



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## JORDAN

**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Jordan's stability – leadership continuity and peace on the streets – enables U.S. access to pursue regional interests while conducting bilateral initiatives with this strategic partner and maintaining a peaceful border with Israel. Our outsized investment of resources attests to the geostrategic importance of Jordan to the United States. The U.S. Embassy in Jordan – employing nearly 800 U.S. personnel and set to grow 30 percent beginning in 2023 – is the fifth largest in the world. Jordan, a middle-income economy, has a population of 11 million and hosts the second highest share of refugees per capita globally. Our development budget is the largest worldwide; our Anti-Terrorism Assistance program the second largest; and our Foreign Military Financing program the third largest.

Economic stability is imperative to Jordan's stability, and the global health crisis has exacerbated the country's challenges. In the next 24-36 months we will help Jordan address economic contraction, double-digit unemployment, and growing government debt; chronic water shortages that threaten the economy, environment, and food security; and the social and economic disruptions resulting from Jordan generously hosting millions of refugees despite a weak infrastructure and job market.

Unemployment requires immediate attention. Jordan's low rate of women's workforce participation further constrains its economy. We will continue to support near-term efforts to preserve jobs while urging Jordan to continue structural economic reforms that maintain macroeconomic stability through fiscal discipline, better tax collection, and growth-oriented policy changes. We will help Jordan adopt reforms that minimize red tape, open markets, attract investment, and create commercial opportunities, including for the United States. We will support Jordan's efforts to implement policies that enable the private sector to create jobs and stimulate economic growth, especially among women and youth. We will continue to work with the GoJ to implement health and education projects to relieve overcrowded schools and an overburdened health system. This will improve outcomes for vulnerable Jordanians and improve prospects for long-term economic growth.

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A primary constraint to Jordan's economic growth is its chronic water deficit. One of the most water-poor nations on earth, Jordan is facing a worsening crisis. We will help the GoJ increase its ability to meet the country's growing water demand, manage the sector, conserve resources, and reach financial sustainability. We will focus on water pricing and conservation for households, agriculture and industry while supporting domestic and regional efforts to increase supply.

Jordan lies at the crossroads of the least economically integrated region in the world. Increased regional economic integration can foster new opportunities, open new markets, and serve as a bulwark against destabilizing economic and political disruptions. We will help Jordan explore ways to maximize its Free Trade Agreement with the United States to expand trade relationships with Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and other regional neighbors. We will encourage it to continue expanding economic cooperation with Israel. We will also urge Jordan to take a more active role in regional water diplomacy, and to work towards regional cooperation in mitigating and adapting to climate change. These efforts will serve both Jordan and the U.S. and ensure our consistent support for Jordan as a regional leader in tolerance, regional cooperation, and inclusive economic growth.

The U.S. strategic partnership with Jordan, a major non-NATO ally, spans seven decades, and is rooted in our security relationship. We must keep pace with shifting regional events such as instability in Syria and continued Iranian expansion in the Levant. Our military and law enforcement cooperation with Jordan combats violent extremism, deters illicit flows, and counters malign regional actors. The recently signed Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) and our newest bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are opportunities to update and enhance our partnership. To reinforce internal and regional stability, we will support Jordan continuing its generous policies for the millions of refugees it hosts, creating economic opportunities for them and reducing tension with host communities, even as we lead international humanitarian efforts for durable solutions by resettling as many refugees as possible.

Jordan cannot overcome its political and socio-economic challenges without responding to its citizens' needs, especially women and youth, who together comprise 80 percent of the population. The GoJ is implementing timely political reform measures designed to broaden political rights and responsibilities. Democratic reforms will be effective when they increase citizen-state interaction, strengthen the role and independence of civil society, and build citizen faith in institutions which deliver efficient, transparent, and equitable services. Similarly, overcoming deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes governing the roles and responsibilities of women, men, and young people in Jordan will enhance the rights of women and youth. We will provide support to government institutions to improve services for survivors of gender-based violence. We will provide training and leadership opportunities for women and youth so that they can become leaders in their families, communities and in government. We will also help Jordan tell its story to the Jordanian people, through an emphasis on effective and strategic government public communications and support for Jordanian journalists.

We will make the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Jordan and Syria a top priority by ensuring they have equitable access to consular services. We will facilitate travel to the United States, including to reunify families and build the economy, while preventing the travel of persons intending harm to the United States.

The embassy's management platform must be resourced and restructured to provide our 42 ICASS organizations the support they need for their current as well as expanding roles in the administration of regional policy and programs. By integrating diverse views, experiences and expertise in our policies, operations, programs, and recruitment, we will deliver foreign policy that better reflects U.S. society, more effectively advances the activities described above, and offers a compelling alternative to the autocratic and monolithic approach of our competitors.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

### **Mission Goal 1:** Increase inclusive, climate-smart economic growth

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Jordan accelerates private sector growth and implements its economic policy reforms (Links to CDCS DO1: Inclusive Private Sector-Led Growth)
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Jordan strengthens its water security, upholds existing climate commitments, and increases efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change (Links to CDCS DO2: Jordan's Ability to Improve its Water Security Strengthened)
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Jordan accelerates public health outcomes and human capacity development (Links to CDCS DO4: Human Potential Accelerated)

### **Mission Goal 2:** Enhance domestic and regional security

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Jordan combats violent extremism, deters illicit flows, and counters malign regional actors
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Jordan contributes to regional peace and stability
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Jordan manages the effects of regional crises and enhances the resiliency of host communities and refugee populations
- **Mission Objective 2.4:** The Embassy protects U.S. citizens and facilitates legitimate economy-building travel

**Mission Goal 3:** Strengthen responsive, accountable governance

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Jordan's public institutions govern transparently and effectively, while respecting human rights (Links to CDCS DO3: Equitable, Democratic Governance Strengthened)
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Citizens engage in inclusive and constructive public discourse (Links to CDCS DO5: Agency and Leadership of Women and Youth Enhanced)
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** The embassy increases the public's knowledge of U.S. policy, values, and commitment to Jordan

**Management Goal 1:** Ensure the embassy's management platform is resourced commensurate to its foreign policy responsibilities and objectives in the region

- **Management Objective 1.1:** The embassy fosters a maximally effective workforce through the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- **Management Objective 1.2:** The embassy delivers accessible infrastructure, technological resources, and workspaces to facilitate growth in support of Jordanian and regional programs

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

#### **Mission Goal 1 | Increase inclusive, climate-smart economic growth**

**Description |** Jordan's stability, a paramount U.S. national security interest to preserve the access we need to protect and pursue our mutual interests in the region, is directly linked to its economic progress. However, Jordan is reeling from a decade of low economic growth that has left it with a debt-to-GDP ratio of more than 95 percent and unemployment rates for youth and recent college graduates at near 50 percent and 23 percent respectively. Jordan's water demand exceeds supply by 33 percent, forcing Jordan to ration water to industry, agriculture, and households. Water scarcity threatens Jordan's three largest industries: tourism, textiles, and mining, while also cutting rural incomes for those dependent on agriculture. It also undermines the already precarious livelihoods of middle- and low-income Jordanians. These factors threaten the Kingdom's stability. Accelerating economic growth and employment is vital to encouraging political stability and combating radicalization and extremism. Under this goal, the embassy collaborates with the Government and the private sector to implement vital economic reform measures to facilitate private sector growth as well as its transition to becoming the Kingdom's primary employer. Additionally, the Embassy works with Jordan to promote renewable energy, diversify its energy portfolio, and manage Jordan's scarce water resources to support sustainable economic growth and regional cooperation.



**Objective 1.1 |** Jordan accelerates private sector growth and implements its economic policy reforms

- **Justification |** Jordan's private sector must lead economic growth and job creation. Public sector employment already strains fiscal resources, and crowds out private employment. As the private sector grows, the share of Jordanians working in the private sector relative to the public sector must increase. Constraints to private sector growth include burdensome, unpredictable and/or ambiguous regulations, institutionalized favoritism, lack of access to credit, low competitiveness, red tape, cultural restrictions to entry by women into the workplace, and barriers to formality that hinder start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises from thriving. To achieve economic growth, the GoJ must address these constraints and improve Jordan's fiscal position. On the fiscal side, this must include reforms decreasing pressure on the state budget and increasing revenue collection without stymieing economic growth. The public sector needs to continue to develop its capabilities and efficiency, including through digitization and expanded technological interoperability between government agencies. Improved consultations between the public and private sector could sensitize the government to the private sector's needs and promote certainty around government rulemaking. Unemployment is driven by low demand for labor from the private sector, fragmentation of the labor market, the mismatch between the output of the educational system and the needs of the job market; the dearth of economic activity outside of Amman, particularly the southern region; the absence of a reliable and affordable transportation system; and the cost of maintaining social security. In addition, a culture of shame and perceptions linked to some professions result in foreign workers taking jobs that could otherwise be filled by Jordanians.

- **Linkages** | This mission objective supports Goal 3 of the 2022-2026 Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa: Strengthen inclusive economic growth to achieve stable and prosperous societies and create new markets for U.S. exports. This objective also supports the following strategies and policies:
  - State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan
  - U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality
  - A Roadmap to Build a Climate Resilient Economy
  - USAID Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Policy
  - USAID Economic Growth Policy
  - INSSG
  - NEA Bureau Plan
- **Risks** | Failure to grow the private sector will strain the GoJ's limited resources and increase Jordan's dependence on grants and concessionary loans from the United States and the international donor community. The Government of Jordan excels at developing comprehensive strategies but has historically fallen short on full implementation of necessary reforms.

Jordan is vulnerable to external political shocks that hamper economic growth. The Embassy will integrate resiliency into its activities. For instance, USAID is seeking to promote more resilient types of tourism, such as faith-based tourism, into Jordan. Without reforms, growth will be insufficient to meet the GoJ's fiscal targets, causing the deficit to grow. If the deficit widens substantially, the GoJ will look to international markets and donors to fill the gaps, which will not be sustainable in the medium-term. The Economic Section and USAID will promote prudent public financial management to ensure Jordan has the "fiscal space" to weather future crises.

**Objective 1.2** | Jordan strengthens its water security, upholds existing climate commitments, and increases efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

- **Justification** | Jordan must manage its limited natural resources carefully and sustainably to support stability and economic growth. As one of the most water scarce countries in the world, Jordan acutely feels the effects of climate change, and must contend with dwindling water resources as a result of population growth and diminishing precipitation. To achieve water security, the GoJ will have to diversify supply sources, embrace desalination via the Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyance Project (AAWDCP), achieve financial sustainability to cover the cost of providing water, decrease water losses, and increase water conservation. Most of Jordan's greenhouse gas emissions come from energy production and the water sector is the country's largest single energy consumer. When the AAWDCP comes online, it will double the water sector's energy consumption and significantly increase the operational expenses of the water sector. Therefore, integrating renewable energy and energy efficiency measures into the water sector, particularly into the AAWDCP, will not only contribute towards Jordan's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 31 percent by 2030 but will improve the resilience of Jordan's water sector, by bringing down the operating cost of desalination, the future of Jordan's water security. USAID's position as a core donor to the water sector empowers Jordan to make climate-smart investments, strengthen regional cooperation, and leverage domestic resources to combat the effects of climate change. The embassy will partner with the GoJ and private sector to expand the water supply and avoid unfavorable infrastructure deals by (1) developing Jordan's water and wastewater infrastructure, (2) strengthening water governance, and (3) increasing water conservation, especially in the agriculture sector, which consumes 52 percent of Jordan's water supply.

- **Linkages |** This mission objective supports Objective 5.2 of the Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa: Strengthen innovative and nature-based solutions to promote climate adaptation and sustainable management of natural resources, including water. This objective also supports the following strategies and policies:
  - USAID Climate Strategy (IR 1.2: Build Resilience)
  - Embassy Amman Climate Strategy
- **Risks |** Four key risks that could threaten success include: sudden and sizable increases in water demand, unexpected decrease in water supply, excessive turnover in senior GoJ officials, and political and/or popular opposition to reforms and national and regional solutions. Mission Amman will support the GoJ in diversifying supply sources to mitigate possible increases in water demand and/or decreases in supply. USAID will also help the GoJ incorporate infrastructure redundancies to strengthen the resilience of the sector.

**Objective 1.3 | Jordan accelerates public health outcomes and human capacity development**

- **Justification |** While Jordan’s total fertility rate declined in recent years, births and economic or refugee-driven migration increased the population by 59 percent in the last decade, placing unsustainable pressure on Jordan’s health and education sectors. This increase created untenable gaps in health infrastructure, contributed to debt of over \$500 million in the health sector, and strained natural resources. The country’s public schools, which have been closed to in-person learning for much of the past two years, are likewise overcrowded and under-resourced. During the pandemic, many vulnerable children were unable to access the Ministry’s online learning platform due to lack of technology, parental support, or both. Even prior to COVID, student learning outcomes for Jordan lagged those of similar upper middle-income countries. The Embassy will address barriers to education access and retention, improve quality, and enhance systems through policy reform for more efficient and capable finance, human resources, and administrative systems.
- **Linkages |** This objective supports Objective 3.2 of the Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa: Drive inclusive economic prosperity through the inclusion of women and marginalized communities in a more equitable, healthy, and skilled labor market. This objective also supports the following strategies and policies:
  - USAID Education Policy (Pillar Two - “Focus and concentrate investments on measurably and sustainably improving learning and educational outcomes” and “promote inclusion and equity”)
  - USAID’s key strategic global health priorities: preventing child and maternal deaths and combating infectious diseases.
- **Risks |** Jordan’s education and health sectors must improve access to quality services and overcome COVID challenges. Backsliding in these areas would threaten Jordan’s near-term and long-term prospects for economic growth. In the education sector, COVID prevention measures have further limited access to education. There is also a lack of learning spaces to promote equity and inclusiveness. The

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embassy will work with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to coordinate a response to the education crisis and implement measures for equitable access to quality education. The Embassy will also work with development partners to address access to education for the most vulnerable including refugee populations. In the health sector, COVID affected access to and uptake of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services, which could reverse reductions in the total fertility rate and the economic downturn has increased reliance on public health services. The embassy will work with the Ministry of Health and local partners to promote the importance of access to supplies and counseling. The embassy will also continue to strengthen public financial management within the Ministry of Health.

**Mission Goal 2 | Enhance domestic and regional security**

**Description |** Security in Jordan and the region underpins the access and stability necessary to accomplish economic and political goals in the national interests of the United States and Jordan. Leveraging strong military and law enforcement cooperation, together the United States and Jordan will combat violent extremism, deter illicit flows, and counter malign regional actors. The recently signed DCA and the MOU provide opportunities to enhance the U.S.-Jordanian strategic partnership and outline updated areas of critical security and economic cooperation. Securing Jordan's borders remains a bilateral, multiagency challenge. Comprehensive solutions to deterring illicit flows of people, money, weapons, drugs, and goods will contribute to security and economic stability. While working to secure a stable Jordan, contributions to regional peace and stability will be key to national security. Collaboratively managing the effects of regional crises and enhancing the resiliency of host communities and refugee populations will result in positive security and economic outcomes. Multilateral cooperation and the support of international organizations will further enhance bilateral efforts to strengthen domestic and regional security. While engaging in multilateral cooperation, the United States will protect its strategic partnership from the activities of governments of Iran, the PRC, and Russia, which may seek to encourage authoritarianism, financial indebtedness, and instability toward their own agenda and contrary to the interests of the United States.

**Objective 2.1** | Jordan combats violent extremism, deters illicit flows, and counters malign regional actors.

- **Justification** | Jordan's geopolitical importance necessitates its borders be secured, terrorists and violent extremism combatted, and malign regional actors countered. Jordan's border security is a challenge, as it has many ministries and agencies with authority to protect it, requiring a whole of government approach by the embassy to deter illicit flows that negatively affect Jordan's security and stability. The U.S. interagency team in Jordan must be the exemplar of collaborative, results-driven efforts on the border and within Jordan. Within Jordan's borders, combatting violent extremism and countering malign regional actors will further U.S. interests in Jordan and the region.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports Goal 1 of the Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa: Modernize and revitalize U.S. alliances, partnerships, and multilateral cooperation to prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts, counter terrorism, and address regional security and stabilization challenges. This objective also supports Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1 to Protect America's Security at Home and Abroad and the INL Functional Bureau Strategy.
- **Risks** | If violent extremism, illicit flows, and malign regional actors are left unchecked, domestic and regional insecurity and destabilization will follow.



**Objective 2.2 | Jordan contributes to regional peace and stability**

- **Justification** | Jordan is a credible regional facilitator, mediator, and convener. Its moderate stance, geographical location, long history of regional diplomatic leadership and general alignment with broader U.S. regional goals make it an indispensable partner and force multiplier for achieving U.S. interests. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to fuel regional instability and presents a domestic challenge for Jordan as well, given its demographics. Efforts will encourage Jordanian support for measures to deescalate tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, especially in Jerusalem, and support U.S. Middle East peace initiatives. To advance U.S. foreign policy goals on Syria, the embassy will continue to encourage Jordan to align its efforts with the UN's step-for-step approach to pursue a political solution to the conflict. More broadly, the embassy will continue to encourage Jordan's regional foreign policy to align with U.S. efforts to stabilize and deescalate conflicts in the region.
- **Linkages** | This objective is in direct support of the MENA Joint Regional Strategy, the Administration's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and its policy on Syria. This objective further links with Mission Objective 1.1 (economic growth), 1.2 (water and climate), and 2.3 (refugees).
- **Risks** | The embassy will continue to stress to Jordan the importance of coordinating and aligning regional goals in order to promote peace, stability, and the security of Jordan and the region.

**Objective 2.3 |** Jordan manages the effects of regional crises and enhances the resiliency of host communities and refugee populations

- **Justification |** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports more than 670,000 Syrian refugees are registered in Jordan, while the GoJ estimates the number is closer to 1.3 million when including unregistered refugees. Jordan also hosts 2 million Palestinian, 66,000 Iraqi, 12,000 Yemeni, and thousands of Sudanese, Somali, and other refugees. Refugees have placed a significant strain on Jordan's already limited resources. Since the start of the crisis the United States has provided more than \$1.9 billion in humanitarian assistance for refugees from Syria and Jordanian host communities and has helped the GoJ respond to the needs of communities hosting refugees across all sectors, including governance, health, education, and water.

More than ten years into the crisis, conditions in Syria remain unsafe and needs in Jordan have not diminished. However, humanitarian assistance vis-à-vis development assistance from non-U.S. donors is declining (MOPIC data in 2020 showed that the relative share of humanitarian funding as a proportion of overall funding reduced from half to one third of total funding). It is more important than ever to align humanitarian and development assistance in a manner that helps Jordan enhance the resiliency and self-reliance of host communities and refugee populations, thereby decreasing dependence on humanitarian aid. In light of the ongoing conflict in Syria, the United States will also continue to provide humanitarian aid to communities across Syria and stabilization assistance to opposition-held areas of Syria.

- **Linkages |** This objective supports the following strategies and policies:
  - Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's Functional Bureau Strategy,
  - The February 4, 2021, Executive Order on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and
  - The February 4, 2021, Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI Persons Around the World,
  - National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality (2021)

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- USAID Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy (2020)
- Joint Strategic Plan between the U.S. Department of State and USAID (FY 2018 - 2022)
- U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (2019)
- **Risks |** Ensuring refugees and host community members in Jordan can meet their basic needs, even as international humanitarian resources decline, is critical for averting a detrimental increase in poverty that could compromise the country's stability and security. It is also essential to maintaining social cohesion between refugees and host communities, which is fundamental to discouraging conflict at the community level, maintaining trust in the national government, and discouraging pressure for premature returns to Syria that would compromise refugees' safety. To mitigate these risks, embassy stakeholders will carefully review humanitarian programs to ensure they are in alignment with the Jordan Response Plan, including by appropriately targeting host communities. Stakeholders will also prioritize the sustainability of programming by seeking to build the capacity of local partners and strengthen service delivery through national institutions. Lastly, the United States will continue to emphasize the importance of responsibility sharing amongst donors to the Jordan response.

**Objective 2.4 |** The Embassy protects U.S. citizens and facilitates legitimate economy-building travel

- **Justification |** The Consular section's top priorities are ensuring the safety of the private U.S. citizen community in Jordan and facilitating legitimate travel to the United States as we focus on recovering from COVID-related backlogs and staffing shortages. Post is recovering from budget cuts and significant staffing gaps which adversely affected our ability to provide ACS and visa services. We will increase the efficiency of routine processing to reduce the backlog of ACS services and absorb the anticipated increase in demand for services as U.S. citizens resume routine travel. The Consular Section will leverage the full range of messaging tools in coordination with in-person outreach to broaden our reach and improve customer understanding of consular processes. The embassy will continue to provide routine and emergency services to U.S. citizens in Syria both directly and via the Czech Republic's Protecting Power in Damascus.

The embassy will continue its robust coordination with U.S. security and law enforcement agencies to prevent the travel of persons intending harm to the United States. The Consular section will focus on increasing visa processing capacity, emphasizing family reunification and legitimate economy-building travel including critical business, student, and exchange visitor visas. The Consular section will also create innovative, efficient processes to optimize workflow.

- **Linkages |** This objective supports the following strategies and policies:
  - Bureau of Consular Affairs Functional Bureau Strategy
  - FY 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan: Strategic Goal 5
  - Bureau of Diplomatic Security Functional Bureau Strategy: Bureau Goal 2
  - Department of State – USAID Joint Strategic Goal Framework: Goals 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3.

- **Risks |** Jordanians prize U.S. visas, and lack of information or misunderstanding about Consular service levels may generate public criticism. Consular messaging also attracts intense scrutiny. The Consular section, in coordination with PAS, will pursue proactive messaging on visa service levels and changes in procedures. Failure to provide timely passport and citizenship services and/or information to Jordanian and U.S. citizens may hinder U.S. citizen travel, invite mala fide actors to engage in fraud, expose them to greater risk or potentially endanger their lives, and separate them from their families, undermining the key USG goal of supporting and safeguarding U.S. citizens abroad.

**Mission Goal 3 | Strengthen responsive, accountable governance**

**Description |** Democracy in Jordan is weakened by limited citizen-state interaction, weak civil society, and the limited capacity of the government to fulfill its end of the social compact to deliver efficient, transparent, and equitable services. In 2021, Freedom House reduced Jordan's rating from "partly free" to "not-free" due to closing space for civil liberties and the CIVICUS Monitor downgraded Jordan from "obstructed" to "repressed" for similar reasons. Recent GoJ policies, ranging from the National Defense Orders put in place during COVID (restricting freedom of expression and assembly) to the dissolution of The Teachers' Union, the largest union in the country, and the arrests of journalists (Jordan ranks 129 out of 180 countries on the 2021 World Press Freedom Index) are negatively affecting civic engagement. Processes and policies governing civil society funding and functioning lack transparency, both in their design and implementation, and are creating barriers for civil society organizations to freely operate. Some 81 percent of Jordanians blame the government for Jordan's economic situation and 90 percent of Jordanians describe the economic situation as "poor" or "very poor." Distrust of political parties and Parliament, coupled with limited opportunities for civil society and the media to represent citizens' interests to the government, stifles civic and political engagement. Under this goal, the embassy collaborates with the Government, civil society, and private sector to provide technical assistance and other support to help the sub-national and local governments improve responsiveness and accountability. The embassy will also strengthen civil society organizations to improve their ability to deliver services and promote constructive dialogue between citizens and the government.

**Objective 3.1 |** Jordan's public institutions govern transparently and effectively, while respecting human rights

- **Justification |** Government function and service delivery is an ongoing challenge. The GoJ spends 90 percent of its budget on recurrent costs (mostly salaries and employee benefits), while employing an estimated 38 percent of the entire Jordanian labor force, the legacy of a financially unsustainable social compact. Meanwhile, a lack of transparency related to resource allocation between urban and rural populations and poor service delivery at the local level have broadened the perception the national government is out of touch and ineffective. Institutional weaknesses of limited political will, a dearth of trained personnel, under-representation of women in decision-making and leadership posts, and lingering adverse gender stereotypes have proven challenging for implementation, enforcement, and overall progress on decreasing gender disparities. The GoJ's implementation of necessary political and economic reforms has generated occasional unrest; reforms are often seen as undermining the implicit social compact with tribal populations while also disrupting traditional patronage systems. At the same time, the government's public communications about these challenges and its reform efforts are ineffective and lack strategy. Moreover, tax hikes and cost of living increases, unemployment, and poverty rates leave many feeling the government does not represent their interests. The political reforms attempted over the last decade have yielded few results and inconsistent implementation of the reforms is widening the citizen-state trust gap. The embassy will strengthen the efficiency and accountability of public institutions at the national and local level so that they are more responsive and accountable to their citizens, including women and youth, and provide more opportunities for economic development. Activities will support advancements in public sector and civil service reforms, inclusive public participation, enforcement of gender equity policies, municipal services, judiciary effectiveness and human rights. The embassy will support and engage with relevant private sector actors, civil society organizations, and other national partners to promote public accountability, efficiency, transparency, and rule of law.

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- **Linkages** | This objective supports the Objective 4.1 of the Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa: Enable more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and equitable governance systems, including rule of law. This objective also supports the following strategies and policies:
  - Joint Strategic Plan Objective 2.3 on Combating Corruption
  - U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption (December 2021)
  - U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (expected in 2022)
  - Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Functional Bureau Strategy
- **Risks** | The GoJ's political will for equitable reforms and the enforcement of rule of law could change, as a result of increasing public discontent, increasing economic challenges, natural resource gaps, and public frustration. Reforms to improve the efficiency of public administration may prove too politically and/or financially costly for GoJ to proceed with its plans. Frequent cabinet changes may further erode cabinet-level effectiveness in championing reform. Furthermore, the GoJ may have insufficient tools, leverage, financial resources, or political will to improve public employees' productivity.

To mitigate these risks the embassy will continue to engage with GoJ counterparts and reinforce the advantages of implementing needed reforms, and the long-term costs of delaying reforms. USAID will also continue to engage with officials at the working level to build their capacity to implement reforms and to build government champions for reforms.



**Objective 3.2 |** Citizens engage in inclusive and constructive public discourse

- **Justification |** Jordan cannot overcome its political and socio-economic challenges without responding to its citizens' needs, especially women and youth, and offering them avenues for social and political expression. Citizens have limited opportunities for engagement in decision-making processes, and this challenge is more profound for marginalized populations. Furthermore, persistent, deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes governing the roles and responsibilities of women, men, and young people in Jordan are leading to systematic denial of the rights of women and youth. This denial of rights harms the Jordanian economy, reduces the gross domestic product, and results in a loss of return on public spending on education.

The embassy will strengthen sub-national and local governance structures and platforms for communication with the public and will support policies and laws that enhance government functions at all levels. A core element to achieving this objective is strengthening civil society organizations (CSO) and coalitions to improve their advocacy and organizational management skills as well as their ability to deliver services and promote constructive dialogue between citizens and government. GoJ regulations on many CSOs, including financial reporting requirements and oversight audits, are operational challenges that CSOs face. Meanwhile, media censorship and self-censorship create gaps in knowledge and data citizens would otherwise use to assert their rights, address challenges in society, and hold the government accountable. Transformative change requires holistic, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing efforts with all Jordanian stakeholders, including the private sector, to challenge non-inclusive perceptions about citizen participation. This includes challenging stereotypes restricting participation by women and youth.

- **Linkages |** This objective supports the Objective 4.2 of the Joint Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa: Enable independent civil society to adapt, represent diverse communities, and hold governments accountable. This objective also supports the following strategies and policies:

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- National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality (October 2021), which outlines a whole-of-government intersectional effort to remove the structural barriers that have hampered advancements in gender equity and equality.
- 2019 Women Peace and Security Strategy, especially the first Line of Effort, which mandates the preparation and meaningful participation of women around the world in informal and formal decision-making processes related to conflict and crisis.
- **Risks |** The process of implementing beneficial reforms will lead to instability at least in the short-term before a new equilibrium is reached. GoJ responses to this instability may further erode democratic norms and processes, for example, through emergency Defense Orders or media censorship. Civil society and media space could become further restricted, which would reduce outlets for citizens to engage and express displeasure with worsening quality of life. Another salient risk is an increasing sense of disenfranchisement among youth under 30 years of age, who comprise 63 percent of the Jordanian population. A significant youth bulge and low female participation rates will exacerbate instability, extremism, and brain drain. Finally, economic priorities overwhelm the GoJ's agenda, limiting appetite to address sensitive priorities such as women's rights and priorities related to marginalized communities. There is also a risk that the USG's efforts to counter discriminatory social norms and practices, particularly related to women and youth, may be derailed by perceptions of outside interference.

To minimize potential risk to implementation, the USG will align with the King's discussion papers, national strategies, GOJ priority papers, and academic studies and analysis to ensure the interagency is working in the right spaces. It will also cultivate a diverse and broad-based group of partners, including non-traditional groups, civil society, national and local governments, non-government organizations, and the media. Finally, the USG will work with and through local organizations and government institutions who have a stake in advancing reform and apply approaches that have been developed for or are adapted to the Jordanian context.

**Objective 3.3** | The embassy increases the public's knowledge of U.S. policy, values, and commitment to Jordan

- **Justification** | Highlighting U.S. partnership with Jordan on several issues widely supported by the population from job skills training to cultural preservation, will lead Jordanians to better appreciate the strategic value and community benefit of the bilateral relationship. Exchange program participants, armed with first-hand knowledge of America and insight into both cultures, become trusted partners, credible amplifiers of our messages, and dispellers of myths and stereotypes of American culture. Promoting English-language learning, both through direct instruction and via programs that develop English-teaching capacity in educational institutions, expands access to the American perspective, including in geographic locations where the United States is less popular. Finally, by prioritizing emerging women leaders, social media influencers, journalists, government communicators, and other target audiences, the Embassy will energize broad networks of influential Jordanians to help amplify our messages.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports the following strategies and policies:
  - E.O. 13985 on Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities
  - E.O. 13988 on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation and Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons Around the World
  - Executive Order 14020 on Gender Equity and Equality
  - White House National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality
  - NEA Regional China strategy
  - NEA Bureau Strategy
- **Risks** | Global and local health conditions and related government restrictions could hinder our ability to carry out in-person programming, exchanges, and other engagements. Regional political and security issues could also compromise our ability to carry our programming on the ground throughout Jordan. Additionally, in certain parts of the country it could be very difficult to engage in in-

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person programming if specific and local security issues emerge. Virtual substitutions are available in the case of health or security restrictions and have been employed successfully; however, in-person engagements are always more effective. The short-lived appointments, e.g., often less than one year, for government ministers, university presidents, and other important officials threaten the consistency of Jordanian government partner support for specific projects and the sustainability of those projects in the medium- to long-term. Engaging civil society partners and mid-level government officials can mitigate this risk, to some extent. Finally, a lack of trust in their government among many in the Jordanian public often undermines positive outreach on bilateral projects and U.S. assistance. To mitigate this, we center outreach on the beneficiaries, using their voices and stories to share how U.S. programs improved their lives and communities.

## 4. Management Goal and Objectives

**Management Goal 1** | Ensure the embassy's management platform is resourced commensurate to its foreign policy responsibilities and objectives in the region.

**Description** | The majority of 44 ICASS organizations operating under Chief of Mission Authority in Jordan have both bilateral and regional portfolios. As the Embassy's interagency collectively assumes a more prominent role in the administration of regional policy and programs, the management platform must be resourced and structured accordingly to provide proper support to its client agencies not only in Jordan, but also in the region, where they engage host countries to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

**Management Objective 1.1** | The embassy fosters a maximally effective workforce through the promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

- **Justification** | Embassy Amman firmly believes creating and maintaining a diverse workforce is critical to our foreign policy objectives in Jordan and the region. When we integrate our large interagency community's diverse ideas, experiences and skills, our foreign policy is stronger and more effective. It is the work of every member of the Embassy Amman community to integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our programs, policies, and operations. Embassy Amman continues its robust USDH recruitment strategy to attract a diverse Embassy workforce through active outreach efforts and a transparent interview process.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports the following strategies and policies:
  - State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan
  - Department of State DEIA Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- **Risks** | A lack of diversity in the embassy's workforce prevents post from providing innovative and creative solutions to our complex challenges in Jordan and in the region. To meet this objective, the embassy will develop a strategy to recruit from a

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broader pool of potential local staff applicants, strengthen the skills of current employees by cultivating effective leaders and managers who ensure all employees contribute successfully to the mission, and institutionalize and expand professional development opportunities for all Embassy staff. Workplace flexibilities are an important part of post-COVID Embassy operations. To be competitive in the post-COVID environment, it is crucial to offer flexible work arrangements that do not strain operations yet also accommodate employees' priorities.

**Management Objective 1.2** | The embassy delivers accessible infrastructure, technological resources, and workspaces to facilitate growth in support of Jordanian and regional programs

- **Justification** | The existing traditional management platform is not designed to provide regional support. It has no sufficient staffing level or regional coordination capacity with other posts in the region to ensure client agencies at posts receive adequate administrative support for their initiatives outside of Jordan. An adequate infrastructure that supports the level of growth post is experiencing will improve the operational efficiency of agencies at post and facilitate a more secure, safe, and coherent work environment. Expanding clean energy programs and promoting water conservation save money and align management practices with climate change priorities.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports the following strategies and policies:
  - State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan
  - State Department DEIA Plan
- **Risks** | The effectiveness of interagency programs in the region will suffer if administrative support for them does not reach beyond the borders of Jordan. Until the proper regional support mechanism is in place, p will continue to informally coordinate with embassies in the region to secure administrative support that client agencies need for their regional activity and programs. An inadequate infrastructure and services that cannot properly support the expected staffing growth can potentially diminish the embassy's operational efficiency and create security, safety, and health hazards that have a negative impact on Post's morale and productivity. During the

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development of the Amman Facility Analysis Design Plan, post will coordinate with the Office of Overseas Building Operations (OBO) to maximize the efficient use of existing space and facilities to ensure embassy operations continue with minimum disruption. The growing physical footprint can have a negative environmental impact unless robust clean energy programs are implemented in parallel. Without an effective feedback system, improving and tailoring services to meet customers' needs is often difficult. To address this, the Customer Service Center operations will be revised slightly to better leverage its resources to improve communication between service providers and clients and create a perpetual feedback system that enables service providers to adjust their services quickly and as needed.