

Integrated Country Strategy



Guidance & Instructions



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Acronyms & Terms

CBI - Congressional Budget Justification. The annual presentation to the Congress that justifies the entire Foreign Operations and State Operations Budget Request.

CDCS - USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy. USAID's CDCS is a planning process designed to produce strategies that concentrate resource priorities and create greater targeted impacts through coordination with interagency partners.

ICS - Integrated Country Strategy

ICS Support Team - The central coordinating team and "help desk" that facilitates the ICS process including developing and coordinating training, interpreting guidance, scheduling and logistics, tracking progress on the strategic plan, and general outreach and communications.

IRS - Joint Regional Strategy. Strategic plan for each region that sets joint State and USAID priorities.

FBS - Functional Bureau Strategy. Strategic plan that sets priorities for each State functional bureau.

MRR - Mission Resource Request. Annual mission foreign assistance and state operations resource justification.



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The [Integrated Country Strategy](#) (ICS) is a multi-year plan that articulates the U.S. priorities in a given country. The ICS sets Mission Goals and Objectives through a coordinated and collaborative planning effort among Department of State (State), USAID, and other U.S. Government (USG) agencies with programming in country. The primary audiences for the ICS are the Mission, Bureaus, and interagency partners.

This guidance is intended to provide some base criteria to increase consistency and regularity of Mission-level planning in an interagency context. An [ICS Support Team](#) composed of staff from several bureaus at State, including regional bureau planners, has been set up to help facilitate the process.

What is the Purpose of the Integrated Country Strategy?

Led by the Chief of Mission, the ICS serves as a “single, multi-year, overarching strategy that encapsulates USG policy priorities, objectives, and the means by which diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance, and other tools will be used to achieve them” (2010 [Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review](#)).

Specifically, the ICS:

- Articulates a common set of USG priority Mission Goals and Objectives in the country,
- Provides the basis for the development of the annual [Mission Resource Requests](#) and performance management,
- Provides a tool to coordinate activities throughout the Mission,
- Links Mission Goals and Mission Objectives to the [Joint Regional Strategy](#), and
- Coordinates USG actions to address challenges and opportunities in a country.

The ICS is the Mission planning component of the broader planning, budgeting and performance management cycle. Planning at the agency level in the [State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan](#) is supported by more detailed planning at the Bureau and Mission levels. Regional Bureaus at USAID and State, in collaboration with Functional Bureaus, identify region-specific guidance in the Joint Regional Strategy. Along with [Functional Bureau Strategies](#), the Joint Regional Strategy is used to help guide decision making and budgeting at the Bureau level. The Joint Regional Strategy and Functional Bureau Strategies also inform Mission level planning in the ICS.



The ICS is a strategy document built from a Mission-based planning process. The multi-year ICS, Joint Regional Strategy and Functional Bureau Strategy frame and inform elements of operational planning, performance management, and the two components of the State-USAID annual budget request: the Mission Resource Request and the Bureau Resource Request. The Mission Resource Request and Bureau Resource Requests focus on resources required to implement the priorities outlined in the strategies. The ICS also serves as the backbone for Mission-level performance management.



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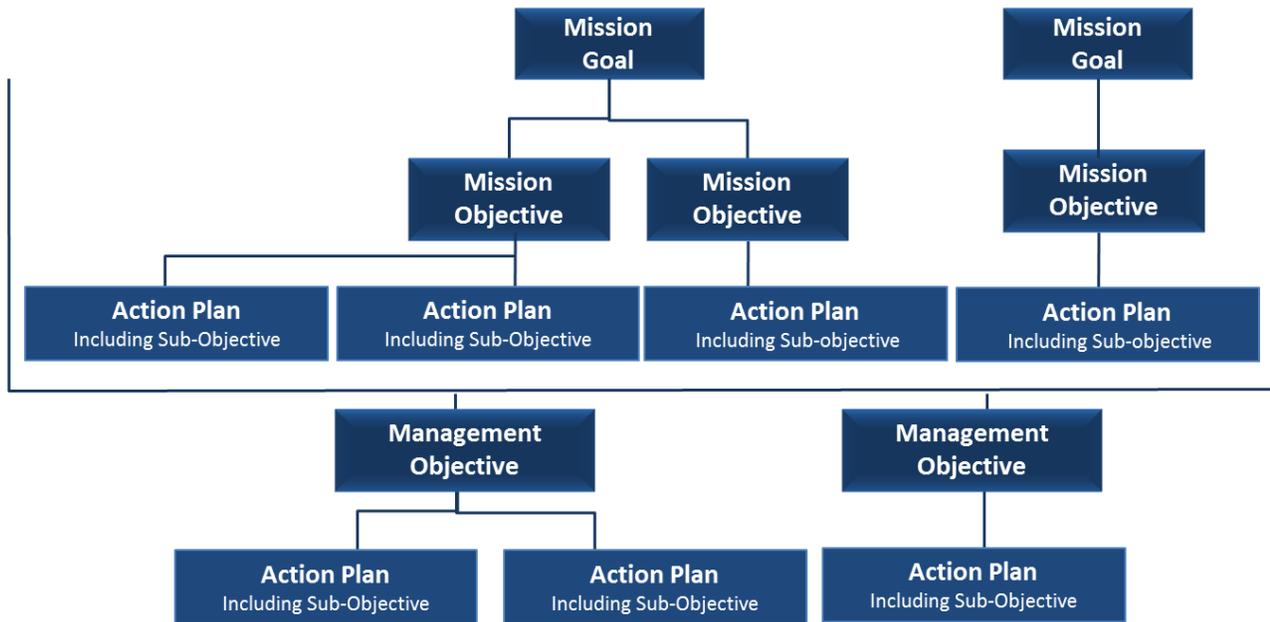
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What does the Process Entail?

Missions will complete an ICS every three years following the publication of the Joint Regional Strategy by the relevant geographic Bureau. **The planning period addressed in the ICS is three years from the date of final submission.** In the strategic planning process, all Missions will gather staff from USG agencies in country to consider opportunities and challenges by analyzing country context, the Joint Regional Strategy, Functional Bureau Strategies, and other USG guidance and strategy; set priorities for USG activities in country; and document these in the ICS.

The general framework of the ICS may articulate Mission Goals, Mission Objectives, Management Objectives and Action Plans as is illustrated below:

Illustrative Strategic Framework*



*The number of Mission Goals, Mission Objectives, Management Objectives, and Action Plans will vary by Mission.

Mission Goals

Mission Goals are ambitious statements of what the Mission intends to accomplish in the long term (five years or beyond) in the host country. These statements can include political, economic, health, social, environmental, or security outcomes.

Mission Objectives

Each Mission Goal will be complemented by one or more Mission Objectives. The Mission Objective is a concrete, realistic statement of a result in the host country that the Mission can significantly influence in the medium term (three to five years), and the achievement of which contributes to accomplishing one or more Mission Goals.



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Management Objectives

Each ICS should be supported by one or more Management Objectives. The Management Objective is a concrete, realistic statement of an improvement in the functions of management that the Mission can significantly influence in the medium term (three to five years), and the achievement of which supports accomplishing Mission Goals and Mission Objectives.

Action Plans including Sub- Objectives

Each Mission and Management Objective is supported by a number of Action Plans that identify what needs to be done to achieve a Sub-Objective. Achieving Sub-Objectives should translate into achieving the broader Objective which they support. Action Plans for each Sub-Objective identify Key Activities that will advance the Sub-Objective as well as the timeline for their implementation and key indications of progress that the Mission needs to track to gauge progress against the Sub-Objective.

What is the Suggested Method to Develop an Integrated Country Strategy?

The ICS is designed to focus more on creating an opportunity for interagency planning dialogue than on a heavily narrated report. Missions are encouraged to build off of existing processes they have set up for interagency dialogue and planning but are encouraged to include the following in their planning process.

Step 1: Preparation (estimated 1-2 weeks)

- **Determine who is involved-** The Chief of Mission determines who is involved in leading and participating in the planning process. It is recommended that the Deputy Chief of Mission serve as the overall Coordinator for this process, that a mid-level officer or higher serve as the primary point of contact, and that all agencies represented at a Mission participate in the development of the ICS.
- **Consult with the Regional Bureau-** The Mission consults with the Regional Bureau to better understand the significance of the Joint Regional Strategy for its Mission. The Mission may also want to consult relevant Functional Bureaus and other stakeholders with functional expertise. If needed, the Chief of Mission should also consult with appropriate State and USAID regional bureaus to discuss any questions or potential issues related to integration of the USAID CDCS and ICS.
- **Consult with stakeholders-** The Mission consults with host country and other appropriate stakeholders regarding key needs, priorities, and constraints they have identified.
- **Decide if further research is needed-** The Mission decides if further research is needed in any area to better inform ICS decisions such as, defining the necessary objectives to achieve a goal, determining what should be articulated in the action plan to achieve an objective, or assessing critical sectors that could impact strategic direction. Research or assessments could be conducted at the discretion of the Chief of Mission based on the size, complexity, and composition of the Mission



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portfolio; agency guidance; or as recommended by senior leadership. Missions are encouraged to use existing assessment tools or reach out to experts at headquarters for advice on conducting assessments. Assessment Annexes are included for the Security and Justice Sector (Annex A) and Gender (Annex B). [Country Data Analytics](#) (CDA) country and regional packages are available for countries that receive foreign assistance. They provide context for how a developing country compares to other recipients of U.S. foreign assistance across different sectors as well as information on financial flows.

Step 2: Dialogue & Draft (10 weeks)

- **Initial Discussion:** The Country Team discusses country context (assumptions, challenges and opportunities) validates and/or updates Mission Goals and Objectives, and works with the ICS Team and Regional Bureau to refine the strategic framework.
- **Working Group Sessions to Fully Develop ICS Objectives:** The Country Team tasks working groups to further define the Mission and Management Objectives and to develop Action Plans including Sub-Objectives for each Objective.
- **Reconvene to confirm Mission Objectives and Action Plans:** All participants reconvene after the Mission and Management Objectives are fully developed to discuss the full ICS plan and make any adjustments to ensure all of the Mission Objectives and Management Objectives are mutually supporting.

Step 3: Final Review and Approval (6 weeks)

See “How is an ICS Reviewed and Approved?” section below for more details.

Step 4: Implementation

The Mission should use the strategy to guide activities in country and monitor progress.



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What Is the Format of the Integrated Country Strategy?

- I. CHIEF OF MISSION PRIORITIES
- II. COUNTRY CONTEXT
- III. MISSION GOALS
- IV. MISSION OBJECTIVES
- V. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES
- VI. ACTION PLANS INCLUDING SUB-OBJECTIVES

The page limits are suggested to emphasize to missions that they should document only what is necessary. The most important consideration is to be clear and concise.

I. Chief of Mission Priorities (1-2 pages)

This section provides an overview that communicates USG priorities to a broad audience. It should identify the key U.S. interests in the country flowing from any relevant U.S. national strategies and Presidential Directives, agency strategies and policies, the Joint Regional Strategy, and the Mission's own assessment. It should provide a concise overview of these Mission Goals and Objectives and how Mission Objectives come together to create a cohesive response to the challenges and opportunities in country.

II. Country Context (1-2 pages)

This section provides a picture of the geopolitical environment the Mission will face in the coming years. In a bulleted list, it should identify key planning assumptions, challenges, opportunities, and risks for the U.S. over the planning horizon. It should focus only on those aspects that are likely to have an impact on the Mission's choice of Objectives or its success in achieving them, rather than a litany of all possible contingencies.

- Assumptions may pertain to the anticipated political, economic, social, public opinion, environmental, military, or funding environment during the next three to five years;
- Challenges are any substantial obstacles that a Mission faces in the political, economic, social, public opinion, environmental, military, or funding environment that might hinder objective achievement;
- New opportunities are avenues for the advancement of USG priorities that were previously unavailable, inaccessible, or not leveraged; and
- Risks are the possible setbacks to USG interests stemming from the identified challenges.

III. Mission Goals (2-4 Goals)

The Mission should decide on broad goal statements that the USG desires to achieve in country. Missions should have between **2 to 4 Mission Goals**. Mission Goals may be based on or taken directly from the Joint Regional Strategy Goals or Regional Objectives, and/or the USAID CDCS Development Goal. The Mission Goals will serve as a link to connect the more specific Mission Objectives to the broader Joint Regional Strategy.



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IV. Mission Objectives (6-8 Objectives, 1-2 pages per Objective including Action Plan(s))

This section articulates the objectives that need to be achieved in the medium term to realize longer-term Mission Goals. The Mission Objective is a concrete, realistic, and measurable statement of a result in the host country that the Mission can significantly influence in the next three to five years. Mission Objectives should reflect the specific priorities set by the Mission during the interagency dialogue and country context assessment, and serve as a guide for Mission activities in the coming three years.

Mission Objectives can be cross-cutting or can focus on a single sector or type of activity, such as security, consular engagement and service, public diplomacy, rule of law, development, economic statecraft, donor coordination, and/or other issues important to the Mission. Taken as a whole, the set of Mission Objectives should address the Mission's priorities related to diplomacy, security and justice, and development:

- Supporting U.S. diplomatic efforts in country such as nurturing support for U.S. policies and values, assisting diplomatic delegations or negotiations;
- Carrying out security and justice sector activities in country; and
- Improving conditions in countries where development is part of the portfolio.

Missions should have between **6 to 8 Mission Objectives total** and **must not exceed 10 Mission Objectives**. Countries with an approved CDCS must include their Development Objectives as Mission Objectives in the ICS. Under certain circumstances, Posts may request an exception to permit the use of the CDCS Development Objective as a Sub-Objective in the ICS (see Action Plan section below). Please see [Incorporating the USAID CDCS in the ICS \(USAID link\)](#) on the ICS website for additional details.

Specificity and measurability of Mission Objectives is important, as they will become the building blocks for resource requests, performance reporting and communicating Mission priorities to all organizations under Chief of Mission authority. Missions should keep in mind that in the Mission Resource Request, all foreign assistance funding will need to be linked to a Mission Objective which needs to be suitable to flow through to the Congressional Budget Justification.

Each Mission Objective will be supported by the following information:

- 1) **Justification:** Where applicable, the narrative should also reference how actions taken to meet this Mission Objective will impact or support progress towards other Mission Objectives in the ICS. If applicable, Missions can use this space to identify potential and existing non-USG partners and stakeholders and the nature of their involvement in achieving each Mission Objective, and describe how the Mission will work with these external partners and stakeholders. For Mission Objectives that are USAID CDCS Development Objectives, the Missions should include their Development Hypothesis from the CDCS as the justification. Third-party data compiled in country and regional Country Data Analytics packages can strengthen justifications for Mission Objectives.
- 2) **Action Plan(s) including Sub-Objectives** which is described in Section VI.



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V. Management Objectives (1-2 pages per Objective including Action Plans)

This section articulates Management Objectives which are the improvement priorities for management functions to achieve Mission Goals and Objectives.

Management Objectives are intended to help the missions identify key management, infrastructure, and platform priorities that will significantly improve efficiency, effectiveness, and employee and customer satisfaction and support the achievement of Mission Goals and Objectives. The Mission should have a reasonable degree of influence and control over carrying out activities to achieve Management Objectives (e.g. cost, service delivery, internal controls, and quality of personnel).

Management Objectives can address specific functional areas including:

- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Performance and Program Management
- Information and Communications Technology
- Security Environment
- Procurement and Local Sourcing
- Engagement with U.S., partner, and host country stakeholders
- Human Capital
- Community and Family Life

Management Objectives will inform resource requests and communicate Mission management priorities to all organizations under Chief of Mission authority.

Each Management Objective should include a specific, measurable, and result-oriented statement of priority improvements in Mission management that will be supported by the following information:

- 1) Justification:** Provide a concise explanation (should not exceed one brief paragraph) of the issues/problem the Management Objective is addressing and how objective achievement will contribute to priorities identified in the Mission Goal and Objectives. Where applicable, the narrative should also reference how actions taken to meet this Management Objective will impact or support progress towards other Management Objectives in the ICS. Data compiled in country and by bureau, such as ICASS metrics, can strengthen justifications for Management Objectives. This section may also include how achievement of the Management Objective is impacted by important mandated activities (such as completing congressionally-mandated reports, delivering demarches, and visitor support- Congressional Delegations, Cabinet-Level, Presidential/Vice Presidential), right-sizing reviews and recommendations, pending reorganizations, facility/security upgrades and major rehab projects, new construction projects, interagency communications, operational procedures, management controls, the unveiling or retirement of key information technology (IT) systems, demands on the global IT infrastructure and others. The justification could include known conditions that have not yet been addressed (e.g. limitations of a current IT system), or management-related changes already underway that could affect Management Objective achievement (e.g. major



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reorganization of the Mission is expected in January 2016, which could delay implementation of critical activities). However, this is not the place to make requests for specific resources or staff. Those should be reserved for the annual budget request. Although the ICS is a separate process from the annual budget request, the ICS frames future resource requests, so taking the time to identify the management priorities that enables the Mission to achieve Mission Goals and Objectives will greatly help in developing these annual resource requests.

2) Action Plan(s) including Sub-Objective which is described in Section VI.

VI. Action Plans Including Sub-Objectives

Each Mission and Management Objective should be supported by Action Plan(s) including Sub-Objectives. The Action Plan centered on a Sub-Objective is a tool for country team interagency planning and communication. This section will specify the Sub-Objectives and Activities necessary to achieve each Mission Objective and Management Objective. Action Plans articulate ways to break out what needs to be accomplished in order to achieve each Mission Objective and Management Objective and delineate illustrative indications of progress. Action plans facilitate country team interagency planning, communication, review and implementation of key activities to advance Sub-Objectives. The Mission should consider what information they need to know at the Mission level to be able to assess progress towards the Sub-Objectives. This should inform their ongoing management and include related performance measures and milestones in their Action Plans. The Mission is the envisioned audience for the Sub-Objectives and Action Plans, but it will be available to USG resource and policy analysts and senior leadership as a tool for understanding Mission activities on a more detailed level. This section will include:

Sub-Objective:	Sub-Objectives are the critical steps or results that need to be addressed to accomplish the Mission and Management Objective. The remaining components of the Action Plan support the implementation and monitoring of the Sub-Objective.
➤ Key Activities:	Cite the critical activities – or “what we do” – during the full three year planning period that are necessary to achieve the Sub-Objective. This does not need to be a long list of every activity conducted at the Mission. Missions should have between 4 and 8 Key Activities total per Sub-Objective.
➤ Implementing Section or Agency:	Indicate which section/office in the Embassy (Political, Consular, Public Affairs, Economic, Regional Security, Information Management, General Services, Human Resources, Community Liaison, etc.) or other USG agency is implementing each Key Activity.
➤ Timeline:	Specify the date or period when each Key Activity will be carried out.
➤ Measuring Progress:	This section should identify illustrative indicators and/or milestones that should be tracked regularly to help the Mission conduct internal learning and understand its progress against each Sub-Objective (and in turn, better understand progress towards the overall Objective that the Sub-Objectives support). Missions should identify no more than 2-3 performance



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indicators and/or 2-3 milestones per Sub-Objective. Missions should only include the Indicators and Milestones it deems important for understanding progress towards the Sub-Objective and which it plans to actively monitor.

- **Indicators:** Often expressed in quantitative terms, Indicators are objective and measurable indications of progress towards the Sub-Objective. They can be measures of the direct, tangible results of activities – “what we get” (outputs)—) – or the desired results of the Key Activities – “what we achieve” (short- or long-term outcomes).
- **Milestones:** A Milestone is also an indication of progress towards the Sub-Objective that is often expressed in qualitative terms. Milestones identify a specific event, product, or step in a process that must be achieved by a certain point in time to support the Sub-Objective.

For Foreign Assistance activities reported to the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources through the [Performance Plan and Report \(PPR\)](#), Indicators and Milestones at the Sub-Objective level will set the stage for Missions to be able to report critical aspects of progress towards their overall Mission Objectives.

There is no centralized reporting mechanism for all other Indicators or Milestones in the Action Plan. Missions collecting and reporting Indicators or Milestones, including ICASS metrics, should review and track these as necessary and use the ICS as a Mission management tool.

For any Mission Objective that is also a Development Objective in a CDCS please list the Intermediate Results, Development Objective performance indicators, the USG agencies that are involved with implementing and achieving the Mission Objective, and below the Action Plan include a link to the final CDCS. As appropriate, Missions can include sub-objectives and Action Plans for non-USAID engagement and programming that also contributes to the achievement of this type of Mission Objective.



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What is the Feedback and Submission Process?

The feedback and submission phase will provide an opportunity for the Mission to discuss the feasibility of the strategy with Washington stakeholders and refine the draft as needed. The ICS is Mission owned. As such, it does not receive formal Washington clearance. The feedback and submission process includes the following steps:

1. Within five weeks of the launch of the ICS process, each Mission must submit a draft Country Context, and Mission Goal and Mission and Management Objective framework using a [standard template \(linked here\)](#) to the ICS Support Team at ICS@state.gov. The ICS team and Regional Bureau have three business days to provide comments back to the Mission on the framework. The Mission should continue to develop the full draft ICS once they receive comments.
2. After a full draft ICS has been developed and reviewed by the Chief of Mission, the Mission will send a copy to the ICS Support Team. The ICS Support Team will alert the Mission if any key components of the strategy are missing. The ICS Support Team will circulate the draft document to reviewers.
3. Reviewers will have three weeks to read the draft strategies and provide feedback using a [standard template](#). Reviewers will be asked to focus their feedback on the feasibility and focus of the Mission and Management Objectives and Action Plans. The ICS Support Team will compile the feedback from the Bureaus and forward it to the Mission along with a cover letter that identifies any suggestions for better adherence to the guidance.
4. The Mission has the discretion to decide how to incorporate any of the feedback from the reviewers and is responsible for submitting a final ICS that fully adheres to the guidance within three weeks of receipt of the feedback. Elements of the draft ICS not in compliance with this guidance and identified by the ICS Support Team and Regional Bureau during the feedback process as critical **must** be addressed before the final ICS is submitted. The Mission should reach out to the Regional Bureau Planner or the ICS Support Team to discuss any concerns or questions about how to incorporate feedback.
5. The Mission submits the final ICS to the ICS Support Team. The ICS Support Team will post the final report in full for view by State and USAID staff on [Diplopedia](#). The [Dissemination Guidelines](#) for strategic plans also calls for the ICS to be posted for the interagency on the Intellink website https://intellipedia.intelink.gov/wiki/Integrated_Country_Strategy (registration required).

Strategic elements that have been recently vetted and approved, such as those in the CDCS or initiative strategies, do not need to be reconsidered in this review process. Please note that all narratives in the ICS should adhere to administration policy and decisions, and the ICS should not be used as a dissent channel.

USAID will continue to advise which Missions need to complete a CDCS and facilitate that process every five years according to the most recent CDCS guidance. Missions should not adjust the CDCS Results Framework as a result of the ICS process, and they should consult with their USAID and State regional bureaus if any issues with the results framework surface during the ICS process. For more details, please see the CDCS at <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs>



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How is the Integrated Country Strategy used in Washington and implemented at the Mission?

The primary intent of the ICS planning process is to more efficiently achieve the U.S. agenda abroad through better planning, communication, and cooperation across agencies. The 2015 QDDR emphasizes the importance of Missions developing their own internal review and implementation of the ICS. The Deputy Chief of Mission or their delegate, on behalf of the Chief of Mission, will coordinate implementation of the strategy during the planning period. The strategy has been designed to help carry out this intent through to implementation in the following ways:

ICS SECTION	USE
Chief of Mission Priorities	Communicates Mission priorities and plans
Mission Objective and Management Objective	Basis for annual resource request in the Mission Resource Request
	Basis for annual performance reporting in the Foreign Assistance Performance Plan and Report (Mission Objectives Only)
	Informs reporting to Congress in the Congressional Budget Justification
	Informs USG agencies of Mission priorities and plans
Action Plan including Sub-Objective	Interagency Country Team work plan/implementation tool
	Basis for project planning and review
	Identifies key Indicators and Milestones the Mission can monitor to conduct internal learning about progress towards their Sub-Objectives (and in turn, their overall Mission Objectives).
	Select Indicators and Milestones that support Foreign Assistance Mission Objectives are reported in the Performance Plan and Report

When Can a Mission Update the Integrated Country Strategy?

The ICS is a three- year strategy with a flexible Action Plan that is regularly reviewed by the Mission and relevant stakeholders and updated as necessary. Changes to the Action Plan should be made in consultation with the relevant Country Team members and do not need Bureau approval or review. An updated version of the ICS should be submitted to the ICS@state.gov whenever changes are made. Missions have the discretion to make changes to the Action Plan as necessary to capture and guide the Mission’s actions in support of the Mission Objectives. Regular review and appropriate adjustment of the Action Plan enables Posts to more fully operationalize direction on implementing ICS Objectives.

We strongly discourage revisions to ICS Goals and Objectives. The ICS should have Goals and Objectives that are broad enough to remain mission-focused during changes in Mission leadership and funding. Furthermore, off-cycle changes to the Goals and Objectives are problematic because: (1) the ICS Objectives form the basis of an integrated cycle of resource planning and performance reporting that benefits from consistency when possible; and (2) ICS Objectives represent whole-of-government priorities including those from other agencies that have been previously approved by their leadership and the COM.

Missions may consider changing a single ICS Goal or Objective if:

- programming and funding for a specific sector are eliminated;



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- new evidence suggests an expansion to new sectors that are supported by funding (i.e. a security sector assessment identifies the need for a new rule of law program, or a MCC constraints analysis opens up new areas for economic engagement); or
- the Mission becomes a focus country for a Presidential or Agency Initiative (supported by Foreign Operations or Diplomatic Engagement resources) and the specific initiative or focus area is not currently in the ICS as an Objective.

Missions may consider changing multiple ICS Goals or Objectives if:

- a major political, environmental, or security disruption that requires fundamental changes to U.S. diplomatic engagement and interests within the country, e.g. wholesale change in the political establishment of the country (Egypt, Mali), a transformative natural disaster (Haiti), or civil war (Syria)
 - this does not normally include anticipated changes such as elections, though these may represent a fundamental change in U.S. engagement with that country and prompt a priority change;
 - this does not include persistent and ongoing conflict or isolated incidents of violence;
 - this does not include natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes that could be expected to occur within a country in any given five year period;
- legal or budgetary foreign assistance restrictions are put in place (by either the US or host country) that force the cancellation or long-term hiatus of programming within the country; or
- the nature of the engagement by a program or agency that supports a strategy significantly changes; such that core priorities of the Mission must also change (e.g. the USAID Mission is asked by the host government to leave).

Missions should not change an ICS Goal(s) and Objective(s) as result of a change in Mission senior leadership (i.e. new DCM or Ambassador), routine Departmental changes in resources and funding, a new requirement from a Bureau or Office, a U.S. Presidential election or regularly scheduled elections in the host country.

Missions must coordinate with their Regional Bureau and contact the ICS Support Team at ICS@state.gov if they decide to adjust a Mission Goal or Objective.

If CDCS Development Objectives are revised or developed, they will replace the existing CDCS-related Mission Objective in the ICS. If a CDCS has been approved since the time the ICS was approved, the new CDCS Development Objectives will replace the old Development Objective as Mission Objectives in the ICS. Under certain circumstances, Posts may request an exception to use the new Development Objective as a Sub-Objective.

What Resources are Available to Help Missions with the Integrated Country Strategy?

Training materials, examples, and a step by step guide for helping Missions coordinate ICS planning are available online at: http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Integrated_Country_Strategy. The Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources and the Bureau of Budget and Planning are jointly coordinate the ICS process with Regional Bureaus and can be contacted with questions at ICS@state.gov.



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What is the classification of the ICS?

Given the general interest and value in sharing key elements of the ICS the Chief of Mission Priorities section and the Mission Goal and Mission and Management Objective statements should be written at the UNCLASSIFIED level (exceptions consistent with classification guidelines may apply).

Except as noted above, the default marking for all documents will be SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED (SBU) as the ICS is a living part of an ongoing, internal deliberative process and not appropriate for public release in its entirety. In some cases a strategy or portion thereof, may need to be CLASSIFIED at a higher level, such instances are treated on a case by case basis.

Annex A: Security and Justice Sector Assessment (Optional)

Missions that identify the need for a strong focus on security and justice sector issues in their ICS can develop more detailed security and justice sector objectives with the aid of an integrated security and justice sector assessment that can help them identify appropriate goals and objectives. The Security and Justice Sector Assessment is not required for all Missions. The functional security-sector bureaus, in consultation with the Regional bureau, will recommend that select Missions conduct assessments, but the final decision rests with missions and regional bureaus.

For additional guidance, please review the [Security and Justice Sector Assessment information sheet](#).

Annex B: Gender Assessment (Optional)

The purpose of a Gender Assessment is to ensure that activities are advancing gender equality and the status of women and girls across the United States' work as a critical tool to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals.

Gender Assessment is not required for all Missions. Regional bureaus, in consultation with the Office of Global Women's Issues and Secretary's Policy Planning Staff will recommend that select Missions conduct gender assessments.

For additional guidance, please review the [Gender Assessment information sheet](#).