

and expanding our internal and external networks. In an era when information is disseminated instantaneously worldwide, our ability to engage quickly and effectively is a core competency for our high-performing, motivated professionals. To meet these challenges also requires a nimble and efficient support platform for our professionals representing the United States around the world.

Another focus of the Department is transitioning engagement activities from limited, exclusive, and

direct contacts to an approach based on a culture of openness. This has resulted in expanding the use of digital communications such as social media, video conferencing, and smart phone applications that allow the Department to reach directly to people and to open up our public engagement to all who are interested, not just the limited audience that can be invited to attend events in person. Evidence-based planning and increased operational efficiency and effectiveness are among the factors accounting for the improvements in performance and results.

MAXIMIZING AMERICA'S INVESTMENT THROUGH INNOVATION AND EVALUATION WHILE MEETING MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Evidence and Evaluation

The State Department supports the analysis and use of evidence in policymaking by training staff, creating groups for knowledge sharing, establishing and monitoring evaluation requirements, providing funding opportunities to gather better evidence, and maintaining a central database to manage and share evaluations. The Department continues efforts to strengthen the use of data and evidence to drive better decision making and achieve greater impacts. Ongoing performance monitoring data provide a picture of how the Department's programs are doing, and the Department employs deeper analysis and program evaluation to understand "why" or "what" about them is working.

The Department's evaluation policy was updated in 2015, to require that all bureaus and independent offices, at a minimum, undertake at least one evaluation per fiscal year. The policy further specifies that those bureaus that receive and directly manage program funds must conduct evaluations of their large programs once in their programs' lifetime. Additionally, pilot programs should be evaluated before being replicated. In 2017, the Department began the process of modifying the Foreign Affairs Manual to add design and performance monitoring requirements. These new policies will improve performance management and the evaluability of Department efforts.

The State Department continues to integrate and facilitate program planning, performance management, and decision support processes. Several bureaus have designated or hired a full-time Bureau Evaluation Coordinator responsible for coordinating evaluations of the bureaus' programs as part of a larger strategy to grow research and performance management capacity.

The Department's Evaluation Community of Practice, with over 400 members, meets monthly to discuss policy issues, share best practices, and host presentations. The Department also hosts evaluation events that bring together the Department's evaluation community and serve as a venue where evaluation leaders can share how they have used the results of evaluations to validate current plans or inform future decisions. These events range from large, multi-day sessions to shorter, topical seminars and workshops.



More information on the Department's Evaluation Policy can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/evaluation/2015/236970.htm>