



Integrated Country Strategy



Guidance & Instructions



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

Contents

What is the Purpose of the Integrated Country Strategy?3

What does the Process Entail?4

What is the Suggested Method to Develop an Integrated Country Strategy?5

What Is the Format of the Integrated Country Strategy Document?6

 I. Chief of Mission Priorities (1-3 pages).....6

 II. Country Context (1-2 pages).....6

 III. Mission Goals.....7

 IV. Mission Objectives (1-3 pages per objective including Action Plan).....7

 V. Enabling Objectives and Management Platform Considerations (1 - 3 pages)..... 10

How is an Integrated Country Strategy Reviewed and Approved? 12

How is the Integrated Country Strategy Used?..... 12

When Can a Mission Update the Integrated Country Strategy?..... 13

What Resources are Available to Help Missions with the Integrated Country Strategy? 13

Annex A: Gender Assessment 14

Annex B: Security and Justice Sector Assessment..... 16

Acronyms & Terms

CDCS - USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy. USAID’s CDCCS, as described in the QDDR, is a planning process designed to produce strategies that concentrate resource priorities and creates greater targeted impacts through coordination with interagency partners.

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

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.

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

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



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

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 Mission Objectives through a coordinated and collaborative planning effort among Department of State (State), USAID, and other U.S. Government (USG) agencies operating overseas under Chief of Mission authority. The primary audiences for the ICS are the Country Team, Bureaus, State resource and policy analysts, and senior leadership in the USG.

This guidance is intended to provide some base criteria to increase consistency and regularity of Mission level planning in an interagency context and provide flexibility so that Missions can decide how to best apply planning best practices at their Mission. An [ICS Support Team](#) composed of staff from several bureaus at State, including regional bureau planners, has been set up to help facilitate the new 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, and objectives, and the means by which diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance, and other tools will be used to achieve them” (Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, Chapter 5, page 191).

Specifically, the ICS:

- Articulates a common set of USG priority Mission Goals and Mission Objectives in the country,
- Provides the basis for the development of the annual [Mission Resource Requests](#),
- 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 mandated by the QDDR. 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 also informs 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 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.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



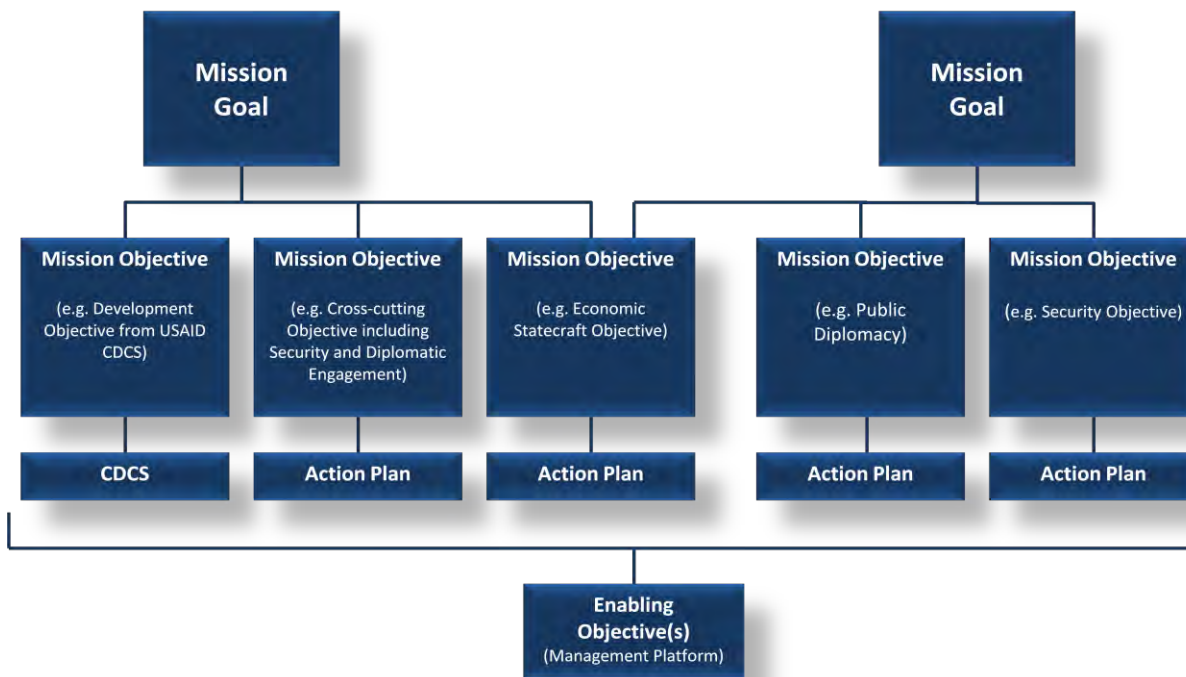
Managing for Results

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 ICS focuses on the upcoming three fiscal years. 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, and other USG guidance; 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, Enabling Objectives (management platform) and Action Plans as is illustrated below:

Illustrative Strategic Framework*



*The number of Mission Goals and Mission Objectives will vary by Mission. The composition of the Mission Objectives is at the discretion of the Mission; the examples above are for illustrative purposes only.

Mission Goal(s)

Mission Goals are ambitious statements of what the Country Team 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 should 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.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

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 (some of which may be outlined below), but are encouraged to include the following in their planning process.

Step 1: Preparation

- **Determine who is involved-** The Chief of Mission determines who is involved in leading and participating in the planning process. It is recommended the Deputy Chief of Mission serve as the overall Coordinator for this process 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-** If appropriate, the Mission consults with host country and other 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. For example, research or assessments could be conducted at the discretion of the Chief of Mission based on the size, complexity, and composition of the Mission 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 Gender (Annex A) and Security and Justice Sector (Annex B).

Step 2: Dialogue & Draft

- **Initial Discussion:** The Country Team discusses country context (assumptions, challenges and opportunities) and drafts Mission Goals and Mission Objectives.
- **Working Group Sessions to Fully Develop Mission Objectives:** The Country Team tasks working groups to further define the Mission Objectives, decide how to gauge success of the Mission Objective, and use the Action Plan to lay out an approach to achieve the Mission Objective.
- **Reconvene to confirm Mission Objectives and Action Plans:** All participants reconvene after the Mission Objectives are fully developed to discuss the full ICS plan and make any adjustments to ensure all of the Mission Objectives are mutually supporting.

Step 3: Review and Approval

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.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

What Is the Format of the Integrated Country Strategy Document?

- I. CHIEF OF MISSION PRIORITIES
- II. COUNTRY CONTEXT
- III. MISSION GOALS
- IV. MISSION OBJECTIVES
- V. ENABLING OBJECTIVES AND MANAGEMENT PLATFORM

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 (1-3 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 Country Team’s own assessment. It should provide a concise overview of these Mission Goals and Mission Objectives.

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.

Example Assumptions, Challenges, Opportunities, & Risks:

- Feedonia’s political system has limited conflict-resolution capacity.
- Civil society has expanded creating new players in the national dialogue on human rights.
- Population is expected to grow at 4% per year.
- Regional elections in one year are likely to bring instability in the north.
- New customs tracking technology will ease cross-border trade.
- Social media will continue to expand rapidly among 18-25 year-olds. Over 80% of college students in those provinces will be on Facebook by the end of 2016.
- Economic instability of a neighboring country is likely to increase unemployment.
- A post-conflict process to draft a new constitution presents an opportunity to include women leaders in government and secure women’s human rights.
- U.S. advocacy groups will continue to bring high visibility to human rights issues in Freedonia and effectively pressure politicians to focus on the issue.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

III. Mission Goals

For this section, the Mission should decide on two to five long-term (five years or beyond) broad goal statements that the USG desires to achieve in country. Mission Goals may be based on or taken directly from the Joint Regional Strategy Goals or Strategic Focus Areas, 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.

IV. Mission Objectives (1-3 pages per objective including Action Plan)

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 statement of a result in the host country that the Mission can significantly influence in the medium term (three to five years). Mission Objectives should reflect the specific priorities set by the Country Team during the interagency dialogue and country context assessment, and serve as a guide for Mission activities in the coming three fiscal 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, or facilitating international travel;
- Carrying out security and justice sector activities in country; and
- Improving conditions in countries where development is part of the portfolio.

As a general rule, each Mission Goal should have no more than three Mission Objectives. Countries with an approved CDCS must include their Development Objectives as a Mission Objective in the ICS. Missions should contact their State and USAID regional bureaus with questions or concerns related to integrating the CDCS with the ICS.

Mission Objectives 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

Example Mission Goals:

- Civil society and judicial and law enforcement institutions strengthen development, nurture ethnic reconciliation, and inhibit organized crime and its destabilizing influence.
- A bilateral partnership that encourages economic growth of both the American and Freedomian economies.

Example Mission Objectives:

- Expanded trade opportunities through minimal trade barriers and strong protection for intellectual property rights.
- More effective and transparent police and judicial systems
- Improved levels of economic growth and social development in the Highlands.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

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 on Foreign Operations. Objectives from the CDCS serve as the basis for the annual budget formulation process for USAID-implemented programs, leading to the development of the overall USAID annual budget.

Working Groups should articulate the following information for each Mission Objective:

- 1) Justification:** Provide a concise explanation (one or two brief paragraphs) of the issues/problem the Mission Objective is addressing and how objective achievement will contribute to priorities identified in the Joint Regional Strategy and the Mission Goals. Missions should identify multilateral policy linkages where possible and appropriate, and identify new or expanded means of synchronizing those linkages with Mission priorities. 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 CDCS Development Objectives, the Missions should include their Development Hypothesis from the CDCS as the justification.
- 2) Mission Objective Team:** This is a list of the Embassy section team(s) and other USG agencies that are involved with implementing and achieving the Mission Objective. The lead for the Mission Objective Team (i.e. Embassy section team or other USG agency) should be identified. This information gives the reader greater context on the Mission Objective.
- 3) Primary Link to Joint State/USAID Strategic Goals:** Identify the primary [Joint State/USAID Strategic Goal](#) that the Mission Objective supports.
- 4) Measuring Success:** Identify one to two performance indicators that will be tracked regularly to gauge progress toward each Mission Objective.
 - Missions are strongly encouraged to cite performance indicators already in use for existing reporting requirements when applicable, such as standard Foreign Assistance indicators already reported on by the Mission in the annual Foreign Assistance Performance Plan and Report, or applicable State Operations indicators in use by regional Bureaus. For more information on indicators, refer to the [Foreign Assistance indicator list](#) and the [Performance Management Guidebook](#).
 - Mission Objectives that are CDCS Development Objectives should include the Development Objective performance indicators from the CDCS.
 - No targets or results need to be included in the ICS.
 - Data for any foreign assistance indicators cited in the ICS must be reported via the Foreign Assistance Performance Plan and Report
 - Data for all other indicators must be reported in the annual Mission Resource Request

Alternative to Indicators: For Mission Objectives focused on activities for which appropriate and relevant performance indicators have not yet been developed (such as certain types of diplomatic engagement), the Mission should instead describe how progress in achieving the Mission Objective over the three-year period will be monitored by the Mission.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

5) **Action Plan:** The Action Plan is a tool for country team interagency planning and communication. The Country Team is the envisioned audience for the Action Plan, 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. The ICS will be classified Sensitive but Unclassified. However, when needed, the Mission can designate the Action Plan as Classified as long as it notifies the ICS Support Team. This section can be a chart, list, narrative, or other format that is most useful to the Working Group. The plan should specify the primary Sub-Objectives and Activities to be implemented in order to achieve the Mission Objective. Most importantly, the team should consider what information they want to know and use at the Mission level to manage and gauge progress towards the Sub-Objective. For any Mission Objective that is also a Development Objective in a CDCS, provide a link to the CDCS and do not complete an Action Plan. (Missions should refer to this [link](#) for a [suggested Action Plan template and examples](#))

Example Action Plan:

Sub-objective: U.S. businesses are more competitive in accessing investment opportunities in Freedonia	
Key Activity	Indicator/Milestone
Promote the Freedonia Free Markets agreement, if ratified (ECON)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct one quarterly trade fair, mission or match making event • % change in annual survey data on support for trade agreement
Engage members of parliament on approving more progressive and open trade legislation. (POL)	
Identify efficiencies in Consular processes to facilitate visa issuance for business persons engaged in activities that promote the objective. (CA)	
Increase coordination with US Chamber of Commerce and Freedonian Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee. (Commerce)	
Promote public dialogue and discussion of the benefits of free and open trade with opinion leaders, policymakers, and youth to generate public support for more liberalized trade agreements. (PAS)	

A sample Action Plan would include:

- **Sub-Objectives:** Sub-Objectives are the main areas that need to be addressed to accomplish a Mission Objective. The Sub-Objective is used to organize and design the more detailed action plan.
- **Key Activities:** The Action Plan should include the most essential Activities in support of the Sub-Objective. This does not need to be a long list of every program conducted at the Mission.
- **Implementing Section or Agency:** Indicate which section in the Embassy (Political, Consular, Public Affairs, etc.) or other USG agency is implementing each Key Activity.
- **Measuring Progress (Optional Best Practice):** The Mission is encouraged, but not required, to include specific milestones or existing indicators that show progress against the Action Plan. Proactively thinking about ways to monitor progress during the planning stage allows Missions to build ongoing



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

monitoring practices into their contracts or routines that can later be used to satisfy reporting requirements such as the Foreign Assistance Performance Plan and Report, Mission Resource Request, or other regular data calls.

V. Enabling Objectives and Management Platform Considerations (1 - 3 pages)

The capacity of the Mission to achieve the Mission Goals and Mission Objectives outlined in this ICS are directly impacted by the structure of the Mission’s management platform, including:

- Managerial Efficiency and Operational Effectiveness
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Information and Communications Technology
- Security Environment
- Human Capital & Rightsizing

Example Enabling Objectives:

- Ensure that Mission office and residential facilities are sufficient to comply with applicable security standards while enhancing functionality and quality of life.
- Improve Mission management controls to reduce costs and improve service delivery.

For this section, the Mission should articulate Enabling Objectives and Management Platform Considerations.

Enabling Objectives reflect critical management priorities that the Mission believes need to be

addressed to achieve Mission Objectives. The Mission has reasonable influence and control over carrying out activities to achieve Enabling Objectives (e.g. cost, service delivery, internal controls, and quality of personnel).

Narrative and performance information required for each Mission Objective (e.g. justification, strategic consideration, action plan, external partners and stakeholders) are not required for Enabling Objectives, but the discussion identified below should address how these Enabling Objectives and Management Platform Considerations can impact the Mission’s ability to achieve the Mission Objectives.

This section also provides a brief description of major management considerations for the Mission that could positively or negatively impact the realization of Mission Objectives. This may include a discussion of 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. Considerations 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 Enabling Objective achievement (e.g. major reorganization of the Mission is expected in January 2015, which could result in temporary program implementation issues).

The following management areas and suggested questions should help guide Missions as they develop the Enabling Objectives and Management Platform Considerations narrative. Missions are not expected, nor required to address all of the questions and areas identified below.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

Management Area	Sources of Information	Suggested Questions for Enabling Objectives and Management Considerations
Managerial Efficiency & Operational Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICASS Growth Analysis and Customer Satisfaction Surveys • Regional Initiatives Council Management (Top 8) Priorities • Collaborative Management Initiative (CMI) Metrics • GAO/OIG Reports • ILMS Reports/Data 	Does the Embassy have a well thought out strategy for operational effectiveness that supports achievement of achieving the Mission Goals and Objectives? (i.e. Is there a plan for getting the job done, and doing it well?)
		Does the Embassy have a plan for managerial efficiency and cost containment that aligns with achieving the Mission Goals and Objectives? (i.e. Are you getting the job done in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible?)
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OBO's Long Range Planning Publication (formerly the Overseas Building Plan and the Overseas Maintenance Plan) • Greening and Sustainability Initiatives 	How does the Embassy's current facilities infrastructure plan either help or hinder the ability of the Mission to achieve the Mission Goals and Objectives?
		How is the Embassy working with the Host Government and/or OBO to acquire land and/or lease facilities to enable the USG to meet its Mission Goals and Objectives?
		How can greening and sustainability initiatives and opportunities improve Mission operations and reduce costs?
Information & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of State IT Strategic Plan • State/USAID IT Transformation Initiative • Modernizing Diplomacy Policy 	Does the level of information and telecommunications technology either help or hinder the ability of the Mission to achieve the Mission Goals and Objectives?
		How will the Embassy's implementation of Modernizing Diplomacy allow it to achieve Mission Goals and Objectives?
Security Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Action Plans (EAP) 	Is this a country where the security environment will affect the capability to engage host government counterparts to achieve Mission Goals and Objectives?
		What is the Embassy (RSO and/or the emergency action committee) doing to address threats to enable personnel to meet Mission Goals and Objectives?
		Has the Embassy's crisis management training incorporated how events may impact achieving Mission Goals and Objectives?
Human Capital & Rightsizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas Staffing Model Results (as reported by bureau management) • Rightsizing Reviews & Reports • Employee satisfaction surveys & comparative wage analysis 	Does the Embassy have a Human Capital Development Plan (recruitment, professional development, succession planning) that ensures personnel are properly equipped to achieve Mission Goals and Objectives?
		How will current staffing levels and trends for USDH, PSC/PASA, EFM, Detailees, and LES personnel affect the ability of the Mission to meet the ICS Mission Goals and Objectives?
		Do quality of life issues (health, safety, morale, housing, schools, benefits, etc) impact the ability of the Embassy to meet its Mission Goals and Objectives?



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

How is an Integrated Country Strategy Reviewed and Approved?

The review and approval phase will provide an opportunity for the Mission to discuss the feasibility of the Mission Objectives with Washington stakeholders and refine them as needed. 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.

1. After a 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 or if there are any other issues and will post the ICS for viewing by State and USAID Bureaus.
2. The State Regional Bureau desk officer will coordinate feedback (teleconference, email, etc) on the draft ICS. Reviewers will be asked to focus their feedback on the feasibility and focus of the Mission Objectives, rather than on the specific details in the Action Plan. At this time, the Mission can choose to share the draft ICS with other USG agencies and get feedback at their discretion, but this will not be coordinated by Washington-based staff.
3. The Regional Bureau desk officer and the Regional Bureau Planner will discuss with the Mission any changes that should be made before the ICS is submitted by the Chief of Mission.
4. The Mission submits the final ICS to the ICS Support Team. The ICS Support Team will post the final report for view by State and USAID staff. Taking into consideration that the ICS is Sensitive but Unclassified, the Country Team can make the report available to other agencies as appropriate.

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 guidance at http://inside.usaid.gov/PPL/offices/spp/upload/CDCS_Guidance.pdf.

How is the Integrated Country Strategy Used?

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 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	Basis for annual resource request in the Mission Resource Request
	Basis for annual performance reporting in the Foreign Assistance Performance Plan and Report
	Informs reporting to Congress in the Congressional Budget Justification
	Informs USG agencies of Mission priorities and plans
Action Plan	Interagency Country Team work plan
	Basis for project planning
	Identifies performance monitoring and reporting



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

When Can a Mission Update the Integrated Country Strategy?

The ICS is a three- year strategy with a flexible Action Plan that is annually reviewed by the Mission and updated as necessary. Changes to the Action Plan should be made in consultation with the relevant Country Team member and do not need Bureau approval or review.

Circumstances may demand major or minor changes to Mission Objectives of the ICS. In the case of **minor** annual changes, adjustments to Mission Objectives can be made in the annual Mission Resource Request. Minor shifts in Mission Objective priorities will be reflected in corresponding shifts to resource requests to support various Mission Objectives. If minor adjustments are also needed to the language of the Mission Objective, the Mission should update the ICS and resubmit it to the ICS Support Team (see FAQs for examples of “minor” and “major” changes).

If **major** changes occur, the Mission should consult with the Regional Bureau to determine if the ICS needs a comprehensive update. Revised planning should address the remaining period covered by the existing ICS. Examples of major changes could include significant change in ground conditions in a region, such as conflict, revolution, natural or man-made disaster or change to another policy-driven strategic outlook.

If CDCS Development Objectives are revised, 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.

An updated version of the ICS should be submitted to the ICS Support Team whenever any changes are made to the ICS.

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

Training materials, an ICS model, and a step by step guide for helping Missions coordinate ICS planning are available online at: diplopedia.state.gov/PlanningandBudgeting. The Office of Foreign Assistance Resources and the Bureau of Resource Management are jointly coordinating the ICS process with Regional Bureaus and can be contacted with questions at ICS@state.gov.



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

Annex A: 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. See the gender policies for [State \(ALDAC 00024819\)](#) and [USAID \(Agency Notice 0307\)](#) for more guidance on agency specific requirements.

Annex A: Gender Assessment

Missions may determine that they need to conduct a Gender Assessment in the preparation stage of the ICS. The purpose of a Gender Assessment is to ensure that we are advancing gender equality and the status of women and girls across our work as a critical tool to achieve our foreign policy goals. A Gender Assessment entails conducting an interagency appraisal of the gender gaps in the host country that impede our diplomacy, security, and development priorities—such as lack of women's participation in peace processes or gender gaps in the economic sector that constrain economic growth—and identifying priority areas of focus and opportunities to advance gender equality and the status of women and girls. Where appropriate, the full range of diplomatic and development goals identified in the ICS should include plans to promote gender equality. Using a Gender Assessment as part of the ICS planning process will help to develop a more informed and detailed strategic plan and will facilitate integration of gender issues into Mission Priorities, Country Context, and Mission Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans

An Assessment should analyze existing gender inequalities, including political, economic, social, legal, and other barriers to women's full engagement in society.

The Assessment should also identify:

- 1-2 priority areas of focus that the Mission should address in its ICS
- Procedures for integrating gender expertise across a range of post activities to improve USG response at the operational level

The Mission should integrate gender priorities into the ICS, including, where relevant, by:

- Using the Gender Assessment to inform Chief of Mission priorities and Country Context
- Incorporating identified priority areas of focus into Mission Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans.

Example Priority Areas:

- Advancing economic growth by expanding women's entrepreneurship and access to markets and credit
- Including women in conflict-resolution and reconstruction processes

Example Procedures for Integrating Gender at Post:

- Inclusion of gender experts in regional and situational task forces, country team meetings, and emergency contingency planning and response activities.
- Integrating gender issues into standard reporting and analyses processes
- Regularizing meetings with local women leaders and women's civil society groups

Resources:

- US Department of State Policy Guidance on Promoting Gender Equality to Achieve our National Security and Foreign Policy Objectives ([ALDAC 00024819](#))
- [USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#)
- World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report
- UNDP Gender Inequality Index
- [World Bank](#) Women, Business, and the Law



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

Missions should refer to existing gender assessments and analysis, where such exist, including any USAID country gender analysis, the country Action Plan related to Women, Peace, and Security, as well as analyses by the host government, other donors, and civil society. The Gender Assessment should be submitted as an attachment along with the ICS.

Should you have questions, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) and the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff (S/P) [Contacts as of May 2012: Rachel Vogelstein (S/GWI) and Mira Patel (S/P)].



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

Annex B: 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.

Annex B: Security and Justice Sector Assessment

Missions that identify the need for a strong focus on security and justice sector issues in their ICS can/may 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. While the assessment should be managed by the Mission, technical experts at State, USAID, DoD and other agencies should be consulted to support the assessment. Missions are generally recommended to conduct a Security and Justice Sector Assessment in the preparation stage of the ICS if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- the security environment of the host nation is of significant importance to the security of the U.S.;
- U.S. security assistance could benefit from improved coordination and sequencing;
- past U.S. assistance has not led to the emergence of self-sustaining host nation security/law enforcement capabilities;
- a regional approach is needed (e.g., to address transnational and/or border issues);
- the host nation is experiencing a moment of transition (e.g., to/from conflict, to/from autocracy); or
- Missions want to best target scarce foreign assistance resources in the security and justice sector;

A Security and Justice Sector Assessment is an interagency evaluation of a country's security and justice sector that assesses the:

- strengths and weaknesses of existing security and justice sector institutions and actors as well as civil society organizations such as bar associations, civil rights groups, and transparency proponents;
- relationships between security forces and communities and the responsiveness of the security and justice sector to the distinct needs and perspectives of males and females;
- levels of checks and balances within the state sector;
- challenges facing the host nation's security and justice sector, including security threats;
- degree to which the human rights of women, men, boys and girls are respected and protected;
- inclusivity of the security sector, including the role and participation of women in the security forces and broader security sector reform efforts; and
- levels of host nation political will and capacity to implement change.

Security Assessment Tools

- Interagency Security Sector Assessment Framework
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/ISSAF_October-29_2010.pdf
- Maritime Security Sector Reform (MSSR) Guide
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/154082.pdf>
- Conducting a DG Assessment: A Framework for Strategy Development
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnach305.pdf
- DCAF Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit
<http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Gender-Security-Sector-Reform-Toolkit>
- [Criminal Justice Sector Assessment Rating Tool](#)

A Security and Justice Sector Assessment is not intended to substitute for or eliminate the need for highly specific technical assessments relating to program design and implementation (e.g., port security visits). Rather, its primary purpose is to look broadly at the security and justice sector as a whole to identify critical pathways for progress and interdependencies at the sectoral level, while drawing linkages to the operational



Integrated Country Strategy

Guidance & Instructions



Managing for Results

level. For this reason, Missions are strongly encouraged to use existing integrative sectoral assessment tools, such as USAID's Interagency Security Sector Assessment Framework and others listed in this annex. At the conclusion of the assessment, Missions will have completed a comprehensive baseline assessment and analysis of the host nation's security and justice sector that will be used to determine the Mission objectives and methods for improving the country's security sector. Missions should refer to existing assessments and analysis, including gender assessments, where such exist, and may include them as annexes to the ICS if appropriate. The level of detail in the Security and Justice Sector Assessment will vary depending upon the country context.

The Security and Justice Sector Assessment should be used throughout the ICS planning process to develop more informed and detailed interagency planning for any Mission Objectives that have a security or justice component.

Should you have questions, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Political Military Affairs (PM) [Contacts as of May 2012: Chris Torres and Christina Rosati] and to the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs [Contact as of May 2012: Michele Greenstein].