic benefits to the U.S. economy are reduced.

**Objective 2.2:** Align Saudi Arabia’s energy and environmental policies with U.S. economic, security, and climate goals. Additionally, encourage Saudi Arabia to adhere to its Nationally Determined Contributions obligations, as well as other international agreements, address domestic energy demands, and continue cooperation with the objective of stable global energy markets and prices.

• **Justification:** Saudi Arabia’s oil exports – and particularly the country’s ability to compensate for supply disruptions elsewhere through strategic deployment of its spare production capacity – have long been essential to global oil-market stability and growth of the world economy. Saudi oil will remain an important component of global energy markets over the coming decades. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has embarked on ambitious programs in nuclear energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and natural gas to replace the use of oil in its domestic power generation. Moreover, oil and the wealth derived from its production undergird Saudi Arabia’s ability to promote environmental reforms, support domestic socio-economic diversification, and act as a valuable U.S. partner on a wide range of political, economic, and security issues.

• **Linkages:** Interim National Security Strategy (2021); State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026), Goals 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4.
• **Risks:** Energy markets are destabilized, economic growth is negatively impacted in the United States and globally, and Saudi Arabia fails to achieve its goals of dramatically reducing its carbon footprint.

**Objective 2.3:** Strengthen Mission advocacy for U.S. companies contributing to Saudi Arabia’s economic diversification, job creation, and GDP growth to support U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia’s long-term economic and social stability.

• **Justification:** The United States has a vital stake in Saudi Arabia’s continued economic prosperity and social stability. Pursuant to its ambitious Vision 2030 socioeconomic reform program, Saudi Arabia has taken significant steps to diversify its economy and create private sector jobs for Saudi citizens to meet the demands of the Kingdom’s young and rapidly growing population. Economic diversification will increase Saudi Arabia’s resilience to fluctuations in the oil market and foster sustainable private-sector job creation, including for Saudi Arabia’s female population.

• **Linkages:** Interim National Security Strategy (2021); State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026), Goals 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4.; Middle East and North Africa Joint Regional Strategy (2022) Objective 3.1.

• **Risks:** Saudi Arabia fails to diversify its economy and fails to create sufficient employment opportunities for its youth, leading to social instability in the Kingdom and regionally.

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**Mission Goal 3:** Institution-building and social development in Saudi Arabia is reinforced in a manner reflecting U.S. interests and international human rights standards.

**Description:** Building on the momentum of Vision 2030, the Mission will engage Saudi public and private interlocutors to develop Saudi institutions and practices so that they align with U.S. interests and international human rights standards. We will advocate for the rule of law, good governance, the inclusion of women and marginalized communities, and the protection of individual freedoms. This will enable Saudi Arabia to reach its full economic and social potential. Through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges, we will capitalize on and build strong relationships that support our mutual interests for generations to come. By providing excellent consular services, we will strive to make it possible for Americans to conduct business, study, visit, and reside safely in Saudi Arabia. Our work with the American community in Saudi Arabia supports and advances U.S. interests across a variety of Mission goals. We will continue building the relationships that ensure Saudi Arabia’s institutions practice policies that encourage U.S. partnerships, have requisite capacity to respond and secure the safety of U.S. citizens, and encourage U.S. regional interests. Improved consular services will also permit the facilitation of Saudi travel to the United States in furtherance of business, cultural, and educational ties. **Objective 3.1:** Enhance good governance and recognition of individual freedoms and human rights, including increased space for civil society and improved mechanisms for public participation.

- **Justification:** For the promotion of long-term domestic stability within the Kingdom, it is in the U.S. interest to ensure Saudi Arabia balances national security concerns with respect for human rights, individual freedoms, good governance, and the rule of law. To support the achievement of this balance, the U.S. government will seek to cultivate a wide range of government and civil society relationships, support those who champion human rights and good governance, and develop the leadership and organizational skills of diverse social leaders, influencers, and civil society.

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• **Linkages:** Interim National Security Strategy (2021); State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026), Strategic Objective 1.5, 3.1, 3.2; Middle East and North Africa Joint Regional Strategy (2022) Goal 4; Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, Executive Order 14020 Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council, and National Security Memorandum/NSM-4.

• **Risks:** Saudi Arabia has drawn international condemnation for its human rights record, as well as for targeting and arresting of domestic and overseas dissidents and their relatives, complicating our ability to enhance security and economic ties with the government. The Mission seeks to mitigate this risk through support for Saudi government policies and rule of law reforms that promote individual freedoms, institutional accountability, and/or align more closely with international human rights standards.

**Objective 3.2:** Strengthen U.S.-Saudi ties through greater engagements between the Saudi and American peoples, including through education and cultural programs and exchanges.

• **Justification:** Saudi Arabia is the fifth-largest source country of foreign students studying in the United States. Many Saudi students and senior officials in the Ministry of Education prefer for Saudi students to study in the United States above other choices. Yet the number of Saudi government-sponsored scholarships to study abroad has diminished, meaning fewer Saudi students in the United States on generous scholarships. The Mission annually identifies a mix of 150-plus male and female young Saudi leaders and mid-career professionals to participate in U.S. government exchange programs to promote our policy objectives and abiding connections between Saudi and American citizens. The Mission continues to engage alumni of these exchanges to serve as effective advocates for the U.S.-Saudi relationship, to amplify the Mission’s engagement on priority issues, and to support alumni as models for active civic, economic, and political participation. The Mission supports these efforts in order to familiarize the Saudi public with American culture, while promoting commercial

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opportunities for American and Saudi entertainment businesses. These educational, cultural, and exchange activities seek to promote American values and influence, and establish lasting, mutually beneficial relationships between the peoples of Saudi Arabia and the United States.

- **Linkages:** Interim National Security Strategy (2021); State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 1.5 and 3.1; Middle East and North Africa Joint Regional Strategy (2022) Objective 4.2; Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

- **Risks:** Public perceptions of U.S. credibility on key issues – including democracy, equity, inclusion, and tolerance – remain a risk. It will be more difficult for the Mission to overcome false or distorted views of the United States, in some cases as part of state-sponsored disinformation campaigns, to strengthen cultural and educational ties. This will be done through public diplomacy programs that demonstrate how democratic governance tangibly leads to improvements in citizens’ daily lives and greater equity and inclusion for all citizens.

**Objective 3.3:** Provide consular support and services to American citizens and expand legitimate travel to and from the United States through enhanced visa procedures and cooperation with Saudi law enforcement partners.

- **Justification:** The approximately 70,000 members of the American community in Saudi Arabia are ambassadors of American values at a time of significant cultural change in the Kingdom. Many of them work in sectors such as energy and defense that are relevant to U.S. strategic and economic interests. Ballistic missile and other cross border attacks, as well as terrorist attacks, continue to be a risk to the American community. Providing American citizens with accurate, timely information about potential threats and preparing to assist them in the event of a crisis remain core Mission objectives. The Vision 2030 social and economic reform program is advancing rapidly in areas that could have implications for demand for consular services, most notably in the opening of the country to tourism. However, the enduring challenges of

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the Saudi legal system and cultural context mean that some American citizens require a high level of consular support. In addition, facilitating the travel of Saudi citizens to the United States promotes U.S. economic interests and greater understanding between the Saudi and American peoples. A significant percentage of applicants for both nonimmigrant and immigrant visas at Mission posts are subject to supplementary vetting procedures. Close, effective cooperation between the Mission, U.S. government agencies, and Saudi law enforcement partners is critical to the facilitation of these people-to-people exchanges while ensuring U.S. national security.

- **Linkages:** State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 5.1 and 5.2.

- **Risks:** Missile and drone attacks on civilian facilities, as well as terrorist groups, represent a significant threat in Saudi Arabia and to the U.S. citizens in country. These risks can be mitigated through increased consular registration, timely and efficient delivery of consular information, emergency planning and preparedness, and crisis management training.
4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Improve human capital resources by prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace, as the Mission recruits and develops staff.

- **Justification:** To facilitate the ongoing Mission expansion of personnel and issues in support of U.S. national interests, Management will maximize its existing human capital resources by further diversifying recruitment efforts to attract qualified talent, by increasing the quantity and quality of training opportunities, and by continuing to offer workplace flexibilities that promote productivity, efficiency, and enhance morale of the Mission work force.

- **Linkages:** Executive Order 14035 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce; Middle East and North Africa Joint Regional Strategy (2022) Cross-cutting Management Objective 1; State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 3.2, 3.5, 4.1.

- **Risks:** Inadequate staffing and a lack of diversity impede the Mission’s ability to accomplish its policy and operational goals and limits the skillset brought to issues by Mission staff.

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Management Objective 2: Enhance services for ICASS customers and continue to optimize support for the Yemen Affairs Unit.

- **Justification:** ICASS continues to serve a record number of customers which increased from 15 to 28 ICASS billing agencies in 8 years and Mission ICASS demands stress available workload and space capacities.
- **Linkages:** State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 4.1, 4.3; Middle East and North Africa Joint Regional Strategy (2022) Cross-cutting Management Objective 1.
- **Risks:** Limited or poor ICASS services brings additional costs and dissatisfaction amongst customers that can quickly spread and may lead to significant and measurable impact on recruiting top talent, achieving Mission goals, and demoralizing staff.

Management Objective 3: Plan and execute ongoing infrastructure projects, including a new embassy compound in Riyadh, facility upgrades for the new consulate compound (NCC) in Jeddah, and completion of the NCC in Dhahran.

- **Justification:** The new compounds will provide secure and modern facilities that will support the strong and enduring partnership with the Kingdom.
- **Linkages:** State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 4.1, 4.3.5.
- **Risks:** The delay in construction projects may lead to cost overruns, demoralization of employees, unsafe work environments and inefficient delivery of services to Mission clients.

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Management Objective 4: Increase the efficiency and quality of service deliverables by streamlining management controls and capitalizing on regionalization, when feasible, and strengthening cybersecurity controls and internet infrastructure.

- **Justification:** Given the high level of demand for Mission resources, the Mission must ensure that the management platform operates efficiently and effectively. The management platform must remain an innovative, cost-conscious, and efficient service provider to best facilitate efforts to achieve Mission goals. Moreover, at the intersection of all the program and policy goals outlined is the use of technology. The critical components of any diplomatic initiative or program rely on how well information is safeguarded.

- **Linkages:** State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan (FY 2022-2026) Strategic Objective 4.2, 4.3; The Federal Sustainability Plan (December 2021), Department of State Greening Diplomacy Initiative.

- **Risks:** Inefficient management of resources could lead to waste and misuse of taxpayer dollars. Physical and cyberattacks conducted by adversaries against U.S. Missions have the potential to harm our people, damage property, and infiltrate our networks.