Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Evaluation Plan

U.S. Department of State

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Introduction

Background

The Department of State (State, the Department) has developed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Annual Evaluation Plan (AEP) in fulfillment of requirements set out in the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act, Public Law No. 115-435) and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11.

The Evidence Act requires agencies to develop an AEP that outlines significant evaluations they plan to undertake and/or will be ongoing in the "fiscal year following the year in which the AEP is submitted" (2023 OMB Circular No. A-11, Section 290.11). The FY 2025 AEP details evaluations that will start, continue, or end in FY 2025 (October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025) pending available funding. Each evaluation listed in this AEP includes a description of the activity or subject/ topical area to be evaluated, the questions the evaluation endeavors to answer, the data to be used and anticipated evaluation methodologies, projected challenges and mitigation strategies, and intended use and dissemination. Note that the details presented in this plan reflect current knowledge and are subject to change, and that for certain evaluations some details are not yet determined.

In compliance with Evidence Act stipulations, the FY 2025 AEP is published on state.gov, the Department's public-facing site, as well as OMB's public-facing evaluation.gov. Per State Department policy, evaluation reports, statements of work, and summaries of evaluation results will be made available internally with all State bureaus and independent offices for discussion and learning, unless these documents are classified [18 FAM 301.4-4(G)]. Per the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) of 2016, completed foreign assistance evaluation reports (or foreign assistance evaluation summaries from previous AEPs) are published to the Department's Foreign Assistance Resource Library.

Definition of Significant Evaluation

In identifying 'significant' evaluations, the Department considers a combination of the following aspects of an evaluation:

- Fundamental to our Mission

    o Aligned to **FY 2022 – FY 2026 Joint Strategic Plan objectives**

- Fills a Knowledge Gap

    o Contributes to **FY 2022 – FY 2026 Learning Agenda questions**

Significant Evaluations for FY 2025

This list should not be considered final or comprehensive, as existing evaluations may need to drop or be modified for a variety of reasons. Moreover, additional evaluations may be planned as funding and new program priorities emerge closer to or during FY 2025.

Table 1: FY 2025 Significant Evaluations

Bureau	Evaluation Title	Timeline
DRL	Contact Theory in Democracy, Human Rights, & Governance Programs	September 2022 – September 2025
DRL	Promoting Rights-Based Evaluation	October 2023 – September 2026
DRL	Labor Evaluation and Strategic Program Framework Refinement	September 2023 – September 2026
NEA	Ex-Post Evaluation: Supporting Local Governance in Syria	October 2024 – June 2025
NEA	Evaluation of Tunisia Entrepreneurship Project: Souk At-Tanmia ("A Market for Development")	February 2024 – November 2025
NEA	Evaluation of the Open Government Promotion Projects in the Middle East and North Africa	April 2025 – December 2025
NEA	Evaluation of the Leadership Development Fellowship Project	March 2025 – December 2025
NEA	Multi-Year Evaluation of the Tomorrow's Leaders Portfolio	June 2024 – December 2025

Bureau	Evaluation Title	Timeline
CT	Project TERMINUS Evaluation	October 2024 – January 2025
INL	Identifying Best Practices for the Sustainability of International Community Drug Prevention Coalition Initiatives	April 2024 – September 2025
INL	Global Drug Demand Reduction Program Evaluation	May 2022 – December 2027
ISN	Global Threat Reduction Program Evaluation FY24	October 2023 – December 2024
OES	Evaluation of Trade-Related Environmental Cooperation Activities	September 2023 – March 2025
A	Furniture and Appliance Pool Program Evaluation	September 2024 – September 2025
A	Permanent Change of Station Evaluation	May 2024 – May 2025
CA	Global Support Strategy	October 2024 – February 2025
CA	Impact Evaluation of Online Passport Renewal	April 2024 – March 2025
ECA	System-Level Effects of International Exchanges	October 2021 – January 2025
ECA	Meta-Assessment of Learning Agenda Research	September 2023 – September 2025
FSI	Succeeding at State (PN250 Course) FY2024	October 2023 – September 2025
GTM	Foreign Language Policy Planning and Evaluation	April 2024 – June 2025
GTM	Department Evaluation of Section 508 Compliance - FY25	June 2024 – May 2025
H	Evaluation of the Congressional Correspondence Process	January 2025 – June 2025
MED	Medical Evaluations of Law Enforcement Officers	April 2024 – September 2025
MED	Evaluation of Operational Medicine's Aviation Subprogram	April 2024 – April 2025
PM	Strategic Impact Assessment Framework	October 2017 – November 2026
TIP	Baseline Assessment and Inventory of Trafficking in Persons Office Processes and Strategic Planning	March 2024 – March 2025

Building Evidence at State

The Bureau of Budget and Planning (BP) and the Office of Foreign Assistance (F) are partnering with other bureaus and offices to enhance the evidence-building culture at the Department of State, leveraging multiple internal projects and processes in alignment with the Administration's foreign policy and diplomatic engagement priorities. This includes using the Learning Agenda implementation process across the Department, with senior-level review, to improve evidence-building functions for diplomatic and foreign assistance programs. The evaluations listed in the FY 2025 AEP are one form of contribution to the Department's Learning Agenda, alongside other learning activities (case studies, trainings, process mapping, and assessments, to name a few).

For the FY 2025 AEP, the Department has continued to prioritize several of the evaluations from the FY 2024 AEP, while also adding new evaluations. Even so, the Department anticipates more evaluations may be planned during FY 2024 that will support Learning Agenda priority questions.

FY 2025 Significant Evaluation Summaries

Contact Theory in Democracy, Human Rights, & Governance Programs

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.2: Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)

Evaluation Timeline

September 2022 – September 2025

Program Description

This is an applied research project to advance understanding of the effective use of intergroup contact in democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programs. The proposed project includes an expanded literature review of contact theory in relation to DRG programs; a mixed-methods desk review of DRG programs; original action evaluation research of DRG programs; development and dissemination of evidence-based tools on contact theory in DRG programs; and technical assistance for DRG practitioners to utilize new evidence on contact theory in their work.

The overarching theme of the programs involved is that they are early warning, early response programs managed by DRL. The objectives of the programs are as follows:

- To develop the abilities of women, youth, and farmer and herder association members to more effectively advance their security interests.

- To engage grassroots community members in contributing to violence prevention.

- To use strategic methods to advocate for government and security agency actions on farmer-herder conflicts that are shaped by grassroots experience and priorities.

- Empower youth and women-led action in peace and security.

- Strengthen civilian security platforms within communities affected by crime and/or violence.

- Disseminate media content to reinforce inclusion, dialogue, and norms change.

Evaluation Questions

To what extent have current strategies for convening individuals from distinct and diverse backgrounds been effective in promoting intended project goals in communities?

1. In what ways can funders' interventions better meet the factors and conditions identified in contact theory literature to promote inclusion and mutual respect among individuals and communities of distinct and diverse backgrounds?

2. In what ways, if any, have efforts to convene individuals of distinct and/or conflicting (e.g., racial, ethnic, faith/belief) backgrounds led to improved social inclusion, mutual respect, tolerance, and inclusion?

Methodology and Data

The methodology includes an expanded literature review on contact theory, a mixed-methods desk review of a sample of DRG projects, and action evaluation research to address knowledge gaps regarding the use of contact theory in DRG programs.

Data collected will include secondary data from existing literature, primary quantitative and qualitative data from program documents, and primary qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with program stakeholders.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

There have been no challenges presented thus far.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

There will be a dissemination of the developed guidance to the general and core advisory groups involved in the program as well as other relevant DRL or other USG entities. The guidance will be translated into several languages and shared with partner organizations and donors across all global regions where USG-funded DRG programming is being conducted. Findings and resources from the evaluation will be posted and shared through the Better Evidence Project's Resource Center and the results will be disseminated through presentations and tailored workshops at conferences that target academic-practitioner collaborations and efforts to bridge theory and practice.

Promoting Rights-Based Evaluation

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.2: Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2023 – September 2026

Program Description

The purpose of this award is to strengthen the use of partner-centered evidence to produce strategic frameworks that guide equitable design, implementation, and evaluation of human rights policies, programs, and practices. In turn, these frameworks will be used to reduce the disparities between disenfranchised communities' and funders' knowledge and values. The benefit of using this innovative approach demonstrates DRL's effort to actionably move evaluation to a community-collaborative and transformative approach that can promote shared stewardship in achieving human rights objectives.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions will be refined in collaboration with global human rights defenders (HRDs):

1. In what ways are human rights programs advancing rights of marginalized communities to facilitate their full participation in various democratic-autocratic contexts?

2. How critical is the enforcement of human rights for members of marginalized communities as a pathway to inclusive, representative democracy?

3. Which strategies fit best for democracy, rights, and governance (DRG) stakeholders and their unique positionality in advancing human rights?

Methodology and Data

The evaluative approach follows a theoretical and practical framing grounded in community-centeredness (Miller & Shinn, 2005) and the human rights principles of dignity, equality, and liberty (Dazzo, 2022). This framing is not a panacea, but one that balances its strengths (e.g., increased program relevance for communities) and limitations (e.g., increased time and resources for program design).

Desk review will draw from program documents (e.g., DOS/USAID Joint Strategic Plans, Operational Plans, NOFOs, implementing partners' reports). Interviews will employ a multistage purposeful and criterion sampling approach. Site selection for in-depth study will be further discussed with DRL to identify information-rich cases that may be typical (i.e., projects with average implementation and outcomes) and extreme (i.e., atypical successes or failures).

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Close coordination and collaboration with DRL throughout the award both on a regular basis and regarding key decision points is critical in mitigating challenges throughout the evaluation.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Through widespread dissemination, the evidence and frameworks have the potential to be widely used by various actors in the DRG community as they seek to develop more transformative and equitable programs, policies, and evaluations.

Labor Evaluation and Strategic Program Framework Refinement

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.1: Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.2: Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)

Evaluation Timeline

September 2023 – September 2026

Program Description

A co-managed participatory evaluation defines the effectiveness of DRL's labor portfolio and refines a global labor strategic framework for operationalization within the bureau's democracy and human rights portfolios and application for implementing partners and other USG funders.

Evaluation Questions

1. What are DRL labor portfolio strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results in protecting rights of workers?

2. To what extent are DRL labor programs achieving their goals and sustained change?

3. How does the labor framework complement both DRL's human rights and democracy strategic frameworks?

Methodology and Data

The evaluation methodology will be complexity- and culturally responsive, and epistemologically just. The evaluation will have a wide range of key stakeholders; while centering the role of workers, worker organizations, and trade unions, stakeholders also include implementing partners (IPs), DRL staff, and the democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) community. This evaluation will include questions and deliverables tailored to each of these stakeholder groups.

Sources for analysis include literature, program documents, participatory design workshops, qualitative data from interviews and focus groups, and participatory data inputs that will be decided in collaboration with DRL and the evaluators.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Close collaboration with DRL throughout the evaluation and at key decision points will be critical in mitigating challenges.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The purpose of this evaluative research is to assess the effectiveness of DRL labor programs and to produce a refined strategic program framework. A key aspect of this evaluation is to prioritize the role of workers, worker organizations, and trade unions, while also involving labor allies in the DRG community and employers. The evaluation results will define how DRL designs and measures performance for the labor portfolio and situates how this framework will be operationalized in concert with the bureau's democracy and human rights portfolios.

Ex-Post Evaluation: Supporting Local Governance in Syria

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.1: Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2024 – June 2025

Program Description

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC), has made substantial investments in stabilization activities in northeast Syria since 2020, including over $24 million supporting local governance actors, but no evaluation currently looks at programming from December 2021 - March 2023. The purpose of this evaluation is to fill that gap and answer strategic questions on project outcomes to inform future iterations of the project. It will help us test key assumptions underlying the project theory of change, including that increased skill development in civil council personnel leads to their promotion within local councils and improves basic service delivery for the local population. It will also examine the different project implementation approaches – both infrastructure rehabilitation and trainings/capacity building – and the relative effect of both approaches.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

To inform future iterations of the project.

Evaluation of Tunisia Entrepreneurship Project: Souk At-Tanmia ("A Market for Development")

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 2.2: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.5: Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)

Evaluation Timeline

February 2024 – November 2025

Program Description

Souk At-Tanmia was a high-impact holistic entrepreneurship initiative, which aimed to offer training, funding, coaching, and mentoring, as well as access to market services to projects that have the potential to generate sustainable jobs and distribute revenues countrywide, especially in the poorest regions of Tunisia. The purpose of the ex-post evaluation is to better understand the sustainability of project outcomes and to assess the long-term effect for the participating institutions and individuals. The evaluation questions center around three themes: sustainable outcomes, effects on beneficiaries, and effects on partners.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Data and conclusions from this evaluation will inform future NEA program and project design, implementation, and policy-related decisions for foreign assistance, particularly as it relates to the provision of seed funding and capacity building for small businesses and entrepreneurs, and in terms of how the NEA Office of Assistance Coordination and the Tunisia Assistance Unit (AU) work with financial institutions to achieve these goals.

Evaluation of the Open Government Promotion Projects in the Middle East and North Africa

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)

Evaluation Timeline

April 2025 – December 2025

Program Description

This evaluation will focus on four projects implemented at different levels (two national level projects and two local projects) to promote open government reforms to enhance effectiveness and ensure long-term sustainability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The main objective of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, outcomes, and long-term sustainability of these projects. The inclusion of two local projects in one of the beneficiary countries presents a unique opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis between countries that have local projects/awards to address critical gaps in national level programing and those without such projects/awards.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Findings from this ex-post evaluation will provide much needed insight on the collective outcome produced by the four projects, which have received a significant amount of foreign assistance funding to address governance reforms in the region. The lessons learned will be instrumental in informing future programmatic and resource allocation decisions related to the governance sector in the MENA region.

Evaluation of the Leadership Development Fellowship Project

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)

Evaluation Timeline

March 2025 – December 2025

Program Description

The Leadership Development Fellowship (LDF) provides early and mid-career professionals from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with training in leadership, civic engagement, and social entrepreneurship. The project was launched in 2007 under its former name, the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship, with several programmatic adaptations since inception and a major redesign in 2020. Funding is scheduled to end in May 2024. This ex-post evaluation will measure the program's outcomes over seventeen years of implementation. The evaluation will assess the methods and success of implementation and sustained effects on the individual fellows and their countries in areas such as political leadership, social entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. A comprehensive evaluation of the project has not been done previously to understand the effects on fellows and the region.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

This ex-post evaluation is expected to yield valuable insight to inform future NEA Office of Assistance Coordination programing and funding decisions in the areas of social entrepreneurship and leadership in the MENA region.

Multi-Year Evaluation of the Tomorrow's Leaders Portfolio

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 2.2: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.5: Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)

Evaluation Timeline

June 2024 – December 2025

Program Description

Tomorrow's Leaders (TL) is a long-standing, multifaceted program within the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The program aims to develop youth who are civic-minded, skilled, and prepared to take on leadership roles in their communities. TL provides scholarships to academically qualified, underserved youth from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to attend Lebanese American University (LAU), American University of Beirut (AUB), or American University in Cairo (AUC). The program was established in 2006 with an undergraduate scholarship before growing to encompass several other components including graduate level support, gender-focused studies, and entrepreneurship training between 2017-2020. TL is supported by auxiliary components to broaden its reach and effect through awards to provide outreach and recruitment support to TLU students studying abroad for one

semester. Together these components work across several countries and institutions to support MEPI's strategic goals and objective.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

TL has not undertaken a portfolio-wide evaluation since the expansion of the program in 2017 to assess the program's effect on students, alumni, partners, and communities in the MENA region. This retrospective evaluation of the effectiveness of the TL program will assess whether the program achieved its stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Project TERMINUS Evaluation

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2024 – January 2025

Program Description

This evaluation will assess the extent of progress achieved by selected partners through Project TERMINUS, which seeks to identify, evaluate, and remediate information-sharing gaps that are impeding the ability of the partner countries' law enforcement and border security authorities to detect and deter the illicit international travel of foreign terrorist fighters. The evaluation will formally document successes and provide recommendations for opportunities and/or improvement.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Depending on the subject matter and associated sensitivities, this evaluation report and related products could be disseminated to implementing partners, partner nation officials, embassy personnel, and other relevant parties on a case-by-case basis. The evaluation report will be used primarily to refine ongoing programming and inform future assistance.

Identifying Best Practices for the Sustainability of International Community Drug Prevention Coalition Initiatives

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.1: Strengthen global health security, combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.5: Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)

Evaluation Timeline

April 2024 – September 2025

Program Description

This is an ex-post evaluation to learn about the long-term sustainability of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)-funded community anti-drug coalitions formed as a result of training and technical assistance provided by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA). Since 2005, INL has funded CADCA to establish an international network of 300 community coalitions representing more than 11,500 active volunteer members in 30 countries. In this network of coalitions and volunteers a total of 118 coalitions have graduated through the years and are no longer supported with resources by INL.

Many of these coalitions have functioned independently for several years and continue to maintain their membership base as well as plans and strategies to address substance use and related issues in communities throughout the world. In the context of community coalitions supported by INL funding, sustainability refers to the likelihood of the approach continuing, especially after the initial support of training and technical assistance from CADCA has ended. Sustainability in this context of coalition work is the ability of a coalition to maintain human, social, and material resources needed to achieve long-term goals for community change.

Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent are these reductions in substance use and crime rates related to coalition efforts?

2. Are there specific types of coalition activities that appear to have a more significant impact on population-level reductions?

3. To what extent did the INL-funded training provided by CADCA contribute to coalition community change efforts?

4. How sustainable are coalitions no longer receiving INL funding, and what are some sustainability determinants?

Methodology and Data

The selected research team will contact drug prevention coalitions, ideally from five different regions of the world, that previously received funding from INL via email, phone, or any other means using the contact information provided by CADCA and the Organization of American States in collaboration with INL. The research team must stratify the sample to allow cross-comparisons between North America, South America, Asia, and Africa or the regions where coalitions selected for this analysis are based.

To gather information, the research team will invite community coalition leaders, ideally from countries in five different regions of the world, to participate in an online survey to assess community context and coalition capacity. Coalitions that complete the questionnaire and meet inclusion criteria can participate in second-phase semi-structured interviews, which will follow an interview guide and allow follow-up probes by the interviewer. This methodology will

provide quantitative descriptions of the coalitions and their activities while enabling qualitative thematic analysis of responses to open-ended questions.

Besides the information coming directly from the community coalition, the research team will collect data from any valuable sources of information, such as but not limited to official epidemiological reports on drug use, crime, violence, official statistic reports, bulletins, databases, other scientific publications, etc. **The research team may conduct on-site visits to gather the data required to perform longitudinal comparative analyses covering at least three moments of the localities where the programs are:**

1. Baseline conditions before implementing the community coalition;

2. Conditions while implementing the community coalition; and

3. Conditions after implementing the community coalition.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

INL revised the initial scope of the project to ensure the evaluation outcome would accurately reflect effectiveness of the community anti-drug coalition program internationally. This resulted in an expansion and redesign of the solicitation for a research institution which delayed the beginning of implementation. INL has hired an evaluation specialist who will work closely with our implementing partners over the course of this evaluation to mitigate additional challenges.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify best practices that can be applied to future coalitions to ensure long-term sustainability beyond the duration of INL funding.

Global Drug Demand Reduction Program Evaluation

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 3.5: Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)

Evaluation Timeline

May 2022 – December 2027

Program Description

INL has a long-standing commitment to the development, implementation, and dissemination of evidence-based programs, strategies, and policies to reduce international demand for substance use and the damaging consequences of drug trafficking and drug use. INL has utilized independent evaluations to support their innovative programming and practices. Results of those evaluations show that the programs and initiatives being evaluated have contributed to measurable reductions in substance use in the program populations, as well as related reductions in crime and gang activity. Building upon previous outcome evaluations of specific INL drug demand reduction interventions, in 2022 INL launched a five-year demonstration study to evaluate the collective effect of prevention, treatment, recovery, and alternatives to incarceration to demonstrate their collective efficacy in reducing drug consumption and related crime throughout a city-wide population. The demonstration project is in its second year of implementation of programming in Pereira and Dosquebradas, Colombia, which will inform

other global drug demand reduction efforts.

Evaluation Questions

This project, which is being implemented in Pereira and Dosquebradas, Colombia, is designed to:

1. Determine the feasibility of bringing drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction efforts to scale to create positive environmental changes in both municipalities, and

2. Improve key population-level indicators of drug use, individual and community wellbeing, and crime in Pereira and Dosquebradas, Colombia.

Methodology and Data

A contextually responsive, one-group pre-test/post-test evaluation design is being used to examine change over time due to intervention activities and examine whether these intervention activities affect changes in targeted outcomes. A repeated cross-sectional design is being used to assess change over time in the project's long-term outcomes. Although a randomized controlled trial (RCT) would be a stronger design, practical challenges in implementing this design with fidelity across two municipalities precluded its use. Data for the evaluation is being collected through student and household surveys, through intervention-level data collection, and by analyzing existing and ongoing municipal, department, and national-level data and indicators.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

The evaluation is based on implementing prevention, treatment, and recovery programming and creating alternatives to incarceration systems and program implementation. The project is currently on track with the completion of the initial household survey in 2022, alongside plans to conduct a mid-point survey on drug use in 2024 since patterns of drug use may have changed in a post pandemic society. These survey results will further support the direction of the implementation of programming.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

This demonstration project, also referred to as the Dedicated Outcome Monitoring and Evaluation System (DOMES) Initiative, is designed to provide proof of concept for INL to assess the feasibility of bringing environmental intervention approaches to scale in other locations in the future.

Global Threat Reduction Program Evaluation FY24

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.1: Strengthen global health security, combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2023 – December 2024

Program Description

The Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN) Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) measures partner capabilities to prevent proliferator states or terrorist groups from developing or acquiring weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems. This yearly report helps assess program effectiveness, successes, challenges, and paths for continuous improvement and coordination with partner nation personnel. The targeted audience is CTR staff and U.S. Congress, and results of this survey will inform future ISN programming to maximize program effectiveness.

Evaluation Questions

1. What are the short- and long-term outcomes of Global Threat Reduction (GTR) programming?

2. What information can an analysis of successes and challenges provide toward a path of continuous improvement?

Methodology and Data

GTR will utilize a mixed-methods approach to understand quantitative and qualitative trends in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) nonproliferation programming and security culture across GTR priority countries. The data to be used include open-source research on websites and publicly available documents, an online survey for participants, key informant interviews, and after-action reports of past programming.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenges of the evaluation include limited availability of open-source information in English on improvements to CBRN threat reduction infrastructure, scoring subjectivity, and recall bias from survey respondents. Mitigation strategies include shortening the survey to be more generalized, not ask specific information about each engagement, and using available information to make educated assumptions on partner nation regulations and threat reduction activities.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

GTR conducts robust monitoring and evaluation of our programs, both at the inception of new efforts, as well as to capture the outcomes long after programming has concluded. GTR has embedded our evaluation metrics within the larger Office of Foreign Assistance framework of performance plan review and have reported on our progress towards achieving partner sustainability.

Evaluation of Trade-Related Environmental Cooperation Activities

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.1: Strengthen global health security, combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 2.2: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 2: How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?

- Department Learning Agenda Question 3: How can the Department's tools best address the climate crisis?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)

Evaluation Timeline

September 2023 – March 2025

Program Description

The evaluation will evaluate the approach, effect, and sustainability of seven projects implemented with OES/Office of Environmental Quality (ENV) funding between 2016 and 2022 under the environmental cooperation mechanisms associated with bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with Colombia, Peru, Jordan, and Morocco, and with two United States' multilateral FTAs, the Dominican Republic - Central America FTA (CAFTA-DR) and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Activities under these projects took place in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, and Peru.

Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent did the projects achieve their planned objectives in terms of institutional strengthening and capacity building for improved enforcement of environmental legislation/policy frameworks?

2. Were there any external/internal factors that influenced (positively or negatively) the capacity of the projects to instill change? Were any problems or bottlenecks encountered? What were they?

3. Which approaches worked better or worse than others and where? Why?

4. To what extent are beneficiaries (ministries/NGAs/businesses, etc.) equipped to modify, amend, or maintain policies, practices, or solutions achieved during project implementation over time?

5. What are the key factors/challenges that could enhance or threaten the sustainability of achievements over time?

Methodology and Data

Methodologies will include a combination of desk review of available documents, virtual engagements, and in-person interviews with previous implementers, project beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, and site visits to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the evaluation questions and provide recommendations.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

One of the original project implementers had an almost complete turnover of staff making it difficult to obtain beneficiary information for the ex-post monitoring and evaluation. OES/ENV is researching all available files from this project for beneficiary information and is helping the ex-post monitoring and evaluation implementer to communicate with leadership for the original implementer.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

As this evaluation covers seven individual projects previously funded by OES/ENV, task order deliverables and the final evaluation will be disseminated and used differently. As part of the task order, the implementer is required to schedule seven virtual discussions with OES/ENV and the original project implementer to discuss the findings of the individual project evaluation and to provide a summary document of each individual discussion. These virtual discussions will allow OES/ENV and its implementers to discuss, with specificity, how future programming in the particular subject area covered by the project could be improved in the future. The final evaluation will be shared with OES/ENV, and the task order requires the evaluator to hold a final virtual conference with OES/ENV to discuss findings regarding the outcomes of the evaluated programs as well as recommendations on how future programming could be improved. OES/ENV has already used information provided in a draft document review from the evaluator to improve how OES/ENV develops virtual cooperation engagements with our foreign counterparts. Ultimately, OES/ENV will utilize information from the evaluation to strengthen future programming with our trade partners.

Furniture and Appliance Pool Program Evaluation

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.2: Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Administration (A)

Evaluation Timeline

September 2024 – September 2025

Program Description

The Furniture and Appliance Pool (FAP) program was piloted in 2012 and then mandated in 2015 for all agencies participating in housing pool programs at U.S. missions abroad. The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) Executive Board (IEB) tasked the ICASS Service Center (ISC) to standardize the management of such programs worldwide and oversee costs of purchasing, shipping, and storing furniture, furnishings, appliances, and equipment. The ISC discussed a wide range of issues related to housing and furniture pool management with the interagency, regional and functional bureaus, and various overseas posts to fully develop policies that address both management and financial aspects of the program.

A key component of the FAP program critical to the widespread subscription to furniture pools was the creation of a standardized, data-driven management approach, which established a mandatory link between customer subscriptions to furniture pools and access to government-furnished housing at posts.

A study of alternatives is required to obtain subject matter experts' assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of the current FAP program service costs, supply chain distribution, warehouse storage, and operational synergy (e.g., between regional bureaus, A Bureau, Overseas Building Operations, etc.) within the Department. The evaluation will further assess alternative global methods of providing furniture (unfurnished, rental, etc.) based on regions, countries, or other post characteristics. The study enables stakeholders to better understand current and future global FAP policies and their implications.

Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent does the Department's current system for providing furniture and appliances follow industry best practices for efficiency?

2. To what extent does the Department's current system for providing furniture and appliances follow industry best practices for cost effectiveness?

3. To what extent does the Department's current system for providing furniture and appliances follow industry best practices for equity for pool subscribers?

4. To what degree does the Department's current system for providing furniture and appliances meet employees' needs enabling them to fulfill their mission abroad?

5. What alternative management support models are possible, given region/country/post characteristics?

6. What are the costs/benefits of alternative models?

7. What are recommendations for the Department's FAP program?

Methodology and Data

1. Literature review of FAP analysis (e.g., analysis of State Office of Inspector General audit and ICASS annual surveys).

2. Literature review of alternative business cases/management support models.

3. Primary data collection (surveys) from post households with a minimum 25 posts and 25 households, ensuring at least one of each mission 'size:' micro, small, medium, large, mega.

4. Primary data collection from available data sources (Integrated Logistics Management System).

5. Primary data collection (survey) from post service providers.

The methodology will include a process map of the FAP supply chain and a business case for existing and alternative management support models.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

The data currently available for the FAP program is inaccurate. Potential mitigation is achieved through existing reporting functions that flag potentially misclassified and erroneous data.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The final evaluation report will be disseminated to Department of State stakeholders and the interagency ICASS participants. Oral presentations will also be scheduled to share and discuss outcomes.

The results will be used to determine whether the Department's current system of providing furniture and appliances takes advantage of industry best practices for efficiency; if it meets customer needs at posts; and what alternative models or additional acquisition strategies need to be considered relative to warehouse/storage needs based on regions, countries, or other post characteristics.

Permanent Change of Station Evaluation

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Administration (A)

Evaluation Timeline

May 2024 – May 2025

Program Description

The Permanent Change of Station (PCS) process includes assignment, check-out, funding, and issuance of travel authorizations (which cover the travel of the employee, eligible family members, members of household and pets and the transfer of their effects via ground or air shipment from one authorized domestic or overseas location to another), check-in upon arrival, and subsequent vouchering. Department and interagency operations depend on an efficient and functional PCS process.

Department leadership is concerned that process inefficiencies unduly cost the Department in terms of finances, lost productivity, emotional resilience, and total (employee and service provider) satisfaction. The PCS process not only affects the Department of State's fiscal and human capital resources but also affects the morale and retention of those transferring and administering the PCS process.

Evaluation Questions

1. What are the root causes of the identified 60 lost hours per capita under "current state" PCS processes?

2. Where are opportunities to eliminate waste and burden among the respective bureau administrators, as identified by the root cause analysis?

3. What potential courses of action would address identified waste and burden deficiencies ("future state")?

4. With respect to the findings of Q3, what are the respective levels of effort and impact for collaborating stakeholders?

Methodology and Data

1. Literature review (existing analyses, documentation, relevant Government Accountability Office and Office of Inspector General assessments, and systems connected to the PCS process).

2. Primary data collection from a representative sample of posts.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Producing a comprehensive assessment presents a major challenge. The evaluation will need to engage multiple and diverse stakeholders to gather information. The bureau will address this by providing the selected contractor a map of these stakeholders at project kickoff, so their input is sought and integrated.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

1. *Dissemination*: Findings will be disseminated to all State Department management bureaus governing individual parts of the PCS process.

2. *Use*: The assessment will provide recommendations on how the Department can address challenges and reimagine the PCS process through the following lenses: process optimization and improved productivity; cost effectiveness, allocation, and recovery; IT application access and integration; customer experience; service provider experience; governance; and institutional changes.

Global Support Strategy

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 5.1: Support and serve American citizens traveling or residing abroad.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 5.2: Advance U.S. interests by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 6: How can the Department balance customer service expectations with national security and cost-effectiveness to provide a better customer service experience to U.S. citizens, and to foreign nationals seeking visas?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2024 – February 2025

Program Description

The Global Support Strategy (GSS) is a worldwide program created in 2010 to bring greater global standardization, accountability, and transparency to the delivery of common visa applicant support functions.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Recommendations from the evaluation will inform CA and Department leadership of how to organize and fund GSS more efficiently and effectively.

Impact Evaluation of Online Passport Renewal

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 5.2: Advance U.S. interests by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 6: How can the Department balance customer service expectations with national security and cost-effectiveness to provide a better customer service experience to U.S. citizens, and to foreign nationals seeking visas?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA)

Evaluation Timeline

April 2024 – March 2025

Program Description

The General Services Administration (GSA), Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES), and the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA), propose to conduct an evaluation of how behaviorally informed interventions can reduce barriers to taking up and completing timely online passport renewals (OPR).

Evaluation Questions

Scope and questions of this evaluation will be determined after the public launch of OPR.

Methodology and Data

Methodology and data collection to be determined after the launch of OPR 2.0.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

OES and CA will design and execute an impact evaluation to answer the following overarching research question: to what extent do behaviorally informed messages (such as advance planning messaging, reminders, highlighting cost and time savings) help eligible passport holders take up and complete the OPR process? Answering this question can help CA make decisions about outreach to existing passport holders who are eligible for renewal and inform system and process improvements to OPR that can improve the customer experience for passport holders.

System-Level Effects of International Exchanges

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objectives 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 1: How can the State Department improve the effectiveness of its diplomatic interventions to better advance foreign policy objectives?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2021 – January 2025

Program Description

The study's objective is to estimate broad, societal-level outcomes of exchange experiences in the United States, with a particular focus on understanding the contributions of ECA foreign exchange participants to the development of their home countries. Development is understood broadly and includes outcomes pertaining to political, economic, and social indicators for countries all over the world. The study will examine data from the last six decades, dating back to 1961 when the Fulbright–Hays Act (officially known as the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act) was written and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs was established in the Department of State.

Evaluation Questions

1. How has international higher education and exchange impacted the formation of leaders globally?

2. How do leaders view connections between their exchange experiences and their societal contributions?

3. What are the links between international exchange programs and participants' home countries' national development?

Methodology and Data

The study adopts multiple methods of data collection and analysis. It will first create a dataset that brings together the existing statistics on international exchange (including ECA foreign exchange participants) and national development indicators. The study will offer a longitudinal analysis of global trends and statistical links between those trends and international exchange, covering all countries in the world for which data exists since the 1960s.

The study will also identify key points of societal development across the world and individual leaders who impacted these developments since ECA's founding. The research team will assemble biographical profiles of more than ~1500 key leaders from 70 countries, covering all six regions, according to a standardized rubric.

Interviews will then be conducted with ~700 of these leaders (including ECA alumni) to understand the role of their international exchange experiences on the development of their human capital, social capital, technical skills, and civic characteristics, as well as the impact of these on their contributions to the key points of societal development.

All data will be analyzed at the regional level and the global level.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Given the broad scope and timeframe of the study, there are likely to be gaps in available data, particularly for the earlier decades included in the study. The research team also expects to have difficulty finding up-to-date contact information for some alumni and will plan to utilize snowball sampling where necessary to reach alumni.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The research team will develop two interim reports detailing preliminary findings before developing a final report at completion in 2025.

It is expected that this global study will demonstrate in a clear and systematic way the effects of *international exchange (including ECA programs) that go beyond the individual. The broader,* societal-level effects explored in the study will be a critical input in understanding the return-on-investment of public diplomacy programs. Such evidence will be relevant for ECA when planning and designing future educational and cultural exchange initiatives.

Meta-Assessment of Learning Agenda Research

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 1: How can the State Department improve the effectiveness of its diplomatic interventions to better advance foreign policy objectives?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

Evaluation Timeline

September 2023 – September 2025

Program Description

The objective of this research is to generate evidence in support of ECA's bureau-level FY 2022-2026 Learning Agenda to enable more efficient and effective public diplomacy programming. By reviewing data collected through ECA evaluations over the past six years as well as conducting additional data collection, the bureau will synthesize evidence, identify knowledge gaps, and highlight lessons learned for four of ECA's learning agenda questions.

Evaluation Questions

ECA's bureau-level learning agenda comprises eight questions. This research will contribute evidence to four learning agenda questions.

1. To what extent and in what ways are ECA programs responsive and adaptable to evolving foreign policy priorities?

2. What role does program diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) play in participant experience and the effectiveness of exchanges and public engagement activities?

3. In what ways do alumni of exchanges and public engagement activities amplify the impact of ECA programs within their home communities?

4. How can ECA continue to improve monitoring and evaluation in support of evidence-informed decision-making?

Methodology and Data

This research will generate evidence through a mixed methods design. It will include a secondary review of evidence generated through ECA evaluations conducted over the past six years, as well as primary data collection. Potential data collection methods include: review of program document and records; secondary review of evidence generated through previous evaluations of ECA programs and/or program monitoring data; literature reviews and gap analyses; surveys (web-based and/or in-person); cognitive interviews; key informant interviews and/or focus groups (remote and/or in-person); direct observation of program implementation, where possible; participant observation; case studies; mobile ethnography; panel studies; unstructured interviews or listening sessions; affinity groups or convention of technical working groups; online insight communities; social media analysis; vox pops; participant photography; audio/visual diaries; meta-evaluations; and other secondary or primary data collection methods.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

This research seeks to address four distinct learning agenda questions and their supporting sub-questions. Given the wide scope of these research questions, ECA recognizes that this research will not produce definitive and detailed conclusions for all learning agenda sub-questions. Instead, the research team will focus on generating necessary evidence to support program-focused learning for the bureau.

Specifically, ECA recognizes that the initial phase of research will draw upon the bureau's existing evidence—which may not directly address the learning agenda questions. The research

team will need to consider how lessons learned can be applied to the distinct inquiries expressed in the learning agenda questions.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Following an initial phase of research in which the research team systematically reviews bureau-generated evidence for each learning agenda question, ECA will facilitate learning-focused discussions to reflect on interim findings and knowledge gaps which will inform subsequent data collection. Stakeholders may include members of ECA's monitoring, evaluation and learning unit, ECA program offices and senior leadership, staff from implementing organizations, and/or members of ECA's monitoring and evaluation community of practice.

In addition to a final report for each learning agenda question, ECA may generate additional deliverables to support learning: infographics and one-pagers; post-research communications to participants, alumni, and respondents; personas and journey maps; vox pops and other videos; multi-media research presentations; standard operating procedures; toolkits; and reference materials. These deliverables will be designed for key stakeholders and shared in a manner that supports evidence-based decision making and programmatic learning.

Succeeding at State (PN250 Course) FY2024

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

Name of Bureau or Office

Foreign Service Institute (FSI)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2023 – September 2025

Program Description

The FSI School for Professional and Areas Studies (SPAS), Political Training Division (POL), developed the Succeeding at State course (PN250) to support mid-level professionals. This five-day course is designed to help mid-level civil service and foreign service professionals strengthen their ability to deploy strategic analysis and critical thinking; communicate and advocate effectively with a wide variety of audiences; and adapt tradecraft approaches to a variety of operating environments, including interagency and multilateral settings.

Evaluation Questions

1. How effective is the content of PN250 in helping participants meet learning objectives?
2. How does PN250 affect participants' behaviors on the job?
3. How does PN250 help participants achieve meaningful results on the job?

Methodology and Data

Methodologies will include an end-of-course survey, after-action review, on-the-job survey, and post-course interviews.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

A low response rate could limit the validity of the survey data. To mitigate this potential issue, participants will be briefed on the effect their responses will have on the course.

SPAS will distribute the Levels 1 and 2 survey immediately following the end of each course offering. The Levels 3 and 4 on-the-job surveys (alongside short, structured interviews) will be implemented approximately 90 days after course completion, with follow-up reminders and an explanation of how the data will benefit future course participants.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Course managers and instructors will use evaluation findings to adjust future iterations of the course.

Foreign Language Policy Planning and Evaluation

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM)

Evaluation Timeline

April 2024 – June 2025

Program Description

The purpose of the Foreign Language Policy Framework is to provide a structure for the Department to address persistent gaps in foreign language proficiency and make informed decisions about resources for foreign language acquisition.

Evaluation Questions

1. What progress has the Department made in advancing Goal 1 of the State Department Policy Plan for Foreign Language Capabilities (2020) (the Policy Plan) to establish a well-defined, consistent, and mission-driven process for language destinations?

2. What progress has the Department made in advancing Goal 2 of the Policy Plan to expand recruitment of Foreign Service personnel with needed language proficiencies?

3. What progress has the Department made in advancing Goal 3 of the Policy Plan to develop an incentive structure, assignment process, and other approaches to maximize foreign language use, maintenance, and retention?

4. What progress has the Department made in advancing Goal 4 of the Policy Plan to sustain effective language training, testing, and technology?

5. What progress has the Department made in advancing Goal 5 of the Policy Plan to ensure decisions related to language programs are informed by reliable data?

6. To the extent the above goals have not been achieved, are those goals still relevant and how should the Department prioritize work toward achieving them?

Methodology and Data

Data collection will include review of the prior study and literature review, interviews and focus groups with staff, review and analysis of existing administrative data, review of FSI course data, and, if needed, surveys of employees receiving language training.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

From the previous study, one limitation in the analysis was caused by fractured data stored across multiple offices and in various formats. Consequently, the report captured various timeframes between 2011 and 2018. Another limitation was caused by a lack of after-action reports, thereby relying largely on institutional knowledge to fill information gaps. Similar challenges are anticipated.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The Language Policy Working Group will use evaluation results to enhance performance and policy planning. Evaluation results will also be reported to the Under Secretary for Management and other Department stakeholders. If appropriate, aspects of the evaluation may be shared with other foreign affairs agencies.

Department Evaluation of Section 508 Compliance - FY25

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM)

Evaluation Timeline

June 2024 – May 2025

Program Description

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, codified at 29 U.S.C. § 794d, requires Federal departments and agencies, and the United States Postal Service, (hereinafter, "agencies") to develop, procure, maintain, or use information and communications technology (ICT) that is accessible to people with disabilities, and to give employees and members of the public with disabilities access to information comparable to the access available to others.

Evaluation Question

1. To what extent is the information and communications technology of the agency accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities?

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The information gathered from the Section 508 evaluation assists the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), General Service Administration (GSA), the U.S. Access Board (USAB), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) in fulfilling statutory reporting requirements to evaluate agency implementation progress. GSA and DOJ will use this information to issue separate annual and biennial reports to Congress that will include a public data file with all agency responses.

Evaluation of the Congressional Correspondence Process

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Goal 1: Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Goal 2: Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Goal 3: Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Goal 4: Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions.

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Goal 5: Serve U.S. citizens around the world and facilitate secure international travel.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 8: How can the Department utilize performance management and evaluation data and data systems to improve decision-making?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Legislative Affairs (H)

Evaluation Timeline

January 2025 – June 2025

Program Description

The Congressional Correspondence Unit (CCU) receives and tracks all written correspondence from Members of Congress, including requests for testimony, briefings, documents, and speaking engagements.

Evaluation Questions

Not yet available.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The purpose of this evaluation is to follow up on recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) related to an investigation into how the Department of State responds to congressional inquiries. This evaluation will address our implementation of a tracking system for interim congressional responses and to formally track Consular Affairs constituent correspondence.

Review of Medical Evaluations of Law Enforcement Officers

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 7: How can the Department more effectively analyze and manage risks to promote a safe and secure working environment for its staff and partners?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Medical Services (MED)

Evaluation Timeline

April 2024 – September 2025

Program Description

This program aims to study Department-specific factors impacting Diplomatic Security special agents in order to develop a comprehensive psychological support program commensurate with the National Law Enforcement agency standards for agent and public safety.

MED will conduct a performance evaluation of the existing Forensic Behavioral Science Service fitness-for-duty evaluation program (12 FAM 045) to assess current practices and scope, and to identify any MED bureau gaps to ensure MED's practices meet the requirements of a comprehensive medical evaluation program for law enforcement officers.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are being drafted but not yet finalized.

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Not yet available.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

Findings will be used to inform current MED practices in conducting medical evaluations for law enforcement officers and will improve methods and intervals of engagement with Diplomatic Security Service Special Agents.

Evaluation of Operational Medicine's Aviation Subprogram

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.3: Protect our personnel, information, and physical infrastructure from 21st century threats.

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Medical Services (MED)

Evaluation Timeline

April 2024 – April 2025

Program Description

This will be an evaluation of our Directorate of Operational Medicine aviation subprogram Solitude (Solitude) to support future planning for strategic priorities, improve coordination amongst interagency and partner nations, shape future programmatic and resource allocation decisions, and incorporate risk mitigation, safety, and process improvement methods into the subprogram.

Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent are the processes for the Solitude mission types documented and communicated to stakeholders?

2. To what extent do current Solitude processes support the Department's requirement for 24/7 multi-mission aviation capability?

3. In what ways do interagency coordination and communication improve the mission success of Solitude? In what ways could these be improved?

Methodology and Data

Data will be collected via primary and secondary methods of quantitative and qualitative data—for example, current and draft standard operating procedures, stakeholder interviews/surveys, historical mission information (emails, invoices), after-action reviews from Department missions/table-top exercises (TTX)/exercises (EXs).

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenges encountered may include high operational tempo, limited access to some information/personnel, info stove piping, and conflicting work obligations or schedules. These may be mitigated by task prioritization or creating a single point of contact.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

This evaluation will emphasize the multiple, critical missions of subprogram Solitude and how it supports the Departments' mission and interagency partners. This evaluation will influence program resource utilization, reallocation, and any needed additional requests. It will also be responsive to recent inquiries posed by the Department Aviation Governing Board regarding the subprogram processes, contracting methodology, and potential synergies.

Strategic Impact Assessment Framework

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 8: How can the Department utilize performance management and evaluation data and data systems to improve decision-making?

Name of Bureau or Office

Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM)

Evaluation Timeline

October 2017 – November 2026

Program Description

Strategic Impact Assessment Framework (SIAF) is a data analysis tool to enable PM to better understand how its multiple programs and activities contribute to achievement of U.S. foreign policy and national security goals and objectives. Distinct from program-level monitoring and evaluation, SIAF is a set of dynamic, interactive dashboards that aggregate cross-cutting data sets. Currently in the second year of the report, the surveyed posts were expanded from 25 to 136.

Evaluation Question

1. What are the trends arising from long-term data collection to inform our understanding of the U.S.' security partnerships with partner nations across five key outcomes including access, influence and assurance, security governance and institutional capacity, stable security environment, and national security innovation base?

Methodology and Data

SIAF uses a variety of data sources including surveys of post personnel, proprietary government data, and third-party data.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenges include reliably and consistently capturing post data. Mitigation approaches include a high-touch, well-executed stakeholder engagement plan that resulted in a 100% post response for the 2023 survey and a 96% in the 2022 survey.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The anticipated use is to enable PM to analyze trends, make comparisons, and more effectively articulate the impact of PM's activities around the world and over time.

Baseline Assessment and Inventory of Trafficking in Persons Office Processes and Strategic Planning

Significance:

This evaluation aligns to—

- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 4.2: Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.

- Department Learning Agenda Question 8: How can the Department utilize performance management and evaluation data and data systems to improve decision-making?

Name of Bureau or Office

Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP)

Evaluation Timeline

March 2024 – March 2025

Program Description

The TIP Office implements several activities focused on anti-trafficking prevention efforts and various subject matters. The office collects a lot of rich data and experiences from these initiatives, but we would like to build a strategic and useful monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework. Our aim is to assess our current MEL processes, extract what works to build upon it, and then fill any gaps in a strategic and prioritized way.

Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent does the TIP Office have a good understanding of MEL best practices?

2. To what extent are the current MEL processes and framework effective?

3. Is the TIP Office capturing lessons learned from each annual strategic review/data collection period? Is the TIP Office applying recommendations each period to improve the process?

4. At what stage is the TIP Office with adopting and implementing the Evidence Act? Modernization Act?

5. What are the performance and results goals for the TIP Office?

6. To what extent are the TIP Office's activities and projects aligned to its priorities and strategic goals?

Methodology and Data

Not yet available.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Evaluation participants may not fully understand its stated importance. This might lead to a lack of targeted information and experience; there might be more than one causal link to initiatives.

To mitigate these potential challenges, the team will cast a wide net for participation; provide a two-pager/overview meeting on importance and intended use and provide participants with space to ask questions; and use information gathering approaches to ensure participation and capture all links.

Dissemination Strategies and Use

The anticipated use is to determine if recommendations from the program monitoring evaluation applied and previous initiatives improved MEL systems and processes. Another anticipated use is to learn where there are gaps in the current TIP Office MEL framework and strategy, and to then develop tailored solutions for a comprehensive approach to using data and evidence for program planning and decision-making.

Appendix A: Department of State 2022 – 2026 Joint Strategic Plan

2022 – 2026 Joint Strategic Plan Goals and Strategic Objectives

GOAL 1: Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.	GOAL 2: Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.	GOAL 3: Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.	GOAL 4: Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions.	GOAL 5: Serve U.S. Citizens around the world and facilitate secure international travel.
Objective 1.1: Strengthen global health security, combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora.	**Objective 2.1:** Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans.	**Objective 3.1:** Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens.	**Objective 4.1:** Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.	**Objective 5.1:** Support and serve American citizens traveling or residing abroad.
Objective 1.2: Secure ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes, including supporting effective Paris Agreement implementation.	**Objective 2.2:** Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe.	**Objective 3.2:** Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.		
Objective 1.3: Reinvigorate U.S. humanitarian leadership and provide lifesaving protection and assistance in response to international disasters and humanitarian crises overseas.	**Objective 2.3:** Support U.S. technological leadership, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance and protect the U.S. innovation base while leveraging technology to improve lives around the world.	**Objective 3.3:** Prevent, expose, and reduce corruption.	**Objective 4.2:** Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.	
Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.		**Objective 3.4:** Promote a safe, humane, and orderly immigration and asylum system, address the root causes of irregular migration collaboratively with our partners, and enhance protections for refugees and displaced persons.		**Objective 5.2:** Advance U.S. interests by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.
Objective 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.	**Objective 2.4:** Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks.	**Objective 3.5:** Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.	**Objective 4.3:** Protect our personnel, information, and physical infrastructure from 21st century threats.	

Goal 1: Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being.

Goal 1 Strategic Objectives:

- **Objective 1.1**: Strengthen global health security, combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora.

- **Objective 1.2**: Secure ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes, including supporting effective Paris Agreement implementation.

- **Objective 1.3**: Reinvigorate U.S. humanitarian leadership and provide lifesaving protection and assistance in response to international disasters and humanitarian crises overseas.

- **Objective 1.4**: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

- **Objective 1.5**: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States.

Goal 2: Promote global prosperity and shape an international environment in which the United States can thrive.

Goal 2 Strategic Objectives:

- **Objective 2.1:** Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans.

- **Objective 2.2:** Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe.

- **Objective 2.3:** Support U.S. technological leadership, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance and protect the U.S. innovation base

- **Objective 2.4:** Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks.

Goal 3: Strengthen democratic institutions, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.

Goal 3 Strategic Objectives:

- **Objective 3.1:** Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens.

- **Objective 3.2:** Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.

- **Objective 3.3:** Prevent, expose, and reduce corruption.

- **Objective 3.4:** Promote a safe, humane, and orderly immigration and asylum system, address the root causes of irregular migration collaboratively with our partners, and enhance protections for refugees and displaced persons.

- **Objective 3.5:** Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

Goal 4: Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions.

Goal 4 Strategic Objectives:

- **Objective 4.1:** Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

- **Objective 4.2:** Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.

- **Objective 4.3:** Protect our personnel, information, and physical infrastructure from 21st century threats.

Goal 5: Serve U.S. Citizens around the world and facilitate secure international travel.

Goal 5 Strategic Objectives:

- **Objective 5.1:** Support and serve American citizens traveling or residing abroad.

- **Objective 5.2:** Advance U.S. interests by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States.

Appendix B: Department of State 2022 – 2026 Learning Agenda

Table 2: 2022 – 2026 Learning Agenda Questions

Question number	Learning Question
1	How can the State Department improve the effectiveness of its diplomatic interventions to better advance foreign policy objectives?
2	How can the Department improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its foreign assistance efforts?
3	How can the Department's tools best address the climate crisis?
4	How can the Department better respond to unpredictable international events and emergencies such as global pandemics?
5	How should the Department confront the rise of global disinformation and its negative effects on the security and prosperity of the United States?
6	How can the Department balance customer service expectations with national security and cost-effectiveness to provide a better customer service experience to U.S. citizens, and to foreign nationals seeking visas?
7	How can the Department more effectively analyze and manage risks to promote a safe and secure working environment for its staff and partners?
8	How can the Department utilize performance management and evaluation data and data systems to improve decision-making?