



Integrated Country Strategy

Independent State of Samoa

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

To advance the United States' strategic goals in the Indo-Pacific and in recognition of the United States and Samoa's shared border and shared values, Embassy Apia is fostering a free and open Indo-Pacific, partnering with Samoa to advance our shared climate goals, supporting Samoa's democracy, and increasing mutually beneficial trade and investment. As a democratic country with a record of good governance, respect for human rights, an independent judiciary, a free media, and peaceful relations with its neighbors, Samoa is a model Pacific Island partner for the United States. The capitals of Samoa and American Samoa are less than 75 miles apart, and the U.S.-Samoa relationship benefits from significant historical, cultural, and economic ties. Against a backdrop of increasing interest in Samoa from strategic competitors looking to expand their influence in the region, sustained U.S. engagement and investment in Samoa is needed to secure our historically close relationship and advance broader U.S. strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific.

To foster a free and open Indo-Pacific, protect global security, and advance U.S. strategic interests in the region, Embassy Apia is expanding mutually beneficial support to Samoa, particularly on security matters. Samoa is strategically located adjacent to U.S. territory American Samoa and near key shipping routes and telecommunication links connecting the United States with Asia, Oceania, and South America. Embassy Apia and our interagency counterparts are partnering with Samoan law enforcement to protect Samoa's maritime resources and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; secure its borders and points of entry; and combat transnational crime. Samoa's close cultural connection with American Samoa serves as a bridge to closer U.S.-Samoa relations, and Embassy Apia is expanding formal and informal ties between the two Samoas.

To advance our shared climate mitigation and adaptation goals, Embassy Apia is facilitating climate partnerships between the United States and Samoa and identifying avenues to accelerate Samoa's clean energy transition. Samoa views climate change as an existential threat and despite its negligible contribution to global emissions, is already experiencing higher average temperatures, greater frequency in extreme weather events, sea level rise, and

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increases in ocean acidification and coastal erosion. As the United States looks to retain and expand our influence in the region, USG engagement in Samoa's clean energy sector will have the dual benefits of deepening our overall bilateral partnership while also advancing our shared climate goals.

To promote economic prosperity for both the United States and Samoa and to ensure that our foreign policy benefits the American people, Embassy Apia is increasing mutually beneficial trade and investment. We persistently advocate for U.S. business interests in Samoa, and aggressively lobby the Samoan government to ensure that trusted technology is used in national security infrastructure. As Samoa grapples with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we advocate for a pro-business and pro-innovation policy environment that will increase opportunities for Samoan and U.S. businesses. We facilitate the legal employment of thousands of Samoans who work abroad to support global commerce and ensure that economically vital remittances continue to flow to Samoa.

To promote a stable, open, and democratic international system, Embassy Apia uses sustained engagement to encourage Samoa to implement a foreign policy that reflects shared U.S.-Samoa values and increases Samoa's concurrence with U.S. interests in international institutions. We encourage Samoa's independent but national interest-based foreign policy, understanding that our shared interests make us natural partners on most issues. As a responsible democracy, Samoa is uniquely positioned to contribute more to regional stability. Embassy Apia encourages the Samoan government to play a constructive role as a regional leader and spread the Samoan model of democracy, peace, and stability. Through targeted assistance, we are supporting good governance initiatives to promote opportunities and sustainability for Samoa and its people. Our public outreach and programs highlight shared U.S.-Samoa ties to strengthen mutual understanding and reinforce our common values.

Insufficient staffing and resources threaten Embassy Apia's ability to achieve our Mission objectives, advance U.S. strategic goals, and compete with our global power competitors. With just two U.S. Direct Hire Officers, Embassy Apia has a fraction of the staff of foreign missions representing the PRC, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. We are the only foreign mission in

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Samoa with a non-resident ambassador, which belies our consistent messaging to Samoa that we value the bilateral relationship. Although Embassy Apia's structure relies on significant TDY support from Mission New Zealand for management, public diplomacy, consular, information management, and post security services, COVID-19 travel restrictions caused a two-year gap in any visits and constrained our ability to accomplish key tasks and ensure robust management controls. While remote support and infrequent task-specific TDY visits are always an imperfect replacement for consistent oversight, the global pandemic demonstrated the limits of our operating model in a changed world. The Embassy's small staff aims to staunchly prioritize work to ensure we are focused on advancing key strategic objectives, but the demands of required reporting, Washington taskers, and the most basic management functions required to keep our embassy operational consume a large percentage of our time and resources. Embassy Apia will continue to advocate for our staffing to be rightsized to allow us to effectively advance U.S. strategic goals, serve and protect U.S. citizen interests, and ensure accountability to U.S. taxpayers.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: The U.S.- Samoa partnership promotes a free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Strengthen USG ties with Samoan law enforcement to enhance Samoa's border security, counter transnational crime, and protect U.S. security interests.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Encourage Samoa to lead by example as a responsible democracy in international fora and to take a more active leadership role in the Indo-Pacific.

Mission Goal 2: The United States and Samoa achieve shared climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Increase U.S. climate investment and assistance to accelerate Samoa's clean energy transition.

Mission Goal 3: Increased U.S.-Samoa trade, investment, and economic ties raise prosperity in both nations.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Expand mutually advantageous trade and investment.

Mission Goal 4: The United States and Samoa deepen their comprehensive partnership.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Highlight U.S.-Samoa historical and cultural ties to increase mutual understanding, promote common values, and combat disinformation and state malign influence.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Support good governance in Samoa and promote opportunity and sustainability for Samoa and its people.

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Mission Goal 5: Embassy Apia provides efficient and effective consular services.

- **Mission Objective 5.1:** Protect the security and interests of the United States and its citizens by providing vigilant, timely, and accurate consular services.

Management Objective 1: Ensure that Embassy Apia is sufficiently staffed and resourced to advance U.S. strategic goals, serve and protect U.S. citizen interests, and ensure accountability to U.S. taxpayers.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | The U.S.-Samoa partnership promotes a free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific.

Description | The U.S.-Samoa bilateral relationship has a growing importance given the key role that the Indo-Pacific region will play in shaping the trajectory of the world in the 21st century. Samoa is strategically located adjacent to U.S. territory American Samoa and near key shipping routes and telecommunication links connecting the United States with Asia, Oceania, and South America. Embassy Apia's engagement aims to support Samoa's ability to secure its own resources and borders, provide opportunity and freedom for its citizens, and play an active role in a democratic and stable international order.

Objective 1.1 | Strengthen USG ties with Samoan law enforcement to enhance Samoa's border security, counter transnational crime, and protect U.S. security interests.

- **Justification** | With a shared maritime border with U.S. territory American Samoa and direct shipping and air links to the United States, our support for Samoan law enforcement directly enhances U.S. security interests. Given Samoa's strategic location and vast territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone, Samoa is vital to the USG's broader interest of ensuring freedom of navigation in the South Pacific.
- **Linkages** | Secretary Blinken's December 14, 2021 speech on A Free and Open Indo-Pacific; Interim National Security Strategy Guidance; White House Indo-Pacific Strategy; US Indo-Pacific Command Theater Campaign Strategy; 2022 National Defense Strategy; JRS Objective 3.1.
- **Risks** | Sustained and significant investment in Samoa by a global power competitor could jeopardize U.S. influence in Samoa and the broader region. Transnational criminal networks could expand their presence in Samoa and undermine security and stability. Unsecured borders and points of interests could create security vulnerabilities for the U.S. homeland.

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Objective 1.2 | Encourage Samoa to lead by example as a responsible democracy in international fora and to take a more active leadership role in the Indo-Pacific.

- **Justification** | The United States and Samoa share core values and Samoa can serve as a model Pacific Island partner. Our interests in international institutions naturally align more often than not and we benefit when Samoa adopts a foreign policy based on its modern interests. As a responsible democracy, Samoa is uniquely positioned to contribute to regional stability and security.
- **Linkages** | Secretary Blinken's December 14, 2021 speech on A Free and Open Indo-Pacific; JRS Objective 3.1.
- **Risks** | Sustained and significant investment in Samoa by a global power competitor could make Samoa vulnerable to coercion and intimidation that would influence Samoa's actions in international fora. Domestic challenges including COVID-19, a stalled economy, and the existential threat of climate change could cause Samoa to become inwardly focused and diminish its ability to play an active role on the international stage.

Mission Goal 2 | The United States and Samoa achieve shared climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

Description | As Samoa increasingly experiences the effects of climate change, U.S. support for Samoa's climate mitigation and adaptation goals with benefit Samoa's long-term economic outlook and advance global climate goals.

Objective 2.1 | Increase U.S. climate investment and assistance to accelerate Samoa's clean energy transition.

- **Justification** | Samoa is already experiencing the effects of climate change in the form of rising sea levels, increasing ocean acidification, and more frequent severe weather effects. Although the government has ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation plans, Samoa's Nationally Determined Contribution is explicit that Samoa's climate goals are contingent on external financial support. Samoa is extremely vulnerable to the

impacts of climate change and natural disasters. These events threaten water and food security, livelihoods, biodiversity, infrastructure, and health care. Resilience in Samoa will largely depend on the strength of communities and the supportive systems in place to mitigate the impacts of shocks. Assisting Samoa develop adaptation management plans, improve the resiliency and capability of their health systems, and improve disaster response capacity will reinforce the U.S. commitment to Samoa.

- **Linkages** | Secretary Blinken’s December 14, 2021 speech on A Free and Open Indo-Pacific; President Biden’s November 1, 2021 speech at the COP26 Leaders Statement; Draft JSP Objective 1.2.
- **Risks** | Samoa cannot gain access to external financial support, leaving it without the financial resources to respond to the threat of climate change. Pledged international support, including from the United States, does not materialize.

Mission Goal 3 | Increased U.S.-Samoa trade, investment, and economic ties raises prosperity in both nations.

Description | Strengthened economic ties between the U.S. and Samoa will create jobs, promote stability, and build wealth in both countries. As Samoa increasingly experiences the effects of climate change, U.S. support for Samoa’s climate mitigation and adaptation goals will benefit Samoa’s long-term economic outlook and advance global climate goals.

Objective 3.1 | Expand mutually beneficial trade and investment.

- **Justification** | Although Samoa has a small economy, there are opportunities for increased trade and investment that will benefit both countries. U.S. territory American Samoa is Samoa’s closest neighbor, providing opportunities for both direct two-way trade and investment and as an intermediate hub connecting Samoa to the rest of the United States.
- **Linkages** | Secretary Blinken’s December 14, 2021 speech on A Free and Open Indo-Pacific; JRS Objectives 4.1 and 4.3; Draft JSP Objectives.

- **Risks** | Samoa's severe recession continues, stifling trade and investment opportunities. Samoa's small market and physical distance from the United States limits its attractiveness as a trade partner and investment destination. Complicated business regulations and COVID-19 entry requirements disincentivize increased economic connections.

Mission Goal 4 | The United States and Samoa deepen their comprehensive partnership.

Description | To support Samoa as a responsible democracy and deepen U.S. connections in this strategically essential region, we will highlight our shared history and values to expand people-to-people ties, invest in Samoa's next generation of leaders, and support institutions that advance freedom and opportunity for the Samoan people. By emphasizing our common regard for principles like the protection of human rights, rule of law, diversity and inclusion, and entrepreneurship, we will highlight the strength and depth of the U.S. partnership with Samoa. This will stand in contrast to authoritarian regimes that flaunt international norms in the Indo-Pacific region. Mission programs will support efforts to counter state malign influence that undermine democratic institutions and regional security.

Objective 4.1 | Highlight U.S.-Samoa historical and cultural ties to increase mutual understanding, promote common values, and combat disinformation and state malign influence.

- **Justification** | The United States and Samoa share a commitment to political independence, self-determination, and religious freedom, and we will strengthen the perception of the United States as a like-minded partner with a shared history, shared culture, and shared commitment to democratic values. By engaging with the Samoan public, we will highlight the advantages of Samoa's partnership with the United States and attract popular support for U.S.-Samoa engagement that advances U.S. policy goals and strengthens democratic resiliency.

- **Linkages** | EAP JRS Goal 4; JSP Objective 3.3; JSP Objective 1.3; and JSP Objective 2.2; NSM 4.
- **Risks** | Failure to connect our people through our common democratic values could create space for authoritarian regimes to increase malign influence programs in Samoa that seek to undermine trust in democratic institutions and generate instability in the Indo-Pacific.

Objective 4.2 | Support good governance in Samoa and promote opportunity and sustainability for Samoa and its people.

- **Justification** | Samoa is proudly democratic and has a history of free and fair elections, though the political impasse that followed the April 2021 general election revealed vulnerabilities. The United States will use diplomatic engagement to support government programs and institutions that promote shared values, expand community participation, enhance opportunities for all Samoans, and strengthen democratic norms.
- **Linkages** | JSP Objectives 2.2, 3.1, and 3.2.
- **Risks** | Failure to connect with civic organizations and build capacity within civil society could create space for authoritarian regimes to undermine trust in democratic values and institutions. The government is unable or unwilling to increase protections for Samoa's most vulnerable groups.

Mission Goal 5 | Embassy Apia provides efficient and effective consular services.

Description | Consistent with the Department and the nation's top priorities, Embassy Apia is committed to serving U.S. citizens in Samoa and ensuring that our consular services strengthen U.S. border security.

Objective 5.1 | Protect the security and interests of the United States and its citizens by providing vigilant, timely, and accurate consular services.

- **Justification** | Samoa is home to a disproportionately high number of U.S. citizens and nationals given its proximity to American Samoa, and Embassy Apia is committed to meeting resident citizens and nationals' consular needs. Embassy Apia continuously prepares for crisis responses given Samoa's vulnerability to natural disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis, and cyclones.
- **Linkages** | Draft JSP Goal 1.
- **Risks** | As designed, TDY staff from Consulate General Auckland provide all non-emergency consular services at Embassy Apia. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions, TDYers from Consulate General Auckland have been unable to travel to Samoa for over two years. Given other demands, Embassy Apia's two USDH officers do not have the capacity to meet all demand for consular services. Embassy Apia will not achieve this goal without additional staffing at Embassy Apia or consistent TDY support from Consulate General Auckland.

4. Management Objective

Management Objective 1 | Ensure that Embassy Apia is sufficiently staffed and resourced to advance U.S. strategic goals, serve and protect U.S. citizen interests, and ensure accountability to U.S. taxpayers.

- **Justification** | Insufficient staffing and resources threaten Embassy Apia's ability to achieve our Mission objectives, advance U.S. strategic goals, compete with our global power competitors, and guarantee management controls. Embassy Apia's operating model relies on significant TDY support from Mission New Zealand for management, public diplomacy, consular, information management, and post security services. However, COVID-19 travel restrictions caused a gap of over two years between any TDY visits, calling into question whether our model remains viable in a changed world. Embassy Apia is the only foreign mission in Samoa with a non-resident ambassador, which belies our consistent messaging to Samoa that we value the bilateral relationship. The Embassy's small staff aims to ruthlessly prioritize work to ensure we are focused on advancing key strategic objectives, but the demands of required reporting, Washington taskers, and the management functions required to keep our embassy operational consume a large percentage of our time and resources.
- **Linkages** | JRS Objective Objectives M1 and M2.
- **Risks** | Insufficient staffing and resources jeopardize Embassy Apia's ability to achieve all our Mission goals and objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions continue to interfere with Embassy Apia's operating model, which contemplates significant TDY support from Mission New Zealand. Insufficient staffing jeopardizes our ability to ensure management controls and negatively impacts morale.