

Management Assistance Report: The Bureau of African Affairs Should Improve Performance Work Statements and Increase Subject Matter Expertise for Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Projects, AUD-MERO-20-29, April 2020

Summary of Review

During an audit of Bureau of African Affairs (AF) monitoring and coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), which is currently underway, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) identified deficiencies in three projects selected for review. Specifically, OIG identified deficiencies with the performance work statements developed for contracts that support the execution of TSCTP projects, which ultimately led OIG to question \$14.6 million expended by the Department of State (Department). The purpose of this Management Assistance Report is to provide early communication of the deficiencies identified and to prompt corrective actions.

The TSCTP is intended to be a whole-of-government initiative created to build counterterrorism capacity, improve regional coordination, and address underlying drivers of radicalization in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa. AF is responsible for formulating, managing, and overseeing the Department's TSCTP activities. Since TSCTP's establishment in 2005, AF has obligated \$481 million on 299 projects in support of this effort. Examples of projects include providing military-related equipment and training, constructing military-use facilities, and enhancing the local government's ability to adjudicate terrorism cases.

OIG identified three TSCTP projects, valued at approximately \$22.8 million, that had performance work statements that did not meet Department standards. The Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH), 14 FAH-2 H-340, states that a performance work statement "describes results in clear, specific, and objective terms with measurable outcomes." However, OIG found that the performance work statements for the three projects reviewed were neither clear nor specific. For example, one project in Cameroon called for the construction of a barrier wall, but the performance work statement did not require the contractor to conduct a site survey prior to submitting a proposal, which in part, led to a section of the wall collapsing as a result of excessive rain. AF then expended an additional \$3.3 million for modifications and repairs. In another example, a contract called for the construction of an aircraft hangar in Niger, but because the performance work statement did not clearly state the dimensions of the apron (an area for aircraft to load or unload passengers or cargo and to refuel, park, or conduct maintenance on aircraft), the apron was built too small. AF expended an additional \$1.1 million, in part, to increase the apron's size. Finally, in the third example, a contract called for training and equipping military forces at Lake Chad in Cameroon, but because the performance work statement did not include correct requirements, the contractor purchased boats that were not appropriate for the project. As a result, the boats were never used for their intended purpose and \$10.2 million was wasted.

The deficiencies OIG found with the performance work statements occurred, in part, because the Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) and program support contractors did not have the technical knowledge needed to develop well-defined performance work statements. Accordingly, OIG made seven recommendations in this report to prompt action

to improve the development of performance work statements for TSTP-supported projects and increase the level of subject matter expertise among personnel responsible for overseeing these projects. AF concurred with all seven recommendations. On the basis of AF's response to a draft of this report, OIG considers the seven recommendations resolved, pending further action. A synopsis of AF's comments regarding the recommendations offered and OIG's reply follow each recommendation in the Results section of this report. AF's response to a draft of this report is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix A.