



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## MAURITANIA

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The U.S. Mission in Mauritania supports the United States' security and prosperity by bolstering Mauritania as a committed and effective partner in a region of significant security concerns. Specifically, our goals are to help Mauritania become more secure, democratic, and prosperous—all of which will make it a more stable U.S. partner. We build on a considerable foundation of cooperation, particularly related to security. Limited economic opportunities, fragile democratic institutions, and internal tribal divisions (racial and ethnic) present major challenges to advancing U.S. objectives. Our goals of security, democracy, and prosperity are mutually reinforcing—but they rely primarily on Mauritania's commitment to reform rather than on U.S. resources to achieve our shared objectives.

### **Strengthen partnerships to enhance regional security and stability towards a safer world for Americans and Mauritians**

Our chief goal is to enhance security for citizens of both the United States and Mauritania, especially by bolstering partnerships that leverage Mauritania's role as host to the G5 Sahel Secretariat. Mauritania sits at the crossroads of the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, a region impacted by violent extremist groups, notably in neighboring Mali. Mauritania is also the headquarters of the G5 Sahel Executive Secretariat and G5 Defense College, an important African-led regional effort that takes ownership of shared security and stability threats in the Sahel through four strategic pillars: defense and security; resilience and human development; infrastructure; and governance. The president of Mauritania and other senior officials regularly cite security cooperation with the U.S. as a major factor in Mauritania's success in preventing domestic terrorist incidents, which have not occurred on Mauritanian soil since 2011. Support for bilateral security cooperation is strong among all sectors of Mauritanian society.

Over half of U.S. direct-hire personnel in Mauritania (Defense Department, Diplomatic Security, and others) are dedicated to our shared security goal, as is the majority of our assistance funding—including assistance we provide to the G5 Sahel via our bilateral relationship with Mauritania. To build upon and advance our cooperation:

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- We will continue our excellent collaboration with military, law enforcement, judicial, and prison officials, focusing on shared priorities and assistance that reflects and reinforces U.S. priorities, including stronger land and maritime borders.
- We will encourage Mauritania's growing diplomatic and security engagement with regional states and status as a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping contributor.
- We will expand our efforts to reduce the appeal of extremism—vital in a nation where more than half the population is under 20 with high youth unemployment. Our programs will provide technical and professional training while furthering Mauritanian government messaging of tolerance and moderation and supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of former members of violent extremist organizations.
- We will continue to provide efficient and vigilant consular services as the first line of homeland defense, as facilitators for legitimate travelers, and as service providers to the American community in Mauritania.

**Promote sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity through an improved business climate, diversification, and increased U.S. investment**

Mauritania's economy is highly dependent on resource extraction, historically focused on minerals and fisheries. The discovery of significant offshore hydrocarbon resources will generate new government revenue that may spur economic growth and development for Mauritania and its trade partners, to include the United States, if properly managed. However, economic rewards have been highly concentrated among traditional elites, with the government distributing economic benefits to key supporters and patronage networks. Greater prosperity coupled with optimal and transparent management of the country's significant strategic resources could contribute to the processes of strengthening security, achieving a more inclusive society, and furthering democratic governance. To address these conditions and advance these aims:

- We will continue to make the case to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (GIRM) that Mauritania's future depends on a more transparent and equitable

distribution of wealth, greater diversity of an open and entrepreneurial economy, and a more concerted focus on inclusive education and development.

- We will seek to leverage U.S. government (USG) assistance to incentivize the GIRM to more aggressively address concerns over human and labor rights and support the government's efforts to transition the country out of a system that allows hereditary slavery to exist.
- We will focus efforts on the country's youth, using available programming opportunities to build technical and professional skills, including English language capabilities.
- We will continue efforts to address Mauritania's chronic health challenges, including those related to child and maternal health and food insecurity.

**Further democratic development and good governance; promote a just, resilient, and inclusive society; and end slavery**

Mauritania completed its first peaceful, democratic transition of power from one elected president to another in 2019. The former president is currently indicted and under house arrest on corruption charges, marking an important step in the fight against the country's widespread corruption. Parliamentary elections in 2023 and presidential elections in 2024 will be a significant test of the country's democratic institutions, media, and civil society. To support the development of institutions that advance the peaceful transition of power:

- We will promote policies that advance education, youth development, antislavery, and integration of refugees, stateless persons, and marginalized communities.
- We will encourage Mauritanian progress in promoting rule of law by supporting increased prosecution of crimes, including violent crimes and terrorist acts; prevention of trafficking of drugs and people, including slavery; and efforts to combat corruption and money laundering.
- We will call for a peaceful and fair legislative election in 2023 and presidential election in 2024, and we will seek USG assistance to support the outcomes of fair national elections.
- We will seek to further Mauritania's democratic governance and internal stability by encouraging the channeling of grievances over issues such as slavery, discrimination,

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corruption, and unresponsive public administration into legitimate political processes, including upcoming elections.

- We will work with all partners—the business community, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other donor nations—to provide programs and active encouragement to meet the government’s stated intention to address the reality and legacies of current and hereditary slavery, as well as the deep societal divisions that are the legacy of centuries of slavery.
- We will share our positive and powerful message about the United States’ own effort to address our ongoing legacy of slavery, and the importance of curbing discriminatory practices that provoke deeper social tensions, with negative implications for the country’s peace and stability.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** Strengthen partnerships to enhance regional security and stability towards a safer world for Americans and Mauritians

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Expanded military/security cooperation helps counter terrorism and secure Mauritania's land borders and vital maritime domain
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Development and adoption of plans to prevent and counter violent extremism solidifies Mauritania's fight against terrorism
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Increased export of Mauritania's best security practices to the region, especially through leadership in and reform of the G5 Sahel, improves regional stability
- **Mission Objective 1.4:** Augmentation of Post consular analytics enhances American security by strengthening visa adjudications

**Mission Goal 2:** Further democratic development and good governance; promote a just, resilient, and inclusive society; and end slavery

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Encouragement of inclusive political participation, robust civil society, and open media leads to stronger democratic institutions and free and fair elections in 2023 and 2024
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Citizens are empowered through policies promoting education, youth development, abolishment of slavery and its effects, and integration of refugees, stateless persons, and marginalized communities
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Increased prosecution of crimes such as TIP, slavery cases, and corruption reflects Mauritanian progress promoting rule of law and support GIRM efforts to end hereditary slavery

**Mission Goal 3:** Promote sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity through an improved business climate, diversification, and increased U.S. investment

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Encouragement of economic reforms leads to fair, open, and diverse markets that meet international standards and attracts increased U.S. trade and investment
- **(U) Mission Objective 3.2:** Concrete steps by Mauritanian institutions promote inclusive economic security, boost entrepreneurship, and bolster public health

**Management Objective 1:** Quality and efficiency of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) to embassy customers is improved per annual ICASS Surveys and Service Standards metrics

**Management Objective 2:** DEIA goals are advanced through Management practices and programs that support Mission-wide efforts to incorporate DEIA aims and principles



### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1:** Strengthen partnerships to enhance regional security and stability towards a safer world for Americans and Mauritians

**Description:** With U.S. support, Mauritania has not suffered a terrorist attack since 2011. Building on a strong record of bilateral cooperation, the embassy will continue to design and implement targeted programs to assess and strengthen Mauritanian security forces and border security, including Mauritania's maritime borders. We will also continue to support Mauritania's own efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. The Mission will work with Mauritania bilaterally to bolster regional stability and support Mauritania's leadership on security issues in regional forums, including the G5 Sahel. These actions, together with robust consular services, will counter transnational threats and target them at their source, preventing them from reaching our borders or causing harm to the American people.

**Objective 1.1:** Expanded military/security cooperation helps counter terrorism and secure Mauritania's land borders and vital maritime domain

- **Justification:** Mauritania remains a relatively stable country in a highly volatile region; however, continued military/security cooperation will help consolidate advances Mauritania has made in combatting Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) and transnational threats. Given the increased instability in the region, the likelihood of threats attempting to transit Mauritania's land borders continue. Additionally, Mauritania continues to address threats posed by Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and drug smuggling in its maritime domain. Its territorial waters are poised to be fertile ground for future threats against its nascent offshore energy infrastructure. All these factors combine to threaten the physical and economic security of the country. Increasing cooperation as contemplated in Objective 1.1 will help Mauritania properly address these threats, especially new ones like those to offshore energy. This will be achieved through formal capabilities assessments; the development of uniform standards and integrated strategies for information sharing; formal training in the U.S. and in Mauritania; and key

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leader engagements between Post and the Mauritanian military to emphasize and support the importance of coordinated responses to these threats.

- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - Interim National Security Strategy Guidance: Protect the security of the American people from violent extremists
  - Department of State (DOS) and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Draft FY2022-26 (State-USAID JSP) Objective 1.4 - Peace and Security: Revitalize U.S. alliances and partnerships to prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts and address international security challenges
  - State-USAID JSP Objective 2.2 - Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe
  - DOS/Bureau of African Affairs (AF) Joint Regional Strategy Draft (JRS) Objective 1.2: Improve the capacity and will of security forces, including defense and civilian sector actors, to identify and respond to ongoing transnational threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, maritime insecurity, and border insecurity
- **Risks:** If this Objective is not achieved, Mauritania will be more susceptible to the effects of these threats, including kinetic, economic, and humanitarian risks. A weakened economy will reduce job opportunities and exacerbate humanitarian issues within the region. It will also make the country more receptive to competitor influence. Potential risks to the advancement of this Objective include changes to senior leadership in the Mauritanian military impacting the Mauritanian military's willingness to provide funding. Mauritanian reliance solely on USG funding without domestic sustainment programs could reduce the chance of receiving future USG assistance. Post will mitigate these risks by continuing to engage with the Mauritanian military, sending military students to International Military Education and Training (IMET) courses addressing relevant topics, and through local engagements focusing on the best ways to improve operations in these domains.

**Objective 1.2:** Development and adoption of plans to prevent and counter violent extremism solidifies Mauritania's fight against terrorism

- **Justification:** Some analysts believe Mauritania's success in preventing domestic terrorist attacks since 2011 is due solely to its military posture; however, in 2010, the GIRM designed a holistic CVE strategy that combines the use of military and non-military approaches to control and eliminate the threat. One successful initiative under this comprehensive strategy has been the increased engagement of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MOIA) with mosques, "mahadras" (Koranic schools), ulama and fuqaha to promote a "moderate" narrative. Prior to this, evidence suggests some mahadras had been used to instill extremist views and a strict interpretation of Islam which may have helped convince dozens of Mauritians to join extremist and terrorist groups in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Thousands more were persuaded to espouse these views as norms. Since 2016, Post has cultivated a relationship of trust and cooperation with the MOIA in support of its efforts. Thanks to this partnership, the USG has access to an otherwise difficult-to-reach audience in Mauritania, i.e. Imams, fuqaha and ulama. The USG also maintains direct access to youth from marginalized communities through programming and partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Post will leverage such relationships to support ongoing GIRM and CSO efforts to develop and implement CVE strategies to address these threats.
- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - Interim National Security Strategic Guidance: Protect the security of the American people; continue to build partnerships in Africa, investing in civil society and strengthening long-standing political, economic, and cultural connections; help African nations combat the threats posed by climate change and violent extremism, and support their economic and political independence in the face of undue foreign influence
  - DOS/AF JRS Goal 1: Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and revitalized alliances and partnerships to address challenges in security,

stability, and democracy, including through long-term efforts to address immediate causes of violence and build resiliency

- State-USAID JSP Overview: Supporting global stability by reversing state and societal fragility, CVE, and other forms of violence, implementing the Global Fragility Act, fostering inclusion and empowerment through initiatives such as Women, Peace and Security, and preventing atrocities
- **Risks:** Failing to build Mauritania's capacity to prevent and counter violent extremism poses a weakness and potential threat to the cohesion of the country. This could result in the establishment of a more conservative society, less open to the world and less compliant with international norms and standards of human rights and dignity. In a worst-case scenario, it could foster internal and exported terrorism. Events in neighboring Mali are a reminder of Mauritania's fragility and vulnerability. Potential risks to achieving this Objective include changes to senior leadership at the MOIA. Post will attempt to mitigate these risks by working with the elements beyond the MOIA in the GIRM and CSOs in order to broaden and adapt activities to changing circumstances.

**Objective 1.3:** Increased export of Mauritania's best security practices to the region, especially through leadership in and reform of the G5 Sahel, improves regional stability

- **Justification:** Mauritania has remained relatively stable in an unstable region. Therefore, its senior leaders are well positioned to share Mauritania's lessons learned and best practices in the fight against VEOs and trans-national crime. Currently, the G5 Sahel Defense College hosts students from other G5 Sahel member countries for training on serving in a multi-national headquarters. As a result, the G5 is well-placed to propagate lessons learned and can develop itself to reach a larger audience. Other institutions within Mauritania have been successful but are not resourced to host regional partner students. Addressing this, e.g. by supporting the Mauritanian Air Force in its regional leadership efforts, will help put a stable partner in the lead of developing other regional partners' ability to combat VEOs and ultimately decrease reliance on foreign assistance. This objective will be achieved through formal capabilities assessments, bilateral best practice

exchanges, key leader engagements between Post and the Mauritanian military, and the signing of an MOU to provide equipment and training.

- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - Interim National Security Strategy Guidance: Protect the security of the American people from violent extremists
  - State-USAID JSP Objective 1–4 - Peace and Security: Revitalize U.S. alliances and partnerships to prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts and address international security challenges
  - DOS/AF JRS Objective 1.1: Strengthen the capability of multilateral and regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to prevent worsening state fragility and the emergence of armed conflict
  - DOS/AF JRS Objective 1.2: Improve the capacity and will of security forces, including defense and civilian sector actors, to identify and respond to ongoing transnational threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, maritime insecurity, and border insecurity
- **Risks:** If Objective 1.3 is not achieved, Mauritania will not be able to share positive lessons learned with neighboring countries whose stability would benefit from the Mauritanian example. Potential risks to the completion of this objective include changes to senior leadership in the Mauritanian military and the military's willingness to provide its own funding and a long-term sustainment plan in support of shared goals. As in Objective 1.1, Mauritanian reliance solely on United States government funding without domestic sustainment programs could reduce the chances of receiving future USG assistance. Post will mitigate these risks by helping the G5 Defense College staff develop its curriculum to ensure it propagates these lessons as much as possible.

**Objective 1.4:** Augmentation of Post consular analytics enhances American citizen security by strengthening visa adjudications

- **Justification:** Visa adjudication at Embassy Nouakchott has a long history of high refusal rates, high overstay rates, fraudulent documents, and high rates of questionable asylum claims and other applications for adjustment of status, including occasional issues related to official GIRM and LE staff travel. The consular section (CONS) has had staffing gaps and was previously staffed by first-tour officers. An in-depth analysis of visa adjudication history will create a guide for future staffing and adjudication in the Consular section and thus enhance American security.
- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - State-USAID JSP Strategic Objective 5.2: Facilitate legitimate travel
  - Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) Goal 3: Facilitate legitimate travel while ensuring secure U.S. borders
- **Risks:** Risks to completing this Objective are whether the Consular Section will have sufficient time to complete these validation studies and the willingness of different offices in CA to support these studies. Post will attempt to mitigate these risks by staffing the Consular Eligible Family Member (EFM) position and stressing to CA the role of these validation studies in the bilateral relationship.

**Goal 2:** Further democratic development and good governance; promote a just, resilient, and inclusive society; and end slavery

**Description:** Mauritania's upcoming parliamentary (2023) and presidential (2024) elections are an opportunity to consolidate and advance Mauritania's democratic transition following the country's first peaceful democratic transfer of power between two elected leaders in 2019. We will seek to further Mauritania's democratic governance and internal stability by encouraging increased political discourse and debate (over issues such as corruption, public administration, slavery and discrimination) in legitimate political processes, including the upcoming elections, and by promoting a free and objective press. On slavery, we will work with all partners—including the GIRM, civil society, the business community, international NGOs, and other donors—to provide programs and active encouragement to meet the government's stated intention to address the existence of and end hereditary slavery, as well as the deep social divisions that stem from it. Strengthening inclusive democracy in Mauritania and ensuring equal opportunity for all citizens will help promote a more stable and prosperous country.

**Objective 2.1:** Encouragement of inclusive political participation, robust civil society, and open media leads to stronger democratic institutions and free and fair elections in 2023 and 2024

- **Justification:** The 2019 election of President Ghazouani marked the first peaceful transition of power in Mauritania from one democratically elected president to another. While the 2019 election is considered to have been mostly free and fair, there are many Mauritians who contend the system was rigged. Elections in 2023 and 2024 will offer Mauritians the chance to hold inclusive elections from which the people will respect the results regardless of outcome, because they have faith in the country's democratic system including its media. Stronger democratic institutions will allow citizens to have increased confidence in the State and will offer an alternative to tribal and/or extremist ideologies that have historically caused security concerns in the country.
- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:

- Interim National Security Strategy: Strengthen our commitment to development, health security, environmental sustainability, democratic progress, and rule of law
- State-USAID JSP Goal 3: Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity
- DOS/AF JRS Objective 3.1: Promote accountable, transparent, and democratic governance
- **Risks**: If Mauritanian political stability falters, democratic gains in the country could be threatened. Capacity building to advance Mauritanian democracy, overcome tribal and ethnic divisions, and strengthen electoral and media institutions will be key to mitigating this risk.

**Objective 2.2:** Citizens are empowered through policies promoting education, youth development, abolishment of slavery and its effects, and integration of refugees, stateless persons, and marginalized communities

- **Justification:** Although the GIRM is making efforts to provide all Mauritanian citizens with civil status documents, many young Mauritians from underserved communities are excluded from school at an early age because they have no access to civil registration. Approximately 40% of youth complete primary school; the remaining majority have limited options and thus can potentially be lured into illicit activities including violent extremism. These youth need support to enter the workforce and productively engage in civic life. Awareness campaigns to assist Mauritians to obtain civil registration will improve student retention rates and offer a more promising future of economic opportunities and livelihoods afforded by education. If awarded funding, activities will be undertaken to increase civil registration, track progress on education, and promote other socio-economic areas of growth for youth and other underserved populations.
- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - State-USAID JSP Performance Goal Statement 1.5.3: By 2026, we will improve our ability to more effectively persuade foreign publics to adopt behaviors linked to expanding prosperity and opportunity



- State-USAID JSP Performance Goal Statement 1.3–4 - Reducing Statelessness (State): By FY 2026, the United States reduces statelessness by encouraging implementation of Member State commitments made at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness
- State-USAID JSP Performance Goal Statement 3.5–2 - Strengthen Educational Outcomes (USAID): By September 2026, children and youth—including females and people with disabilities—in 25 countries will experience improved educational outcomes
- **Risks:** The risk of not extending civil liberties to all citizens denies the full potential of prosperity and shared values with the U.S. and puts Mauritians at risk of violent extremism by pushing excluded citizens into at-risk behavior for perceived lack of choice. The challenges associated with this risk are being able to reach the stateless populations, many of whom live outside the public sphere. Post will mitigate these risks by coordinating efforts to target and use proven methods to raise awareness within targeted populations considering the sensitivities of their cultural environment and drawing from lessons of work conducted by the USG in this space from the recent past.

**Objective 2.3:** Increased prosecution of crimes such as TIP, slavery cases, and corruption reflects Mauritanian progress promoting rule of law and support GIRM efforts to end hereditary slavery

- **Justification:** In previous years, Mauritania’s lack of progress towards combatting TIP significantly hampered relations with the United States. Ensuring Mauritania prioritizes prosecution of crimes such as TIP, slavery, and corruption (by a judiciary that reflects Mauritania’s diversity) will help avoid future economic sanctions and open the door to increased economic ties through the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Increased rule of law will contribute to citizens’ faith in the state and will also ensure that historically marginalized communities will be less likely to turn to extremist organizations to seek redress of grievances.

- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - Interim National Security Strategy: Confronting corruption
  - State-USAID JSP Strategic Objective 3.3: Combatting Corruption
  - DOS/AF JRS Sub-Objective 1.4.1: Publicize policies that prevent, investigate, and address trafficking in persons
  - DOS/AF JRS Sub-Objective 3.1.2: Ensure accountability for endemic corruption
- **Risks:** Although there is increased political will to prosecute crimes such as TIP, slavery, and corruption, resources dedicated to these efforts remain limited. If Mauritania becomes subject to assistance restrictions based on its TIP status, capacity building efforts would significantly diminish. Widespread corruption and a certain degree of cultural acceptance for TIP (including slavery) could cause progress towards these efforts to move slowly. Efforts to mitigate these risks could include substituting virtual training programs for in-person activities and ensuring international partners are willing to focus on similar objectives so their assistance resources can mitigate any U.S. assistance restrictions.

**Goal 3:** Promote sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity through an improved business climate, diversification, and increased U.S. investment

**Description:** Greater prosperity and optimal management of the country's strategic resources will further democratic governance, strengthen security, and address slavery and discrimination. Economic proceeds have been highly concentrated among traditional elites, with the government historically distributing economic benefits to key supporters and their patronage networks. Mauritania's economy is highly dependent on resource extraction, focused on minerals and fisheries. If properly managed, the recent discovery of significant offshore hydrocarbon resources, along with the promise of large "green energy" projects in the short-term, will generate new government revenue that may spur economic growth and development for Mauritania and its trade partners, including the United States. If managed well, this growth should also enhance citizen access to basic services such as public health and the right to participate in economic growth through entrepreneurship.

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**Objective 3.1:** Encouragement of economic reforms leads to fair, open, and diverse markets that meet international standards and attracts increased U.S. trade and investment

- **Justification:** Broad economic reforms in this emerging market are necessary to address market inefficiencies, correct overdependencies on food imports and extractive industries, and attract necessary investment and expertise from foreign firms. The combined impact of these actions will increase prosperity, distribute wealth more evenly within Mauritania, encourage a virtuous cycle of innovation and local entrepreneurship, and secure optimal management of the country's strategic resources against misappropriation and malfeasance—furthering democratic governance. Through positive diplomatic engagement, targeted foreign assistance in support of regulatory and budgeting best practices, and increased commercial advocacy (especially in support of clean energy), Embassy Nouakchott can continue to support the opening of the Mauritanian economy and provide the GIRM with tools to combat patronage and corruption to boost investment.
- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports:
  - Interim National Security Strategy: Expanding economic prosperity and opportunity
  - DOS/AF JRS Objective 2.1: Encourage improvements to business enabling environments and enhanced trade and investment between the United States and Africa through whole-of-government engagement.
  - DOS/AF JRS Objective 2.3: Improvement of economic governance and regional integration for trade and investment, including the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement
  - U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption, National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM-1) Strategic Pillar Four: Preserving and Strengthening the Multilateral Anti-Corruption Architecture
  - NSSM-1 Strategic Pillar Five: Improving Diplomatic Engagement and Leveraging Foreign Assistance Resources to Advance Policy Objectives

- **Risks:** There are several risks that may jeopardize this Objective over the next several years: the growing disparity of wealth and economic opportunities within society; the potential spillover of regional insecurity into Mauritania given its overreliance on essential imports from neighboring countries; weak government institutions; limited infrastructure and poor resource management; and corruption and patronage systems. To mitigate these risks and improve the outcome for the country's economy, Post will provide expert guidance and technical assistance to concerned government entities and private businesses involved in the public sector to improve existing infrastructure. Post will continue to highlight the importance of fighting corruption to the country's judicial, economic, and political institutions, and emphasize how systems of personal patronage inhibit trade expansion between the United States and Mauritania. Post will also continue to support the modernization of Mauritania's financial system by providing expertise, technical assistance, and facilitating communication with the U.S. financial sector.

**Objective 3.2:** Concrete steps by Mauritanian institutions promote inclusive economic security, boost entrepreneurship, and bolster public health

- **Justification:** Mauritanian institutions need to ensure more extensive basic services such as public health, including reproductive health, in order for the country's population to achieve demographic dividends and enjoy increased economic security. Inequitable economic growth and distribution of resources stifles opportunities and increases social costs. We aim to support an enabling environment that allows all citizens to access public health services and engage in economic opportunities such as entrepreneurship that will increase the country's economic security and well-being.

- **Linkages:**
  - State-USAID JSP Performance Goal Statement 2.2.4: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth (State) - By 2026, U.S. leadership in multilateral and bilateral discussions and negotiations will result in international and regional environmental, health, and scientific agreements and processes, laws, policies, and regulations that promote shared goals, leverage resources, and utilize expertise to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic gains
  - State-USAID JSP Performance Goal Statement 3.5.1: Strengthen Health; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); and Food and Nutrition Services (USAID) - By 2026, increase the number of countries with improved access to quality health, WASH, food, and nutrition services for women, youth, and marginalized groups
- **Risks:** The risk of not extending assistance to ensure economic security, opportunities and support to public health is to push people into situations where they may feel compelled to seek alternative and illicit means to cover these needs for lack of better options. The risks to achieving this Objective include the GIRM's limited human resources being overwhelmed by the COVID pandemic, polio outbreaks, malnutrition, and other health related emergencies. Post will mitigate these risks by supporting the GIRM with tools, technical assistance and equipment to strengthen the health system with sustainable practices.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** Quality and efficiency of ICASS services to embassy customers is improved per annual ICASS Surveys and Service Standards metrics

- **Justification:** Embassy Nouakchott achieved its highest ever ICASS score in 2021, but the score is still below the worldwide average. In numerous areas, including IRM and LE staff HR, ICASS scores are below average for AF. In addition to customer input, ICASS Service Standards (ISS) establish minimum baselines for quality service delivery. Using ICASS scores and ISS metrics in concert ensures that Management (MGT) section performance is measured for both quality and efficiency of services that will enhance embassy staff morale and productivity in this HDS Post.
- **Linkages:** ICASS services support all Mission Objectives and their related linkages as detailed herein.
- **Risks:** Failure to provide ICASS services in a timely and efficient manner impedes the ability of the Mission to deliver on overall Mission Objectives. From motor pool support to community morale, shipping logistics to financial management, all aspects of Management deliverables rely on effective performance of ICASS responsibilities. The greatest risk to implementation of this Objective is the challenge of promoting change in a local culture often averse to new ways of working. Post will attempt to overcome this challenge with training and messaging that conveys the shared benefit to the Mission, its members, and our Goals if we modernize our ways of working.

**Management Objective 2:** DEIA goals are advanced through Management practices and programs that support Mission-wide efforts to incorporate DEIA aims and principles

- **Justification:** Incorporating DEIA goals into Management practices, including promotion of equity and fairness in recruiting, will ensure a diverse workforce better able to draw on differing backgrounds, experiences and skillsets. This will aid in the quality, efficiency and fairness of overall Mission service delivery while maximizing and reflecting contributions from all sectors of Mauritanian society.
- **Linkages:** This Mission Objective links to and supports Performance Goals from the State-USAID JSP as follows:
  - E.O. 14035: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce
  - E.O. 13583: Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce
  - E.O. 13988: Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation
  - E.O. 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
  - E.O. 14020: Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council
- **Risks:** Failing to address DEIA goals may have a number of negative ramifications for the Mission. Host country relations could be affected, as a perception exists that the embassy only hires from certain segments of the population. Operations would also lack the diversity of community contacts and experiences that having a broad section of Mauritanian society would offer. The greatest risk to implementation of this Objective is the inherent imbalance in skills (particularly language skills) which exists in the wider context of Mauritanian society in conjunction with a lack of desirability for USG employment among under-represented ethnic groups. Post will attempt to mitigate this risk by expanding and targeting advertising to additional groups of applicants.