



# Action Plans

## Integrated Country Strategy



The Action Plan is a consolidated place to articulate:

- what new and on-going critical and realistic activities and interventions the Mission will undertake to advance the Sub-Objective and, in turn, the Mission and Management Objective;
- who will lead each effort and how various agencies are contributing to and coordinating under a single Sub-Objective;
- when you expect to carry out each activity; and
- how you will monitor progress and results.

The core component of each Action Plan is the Sub-Objectives which are the critical steps or results that need to be addressed to accomplish the Mission Objective. The overall purpose of this section is to identify what needs to be done to achieve the Sub-Objective and then ultimately the Objective. In many cases, when drafting Action Plans, it will be useful to form small Working Groups so that you can benefit from having subject matter experts working out the particulars behind each Objective.

Action plans also identify roles and responsibilities as well as illustrative indicators that describe how the Mission will monitor progress of their Activities and capture any results being achieved. There are five elements to the Action: (1) Sub-Objectives: (2) Activities, (3) Implementing Section or Agency, (4) Timeline, and (5) Monitoring and Measuring Progress.

### Structure

**Sub-Objectives** are the key results that contribute to accomplishing an Objective. You may start by first coming up with the Sub-Objectives and then defining the Activities under them, or you may decide to

### Action Plan Elements

- What** activities will you carry out?
- Who** is the lead agency or sector?
- When** will you carry out the activity?
- How will you track** progress and results?
- How** will you gauge progress?

### Questions to Consider

- What key things need to happen to achieve the Objective?
- What is the Mission currently doing well to support the Objective or Sub-Objectives and what else may be needed?
- What constraints that could hinder progress?
- What does success look like for an Objective, Sub-Objective, or Activity, and what data are available to gauge progress or capture results?

brainstorm activities and then group them together into Sub-Objectives. Most Objectives are likely to have 2-3 Action Plans with 6-8 Activities associated with each. It is important to think about how you will monitor progress on Activities, and gauge or measure if or how the Mission's Activities actually contribute to achieving the Sub-Objective. Ultimately, the Mission should monitor (and



# Action Plans

## Integrated Country Strategy



*routinely discuss) what it deems to be the important indications of progress and results towards each Sub-Objective and determine if and how these things are helping to advance the overall Objective.*

**Activities** are the key interventions the Mission will use to achieve its Sub-Objectives. These are new or existing activities that the Mission plans to conduct over the three year ICS period. This does not need to be a long list of every task the Mission will carry out; however, it should include the primary activities or critical path the Mission plans to undertake to reach their Sub-Objective. While it can be difficult to predict the specific activities that will be required three years out, it's hard to reach a goal without the team having at least a general idea of the steps it will take to get there, and this portion of the ICS can be refined by the Mission as necessary. These activities represent your current plan for how you will reach the Sub-Objective, but you can change and expand the Action Plan as you make progress so notional ideas for the longer term activities can be included if necessary. Ultimately, accomplishing the things on your Action Plans should help you achieve your Sub-Objectives and then Objectives.

**Point of Contact (POC)** notes which Section in the Embassy (Political, Consular, Public Affairs, etc.) or other USG agency is implementing each Activity. It is possible to have more than one Section or Agency implementing an Activity.

The **Timeline** should specify the date or period when each Activity will be carried out. This information will be help to provide a full picture of when each Activity will occur and will help to note any gaps or timing conflicts.

**Monitoring and Measuring Progress** is where the Mission identifies measurable and observable **indications** of progress being made towards the Sub-Objective. It's intended to help the Mission **assess and understand how its activities are progressing and what, if any, results are being realized** from those Activities. Indications of progress are not intended as a "gotcha" or to become the sole driver of what the Mission does. The purpose is to promote learning by providing data that will help **the Mission** assess which things are working, the extent to which your Activities are leading to achievement of your Sub-Objectives and Objectives, and an understanding of any changes that may be helpful. Indications of progress may include specific milestones (a significant event that contributes to the Sub-Objective or Objective) or performance indicators that capture the outputs (what we get) or outcomes (what we achieve) of your Key Activities.



# Action Plans

## Integrated Country Strategy



*Indicators and milestones included in the ICS can be illustrative of the kinds of information and data the Mission needs to discuss to monitor its progress and results, but a target for every indicator does not need to be specified in the ICS and indicators may not be necessary for every Activity, especially if the Activity is very specific or narrowly defined. Some related Activities may share indicators. For foreign assistance reported to the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources, you will need to provide target and result information for a smaller set of indicators which convey progress towards the overall Objective in your Performance Plan and Report (PPR). The PPR will not require you to report on every indicator at the Sub-Objective Level in the ICS, only **key** indications of progress at the Objective level.*

*When considering which performance indicators or milestones to include in the Action Plan, you can look to existing data that the Mission is already collecting that may be instructive, and consider other sources of available and reliable data that would help the Mission gauge and understand its progress and results. It can be more difficult to assess the results of diplomacy, advocacy, and policy efforts; however, these are such a significant part of our efforts that clearly identifying how you will monitor progress on implementing your Key Activities and accounting for results achieved is crucial.*

### Measuring Progress and Results

- I. Identify what information you need to assess progress:** What kinds of things would tell you that an Activity is progressing as you envisioned it would, or that the results you were expecting from these Activities are being achieved? What would success look like at the Sub-Objective or Objective level overall?
- II. Identify current indicators or data sources:** Assess what indicators the Mission is already tracking that could be informative (including any standard FA indicators). Take stock of other existing data sources that could be helpful (e.g. we are already compiling positive news articles monthly but hadn't analyzed the data as an indication of progress towards our Objective).
- III. Develop indicators, milestones and data sources:** You may need to start collecting data on things (monitoring) that you hadn't previously because it's an important indication of progress. Outputs can be easy to track, while outcomes such as behavioral or attitudinal changes can be more difficult to measure.



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## Integrated Country Strategy



### MISSION OBJECTIVE ACTION PLAN EXAMPLES

**SUB-OBJECTIVE: An economic reform program facilitating economic growth is implemented by Government of Freedonia.**

KEY ACTIVITY	POC	DATE	INDICATORS/ MILESTONES
Encourage the GOF to promote policies on the basis of competition, equality, good governance, and international best practices.	P/E USAID	2015- 2017	A three year tax reform Roadmap is articulated by the Ministry of Finance and accepted by GOF policymakers.  % of Freedonians paying taxes.
Provide technical assistance to GOF to implement tax and customs reforms.	USAID	2016	MOA submits a new national cooperative law to the Assembly with international best practices.
Provide technical guidance to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) to draft a national cooperatives law that facilitates agricultural production, exports, and trade, and aligns with international best practices.	P/E USAID	2015	

**SUB-OBJECTIVE: Encourage Freedonia’s justice sector to adopt reforms aimed at a more modern and transparent system, to result in greater public trust and speedier trials in all cases, including terrorism cases.**

KEY ACTIVITY	POC	DATE	INDICATORS/ MILESTONES
Train Freedonian justice sector officials in complex case management, especially regarding terrorism, cybercrime, and financial crime cases.	OPDAT	2015- 2017	Conduct at least two trainings/year with justice sector officials on named topics.
Facilitate USG/GOF exchanges in the justice sector through U.S.-based trainings, IVLP visits, and GOF-sponsored visits.	OPDAT	2016	Justice sector officials participate in at least two U.S.-based activities (IVLP, training, mutual exchange)/year designed to



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## Integrated Country Strategy



### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE ACTION PLAN EXAMPLE

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE:** Mission Freedonia has a sufficient talent pool to draw from by improving all aspects of safety and comfort that it has control over.

**SUB-OBJECTIVE:** Mission Freedonia improves community and family life

KEY ACTIVITY	POC	DATE	INDICATORS/ MILESTONES
Relocate residents to housing deemed seismically sufficient to meet OBO standards.	GSO	2015-2017	% of staff living in housing meeting OBO standards  EFM employment rates  Number of yearly MEDEVACS
Engage with the larger academic, NGO, and corporate communities to create opportunities for family employment.	CLO	2015-2017	
Deploy healthcare outreach and activities that target the wellness needs of the community.	Health Unit	2015	