



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

AUD-MERO-20-42

What OIG Audited

The Department of State (Department) established the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2005 as a mechanism to work with willing countries in West and North Africa to build counterterrorism capacity, improve regional coordination, and address the underlying drivers of radicalization. Intended to be a U.S. whole-of-government initiative, the TSCTP is expected to draw on diplomatic, defense, and development tools and programs to build capacity and assist counterterrorism efforts. The Bureau of African Affairs (AF) within the Department is responsible for formulating, managing, and overseeing TSCTP projects.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine whether AF is monitoring and coordinating TSCTP projects in accordance with Federal and Department requirements. OIG reviewed eight TSCTP awards, consisting of six contracts, one cooperative agreement, and one grant implemented in Africa between FY 2015 and FY 2020. These awards had a combined value of \$209.6 million.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 13 recommendations to AF that are intended to improve the monitoring and coordination of TSCTP projects. AF concurred with all 13 recommendations. On the basis of AF's response to a draft of this report, OIG considers the 13 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 B.

September 2020

OFFICE OF AUDITS

MIDDLE EAST REGION OPERATIONS

*Audit of the Department of State Bureau of African Affairs
Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Sahara
Counterterrorism Partnership Program*

What OIG Found

AF is not monitoring TSCTP contracts in accordance with Federal and Department requirements. Specifically, OIG found that contracting officer's representatives (COR) had approved invoices for four contracts without adequate supporting documentation. In addition, they relied on Department of Defense (DoD) partners to monitor contractor performance; however, these DoD partners were not delegated authority to serve in this role, nor were they trained to be government technical monitors or alternate CORs. Furthermore, none of the six TSCTP contracts reviewed had the required monitoring plans, and five contracts were missing Government quality assurance surveillance plans; both plans are essential oversight tools. Lastly, AF was not ensuring that the assistance provided to the host countries was being used to build counterterrorism capacity. AF officials stated that the lack of clear guidance and limited staff contributed to these weaknesses. Because of these weaknesses, OIG considers the \$201.6 million spent on these six contracts as potential wasteful spending due to mismanagement and inadequate oversight. OIG is specifically questioning almost \$109 million because the invoices lacked supporting documentation. With respect to the grant and cooperative agreement reviewed, both had required monitoring plans included in the files.

OIG also found that AF is not effectively coordinating with stakeholders to execute a whole-of-government initiative. Although TSCTP partner agencies meet to formulate strategic priorities, the execution of activities among the partners in the host countries receiving assistance is insufficient. For example, U.S. Air Force officials said they were not consulted on the plans and construction of a C-130 aircraft hangar on a base that they share with the Nigerian military. Government officials stated that undefined roles and responsibilities, the lack of knowledge management, and staffing shortfalls hinder effective coordination.

The deficiencies identified in this audit have occurred, in part, because AF has not adequately attended to longstanding challenges with the execution of foreign assistance, including the TSCTP. AF officials acknowledged the lack of progress made to address these challenges but stated that the Department has not appropriately prioritized the bureau's needs. Until these deficiencies are addressed, the Department will have limited assurance that TSCTP is achieving its goals of building counterterrorism capacity and addressing the underlying drivers of radicalization in West and North Africa.