



Functional Bureau Strategy

OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

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1. Executive Statement and Mission Statement

Vision: Strategic, coordinated, and effective foreign assistance on behalf of the American people.

Mission Statement: On behalf of the Secretary of State, the Office of Foreign Assistance (F) optimizes the impact of U.S. foreign assistance by aligning resources to foreign policy objectives, measuring effectiveness, and promoting evidence-based policies.

The Secretary of State created the Office of Foreign Assistance in 2006 to improve strategic coordination of and oversight over all foreign assistance funding, focusing on strategy and effectiveness. Since then, drawing on expertise from both USAID and State personnel, the Office has provided expertise on a range of foreign assistance and broader foreign policy issues to Secretaries of State and USAID Administrators across Presidential Administrations.

F advances U.S. national security and development objectives by coordinating policy, planning, and performance management efforts; promoting evidence-informed decision making; and providing strategic direction for the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development foreign assistance resources. The Office provides coordination and guidance for all foreign assistance delivered through other agencies and entities of the USG, including the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

The foreign policy and assistance priorities outlined in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (INSSG) and the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for FY 2022-2026 guide F's goals and objectives in this strategy. F will advance efforts across all JSP goal areas through the strategic provision and coordination of foreign assistance.

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2. Bureau Strategic Framework

Bureau Goal 1: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of foreign assistance budgeting and planning processes

- **Bureau Objective 1.1:** Optimize budget formulation and execution processes
- **Bureau Objective 1.2:** Improve transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency by enhancing strategic planning and budgetary processes
- **Bureau Objective 1.3:** Strengthen linkages between strategy, performance, and resources
- **Bureau Objective 1.4:** Empower State and USAID employees to bring diverse perspectives and skills to the budgeting and planning process

Bureau Goal 2: Strengthen F's leadership and stakeholder engagement in foreign assistance policy

- **Bureau Objective 2.1:** Advance F's policy leadership by developing and advancing clear, evidence-based positions on major foreign policy matters to shape State Department priorities in policy, budgets, and programming
- **Bureau Objective 2.2:** Improve F's coordination with U.S. Government stakeholders to influence their policy work, identify opportunities for collaboration, and increase information sharing
- **Bureau Objective 2.3:** Shape the policy environment by strategically engaging external stakeholders on foreign assistance policy, to increase understanding of and support for foreign assistance

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Bureau Goal 3: Improve Department and USAID ability to leverage foreign assistance as a tool to achieve US government foreign policy objectives

- **Bureau Objective 3.1:** Improve Department and USAID staff's capacity to plan, manage, and evaluate foreign assistance
- **Bureau Objective 3.2:** Improve best practices and procedures in foreign assistance coordination

Bureau Goal 4: Enhance foreign assistance decision-making and learning through establishing F as the knowledge hub to improve quality, availability, and use of data and evidence

- **Bureau Objective 4.1:** Strengthen quality of data through improvements to F data lifecycle management, systems, and tools
- **Bureau Objective 4.2:** Foster an enabling environment to increase availability, rigor, and use of data, evidence, and learning.
- **Bureau Objective 4.3:** Senior F leadership establish and model expectation for evidence-based decision-making including the full implementation of the Evidence Act.

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1: Empower staff at all levels by increasing diversity, advancing equity, improving inclusion, and expanding accessibility within F

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 2: Sustain a healthy, motivated, and effective F workforce by strengthening leadership, management, team operations, and staff resiliency

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3. Bureau Goals and Objectives

Bureau Goal 1: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of foreign assistance budgeting and planning processes

- **Bureau Goal 1 Description:** Budget and planning processes that efficiently meet the needs of the Department of State, USAID, and the foreign assistance community inherently support the Administration’s foreign policy objectives. This goal aims to leverage the use of technology and process improvements to strengthen the links between strategy, resources, and execution in a transparent and inclusive manner. Achievement of this goal requires timely inputs from numerous stakeholders, as well as the alignment of foreign policy priorities with the allocation of resources. This goal undergirds the success of objectives across all five JSP policy-related goals, and it primarily supports JSP Objective 4.2: “Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.”

Bureau Objective 1.1: Optimize budget formulation and execution processes.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Justification and Linkages:** To further Department of State and USAID foreign policy objectives, resources must be efficiently matched with strategic priorities. Such alignment is made possible through access to and communication of timely information regarding resources and performance. This bureau objective is conscious of the opportunity afforded by technology to achieve efficiency gains and increase transparency and access to data for decision-making. Transparency is key to helping F stakeholders understand how we evaluate resource requests and align funding with policy priorities, enable the Department of State and USAID to meet Congressional requirements, and enable greater stakeholder collaboration and participation in decision-making. Increasing the efficiency of core budget processes supports posts and missions with more rapid implementation of foreign assistance programs. This bureau objective directly supports JSP Objective 4.2

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and aligns with Objective 4.3 of the Department of State's Enterprise Data Strategy: "Measure the Organizational Value of Data and Analytics."

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Risk Considerations:** The primary risks related to this objective involve financial and human resource availability to complete activities outlined in sub-objectives and milestones. In order to leverage technology to make processes more efficient and transparent, funds must be made available to invest in developing, testing, and deploying systems and software. Staff must also dedicate time to elaborate business rules, participate in user testing, and learn how to interact with new systems and processes. F staff must also conduct outreach and provide change management support for other bureaus engaged in the budgeting process. While there are cadres of staff currently dedicated to these improvement efforts, annual changes in resource allocation or competing priorities may jeopardize the timely completion of sub-objective milestones. More broadly, efforts to increase process efficiency may have trade-offs with the amount of consultation and feedback that can be integrated from stakeholders. Efforts to mitigate this risk include providing regular updates to senior leadership on milestones and using quantitative metrics to underscore the long-term benefits of increasing digitalization in the department. Staff members engaged in these efforts have explicit links between performance goals and achievement of these milestones, which also helps to mitigate risks.

Bureau Objective 1.2: Improve transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency by enhancing the use of data in strategic planning, budgetary, and reporting processes.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Justification and Linkages:** Strategic planning and budgetary processes within F currently only use a subset of financial and performance data that is generated, owned, and managed by Department and Agency data systems. This subset of data must often be gathered via ad hoc processes and collected via cuff records. As a result, F strategic planning and budget processes may not include all available data and rely on slow and inefficient data calls. Furthermore, because these

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data calls are collected into ad hoc records, the data that informs F's budgetary and strategic planning processes, they are not easily accessible. This impedes F efforts to be transparent in its decision-making processes. Remedying these issues will result in more efficient and effective strategic planning and budgetary processes. This bureau objective directly supports JSP Objective 4.2 and aligns with Objective 4.3 of the Department of State's Enterprise Data Strategy.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Risk Considerations:** Systems that contain data relevant to F planning and budgetary processes in milestone 1.2.1.2 may not be owned by F. Therefore, there is a risk that the owners of these data and data systems will not facilitate F access. Steps to mitigate these risks will include securing high-level leadership buy-in and endorsement of proposed system mapping and access using executive memos, MOUs, and/or MOAs as appropriate. Additionally, financial and human resources must be available to create and deploy enhancements to systems.

Bureau Objective 1.3: Strengthen linkages between strategy, performance, and resources.

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Justification and Linkages:** Effective planning is critical to ensuring that programming is used to maximum effect in meeting Administration priorities. A key component of planning effectiveness is strengthening coordination between Washington and missions, and among Washington bureaus, to avert budget execution bottlenecks. This can be done by increasing the access to and use of financial performance data, such as obligation, pipeline, and other information, in decision-making and dialogue between Washington and post. These financial data are spread across Department and Agency systems and may not be regularly accessed or used by decision-makers. This objective seeks to identify foundational steps that may be undertaken to link data systems processes to strengthen strategy, performance, and resource links. This objective supports JSP Objective 4.2 and aligns with Objective 4.3 of the Department of State's Enterprise Data Strategy.

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- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Risk Considerations:** Risk considerations for this objective lie heavily with F staff bandwidth. Employee capacity to take on new assignments that would be produced to successfully accomplish the sub-objectives may be limited. The need for change management support for new processes may impede the momentum of updating an established system with data gaps. Finally, if the employees do not have access to systems or if the data is not collected in the required fashion, the full potential of the outcome may not be realized. To mitigate these risks, early leadership buy-in and working level coordination on the creation of joint teams will be essential. To avoid adding burdensome workloads on staff, financial data should be gathered from existing systems and from bureaus who already have data collection processes established.

Bureau Objective 1.4: Empower State and USAID employees to bring diverse perspectives and skills to the budgeting and planning process.

- **Bureau Objective 1.4 Justification and Linkages:** The Administration has promulgated Executive Orders (EOs) and actions that charge the entire federal government with advancing equity and racial justice. These directives (E.O. 13985, E.O.14020, and E.O. 13988) focus on increasing racial equity, combating discrimination based on gender identity/sexual orientation, and promoting gender equity and equality. This bureau objective seeks to integrate diversity and inclusion principles into the work stream of F's budget formulation and execution processes. This objective also supports JSP Objective 3.2: "Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all."
- **Bureau Objective 1.4 Risk Considerations:** Risks to the accomplishment of this objective include staff bandwidth, differing perspectives about D&I principles, and limited resources for staff training opportunities. When understanding D&I principles, F staff will need to consider the intersectional nature of challenges facing individuals, to include race, ethnicity, class, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, disability status, religion, and/or national origin. Additionally, developing a more inclusive and equitable process could create delays in F

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timelines. To mitigate these factors, leveraging F staff leadership and the F D&I Council to provide training opportunities or resources for all F staff may help ensure a consistent understanding of D&I principles. Finally, leadership communication will emphasize the end-goal of fostering diverse perspectives, while maintaining existing decision-making processes.

Bureau Goal 2: Strengthen F's leadership and stakeholder engagement in foreign assistance policy

- **Bureau Goal 2 Description:** F has a unique policy perspective, at the intersection of foreign policy and foreign assistance. Through Goal 2, we seek to promote F's ability to gather and advance rigorous, evidence-based policy positions, thereby strengthening F's leadership and ability to influence the outcomes of policy debates within the State Department, interagency, and broader stakeholder community.

Bureau Objective 2.1: Advance F's policy leadership by developing and advancing clear, evidence-based positions on major foreign policy matters to shape State Department priorities in policy, budgets, and programming.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Justification and Linkages:** This objective supports JSP Objectives 2.1: "Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans," 2.2: "Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe," and 2.4: "Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks." It serves as the primary objective in the FBS dedicated to policy development and thought leadership.
- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Risk Considerations:** F's ability to serve as a policy leader in the Department rests on our ability to effectively integrate into major policy processes early enough to influence them; we should have a strong inter-bureau network and support our network accordingly. To mitigate this risk, F needs to engage

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with policy leaders across State, USAID, and the interagency early and often, while also regularly seeking guidance from F leadership to effectively prioritize.

Bureau Objective 2.2: Improve F's coordination with U.S. Government stakeholders to influence their policy work, identify opportunities for collaboration, and increase information sharing.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Justification and Linkages:** This objective serves to capture F's engagement with U.S. Government stakeholders (across the Department, interagency, and White House) on foreign assistance policy, particularly with policymaking entities within the Department and interagency, as well as foreign assistance implementing agencies, in order to position F as a leader in foreign assistance. This objective supports JSP Objectives 2.1: "Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans," 2.2: "Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe," and 2.4: "Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks."
- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Risk Considerations:** F's ability and mandate to influence the interagency on foreign assistance varies over time and across administrations, necessitating a thoughtful approach to coordination with other assistance actors that does not overstep. In light of the unique relationship State has with DFC and MCC (by nature of Chairing their Boards), we can mitigate this risk by focusing on those engagements where State has an enduring role.

Bureau Objective 2.3: Shape the policy environment by strategically engaging external stakeholders on foreign assistance policy, to increase understanding of and support for foreign assistance.

- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Justification and Linkages:** This FBS Objective supports JSP Objective 1.5 and serves as the objective to guide our work with external, non-USG stakeholders, including think tanks, NGOs, Congress, media, and the public (both domestically and internationally).

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- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Risk Considerations:** While F can participate in the policy environment, F may have limited ability to drive or shape others' views of assistance. As we seek to do more of this, we also need to be cognizant of the limitations of what F alone can do through strategic communications and greater engagement with non-USG stakeholders.

Bureau Goal 3: Improve Department and USAID ability to leverage foreign assistance as a tool to achieve US government foreign policy objectives

- **Bureau Goal 3 Description:** When used properly, foreign assistance is an effective tool to achieve foreign policy objectives. Two key elements of effective foreign assistance are staff capacity and coordination. Staff who understand how to plan, manage, and evaluate foreign assistance can better leverage these funds to advance U.S. policy priorities. Likewise, missions and bureaus that coordinate foreign assistance well internally and with the interagency are best positioned to integrate diverse interests into effective whole of government solutions. This strategy's SWOT analysis and previous assessments have identified gaps in staff ability to manage foreign assistance, and varying levels of coordination between regions, bureaus, and missions. F, as a joint USAID-State bureau, will convene stakeholders to investigate, develop, and share the tools that will improve both staff foreign assistance capacity and institutional coordination of foreign assistance. This goal supports the JSP and the Secretary's modernization agenda which call for investing in our diplomatic and development workforce to advance American interests.

Bureau Objective 3.1: Improve Department and USAID staff's capacity to plan, manage, and evaluate foreign assistance.

- **Bureau Objective 3.1 Justification and Linkages:** Currently, staff capacity to maximize foreign assistance as a policy tool varies across State and USAID. While USAID offers robust training and learning opportunities focused on programming foreign

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assistance, there is a lack of similar standardized training on foreign assistance at the Department of State. At the same time, State offers a broad set of classes on geopolitical topics that could enhance USAID work. The Foreign Service Institute now offers few classes on strategically planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating foreign assistance. Bureaus conduct additional internal training (such as F's Think Knowledge Seminars), but there is little resource sharing or cross-training between bureaus and between USAID and State.

Establishing a foreign assistance learning path for staff at all levels would better enable the use of foreign assistance as a foreign policy tool. This effort also needs to actively be cultivated by F; staff should be dedicated to designing the gap fillers and empowered to take advantage of a wide breadth of learning opportunities.

Improving State and USAID staff capacity to use foreign assistance in this way supports the FY 22-26 State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: "Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient and dynamic workforce," as well as every objective that leverages foreign assistance resources, and the Secretary's Modernization Agenda which prioritize investments in the U.S. diplomatic and development workforce.

- **Bureau Objective 3.1 Risk Considerations:** F has limited resources to assess, develop, and sponsor training for Department and USAID staff, and limited influence over other organizations, like FSI, involved in developing the workforce. Bureaus may also resist F initiatives if they believe that F is acting in their place. It is important to work with other operating units to develop the needed resources rather than attempt to develop them all within F. In addition, it will be important to commit the appropriate level of staffing within F, both for developing additional resources and allowing staff to attend training.

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Bureau Objective 3.2: Improve best practices and procedures in foreign assistance coordination

- **Bureau Objective 3.2 Justification and Linkages:** Coordination is an essential element in any effort to maximize the effectiveness of foreign assistance. Improved coordination is a proven path to reducing redundancies and better leveraging our core competencies. The first step to improving coordination is to understand how F's current processes operate not only within the Department but within USAID and other interagency partner organizations as well. Initially F will bring key stakeholders together to establish a common understanding of the issues and develop a plan to address them collectively. F has identified several potential avenues for better coordination between units (e.g., enhancing the MfR Communities at State, enhancing FACTS to better link updates between processes, creating additional training materials, workshops, speaker series, and more) but seek wider stakeholder input and buy-in to prioritize our efforts. Once a plan has been created and agreed to, F will identify new sub-objectives within the F FBS to prioritize critical elements of that plan. F will also seek to establish foreign assistance points of contact with relevant bureaus and missions as a point of entry for improved coordination. This objective directly supports JSP Objective 4.1 as well as every objective that leverages foreign assistance resources.
- **Bureau Objective 3.2 Risk Considerations:** If coordination doesn't improve, the US government will miss out on opportunities to more efficiently leverage foreign assistance resources towards achieving Administration priorities. Improving coordination depends on stakeholders both internal and external to F. F's ability to bring together the differing needs and perspectives of each stakeholder is central to our ability to accomplish this objective. F will rely on its convening power and the personal relationships of senior F leaders to help broker compromise as necessary.

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Bureau Goal 4: Enhance foreign assistance decision-making and learning through establishing F as the knowledge hub to improve quality, availability, and use of data and evidence

- **Bureau Goal 4 Description:** The Department of State is committed to using data, evidence and learning to achieve the most effective U.S. foreign assistance outcomes, greater accountability, and transparency. To achieve this, F will serve as a knowledge hub connecting the right information to the right people at the right time to inform decisions. Evidence analyzed by F, as well as the learning from sound performance management in Bureaus and Missions, should be considered alongside Administration policy goals, Congressional directives, and other strategic imperatives by Senior leadership when making decisions related to Foreign Assistance. F's core function is to coordinate foreign assistance, and its success in promoting evidence-based decision-making relies upon the collection, analysis, and appropriate dissemination of high-quality data, information, and visualizations from multiple stakeholders in a timely manner. F is uniquely situated to not only to conduct cross-cutting analysis on the foreign assistance data that Missions and Bureaus collect, but also to establish standards, policies, and best practices to improve the quality, availability, and use of data and evidence throughout the Department. F will seek to build upon the progress made since the establishment of centrally collected, standardized programming information over the past ten years, and evolve to the next phase to elevate the information that F manages to be more strategic and outcome oriented. To this end, F will continue efforts to improve performance management practices of Bureaus and Missions to increase data-driven decisions by their leadership, as well as expand the evidence base available for F to utilize in our direct research and analysis. F's ability to conduct cross-sectoral analysis requires a strong foundation of information sharing and knowledge management that follow common data governance practices so that data are readily available and useable. As the coordinator of all foreign assistance, but rarely

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the direct or sole decision-maker, F's work is always dependent on its relationships with a wide variety of foreign assistance stakeholders. The most frequent interactions with F involve data collection and/or consumption. As such, the success of F's key relationships relies on our ability to effectively manage data coming into and going out from F through sound data governance processes.

Goal 4 leverages two key legislative mandates in the areas of data transparency and learning. First, in accordance with Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 (FATAA), the Department is committed to providing publicly available planning, performance and financial transaction data on foreign assistance spending and activities, as well as strategies and evaluations, for itself, USAID, and implementing agencies on ForeignAssistance.gov. Second, the Foundations for Evidence Based Policy Act of 2018 ("Evidence Act") mandates evidence-building activities, including a Department Learning Agenda and capacity assessment. In addition, Goal 4 is linked to JSP Objective 4.2: Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.

Bureau Objective 4.1: Strengthen quality of data through improvements to F data lifecycle management, systems, and tools.

- **Bureau Objective 4.1 Justification and Linkages:** F can and should constantly work to improve the quality of the data which is stored in our systems and over which we have stewardship. Data quality is improved through enhanced accuracy - leveraging tools, systems, and comprehensive strategies. The establishment of a sound and consistent data infrastructure to support better quality of data will benefit F and foreign assistance coordination writ large by enabling data automation, reducing the level of effort for staff performing manual processes, reducing errors associated with manual data processing (e.g., transcription), and improving overall data reporting processes. Ultimately, using data to tell a better story. Additionally, establishing and implementing strategies for data governance and data lifecycle management is necessary to ensure

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availability and support uniformity in the interpretation of foreign assistance data, as well as to define ownership, access, compliance, and source of data that F owns or has stewardship over. Once the strategies are finalized, they should be utilized to improve the efficiency and usability of the FACTS Info information system, as well as the accuracy of publicly available foreign assistance data. Achieving this objective will also strengthen F's position in meeting its data transparency requirements under FATAA. This bureau objective directly supports JSP objective 4.2.

- **Bureau Objective 4.1 Risk Considerations:** Data quality and infrastructure are critical to meeting increased demands for timely, accurate data from leadership and stakeholders. If F does not improve data lifecycle management, systems, and tools and employ data automation, it will continue to require manual data processing/entry, resulting in transcription errors, delayed response times, and higher costs associated with higher level of effort by staff. As demand grows without sufficient structure, F runs the risk of not meeting data-related demands from stakeholders, and missing opportunities for providing proactive data analysis along all its lines of business as is now required by both Senior Department leadership and Congress. The primary risks to F achieving this objective are staff resources and time to make the necessary updates the systems and tools envisioned. Moreover, systems that contain foreign assistance data involve external stakeholders to help maintain and keep up to date to ensure data quality. Therefore, there is a risk that the participants in the data life cycle and data systems will adhere to new guidance and data management strategies. Steps to mitigate these risks will include securing high-level leadership buy-in within and outside of F and buy-in by all relevant stakeholders through socialization on the improvements and guidance created to improve data quality.

Bureau Objective 4.2: Foster an enabling environment to increase availability, rigor, and use of data, evidence, and learning.

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- **Bureau Objective 4.2 Justification and Linkages:** The concept that government decision makers integrate data into decision making has grown significantly in previous years into an expectation. As the Department of State and USAID move quickly towards this goal, F is uniquely placed to support and institutionalize this culture shift. While data has been integrated into decision making for many years, the piecemeal nature of its availability and scope has impeded its full adoption and the benefits that come with it. If a data dependent environment is to exist, it cannot be implemented or resourced as an optional activity as resources allow. The funding for development of systems and tools, capacity building for staff, and maintenance of infrastructure must be prioritized and built into Bureau resource requests. In this strategy, F is committing to work toward a comprehensive and standardized data environment that support decision making across the U.S. foreign assistance realm. This must include the prioritization and funding of systems and tools development, staff capacity building, evidence collection and dissemination, and continual process improvement. This objective directly supports JSP objective 4.2.
- **Bureau Objective 4.2 Risk Considerations:** Failure to establish a robust data environment where quality evidence is available and used at all levels risks the Department's ability to make quick, effective, and informed decisions. Moreover, if F does not invest in building a pipeline of evidence creation, then it cannot effectively implement evidence-based decision making. If this occurs, leadership and foreign assistance stakeholders would experience increased frustration at being constrained by outdated inputs that do not allow for data-driven decisions and staff would be constrained by antiquated and time-consuming practices. To mitigate these risks F is committing in this objective to prioritize availability of data, evidence, and learning. Achieving this objective will require investment in tools, systems and people. As with all federal appropriations, future funding for investment is never guaranteed. F will work to mitigate this risk by integrating resource planning for these activities into regular budget formulation and execution processes of foreign assistance.

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Bureau Objective 4.3: Senior F leadership establish and model expectation for evidence-based decision-making including the full implementation of the Evidence Act.

- **Bureau Objective 4.3 Justification and Linkages:** F is committed to adopting and maintaining a culture that produces timely, high-quality data, evidence, and learning to inform foreign assistance decision making at the strategic, programmatic, and tactical levels across the Department and interagency. This objective supports JSP Objective 4.2, and the goals outlined in the Department of State's Enterprise Data Strategy. It is not enough to simply require evidence collection and support sound data management processes. It is imperative to ensure these efforts result in useful analytic products and data that can inform foreign assistance decision making. Objective 4.3 builds sequentially from the improved data quality and availability achieved through Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 by putting data to use in decision making processes. Sub-objective 4.3.1 leverages insights gained from implementation of the Evidence Act, including the Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment, to identify challenges and best practices for using data and evidence across the department. These lessons and recommendations will feed into the development of practical guidance and tools for staff to integrate data, evidence, and learning at different points in foreign assistance planning and implementation including budget formulation and execution, operational planning, and strategy processes (sub-objective 4.3.2). To complement guidance and tools, sub-objective 4.3.3 considers the importance of setting expectations and incentives from the top-down and seeks to increase the role of F and department leadership to signal the importance of evidence-based decision-making.
- **Bureau Objective 4.3 Risk Considerations:** Limited capacity (such as staff data fluency), tools (such as access to nimble, user-centric technology solutions and infrastructure) and resources (such as staff, time, and funding) may create challenges in meeting this objective. F will work to identify opportunities for technology modernization, business process efficiencies, and ways to increase data fluency to strengthen staff capacity to make programmatic decisions.

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4. Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objectives

Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1: Empower staff at all levels by increasing diversity, advancing equity, improving inclusion, and expanding accessibility within F

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1 Justification and Linkages:** This management objective takes a people-centered approach to ensuring all F staff are empowered to be successful now and in their future careers by increasing diversity, advancing equity, improving inclusion, and expanding accessibility, not only for our team, but in how we approach our role optimizing the impact of U.S. foreign assistance at the direction of the Secretary of State and on behalf of the American people. We know that our workforce is at its strongest when its members reflect our nation and the communities we serve, and when our public servants are fully equipped to advance equitable outcomes for all communities in the United States and for U.S. foreign assistance resources and programs. This management objective is linked to JSP Objective 4.1: “Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce” and to the Government-Wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce (November 2021).

In order to achieve our FBS goals it is important that all staff utilize shared definitions to ensure common understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility. F will utilize definitions consistent with those articulated in the Government-Wide Strategic Plan cited above.

Diversity: The practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including underserved communities.

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Equity: The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

Furthermore, equity addresses the specific and proportionate needs of certain persons or populations to attain fair and just treatment and outcomes, as opposed to equality, which emphasizes the same or equal treatment for all persons or groups regardless of specific circumstances or needs.

Inclusion: The recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds.

Accessibility: The design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1 Risk Considerations:** Risks to accomplishing this objective include limited staff bandwidth and financial resources. It is also possible that recruiting for diversity and implementing more inclusive, equitable, and accessible practices could initially require more time and/or funding, and that there will be some discomfort with change. To mitigate these factors, we will leverage F leadership, the F DEI Council, F's Management Office, and State/GTM and USAID/HCTM expertise to prioritize and model a DEIA culture and meet our sub-objectives and milestones.

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Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 2: Sustain a healthy, motivated, and effective F workforce by strengthening leadership, management, team operations, and staff resiliency

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 2 Justification and Linkages:** The Office of Foreign Assistance is a unique hybrid organization comprised of both State and USAID positions. On behalf of the Secretary of State, F optimizes the impact of foreign assistance by strategically aligning foreign assistance resources to the Secretary's overarching foreign policy goals, measuring effectiveness, and promoting evidence-based policies, including budget formulation, justification, and execution mechanisms. The combination of Civil Service, Foreign Service, contractors, and detailees brings a variety of experience, skills, and challenges to this diverse but unified organization. Due to the hybrid structure of F, there is greater complexity involved in the application of State and USAID policies and regulations, requiring additional staff time and coordination efforts not present in other traditional bureaus. Furthermore, hiring mechanisms between the two agencies vary including the experiences of staff members. As such, F leadership and senior managers have greater requirements to address management, operations, and administrative issues as many items are dependent of other offices and not under F's direct control and purview. Linkages to JSP objectives relate to 4.1 "Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce," with enhanced training, development, and work life programs, among other things. Specifically, this includes Joint Agency Priority Goal 4.1.3 of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accountability: "Expand inclusive and equitable recruitment, hiring and retention practices that result in diverse Department of State and USAID workforces." (See also F Management Cross-cutting Objective 1).
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 2 Risk Considerations:** With limited staff resources, high turnover rates in recent years, and challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have indicated via surveys sentiments of feeling overworked

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and unable to perform optimally as the list of items to do keeps growing. This combined with work life balance concerns and staffing gaps presents additional risk of loss of overall valuable institutional knowledge and capacity of the organization if employee retention plummets with more departures. Absent adequate human capital and contractor back-fill support for key functions, the organization will have a greater risk not being able to adequately maintain operations and achieve ambitious goals and objectives as prioritization and trade-offs will become ever more crucial.

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