



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The U.S. Mission to Côte d'Ivoire is building a strategic bilateral partnership with the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, a reliable political, economic and security partner of the United States. Success in the achievement of our priorities will advance shared prosperity for the American and Ivorian people. Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth, democratic progress, the resiliency of its people and social institutions, and its capacity to counter violent extremism are increasingly important in a region facing significant challenges to governance and security. Côte d'Ivoire seeks to expand partnerships with the United States to create the conditions for its citizens to achieve their aspirations. Mission Côte d'Ivoire's objectives are organized into three pillars - People, Peace, and Prosperity – an “all of America” approach that seeks human security through economic growth, opportunity, strong democratic institutions, and public health.

The People of our Mission community are essential to achieving our strategic objectives. By putting People first, Mission Côte d'Ivoire is projecting American values of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and empowerment. In our operations and our policy priorities, we are leading by example. By providing tools, training, and opportunities for all members of our Mission community, we are empowering our Embassy staff, supporting families, and creating an inclusive environment where all employees can thrive. We are building interagency and cross-functional teams to encourage innovation and improve our workplace. Our management objectives underpin all ICS goals by creating the platform to support and protect our People.

We engage across sectors to advance American interests by empowering the People of Côte d'Ivoire. Through U.S. programs, we are strengthening democratic institutions, promoting rule of law, championing justice, and encouraging social cohesion. Our messaging amplifies the impact of our programmatic investments. Our Public Diplomacy Section will increase cultural and educational exchanges, focusing on diversity and inclusion, women's empowerment, and economic opportunities for young people. The Embassy's Consular Section issued more student visas than ever before in 2023, expanding ties between the American and Ivorian people. The USG's longstanding support to developing human capital through health programs has a profound positive impact on Ivoirians by reducing mortality, increasing the quality of life for

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millions, and preparing for and responding to public health threats. Our partnerships are increasing health security for the United States and Côte d'Ivoire. With Côte d'Ivoire's economic success, it is a magnet for those seeking refuge. Our assistance programs are building Côte d'Ivoire's capacity to expand opportunity and empower local communities.

Peace is a central pillar for Mission Côte d'Ivoire. The Embassy partners with Ivorian security forces and judicial actors to protect Ivorian territory against transitional threats such as violent extremism and illicit activities, and to increase their capability to coordinate with regional and international partners, in tune with the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability. We are encouraging peacebuilding by improving professionalism and accountability of security forces to the population. By focusing on social cohesion, we are advancing democratic governance in communities vulnerable to violent extremist propaganda. U.S. partnerships provide health and education services and counter the effects of climate change on Côte d'Ivoire's agriculture-focused economy to improve human security. Our renewed emphasis on; inclusive economic growth gives hope to younger generations, delivering Peace dividends, thus strengthening resilience and cultivating a People-centered security ecosystem in Côte d'Ivoire.

Shared Prosperity drives Mission Côte d'Ivoire's objective to become a center of excellence for economic and commercial engagement. Ivorians seek new public and private sector partnerships with the United States to achieve their ambitious goals as the region's economic engine.

Transformative investment through the Millenium Challenge Corporation Compact is positively impacting the lives of more than 11 million People. The Embassy's engagement supports entrepreneurship, an enabling business environment, increased U.S. – Ivorian trade and investment, and upgrading infrastructure to encourage equitable economic growth and mitigate climate change. Targeted interagency programming encourages U.S. private sector and institutional commitments in agriculture, education, cybersecurity, digital economy, energy, transportation, and creative industries. Sustained investment in Côte d'Ivoire's health sector has significantly lightened the burden of disease in the country, enabling a healthier population to develop their country. U.S. investments in education and exchanges are key to upgrading skills and knowledge in a diversifying and inclusive economy, and responsive institutions support

transparency and a level playing field. Political stability, underwritten by public reconciliation of key political figures, is indispensable to an enabling environment for Prosperity.

We support Côte d'Ivoire's continued progress through our People, Peace and Prosperity agenda. U.S. Mission programs are building resilient institutions and communities to buttress Côte d'Ivoire as it confronts significant headwinds in an increasingly complicated region with growing political, economic and security challenges. Its progress toward political reconciliation sends a powerful signal to neighboring countries that open dialogue is best for managing political conflicts. The country experienced spillover attacks on its northern border by violent extremist organizations and it responded with increased services and efforts to build trust between communities and security services. Côte d'Ivoire is managing a steady flow of refugees fleeing conflict in neighboring countries, investing its own resources to build shelter and meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable. It is targeted by malign actors through information manipulation to undermine its progress. In response to these challenges, the government and people of Côte d'Ivoire are diversifying international partnerships and the United States can seize this critical moment to solidify our position as the partner of choice.

Together the United States and Côte d'Ivoire can promote open societies, leverage the dynamism of young people, advance shared values, and encourage new initiatives and alliances to achieve our common aspirations. As a priority country for the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, Côte d'Ivoire seeks to elevate its position as a reliable security partner to leverage U.S. investments that drive innovation. The United States will deepen its partnership with Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen democratic institutions, expand economic and development cooperation, and increase security. The United States will benefit from a strong ally in West Africa with shared values, commitment to the rules-based international order, and the ability to positively shape security outcomes.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** Côte d'Ivoire practices democratic governance, respects human rights, and supports the rules-based international order.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Côte d'Ivoire promotes transparent and fair political competition and builds responsive and accountable institutions.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Côte d'Ivoire promotes social cohesion and respect for human rights.

**Mission Goal 2:** Côte d'Ivoire secures its territory against internal and external threats while serving as a stabilizing U.S. partner in the region.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Ivoirian security forces improve their ability to secure their land and maritime borders, counter terrorism and violent extremism, and address illicit activities while respecting human rights.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Ivoirian judicial and security sectors improve their professionalism, focusing on reducing corruption and improving their accountability to the people of Cote d'Ivoire.

**Mission Goal 3:** Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth is more evenly distributed, resulting in a stronger, climate-adaptive, transparent, and diversified economy.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Côte d'Ivoire increasingly supports entrepreneurship and sees a blossoming private sector.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Côte d'Ivoire increases trade and investment with the United States and within the region while adapting to a changing climate.

**Mission Goal 4:** Côte d'Ivoire provides reliable, equitable, and sustainable public health and education services to its residents nationwide.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Côte d'Ivoire improves delivery, accessibility, and quality of basic public health services nationwide.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Côte d'Ivoire builds a stronger skills-based education system that is responsive to private sector needs and ensures the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

**Management Objective 1:** Expand as a regional Embassy platform while cultivating a culture of empowerment, training, and innovation to improve the quality and continuity of ICASS services, and maintaining strong security practices.

**Management Objective 2:** Strengthen the workplace environment for a growing Mission community and provide strong career development opportunities for all personnel.

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1:** Côte d'Ivoire practices democratic governance, respects human rights, and supports the rules-based international order.

**Description:** Emerging from years of conflict and political violence, Côte d'Ivoire continues to improve its political stability and enjoy strong economic growth. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees assessed that the fundamental and durable changes in Côte d'Ivoire justified a cessation of refugee status for Ivoirian refugees outside of the country in June 2022. To distribute years of positive economic growth, the government must act more equitably to address the population's needs through effective engagement and dialogue that strengthens political inclusiveness, women's empowerment, social cohesion, and fosters nationwide reconciliation. It must also improve the provision of, and access to, basic government services like security, justice, public, and social services. It must reinforce the accountability of political and administrative actors who provide such services. While the country finds itself at an inflection point, long standing habits of opaque political deals and systemic corruption if left unchecked could derail positive momentum. To address these concerns, and in concert with Ivoirian citizens as well as the objectives and spirit of the SPCPS, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will focus on enhancing the constructive and solutions-oriented role civil society can play in holding the government and elected officials accountable, supporting activities that foster women's empowerment and inclusive political dialogue, and catalyzing the role media should play in amplifying the legitimate concerns of the citizenry. Civil society's ability to effectively articulate and offer solutions to the government while also advocating for quality service delivery, respect for human rights, and rejection of violent extremism remain crucial to the country's continued democratic development. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will also reinforce these issues through sub-national diplomacy. Strengthened governance will serve U.S. interests by creating a more stable country that projects stability, hope, and inspiration in a troubled region resulting in a more reliable U.S. partnership in political, security, and economic terms.



**Objective 1.1:** Côte d'Ivoire promotes transparent and fair political competition and builds responsive and accountable institutions. (Links to RDCS RDO 1: Democracy, Peace, and Stability Enhanced)

- **Justification:** Inclusive political debate and engagement is a proven recipe for countering historic misunderstandings and mistrust that divide citizens across regional and communal lines and isolate marginalized communities already at risk of being coopted by violent extremists. The government must reinforce the accountability of political and administrative actors who are responsible for providing services to local communities. Deeply rooted systems of patronage and favoritism result in opaque political deals and systemic corruption. These, if left unchecked could derail positive momentum.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objectives 3.1 and 3.3, RDCS RDO 1, Objective 2 of the SPCPS, and is linked to the ICS Security goal. Considerable gains in democratic governance are at risk due to domestic and regional terrorist threats stemming from the Sahelian countries. Failure by the government to engage and include long-marginalized communities makes them vulnerable to being co-opted by terrorist and criminal networks against security forces and ultimately, their own government. To catalyze the democratic pluralism gained in the last legislative elections, the government must engage the opposition and civil society actors in constructive dialogue around governance and the allocation of services, particularly at the sub-national level. Our Public Diplomacy Section is training civil society and political actors to identify and combat misinformation with a focus on strategic communication and branding.
- **Risks:** Progress requires the government to strengthen anti-corruption controls and accountability, maintain a culture of protecting civil liberties and freedom of the press, and increase investments in the justice sector. Increased security concerns and lack of progress addressing petty corruption by security forces compound long present citizen apathy and frustration. This lethal combination at a minimum stymies potential and at worst risks the country taking a path like its neighbors in the Sahel. Depressed grassroots participation and continued uneven allocation of resources to sub-national governments fuel intercommunal tensions and distances the people from their government.

**Objective 1.2:** Côte d'Ivoire promotes social cohesion and respect for human rights within and outside its borders and invests in an informed, open population. (Links to RDCS RDO 1: Democracy, Peace, and Stability Enhanced)

- **Justification:** Intercommunal and interethnic tensions, competition over scarce land, and irregular migration from the Sahelian countries compounded by climate change effects adds to the urgency of integrating marginalized communities and increasing protections of human rights. Media and civil society are two powerful institutions that can facilitate social cohesion, build communities, and raise awareness. A professional media landscape based on sound journalistic fundamentals is an essential component of a modern democracy and connects communities through publications, radio, television, or the Internet. Likewise, a vibrant civil society sector channels the voice of a population, reinforcing engagement in salient issues, and setting a norm for citizen participation in matters of public interest. Both the media and civil society play an enormous role in maintaining democracy by empowering the population to directly express their preferences to their government and building intra-community linkages. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will support civil society and media to continue strengthening their growing role in building Côte d'Ivoire into a stable partner of the United States.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objective 3.2, RDCS RDO 1 and 4, Objective 1 of the SPCPS, and is linked to the ICS Security goal. Côte d'Ivoire has made considerable progress since the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis, and the country is relied upon within the region to serve as a significant contributor to peace and security, as well as an engine for economic growth and prosperity. Therefore, further improvements in respect for human rights and a flourishing civil society and media will enhance Côte d'Ivoire's resilience in the face of security-related turmoil in the region and project a positive example for neighboring countries to aspire to.
- **Risks:** Progress requires the government to maintain a culture of protecting civil liberties and freedom of the press and increase investments in the justice sector. Increased security concerns compound long present citizen apathy and frustration. This lethal combination at a minimum stymies potential and at worst risks the country taking a path like its neighbors in

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the Sahel. Depressed grassroots participation and continued uneven allocation of resources to sub-national government officials fuel intercommunal tensions and distances the people from their government. Virtually all press outlets are either government-affiliated or owned by politicians or other wealthy individuals. Not surprisingly, media content frequently reflects the political views of the owner. The Ivoirian press is generally free and tends to report accurately, but journalists are hindered by limited resources and a low capacity.

**Mission Goal 2:** Côte d'Ivoire secures its territory against internal and external threats while serving as a stabilizing U.S. partner in the region.

**Description:** Côte d'Ivoire faces internal and external threats to its stability and security, including violent extremism, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, piracy, and various forms of trafficking. In recent years, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has expanded into the country's northern territory, launching sophisticated attacks against Ivoirian security forces, and destabilizing an already vulnerable region. While there were no significant Violent Extremist Organization (VEO) attacks since 2021, the region exhibits poverty, criminality, communal tensions, unemployment, and a lack of government services – the formula for extremist recruitment. The characteristics of fragility that threaten the security of Côte d'Ivoire and other sub-regional states also leave them vulnerable to exploitation by hostile foreign powers. In the maritime domain, state-sponsored, industrial-scale illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone is an especially salient threat, robbing Côte d'Ivoire of vital economic resources, devastating its marine and coastal ecosystems, and violating Ivoirian sovereignty. Compounding these security challenges are the deleterious effects of climate change, which add to uncertainties and stoke interethnic conflict, placing additional pressure on communities and government institutions in areas with limited capacity to respond. Côte d'Ivoire is at a critical juncture where preventative security investments can result in outsized impacts and reduce fragility in the future.

U.S. interests are best supported by a safe and prosperous Côte d'Ivoire able to serve as a regional leader in West Africa, a strong U.S. security partner, and a stalwart against encroaching

instability from the Sahel. Interagency programs are cultivating a people-centered security ecosystem. To best assist Ivoirian partners, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will apply the Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability under the Global Fragility Act to invest in the Ivoirian government's ability to secure its borders, build the government's capacity to address external and internal threats, and professionalize its security forces by improving their responsiveness and accountability to the population. Post will work with like-minded partners in the region to achieve these objectives, encouraging international cooperation where possible and prioritizing programs in areas where the United States enjoys a competitive advantage. In doing so, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will protect the safety and security of U.S. citizens and interests, build on the multi-faceted bilateral partnership with Côte d'Ivoire, and prevent its destabilization and exploitation by transnational threats and hostile actors.

**Objective 2.1:** Ivoirian security forces improve their ability to secure their land and maritime borders, counter terrorism and violent extremism, and address illicit activities while respecting human rights

- **Justification:** Secure borders and effective security services that carry out their mandates while respecting human rights are essential for security, stability, and economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, Ivoirian security forces frequently lack sufficient communication, transportation, defense, and force-projection equipment needed to conduct operations. Further, different security services routinely experience challenges in cooperating in joint operations. To that end, U.S. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will assist the country's efforts to increase control over its borders, contribute to counter- terrorism initiatives, and improve information gathering, analysis, and response to illicit activities. U.S. engagement will also focus on deepening local, bilateral, and regional partnerships to enable the government to address the country's security challenges within established legal authorities, international norms, and respect for human rights. Collaborative action between Côte d'Ivoire and its regional partners in coastal West Africa is essential for addressing the shared threats of violent extremism, illicit maritime activities such as piracy and IUU fishing, and cross-border drug and human trafficking.

- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objective 1.1 and 1.5, RDCS RDO 1, SPCPS Objective 3, and is linked to improving democratic governance and economic opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire as security is a necessary condition for improvements in both areas. This objective is also linked to addressing environmental crime and the effects of climate change in Côte d'Ivoire. Many violent extremists and regional terrorist groups in northern Côte d'Ivoire are financially connected to the illicit networks behind activities such as wildlife trafficking, illegal gold mining, and unregulated logging. Therefore, dismantling these networks through counterterrorism and law enforcement operations will reduce both funding for extremist organizations as well as the negative effect these crimes have on the environment in Côte d'Ivoire.
- **Risks:** The risks associated with not achieving this objective include continued expansion of violent extremism into Côte d'Ivoire and an increase in illegal activities within its borders, which could prevent the Ivoirian government from achieving the country's political and economic development goals and create vulnerabilities within Ivoirian society that U.S. strategic competitors and transnational threats can exploit.

**Objective 2.2:** Ivoirian judicial and security sectors improve their professionalism, focusing on reducing corruption and improving their accountability to the people of Cote d'Ivoire.

- **Justification:** Côte d'Ivoire's future security and prosperity requires professional security services that are transparent, apolitical, and accountable to the population. Since 2018, the Ivoirian government has made significant investments in its security forces, repairing internal rifts, and improving its capacity to respond to the needs of its population. However, Côte d'Ivoire's security sector still lacks adequate institutional transparency and accountability mechanisms, fostering an environment of impunity, fraud, and corruption within the police and military. This encourages petty corruption and racketeering by security forces which affects public confidence in both security services and the Ivoirian government's anti-corruption efforts. Addressing these issues is essential for Côte d'Ivoire's long-term security and stability. As such, Mission Côte

d'Ivoire will adopt an innovative package of projects and programs that will assist the Ivoirian government in reducing corruption within its security forces, improving transparency, and implementing institutional mechanisms that encourage greater accountability to the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objective 3.4, RDCS RDO 1, SPCPS Objective 3, and is linked to U.S. efforts to improve democratic governance, diversity, and inclusivity in Côte d'Ivoire. In many parts of the country, security forces serve as the most visible example of critical government services. By reducing security sector corruption and improving the Ivoirian military and police forces' responsiveness to the needs of the people within its borders, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire can also realize more equitable delivery of these services, especially to historically marginalized groups and thus improve social cohesion.

**Risks:** Ivoirian security services' and institutions' failure to improve transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to population needs risks exacerbating societal grievances that motivate violent extremism among disenfranchised populations and render them vulnerable to exploitation by domestic, international, and transnational bad actors.

**Mission Goal 3:** Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth is more evenly distributed, resulting in a stronger, climate adaptive, transparent, and diversified economy.

**Description:** Côte d'Ivoire has retaken its position as the economic engine of Francophone West Africa. The country's GDP growth in 2022 was 6.7 percent, with the Ivoirian government projecting real GDP growth 6.5 percent in 2024-2025 period. Côte d'Ivoire weathered the COVID-19 pandemic better than its neighbors by registering positive GDP growth of 1.8 percent at the height of crisis. Even with these gains, 77 percent of its population is under the age of 35 and lacking in the skills and education they need to be competitive in a modernizing economy. Women are not empowered to fully participate in the economy, although full inclusion would be an accelerator for growth. A large percentage of the population is employed in the informal sector, creating a burden of higher taxation on the formal sector. Economic growth has also come at the cost of environmental degradation. Côte d'Ivoire has pledged to reach net zero emissions by 2030 mainly through reforestation and land-use changes. Reaching these goals will be difficult as small-scale farmers need land to grow crops and often cut down trees to make space for agriculture. Though the country's economic outlook is promising, the poverty rate remains high at 39 percent, and a wide income disparity exists between Abidjan (the economic and commercial capital) and the rest of the country. It is therefore important that economic growth is sustainable and inclusive, benefiting the entire population.

The government launched its 2021-2025 National Development Plan (NDP) in which it allocates resources to strengthen private sector competitiveness and address corruption. Corruption, dampens foreign investor interest and hobbles efforts to distribute economic growth more equitably. The government intends to aggressively shift up the value chain its commodity-export-dependent economy. The United States is one of Côte d'Ivoire's leading trading partners, based largely on U.S. imports of cocoa for the chocolate supply chain. Côte d'Ivoire is the United States' largest trading partner in Francophone Africa, and the United States is one of Côte d'Ivoire's top five trading partners with two-way trade totaling more than \$1.47 billion in 2022. The United States is well positioned to benefit from and contribute to Côte d'Ivoire's

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impressive growth, especially as U.S. firms and banks continue investing in Abidjan as a growing regional business hub. Initiatives such as the Partnership for Global Infrastructure, Prosper Africa, the Department of State's Africa Bureau Commercial Diplomacy Strategy, and other tools offer incentives to promote competitive markets, increase U.S. private sector participation, especially in infrastructure development, and address the climate crisis through smart, sustainable infrastructure solutions. The Prosperity Working Group and Embassy Deal Team encourage elevated engagement to offer tools, financing, and other vehicles to transition from idea to project as well as fill gaps in feasibility studies and financing, as possible.

**Objective 3.1:** Côte d'Ivoire supports entrepreneurship and sees a blossoming private sector. (Links to the RDCS RDO 2: Inclusive Broad-based Economic Growth Advanced).

- **Justification:** Since 2012, much of Côte d'Ivoire's impressive economic expansion has been financed by public sector spending on infrastructure. Côte d'Ivoire's Strategic Plan CI-2030 aims to "consolidate [economic] recovery and accelerate the market towards emergence." To achieve sustained economic growth, interventions will require dynamic participation from the private sector, and the NDP has the stated goal of mobilizing 70 percent of the financing from the private sector to realize the plan. To promote this private sector-led growth, Post will draw on tools available, such as the Partnership for Global Infrastructure, Prosper Africa, the Department of State's Africa Bureau Commercial Diplomacy Strategy, and other to support the country's needs and goals.
- **Linkages:** This objective advances JRS Objective 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3; and NSSG Expanding Economic Prosperity and Opportunity Pillar, and RDCS RDO 2, Objective 2. This goal is also linked to democratic governance as the private sector and investors seek a stable, level playing field in which to operate. Bureaucratic hurdles, over-regulation, and new tax requirements disincentivize informal businesses from making the jump to formal, though that would allow them to compete in government procurement processes. It is also linked to security, as growing risks emanate from the Sahel and the terrorist and criminal groups operating in northern Côte d'Ivoire and along its border. Economic growth is also linked to climate change goals, as openness to foreign engagement

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facilitates climate smart investments; and both public and private investment is necessary to achieve Côte d'Ivoire's ambitious climate goals. An inclusive approach that supports women's economic empowerment will have a tremendous impact on sustainable growth.

- **Risks:** If Côte d'Ivoire's economy fails to maintain and exceed current GDP growth rates, it risks falling short of the population's demand for jobs and economic opportunity. Sustainability and broad inclusion are critical to avoid disenfranchised and frustrated youth becoming increasingly vulnerable to extremist groups and criminal alternatives for income generation. A faltering economy would also provide additional incentives for the government to look towards strategic competitors like Russia and China for economic assistance.

**Objective 3.2:** Côte d'Ivoire increases trade and investment with the United States and within the region, while adapting to a changing climate. (Links to the RDCS RDO 2: Inclusive Broad-based Economic Growth Advanced).

- **Justification:** Mission Côte d'Ivoire is confident that expanding trade and investment is a critical way to deepen ties between our two countries while also providing direct benefits to Americans through better-paying jobs in the United States. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement entered into force in January 2021 without fanfare, but its potential for increasing intra-African trade and investment could transform the continent from being a net exporter of raw commodities in exchange for finished industrial goods by diversifying and building real trade linkages among African member countries. Trade also plays a catalytic role in improving the overall business environment by making conditions more appealing for private investment. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will work to expand trade and investment by supporting policies that promote a more open and competitive business climate, by helping Côte d'Ivoire move beyond the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and by supporting an increased U.S. commercial presence in the country.

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- **Linkages:** This objective advances JRS Objective 2.1 and 2.3; RDCS RDO 2, and NSSG Expanding Economic Prosperity and Opportunity Pillar. Increased two-way trade and investment strengthens bilateral cooperation and helps to make U.S. global competitors less attractive, which links this Objective directly to democratic governance and security. Côte d'Ivoire represents untapped potential for U.S. investors, who currently comprise a small proportion of the country's foreign direct investment. The country has the third largest economy in ECOWAS and the second largest port in West Africa, demonstrating its status as a regional economic powerhouse. Abidjan has been a strategic location for companies to base their operations for all of francophone West Africa, and the government is keen to promote the country as a dynamic entry point into the sub-region.
- **Risks:** Failing to increase trade and investment linkages with the U.S. means a missed opportunity to promote both U.S. and Ivorian economic growth and prosperity. Lack of participation of U.S. economic actors cedes the ground to global competitors with less transparent ways of doing business and less interest in supporting stability, good governance, and human rights.

**Mission Goal 4:** Côte d'Ivoire provides reliable, equitable, and sustainable public health and education services to its residents nationwide.

**Description:** A sustained focus on public health and health security saved hundreds of thousands of lives and created resilient communities that make peace and prosperity possible. The USG is the largest bilateral investor in Côte d'Ivoire's health sector with direct investments already over \$2.3 billion since 2003. The USG works closely with other like-minded donors to advance strategic objectives in the health sector. The USG will continue to invest in the Government of Côte d'Ivoire's (GoCI) efforts to reach HIV epidemic control through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief – PEPFAR, eliminate malaria through the President's Malaria Initiative – PMI, strengthen maternal and child health and family planning services, and reinforce Côte d'Ivoire's ability to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to infectious disease threats through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). The USG will also support the GoCI in its efforts to achieve universal health coverage with an emphasis on sustainability planning and domestic resource mobilization while focusing on an accountable and transparent health care delivery system.

Given high rural poverty, as well as demonstrated gaps in equitable access and use of health services, the USG will support the GoCI to improve access to and availability of high-quality healthcare services for all populations, with a particular focus on addressing the structural, educational, and social bottlenecks that compound inequities in access to care. The USG will continue to monitor progress made; collect and triangulate data on stigma, discrimination and health disparities affecting marginalized and key populations; and work with communities and key stakeholders to address gaps identified in health service delivery in both clinical and community settings.

U.S. government investments in Côte d'Ivoire's education system strive to create opportunities for young people who need access to marketable skills. The USG works to improve access to and quality of lower secondary education by constructing secondary schools in rural and peri-urban areas, improving teacher training, tackling gender disparities, and enhancing the government's information management system. The USG also works to improve the quality and

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relevance of technical and vocational education and training centers (TVET) through private sector led training in skills such as numeracy, literacy, soft skills, and technical skills. The Embassy invests in educational exchange, teaching English, and supporting student access to internet and other informational resources through a network of American Spaces and Shelves. In the Health sector, USG works to enhance the skills of university students and health workers to meet the current and changing needs of the country.

USG investments in health and education are mutually reinforcing with other Mission Goals; government provision of public health and education services and reaching marginalized groups is a key component of good governance; a healthier, educated population, with local access to quality health and education services will improve stability and trust in government and be more productive and better contribute to economic growth. USG activities to improve government provision of quality health and education services in hard to reach and historically marginalized communities bolsters broader USG efforts to prevent the destabilizing expansion of terrorism and violent extremism, thus echoing the spirit of the SPCPS.

Côte d'Ivoire is already challenged by the impacts of climate change and climate-related impacts are expected to increase. Currently, rainfall patterns are shifting, causing flooding and leaving the country vulnerable to changing disease patterns, including for diseases such as malaria and dengue. The USG is monitoring these shifts and planning programming adjustments as necessary.

**Objective 4.1:** Côte d'Ivoire improves delivery, accessibility, and quality of basic public health services nationwide. (Links to the RDCS RDO 3: Governments, Institutions, and Partners Catalyzed to Strengthen Health Systems).

- **Justification:** Mission Côte d'Ivoire is focused on supporting the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the delivery of essential health services in a manner that is transparent, equitable and evidence-based so that public actions and resources capably address the needs of all the population. Over the medium- to long-term, Mission Côte d'Ivoire aims to ensure that the approach we support will be sustainable by the Ivoirians after the United States has drawn down its assistance.

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- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objective 4.1, the PEPFAR 5-Year Strategy (including 95-95-95 by 2025; i.e. diagnose 95% of all HIV-positive individuals, provide antiretroviral therapy for 95% of those diagnosed and achieve viral suppression for 95% of those treated), the PMI Strategy 2021-2026, the US Global Health Security Strategy, the National Biodefense Strategy, International Health Regulations, SPCPS Objective 2.3, and RDCS RDO 3. This goal is also linked to democratic governance, security, and economic growth. By improving the effectiveness of health services, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will help the Government of Côte d'Ivoire improve public financial management and maximize the impact of its largest public expenditures. These investments in basic services demonstrate the GoCI commitment to the well-being of its population and improves Ivoirian allegiance to the state – an important factor in peace and security. This also responds to Post's principles of supporting the GoCI to invest in its People, in Peace, for Prosperity. Importantly, improving health status is also linked to economic growth in that it creates a larger and more productive workforce.
- **Risks:** Without improved accessibility to and quality of health services in an equitable manner, the Ivoirian population will continue to experience preventable death and diseases. Shortened life expectancy, absenteeism, and recurrent out-of-pocket health expenses all contribute negatively to the domestic economy, human capital, and government delivery of basic services, making the country more vulnerable to non-state actors who threaten violent extremism. Mission Abidjan can mitigate these risks by directing health and education-related investments to augment and amplify Ivoirian efforts to narrow the gaps between population needs and services currently available.

**Objective 4.2:** Côte d'Ivoire will build a stronger skills-based education system that is responsive to private sector needs and ensures the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

- **Justification:** Years of conflict and uneven governance has led to inadequate training and education to compete in the global economy. Lagging education infrastructure is consistently outstripped by the fast-growing youth population. In Côte d'Ivoire, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete only eight years of school by her 18th birthday. This is lower than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa and lower middle-income countries. Without proper education, the largely young population of Côte d'Ivoire faces precarious economic prospects, and businesses in turn have a hard time finding qualified, productive labor that can help grow their businesses. U.S. investments in this area will help the government close the education gap and support economic development goals.
- **Linkages:** This directly links to JRS Bureau Objective 4.4, SPCPS Objective 2.3, and ICS democracy and economic growth goals. Education is inextricably linked with democratic governance and economic growth. Improvements to the delivery and accessibility of education should improve other public services and government functions as lessons learned and skills developed in the management of the education sector transfer into other sectors, especially within the context of using data to improve transparency and service delivery. Mission Côte d'Ivoire, through the MCC Compact, will incentivize government's investment delivery and accessibility of education services to contribute to a stronger governance framework within Côte d'Ivoire.
- **Risks:** The continued inability to adequately educate Côte d'Ivoire's burgeoning youth population will lead to greater instability, reduced economic growth, and greater long-term poverty. This scenario raises the risk of political instability, exploitation by international trafficking networks, and violent extremism as desperate households look for ways to survive. This risk can be mitigated by supporting communities and the private sector in their efforts to advocate for their education needs to government.

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## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** Expand as a regional Embassy platform while cultivating a culture of empowerment, training, and innovation to improve the quality and continuity of ICASS services, and maintaining strong security practices. **Justification:** In recent years, Embassy Abidjan has successfully regularized management services and internal controls following a prolonged period of political uncertainty and unrest in Côte d'Ivoire. USDH and LE Staff positions are now filled with qualified staff, who are better equipped with technology tools for increased productivity, mobility, and workplace flexibilities. Mission Côte d'Ivoire's Management team provides the full range of ICASS services and support to nearly 600 employees and Eligible Family Members (EFMs) representing nine USG agencies. As the Mission grows as a regional platform, the Management team will continue to emphasize LE Staff training and empowerment to foster innovation, climate-conscious growth, professionalism, accountability, and continuity in the provision of quality ICASS services. Contributing positively to the development of Côte d'Ivoire's human capital, nurturing a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), and reducing the Mission's carbon footprint remain key operating principles. We focus on engaging with all members of our community, including LE Staff, First and Second Tour Officers (FAST) and midlevel officers to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Mission Management will work with the Regional Security Office (RSO) and Health Unit to ensure all our employees benefit from our emergency preparedness and crisis management training.

- **Linkages:** This objective supports all other ICS goals by providing the ICASS platform that will facilitate Mission programming to achieve interagency goals. Staff empowerment initiatives will also extend to all personnel throughout the Mission. It directly supports the AF JRS Bureau Management Objective.
- **Risks:** Not achieving this objective puts at risk all the aforementioned ICS goals, as well as support for smaller missions throughout Africa that are growing to depend on the stable, regional platform Mission Côte d'Ivoire provides. While the team could continue to provide some level of service with current skills and staffing, the quality of this

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platform can atrophy over time if not properly nurtured, resulting in failures in other Mission objectives. This will be mitigated with interagency collaboration on long-term planning documents like the MRR, annual ICASS support reviews, and inclusive budget planning for adequate staff training.

**Management Objective 2:** Strengthens the workplace environment for a growing Mission community and provides strong career development opportunities for all personnel.

- **Justification:** A Mission focus on improving the quality of life creates an environment in which employees can do their best work, encourages extensions, and attracts well-qualified bidders. While Mission Côte d'Ivoire is regaining its status as a regional hub, it remains a Historically Difficult to Staff post with recruiting challenges. Access to safe, outdoor recreational space that provides opportunities for the Mission community to come together is vital to building Mission morale. The availability of quality K-12 education is also a key element of recruitment. The USG-sponsored school has rapidly increasing enrollment and plans for facility upgrades but has room to improve in terms of communications, staff development, and consistency in the quality of instruction across all grade levels, particularly at middle and secondary school levels. The quality of post's housing pool has steadily improved over the past several years, but Mission growth will require continued efforts to find and maintain affordable, safe, and modern housing near the Embassy in an increasingly competitive real estate market. Mission Côte d'Ivoire received formal approval to develop the Embassy Annex, located near Mission housing, into a recreation center for the Mission community and subsequently received OBO funding, awarded a contract, and began construction of a swimming pool complex on the site.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports all other ICS goals by providing the conditions that will attract well-qualified staff to lead and implement Mission priorities. It directly links to the AF JRS Bureau Management Objective.



- **Risks:** A return to political instability and/or deteriorating economic, security, or health conditions in Côte d'Ivoire would impede achieving this objective. Not achieving this objective would jeopardize U.S. Mission Côte d'Ivoire's ability to have motivated, well-qualified personnel to achieve all other bilateral priorities and strategic objectives.