**Position Description: Public Engagement Assistant (Based in Maldives)**

**Basic Function of Position:**

The Public Engagement Assistant works under the direct supervision of the Assistant Information Officer (or PAO designee) and has no supervisory responsibilities. Is the leading LE Staff advisor for the Mission’s Public Diplomacy (PD) engagement with the Emerging Voices (EV) audience sector: primarily youth, minorities, and others who are able to influence Maldivian attitudes toward the U.S. using new, often digital, communication networks rather than prominent protocol positions or established institutions.

Plans, develops, coordinates, oversees, and evaluates impact of PD activities, projects and initiatives to engage priority audience sectors. Tracks trends in emerging networks through direct engagement, research, polling and statistical analysis and analytics. Designs and recommends PD strategies to promote understanding of and support for of U.S. policy and dispel inaccurate perceptions. Coordinates the Mission’s exchange programs for Established Opinion Leaders (EOL) and EV audiences. Designs, plans, and implements a broad range of activities to maintain contact with alumni of all PD activities and initiatives. Promotes academic study in the U.S. through Education USA advising programs. Coordinates Mission PD outreach through Experiential Learning (EXPL) projects and events -- “learning through experience” activities.

**Major Duties and Responsibilities:**

I. **Strategic Planning, Analysis, Evaluation, and Recommendations (25%)**

Serves as lead observer, strategist, and advisor on Mission engagement with EV audiences. Actively plans Mission engagement with EV audiences at least a year in advance to intensify impact and expand EV sector support for Mission objectives and U.S. foreign policy goals. Contributes EV elements to the annual Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan (PDIP). Leads in designing and recommending engagement and marketing strategies most likely to succeed with key audience segments, enhance Mission engagement, and reach priority communities (e.g., ethnic, linguistic, or ideological groups of rising important to U.S. objectives). Contributes EV components to the Mission Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) and the Public Diplomacy Country Context (PDCC).

Drafts plans, performance goals, benchmarks, and risk assessments for projects and initiatives to engage EV audiences, ensuring strategic and performance goals for all EV activities are consistent and complementary. Evaluates previous Public Diplomacy (PD) activities for impact and cost-effectiveness as the basis for improved planning and enhanced performance. Assesses evaluation of previous activities to fine-tune projections for planned initiatives; identifies project objectives, assessment methods and outcomes.
Analyzes demographic, communication, and influence patterns of the EV sector to identify those audience groups of greatest potential to affect U.S. foreign policy priorities. Collaborates on State Department and post-funded polls, uses poll results, audience analysis and analytics, and gathers his/her own data to interpret the Maldivian context and identify optimal means of obtaining policy goals. Expands Mission understanding of the genesis of emerging networks and changing influence patterns in Maldivian EV sector by developing substantive relationships with Maldivian political, intellectual and cultural leaders and institutions who follow EV sector issues, as the basis for strategic planning, analysis and identifying performance targets.

Serves as advisor on innovation and change management for Mission engagement with the EV sector, identifying new communication platforms and emerging technologies, and optimal partnerships with credible local voices and institutions.

II. Implementation: (35% of time)

Advances U.S. foreign policy objectives by overseeing activities and initiatives designed to reach EV audiences in the virtual, physical, and communication spaces where they are active.

Designs and oversees activities and initiatives tailored to attract EV audience segments of specific interest, to develop networks and communities that support U.S. goals and values on critical issues such as, human rights, good governance, countering extremism, and market-based economies.

Directs Mission’s education outreach, academic advising, experiential learning, and exchange and alumni programs, focusing on hard-to-reach groups important to Mission goals.

Responsible for Department of State (DOS)-funded exchanges; develops and oversees Mission-designed activities, both virtual and in-person, to reach EOL and EV individuals, their institutions and networks in order to gain support for U.S. foreign policy goals.

Manages and markets all aspects of Mission’s inbound and outbound exchange programs, including the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), Fulbright, and youth exchanges. Reviews exchange candidate nominations to assist in determining final candidates.

**Outbound Exchanges:** Engages officers across the Mission to coordinate process of identifying and recruiting Maldivian participants for U.S. exchange programs. Coordinates Mission process to review and select participants; and convenes PD- or Mission-wide selection panels as needed. Monitors development of participants’ U.S. programs; organizes pre-departure logistics, orientations, and briefings for participants. Facilitates visa issuance; arranges for debriefing of participants with nominating office/ officer on return of participant(s).

**Inbound Exchanges:** Identifies program options for inbound participants and coordinates program development. Organizes arrival orientations; maintains smooth communication among local implementers, participants and Mission; solves problems arising from Maldivian implementer deficiencies. Organizes de-briefings for participants and Maldivian implementers at conclusion of exchange programs.

**Alumni Projects and Initiatives:** Implements activities to maintain substantive contact with PD
program alumni, in person and virtually. Organizes activities and forums for alumni and supports their future programs.

Provides accurate and comprehensive information and advice to students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and local and national government officials regarding study abroad opportunities at U.S. higher education institutions. Supports education fairs, seminars, workshops and press availabilities – in-person and virtual – to expand Maldivian awareness of U.S. education opportunities, including regulations and practices for college applications, visas, etc.

III. Resource Management (20% of time)

Recommends allocation of funding, program and human resources for public engagement activities to AIO or PAO designee.

Serves as program adviser and sometimes as the Grants Officer Representative (GOR), with responsibilities as indicated in the Delegation of Authority letter. Monitors progress toward stated performance goals, evaluates effectiveness of resource investment, and ensures that grants and cooperative agreements meet all strategic and regulatory requirements, working with Resource Coordination. For ECA or IIP-initiated grants, acts as liaison between Department-based GOR and local implementing institution(s) as required.

IV. Intra- and Interagency Coordination (10% of time)

Participates in Mission-wide policy and strategy working groups. Advises Mission staff, U.S. and LE, on relation of their work to EV engagement, encouraging development of shared priorities for EV audience engagement, design of effective outreach opportunities, and performance measurement and evaluation.

V. Administrative Functions (10% of time)

In coordination with Resource Coordination team, maintains required office records and files, and ensures that activities and outcomes are recorded in Mission Activity Tracker; ensures that contact records, including alumni, are recorded and up to date in contact databases. Drafts office correspondence in English and Dhivehi, including cables, program proposals, and evaluation reports. Provides informal interpretation and translation from/to English and Dhivehi when required.

Acts as backup to the other Public Diplomacy Section position, assisting with media engagement and analysis and American Center support.

*Job holder will perform other related duties as assigned.*
Qualifications Required for Effective Performance:

A. Education: University degree in Communications, Journalism, International Affairs, Business, Marketing, Political Sciences, or Sociology is required.

B. Prior Work Experience: A minimum of two years of progressively responsible experience in a multilingual, multicultural, or multinational work environment with marketing, public relations, communication, or education duties as a significant part of the job is required. Experience with audience or market analysis or managing social media accounts is required.

C. Language Proficiency: Level 3 Speaking/Reading/Writing English is required. Level 4 Speaking/Reading/Writing Dhivehi is required.

D. Job Knowledge: Detailed knowledge of U.S. foreign policy objectives and American interests in Maldives, especially the EV sector; understanding of U.S. historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces that shape U.S. foreign policy; comprehensive knowledge of the attitudes and preferences of the EV audience sector(s); understanding of regional, ethnic, socio-economic, cultural and linguistic factors and the influence of religious, cultural and educational institutions in shaping EV perceptions of the U.S. are all required. Detailed knowledge of the U.S. higher education system, the college application process, standardized entrance exams and financial aid is required.

Knowledge of marketing techniques, market analysis and analytics, and customer service standards in the U.S. and Maldives; knowledge of trends in experiential learning and audience engagement; understanding of communications in the region and the international information environment as it affects Maldives; detailed knowledge of PD engagement tools, related policies and procedures for each; and knowledge of multiple PD resource streams and regulations are all required. Must have general knowledge of project management, including defining project objectives, outcomes, and assessment methods.

E. Skills and Abilities:

Analytic skills: Must have strong analytic skills and the ability to conceptualize how best to use PD tools to move Maldivian attitudes in positive ways. Must be able to advise senior Mission leaders of opportunities to promote Mission objectives; identify, analyze, predict and assess EV audience attitudes; evaluate the impact of projects and modify approaches for greatest outcomes. Must be able to perceive the emergence of new influencers and adjust operations and programming accordingly.

Communication Interpersonal skills: Must have excellent customer relations, interpersonal cross-
cultural communication skills, and be able to identify and engage key figures critical to shaping local public opinion. Must have excellent written and oral communication skills, including public speaking, interviewing for evaluation purposes, and writing reports and material for publication. Must be able to tailor communications to fit formal and informal situations and different ethnic, religious and linguistic cultures. Must be able to brief on a variety of issues, and interpret informally between English and Dhivehi for public programs.

**Management Skills:** Strong project management skills are required, including the ability to develop and oversee project budgets and to organize, run, and present projects such as workshops, seminars, digital video conferences, panel discussions, lectures and camps. Must be able to negotiate agreements with partner institutions and manage their fulfillment.

**Technical Skills:** Good keyboarding and data entry skills and excellent familiarity with electronic discovery tools, in particular the Internet, and standard information retrieval practices and procedures are required. Thorough, detailed knowledge of various computer software programs, specifically Microsoft Word, Excel, graphic design and photo editing software, and PD-specific software, databases, and reporting tools is required. Detailed knowledge of and ability to use social media and mobile platforms and basic photo and video skills are all required. Must have good numerical skills to be able to develop and manage project and grant budgets; must be able to develop descriptive statistical analysis of target audience composition and measure the impact of public engagement activities and initiatives.