

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-518](#), a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Events in northwest Africa—such as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s seizure of territory in Mali in 2012 and Boko Haram’s near-daily attacks in Nigeria—have underscored concerns that the region is vulnerable to the spread of violent extremism. TSCTP, a U.S. multiagency counterterrorism effort begun in 2005, led by State, and primarily coordinated with USAID and DOD, focuses on strengthening partner countries’ counterterrorism capabilities and inhibiting the spread of terrorist ideology through diplomacy, development, and security assistance.

This report examines (1) the status of TSCTP-related funding and U.S. agencies’ ability to track such funding; (2) the extent to which U.S. agency implementation of TSCTP is consistent with key practices of interagency collaboration; and (3) whether U.S. agencies considered partner country needs, absorptive capacities, and other donor efforts when selecting TSCTP activities. GAO reviewed agency documents, met with key officials in Washington, D.C., and conducted fieldwork at the U.S. Africa Command in Germany and in Algeria, Mauritania, and Niger.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID ensure that TSCTP program managers take steps to routinely collect and assess information on the status of funds for TSCTP. GAO also recommends that the Secretary of State take steps to better integrate the Department of Justice into TSCTP coordination efforts. State and USAID both concurred with GAO’s recommendations.

View [GAO-14-518](#). For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

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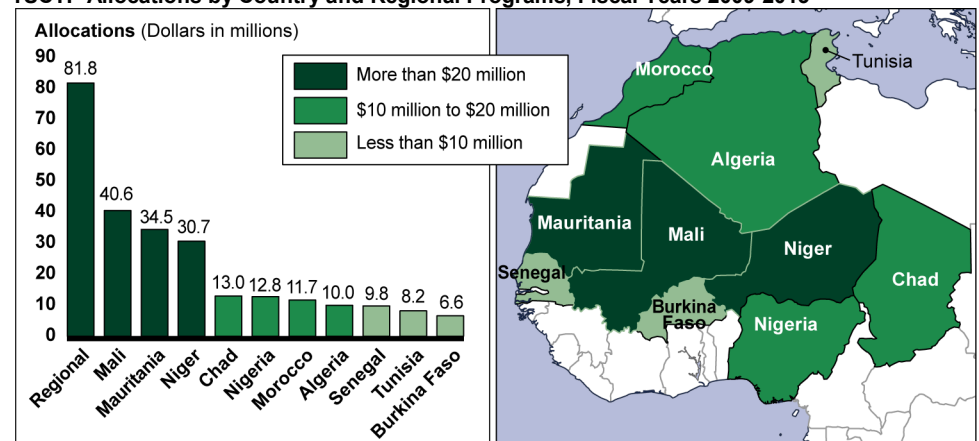
COMBATING TERRORISM

U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management

What GAO Found

Nearly half of the funds allocated for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) since fiscal year 2009 have been disbursed, but TSCTP program managers are unable to readily provide data on the status of these funds. As of late 2013, U.S. agencies reported disbursing nearly \$140 million of the approximately \$288 million allocated for TSCTP between fiscal years 2009 and 2013. Mali, Mauritania, and Niger were the top three recipients of bilateral funding. Although the Department of State’s (State) *Foreign Affairs Manual* and federal standards for internal control note that effective internal management requires financial information for planning, programming, and performance evaluation, TSCTP’s program managers do not routinely collect and assess data on the status of funding for TSCTP, such as the amount of funds unobligated. Consequently, TSCTP’s program managers may lack the day-to-day access to financial information that federal standards for internal control state is required to make operating decisions, monitor performance, and allocate resources.

TSCTP Allocations by Country and Regional Programs, Fiscal Years 2009-2013



Source: GAO analysis of State and USAID data; Map Resources (map). | GAO-14-518

State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of Defense (DOD) actions to implement TSCTP are generally consistent with most but not all of the key practices of interagency collaboration that GAO has identified as important to enhancing collaborative agency efforts. For example, agencies have agreed on their roles and responsibilities, established a joint strategy, and defined a common outcome for TSCTP. However, although agencies have taken steps to leverage their resources and establish compatible procedures to operate across agency boundaries, the Department of Justice has not been fully integrated into TSCTP coordination efforts despite its expertise in building law enforcement capacity—one of TSCTP’s five lines of effort.

U.S. agencies have used various means to consider partner country needs, absorptive capacities, and other donor efforts when selecting TSCTP activities. These include assessment reports, meetings with host governments, and bilateral and multilateral outreach to other donors. For example, the United States participates in the Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral venue for sharing information on the counterterrorism activities of other donor nations.