



Integrated Country Strategy

Lao People's Democratic Republic

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States' bilateral relationship with the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR or Laos) is on stronger footing today than at any time since 1975, with remarkable progress made under the U.S.-Lao Comprehensive Partnership agreed to in 2016. Over the next four years we plan to further normalize our bilateral relationship beyond war legacy issues and support Laos' economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Embassy Vientiane will also integrate and model diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in its diplomatic activities, assistance programs, and internal operations.

Laos lies to the immediate south of China and at the heart of Mainland Southeast Asia, with its improved infrastructure increasingly linking countries strategically important to U.S. security and economic interests. ASEAN's strength depends on the strength of all its members, and our success in building a new relationship with Laos that looks to the future, that helps improve governance and strengthen public institutions, and that facilitates strong and sustainable economic growth, will aid Laos in developing as a country that upholds a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific and is resilient to transnational threats.

Laos' more international-oriented President, with an anti-corruption, better governance agenda, represents the most receptive leadership we have seen. We are working to facilitate Laos' continued integration into the ASEAN and global economy; foster better government and increased accountability to its citizens; encourage joint action in confronting global threats; and help Laos maintain its autonomy as a constructive member of the international community.

High-level personal diplomatic engagement and continuing support for the Lao government's development goals are the keys to propelling this relationship forward. We have exponentially grown our support to Laos to address of persistent challenges, exacerbated by the pandemic, of health, education, inclusive economic development, climate change, trafficking in persons and wildlife, cybersecurity, and illicit narcotics. We support the Lao government's goal to eliminate UXO as an obstacle to national development by 2030 and are continuing our efforts to survey and clear the unexploded ordnance remaining in Laos from the 1965 to 1974 "Secret War." At

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the same time, we are working toward a goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting of our missing U.S. service members by 2030. In doing so, we will fulfill our obligation to their families while gradually shifting focus in our bilateral relationship more fully on our shared future.

Increasing support of Laos' development goals is creating the mutual trust needed to effectively help Laos recover from the pandemic, uphold the rule of law, and become increasingly accountable and responsive to its people. We will help the government in its declared goals to fight corruption and transnational crime and grow the economy sustainably, while highlighting the important role civil society plays in economic and social development. In line with the Indo-Pacific Strategy, we will continue cooperation with likeminded allies and partners and will engage with the rising generation of Lao leaders in pursuing these efforts.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Protect America's regional and global security interests, in cooperation with allies and partners.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Work with allies and partners to enhance Laos' capacity to make independent political choices so that the Lao PDR is more fully integrated into ASEAN, supports the rules-based international order, and addresses regional security issues.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Increased engagement with all branches of Laos' government and socio-political organizations, strengthens governance institutions to better reflect citizens' needs, combat transnational threats, and uphold the rule of law.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Improved consular relations facilitates Embassy operations to enhance U.S. and regional border security, protect the lives of U.S. citizens in Laos, and facilitate legitimate travel.
- **Mission Objective 1.4:** Strengthened security cooperation supports Laos' natural disaster readiness and response capacity, promotes regional initiatives to combat transnational crime, and augments Laos' growing digital initiatives.

Mission Goal 2: Support sustainable and inclusive economic growth to bolster Laos' fiscal independence, improve livelihoods, and promote a competitive and attractive market for U.S. businesses.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Increased U.S. economic and development cooperation improves Laos' macroeconomic stability and fiscal sustainability, citizens' health and education, and fosters innovation, job growth, and more trade and investment.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Enhanced engagement improves Laos' efforts to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and pandemics, develop disaster-resilient critical infrastructure and emergency response capabilities, and diversify beyond reliance on natural resource and energy exploitation for sustainable economic growth.

Mission Goal 3: Normalize the bilateral relationship beyond the Indochina War and Cold War legacies so that Laos recognizes the United States as a credible partner that helps Laos balance other external influences.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Expanded engagement with Laos' whole-of-government interagency, local organizations, civil society, and all Lao citizens, promotes understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Support for Lao preparations for its ASEAN chair year in 2024, including senior-level U.S. engagement, underscores Laos' importance to the U.S. policy of ASEAN centrality, and the importance of the bilateral relationship to regional security and prosperity.

Management Objective 1: Provide environmentally sustainable, cost-effective services; foster a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible work environment; and efficiently maintain an operational platform that is appropriately rightsized and resourced to support expanding Mission Goals and Objectives.

Management Objective 2: Strengthen the bilateral management relationship with the government of Laos to expand our workforce and facilities at a commensurate rate to the overall bilateral relationship, to ensure operational capabilities and the continued security and safety of the Mission.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Protect America's regional and global security interests, in cooperation with allies and partners.

Description | The 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance calls for the United States to lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rules to promote a favorable distribution of power to deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the United States and our allies, inhibiting access to the global commons, or dominating key regions. The 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance also identifies an increasingly assertive China as the only competitor potentially capable of mounting a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system, presenting a challenge to core objectives of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Laos is on the front lines of this challenge, most clearly represented by the December 2021 inauguration of a railway linking Laos to China, as well as the land and resource concessions Laos has granted China in recent years for resource extraction and the extra-sovereign administration of special economic zones. China seeks to use its growing political, security, economic, and cultural influence to co-opt the government and people of Laos to think and act in ways consistent with the PRC's worldview rather than as an independent actor that adheres to a rules-based international order and the principle of ASEAN centrality. Laos' ASEAN membership, its geographic position between Thailand and Vietnam, and its role in regional energy, security, and countertrafficking efforts make Laos an important hinge in the region despite its small population. As Laos' connectivity with neighbors grows, the country will also become increasingly vulnerable to transnational threats such as human, wildlife, and narcotics trafficking, as well as the transmission of pathogens and pandemic diseases. A country context of poverty, porous borders, weak rule of law and respect for human rights, and poor governance exacerbates these potential threats. The United States should assist Laos in strengthening government and security sector institutions responsible for protecting the

country to ensure Laos maintains foreign policy independence, is more fully integrated into ASEAN, supports the rules-based international order, and addresses regional security issues.

Objective 1.1 | Work with allies and partners to enhance Laos' capacity to make independent political choices so that Laos is more fully integrated into ASEAN, supports the rules-based international order, and addresses regional security issues.

- **Justification** | As a small country surrounded by more influential neighbors, Laos tends to work multilaterally rather than unilaterally to honor its international commitments and obligations. Therefore, working through ASEAN mechanisms, as well as the United Nations and other international organizations, is the most effective way to encourage Laos to join its ASEAN neighbors on regional security issues and to counter attempts by revisionist countries to gain support for their policy positions via a divide and conquer approach. Additionally, encouraging Laos to cooperate regionally through ASEAN mechanisms supports U.S. national interests in countering transnational threats such as terrorism, trafficking, and illicit migration.
- **Linkages** | The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance calls for reinvigorating and modernizing U.S. alliances and partnerships around the world. The U.S Indo-Pacific Strategy, the State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy (Goal 1) and the INDOPACOM Theater Campaign Plan direct the forging of stronger connections within and beyond the region. The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1 calls for leading allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security (1.4). The State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy calls for revitalizing alliances and partnerships to bolster the rules-based international order (1.1), delivering concrete solutions to global and regional challenges and threats (1.2), and for contributing to countries in the region upholding and adhering to international law and norms, including UNCLOS, while countering transnational crime and violent extremism, resolving conflicts, combating human trafficking, and building cybersecurity capacity (3.4).

- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective would likely result in Laos aligning with and advocating on behalf of the PRC to serve a blocking function to U.S. interests in the ASEAN framework, to the detriment of the global rules-based order.

Objective 1.2 | Increased engagement with all branches of Laos' government and socio-political organizations, strengthening governance institutions to better reflect citizens' needs, combat transnational threats, and uphold the rule of law.

- **Justification** | A free and open Indo-Pacific requires working both to strengthen government institutions and systems, including for accountability and transparency, and working within the constraints of a one-party authoritarian state to facilitate increased dialogue between civil society and government and to increase the voice that ordinary citizens have in shaping the policies and behavior of their public institutions. Increased transparency also makes it more difficult for state and non-state actors that operate outside international norms to conduct back-room deals.
- **Linkages** | National Security Strategy Memo 1 established the fight against corruption as a core U.S. national security interest. The Indo-Pacific Strategy calls for ensuring that the world's most dynamic region is free from coercion and accessible to all. The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 3 underscores the importance to U.S. interests upholding universal values and promoting human dignity, including: promoting good governance (3.1), preventing, exposing, and reducing corruption (3.3), and improving inclusive, equitable health, education, and livelihood services (3.5). State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy Goal 4 calls for strengthening democracy in the region; promoting equity, accessibility, human rights; and advancing transparent, accountable governance that works in the public interest. These objectives are reinforced in the INDOPACOM Theater Campaign Plan. Promoting greater transparency and accountability (Goal 4.34) is vitally important to a country like Laos with endemic corruption and weak rule of law.
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective would see increased levels of corruption, non-transparency, and arbitrary governance that would undermine Laos' ability to be an

effective member of ASEAN, increase opportunities for transnational criminal enterprises, and leave Laos politically and diplomatically vulnerable to influence by countries that seek to disrupt the rules-based international order.

Objective 1.3 | Improved consular relations facilitates Embassy operations to enhance U.S. and regional border security, protect the lives of U.S. citizens in Laos, and facilitate legitimate travel.

- **Justification** | Consular operations in Laos prioritize protecting the lives and interests of Americans living in Laos, while also ensuring strong measures to protect U.S. border security and facilitating the legitimate travel of Lao nationals to the United States consistent with U.S. immigration law. Streamlined consular operations ensure that the Embassy is using its resources as effectively as possible, services are provided in a timely and efficient manner, and the Embassy is prepared to deal with emergencies involving U.S. Citizens. Visa sanctions, levied against Laos under Section 243(d) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, remain a significant hurdle in the U.S.-Lao relationship and negatively affect Post's ability to pursue other avenues of engagement. Post will continue to work with the Government of Laos on finding a path forward for Laos to accept Lao nationals ordered removed from the United States and identify options for gradual, reciprocal easing of visa sanctions.
- **Linkages** | The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (Goal 5) and the Consular Affairs (CA) Bureau Strategy Framework highlight the importance of protecting U.S. Citizens abroad. The CA Functional Bureau Strategy Framework divides the mandates of protecting the lives and interests of U.S. citizens and strengthening U.S. border security into two separate goals (Goals 1 & 2) and adds a third goal pertaining to improving organizational and resource capacity (Goal 3). The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan also calls for promoting safe, humane, and orderly asylum systems (3.4).
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective will potentially result in direct harm to U.S. citizens in Laos and undermine legitimate travel opportunities that can advance U.S. economic and public diplomacy interests.

Objective 1.4 | Strengthened security cooperation supports Laos' natural disaster readiness and response capacity, promotes regional initiatives to combat transnational crime, and augments Laos' growing digital initiatives.

- **Justification** | The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis have underscored the urgency of building a more resilient Indo-Pacific. In 2021, Laos was still rebuilding a flood-stricken region, suffered several small earthquakes, and faced a significant and lasting surge in COVID-19 cases that overwhelmed its public health system and disrupted its economy. Such vulnerability increases opportunities for China and Russia to offer support in return for those countries' political and economic benefit. It also presents opportunities for transnational criminal organizations to exploit vulnerable populations and move more freely as law enforcement agencies are redirected to support strained public services. Laos' increasing digital connectivity also presents risks, with economic and politically motivated hacking risks increasing exponentially. Working with Laos in these areas helps Laos establish its own norms and legal frameworks that integrate it more fully into ASEAN, regional, and global frameworks.
- **Linkages** | The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance calls for working with the international community to combat the continuing threat posed by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases with pandemic potential. The Interim Guidance also calls for the United States to shape emerging technology standards to boost U.S. security, economic competitiveness, and values, and to renew the U.S. commitment to international engagement on cyber issues, working alongside our allies and partners to uphold existing and shape new global norms in cyberspace. The Indo-Pacific Strategy calls for building regional resilience against disease and climate crises, combating transnational crimes, and investing in cybersecurity and developing digital economy standards. The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan calls for U.S. leadership strengthening global health security, combating infectious disease threats, and addressing priority global health challenges through bilateral and multilateral engagement (1.1). It also calls for reinvigorating U.S. humanitarian leadership to provide lifesaving protection and assistance for humanitarian crises (1.3). The State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint

Regional Strategy calls for building sustainable and resilient health systems (2.1), increasing climate resilience and adaptation (2.2), and improving the life-saving response capabilities of host governments and local actors (2.3).

- **Risks** | To achieve this objective could undermine Laos' ability to act as an effective member of ASEAN, increase opportunities for transnational criminal enterprises, and leave Laos politically and diplomatically vulnerable to influence by countries that seek to disrupt the rules-based international order.

Mission Goal 2 | Support sustainable and inclusive economic growth to bolster Laos' fiscal independence, improve livelihoods, and promote a competitive and attractive market for U.S. businesses.

Description | Across the globe, the United States partners with countries to promote free market competition and incentivize private sector growth. As the economy of Laos becomes more competitive, it will become an increasingly attractive destination for American businesses, both as a sourcing destination but also as an export destination for American goods and services. To become competitive, Laos requires an enabling environment that encourages further investment and a population that is healthy and equipped to meet the needs of the global economy. The risk of falling short of this mission goal is that Laos does not experience sustainable growth over the long-term and does not become self-reliant. This would limit market opportunities for U.S. businesses, increase Laos' vulnerabilities as outlined in the objectives under Mission Goal 1, and undermine the country's ability to act independently in support of U.S. interests regionally and globally. The rising negative influence of China is pervasive throughout the region, and Laos, despite most ASEAN countries' increasing efforts to isolate Russia, still retains its historical political and military ties to Russia. In particular, the PRC's investments in Laos are rarely aimed at helping the country achieve economic independence, and often come with negative consequences. Investment of U.S. Foreign Assistance in Laos offers the Government of Laos a better choice toward self-reliance without burdening the country with unsustainable debt. Foreign Assistance programming affords the USG the opportunity to build the trust of the Lao people and government and serve as a

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counterweight to China's growing influence, particularly when it facilitates greater investment and trade involving high-quality U.S. firms. Therefore, maintaining economic bilateral assistance to Laos serves the USG's strategic purposes for the country and the region.

Objective 2.1 | Increased U.S. economic and development cooperation improves Laos' macroeconomic stability and fiscal sustainability, citizens' health and education, and fosters innovation, job growth, and more trade and investment.

- **Justification** | Although Laos' economy has grown rapidly in recent years, this has not led to a commensurate rise in income for most of the population, which is critical for a productive population that can fully integrate into the global economy and is able to become a full, reciprocal trade partner with the United States. A key impediment to broad-based growth is a business environment that prevents its citizens from participating fully in the economy and does not fully tap the potential of the private sector. In addition, the country's economic growth has been dependent on the rapid exploitation of its natural resources, especially hydropower, which is not sustainable in the decades ahead, both due to increasing external debt and the negative environmental impacts on downstream neighbors on the Mekong River. Assistance to Laos that improves the business enabling environment and increases socially and environmentally responsible private-sector investment, including from the United States will help drive the broad-based growth necessary for Laos to succeed in the global economy.
- **Linkages** | The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2 is to promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive. This objective will promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans (2.1). It also supports inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe (2.2), and will improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups (3.4). The State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy Goal 5 seeks to advance more inclusive and sustainable growth and promote free, fair, and open

trade and transparent investment that improves the lives of Americans and people around the world.

- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective could leave Laos economically vulnerable to influence by countries that seek to disrupt the rules-based international order.

Objective 2.2 | Enhanced engagement improves Laos' efforts to reduce vulnerability to the impact of climate change and pandemics, develop disaster-resilient critical infrastructure and emergency response capabilities, and diversify beyond reliance on natural resource and energy exploitation for sustainable economic growth.

- **Justification** | The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis have underscored the urgency of building a more resilient Indo-Pacific. In 2021, Laos suffered several small earthquakes and faced a significant and lasting surge in COVID-19 cases that overwhelmed its public health system and disrupted its economy. A healthy and educated population is a key part of enhancing the economic productivity of Laos and raising the country's long-term competitiveness in the global economy.
- **Linkages** | The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and the Indo-Pacific Strategy both call for combatting the impact of global health crises and climate change. The Indo-Pacific Strategy calls for greater regional resilience. This objective also falls under State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goals 1 and 2. Specifically, this addresses securing ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes (1.2), supporting inclusive and sustainable growth opportunities (2.2), and strengthening global economic resilience to shocks (2.4). The State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy Goals 2 and 5 for resilience and sustainable economic growth. Mission programs in the areas of health, education, and nutrition contribute to the perception among the Lao people that the United States is a credible partner (Mission Goal 3).
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective could undermine Laos' socio-economic system and leave the country vulnerable to influence by countries that seek to disrupt the rules-based international order.

Mission Goal 3 | Normalize the bilateral relationship beyond the Indochina War and Cold War legacies so that Laos recognizes the United States as a credible partner that helps Laos balance other external influences.

Description | Bordered by four ASEAN countries and China, Laos' history is one of balancing the interests of larger neighbors. Although the PRC is Laos' largest investor, largest creditor, and second largest trading partner, the government has taken steps to scrutinize and scale back PRC-backed projects not in line with its own interests and seeks to minimize its debt dependency. Laos has simultaneously pursued engagement with and investment from other partners. To capitalize on Laos' search for balance against PRC influence, the United States must normalize its bilateral relationship beyond the Indochina War and Cold War legacies so that Laos recognizes the United States as a credible partner that helps the country balance external influences. Clearing UXO is important, but increased U.S. business engagement can focus on developing the future economic benefit of cleared agricultural land. The United States must leverage cooperation on POW/MIA to build a stronger military and security relationship with Laos. Accelerated cooperation on war legacy issues creates the trust needed to expand the bilateral relationship. The United States must carry forward the positive momentum built up with COVID-19 assistance, to help Laos achieve a sustainable recovery so that its economy and citizens do not fall further behind regional neighbors. This helps Laos recognize the United States as a credible partner that offers assistance without the risk of coercion or ulterior motives.

Objective 3.1 | Expanded engagement with Laos' whole-of-government interagency, local organizations, civil society, and Lao citizens generally, promotes understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- **Justification** | Increased engagement and strengthened people-to-people ties solidifies trust and inspires the new generation to look to the United States, instead of coercive states, as the partner of choice on more forward-looking issues that advance U.S. priorities. The shared desire to overcome war legacy issues is the underpinning of our

bilateral relationship with Laos and will serve as the foundation for more future-oriented engagement. Continued cooperation with the Government of Laos on UXO clearance shows that the United States is a credible partner. Laos' continued willingness to assist in accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the wars in Indochina is a strong example of this trust. These joint activities, together with targeted humanitarian assistance and efforts to combat infectious diseases, pave the way for partnering on shared priorities. These activities are also the currency by which the Lao people—more than half of whom are under the age of 25—will ultimately view the United States as the partner of choice for balancing the influence of coercive states. Conversely some individuals who hold important decision-making roles in the Lao government and Lao Communist Party still view the United States with skepticism. Many mid- and high-ranking government officials were trained in Vietnam or in states that were once part of the former Soviet Union; virtually none received extended training in the United States. There is a considerable appetite within the younger generations to engage with the United States, as seen in the popularity of the Mission's American Center and Facebook page. More engagement with government, civil society, and private citizens will result in shared values, and ensure that as new leaders move into government, they will take a more positive, forward-leaning stance towards and view the United States as the partner of choice for balancing the influence of coercive states.

- **Linkages** | This supports the Mission's broader strategic goals of strengthening ties with partners, offsetting PRC influence, and promoting enduring U.S. values and international norms, as elaborated in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and the Indo-Pacific Strategy. It specially links to the State-USAID Joint Strategic Objective to enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States (1.5). Laos recognizing the United States. As a credible partner also supports Strategic Objective 1.4, to lead allies and partners to address shared challenges. This also links to the State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy objectives to Support a resilient, viable civil society and independent media capable of promoting and defending democracy, holding government accountable, and combating propaganda

and mis-, dis- and mal-information (4.2), and strengthen human capital, including for marginalized and underrepresented groups, to advance regional prosperity (5.4).

- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective will cede the ground of influence in an ASEAN member nation to other countries that seek to alter the global rules-based order.

Objective 3.2 | Support Laos' preparations for its ASEAN chair year in 2024, including senior-level U.S. engagement to underscore Laos' importance to the U.S. policy of ASEAN centrality, and the importance of the bilateral relationship to regional security and prosperity.

- **Justification** | Lao officials notice when senior U.S. government officials visit the region. President Obama's visit to Laos in 2016 and Dr. Jill Biden's visit in 2015 are still fondly remembered; however, Laos has not had a cabinet-level visit since Wilbur Ross in 2017. Laos co-chairing the Mekong U.S. Partnership in 2022 and chairing ASEAN in 2024 present opportunities for USG to come more frequently. High-level visits from the State Department, other agencies, INDOPACOM, and CODELS can advance environment, energy, trade, and security issues. These visits will help demonstrate that the whole U.S. Government is as committed to Laos as we are to other ASEAN members.
- **Linkages** | The 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and the INDOPACOM Theater Campaign Plan calls for closer engagement with ASEAN. The Indo-Pacific Strategy upholds ASEAN centrality as a core pillar. The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan calls for the United States to lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors (1.4), and to enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States (1.5). The State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy calls for ensuring a secure, free, and open Indo-Pacific and bolster the rules-based international order (1.1) and leveraging multilateral, regional, and mini-lateral fora, to deliver concrete solutions to global and regional challenges and threats (1.2).
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective could undermine the ability of Laos to host an effective ASEAN year, to the detriment of partner and U.S. interests in the region and the benefit of countries that see negatives in a unified ASEAN.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Provide environmentally sustainable, cost-effective services; foster a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible work environment; and efficiently maintain an operational platform that is appropriately rightsized and resourced to support expanding Mission Goals and Objectives.

- **Justification** | Embassy Vientiane's ability to implement its goals will require innovative use of resources, identification of maximum leverage opportunities for those resources, and commitments to data-based decisions. On-going growth in the Embassy community strains the ICASS-platform's footprint and abilities but also provides opportunities for efficiency gains, cost savings, and performance improvements.
- **Linkages** | The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 4 calls for revitalizing the diplomatic and development workforce and institution, including a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce (4.1), and to modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery (4.2). State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy Goal 6 calls for aligning and managing personnel and resources to implement strategic priorities and to ensure effectiveness and accountability.
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective will adversely affect the Mission's capacities and capabilities to achieve the Integrated Country Strategy Goals and Objectives.

Management Objective 2 | Strengthen the bilateral management relationship with the government of Laos to ensure that our workforce and facilities expand at a commensurate rate to the overall bilateral relationship to ensure operational capabilities and the continued security and safety of the Mission.

- **Justification** | Several bilateral management issues present obstacles to the efficient use of USG taxpayer money and cause frustration among American staff. Successful resolution of these obstacles will enhance Lao-U.S. government ties and bolster employee morale.
- **Linkages:** | The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 4 calls for revitalizing the diplomatic and development workforce and institution, including: a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce (4.1); modernizing IT and leveraging data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery (4.2); and protecting our personnel, information, and physical infrastructure from 21st century threats (4.3). State-USAID East Asia and Pacific Joint Regional Strategy Goal 6 calls for aligning and managing personnel and resources to implement strategic priorities and to ensure effectiveness and accountability.
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective will adversely affect the Mission's capacity to achieve the Integrated Country Strategy Goals and Objectives.