

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 12/4/20

Series: Organization

Part 111: Insular and International Affairs

Chapter 3: Office of International Affairs

Originating Office: Office of International Affairs

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3.1 Office of International Affairs. The Office of International Affairs facilitates, supports, and coordinates international activities of the Department of the Interior (DOI) to advance DOI's mission and support complementary U.S. foreign policy priorities.

3.2 Functions.

A. Initiates, coordinates, and promotes international initiatives that support and enhance DOI's mission, including transboundary programs and scientific/technical exchanges.

B. Promotes and facilitates efforts to marshal DOI's expertise in support of complementary U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities.

C. Serves as principal contact for requests from outside the Department for international cooperation or foreign policy coordination and provides guidance in the development of responses to requests.

D. Coordinates international activities involving more than one Bureau, or which involve policy priorities for DOI or significant U.S. foreign policy interests.

E. Provides substantive support for international meetings, diplomatic interactions, or other engagements with foreign officials for the Office of the Secretary or other high-level officials in DOI; and provides diplomatic and protocol guidance to DOI officials regarding international activities.

F. Identifies international policy issues relevant to DOI, consults with DOI experts, and analyzes and facilitates development of DOI's positions on international policy issues.

G. Represents DOI in interagency forums on international policy issues (such as Department of State or National Security Council interagency work groups and policy committees) and in international diplomatic meetings that are relevant to DOI's mission or that can benefit from DOI's expertise.

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H. Reviews and clears all DOI international agreements with foreign countries and international organizations. Facilitates, as appropriate, consultations with Department of State and other Federal agencies.

I. Coordinates with Bureaus/offices to provide technical assistance to foreign countries to further the DOI's priorities and complementary U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives.

J. Administers agreements with other Federal agencies, international organizations, and foreign governments to provide technical assistance to foreign countries in areas of DOI's expertise, consistent with the Foreign Assistance Act, 22 United States Code Chapter 32, as amended.

K. Establishes international travel clearance criteria for DOI in coordination with the Office of Financial Management and the Department of State. Reviews, approves, and tracks foreign travel for all DOI employees to ensure (1) the number of travelers and number of trips to foreign countries is held to the minimum necessary for the conduct of essential business and to accomplish DOI's objectives; and (2) that the travel is appropriate in light of international political conditions, consistent with U.S. foreign policy and national security.

L. Facilitates coordination and sharing of information among international programs staff across all Bureaus/offices, including chairing regular meetings of lead points of contact.

M. Reviews and approves requests for waiver of the J-1 visa home country presence requirement on behalf of DOI, consistent with relevant authorities and regulations of the Department of State.

N. Processes and provides guidance on official passport and visa transactions for DOI employees in coordination with the Department of State and foreign embassies or consulates.

O. Obtains, renews, stores, disposes of, and tracks usage of official passports for DOI employees, consistent with Department of State protocols and guidelines.

3.3 Organization. The Office is headed by a Director who reports to the Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs. The Director carries out the responsibilities of the office with assistance from support staff and three divisions: Policy, Technical Assistance, and Passport and Visa Operations. An organization chart is attached.

A. Policy Division. The Policy Division identifies and analyzes relevant international policy issues, consults with DOI experts, facilitates the development of DOI positions to advance DOI's mission and complementary U.S. foreign policy objectives, and represents DOI on international issues externally, including with other Federal offices and agencies and foreign governments. The Division plays a lead role for DOI on issues that relate to more than one Bureau or that require specialized expertise that may not exist in most of the Bureaus. The Division also supports DOI officials engaging in international issues and activities and advises on consistency of DOI's international activities with U.S. foreign policy and national security.

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B. Technical Assistance Division. The Technical Assistance Division coordinates with Bureaus/offices to provide technical assistance; obtains and manages funding for, and carries out the development and implementation of technical assistance to advance DOI's mission and complementary U.S. foreign policy goals, consistent with the Foreign Assistance Act, 22 United States Code Chapter 32, as amended. The Division manages DOI's International Technical Assistance Program, which provides technical assistance to foreign countries on matters for which DOI has expertise. The Division identifies and prioritizes requests for assistance, evaluates needed expertise, facilitates and manages the provision of expertise from DOI, integrates and coordinates the engagement of relevant Bureaus/offices to ensure effective responses.

C. Passport and Visa Operations Division. The Division includes certified passport acceptance agents, who process official passport and visa transactions in coordination with the Department of State and foreign embassies. The Division oversees and tracks storage and usage of all official passports for employees served by the office and provides guidance to DOI's employees to ensure adherence to Department of State protocols and requirements for all U.S. government personnel to utilize official passports and visas when conducting official foreign travel.