



# OIG HIGHLIGHTS

April 2015

## AFRICAN AFFAIRS

### Inspection of Embassy Port Louis, Mauritius

#### What OIG Found

- The embassy's strategic planning documents reflect a realistic and limited set of goals and objectives, match policy priorities discussed by Washington-based officials, and are consistently used by all embassy sections when determining how to program limited fiscal and human resources.
- Regular visits to Embassy Port Louis from the regional human resources officer, the regional financial management specialist, the regional consular officer, and other experts provide additional management control oversight for the small mission.
- Processing immigrant visas at the U.S. Consulate General in Johannesburg would be more efficient than doing so at Embassy Nairobi, as is currently the case.
- Embassy Port Louis does not follow the required procedures for the management of grants.
- The embassy is packed into a small suite of offices in a commercial office building in downtown Port Louis. Although the facility meets security standards, [Redacted] (b) (5), [Redacted] (b) (7)(F) the layout poorly accommodates visitors to the consular section and Information Resource Center.

For more information, view the full report:  
ISP-I-15-19A

#### What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the U.S. Embassy in Port Louis during October 29–November 19, 2014.

#### What OIG Recommends

The OIG team made 16 recommendations to U.S. Embassy Port Louis intended to improve its operations and programs. The team recommended that all employees observe the policy for use of record and nonrecord emails as well as the standard filing system in a common-use drive.

The OIG team highlighted areas of concern, such as the timely submission of an FY 2015 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan that cites the mission's Integrated Country Strategy goals and the approval of the request to change the designated post for processing immigrant visa applications.

The OIG team also made recommendations regarding motor vehicle, physical property, information technology, grants management, and a backup communications system for access to OpenNet.



**OIG**

Office of Inspector General

U.S. Department of State • Broadcasting Board of Governors

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ISP-I-15-19A

Office of Inspections

April 2015

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# Inspection of Embassy Port Louis, Mauritius

## AFRICAN AFFAIRS

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## KEY FINDINGS

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- The embassy's strategic planning documents reflect a realistic and limited set of goals and objectives, match policy priorities discussed by Washington-based officials, and are consistently used by all embassy sections when determining how to program limited fiscal and human resources.
- Regular visits to Embassy Port Louis from the regional human resources officer, the regional financial management specialist, the regional consular officer, and other experts provide additional management control oversight for the small mission.
- Processing immigrant visas at the U.S. Consulate General in Johannesburg would be more efficient than doing so at Embassy Nairobi, as is currently the case.
- Embassy Port Louis does not follow the required procedures for the management of grants.
- The embassy is packed into a small suite of offices in a commercial office building in downtown Port Louis. Although the facility meets security standards, [Redacted] (b) (5), [Redacted] (b) (7)(F) the layout poorly accommodates visitors to the consular section and Information Resource Center.

## CONTEXT

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Embassy Port Louis manages bilateral relations with Mauritius and Seychelles. Mauritius is an island nation of 1,331,155 (July 2014, est.) in the Indian Ocean, about 800 kilometers east of Madagascar and 1,700 kilometers south of Seychelles, with a total land area about one-half the size of Rhode Island. It is a stable democracy with regular free elections and a positive human rights record. Since independence in 1968, Mauritius has developed from a low-income agriculturally based economy to a middle-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial, and tourist sectors and one of Africa's highest per capita incomes: \$16,100 (2013, est.).

Seychelles, an island nation of 91,650 (July 2014, est.), is located northeast of Madagascar with a total land area about the size of San Jose, California. Per capita income is in the upper-middle-income group of countries: \$25,900 (2013, est.). Growth has been led by the tourist sector and by tuna fishing. Embassy Port Louis handles diplomatic relations with Seychelles through periodic visits in addition to supporting a consular agent and an American Corner.

The Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) identifies four goals for both countries: strengthened democratic institutions, increased bilateral trade and investment, improved capacity to secure their maritime boundaries, and increased U.S. influence.

The U.S. mission to Mauritius and Seychelles (budget for FY 2014: \$3,248,020) comprises 81 staff members, including 13 U.S. Department of State (Department) direct-hires and 1 direct-hire each from the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

FY 2014 International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds (Mauritius, \$203,500; Seychelles, \$137,000) were directed at increasing the security forces' regional maritime security capacities.

## LEADERSHIP

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Embassy Port Louis has for a leader a career Foreign Service Ambassador, who is in her third year in country, and a deputy chief of mission (DCM), who has been at the embassy since August 2013. American and locally employed (LE) staff members told the Office of Inspector General (OIG) team that they welcome the Ambassador's informality and interest in their well-being as well as the DCM's structured approach.

The ICS for Mauritius and Seychelles was completed in September 2013. The Ambassador led a process to establish goals and objectives, and the DCM and other members of the country team applied the finishing touches after their arrival in late summer. The Ambassador's challenge to the American and LE staff in shaping the FY 2015–2017 ICS was: "What are the things we can do that would make a difference?" The country team is aware of the strategic priorities and arranges its work to fit into those priorities. The Mission Resource Request for FY 2016 tracks the priorities of the ICS and was completed with contributions from the entire country team. The OIG team believes that both documents reflect a realistic, and limited, set of goals and objectives for the embassy that match the policy priorities discussed by Washington-based officials.

The Ambassador, though lacking a large foreign assistance budget, has nevertheless advanced the mission's ICS goals and objectives in Mauritius and Seychelles. She and her team use their access to government officials, higher educational institutions, civil society groups, and the

media to advance progress toward meeting ICS goals. The Ambassador expanded the American Corner in Mauritius and opened one in Seychelles to facilitate access to information about the United States and to encourage study in the United States. Additionally, the embassy's public affairs grants program, Fulbright scholars and Science Fellows, Special Self-Help grants, and IMET program are all deployed in support of the embassy's ICS goals and objectives. The Bureau of African Affairs (AF) praises the embassy for "a superb job in projecting U.S. culture, credibility, and concern in these far-flung locations."

The OIG team counseled the Ambassador to further improve the embassy's strategic planning process by adopting two Office of Management and Budget-developed best practices: assigning lead officers to each of the ICS goals to see that they receive continuous attention and establishing a formal process to assess periodically progress in meeting the goals of the ICS, including appropriate adjustment to mission reporting, travel, and representation plans.

The Ambassador conducts daily country team meetings and drops by offices throughout the day to stay informed and provide direction. LE staff members noted their appreciation to the OIG team of her interest in their professional and personal welfare. The Ambassador attaches high priority to promoting good morale and devotes time and energy to this objective. American and LE staff members participate in twice-weekly embassy hikes, exercise classes, and other activities. The Ambassador and DCM involve the four first- and second-tour (FAST) employees in all aspects of the mission's reporting and representational activities, including travel to the Seychelles. Both want an assignment to Mauritius to be a training opportunity for the FAST employees and employees serving as sections heads for the first time.

The embassy staff and their files and office equipment are tightly packed into a small suite of offices in a commercial office building in downtown Port Louis. The layout poorly accommodates visitors to the consular section and Information Resource Center (IRC). Although the facility meets security standards for commercial office buildings, [Redacted] (b) (5), [Redacted] (b) (7)(F)

[Redacted] The Ambassador is working with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to identify potential sites for the eventual construction of a new embassy compound.

### **Records Management Noncompliance**

Embassy officers and their Department interlocutors are not using record email to track important exchanges on policy and programs. Per 5 *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) 443.2, email messages constitute Federal records if they include documentation of Department decisions and commitments not otherwise documented in Department files. During the inspection, the OIG team identified three instances of email communication that inspectors believe should have been labeled record email in order to retain the historical record on decisionmaking.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Port Louis should disseminate a management notice that informs all employees of Department of State policy for use of record and nonrecord emails and requires that employees observe the policy. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

The economic section and the political section are not using a file system as described in 5 FAM 440 for electronic files. Files are not grouped by year or by traffic analysis and geographic system subject matters, making retrieving material difficult.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Port Louis should use the Department of State's standard filing system in a common-use drive. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

## POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

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### Political

The OIG team interviewed Washington readers who complimented the volume and quality of the political reporting coming from the embassy. Several noted that the relative prosperity of Mauritius and Seychelles permitted the mission to concentrate on some nontraditional but important issues such as domestic violence and women's rights. The embassy reporting is based on an integrated reporting and travel plan that incorporates the efforts of the political; economic; public affairs; and environment, science, technology, and health officers. The embassy also produces a monthly cable providing a summary of news items that do not warrant separate spot reporting.

### Economic

Washington readers of the embassy's economic-commercial reporting were complimentary of the embassy's output. The economic section has led a missionwide effort to promote trade and investment. Examples included hosting a day-long seminar featuring a U.S. speaker on the services of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Export Import Bank, and the Trade and Development Association. Other programs have addressed intellectual property rights and entrepreneurship. The Ambassador participated in two webcasts with U.S. companies promoting trade and investment opportunities in Mauritius and hosted events dealing with renewable energy and the American Chamber of Commerce.

### Foreign Assistance

The embassy administers IMET funding, which totaled \$340,500 in FY 2014—\$203,500 for Mauritius and \$137,000 for Seychelles. The funds are concentrated on maritime security issues. The embassy also receives \$75,000 in Special Self-Help grant funds and those funds are distributed to both Mauritius and Seychelles in support of embassy goals and objectives.

The political officer is the grants officer for the Special Self-Help Fund. FY 2014 was the first year the Department's Economic Support Funds funded this program, which now requires oversight by a grants officer warranted by the Office of the Procurement Executive. The political officer was warranted in 2013. At the time of the inspection, none of the FY 2014 projects was complete. The OIG team noted instances of incomplete files for these new Self-Help grants and counseled the grants officer on corrective measures.

### Public Affairs

The OIG team discussed ICS themes, public affairs section key activities, and office personnel structure with the public affairs officer. AF assigned a new Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP) position to the section in 2014. The OIG team advised the section in the preparation of a position description for the EPAP during the inspection. The section has about the right volume of programs and proportion of themes and audiences judging by its ICS, the size of the section, and its Mission Activity Tracker reports over a 6-month review period.

The section hired its sole media assistant in 2012. She took both online and classroom training, including media training at the Foreign Service Institute in March 2014. That class did not include a visit to the Department to meet the AF desk officer or the spokesperson in the Bureau of Public Affairs or to observe the noon press briefing. As a result, the LE staff participants in the course were deprived of an opportunity to get an inside look at how media policy is formulated and executed. The OIG team discussed this omission with the director of public diplomacy

training at the Foreign Service Institute and urged that a Department visit be added to the 2-week curriculum.

### **Position Descriptions Out of Date**

The public affairs officer has not updated LE staff position descriptions in the section. The IRC director's position description is classified as an IRC technician, though she performs the duties of a typical IRC director. The cultural specialist's position description includes supervisory responsibilities that ended in 2012 and does not include recently assumed responsibility as a grants officer representative. Regulations in 3 FAM 7513.1 require that position descriptions be regularly reviewed for accuracy and kept up to date. The Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs recently advised embassies to delay revision of public affairs LE staff position descriptions pending issuance of universal positions by that bureau in FY 2015.

### **Public Affairs Implementation Plan Overdue**

The FY 2015 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan was not submitted by the October 31, 2014, deadline, as required by 14 State 117294 and is therefore overdue. The plan is essential for guiding public diplomacy programs so that they meet ICS goals.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Port Louis should submit an FY 2015 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan that cites the mission's Integrated Country Strategy goals. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

### **Media and Cultural Products**

The media unit produces an appropriate one-page daily summary of both print and broadcast news from Mauritius and Seychelles for embassy and Washington readers.

During the inspection, the embassy drafted a mission media policy for officers and staff to refer to when dealing with media inquiries on the basis of samples that the OIG team provided.

The embassy has a television antenna on the roof. No one in the embassy regularly watches the programs received via this antenna, almost all of which are also available on the Internet, and the embassy was considering removing the antenna. The OIG team identified several other uses for the antenna and counseled the embassy to continue maintenance of this low-cost piece of equipment.

In 2012, 39 percent of Mauritian households had Internet access (with 80 percent of these on Facebook). "Likes" on the embassy's Facebook page have risen sharply, from 3,800 in September 2013 to 16,160 in November 2014. The OIG team suggested ways to make the page more interactive by including more hotlinks and by posing questions to readers.

The section manages a modest portfolio of academic and cultural exchanges, including International Visitor Leadership Program; Fulbright graduate students, scholars, and specialists; Humphrey scholars; Mandela Fellows; and speakers recruited by both the Bureau of International Information Programs and the Africa Regional Program office in Paris. The Bureaus of Education and Cultural Affairs and International Information Programs have complimented the embassy's management of these programs.

### **American Spaces**

The Harper Lee American Corner, which opened in 2010, is in Curepipe, the second largest city in Mauritius. Its strengths include the host municipality's support, the adjacent Andrew Carnegie city library, and a large programming venue available in city hall next door.

The embassy IRC accepts appointments for reference and other services 2 days a week. The number of visitors has declined over the past 10 years because of tightened security procedures in the embassy, reduced parking availability, and increased Internet access elsewhere. The Harper Lee American Corner has also absorbed some of the IRC's patrons.

The Seychelles American Corner opened in October 2014 at the University of the Seychelles and is operating with an on-site coordinator and a memorandum of understanding with the university. The new EPAP employee will monitor the development of this new facility.

## **Consular Affairs**

The small consular section is responsible for services to American citizens and nonimmigrant visas for Mauritius, Seychelles, and the island of Reunion, which is an overseas department of France. Section staff processed 2,662 nonimmigrant visa applications in FY 2014. The consular officer approves more than 98 percent of nonimmigrant visa applications from Mauritians. Validity studies, which the consular section conducted to confirm that visa applicants have returned from their visits to the United States, indicate that less than 1 percent of Mauritians stay longer than authorized.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs allowed the embassy to stop processing most nonimmigrant visa applications for 5 months in 2011, when the consular chief position was vacant. The backup consular officer, who worked in another section, decided to process only nonimmigrant applications from government officials and students. LE staff members had to field phone calls from angry Mauritians and to tell them to apply in Madagascar or South Africa.

Embassy staff members describe the consular section waiting area as inadequate. The embassy has done all that is possible to mitigate the problems. The waiting area is in the elevator lobby in front of the security screening area. Prior to 2013, the embassy did not provide any seating for consular clientele. On nonimmigrant visa interview days, the applicants would stand in the stairwell waiting their turn. The current consular section chief had seating for nine people installed, but no more space is available for additional seating. He also had a privacy booth built at the interview window, because some of the seats are directly behind the window and consular customers could hear clearly the interviews of other applicants. The OIG team observed that some visa applicants were still forced to stand in the stairwells because of insufficient seating.

## **Change Designated Post for Immigrant Visa Applicants**

Immigrant visa applicants from Mauritius and Seychelles, who must apply for their visas at Embassy Nairobi, complain about the expense and inconvenience of waiting 3 weeks in Nairobi to receive their visas. Embassy Port Louis processed immigrant visa applications until 1995, when the Department designated Embassy Nairobi as the immigrant visa processing post for Mauritius and Seychelles as an efficiency measure. The Department estimates that, on average, roughly 30 Mauritians and Seychellois apply for immigrant visas each year, although that number ranges between 20 and 40 in any given year. The Bureau of Consular Affairs denied a request from Embassy Port Louis to resume processing of immigrant visa applications. The bureau said that the workload would be insufficient for the consular staff to develop required expertise in fraud detection.

The embassy estimated it had handled approximately 25 complaints from Mauritians, year to date in 2014, about having to apply for immigrant visas in Nairobi, where applicants are required to stay up to 3 weeks before receiving their visas. Consulate General Johannesburg has indicated that it could process Mauritius and Seychelles immigrant visa cases, usually in less

than 1 week, without requiring additional resources. Embassy Port Louis consular staff advised the OIG team that many Mauritians have said they would prefer to apply in Johannesburg.

Guidance in 7 *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (FAH)-1 H-821(a) states under "What Public Service Means" that "Legitimate expectations include professionalism, timeliness, and courtesy." It further defines "timeliness" as "Prompt service provided without needless delay. The applicant should have to wait no longer than absolutely necessary to accomplish the service." After discussions with the OIG team, Embassy Port Louis asked the Department to apply those criteria and change the designated post for immigrant visa applications from Nairobi to Johannesburg.

**Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should approve the request from Embassy Port Louis to change the designated post for processing immigrant visa applications for Mauritius and Seychelles from Embassy Nairobi to Consulate General Johannesburg. (Action: CA)

#### **Consular Agency Seychelles: Unclear Duties and Inadequate Communications Guidance**

The embassy has not clearly defined the duties of the consular agent in Seychelles. In 1996, the United States closed the embassy in Victoria, Seychelles, for budgetary reasons and established a consular agency there to assist American residents and visitors. Though the consular agency has a low workload, with the consular agent working 16 hours per week, the agency serves an important purpose. Given the distance between Mauritius and Seychelles, Embassy Port Louis would have difficulty providing timely services to American citizens in Seychelles. An LE staff member also works in Seychelles as an employee of the political section of the embassy. The consular agent exercises no supervision over her.

Per verbal instructions from the Ambassador and the consular section chief in Port Louis, the current consular agent in Seychelles, who was hired in 2013, performs only consular duties. Because the Ambassador's instructions are not written in policy, however, some embassy officers believe room for ambiguity exists. When other embassy officers ask the consular agent occasionally to assist with nonconsular duties because of his knowledge of the local scene, he has to decline. This situation puts the consular agent in a difficult position.

The Consular Agents Guidebook discusses the evolving role of consular agencies, especially given that some have replaced embassies that were closed. The guidebook states that consular agencies have been called on to perform new tasks, such as assisting with official visitors and commercial work. This guidance allows embassies to use consular agents for nonconsular work but does not mandate it.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of African Affairs, should clarify in writing the duties of the consular agent in Seychelles. (Action: Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with CA and AF)

During the inspection, the OIG team discovered that guidance from the Bureau of Consular Affairs on communications equipment for consular agencies is inadequate. The consular agent's BlackBerry device broke, and the embassy determined that it could not be fixed. This device was the consular agent's only means of accessing OpenNet. Without such access, he could not transmit or receive personally identifiable information securely. Guidance in 7 FAM 1300 Appendix I (a) states: "All Federal employees and contractors with access to passport and U.S. citizen consular records are reminded of the requirement for safeguarding the privacy of U.S. citizens and their records." This equipment failure put the consular agent in the position of not being able to carry out his duties while remaining in compliance with the above requirement.

Because of limited service providers in Seychelles, a new BlackBerry device for the consular agent was going to require special configuration and would take weeks to arrive. In the meantime, the embassy was attempting to identify a backup device to send to the consular agent. This situation highlighted a vulnerability that the Department has not addressed. The guidance from the Bureau of Consular Affairs on the consular agency program simply states that the bureau will fund communications devices for agencies. The guidance does not address the importance of such devices in protecting personally identifiable information or the need for backup devices to avoid lapses in secure communications.

**Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should issue guidance that is incorporated into the intranet site on consular agents that advises supervisory consular officers to have a backup communications system in place so that consular agents will always have access to OpenNet. (Action: CA)

### **Regional Consular Officer Support**

The regional consular officer in Johannesburg supports the consular section in Port Louis and the consular agency in Seychelles. She visits Port Louis approximately every 6 months and files detailed reports about her review of consular management controls, processes, procedures, and other consular operations. She also briefs the Ambassador on her findings, recommends changes, and follows up on previous recommendations. Embassy officials told the OIG team that the support from the regional consular officer is excellent.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**Table 1: FY 2014 Staffing and Funding, by Agency**

Agency	U.S. Direct-hire Staff	U.S. Locally Employed Staff	Foreign National Staff	*Total Staff	Funding (\$)
<b>DEPARTMENT OF STATE</b>					
Diplomatic and Consular Programs	7	0	7	<b>14</b>	856,800
ICASS	3	1	23	<b>27</b>	1,756,400
Public Diplomacy	1	0	5	<b>6</b>	367,700
Diplomatic Security	1	0	28	<b>29</b>	544,824
Consular	1	0	2	<b>3</b>	126,676
<b>DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE</b>					
Office of Security Cooperation	1	0	1	<b>2</b>	120,000
Naval Criminal Investigative Service	1	0	0	<b>1</b>	151,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>\$3,248,020</b>

\*Staffing totals reflect authorized positions not actual personnel.

**Source:** Embassy Port Louis, Mauritius.

Embassy Port Louis’s overall International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) scored above AF and worldwide averages in the 2014 customer satisfaction survey. The embassy does not have American financial management or human resources officer positions, so the management officer supervises these operations.

### Financial Management

All financial management services scored above worldwide and regional ratings in the ICASS customer satisfaction survey. In early 2014, the embassy transferred processing of all travel vouchers to the post support unit.

#### Seychelles Subcashier Verifications Missing

The embassy was not conducting unannounced quarterly cash verifications of subcashier funds in the Seychelles, as required by 4 FAH-3 H-397.2-3. The subcashier has an advance of [Redacted] and an unannounced verification is required at least quarterly when the advance amount is less than [Redacted]. The management officer, who supervises the Class B cashier, has not designated qualified personnel to verify subcashier levels in order to protect against misuse of U.S. Government funds.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Port Louis should conduct quarterly cash verifications of subcashier funds in Seychelles and submit those verifications to the Class B cashier. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

#### Hardship Differential Survey Overdue

The embassy was delinquent in submitting its updated post hardship differential questionnaire, which was due in May 2013. Department direct-hire employees receive a 5-percent hardship

allowance in Mauritius. The Department of State Standardized Regulations 513.2 require a review of conditions at differential posts at least every 2 years to justify the appropriate level of hardship differential payments.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Port Louis should submit an updated post hardship differential questionnaire for review. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

## Human Resources

ICASS customer satisfaction ratings for both American and LE staff human resources services ranked above worldwide and regional scores.

### Local Compensation Plan Out of Date

The embassy's local compensation plan for LE staff is out of date for leave and supplemental retirement benefits. In addition, the Department's implementation of changes to the transportation allowance in 2013 resulted in freezing total compensation for some employees instead of freezing only transportation allowances as the embassy intended. The local leave plan was set up in 1999 and has not incorporated subsequent changes in Mauritian labor law affecting leave. In addition, supplemental retirement benefits provided through a contract with a vendor have not been revised since 1983. Full surveys of local compensation are required at 4- to 5-year intervals by 3 FAH-2 H-221A. Without an appropriate compensation package, the mission cannot recruit, retain, and motivate highly qualified LE staff members to achieve U.S. Government objectives.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should conduct required surveys and analysis to update the local compensation plan for locally employed staff. (Action: Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with DGHR)

## General Services Operations

The general services office consists of 1 direct-hire general services officer and 10 LE staff members. The section's overall ICASS scores were above regional and worldwide averages. Embassy Pretoria provides formal support to the general services office through the regional financial management officer, and the general services office in Pretoria provides informal support with advice on procurement, property management, and other general services functions.

The general services office implemented the Integrated Logistics Management System Expendable Supplies and Fleet Management Information Systems modules during the inspection. Embassy Port Louis established a missionwide furniture pool in 2013. The warehouse is clean and well organized.

The embassy does not have a motor vehicle safety program, in violation of requirements detailed in 14 FAM 431.2-2 and 15 FAM 957.3. A post-specific motor vehicle safety policy helps post management document and communicate their expectations and requirements for managers and operators of official vehicles, as well as operators using personally owned vehicles for official use. In accordance with 14 FAM 433.3-4(3), the motor vehicle policy authorizes arriving employees to use a U.S. Government-owned vehicle for home-to-office transportation. The embassy motor vehicle policy requires that all incidental drivers receive driver safety training before operating a government-owned vehicle. This safety training includes driving in local traffic with an experienced operator. Traffic moves on the left side of the road in Mauritius. The

safety training reduces the risk of employees who are not acclimated to driving on the left side of the road being involved in accidents

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Port Louis should issue a written motor vehicle safety policy. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

Although the professional drivers undergo regular medical examinations to certify their medical fitness to drive, as required by 14 FAM 432.4 c.(4)(a), LE staff incidental operators of official vehicles have not undergone such exams. Per 14 FAM 432.4 c.(4)(b), incidental operators should complete a medical exam and receive a positive certification at least once every 4 years. Lack of such certification places the safety of these drivers and U.S. Government property at risk.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Port Louis should require that incidental drivers are medically certified to drive government vehicles. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

The purchase card program manager has not conducted annual reviews, as required by 4 FAM 455.3 a.(4). Purchase cards are vulnerable to misuse, and the annual program review is an essential management control.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Port Louis should conduct annual purchase card program reviews. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

The accountable property officer also serves as the property disposal officer. Maintaining separation of duties between these two functions is vital to reducing management control vulnerabilities. Per 14 FAM 411.2-3, the property disposal officer should be an official other than the accountable property officer.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Port Louis should designate an officer other than the accountable property officer to serve as the property disposal officer. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

## Facilities Management

The general services officer serves as the facilities manager. The facilities manager in Embassy Antananarivo provides regional support to Embassy Port Louis. Housing is adequate and meets Department standards. The embassy is taking steps to reduce utility and fuel costs. The general services officer informs residents of their household utility consumption and costs. Window screens are not a normal housing feature landlords provide. The embassy is now installing window screens in residences to lower air conditioning costs and keep out insects. To save fuel and reduce carbon emissions, the general services office added one hybrid and one all-electric vehicle to the fleet in 2014.

## Information Management

The information management unit's ICASS customer survey scores matched worldwide and regional averages. The section received outstanding ratings from the Department's network and systems monitoring software. The embassy's information management staffing level is appropriate to current operational requirements. All recommendations from the 2013 computer security assessment have been resolved. The OIG team identified information technology contingency testing as an area for improvement.

The OIG team counseled unit staff on requirements to mark computer hardware and removable media to its highest level of classification, use a visitor log for the unclassified server room, post

a current access list for the mail room workers; and ,update the telephone emergency contact list. The embassy corrected these deficiencies during the inspection.

### **Information Technology Contingency Plan Noncompliant**

The embassy does not have a current and tested information technology contingency plan for the unclassified network. Contingency plans must be completed and updated annually or when major modifications to the systems occur, according to 12 FAM 622.3-2. The information management unit staff has not updated and tested the unclassified contingency plan, bringing into question its ability to deal with a potential system outage. Testing the contingency plan allows personnel to become familiar with the required emergency operation tasks and ensure that the embassy can restore the network in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Port Louis should update and test its information technology contingency plan annually in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

## **MISSION SUPPORT SERVICES**

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The embassy community rated both mission and personal morale as good in OIG surveys. Department direct-hire employees receive a 30-percent cost-of-living allowance, a 5-percent hardship differential, and two rest and recuperation trips for a standard 3-year assignment. Hardship factors include isolation and lack of family member employment opportunities.

### **Eligible Family Member Employment**

Community liaison office operations received lower marks than both regional and worldwide averages in the 2014 ICASS customer satisfaction survey. In addition to the community liaison coordinator position, the embassy has a new EPAP in the public affairs section. No family members at post are currently employed outside the mission.

### **Schools**

U.S. direct-hire dependents attend four schools offering British, French, or International Baccalaureate curricula. In OIG surveys and interviews, parents expressed satisfaction with the quality of education. Several schools have received soft-target funding for security upgrades. The Department's regional education officer last visited Port Louis in 2011.

### **American Employee Recreation Association's Financial Report Overdue**

The Port Louis Employee Association is delinquent on its semiannual financial report, which was due to the Office of Commissary and Recreation Affairs on August 15, 2014, as required by 6 FAM 557 a. Without timely financial reports, the Department cannot provide effective oversight to protect the association from fraud or mismanagement.

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Port Louis should comply with all reporting requirements for the Port Louis Employee Association. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

### **Health Unit**

According to the Office of Medical Services, medical care in Mauritius is adequate. Port Louis has an ambulance system with paramedics. The embassy health unit is staffed by an LE nurse who works 1 day per week. Embassy Antananarivo and Embassy Pretoria provide regional support.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program Coordinator**

The embassy has one trained Equal Employment Opportunity counselor and one trained LE staff Equal Employment Opportunity liaison. Equal Employment Opportunity information is prominently displayed. The embassy has also designated a Federal Women's Program coordinator.

## **MANAGEMENT CONTROLS**

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The embassy's 2014 annual chief of mission statement of assurance did not identify any management control deficiencies. In addition to internal management control reviews, the embassy reviewed reports and recommendations from regional offices supporting post. Regular visits to Port Louis from the regional human resources officer, the regional financial management specialist, the regional consular officer, and other experts provide additional management control oversight for the small mission.

### **Grants Files Incomplete**

The OIG team examined documentation for 24 public affairs section grants covering awards for FYs 2013 and 2014, with a combined value of more than \$250,000. All the grants files reviewed lacked complete documentation, as required by 4 FAH-3 H-636 and Grants Policy Directive 3, Revision 3. At the time of the inspection, the embassy was retroactively compiling records for the files to address this problem. Some paper-copy FY 2014 grants files were available for inspection; however, only incomplete electronic documentation, not organized by individual grant, was available for FY 2013 and previous years. Deficiencies included the following:

- Grants files did not use the DS-4012, Federal Assistance File Folder or Form, to track required documentation supporting the issuance and management of each award as mandated by Grants Policy Directive 23, Revision 2.
- Grantees did not complete the mandatory application form SF-424 as directed by Grants Policy Directive 3, Revision 3.
- None of the files for the seven grants of more than \$10,000 showed evidence of competition or justification for sole-source awards as required by Grants Policy Directive 5, Revision 4.
- Files were missing grantee performance and financial reports as well as embassy monitoring plans and monitoring reports on grantee performance outlined in Grants Policy Directive 42.
- Files lacked close-out documentation per instructions in Grants Policy Directive 41, Revision 2.

In addition, some awards designated a grants officer representative who was not yet certified by the Office of the Procurement Executive, as required in Grants Policy Directive 16, Revision 3. The grants officer representative subsequently completed the required training and received certification in October 2014. Weak grants management increases the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse. Without complete accurate grants files, grants managers cannot effectively monitor and evaluate projects to assure that funds are spent appropriately to achieve Department objectives. An OIG team member accompanied the grants officer on a grants monitoring visit and later

counseled her to write a visit report for the file and to include the grants officer representative on such visits.

**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Port Louis should follow required procedures for the management of grants. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Port Louis should disseminate a management notice that informs all employees of Department of State policy for use of record and nonrecord emails and requires that employees observe the policy. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Port Louis should use the Department of State's standard filing system in a common-use drive. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Port Louis should submit an FY 2015 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan that cites the mission's Integrated Country Strategy goals. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 4:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should approve the request from Embassy Port Louis to change the designated post for processing immigrant visa applications for Mauritius and Seychelles from Embassy Nairobi to Consulate General Johannesburg. (Action: CA)

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of African Affairs, should clarify in writing the duties of the consular agent in Seychelles. (Action: Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with CA and AF)

**Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should issue guidance that is incorporated into the intranet site on consular agents that advises supervisory consular officers to have a backup communications system in place so that consular agents will always have access to OpenNet. (Action: CA)

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Port Louis should conduct quarterly cash verifications of subcashier funds in Seychelles and submit those verifications to the Class B cashier. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Port Louis should submit an updated post hardship differential questionnaire for review. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should conduct required surveys and analysis to update the local compensation plan for locally employed staff. (Action: Embassy Port Louis, in coordination with DGHR)

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Port Louis should issue a written motor vehicle safety policy. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Port Louis should require that incidental drivers are medically certified to drive government vehicles. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Port Louis should conduct annual purchase card program reviews. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Port Louis should designate an officer other than the accountable property officer to serve as the property disposal officer. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Port Louis should update and test its information technology contingency plan annually in accordance with Department of State regulations. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Port Louis should comply with all reporting requirements for the Port Louis Employee Association. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Port Louis should follow required procedures for the management of grants. (Action: Embassy Port Louis)

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

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<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
Ambassador	Shari Villarosa	11/2012
Deputy Chief of Mission	Susan Falatko	08/2013
<b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>		
Management	Jonathan Earle	10/2013
Consular	Seth Schleicher	08/2013
Political	Maroof Ahmad	08/2013
Economic	Patrick Koucheravy	08/2013
Public Affairs	Kathleen Fox	07/2013
Regional Security	Douglas Carter	09/2013
<b>Other Agencies:</b>		
Department of Defense, Office of Security Cooperation	David Richardson	07/2014
Naval Criminal Investigative Services	Jennifer Cartaino	03/2014

**Source:** Embassy Port Louis, Mauritius.

## APPENDIX A: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

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This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the OIG for the Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

### Purpose and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and BBG. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals are being effectively achieved and U.S. interests are effectively represented.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are used with maximum efficiency and effectiveness and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether operations meet the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls are enforced; whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

Inspections also assess executive leadership in such areas as security, interagency cooperation, morale, Equal Employment Opportunity, and staff development.

### Methodology

The inspection team's primary assessment criteria are regulations contained in the Foreign Affairs Manual and Handbooks, Department instructions, applicable law and generally accepted management principles.

The Office of Inspections solicits reviews of the content of inspection reports from interested offices, individuals, organizations, and activities.

Over the course of the inspection, the team reviewed 82 questionnaires, interviewed 177 employees and officials (112 in Washington DC during the survey phase and 65 in Port Louis during the inspection phase), and wrote more than 81 memoranda of conversation.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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AF	Bureau of African Affairs
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	U.S. Department of State
EPAP	Expanded Professional Associates Program
FAH	<i>Foreign Affairs Handbook</i>
FAM	<i>Foreign Affairs Manual</i>
FAST	First- and second-tour employees
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IRC	Information Resource Center
LE	Locally employed
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Services
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OSC	Office of Security Cooperation

## INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

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Ambassador Peter Prahar (team leader)

Leo Hession (deputy team leader)

David Bocskor

Karen Davidson

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Thomas Furey

Dolores Hylander

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