



Integrated Country Strategy

Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Approved: May 3, 2022

Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities	1
2. Mission Strategic Framework	4
3. Mission Goals and Objectives	6
4. Management Objectives	14

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Accredited to five diverse and geographically distant Pacific Island nations, Embassy Suva promotes U.S. interests on issues ranging from regional security and UN peacekeeping to the multi-billion-dollar tuna industry, from shared efforts to promote economic development to confronting climate change and other environmental challenges and strengthening people-to-people ties. While the land masses of the Pacific Islands appear small on the map, their exclusive economic zones encompass a vast area that is critical to global security and vital to the global economy, hosting a large proportion of the world's shipping, fisheries, and naval corridors. Recognizing the need for effective and accountable governance, Embassy Suva maintains an active interest in reinforcing the five countries' democratic institutions. The Embassy upholds core United States values through safeguarding human rights, promoting free and fair elections, combating disinformation, strengthening digital safety, both for new and traditional media, and advocating for transparency and accountability. In addition, the Embassy champions political participation by promoting a vibrant civil society and free press. This is particularly true as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and other aggressive state actors' engagement practices in the region are not only problematic to democracy and a rules-based order, but also seek to displace traditional Pacific partners, including the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Key to this effort is enhancing an already-strong security relationship that promotes civilian governance and the rule of law.

In addition to its bilateral responsibilities, Embassy Suva serves as a regional platform for achieving U.S. interests in the South Pacific. While Post is bilaterally accredited to five countries, the Embassy's regional offices have wider areas of responsibility, providing consular, environmental, and development support to up to 21 other Pacific countries and territories, spanning four million square miles. Embassy Suva hosts the Regional Pacific Environment Office, which has a broad mandate for advancing environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) goals throughout the region. From Embassy Suva, USAID is growing its presence through the establishment of a Pacific Islands Office, leading engagement and coordination with other regional stakeholders headquartered in Suva. The five nations to which this mission is

Approved: May 3, 2022

accredited form a subset of that region. Embassy Suva is the principal interface with major regional organizations such as the Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Development Forum, and the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility, which are avenues for the United States to amplify our influence. We use these institutions to build a durable foundation for improved security cooperation, increased coordination on global climate and health issues, strengthened democratic institutions, and sustained and open economic development receptive to U.S. investment.

Fiji and Tonga, the only countries with militaries, have proven to be reliable partners and staunch supporters of U.S.-led efforts to promote regional maritime domain awareness, international peacekeeping troop contributions, and Coalition operations in the Middle East and elsewhere. Since the resumption of democratic governance in Fiji in 2014, Post, in coordination with Australia and New Zealand, has strengthened ties with these countries' militaries to ensure that the United States and its allies remain the security partners of choice while promoting civilian control of the military.

The impacts of climate change are already a reality across the Pacific. National leaders, who routinely cite climate change as an existential threat and their greatest security challenge, are vocal participants in international climate summits. The United States and Pacific nations are natural allies in the fight against climate change, particularly in encouraging other major economies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The United States assists Pacific nations to access international climate financing, particularly to support climate adaptation and resilience projects. Post assists governments and communities in the region build the capacity to adequately respond to climate change, natural disasters, and other potential shocks that threaten the region's water and food security, livelihoods, biodiversity, infrastructure, and health care systems.

Enhanced political stability and resilience to external shocks should contribute to economic growth and increased opportunities for U.S. firms. However, poor investment climates and telecommunications capabilities in Post's five countries of accreditation have impeded economic performance. In addition to promoting market-based economic policies, the

Approved: May 3, 2022

Embassy regularly provides advocacy and dispute resolution for U.S. firms. Economic growth in Fiji, driven primarily by tourism, is also increasing the number of applications for U.S. visas, and U.S. tourists are the first to return to the Pacific. Post seeks to promote U.S. business interests, improve border security, and protect U.S. citizens, but we face human resource constraints that hinder commercial services and advocacy for U.S. business interests as well as economic diplomacy efforts that would lead to the creation of U.S. jobs.

In sum, Post is pursuing five central goals, which together work to reinforce a strong U.S. commitment to the region: (1) enhance U.S. and regional security in the Pacific; (2) promote careful stewardship of island states' ecologies and natural resources, alongside increased climate adaptation and resilience; (3) advance a democratic, regional rules-based order, both bilaterally and multilaterally; and (4) foster sustainable, mutual economic prosperity; and (5) protect the U.S. border and its citizens. Working with our allies and partners, we will further deepen our relationships with our five countries of accreditation, even as competitors increase their efforts, as well as garner favor for U.S. priorities in regional and international institutions.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Expand and strengthen alliances and partnerships with countries and institutions to advance a more resilient and prosperous Indo-Pacific region and to prevent, reduce, and defend against the full spectrum of current and emerging security threats.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Strengthen alliances and partnerships with Pacific Islands, like-minded countries, and regional institutions to advance a more resilient, prosperous, and secure Pacific region.

Mission Goal 2: Respond to and address the global challenges including climate change and global pandemics that threaten the region's security and prosperity.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Increase cooperation with Pacific Islands on climate and other global environmental issues, including biodiversity protection.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Foster more healthy, educated, and resilient populations through assistance aimed at promoting sustainable and resilient health, economic, and social systems.

Mission Goal 3: Advance more inclusive and sustainable growth and promote free and fair trade and transparent investment that improve lives of Americans and people around the world.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Leverage U.S. diplomatic, development, and private sector tools and engagement to strengthen the regional economic architecture for open and rules-based markets.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Promote trade and investment that advances more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth where benefits are shared broadly, including with marginalized and underrepresented groups.

Mission Goal 4: Strengthen democracy in the region; promote equity, accessibility, human rights; and advance transparent, accountable governance that works in the public interest.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Strengthen the efficacy and inclusivity of democratic institutions in pursuit of the public interest, including through promotion of the Rule of Law and free and fair elections.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Support a resilient, viable civil society and independent media capable of promoting and defending democracy and human rights, holding government accountable, and combating propaganda and mis-, dis- and mal-information.

Mission Goal 5: Support U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas and protect U.S. borders while facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.

- **Mission Objective 5.1:** Establish a small Consular Section in Tonga to provide American Citizen Services, as well as visa adjudications.
- **Mission Objective 5.2:** Implement and expand the Pay.Gov method of fee collection throughout the consular district, to provide easier processing of services for both American citizens and visa applicants.

Management Objective 1: Create a respectful, welcoming, and healthy work environment.

Management Objective 2: Improve efficiency and customer service posture of the ICASS platform.

Management Objective 3: Successfully support increased USG presence in the Pacific.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Expand and strengthen alliances and partnerships with countries and institutions to advance a more resilient and prosperous Indo-Pacific region and to prevent, reduce, and defend against the full spectrum of current and emerging security threats.

Description | Only through cooperative, coordinated, and concerted efforts can the U.S. and like-minded partners counter transnational security threats across the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Post relies on partner countries to contribute, but most lack the necessary resources to effectively do so.

Objective 1.1 | Strengthen alliances and partnerships with Pacific Islands, like-minded countries, and regional institutions to advance a more resilient, prosperous, and secure Pacific region.

- **Justification** | Of Embassy Suva's five-country portfolio, two have standing militaries (Fiji and Tonga). Size, focus, and geographical remoteness present significant challenges for Fiji and Tonga to contribute significantly to multilateral contingency response operations. The Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) and His Majesty's Armed Forces (HMAF) of Tonga are primarily focused on the defense of their respective nations while growing their capacity to serve as regional hubs for various facets of security. Both countries have made significant contributions in regional and international actions. Additionally, Fiji has a long tradition as a troop contributing nation to UN Peace Keeping Operations, and this is a source of significant national pride. Security cooperation efforts, including training, engagements, and capacity-building efforts will strengthen our relationships, solidify common values, and reinforce the United States as a partner of choice, networked to other like-minded partners and allies.
- **Linkages** | This goal seeks to bolster security in furtherance of Pillars I (Protect the Homeland) and III (Preserve Peace Through Strength) of the National Security Strategy

as well as Joint Strategic Goal 1 (Protect America's Security) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 1 (Enhanced Security at Home and Abroad).

- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective provides an enormous gap in security that can be exploited by malign actors.

Mission Goal 2 | Respond to and address the global challenges, including climate change and global pandemics, that threaten the region's security and prosperity.

Description | Post's five countries of accreditation view climate change and rising sea levels as an existential threat and are active and vocal in international climate summits. The Pacific Islands location along the Ring of Fire, combined with their geographic smallness and isolation, make them 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 the Pacific Islands will largely depend on the strength of communities and the supportive systems in place to mitigate the impacts of shocks. As the Pacific Islands have arguably the most to lose from climate change, they are key partners in our efforts to engage other major economies to increase their climate ambitions and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Pacific Island nations are particularly focused on increasing their access to more international financing to support climate adaptation and resiliency efforts in the region, a goal we are well-placed to assist them with in coordination with our international partners. We also have an important role to play in supporting host nation efforts to build resiliency to climate change, epidemics and other health challenges, and natural disasters. By assisting them to develop adaptation management plans, improve the resiliency and capability of their health systems and improve disaster response capacity, Post simultaneously deepens our bilateral relationships, reinforces U.S. commitment to the region, improves health outcomes, and fosters sustainable economic development.

Objective 2.1 | Increase coordination with Pacific Islands on climate and other global environmental issues, including biodiversity protection.

- **Justification** | Pacific leaders, who routinely cite climate change as an existential issue and their greatest security challenges, are vocal participants in international climate summits, but are often underrepresented. The U.S. and Pacific nations are natural allies in the fight against climate change, particularly in the ongoing effort to raise global climate ambitions. We should continue to leverage the moral example of the Pacific Islands to press other major economies to enact greater reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions and protection of marine and terrestrial biodiversity, including by increasing our coordination with regional governments in the leadup to major climate forums. Additionally, post will continue to look for opportunities to build up the capacity of Pacific governments, NGOs, and youth activists to engage effectively at the international level, as well as to provide logistical support where possible. U.S. Departments and Agencies can also support communities to prepare for and mitigate risks, especially of slow onset climate impacts (e.g., drought, sea level rise).
- **Linkages** | Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1, Joint Regional Strategy Goal 2
- **Risks** | Continued disagreement between the United States and Pacific Islands on the preservation of maritime zones in the face of rising sea-levels and loss and damage claims; frustration of Pacific Islands over a perceived shortfall in promised climate financing from developed countries, including the United States.

Objective 2.2 | Foster more healthy, educated, and resilient populations through assistance aimed at promoting sustainable and resilient health, economic, and social systems.

- **Justification** | Healthy, educated, and resilient populations contribute to sustainable economic development, as well as regional stability and prosperity. Post will continue to promote climate adaptation and resilience efforts. Pacific island nations are among the countries most affected by degradation of coastal areas, acidification of the ocean, and the loss of fish populations. These consequences of climate change have disproportionate financial impact on economies reliant on marine resources. Maritime resource management is inherently a transnational issue, requiring international solutions to effectively address local threats. Post will continue an active dialogue and

advocate bilaterally and work in partnership with regional institutions including the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) to address climate change issues.

- **Linkages** | Achieving this goal will further Pillar IV (Advance American Influence) of the National Security Strategy as well as Joint Strategic Goal 3 (Promote American Leadership through Balanced Engagement) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 5 (A Rules-Based Order in the Indo-Pacific).
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective undermines our credibility with host governments, hindering progress on other strategic goals.

Mission Goal 3 | Advance more inclusive and sustainable growth and promote free and fair trade and transparent investment that improve lives of Americans and people around the world.

Description | To varying degrees, Post's five countries of accreditation remain reliant on donors. To help assistance programs reach a natural endpoint, Post will advocate for improved economic connectivity, sustainable resource management, and market-driven policies that break down barriers to open trade. Doing so will foster private-sector investment and create business opportunities for U.S. firms.

Objective 3.1 | Leverage U.S. diplomatic, development, and private sector tools and engagement to strengthen the regional economic architecture for open and rules-based markets.

- **Justification** | Without economic prosperity, partner countries are unwilling to engage on higher-order issues such as security and democracy. To foster mutually beneficial development, Post will continue to generate commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses by advocating for free, fair, and reciprocal trade and investment and by providing commercial services to interested U.S. firms. Post will also seek to promote governance practices that use market competition, development finance standards,

Approved: May 3, 2022

environmental and social sustainability safeguards, and open and fair market access to develop high-standard infrastructure. To reduce dependence on foreign aid, Post will encourage high standards for infrastructure projects and transparent development finance standards.

- **Linkages** | Achieving this goal will further Pillar II (Promote American Prosperity) of the National Security Strategy as well as Joint Strategic Goal 2 (Renew America's Competitive Advantage) and Joint Regional Strategy Goal 3 (Sustained and Inclusive Growth and Prosperity).
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective hinders commercial opportunities for U.S. firms, keeps partner countries reliant on development assistance, and leaves the South Pacific vulnerable to predatory and coercive economic practices.

Mission Goal 4 | Strengthen democracy in the region; promote equity, accessibility, human rights; and advance transparent, accountable governance that works in the public interest.

Description | While Post's five countries of accreditation are unique in many ways, all five have been fully independent countries for only about 50 years. Together with our allies, the Embassy seeks to leverage influence as an indispensable partner to further develop and help mature these countries' democratic and governance efforts.

Objective 4.1 | Strengthen the efficacy and inclusivity of democratic institutions in pursuit of the public interest, including through promotion of the Rule of Law and free and fair elections.

- **Justification** | Post's five countries of accreditation are young democracies (Tonga is a constitutional monarchy), with strong traditional politics, nascent but active civil society, and challenges in the rule of law. Each country faces unique challenges, but common themes can be seen within these democracies, including political instability and difficulties related to financial and human capacity. These issues lead to weaker government transparency and accountability mechanisms, as well as the weakening of CSOs, free media, and political parties.

Approved: May 3, 2022

- **Linkages** | This Mission Goal supports the key Administration priorities to advance democracy, human rights, good governance, diversity, and gender equality as outlined in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, and to mitigate conflict in fragile areas. This mission objective also aligns with the Joint Regional Bureau strategy to strengthen governance and legal and administrative systems as articulated in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.
- **Risks** | Authoritarian actors are exploiting these fragile governance structures and limited capacity, thereby threatening the sovereignty of the Pacific Islands and obstructing their path to sustainable development.

Objective 4.2 | Support a resilient, viable civil society and independent media capable of promoting and defending democracy and human rights, holding government accountable, and combating propaganda and mis-, dis- and mal-information.

- **Justification** | Post's five countries of accreditation are young democracies (Tonga is a constitutional monarchy), with strong traditional politics, nascent, but active civil society, and challenges in the rule of law. Each country has unique challenges, but common themes can be seen within these democracies, including low engagement of women and youth in decision-making processes and a lack of fundamental human rights. These issues lead to governments that are not representative and responsive to their populations and a civil society and media that are not fully capable of holding government accountable.
- **Linkages** | This Mission Goal supports the key Administration priorities to advance democracy, human rights, diversity and gender equality, as well as counter malign influence.
- **Risks** | Authoritarian actors are exploiting these fragile governance structures and limited capacity, thereby threatening the sovereignty of the Pacific Islands, and obstructing their path to sustainable development.

Mission Goal 5 | Support U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas and protect U.S. borders while facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.

Description | Only through cooperative, coordinated, and concerted efforts can the United States counter transnational security threats across the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean that threaten U.S. borders and citizens, both home and abroad. Post relies on partner countries to do their part, but most lack the necessary resources to effectively do so.

Objective 5.1 | Establish a small Consular Section in Tonga, to provide American Citizen Services, as well as visa adjudications, to the population in that region by 2024.

- **Justification** | Tonga is home to 400 known American Citizens and potentially hundreds more. Thousands of Americans have been cut off from access to Consular services by the strict border controls put in place during the pandemic and the loss of communication following successive natural disasters. The inability to access documentation and other assistance has resulted in further hardship, including family separation, that would be obviated through regular access to consular services. There are a significant number of U.S. citizen children living with extended family members while their parents reside in the United States.
- **Linkages** | In line with Joint Strategic Plan Goal 5, consular officers are the U.S. government's first provider of services for U.S. citizens overseas, whether it be registering the birth or death of a U.S. citizen, to repatriating remains, providing assistance voting in U.S. elections, or helping citizens return to the United States, when needed. Consular officers also provide assistance to incarcerated and missing persons, abducted children and their families, travelers threatened by natural disasters, public health crises, or civil unrest.
- **Risks** | Tonga remains prone to natural disasters including cyclones, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis.

Objective 5.2 | Implement and expand the Pay.Gov method of fee collection throughout the consular district, to provide easier processing of services for both American citizens and visa applicants.

- **Justification** | Embassy Suva covers the largest geographic consular district in the world, roughly four million square miles. In addition to the Embassy's five countries of accreditation, the Consular Section provides services to travelers to and from the French territories in the Pacific – French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and New Caledonia. With a proven vulnerability to natural disasters combined with infrequent, unreliable, and often unsafe travel connections and communications infrastructure, U.S. citizens living or traveling in the South Pacific often need emergency assistance and flexible methods of payment.
- **Linkages** | As described in Joint Strategic Plan Goal 5, The Consular Section carries out the Department's most important mission overseas – the protection of U.S. citizens and their interests. Consular officers are the U.S. government's first provider of both routine and emergency services for U.S. citizens overseas. The section coordinates with foreign governments and interagency partners such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of the Treasury, and the intelligence and law enforcement communities to protect U.S. borders from threats at home and abroad. Consular integrity programs and a robust fraud prevention effort enable employees to make appropriate decisions to strengthen U.S. national security.
- **Risks** | Malevolent actors also seek to exploit consular processes to improperly obtain travel documents. Post will counter these threats through crisis management planning, improved communication methods, and increased fraud prevention efforts.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Create a respectful, welcoming, and healthy work environment.

- **Justification** | While the Embassy continues to advocate for new USDH, EFM, and LE Staff positions, Post is building workplace support, training, and flexibilities to ensure that employees have the best opportunity to meet their increasing workload and responsibilities.
- **Linkages** | These goals match the Under Secretary for Management objectives regarding diversity and inclusion, talentcare, and wellness.
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve these objectives will diminish our ability to recruit, retain, and sustain a diverse, talented, and inclusive workforce that is prepared to advance U.S. national security interests and American values in every corner of the world.

Management Objective 2 | Improve efficiency and customer service posture of the ICASS platform.

- **Justification** | The number of customer agencies and positions at Embassy Suva continue to increase while ICASS USDH positions were decreased. Despite the increased workload, positive ICASS customer satisfaction scores reflect Post's efforts to deliver timely, client-focused service.
- **Linkages** | These goals match the Under Secretary for Management and ICASS Service Center objectives regarding customer service and accountability.
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective will diminish our ability to support a diverse workforce across multiple agencies that is prepared to advance U.S. national security interests and American values in every corner of the world.

Management Objective 3 | Successfully support increased USG presence in the Pacific.

Approved: May 3, 2022

- **Justification** | Historic understaffing, particularly given the mission's multi-country responsibilities, and the resulting strains on existing staff inhibit Post's ability to achieve ICS goals. Post's limited travel budget is inadequate to cover five countries, particularly given the amount of time needed to travel, and the limited and expensive flights that result from a near monopoly on routes within Fiji and between Fiji and our other countries of accreditation.
- **Linkages** | Supports the Indo-Pacific Strategy focus on increased U.S. presence in the Pacific, targeted development assistance, and proactive messaging on democracy and human rights.
- **Risks** | Failure to establish and maintain sufficient presence in the four countries of accreditation currently without permanent diplomatic presence results in loss of faith in the United States as a partner, increased misinformation about U.S. intentions and actions and elite capture by malign actors, and the inability to deliver promised development assistance.