**Integrated Country Strategy**

**ESWATINI**

Approved: March 18, 2022

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

This is a moment of challenge for Eswatini, but also one of opportunity. The government of the Kingdom of Eswatini (GKoE) is striving to repair years of poor economic policy, opaque and unaccountable governance, and systemic inequalities. A large youth population is unemployed or preparing to enter a job market that lacks opportunity; reformers in the government are seeking to spur job creation and investment by revitalizing the private sector, improving the business climate, and building an e-commerce hub. Following civil unrest and violence in 2021, the king agreed to inclusive national dialogue, and political parties and civil society groups are clamoring for dialogue to begin and lead to consequential democratic reforms. Eswatini is the last country in Africa to maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan, and in its current precarious fiscal situation, faces increased pressure from China.

As a monarchy, Eswatini ranks low in Freedom House's political rights indicator. Allegations of human rights abuses and security force impunity associated with the response to civil unrest have not been fully investigated and addressed, and politicization of the judiciary is a concern. Post will continue to encourage the GKoE to **support dialogue and respect outcomes**, **strengthen its commitment to transparent and accountable governance, human rights, and the rule of law to generate peace and prosperity**. Our team will encourage government, civil society, and traditional leaders to cooperate to implement structural reforms to strengthen democratic governance by leveraging speakers' programs and grants targeting the development of civil society organizations and government officials. We will help reduce the likelihood of violence by training Eswatini's security forces on human rights through a combination of engagement and professional military training programs, such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. To support reform efforts, we will encourage the GKoE to strengthen protections for freedom of speech and assembly through a combination of advocacy and capacity building. Specifically, we will continue to encourage government to empower the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) to draft guidelines for political party participation in the electoral space. Another area of emphasis will be fostering the development of a more independent, competent, and objective journalist corps through Public Diplomacy (PD) sponsored professional development opportunities for journalists, increased engagements with key media stakeholders, and assistance in developing uniform press standards. In addition to professionalization, PD efforts will focus on improving digital literacy, countering misinformation, and educating communities, leaders, and influencers about constitutional rights, women's land rights, and other proposed pieces of legislation.

Eswatini's economy is heavily dependent on revenue from the Southern African Customs Union and the sale of raw sugar. Post is working with other USG agencies and the GKoE to promote

**transparent legislative and infrastructure investments to improve the business environment and encourage economic growth**.  To achieve this goal, the country will need an educated and skilled workforce, as well as a social structure that offers full and equal participation for women, youth, and disadvantaged populations.  We will work with government, the business community, and other partners to improve education opportunities through vocational schools, internships/apprenticeships, and mentorship, with an emphasis on supporting increased educational and training opportunities for women and youth.  The Mission's PD programming will play a central role in empowering disadvantaged groups, particularly youth and women, to participate in their country's future in meaningful ways.  PD activities will promote inclusive and peaceful dialogue about the political, social, and legal environments that must be created to advance economic development and sustain progress on HIV/AIDS.  Through speakers, workshops, and exchanges, we will continue to support civil society and expose Swati youth and women to information, tools, and networks that will better enable them to become leaders, advocate for policy advancements, build viable economic futures, and participate more fully in political processes.  Finally, in the wake of COVID, PD will invest in programs that encourage economic resilience and mitigate negative effects on social structures and civil society.  We will continue to assist government in exploring ways to further capitalize on the benefits available under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), while simultaneously encouraging the GKoE to explore enhanced whole-of-government initiatives to improve trade and economic environment.  By encouraging a multisector approach and facilitating connections with U.S. businesses, we hope to see substantial advances in the Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) field, with a secure and reliable 5G network deployed across the country before the end of 2024.  Eswatini is currently dependent on South Africa for its electricity supply and is urgently pursuing indigenous solutions.  The country has developed a nascent green energy program but needs assistance in developing a robust renewable energy program that avoids dependence on carbon fuels.  Post will work with U.S. and like-minded partners to assist the country in achieving energy independence through development of sustainable energy production with renewable resources.

The GKoE, with U.S. support, has made notable progress in controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and will need to make significant health and other investments to sustain progress.  Eswatini has the world's highest HIV prevalence rate, with 27% of people older than 15 years living with HIV. Two Population HIV Impact Assessments conducted five years apart showed remarkable progress in reducing new HIV infections, resulting in widespread praise for the government's program and development assistance support.  Continued progress led to Eswatini being named by UNAIDS as one of only two countries to reach the ambitious 95-95-95 targets early, with 95% of people living with HIV being diagnosed, 95% of them on treatment, and 95% on treatment are virally suppressed.  PEPFAR represents nearly 100% of the U.S. Mission's foreign assistance budget in Eswatini and is the largest contributor to the host-country response to the

HIV/AIDS epidemic.  The GKoE has demonstrated commitment to HIV programming, and annually staffs and funds procurement of nearly all required adult antiretrovirals.  COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on nearly every aspect of HIV service delivery in Eswatini.  In responding to the COVID crisis, the country leveraged systems strengthened by PEPFAR and adapted HIV services for safe delivery of services, including community delivery of life-saving HIV medication.  National results so far show that the high levels of HIV viral suppression were sustained.  While the country is on the right track towards controlling the epidemic, addressing underlying economic, social, and health challenges that create vulnerable populations will be critical for the country's progress toward the national goal of an AIDS-free generation.

In this effort, the mission will support government in **strengthening its health sector to deliver reliable, consistent, and sustainable high quality health services through a multisectoral approach.**  The health team will support the government through focused investments and technical assistance to prevent new HIV infections and reach the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals across all sub-populations.  To assist the transition to sustainable epidemic control, the mission will work jointly with the GKoE on a holistic, multisectoral planning process to also address social and economic factors that are increasing HIV vulnerability of sub-populations.  The COVID pandemic has shown just how vulnerable Eswatini's broader health-system can be when placed under additional stress.  Accordingly, the PEPFAR team will work with government to strengthen Eswatini's health system to prevent, detect, and respond equitably and rapidly to infectious disease outbreaks while maintaining continuity of health services.  Bolstering the country's national laboratory systems and medical supply chain capabilities will be central to this effort.  As we jointly move forward in the effort to sustain successes and fully reach epidemic control, government will need to assume increasing responsibility for the nation's HIV/AIDS response.  Accordingly, we will work with government and healthcare stakeholders to modernize health financing mechanisms, governance structures, and service delivery models to facilitate evolution to full domestic financing of the HIV response.  This will require government to evolve its service delivery models for increased sustainability.  Finally, PEPFAR and PD will work together on implementing a strategic communications campaign to build awareness of the strong PEPFAR presence in Eswatini and counter misinformation about HIV/AIDs programs.

While Peace Corps/Eswatini (PC/Eswatini) has its own strategic planning process, the organization performs much work in the country that contributes toward and supports mission goals, particularly under the PEPFAR umbrella.  In MAR of 2020, all Peace Corps Volunteers were evacuated due to the COVID-19 pandemic; we expect to welcome volunteers back in 2022.  Peace Corps Eswatini has engaged in activities designed to update and enhance staff capacity, particularly related to medical and safety and security issues; update computer hardware and software; and modernize the physical plant to strengthen post operations.  In addition, PC/Eswatini was chosen as one of only a few countries to pilot a new Virtual Service

Program (VSP). The successful pilot has led to new opportunities for local organizations to receive specialized help with technical and programmatic issues, and for volunteers to work virtually during the pandemic and civil unrest.

Peace Corps staff will continue to update and enhance both the **Community Health (CHAMP) Framework** and the **Youth Development (Y-Deep) Framework**. CHAMP is aimed at assisting Ministry of Health (MoH) clinical staff in developing youth friendly spaces/services and strengthen supply chain management within the MoH clinics. Y-Deep targets Life Skills education within secondary and high schools to support school-based Workforce Readiness & Financial Literacy clubs. Peace Corps is also working to implement a series of COVID-19 mitigation and response activities, including developing plans and procedures to keep communities, families, partners, and Volunteers safe, as PC leadership plans for Volunteers to return to Eswatini in a COVID-19 environment. Peace Corps also continues to expand relationships with other USG agencies, host government ministries, multilateral organizations, and civil society to better understand the needs of communities and enhance Volunteer impact and experience.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** Eswatini strengthens its commitment to transparent and accountable governance, human rights, and the rule of law to generate greater peace and prosperity.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Government, civil society, and traditional leaders cooperate to implement structural reforms to strengthen democratic governance.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Eswatini strengthens protections for freedom of speech and assembly to support reform efforts.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Eswatini develops a more independent, professional, and objective journalist corps.

**Mission Goal 2:** Eswatini implements transparent legislative and infrastructure investments to improve the business environment and encourage economic growth.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Government improves education opportunities, and women and youth develop skills necessary to find meaningful employment and participate fully in the economy.
- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Eswatini explores enhanced whole-of-government initiatives to improve trade and the economic environment.

**Mission Goal 3:** Eswatini strengthens its health sector to deliver reliable, consistent, sustainable high quality health services through a multisectoral approach.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Eswatini achieves and sustains the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals across all sub-populations while continuing to reduce new HIV infections.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Eswatini's health system is strengthened to equitably and rapidly prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks while maintaining continuity of health services.

- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Eswatini government and stakeholders modernize health financing mechanisms, governance structures, and service delivery models to facilitate evolution to full domestic financing of the HIV response.

**Management Objective 1:** Strengthen delivery of management services to advance objectives and support resiliency.

**Management Objective 2:**  Management develops a long-term plan to improve and maintain mission facilities to support community resilience and ability to host outdoor representational events.

**Management Objective 3:**  Management continues to improve communications capabilities and resiliency to support ability of post to perform its mission in adverse circumstances.

## 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1:** Eswatini strengthens its commitment to transparent and accountable governance, human rights, and the rule of law to generate greater peace and prosperity.

**Description:** At a pivotal moment in Eswatini's history, transparent and accountable governance is more important than ever before. Eswatini is reeling from the unprecedented civil unrest of 2021. The national dialogue process, expected to begin in 2022, will bring citizens, civil society, government, and traditional leaders together to attempt to heal and move forward with critical reforms. To be successful, the dialogue process must be inclusive and transparent, have a clear mandate, and be strongly supported by all members of society, including the head of state. Alleged human rights abuses must be fully investigated, and any perpetrators held accountable.

**Objective 1.1:** Government, civil society, and traditional leaders cooperate to implement structural reforms to strengthen democratic governance and improve the security environment in Eswatini.

- **Justification:** Although political parties do exist in Eswatini, the lack of guideline for their operation and limitations on their participation in elections have resulted in strained relationships between government, traditional leaders, and civil society. In the wake of unprecedented civil unrest in 2021 that resulted in dozens of deaths and hundreds of injuries, Eswatini has become increasingly divided. Eswatini has a unique parallel political and legal structure, and traditional leaders are very influential, especially in rural communities. To support Eswatini's preparations for national dialogue, implementation of reforms, and its overall development and prosperity, it is essential to empower, educate, and enable stakeholders across Eswatini. The U.S. embassy can support this objective through advocacy, capacity-building, and diplomatic engagement.
- **Linkages:** State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Objective 1.4 and 3.1; Bureau of African Affairs' Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, and 3.1.
- **Risks:** The potential for further unrest and violence remains a very real challenge to a successful dialogue and reform process. It will be important that all stakeholders commit to and have the capacity to participate in a constructive way and honor commitments made. Clear government communication and non-biased reporting on the dialogue process, agreed outcomes, and implementation of reforms will be key. The mission will encourage government to dedicate the resources and energy necessary for the national dialogue and reforms to succeed and will offer subject matter expert support during the process to mitigate these risks.

**Objective 1.2:** Eswatini strengthens protections for freedom of speech and assembly to support reform efforts.

- **Justification:** Although Eswatini's constitution and laws such as the Public Order Act are permissive, the application of these laws has become increasingly problematic and politicized. The banning of petition deliveries in JUN 2021 was a trigger for civil unrest. A preliminary report by the Commissioner of Human Rights and Public Administration found that at least 46 people died during the JUN 2021 unrest and recommended that the Eswatini government "initiate an independent, thorough, credible, transparent, and impartial investigation by experts with relevant skills and knowledge into allegations of human rights violations and abuses and to bring those responsible to justice.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.5 and 3.1; Bureau JRS Objectives 3.2 and 3.4.
- **Risks:** Politicization of the judiciary and failure to open political space for upcoming national dialogue risk its success. The public's willingness to engage and speak freely could be dampened by misapplication of the law and failure to address security force impunity. Post will engage through government, palace, civil society, and media to urge respect for rule of law.

**Objective 1.3:** Eswatini develops a more independent, professional, and objective journalist corps.

- **Justification:** Access to information in Eswatini is hindered by lack of communication by government with citizens and the limited number and state ownership of media outlets, poor quality journalism, high turnover, and limited internet penetration outside of urban areas. The executive branch limits media independence through its powers to influence parastatals to withdraw advertising that is crucial for the survival of independent media and the removal/suspension of state-owned media journalists in cases when critical articles are published. Journalists are generally free to criticize the government, but face physical, legal, financial, and social retribution if they criticize the royal family. Most recently, given the hyper-polarized political environment, they also face criticism and social media threats for appearing to take sides even when reporting is balanced and accurate. Journalists often lack formal training, and journalistic integrity is a nascent concept. The mission will continue to cultivate productive working relationships with members of the media and will work to expand training opportunities and programs designed to build the capacity of journalists, especially women and youth who are under-represented, to provide timely, accurate, and substantive reporting and to engage the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and other stakeholders on the importance of media freedom and the role of the media in a democratic society.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.5; Bureau JRS Objective 3.2
- **Risks:** Government and journalists will play a key role in communicating effectively and accurately during the runup to and conduct of national dialogue and subsequent reform efforts. Failure of government or the press to meet these needs could lead to public frustrations or even renewed civil unrest. High turnover of journalists, the continued censorship of state media and frustration of independent media by the executive government limit opportunities to enhance professionalism and independence. Travel restrictions due to COVID and civil unrest have limited exchange and speaker programs. Post will increase the number and frequency of engagements/trainings to combat high turnover and offer virtual options when travel is limited.

**Mission Goal 2:** Eswatini implements transparent legislative and infrastructure investments to improve the business environment and encourage economic growth.

**Description:** This Mission Goal looks to assist government in improving Eswatini's investment climate, trade relationships with U.S. companies, and readiness to participate effectively in regional and international markets. At the same time, we will focus on the pressing need for greater economic integration and inclusion, particularly for Eswatini's historically underserved and underrepresented youth and women. Post will continue working to support equitable access to education for all students, and to training for Eswatini's next generation; improve economic governance and regional integration for trade and investment; encourage mutually beneficial trade and investment between the United States and Eswatini; and expand Eswatini's capacity to effectively participate in global markets.

**Objective 2.1:** Government improves education opportunities, and women and youth develop skills necessary to find meaningful employment and participate fully in the economy.

- **Justification:** Youth comprise more than half of the total population of Eswatini; in 2021 nearly 70 percent of the population was under age 35. Yet, they face some of the greatest challenges, including limited access to education, high rates of unemployment, and disproportionate vulnerability to the devastating effects of HIV. Eswatini has the highest prevalence of HIV in the world, and youth are the most impacted by the epidemic. More than 70 percent of youth aged 15-17 are either orphaned or categorized as vulnerable children. Youth often complain that they are excluded from the political system and that programs meant to address youth issues are ineffective and rife with nepotism. Like youth populations, women face higher rates of unemployment. They also earn less than their male counterparts and are more adversely affected by the HIV epidemic than men. Women are infected at higher rates and, on average, at a younger age than men. Addressing Eswatini's gender- and age-based inequities will be an essential part of any successful strategy for the country to capitalize on its competitive advantages and reach its full economic potential. It will also increase the potential for success in halting transmission of HIV to this vulnerable population.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objectives 2.1, 2.4, 3.2, and 3.5; JRS Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 4.4.
- **Risks:** Closure of schools due to civil unrest and the continued COVID-19 pandemic, causing student to fall further behind in curriculum. High rates of teen pregnancy and GBV, and lack of government resources to invest in needed improvements. Post will engage with government at the highest levels to reinforce the need for schools to remain open and to prioritize government spending to improve education.

**Objective 2.2:** Eswatini utilizes enhanced whole-of-government initiatives to improve trade and the economic environment.

- **Justification:** Eswatini has high unemployment and one of the lowest gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the World Bank, an estimated 59 percent of the population lives below the international poverty line. The economy of Eswatini is largely dependent on sugar exports and Southern African Customs Union receipts (50 percent of total revenue), both of which are likely unsustainable in the long-term. Mismanagement and lavish and unaccountable spending by the royal family divert much needed public resources from key areas such as health, education, and economic development. Improving trade and foreign investment is key to reviving Eswatini's economy. Eswatini's current energy agreement with South Africa's ESCOM ends in 2025, and Eswatini is beginning to move towards renewable energy to become fully energy independent while addressing climate change issues. As the sole African country to commit to development of a secure 5G network, Eswatini demonstrated its commitment to the highest standards of security against vendors' ability to disrupt, manipulate or deny services to private citizens, financial institutions, or critical infrastructure.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objectives 1.2, 2.1, 2.4 and 3.1; the strategic objectives of the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE); the [draft] USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030, and Bureau JRS Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 4.2.
- **Risks:** Eswatini has limited government resources and finances to develop large infrastructure projects and plans to build a thermal power plant to increase its energy independence. Post will assist government in identifying private investment and development opportunities, particularly with U.S. businesses, to meet energy needs with sustainable power generation.

**Mission Goal 3:** Eswatini strengthens its health sector to deliver reliable, consistent, and sustainable high quality health services through a multisectoral approach.

**Description:** Despite having the world's highest HIV prevalence, over a decade and a half of US government and Global Fund assistance, coupled with strong political will and leadership from the government, Eswatini has pivoted the situation from a humanitarian crisis to one of the fastest reductions in new HIV cases documented. Eswatini is one of the first two counties in the world to reach the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals – with 95% of people living with HIV being diagnosed, 95% of them on treatment and 95% of those on treatment virally suppressed. Despite the gains, the reality remains that nearly 30% of all adults require daily antiretroviral (ARV) medication for their survival, in a highly donor-dependent health system.

U.S. health investments over the past 17 years have focused on preventing new HIV infections, identifying and treating people living with HIV, addressing factors that make people vulnerable to HIV infection, and supporting health systems to be able to deliver prevention and treatment services. Epidemic control measures now need to mature, focusing on closing the remaining gaps in coverage for vulnerable populations and improving treatment retention of the young and newly initiated on treatment, while effectively and efficiently sustaining the impact.

Health systems strengthening is necessary for a broader public health response – Eswatini must develop the required disease surveillance and outbreak control mechanisms to sustain HIV progress and improve capacity to respond to future pandemics. Using PEPFAR HIV funding to establish, maintain, and support the country's health platform is critical for Eswatini's future, both in maintaining the gains in HIV as well as for future pandemic readiness. U.S. government investment in Eswatini must be positioned to ensure availability of critical strategic epidemiological information; strengthen key public health institutions, health workforce, leadership, and infrastructure; establish strong public health laboratory networks; implement data driven public health programs; and, support critical operational and applied research.

This strengthening necessitates a multisectoral approach for efficacy and sustainability. Engagement with Ministries of Education, Finance, and Economic Planning, as well as with traditional and religious structures and the private sector is required to address systemic health vulnerabilities and build a health system that is self-sustaining and capable of a swift and effective response to future health challenges.

**Objective 3.1:** Eswatini achieves and sustains the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals across all sub-populations while continuing to reduce new HIV infections.

- **Justification:** Despite facing the world's highest overall HIV prevalence, Eswatini stands on the brink of reaching epidemic control. As the country has achieved the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals, strategic programmatic shifts will drive the HIV program towards sustaining control of the epidemic. As the testing and treatment gaps close across the board, unmet need is no longer restricted to any one age, sex, or region – all people living with HIV (PLHIV) on treatment must receive services that support their ability to remain on treatment and virally suppressed. To address the persistently high incidence, preventing new infections among populations who are most at risk of acquiring HIV (as determined through infection recency testing) must be prioritized and expanded. The overarching goal of the PEPFAR/Eswatini (PEPFAR/E) investments remains to support the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini (GKoE) to achieve and sustain epidemic control, provide high-quality HIV services to PLHIV, and continue to rapidly reduce the number of new infections. The program activities are guided by and aligned with Eswatini's National Multi-Sectoral Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS. While Eswatini has reached the 95-95-95 goals at a population level, higher risk and more vulnerable populations have not yet achieved this benchmark, including key populations (sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgender people, and injecting drug users), military, and adolescent girls and young women. Consistently higher rates of new HIV infections among these populations both exposes individuals to risk of contracting HIV and hinders the ability of the country to control the epidemic. Addressing the gaps in marginalized populations requires a multi-sectoral approach to identifying and removing structural barriers to service seeking and delivery, optimizing data-driven testing, and care and treatment strategies to help them achieve durable viral load suppression, reduced AIDS-related mortality, and improved survival. Accelerating impact of HIV primary prevention, including though PrEP, DREAMS, VMMC, sexual violence prevention and response, and other comprehensive strategies, must include the advancement of gender equity and equality as well.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.1, the Global Health Security Agenda, PEPFAR, and the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE), and Bureau JRC Objectives 3.2 and 4.1.
- **Risks:** Discrimination against marginalized populations and vulnerability of adolescent girls and young women are intertwined with conservative and traditional culture in a male-dominated society. Progress in shifting cultural norms may not be linear or timely. Post will engage government, civil society, and traditional leaders to increase social equity of marginalized populations.

**Objective 3.2:** Eswatini's health system is strengthened to prevent, detect, and respond equitably and rapidly to infectious disease outbreaks while maintaining continuity of health services.

- **Justification:** Funding in the HIV sector is currently highly donor-dependent, and donor funding dominates health system investments in Eswatini. Leveraging PEPFAR-supported health systems as a backbone of the public health response will allow the country to both protect and expand HIV outcomes while strengthening the health security of the nation and enabling preparedness for detecting and addressing new infectious disease outbreaks.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.1, the Global Health Security Agenda, the USG COVID-19 Framework (Objectives 2 and 3), PMI, PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE), and Bureau JRC Objective 4.1.
- **Risks:** High donor-dependence developed because of significant need in responding to the early HIV crisis and consequent sustained international investment in HIV programs and structures. Similar extreme levels of donor financing will not be replicable across the health system and will require increased domestic health financing. PEPFAR will work with government to increase funding for the health sector and focus on shifting to a sustainable HIV response model.

**Objective 3.3:** The Government of Eswatini and stakeholders modernize health financing mechanisms, governance structures, and service delivery models to facilitate evolution to full domestic financing of the HIV response.

- **Justification:** PEPFAR programming came to Eswatini when the country was amidst a humanitarian crisis. Through science, hard work, significant and sustained investment, and long-standing partnership with government and other donors, Eswatini is on the brink of effectively controlling the HIV epidemic. Eswatini PEPFAR is beginning a new phase that is focused on sustaining the impact and hard-won gains of the HIV effort. To be successful, PEPFAR will need to work with government to develop a shared vision and long-term plan that includes gradual steps to merge and manage the HIV response within existing domestic systems and finances, supported throughout the process by PEPFAR funding. The Government of Eswatini is considering how parts of the health sector may be reformed to better meet current challenges of funding, sustaining, and improving the health sector.

- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.1, the Global Health Security Agenda, the USG COVID-19 Framework (Objectives 2 and 3), PMI, PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) and Bureau JRC Objectives 3.1 and 4.1.
- **Risks:** Changes to policy and law in Eswatini often require a lengthy process. The Health Bill that contains some changes to the governance structure in the health sector has been in progress for seven years, and although there is renewed interest in its passing, it may face further delays. Likewise, introducing significant but strategic changes to health financing mechanisms, such as the introduction of universal health insurance or performance-based financing, may be impacted by the economic crisis or political realities. Mission Eswatini will work with government to increase revenues and push forward legislative changes needed to modernize the health sector.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** Strengthen delivery of management services to advance objectives and support resiliency.

- **Justification:** Eswatini is changing. Previously one of the most stable countries on the continent, the unrest of 2021 showed there is appetite for political reforms. This presents an opportunity for the U.S. to expand diplomatic engagement, but to do so, the Mission must upgrade its management and ICASS capabilities. Until now, the ICASS platform has primarily supported PEPFAR and USAID counter-HIV efforts, but as diplomatic engagement efforts become larger and more urgent, additional resources and more efficient service delivery are needed to enable substantive work. This includes the addition of ICASS support staff as well working to align our facilities to support anticipated Mission staff growth.
- **Linkages:** Bureau JRS Management Objective 1; Bureau JRS Sub-objective 1.1
- **Risks:** Post is already fully utilizing all its desk space and is experiencing desk shortages in a number of sections. As post continually reassesses its staffing posture, we will engage with OBO to identify ways to optimize the use of its space and, as required, increase the number of desks to support additional staff as required. Post will, through the MRR process, continue to request the addition of an FMO/HRO position to relieve the workload and associated pressures on the Management Officer.

**Management Objective 2:** Management develops a long-term plan to improve and maintain mission facilities to support community resilience and ability to host outdoor representational events.

- **Justification:** In JUL 2021, Mission Eswatini experienced a sudden change in the operational environment as violent unrest swept the country. As part of the post-crisis review, several opportunities were identified to improve mission facility preparedness and utility for future crises as well as in support of community resilience in general. The COVID-19 pandemic has also revealed that the mission is currently heavily reliant on indoor spaces to hold representational events. While the pandemic will eventually subside, increasing mission capacity for a variety of representation event formats will allow greater flexibility to adapt to future challenges and changes. The main focus of these efforts will be the Kent Rock compound, a multi-acre USG-owned parcel of land located in Mbabane that previously housed PEPFAR and MGT support functions and now is a mix of functional and recreational space.
- **Linkages:** Bureau JRS Management Objective 1
- **Risks:** Without infrastructure investments, Post will continue to struggle to find adequate space to host representational events and staff morale/resilience could suffer if security concerns persist. Post will work within its post-held budget and with AF Bureau and OBO to ensure funding is prioritized and adequate to ensure projects are completed in a timely manner.

## Management Objective 3: Management continues to improve communications capabilities and resiliency to support ability of post to perform its mission in adverse circumstances.

- **Justification:** During the 2021 civil unrest, the host government repeatedly limited or shut down local ISPs to restrict the ability of rioters to communicate and coordinate, severely impacting post's internal and external communications capabilities. A limited number of ISPs, especially one satellite-based ISP, were able to continue providing service during this period. With more services coming online in the coming years, post must continually reassess its service mix to achieve an optimal blend of capability and resilience should service disruptions recur in the future.
- **Linkages:** Bureau JRS Management Objective 1; Bureau JRS Sub-objective 1.2
- **Risks:** Post will continue to survey opportunities to increase communications resilience, as new outbreaks of civil unrest could degrade or disrupt or our communications when it is needed most during a crisis. A diversity of ISPs, ISPs under foreign licensing, and ISPs capable of placing post's access in a protected status are among the opportunities that post will explore.