

STRENGTHEN BORDER MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY IN MALI AND NIGER THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING OF BORDER AUTHORITIES AND ENHANCED DIALOGUE

FINAL INTERNAL EVALUATION

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Project Summary

Executing Organization:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Project Identification and Contract Numbers	CTCBP - P009555/IB.00238
Project Management Site and Relevant Regional Office:	Management Site Mali-CO-Bamako-ML10 Regional Office: RO Dakar
Project Period:	4 March 2021 – 30 November 2022
Geographical Coverage:	Gao (Mali) & Tillabéri (Niger)
Project Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries include local communities in the Tillabéri (Niger) and Gao (Mali) regions, civilian authorities of both Mali and Niger, and Nigerien police force. The project will directly contribute to the establishment of a proactive relationship between communities, civilian authorities (Mali and Niger) and Niger police and enhance the capacities of the relevant border authorities to ensure more effective border management and security. Indirect beneficiaries include travellers and migrants, who would benefit from safer travel conditions in the corridor between Labbezanga (Mali) and Kongo Kiré (Niger).
Project Partner(s):	In Niger, IOM will work closely with Ministries in charge of Security, Social Cohesion, National Police, Foreign Affairs and Defence. In Mali, IOM will coordinate its efforts with MINUSMA (specifically the police component and its program related to community-based early warning system), G5 Sahel, and the international NGO Search for Common Ground.
Total Confirmed Funding:	(CAD\$) 2,749,046
Date of the Evaluation	November 2022
Evaluator	Abderrahim El Moulal, ROMEO, IOM Dakar

ACRONYMS

ACCBP	Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program
ACLED	The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
CPC	Community Prevention Committee
CS	Community Stabilization
CTCBP	Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program
DST	Directorate of the Surveillance of the Territory
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GARDL	Groupe Action Recherche Développement Local
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
HACP	Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix
IBM	Identity & Border Management
IBSM	Integrated Border Stability Mechanism
IOM	International Organization for Migrations
KII	Key-Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
NBD	National Border Directorate
NCCI	Niger Community Cohesion Initiative
NCE	No Cost Extension
PBF	Peace Building Fund
POE	Point of Entry
RGA	Revenue Generating Activities
RO	Regional Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operational Procedures
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
ToC	Theory of Change

ToT	Training of Trainers
VEG	Violent Extremist Groups
WCA	West and Central Africa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project “*Strengthen Border Management and Security in Mali and Niger through Capacity Building of Border Authorities and Enhanced Dialogue with Border Communities*”, implemented by IOM Mali and Niger between March 2021 and November 2022, partially attained its ultimate objective to ensure that “*The borders between Mali and Niger are better secured in the administrative districts of Gao, Ansongo and Menaka in Mali, and in the districts of Banibangou, Ayerou, Bankilare, Ouallam, Téra, Gothèye and Tillabéri in Niger*”.

The internal ex-post evaluation relied on a mostly qualitative approach, surveying the main project beneficiaries and stakeholders on their experience with the project, and describing any changes to its internal and external contexts and how they impacted the attained results.

The main findings and recommendations of the evaluation are:

Relevance (Rating: Very Good – 4/5)

According to the evaluation findings, the project was universally endorsed as being aligned to urgent national priorities, both in Niger and Mali. The project is expected to contribute to national border management policies in the two countries, as well as to relevant national strategies on the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

Thanks to the security perception studies conducted in the targeted areas and the inception workshops organized in Gao and Tillabéri, the project was able to consult the communities, implementing partners and the relevant government agencies on their needs and incorporate them in its implementation approach.

Recommendation 1.

Consider and assess targeting other border zones in Mali and Niger, such as south of Mali or Dosso in Niger, where access and security issues are still less predominant and where the need for the project’s contribution is real.

The project’s design, as articulated in its Logic Model, was coherent and detailed, with three result pathways related to improved dialogue, enhanced community engagement and increased institutional capacities. However, according to some of the evaluation respondents, the project Logframe and implicit theory of Change (ToC) were too complex and ambitious with regards to its resources and duration, leading to difficulties in monitoring its results and in reporting on its achievements.

Recommendation 2.

To the extent possible, consider simplifying the project document template, as well as its Logic Model and Theory of Change in proportion to its scope, duration, budget and the ability to monitor its results. Consider also streamlining and simplifying the narrative and financial reporting templates.

Recommendation 3.

For future projects of the same size and scope, consider reducing the number of the project’s result streams (three in the first phase of the project), and consequently, the number of small-scale activities for more impactful and far-reaching larger activities.

Gender equality and empowerment were well mainstreamed in the project’s design, and a gender sensitive approach was integral to the project’s implementation approach.

Recommendation 4.

Continue positioning gender mainstreaming and women empowerment as a central component of any future similar projects and their implementation and sustainability strategies.

Coherence (Rating: Very Good – 4/5)

The project is aligned with IOM key global and regional frameworks, directly or indirectly contributing to their strategic objectives and priority engagements.

The project contributed to relevant SDGs related to migration governance and management and is aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063 and its aspirations related to peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts. It is also well aligned to the donor’s strategies and priorities for the sub-

region, in particular its anti-crime and counter-terrorism capacity building flagship programs.

Recommendation 5.

Seek enhanced coherence and complementarity with IBM and Community Stabilization interventions of other UN and international organizations operating in the targeted areas.

Recommendation 6.

Develop a multi-year action plan for the IBSM framework, with detailed implementation and monitoring plans.

Effectiveness (Rating: Good – 3/5)

The security perception study conducted in Gao and Ménaka, as well as other studies in Niger allowed the project to capture community needs and expectations and guided the design of certain of its activities. However, the findings and recommendations of such studies need to be better disseminated to implementing partners, in particular border management agencies.

Through to the creation and reinforcement of CPCs in the targeted areas, the project was able to induce a relative improvement in communication between the communities, the security forces and the local authorities. Establishing such community structures proved, however, to be more challenging in Mali compared to Niger, and the relationship between the local border communities and the security forces continue to face important challenges.

Recommendation 7.

Continue logistically and technically supporting CPCs and strengthening their relationships with the local authorities and defense & security forces.

An innovative approach of the project to enhance its sustainability, is the creation/reactivation of communal and departmental committees to coordinate and monitor the communication between the communities and the security forces, as well as to facilitate the implementation of community-based activities. However, the role such committees are supposed to play was not always clear, and a capacity gap has been observed, preventing them from carrying out their mission.

Recommendation 8.

Clarify the mandate and role of the communal and departmental committees and enhance their technical capacities to follow-up and monitor interaction between communities and security forces, as well as the outcomes of the community-based activities.

The political and security conditions in Mali seriously hindered the implementation of cross-border activities, resulting in limited creation of forums and platforms allowing stakeholders from both sides of the border to coordinate their actions and interventions.

Recommendation 9.

Continue supporting cross-border forums and meetings to ensure experience sharing and reinforced cooperation.

While encountering serious security and logistical challenges, various community engagement activities were implemented by the project and its partners in the targeted areas in Mali and Niger. These activities visibly reinforced the level of community engagement and helped build trust between the communities and the security forces. However, their outcomes were not systematically monitored, and their impacts will remain limited in view of the complexity of the security situation in the border zones.

Recommendation 10.

Continue associating, when possible, security forces to community events and activities to improve dialogue and communication.

To enhance their engagement in preserving the social cohesion of their communities, the project supported women groups in Gao and Ménaka to increase their material and technical capacity to provide services and engage with women in their communities. Such support is important in itself considering the role that women can play, and bearer of the sustainability of the project's results in terms of community engagement.

Youth training and support to start an RGA organized in Gao and Ménaka were important in mobilizing a portion of the youth and providing a welcome economic support to the communities. Their impacts on the youth engagement is, however, yet to be thoroughly assessed.

Recommendation 11.

Increase the reach and the scope of RGAs to reduce the risks of recruitment of youth by VEGs and enhance the engagement of youth community groups.

While having been delayed because of the political situation, training of trainers on border management and COVID-19 health measures have been organized in both countries. Their impacts need to be yet assessed. Infrastructure rehabilitation and material equipment provision has been also conducted to help improve the technical capacities of border management agencies.

Recommendation 12.

Design and implement a consistent training plan targeting border officers in the two countries.

The project did not face any serious internal coordination challenges. On the other hand, no consistent and integrated M&E system has been put in place to track its progress and assess its outcome due to limited human and financial resources, as well as the perceived complexity of its results matrix.

Recommendation 13.

Implement a comprehensive and integrated monitoring and accountability system to follow-up on the results of the projects' activities.

Recommendation 14.

Improve coordination mechanisms with other IOM interventions such as NCCI and the German and US-funded IBM projects.

Efficiency (Rating: Good – 3/5)

The project was, overall, well-managed, with security issues and the closure of the borders being the most important encountered implementation challenges. The project was able of appropriately monitor its external immediate context and its risks, adapting its implementation approach to its changes.

The project's financial resources were generally deemed enough to produce its main outputs and contribute to its desired outcomes. Some management positions could, however, have

been better resourced and certain costs – such as security – could have been better anticipated.

Recommendation 15.

Better budget certain management functions such as M&E and liaison with local civil society.

Recommendation 16.

Factor security costs in activity implementation, especially infrastructure rehabilitation and securing community events.

Impact (Rating: Good – 3/5)

It is too early to observe long-term impacts to be attributed to the project intervention, and the evaluation did not possess the resources to conduct a systematic impact assessment. However, some early impacts are reported by the project's beneficiaries and partners such as the improved communication between the communities and the security forces, some improved social and security services or the economic and social benefits due to the supported RGAs.

Recommendation 17.

Provide implementing partners and Communal Monitoring Committees with training and resources to better capture the intervention impacts.

Recommendation 18.

Continue supporting CPCs and the organization of community-based events for the potentiality of their longer-term impacts.

Sustainability (Rating: Good -3/5)

The project is well integrated to its immediate institutional environment, and possesses, in the IBSM, a strong and coherent strategic planning tool to ensure the continuity and the sustainability of its results. It also supported the creation of innovative institutional tools to guide regional and local coordination and ensure its lessons learned are well captured and built on and that its results in terms of community-security force communication do not fade after the end of the intervention.

The increased capacity and engagement of the CPCs can allow the observed benefits and immediate impacts of the project to be

sustainable on an intermediate term, provided they continue to be supported with the right amount of technical and financial resources to remain operational. The various infrastructure rehabilitated as part of the project have also the potential to yield sustainable long-term effects on the ability of the communities to access basic social services.

The direct economic benefits of the project are limited but can be sustained if proper follow-up and monitoring is done with beneficiaries who created their own RGAs. These training and entrepreneurship opportunities should be systematically associated to community-based engagement activities for the economic relief they provide to communities and for their mobilizing potential with women and youth.

Risks to the project's sustainability are closely associated to the security situation and can be of political, financial or social nature. Those need to be further analyzed and accounted for when reflecting on the exit strategy for the project or its potential follow-up.

Recommendation 19.

Develop a hand-over or an exit strategy, detailing the measures to be taken by the partners to ensure the results of the project will be sustainable on the longer-term.

Gender & Human Rights

Gender equality and empowerment were an integral and important component of the project, with innovative approaches to build the capacity of women groups in Mali and engage a larger women proportion in the communities. Vulnerable groups, such youth and IDPs, were also targeted by the project's activities, while ensuring no beneficiary or participant will be at risk of harm due to the project activities.

Lessons Learned

- Community Perception Studies provided valuable information on the community needs and expectations, as well as to scope and target the project's activities.
- The IBSM Mechanism provided a coherent and consistent framework to guide the project's design and

implementation and ensure complementarity with other interventions.

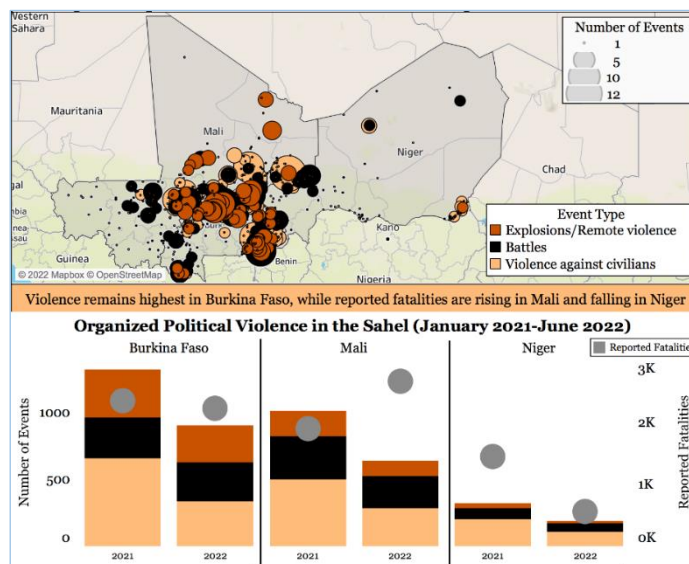
- The targeting and empowerment of women groups can potentially lead to enduring and sustainable results.
- Associating security forces to community activities helps creating trust and initiating dialogue and communication between communities and the local authorities & security forces.
- Cross-border activities, gathering the main actors in the two countries is highly valued for its ability to induce a more effective collaboration and experience-sharing.
- Adaptive and flexible management allowed the project to adapt to its environment and to be successful in achieving most of its outcomes.

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Project Background

In recent years, the humanitarian and security situation has particularly deteriorated in the Sahel due to the increase of terrorist attacks and repeated inter community clashes. 2022 is on track to be the deadliest year for both Burkina Faso and Mali since the Sahel crisis began more than a decade ago. Conflict intensity, as measured by the number of organized political violence events in the first half of 2022, remains highest in Burkina Faso among Sahelian states. Meanwhile, reported fatalities so far in 2022 are highest in Mali, which has been regaining its place as the epicenter of the crisis after being surpassed by Burkina Faso in the count of conflict-related deaths in two of the last three years. Only Niger is faring better in 2022: after experiencing a record year of conflict in 2021, conflict-related deaths are in decline¹. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 6,448 terror attacks were registered in Mali and Niger since 2016, causing 18,738 deaths.

Figure 1. Violent Extremism Violence in the Sahel throughout 2022 (source: ACLED)



This situation threatens parts of the Malian and Nigerien territory and populations which had been relatively spared by the violence so far. The targets of such attacks are indeed slowly shifting towards civilian representatives (head of villages, teachers). Unlike Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have so far managed to maintain a police presence at the borders in the tri-border area of Liptako-Gourma, hence allowing this part of the border to be supported with projects.

Border security and management remains a main priority in the Sahel and, more specifically, along the border between Mali and Niger and the tri-border area. Assessments and studies conducted in different regions of Mali and Niger, including by IOM, have highlighted that communication and coordination between border authorities, security forces and border communities remain weak and unstructured. In the framework of ongoing projects implemented by IOM that are addressing capacity building needs in border management in Mali and Niger, the further enhancement of border management and the engagement of communities have been stressed as a priority by the national authorities.

Funded by the Canadian Government (nearly 2.8 M CAND) and implemented by IOM in Mali and Niger, the project “*Strengthen Border Management and Security in Mali and Niger through Capacity Building of Border Authorities and Enhanced Dialogue with Border Communities*” (thereafter referred to as “The project”) focused on the administrative districts of Gao, Ansongo and Menaka (Mali), and Banibangou, Ayerou, Bankilare, Ouallam, Téra, Gothèye and Tillabéri (Niger). This cross-border zone at the heart of Liptako-Gourma is affected by a number of security, political, social and climatic crises. Populated by nomadic and sedentary communities, namely Tuaregs, Fulani and Songhai/Djerma, the area has historically suffered from inter-community tensions and conflicts due to competition on access to resources. The scale of inter-community conflicts has been exacerbated by repeated droughts and easier access to weapons since the

¹ ACLED. (2022). The Sahel Mid-Year Update: Persistent, Expanding, and Escalating Instability.

Libyan crisis. Violent extremist groups (JNIM, ISGS, AQIM, etc.) fuel conflicts by preying on intercommunity tensions to recruit and obtain logistical and intelligence support. With these groups' area of operation spreading further south to Burkina Faso and Benin, there is a well-documented risk that coastal countries of West Africa will be targeted by terrorist activities.

The project was implemented between March 2021 and the end of November 2022 in the above targeted border districts in Mali and Niger. The ultimate objective of the project is to ensure that ***“The borders between Mali and Niger are better secured in the administrative districts of Gao, Ansango and Menaka in Mali, and in the districts of Banibangou, Ayerou, Bankilare, Ouallam, Téra, Gothèye and Tillabéri in Niger”***. To attain this ultimate outcome, the project focused its interventions and activities to contribute to the following Intermediate Outcomes:

1. Increased capacities for communities, law enforcement forces and local authorities to dialogue and exchange through platforms;
2. Increased engagement of community members, civil society, particularly the women's group, in improving border security and preventing radicalization in border areas of Mali and Niger; and
3. Increased border management capacities of the authorities and law enforcement forces along the borders or in neighboring areas between Niger and Mali.

The project's detailed Logic Model, including its immediate outcomes, its expected outputs and its planned activities can be consulted in Annex 4.

The main beneficiary groups of the project are the local communities in the targeted border districts in Mali and Niger (including women and youth groups), as well as security and border forces in the two countries both at the national and regional levels.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

This final internal and independent evaluation is commissioned by IOM Mali as part of its contractual engagement with the donor. It is conducted to assess the overall performance of the project, including the extent to which the project's activities and outputs were achieved and if and how they contributed to any observed outcomes and impacts. More specifically, the objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance of the project with regards to the needs and priorities of the regions of Gao and Tillabéri in terms of security, border management, social cohesion and community development;
- Evaluate the project's implementation strategy, including its management and coordination mechanisms and the roles of its various stakeholders;
- Assess the project's effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the quality of its results;
- Identify the project's impacts on the targeted beneficiary populations;
- Document the project's successes and whether and why important intended results were not attained during the implementation period;
- Analyze catalytic factors and the challenges encountered during the project's implementation, and derive best practices, lessons learned and recommendations for future interventions related to border management;
- Evaluate the impact of COVID-19 and the political and diplomatic situation on the project's implementation.

The evaluation findings and recommendations can be used by IOM country offices in Mali and Niger for their planning and programmatic efforts. They can be useful to the donor to assess the alignment of the project with its orientations and priorities, to integrate the evaluation learnings in its programming and to potentially replicate its model and implementation approach in the region and/or globally. The evaluation findings can also be used by the government relevant security and border management agencies in Mali

and Niger to assess the project’s contribution to the countries’ border management and to inform any future programs or initiatives seeking to improve social cohesion in the border regions.

The evaluation covers all project’s outcomes and their related outputs and activities in the regions of Gao & Menaka in Mali and Tillabéri in Niger; as well as the project’s full implementation period from March 2021 to end of November 2022.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) as well as a Gender & Human Rights transversal criterion. These criteria are assessed against the overall objective and the specific results set within the project’s log frame and theory of change. Specific evaluation questions include:

<p>RELEVANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did the project’s objectives respond to national priorities and the expectations of beneficiary communities in terms of security, social cohesion and peace consolidation? - To what extent has the project adapted to the evolution of its environment, in particular on the political and security levels, and what risk mitigation strategies have been put in place? - Was the intervention well formulated (results framework, risk matrix, etc.) to meet the needs of the beneficiaries? - Were there any major risks that have not been taken into consideration by the project teams?
<p>COHERENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Internal Coherence</u>: To what extent did the project synergize and interlink between other interventions implemented by IOM Mali and Niger regarding the project’s thematic area, as well align with interventions by other UN agencies? - <u>External Coherence</u>: To what extent did the project synergize and interlink between interventions of the Governments and donor communities regarding the thematic area?
<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent have the project outputs and outcomes been achieved in accordance with the stated plans? - What were the main internal and external factors that positively or negatively influenced the attainment of the project’s expected results? - In which areas did the project achieve the more and less important performances? What were the influencing factors? - To what extent did the project’s stakeholders participate in its implementation? - To what extent has the project adapted or was able to adapt to changing external conditions, such as COVID-19, in order to ensure project outcomes? - To what extent have the project’s coordination and monitoring mechanisms at the different levels been implemented, functional and effective?
<p>EFFICIENCY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were the funds mobilized for the project sufficient to carry out all the activities and achieve the expected results? - To what extent have the mechanisms put in place made it possible to optimize the use of available resources, increase synergies and complementarity in action? - To what extent have the activities been implemented in the most efficient way, including through the selection of implementing partners, compared to possible alternatives tested under other projects?

	<p>To what extent did the Monitoring & Evaluation systems used to ensure efficient management of the project?</p>
IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which positive/negative and intended/unintended effects can be attributed to the project? - Did the project take timely measures for mitigating any unplanned negative impacts?
SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was the degree of involvement and ownership of the project by the beneficiaries, in particular the municipalities and government technical services at the different stages of the project (design, implementation and monitoring of activities to ensure their proper continuity)? What were the strategies implemented? - Are there any structural, social, political or security risks that could threaten the sustainability of project results? - To what extent have lessons learned been continuously documented and disseminated to interested parties? - What are the strategies and mechanisms envisaged to ensure the enhancement, replication or extension of the results achieved?
GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent did the project contribute to gender equality, women and youth empowerment and human rights-based approaches? - To what extent has the gender dimension been integrated into the project cycle and more particularly into its formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting stages? - If the target groups suffered unforeseen negative effects, did the project managers take the appropriate measures? - Were the data collected during the project implementation appropriately disaggregated (e.g. by age, disability, displacement, ethnicity, gender, nationality, migration status)?

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Approach

Given the nature of the project and its intended objectives, the evaluation followed a mostly qualitative approach, surveying the main project beneficiaries and stakeholders in the two countries on their experience with the project and its activities, and describing any changes to its internal and external contexts and how they impacted the attained results. The evaluation approach considered a criteria-based approach complemented with a program theory model. On the one hand, the project's performance was assessed against the above-described OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and their related evaluation questions mapped to the proposed data collection methods (see the Evaluation Matrix in Annex 1). The project's overall performance for each criterion was rated, in accordance with IOM guidance on ex-post evaluations, on a scale of one to five (1=Poor, 5=Excellent) based on the evaluation findings and the available evidence. In Annex 2, the Evaluation Scoring Matrix provides a detailed definition of each of the assessment criterion and justifications for the rating.

On the other hand, and in addition to the criteria-based evaluation model suggested, the evaluation was also informed by a program theory approach. The program theory perspective states that every program is built upon explicit or implicit models on how the intervention will cause the desired results. For this, the global model of the project was revised, aiming at establishing the underlying intervention rationales, the causal linkages between all elements in the project toward the production of results. The theoretical model included all relevant aspects of the intervention: assumptions, bottlenecks, main priorities, outputs, dimensions, outcomes and the final impact.

Methodological Strategy

The evaluation used a combination of data collection techniques to obtain a reasonable view and understanding of the project to be able to answer the evaluation questions and provide meaningful recommendations. The use of different and complementary sources of information helped to some extent to fill the gap between the absence of information, the inability to survey a larger sample of beneficiaries and to access the project's implementation sites.

To address the evaluation questions, the study relied on qualitative data, either directly collected by the evaluation consultant or IOM staff in the country offices, or provided by the project management staff:

Table 1. Evaluation Data Collection Tools

PROPOSED METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION			
Methods	Description	Number	Addressee
Desk Review	In-depth review of all documentation related and generated by the project	N/A	N/A
Semi-structured interviews	The evaluators conducted individual interview with selected key-stakeholders	Around 40 interviews were conducted with selected key-stakeholders	IOM staff in the two countries; Government and implementing partners; Community leaders; Women groups, POE Officers, etc.
Focus Group Discussions	To complement KIIs and reach a higher number of key-informants to discuss particular topics.	six (06) FGDs; 68 respondents.	CPC representatives; POE and Police Officers; Women and youth groups.

- **Desk Review** - A detailed analysis of the project documents initially assessed the extent to which the project is aligned with the identified needs and the priorities of its main stakeholders (IOM, the project partners, the donor, etc.), as well as the coherence of the intervention and the synergies created with the various partners to ensure the sustainability of its results. Project documentation included the project document and logical framework, the project budget, the interim financial and

narrative reports, activity reports, documents related to the project's outputs such as partners' reports, study reports and other publications related to the project.

- **Interviews with key-informants** - including with the project management teams in Mali and Niger, representatives of partnering government agencies (National Border Directorate, National and Regional Police, etc.), representatives of implementing partners, as well as the communities. The interviewees were selected in a way to ensure the views and perceptions of all relevant stakeholders are represented, as well as gender balance and representativeness of vulnerable groups (e.g. youth). The community, youth and women respondents were selected based on their availability and the ability to reach them. No systematic sampling was conducted to identify respondents from these particular groups. A total of nearly forty (40) in-depth individual interviews was conducted face-to-face or by phone with the different categories of respondents. A list of the evaluation categories of interviewee can be consulted at Annex 3.
- **Focus-groups discussions with a small sample of direct beneficiaries** – including members of Community Prevention Committees (CPC), as well as women and youth groups. Six FGDs were conducted by IOM country offices M&E staff, two with CPC members in Tera (Niger) and Gao (Mali), two with women groups in Ansongo and Menaka (Mali) and two with youth groups in the same locations in Mali. Sixty-eight respondents participated in the FGDs, including 38 women.

The fieldwork data collection phase of the evaluation was conducted by the internal evaluation expert between October 31st and November 09th during a field mission in Bamako and Niamey. Security restrictions hindered the ability of the principal evaluator to travel to the project implementation sites in Gao and Tillabéri. Interviews with some stakeholders in the implementation areas were, when possible, conducted by the principal evaluator by phone. Field data collection in these regions (especially focus-group discussions) were, however, conducted by IOM staff in the country offices, under the supervision of the principal evaluator.

Data Analysis

Both the collected interview data and the data extracted from the exhaustive document review were uploaded into a qualitative data analysis software (Qualcoder) for coding and content analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed iteratively, following both a deductive and an inductive approach. First, the evaluation data were coded using a preliminary coding book based on the project ToC and the evaluation questions. This initial coding identified in the data the central themes and categories articulated in the project logic model and/or the evaluation questions. The coding scheme was, subsequently, further refined by carefully reviewing the qualitative data and capturing any emerging thematic or trend not initially accounted for by the project theory. Following this content analysis which provided the basis for the evaluation preliminary findings and recommendations, a contribution analysis was conducted to test the validity of the project's theory and the potential causal relationships between the different levels of results.

Norms and standards

The evaluation was conducted following relevant IOM policies and guidance on M&E, IOM Data Protection Principles, as well as UNEG norms and standards. Data collected and any resulting information was not linked to any particular respondent or office and the findings of the evaluation are presented at an aggregated level. The participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary and their explicit consent to participate in the process systematically sought.

Limitations of the Evaluation

The following limitations should be accounted for when interpreting the results and findings of the evaluation and mitigation measures were adopted, when feasible, to alleviate their impact on the quality of the final products of the evaluation:

Table 2. Limitations of the Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies

LIMITATIONS	EXPLANATION	MITIGATING STRATEGY
Inability to access certain implementation sites	The principal evaluator struggled to develop a rich and contextualized perspective of the evaluand due to the inability to conduct onsite data collection. Data collection strategies such as unobtrusive observation, building rapport with stakeholders as well as all sorts of inductive inquiry were not possible.	Remote interviewing (by phone, teleconferencing) constituted only a partial solution to this challenge. It only partly alleviated the access problem and was prone to bias.
Inability to conduct a quantitative survey	Given the evaluation limited budget and accessibility issues to certain of the project's implementation sites, it was not possible to conduct a larger scale quantitative survey with the project's main beneficiaries (community leaders, women groups, beneficiaries of RGA activities, etc.) Such a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data could have reinforced the robustness and validity of the evaluation design.	Larger-scale quantitative surveys were replaced with focus-groups with a smaller sample of beneficiaries (community leaders, youth groups, etc.). To the extent possible, the number of in-depth interviews with respondents of these categories was increased.
Remote interviews	Certain interviews with respondents in restricted areas were conducted by the principal evaluator by phone. This 'non-traditional' remote interviewing mode might cause losses related to absence of non-verbal cues, to technological issues or to challenges in building rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee, hence threatening the quality of the collected data.	Any issues with the quality of the collected data were mitigated by following up with the respondents, when possible, for clarifications and by triangulating the qualitative interview data with other sources of information.
Data collection by IOM staff	Due to accessibility issues, the focus groups discussions were held in some of the implementation areas by IOM staff in Mali and Niger country offices. This made that the principle evaluator was not able to collect data by his own means and that the IOM staff in country might have been, to some extent, involved in the project's implementation and management.	Through Desk review and triangulation with other sources of information, the principal evaluator assessed the information to complement the analysis and check for convergences and/or divergences among them.
Lack of monitoring data	The evaluation was confronted to the scarcity of monitoring and performance data regularly and systematically collected on the project implementation and results, especially at the higher outcome levels. This was mainly due to the limited resources for Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and the absence of an integrated M&E system.	To the extent possible, the evaluation tried to identify and extract outcome data through the review of the project's available documentation (partners' reports, interim reports, etc.). Outcome and impact related questions were factored in the evaluation data collection tools.

LIMITATIONS	EXPLANATION	MITIGATING STRATEGY
Willingness to openly express opinions and reflections	The process sought to establish a relationship of trust with informants. On aspects related to the security situation and the information sharing between communities and security forces, certain respondents (especially community members) were not willing to elaborate for understandable safety and security reasons.	The evaluation was committed to the do-no-harm principle, as well as to the privacy and confidentiality norms. Triangulation of data sources and search of secondary data provided more information on the aspects less articulated by some respondents.
Evaluation biases	Evaluations are, by definition, vulnerable to cognitive and behavioural biases, such as seeing patterns where there are not, or attribution biases where the projects observed outcomes and impacts are linked only to internal factors rather than external ones.	The evaluation tried to the extent possible to be as systematic, transparent and reflexive as possible. Systematic by following a clearly established plan, transparent in the way judgements were generated and based on triangulation, and reflexive in being aware of the bias problem throughout the process.

RELEVANCE

Relevance is the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. **(Rating: Very Good – 4/5)**



Finding 1. According to the evaluation findings, the project was universally endorsed as being aligned to urgent national priorities, both in Niger and Mali. The project is expected to contribute to national border management policies in the two countries, as well as to relevant national strategies on the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

Relevance to national priorities

- 1.1. The project was assessed by all evaluation key-informants as highly relevant to address the existing weaknesses of border management in the targeted areas, to enhance coordination and collaboration between Mali and Niger on various trans-border issues, including the activities of Violent Extremist Groups (VEGs), and to support social cohesion and engagement with the border authorities at community level. More specifically, the project is aligned with the main national frameworks and policies related to border management and peacebuilding in the two countries, recently developed to respond to the still ongoing security and humanitarian crisis in the Sahel region:
 - In Mali, the project is in line with the **2018 National Borders' Policy**² (*Politique Nationale des Frontières*), designed with the support of IOM Mali, and its strategic objectives: #2 (*"Promote transborder cooperation"*), #3 (*"Contribute to the development of a border securitization strategy"*) and #4 (*"Enhance stakeholders' capacities to manage borders"*). The project is also aligned with the **National Strategy on the prevention of violent extremism** (*Stratégie de prévention de l'extrémisme violent et le terrorisme* (PNLEVT)) and its pillars related to border protection and social cohesion.
 - Similarly, the project is aligned with **Niger National Borders' Policy (2019-2035)** and its strategic objectives: #1 (*"Strengthen peace and security in the border areas"*), #4 (*"Enhance transborder cooperation"*) and #6 (*"Enhance the capacities of institutions and actors involved in border management"*). It is also in line with Niger's national peace consolidation strategy as articulated in the **2022-2026 strategic plan of the Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix (HACP)** and its strategic goals related to community resilience, prevention of conflicts and social cohesion.

Response to stakeholders' needs



Finding 2. Thanks to the security perception studies conducted in the targeted areas and the inception workshops organized in Gao and Tillabéri, the project was able to consult the communities, implementing partners and the relevant government agencies on their needs and incorporate them in its implementation approach.

- 1.2. The project was designed by IOM Mali, in consultation with the donor, to respond to requests for support by the national border agencies in the two countries to strengthen cross-border cooperation and improve border management on both sides of the borders. The project's main beneficiaries include the Directorate of the Surveillance of the Territory (DST), 'Gendarmerie Nationale', National Commission of Borders, National Police in Niger, and the Ministry of Security, General Directorate of National Police, National Border Directorate (NBD) in Mali. These national partners and project beneficiaries are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of their respective national borders' policies and action plans, formulating their needs for IOM support in terms of capacity building on integrated border management, infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, as well as community engagement reinforcement and cross-border improved collaboration. For instance, in Mali, the *2018-22 National Borders' Action Plan* listed, amongst its priority actions, *"strengthening technical and organizational capacities of the NBD"* through training and

² As well as with its 2018-2027 Action Plan.

improved information management, and “*promoting trans-border collaboration*” through the creation and implementation of concertation/coordination frameworks with neighboring countries on transborder issues. The project, through its implemented activities, directly contributed to the action plan and the needs of its national actors.

- 1.3. During the planning stage of the project, a Security Perception Survey was conducted late 2021 in the regions of Gao and Menaka³ which, along with other perception studies conducted by IOM in Tillabéri⁴, surveyed communities in the targeted villages on their security perceptions, as well as on their needs and expectations to improve communication with security forces. These expectations can be summarized as follow:

- Ensure the effective presence of defense and security forces at the borders;
- Enhance communication between defense and security forces and local communities;
- Strengthen mechanisms for crisis response and management;
- Address root causes of crises in a context-sensitive manner;
- Strengthen and empower legitimate leaders at community level.

The perception studies have thus enabled the project to target the villages and areas where the needs are the most pressing and which are the most accessible, to identify the security risks and to prioritize the needs of the communities whose response is likely to strengthen social cohesion and relations with the security forces.

- 1.4. The inception workshops organized by the project in Gao, Mali in June 2021 and Tillabéri, Niger in May 2021, were the opportunity to gather the national and local authorities (governor, prefects, mayors, technical services, local defense and security forces, etc.), as well as community traditional leaders to discuss any incurring changes to the project direct context in the targeted regions and the extent to which its planned activities and results are responding to the most urgent needs of the different categories of beneficiaries (communities, national border management authorities, regional and local authorities, etc.).

Relevance of the project model



Finding 3. The project’s design, as articulated in its Logic Model, was coherent and detailed, with three result pathways related to improved dialogue, enhanced community engagement and increased institutional capacities. However, according to some of the evaluation respondents, the project Logframe and implicit theory of Change (ToC) were too complex and ambitious with regards to its resources and duration, leading to difficulties in monitoring its results and in reporting on its achievements.

- 1.5. As designed at its planning phase and indicated in the Logic Model in Annex 4, the project’s model and its implicit ToC were sound and detailed, with one overall development objective and multiple immediate, intermediate and ultimate levels of outcomes. The main development challenge the project is supposed to address is the demonstrated weak border management in Mali and Niger, caused among other by the activities of VEGs across the shared borders, the historically weak presence of the state in border areas and its limited capacity to provide social and security services, as well as the limited cross-border cooperation and coordination. To contribute to the expected ultimate outcome of the project to better secure the borders in the targeted administrative districts in the two countries, the project focused its interventions towards achieving three main results streams: (1) “Increased capacities for communities, law enforcement forces and local authorities to dialogue and exchange through platforms”, (2) “Increased engagement of community members, civil society, particularly the women’s group, in improving border security and preventing radicalization in border areas of Mali and Niger”, and (3) “Increased border management capacities for the authorities and law enforcement forces”. The project’s immediate and intermediate expected outcomes were both aligned with IOM new Integrated Border Stability Mechanism (IBSM)⁵ and the donor’s Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP)/ Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program

³ OIM. (2021). Etude des Perceptions des Communautés Frontalières sur la Sécurité, leurs Relations avec Les autorités de Gestion des Frontières.

⁴ Regular security perceptions studies were conducted by IOM in the Tillabéri region as part of the Flintlock project funded by the US Department of State and implemented by IOM in the region since 2017.

⁵ For more information on the IBSM, see the Coherence, Effectiveness and Sustainability sections.

(CTCBP) Logic Model and its expected outcomes. However, some project's stakeholders formulated a certain level of criticism regarding the high ambitions of a project with a relatively limited budget, operating in a very difficult implementation context, to have a concrete influence on multiple streams of results, leading to a significant number of expected outputs and an even more significant number of associated planned activities.

- 1.6. The project's proposal and Logic Model, and consequently its narrative and financial progress and final reports, were designed following the donor's templates and guidance. This, according to some evaluation respondents, was a source of perceived complexity and led to inefficiencies in terms of monitoring the project's outcomes and reporting on its achievements. Indeed, the project's initial Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) was deemed, according to some of the project's managers, too complex and difficult to implement with the available resources, leading to inability to report on the project's higher-level outcomes⁶.
- 1.7. Underlying assumptions and hypotheses on how the project and its context are supposed to contribute to its expected outcomes were not explicitly outlined in its logic model or its performance measurement framework. Assumptions (whether in the Results Matrix or the ToC) are important to articulate the logical connection and causal pathway between lower- and higher-level results and express the strategic thinking about how change is expected to happen due to the project's intervention and in response to its environment. The underlying assumptions could not, therefore, be tested during the project's implementation or as part of its ex-post evaluation. More generally, it is recommended, at the design stage, to develop an explicit project's Theory of Change (ToC) to map out the logical sequence of the project from activities to results (outputs and different levels of outcomes), showing the different pathways expected to lead to change, including pathways not related to the project direct activities.



Finding 4. Gender empowerment was well mainstreamed in the project's design, and a gender sensitive approach was integral to the project's implementation approach.

- 1.8. Finally, gender equality, in accordance with the donor's strategy and priorities, was a central feature of the project design and gender was mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the project. A gender sensitive approach has been applied to the issues relating to border management, social cohesion and peaceful conflict resolution, and gender equality and empowerment was addressed when identifying key-implementing partners (women groups in Gao and Menaka) and designing the project's activities such as community-based activities, training or awareness-raising on violent extremism and peaceful cohabitation.

⁶ See sub-section "Monitoring & Evaluation" in the "Effectiveness" section below.

COHERENCE

Coherence refers to the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. **(Rating: Very Good – 4/5)**

Internal Coherence



Finding 5. The project is aligned with IOM key global and regional frameworks, directly or indirectly contributing to their strategic objectives and priority engagements.

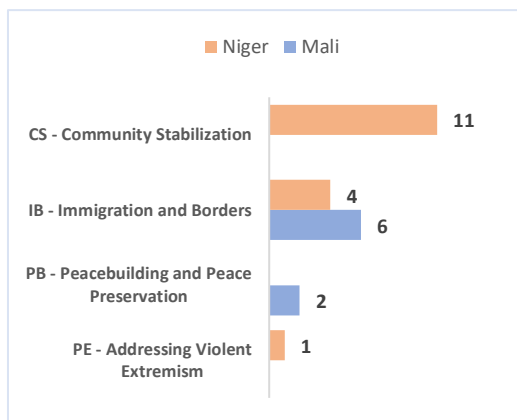
- 2.1 At the global level, the project is aligned with the third principle of IOM Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) (*“Engagement with partners to address migration and related issues”*) and contributes to its second objective (*“Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises”*). It is also in line with IOM Global Compact for Migration (GCM) first (*“Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies”*) and eleventh (*“Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner”*) objectives and contributes to IOM Strategic Results Framework (SRF) second (*“Individuals and communities are empowered and resilient”*) and third objective (*“Migrants and societies benefit from safe, orderly and regular human mobility”*), as well as to its Long-term Outcomes 2A (*“Addressing drivers and structural factors”*) and 3B (*“Migration flows and cross-border mobility are well managed, with measures to ensure well-being, including health, security and safety throughout the mobility continuum”*).
- 2.2 At the regional level, the project is aligned with IOM West and Central Africa (WCA) Regional Strategy (2020-2024) and its results are expected to directly contribute to the strategy's first (*“Pursue robust collective outcomes across the humanitarian development–peace nexus”*) and second (*“Build community resilience and protect and empower migrants, returnees and displaced persons in areas of origin, transit and destination and during displacement”*) strategic priorities. The project is also in alignment with IOM's newly developed and innovative Integrated Border Stability Mechanism (IBSM)⁷. The framework is a coordination mechanism to facilitate coherent and integrated donor support to West African governments in the implementation of their strategies and cooperation frameworks in the field of border governance and integrated border management. The framework focuses on five interlinked and complementing objectives:
1. supporting the development and/or operationalization of legal frameworks and enabling good governance;
 2. improving border management infrastructure;
 3. strengthening border security management capacities and improving cross-border cooperation;
 4. supporting capacity development in migration management and cross-border mobility;
 5. ensuring community engagement in areas directly affected by IBM capacity-building projects.
- 2.3 At the sub-region and country levels, the project has been designed and implemented in alignment and close coordination with the border management project IB.0260⁸ funded by the German Government and implemented during the same period, targeting the same implementation areas in Gao, Menaka and Tillabéri. The two projects, without duplicating their activities, were designed in parallel with the common objective of strengthening border management on both sides (especially at the Labbezanga point of entry). Their complementarity was highlighted when the political events of 2021 in Mali prevented the Canadian-funded project from working directly with the security forces in Mali as project target counterparts. The German-funded project thus focused on supporting the

⁷ See: IOM. (2022). Integrated Border Stability Mechanism (IBSM): Concept Note. Draft.

⁸ The 2.3 M Euro project *“Securing Labbezanga-Kongo Kiré Corridor through improved border management and cross border cooperation”*, implemented between May 2021 and December 2022 in Mali and Niger.

rehabilitation and the equipment of the Labbezanga Point of Entry (POE), while the Canadian-funded project implemented community-based activities in the area and rehabilitated and equipped female associations centers along the border and in Labbezanga. The project has been also coordinating and sharing resources and lessons learnt with other border management, community stabilization and peace-building projects in the two countries, such as the “Niger Community Cohesion Initiative” (NCCI) or “Enhanced IBM” projects in Niger, and “Community Reconciliation” or “Enhancing IBM” projects in Mali. In fact, and in line with the two countries IOM strategies, the project is part of a set of close to 24 projects and initiatives implemented during the last three years or still active in the two countries in the interlinked thematic areas of border management, community stabilization, peacebuilding and violent extremism.

Figure 2. IOM IBM and Community Stabilization Programs in Mali and Niger



External Coherence



Finding 6. The project contributed to relevant SDGs related to migration governance and management and is aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063 and its aspirations related to peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts. It is also well aligned to the donor’s strategies and priorities for the sub-region, in particular its anti-crime and counter-terrorism capacity building flagship programs.

2.4 The project contributed to the achievement of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets:

- **SDG #5.5** - “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”;
- **SDG #8.6** – “By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training”;
- **SDG #9.1** – “Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all”;
- **SDG #10.7** - “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”; and
- **SDG - #16.1** – “Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere”.

2.5 The project is in line with the *African Union Strategy for a Better Integrated Border Governance (2020)* and its objective to support West African states in exploiting the positive potential of borders “as vectors to promote peace, security, and stability, and to improve and accelerate integration through effective governance of borders while facilitating easy movement of people, goods, services and capital among AU Member States”. It is also aligned with the *African Union (AU) Agenda 2063* and its aspirations related to continental integration, peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts and people-driven development, especially by women and youth. The project is as well aligned to *ECOWAS Counter-terrorism Strategy (2013)* and its “Prevent” and “Construct” pillars.

2.6 The project was aligned to Global Affairs Canada Security Capacity-building Programs, and more specifically its two flagship programs, ACCBP and CTCBP. The second program, in particular, provides assistance to foreign states to enable them to prevent and respond to terrorist activity and supports global efforts to fight terrorism and address terrorist threats. The program focuses on:

- Law enforcement, military and intelligence.
- Countering violent extremism and foreign terrorist fighters.
- Countering the financing of terrorism.
- Border, transportation and critical infrastructure security (including cyber infrastructure).and
- Legislative assistance.

The project is therefore expected to contribute to the CTCBP longer-term outcomes, notably to *“Enhanced inclusive and gender-responsive prevention and response to terrorism and transnational organized crime by security institutions”* and to *“Improved inclusive and gender-responsive engagement and resilience of communities and civil society.”*

EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups. (Rating: Good – 3/5)

Enhancing communication between border communities and authorities



Finding 7. The security perception study conducted in Gao and Menaka, as well as other studies in Niger allowed the project to capture community needs and expectations and guided the design of certain of its activities. However, the findings and recommendations of such studies need to be better disseminated to implementing partners, in particular border management agencies.

- 3.1. To contribute to the project's expected intermediate outcome of *"Increased cooperation between border communities, civilian authorities and border management services in Mali and Niger for a more effective management of borders and borders areas in areas of intervention"* the project had to achieve the immediate outcomes related to *"Increased capacities for communities, law enforcement forces and local authorities to dialogue and exchange through platforms"* and *"Increased knowledge for law enforcement of border communities' perceptions on security and border management through a field assessment"*. As for the later immediate outcome, this was expected to be achieved through the conduction of security perception studies in the targeted areas and their dissemination to the relevant border management authorities and stakeholders. As mentioned above in the 'Relevance' section, a perception study was conducted between July and December 2021 as part of the project's inception phase in the regions of Gao and Menaka, in addition to regular perceptions studies in Tillabéri conducted as part of the US-funded Flintlock project in 2019. The findings and recommendations of the perception study in Mali were presented to the various stakeholders during a workshop held in Gao in December 2021 and guided the design and the implementation of certain project activities related to training, community engagement and awareness-raising. The extent of the use of the perception studies in Tillabéri is, however, not clear and no evidence was collected by the evaluation demonstrating that these assessments were used to guide activity design, targeting and/or implementation. Furthermore, while having been completed early in the project's implementation, the 'Security Perception Study in Gao and Menaka' has only been published by IOM Mali in January 2023, and most respondents from border management agencies in the two countries were not aware of the existence of such studies and how they can use them to improve their understanding of the communities' perception and to guide their interventions in the border areas:

"Our agency was not directly involved in the perception study in Gao and Menaka (but we were part of another study conducted by IOM in different regions). The study has not yet been shared with us by IOM." **Border Management Representative from Mali.**

The importance of such community needs and perception assessments for this type of community-focused projects can hardly be overstated in terms of identifying expectations, guiding targeting and monitoring impacts and changes. Their findings need, however, to be more widely and appropriately shared with relevant implementing and government partners, and the latter systematically associated to their design and conduction.



Finding 8. Through to the creation and reinforcement of CPCs in the targeted areas, the project was able to induce a relative improvement in communication between the communities, the security forces and the local authorities. Establishing such community structures proved, however, to be more challenging in Mali compared to Niger, and the relationship between the local border communities and the security forces continue to face important challenges.

- 3.2. Increasing the capacity of communities, security forces and local authorities to exchange and dialogue on security challenges and how to effectively prevent the activities of VEGs and bandit groups was a key immediate outcome to be achieved by the project. To achieve this outcome, the project supported the creation and capacity-building of a network of CPCs in Mali and Niger, with mixed results. In Niger, the project built on IOM proven and recognized experience establishing, training and reinforcing community-based structures in various regions of the country such as Diffa, Agadez, Zinder and Tillabéri, to work hand-

in-hand with the local authorities to improve social cohesion and advocate for peaceful conflict resolution. The project therefore took over 68 CPCs created in 2018 under the US-funded project “*Engage Communities in Border Management*” and supported the creation of 10 new CPCs in Tillabéri. The CPC members, with proper representation of women and youth, were subsequently provided with communication kits and trained on their use and their roles and responsibilities regarding their contribution to prevent and mitigate incidents at the border and in the communities.

- 3.3. In Mali, activities to achieve this outcome were more complicated to implement due to the security situation in the implementation zones and the political events in the country during 2021. CPC creation had to be delayed, resulting in a project three-months No-Cost Extension (NCE), and in 2022, twenty (20) CPCs⁹ (referred to as *Agences Communautaires de Gestion des frontières* (ACGF) in Mali) were created and their 120 members trained on communication with the local authorities and the security forces, and on the prevention of violent extremism activities. The security situation in the Gao and Menaka regions was so volatile during the project implementation that the sessions for creating the CPCs and training their members had to be organized in Gao and not in the villages in order to limit security risks for the CPC members. In sum, unlike Niger, the difficult security situation in the border regions of Mali has seriously hindered the project's ability to create a strong network of community prevention committees, limiting the level of exchange and dialogue with the security forces and the local authorities.
- 3.4. When asked about the relevance of the CPCs and the quality and usefulness of the training received as part of the project, most CPC members interviewed during the evaluation expressed a high level of engagement to work with the security forces and the local and border authorities, and of satisfaction regarding the training and capacity building activities delivered. The most appreciated aspect of the training session according to the respondents was the ability to meet with the security forces and the representatives of the local authorities, providing them with an opportunity to directly express their concerns and needs, and to start building trust with government representatives who historically had a very limited presence in their villages and communities.

“The trainings were very beneficial for us as CPC members. Before, we did not know how to communicate with the security forces, but with the training now we know how to communicate reliable information while seeking to know if it is true or not before passing it on. We were also sensitized on how to live together in a peaceful manner. The training made us understand that in this fight against terrorism, the population also has its share of responsibility; we cannot leave this fight only to the security forces. The population must support them and collaborate with them.” CPC Member, Niger.

- 3.5. With regards to improved communication and trust relationships with the security forces and the local authorities, most community respondents agree on a relative improvement in communication with the local authorities and the security forces, but underline the persistent existence of challenges and obstacles which they sum up as: (1) the lack of recognition of their role and the risks they encounter by their government counterparts; (2) the recurring changes of security and local authorities' personnel; (3) the technological challenges related to the weakness of the cellular network; (4) the absence of clear communication procedures and mechanisms with the security forces; and, above all, (5) the lack of responsiveness of the security forces when they are alerted to the presence of a potential security threat. In fact, a difference can be observed in the evaluation of the improvement in the level of communication with the security forces between respondents who are members of the CPCs in Niger versus Mali, with the former expressing, in general, a higher level of satisfaction. This can quite normally be explained by the size and strength of the CPC network in Niger, as well as by the significantly more sensitive security situation in the targeted regions in Mali.

“To the question on the improvement of communication with the security forces I can answer with yes and no: Yes, because since the creation of the CPC and the provision of means of communication by IOM, communication has become more fluid thanks to

⁹ Supported both by the Canadian and the German funded border management projects. Menaka, originally targeted for the creation of CPC had to be dropped for security reasons.

telephone calls. No, because when information is communicated to the defense and security forces on potential insecurity threats, they do not react instantly. Often, they even reject this information while sometimes they are informed in real time of certain terrorist attacks or the presence of extremist armed groups in our area.” CPC Member, Mali.



Finding 9. An innovative approach of the project to enhance its sustainability, is the creation/reactivation of communal and departmental committees to coordinate and monitor the communication between the communities and the security forces, as well as to facilitate the implementation of community-based activities. However, the role such committees are supposed to play was not always clear, and a capacity gap has been observed, preventing them from carrying out their mission.

- 3.6. In order to coordinate the relationship and the communication between CPCs (and communities in general) and the security forces & the local authorities, the project created or reactivated municipal and communal coordination and monitoring committees. In Niger, 7 municipal monitoring committees were reactivated and their 29 members, including 7 women, were trained on their monitoring responsibilities and provided with necessary tools, including a roadmap and evaluation grid. In Mali, their creation was delayed for a time due to the security and political situation, and a couple of them were finally created early 2022 in Gao and Menaka, coordinating and monitoring community-based activities and revenue generating activities (RGAs). However, while these structures were designed to ensure a certain level of sustainability for the project’s results, their mandate and role was not always very clear, some CPC presidents were not aware of their existence and their capacity needs to be further strengthened for them to be sustainable in the long run. For instance, if the communal committees were responsible for monitoring community-based activities and their implementation, there does not seem that any systematic and consistent data collection is occurring on the outcomes and impacts of such activities. Some CPC members also complained that there were no clear protocols and procedures in place guiding their communication with the security forces and following-up and monitoring their reactions response to communications about security threats. For any potential second phase of the project or for any similar projects in the future, some kind of terms of references should be drafted clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the communal/departmental committees, and Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) developed to facilitate and monitor the communications between the communities and the security forces.



Finding 10. The political and security conditions in Mali seriously hindered the implementation of cross-border activities, resulting in limited creation of forums and platforms allowing stakeholders from both sides of the border to coordinate their actions and interventions.

- 3.7. Final and important outputs supposed to lead to improved communication between authorities and communities were the facilitation of cross-border forums and the organization of cultural/sport events and civilian-military activities for border communities and law enforcement between Niger and Mali. Before the closure of borders between Mali and Niger in January 2022 due to the ECOWAS sanctions, a community forum on peace was organized in December 2021¹⁰, gathering municipal authorities of Ayorou and Outtagouna, as well as community representatives and security forces on both sides of the borders to discuss various common challenges and issues such as security contexts on both sides of the border; issues related to the delayed action taken by the military after an alert is issued; the protection of community committee members; lack of mutual trust between local communities and security forces; how to give a more prominent role to traditional leaders to improve stability and security; the need to create a municipal police; the need to create auto-defense groups, to ensure the security of key informants; and the need to organize regular meetings among community prevention committee members. The political events in Mali and the subsequent closure of borders put the planned cross-border forums and exchanges to a temporary halt, much to the regret of community representatives, local authorities and project managers who saw in the realization of this output a crucial step to better coordinate cross-border management and increase interactions between communities on both sides.

¹⁰ The forum was co-financed by the project “Securing Labbezanga-Kongo Kiré Corridor through improved border management and cross border cooperation (BM-CBC)”, funded by the Government of Germany.

“The project has brought us together with the people of Mali, but it is still not enough. The project should organize more meetings between the different municipalities such as the municipality of Dessa, Anzourou and Ayorou to exchange and further strengthen the links between the different municipalities and communities.” CPC member, Niger

“Thanks to the workshop organized between us and Ouattagouna (the commune of Mali which borders the commune of Ayorou) on social cohesion, during which the police from both communes also participated, we exchanged on our shared fears and we built trust with the defense and security forces Today if I have information, I can inform them without fear, as well as the rest of the population” Municipal Elected Official, Niger.

- 3.8. At the national level, the mediator of the Republic of Niger organized a regional workshop¹¹ on the management of local and community conflicts in the border area of the Liptako-Gourma region gathering relevant actors and stakeholders from Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali. The workshop allowed participants to share their experiences and best practices and to learn about the different programs and initiatives as well as the actors engaged in the prevention and management of conflict. At the end of the workshop, recommendations on how to improve conflict management in the Liptako-Gourma were summarized in the Niamey Declaration. The recommendations included, among other, the creation of cross-border exchange platforms as well as the reinforcement of mutual trust between border communities and defense and security forces through an improved dialogue. It is not clear, however, what concrete follow-up actions were taken to implement these recommendations and monitor their implementation status.

Increasing Community Engagement

- 3.9. The second results pathway the project was supposed to head to at the intermediate term is the *“Increasing of the engagement of community members, civil society, particularly the women’s group, in improving border security and preventing prevention of radicalization in border areas of Mali and Niger”* by increasing the ability of community members, especially women, youth and CSO to build awareness in their communities on safety measures and prevention of radicalization, and improving skills and knowledge of women and youth for potential employment/self-employment in Gao, Ansongo.



Finding 11. While encountering serious security and logistical challenges, various community engagement activities were implemented by the project and its partners in the targeted areas in Mali and Niger. These activities visibly reinforced the level of community engagement and helped build trust between the communities and the security forces. However, their outcomes were not systematically monitored, and their impacts will remain limited in view of the complexity of the security situation in the border zones.

- 3.10. For the first immediate outcome, in Mali, a national NGO (GARDL) was contacted to develop, in close collaboration with the communities and the authorities, awareness-raising messages on social cohesion, peaceful conflict resolution and COVID-19, to organize community awareness-raising sessions in various communes in Gao and Menaka, and to diffuse the messages on local radios. In total, 505 community members (including 125 women) from six communes participated in the community awareness-raising sessions, and 89,939 persons were targeted by the radio messages. Local authorities and security forces participated in the community gatherings and social, cultural and sport events were organized to improve trust between the communities and the law enforcement forces. According to an assessment conducted by the implementing partner¹², the community engagement sessions helped to some extent reducing the level of tensions and conflicts in the communities¹³, improved the level of trust between the communities (particularly the youth) and the security forces, and were generally well appreciated by the communities for the quality of the information shared and the opportunity to meet and discuss with the local authorities and security forces. However, the NGO and interviewed community leaders all agree that such small-scale

¹¹ The workshop was co-financed by the German-funded Niger Community Cohesion Initiative (NCCI) and other international NGOs and organizations.

¹² The full assessment, as well as its consolidated or raw data were not available to the evaluation team.

¹³ The NGO project manager mentioned, as an example, an incident when three young community members were killed by a local armed group in Ansongo, which threatened to trigger an open ethnic conflict. A radio debate organized by the NGO helped reduce the tension and mediate a peaceful solution.

intervention is unlikely to have any significant enduring effects on an ever-worsening security situation and local and regional conflicts with deep and complex roots.

- 3.11. In Niger, although delayed for a long period due to the sensitive security situation in Tillabéri, community engagement activities were organized in four border departments (Tera, Ayorou, Bankilaré, Torodi) in close cooperation with the US-funded NCCI and local implementing partners¹⁴. The project was able to take advantage of IOM's good knowledge of community dynamics acquired through some of its projects implemented in the region such as NCCI, with the novelty of being able to associate the security forces with these activities¹⁵, which had a significant impact on the level of commitment of the communities and the trust between them and the security forces. Community leaders interviewed as part of the evaluation, as well local authority officials, unanimously expressed their satisfaction regarding the relevance and quality of the community engagement and awareness-raising sessions, and their important impacts bringing together the communities and the security forces and establishing a level of mutual trust and an engagement to better communicate.

“The awareness caravans have the potential for strong impact because they allow the authorities to meet the communities. Communities are increasingly transforming from victims to actors for their own safety. The communities, sometimes isolated and even completely abandoned, are very happy to meet the local authorities and the security forces, reinforcing trust between the authorities and the communities and giving the communities the feeling of not being forgotten. Outreach activities (cultural, sports, etc.) also bring communities and security forces closer together, creating bonds of mutual trust.” **Field IOM Officer, Niger**

Community engagement activities in Niger were not, as far as data shared with the evaluation show, systematically monitored to assess their outcomes and their potential long-term impacts, implementing and government partners not possessing the technical or human resources to undertake such task. They were started late during the project implementation, encountered numerous access and security issues and the available budget limited their reach and scope.



Finding 12. To enhance their engagement in preserving the social cohesion of their communities, the project supported women groups in Gao and Ménaka to increase their material and technical capacity to provide services and engage with women in their communities. Such support is important in itself considering the role that women can play, and bearer of the sustainability of the project's results in terms of community engagement.

- 3.12. As mentioned above, one of the project's most innovative approaches to improve community engagement is to partner with local women groups and enhance their logistical and technical capacity to engage in conflict and violent extremism prevention and countering. This is based on a demonstrated assumption that women play an important economic and social role in their communities, and their efforts to keep the community together and prevent their young members from joining VEGs is generally overlooked. The project, therefore, partnered more particularly with Collective of Malian Women (COFEM) and men's Associations and NGOs in Mali (CAFO), and rehabilitated and equipped their community centers in Gao, Menaka, Ansongo and Labbezanga. These centers are important - and often the only - spaces where women can meet safely and engage on social and economic matters affecting their communities, while offering various social, health and economic services to women. Their rehabilitation will increase the material and logistical capacity of women organizations to service their target population, as well as their credibility and legitimacy as important actors in preserving the social cohesion in the region. A training was also supported by the project targeting women groups in Gao and Menaka on human rights, gender-based violence (GBV), advocacy and the prevention of violent extremism, benefiting more than 50 women. No similar support to or partnership with women groups in Niger was designed or implemented by the project.

¹⁴ At the time of the evaluation, no consolidated figures on the community engagement activities in Niger were yet available, and some implementing partners did not yet submit their activity reports.

¹⁵ It is worth noting that as part of some US-funded community engagement and stabilization programs, military forces cannot participate for legal reasons.



Finding 13. Youth training and support to start an RGA organized in Gao and Menaka were important in mobilizing a portion of the youth and providing a welcome economic support to the communities. Their impacts on the youth engagement is, however, yet to be thoroughly assessed.

- 3.13. Finally, to improve the engagement of the community youth and reduce the risks of recruitment by VEGs during these difficult economic times, the project supported the vocational training of 200 youth (including 80 women) in Gao and Menaka municipalities, and provided them with kits to start an RGA, selected following clear criteria, with the direct involvement of the departmental monitoring committee, the regional youth organization and women groups. The pre and post training data demonstrate a high level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries, as well as improved knowledge and skills due to the training. Nonetheless, no consistent follow-up or monitoring was performed with the youth who started an RGA to assess the medium to long-term impacts of the training on their livelihood and their engagement in their communities. In Niger, no such youth engagement or vocational training were planned or conducted as part of the project, and some project managers and community leaders advocated organizing such activities for their importance in supporting youth during difficult economic times and their ability to have larger impacts on the community.

Increasing Border Management Capacities



Finding 14. While having been delayed because of the political situation, training of trainers on border management and COVID-19 health measures have been organized in both countries. Their impacts need to be yet assessed. Infrastructure rehabilitation and material equipment provision has been also conducted to help improve the technical capacities of border management agencies.

- 3.14. The third and last intermediate expected outcome of the project is to *“Increase border management capacities of the authorities and law enforcement forces along the borders or in neighboring areas between Niger and Mali”* by training border management staff and rehabilitating and equipping relevant border and security infrastructures. Joint training for Malian and Nigerien security forces initially planned in order to reinforce their technical capacities and support the harmonization of practices across technical services on both sides of the border could not be held due to border closure. Instead, the project supported in October 2022 a Training of Trainers (ToT) from various border management agencies and regions in Niger on topics such as immigration laws and regulations, border security and counterterrorism measures, use of technology in border management (e.g. biometrics), human rights and refugee protection, international cooperation and coordination with other agencies, among other. A training plan was designed to replicate the training at the departmental level, with a priority for Border Police Schools. Given that the training was conducted at the final stages of the project, no information is yet available on its concrete outcomes or impacts on the beneficiary border management & security agencies. In Mali, two training were conducted by the project with the Border Police Forces, one on health procedures related to COVID-19 and another on document fraud at the borders.
- 3.15. To enhance the capacities of the border management agencies, in Niger the Regional Directorate of the National Police building in Tillabéri, including the Central Bureau for the Repression of the Illegal Trafficking of Drugs, was rehabilitated and the infrastructures of the health control post at the PoE of Yassan, Niger, was supported by installing a water connection. Communication and office equipment as well as equipment for alternative water and electricity supply (generator and borehole) were also provided to the Regional Directorate of the National Police in Tillabéri and the Departmental Directorate of the National Police in Banibangou, as part of capacity reinforcement of border management agencies.
- 3.16. To summarize, while the project had to delay and adjust some of its expected activities in response to the political and security context, an estimated 80% of its expected outputs have been achieved. Its contribution to the enhanced communication between border communities, civilian authorities and border management services, as well as to the increased engagement of community members, civil society, particularly the women’s group in improving border security can be assessed as relatively important given all the challenges it faced; while more effort is needed to reach a sensible contribution to increased border

management capacities of the authorities and law enforcement forces along the borders or in neighboring areas between Niger and Mali.

Coordination & Monitoring



Finding 15. The project did not face any serious internal coordination challenges. On the other hand, no consistent and integrated M&E system has been put in place to track its progress and assess its outcome due to limited human and financial resources, as well as the perceived complexity of its results matrix.

- 3.17. According to the project managers in both countries, the project did not encounter any significant coordination issues, whether across the two countries or with the field offices in each country. The management teams in Mali and Niger shared the same understanding of the implementation strategy and were focused on the implementation of the planned activities, keeping constant mutual communication. No formal coordination group or committee was in place, but this did not hinder the implementation of coherent strategy and a constant discussion of the common challenges. Remote management and coordination of field activities proved, however, more challenging given the security situation and the inaccessibility of certain implementation areas. In this respect, the IOM field agents recruited for their knowledge of the regions of implementation, have demonstrated, according to project managers and partners, a high level of competence, adaptability, and flexibility in the face of recurring changes in project conditions on the ground.
- 3.18. Based on the project's Logic Model, ToC and Performance Measurement Framework, the M&E Specialist in Mali developed an exhaustive, detailed, and integrated M&E Plan to monitor the project's outputs and immediate outcomes, with a detailed M&E timelines and the recommended tools to be used to measure the results' indicators. Unfortunately, the designed integrated M&E system for the project proved to be very complex, costly and difficult to operationalize by the project management in view of the situation in the field and the available resources. Indeed, the initial budget allocated to the monitoring and evaluation of the project achievements was around 20,000 CAD (or 1% of the total budget of the project¹⁶), including funds to be allocated to the final evaluation of the project. An insufficient budget to set up a fairly complex M&E system, having to simultaneously monitor three streams of results with activities that are diverse in nature and scope, and operating in a delicate context with significant security and accessibility issues. The IBM units in both Mali and Niger did not have a dedicated M&E staff, and the project had to rely either on IOM limited field staff or implementing partners to collect basic monitoring data on the implemented activities and their outputs. Virtually no consistent data on the project's immediate outcomes were available at the time of the evaluation, impacting the ability of the interim or final narrative reports to elaborate on actual changes the project helped trigger at the community or institutional levels.

Implementing partners collected some monitoring information on the outputs of some of the activities such as training, community engagement events or workshops; however, this information collection was far from following a systematic approach, and most were focused on counting the number of beneficiaries or narrating the events without a systematic assessment of direct or indirect effects, behavioral or institutional changes or preliminary impacts.

- 3.19. In addition, and according to the project managers in both countries, a more efficient approach to cost and time management could have been applied to the final evaluation of the project. Indeed, the final evaluation could have been combined with the evaluation of the border management project financed by the German government (and potentially other ongoing PBF and CS projects), which operated in practically the same areas, on similar themes and with similar partners (especially border management government agencies). This could have alleviated the burden on IBM managers who have to manage multiple evaluations at the same time with limited resources, as well as on the partners and other stakeholders who had to answer the same questions multiple times, in addition to the benefits in terms of syndicating

¹⁶ As per its Guidance on M&E, IOM recommends allocating 7 to 10% of the project budget to monitoring and evaluation activities.

resources and deriving conclusions and recommendations coherently capturing the effects of the various IOM interventions related to border management and community stabilization in Mali and Niger.

Influencing Factors

3.20. A certain number of internal and contextual positive or negative factors influenced the attainment of the project's outputs and outcomes. These include:

Positive Factors

- ✓ **The community perception studies**, conducted by the project or other IOM complementary projects in the same regions, provided the project and its different stakeholders with important information and recommendations to inform targeting and design activities responding to communities' needs and expectations.
- ✓ **The design of the IBSM**, provided the project, as well as other IOM IBM, PBF or CS interventions, with a clear and coherent strategy towards an integrated border management, based on strategic pillars and orientations guiding the design and implementation of this kind of projects.
- ✓ **The coherence and harmony with other IBM and CS interventions** allowed sharing of costs and resources, building on the achievements of previous or ongoing projects, and a better coordination with the government and implementing partners. The example of CPCs created in Niger under the US-funded project on community stabilization in Tillabéri demonstrates the strategic and operational continuity of the work accomplished by IOM on these thematic areas.
- ✓ **The multi-sectorial approach to the work with women groups in Mali**, allowed the mobilization and the engagement of an important component of the communities, to be reinforced and potentially replicated in Niger.
- ✓ **The selection of competent NGOs** for the implementation of field activities permitted the conduction of the activities in often difficult conditions.
- ✓ **The competence and dedication of IOM field staff**, who worked in difficult, sometimes very risky situations, made it possible to achieve most of the project's outputs and contribute to its outcomes.

Negative Factors

- **The security situation**, coupled to political events in Mali, remained a constant preoccupation all along the project's implementation. It caused important delays or the cancellation of some activities, required sensible adjustments to others, and hindered the project from reaching the full potential of its expected achievements and outcomes. For instance, due to the closure of the borders following the political events in Mali, no consistent cross-border activities or events could be organized or supported by the project.
- **The weak presence of the state in certain target areas** prevented the project from achieving its full results in terms of communication and mutual trust between the communities, the CPCs and the security forces.

EFFICIENCY

Efficiency refers to the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.
(Rating: Good – 3/5)

Operational Efficiency



Finding 16. The project was, overall, well-managed, with security issues and the closure of the borders being the most important encountered implementation challenges. The project was able of appropriately monitor its external immediate context and its risks, adapting its implementation approach to its changes.

- 4.1. Overall, the project was well managed and efficiently delivered its most important outputs despite implementation challenges due to the security and political situation in both countries, with appropriate modifications to project activities and approval of no-cost extensions. The project adopted an '*adaptive management*' approach, closely monitoring its risks and changes to its external direct context, subsequently adapting its implementation approach and revising certain of its activities considering accessibility, security and political challenges. As an illustration, the project, to respond to expressed urgent needs by the communities and the local authorities, delivered emergency support to internally displaced populations (IDP)¹⁷ who fled their villages in Gao and Ménaka because of VEG attacks; an activity not initially planned as part of the project but deemed relevant to alleviate potential tensions in the communities and enhance the credibility of the project and the local authorities. The project management decided also, given the difficulty to organize cross-border forums as planned, to reallocate some of its planned resources to organize more community-based and training activities.
- 4.2. As mentioned above, remote management was an important implementation challenge, with the project managers generally unable to access implementation areas and the communication networks not allowing a smooth and easy communication with the field offices. Field community-based activities required complex and costly security arrangements to ensure community members attending are not targeted by VEG or banditry attacks and needed sometimes to be relocated to other more secure venues such as the training of CPCs in Gao. Implementing partners, especially NGOs who organized community events or awareness-raising caravans, were relevantly selected for their knowledge, experience and familiarity with the local contexts and its dynamics, and the project managers expressed a general high level of satisfaction regarding their work.

Financial Efficiency



Finding 17. The project's financial resources were generally deemed enough to produce its main outputs and contribute to its desired outcomes. Some management positions could, however, have been better resourced and certain costs – such as security – could have been better anticipated.

- 4.3. The final financial report of the project was not yet available at the time of the evaluation to be able to assess how efficiently the planned resources were spent versus the initial workplan and in reaction to the multiple changes in the project's context. According to most evaluation respondents, however, the human and financial resources were generally enough to attain the project's observed outputs and results. Staff and office costs accounted for nearly 39% of the initial budget which is, according to the project managers, is an acceptable ratio for this kind of projects. Nonetheless, some project managers would have appreciated having a dedicated M&E expert to monitor the project progress and collect systematic information on its outcomes, as well as an NGO liaison officer in Mali- with good knowledge of the local civic society dynamics. The budget allocation for the three intermediate outcomes was fairly balanced (around 20% for each outcome), but with some discrepancies between the two countries, especially for outcome 2 and community-based activities. No vocational training or RGAs¹⁸ were organized in Niger despite a high

¹⁷ Support was provided by IOM to close to 75 IDP households in the implantation zones in Gao and Ménaka.

¹⁸ RGAs were, however, organized in some of the targeted communities as part of NCCI or other CS initiatives in Tillabéri.

demand by the communities and the local authorities, and the much higher number of CPCs supported by the project in Tillabéri, Niger made it impossible to organize as much community engagement events as desired.

“The resources available for the community component were insufficient. In two to three months of implementation, the resources for this component have been exhausted, especially because of the large number of committees. Resources were managed efficiently, but more funds could have reached more villages. New categories of beneficiaries, such as the internally displaced, have appeared, and cannot be ignored at the risk of creating tension within the communities.” IOM Field Officer, Niger.

- 4.4. The costs related to security have not always been correctly anticipated in the budget planning, especially those related to the transport of equipment for the rehabilitation of infrastructures or for the security of certain community events. The convoy of this kind of material or the organization of community gatherings or movements always pose the risk of attacks by VEG or other armed gangs, requiring an adequate security device that the security forces are not always able to provide. This, in addition to galloping inflation, have increased the budget for certain activities beyond what was initially envisaged.
- 4.5. Finally, the project was able to benefit from the synergy with other IBM and CS IOM interventions in the targeted areas such as the NCCI or the German-funded IBM project, sharing the costs for carrying out larger activities, building on past or ongoing activities by these projects and using shared human resources. The project also explored complementarities with other development actors supporting border management agencies or the targeted communities.

“Without the cost-sharing with other projects (German, PCCN, PBF, etc.) the activities would have been less important in terms of impact and scale. Complementarity with certain other actors was explored, such as ENABEL which built certain infrastructures that were supported with material by the project.” IOM Manager, Niger.

IMPACT

Impact refers to the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. (Rating: Good – 3/5)



Finding 18. It is too early to observe long-term impacts to be attributed to the project intervention, and the evaluation did not possess the resources to conduct a systematic impact assessment. However, some early impacts are reported by the project's beneficiaries and partners such as the improved communication between the communities and the security forces, some improved social and security services or the economic and social benefits due to the supported RGAs.

- 5.1 It is premature, at the end of such a short-timed intervention operating in a very sensitive environment, to expect any meaningful medium or longer-term enduring impacts that can be attributed to its activities. Furthermore, the evaluation did not have the required resources to conduct a thorough impact assessment of the project. It will, therefore, attempt to sketch any early impacts as reported or perceived by the beneficiaries and the key-stakeholders in the interviews and focus-group discussions.
- 5.2 It is difficult to say whether the project has had any substantial impact on the management of the common border between the two countries. This is a complex issue that finds its origin and its explanation in several equally complex historical, political, sociological and economic elements. Borders between Mali and Niger were closed for a good period of the project, and judging by ACLED data, attacks by VEGs or armed groups in the implementation areas only increased during and after its activities becoming even more lethal¹⁹. The project, in substance did not, and could not expect to have any effect on the security situation in the targeted regions and the ability of VEGs to more across porous borders. More modestly, the project could claim to have had a relative impact on the level of trust and communication between the communities & their peace committees and the security forces²⁰. Communications that do not always translate into the ability of law enforcement to react in the event of a threat alert, but which at least demonstrates the communities' commitment to their own safety and the need to work with local authorities and the security forces. This has been achieved thanks to the creation or reactivation of CPCs in the targeted areas and the training of their members, as well as the various community, cultural, sporting or social activities that have contributed to bringing communities and security forces closer together. Even if the impact of their strengthening cannot yet be immediately measured, the simple creation and capacity-building of these community structures for peace and conflict resolution have significant potential for impact, provided that they continue to be supported and strengthened.

“With the project activities by IOM, I can say that there has been an improvement in communication and our collaboration with the defense and security forces is strengthening. Nevertheless, IOM must continue to sensitize and train the population so that we can achieve our objectives.” CPC Representative, Mali.

“Communication has greatly improved thanks to the training and provision of materials to the community prevention committees. Communication takes place between mayors and chief of villages on security, health and humanitarian issues. Communication has also improved between the committees and the communities in general. Community activities have also bridged the gap between communities and security forces. It also allows the security forces to explain their working and intervention methods and justify the sometimes-perceived slowness in their reaction after an alert or an exchange of information.” Field Project Officer, Niger.

- 5.3 An important approach highlighted throughout this report is the multi-dimensional capacity building of women groups and the activities conducted to induce more women engagement in the social cohesion and

¹⁹ According to ACLED, attacks by VEGs between 2021 and 2022 raised from 354 to 472 with 1,928 fatalities; a 40% increase in one year.

²⁰ No data seem to be systematically collected on the interaction between the CPC, local authorities and the security forces. This is very important data to collect, not only to assess if the project triggered any change in the level of communication and threat alerts transmitted by the communities and the CPCs, but also to follow up on these communications and learn on the movements and tactics of the VEGs.

the prevention of violent extremism in their families and communities. This approach and its potential benefits are best highlighted by a project manager:

“The most interesting approach, in my opinion, within the framework of this project, is the approach of multidimensional support for women's organizations: We have reinforced their capacities in different ways and almost simultaneously with RGAs, the rehabilitation of infrastructure, the provision of and equipment, the training, etc. This, always, in the presence of the local authorities and the security forces. In my opinion, it makes it possible to multiply the impacts. Instead of supporting a large number of associations with each time a slightly different approach, we supported only two associations, but strongly through the different types of interventions.” **Project Manager, Mali.**

5.4 In addition to strengthening the effectiveness of local conflict alert system and the communication between the community representatives and the security forces, the project, through the rehabilitation and construction of community and security infrastructures, has not only brought the communities closer together and allowed for intra-community dialogue, but has also contributed to an improvement in the population's access to certain basic social services. For instance:

- The water connection of the health control post adjacent to Yassan PoE will improve the health and hygiene conditions at the PoE, helping reestablish trust with the government and its different security and border management agencies.
- The rehabilitation and equipment of two women groups (COFEM & CAFO) centers will strengthen the capacity and credibility of these organizations and thus induce a better contribution of the women of the communities to raising awareness on the risks of recruitment by VEGs and to a greater involvement of women in the social cohesion of their communities and in the communication with security forces and local authorities.
- The rehabilitation of the Regional Directorate of the National Police in Tillabéri will have direct and almost immediate impacts on the quality of reception and service for citizens, thus improving relations between the communities and the security forces and enhancing the trust between the two parties.

5.5 Training and equipping young people in the communities in Mali (including women) to start an RGA also has economic, social and security impacts that have yet to be explored more systematically. In communities that are often isolated, with declining economic activity due to the security situation, this support, although limited in scale, remains welcome and provides communities with a form of economic assistance. Their impacts can be observed on households, on the probability of recruitment by VEGs who manipulate the economic situation of young people or on a stronger commitment of young people to the social cohesion of their communities.

“Through the actions of the project, the impact of the project on the beneficiaries is measurable. Indeed, thanks to the actions of IGAs, women and young people are economically independent. Better still, social cohesion is strengthened and the integration of internally displaced persons into groups and associations is a reality.” **Implementing Partner, Mali.**

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability refers to the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. (Rating: Good – 3/5)



Finding 19. The project is well integrated to its immediate institutional environment, and possesses, in the IBSM, a strong and coherent strategic planning tool to ensure the continuity and the sustainability of its results. It also supported the creation of innovative institutional tools to guide regional and local coordination and ensure its lessons learned are well captured and built on and that its results in terms of community-security force communication do not fade after the end of the intervention.

Institutional Sustainability

- 6.1 As illustrated in the ‘Relevance’ and ‘Coherence’ sections, the project is well anchored in its institutional environment, with a good level of alignment and coherence with the national, regional and global frameworks governing border management in the two countries, as well as with IOM own strategic and operational frameworks guiding IOM interventions in Niger and Mali on border management and community stabilization thematic areas. It is useful, for this purpose, to reiterate the importance of IBSM as a strategic planning and programming tool, provided it is complemented with precise and detailed mechanisms for operationalization, implementation and monitoring. Such a strategic mechanism makes it possible to build on the real and potential achievements of the project, and to place it within the framework of a multi-annual or longer-term programming in the two countries and beyond in the rest of the sub-region. The project is also strongly in line with national strategies and policies on border management and the fight against violent extremism in Mali and Niger, so that appropriate monitoring of these frameworks by national authorities supported by donors would ensure that the achievements and impacts of the project are not overlooked and built on through new initiatives.
- 6.2 As also mentioned above, the communal or departmental monitoring and coordination committees set up and supported by the project are an innovative and important institutional mechanism for the sustainability of its results at the regional and local levels, provided that the mandate of these structures is clarified once and for all and that they are provided with the technical and human resources to carry out their tasks. These structures have sometimes suffered from political volatility and changing bureaucratic and political personnel at the regional and local levels, and it is essential that national authorities ensure that these committees continue to be fully operational despite these changes.
- “Local authorities must take ownership and competencies transferred to them. This has already been done, thanks to the municipal monitoring committees, which ensure the effective monitoring of the CPCs. IOM’s strategy is to build the capacity of these monitoring committees and give them the means to assume their role.” **Project Field Officer, Mali.***
- 6.3 Even if they could not be carried out as planned due to political events in Mali and the closing of borders, forums and platforms for cross-border exchange and cooperation can prove to be important institutional tools if they come to be formalized and endowed with the necessary means. This cross-border cooperation was the less performing in terms of project achievements and should be critically strengthened in any follow-up to the project, should the political context allow.

Social Sustainability



Finding 20. The increased capacity and engagement of the CPCs can allow the observed benefits and immediate impacts of the project to be sustainable on an intermediate term, provided they continue to be supported with the right amount of technical and financial resources to remain operational. The various infrastructure rehabilitated as part of the project have also the potential to yield sustainable long-term effects on the ability of the communities to access basic social services.

- 6.4 The project was successful in creating and revitalizing a large number of conflict prevention and peace committees (especially in Tillabéri) to address tensions and social conflicts and communicate with the local authorities and the security forces. Members of these established groups have been well trained on peaceful conflict resolution, on communication with the law enforcement agencies and are capacitated to play their roles effectively. With the skills and experiences acquired during the project implementation, it is expected that these structures and their members will continue to display autonomy and proactivity, as well as engagement for the safety and cohesion of their communities with limited or without project support. The peace committees were inclusive and represented different stakeholders allowing for not only representation and proximity but also ethnic and gender inclusivity in peace building. To be able to respond quickly to tensions, agility and geographical proximity is a must. As illustrated in the impacts section, the action has helped to strengthen trust leading to better exchange of information and social cohesion. In any follow-up to the project, the number of the CPCs should be increased in Gao and Ménaka, and the structures in both countries provided with further support and capacity-building to ensure the reestablished trust with the local authorities and the security forces is not yet again broken.

“Normally, with the training received, I think even if the project stops, we can continue to work with the security forces and the local authorities because it is in the interest of all of us. But before, we ask the project to put at our disposal provision of the necessary means and funds that will allow us to do our job properly. You can see that the social cohesion activities (military-civilian activities) have made it possible to strengthen the links between the population and the FDS.” CPC Member, Niger.

- 6.5 The rehabilitation and equipment of the government and community infrastructures (especially community centers operated and managed by women groups) allows communities and individual citizens, especially their most vulnerable members, to have access to sustainable social services and resources, at least in the medium term. These infrastructures, if properly maintained and managed, reassure communities about the presence of the state and civil society in their areas, provide them with health, identification and security services, in addition to a certain number of other social and economic services. They allowed the intervention to be faithful to IOM integrated approach to border management, placing the border posts, the communities and the relevant agencies in an inseparable social microcosm where the ultimate objective is to gain the adhesion of the community and its commitment to the safety of border posts and their surrounding areas.

Economic Sustainability



Finding 21. The direct economic benefits of the project are limited but can be sustained if proper follow-up and monitoring is done with beneficiaries who created their own RGAs. These training and entrepreneurship opportunities should be systematically associated to community-based engagement activities for the economic relief they provide to communities and for their mobilizing potential with women and youth.

- 6.6 In the perception studies undertaken during the planning phase of the project, target communities also expressed their need for support in order to cope with the economic situation which continued to deteriorate due to insecurity, drought and inflation, in addition to the influx of internally displaced persons who puts additional strain on available resources. Although support for RGAs was exclusive to Mali and limited in its coverage (200 beneficiaries, including 80 women), it could, if followed by adequate support and monitoring, prove to be sustainable and have impacts affecting at least part of the communities. Any evidence that such RGAs helped improve the economic income of the individuals, families and communities should be tracked and assessed, and such activities replicated in any potential next stage of the project, including in targeted areas in Niger.

Risks to Sustainability



Finding 22. Risks to the project's sustainability are closely associated to the security situation and can be of political, financial or social nature. Those need to be further analyzed and accounted for when reflecting on the exit strategy for the project or its potential follow-up.

- 6.7 Despite the institutional sustainability mechanisms and the ownership of the project results by some of its stakeholders and partners, certain political, security, financial or social risks may jeopardize them:
- The steadily deteriorating security situation has both impacted the implementation of the project activities and remains an obvious risk to the sustainability of its results. Some respondents fear that the steady deterioration of security could make northern Mali a completely inaccessible area, and that interventions by IOM and other international donors must shift south where mobility is still relatively possible. This deterioration in security has a direct bearing on all the other risks to the sustainability of the project.
 - The nature of the public service in both countries means that civil servants or elected officials involved in the project can be changed or transferred to other services or regions at any political change such as a new political leadership. With the significant capacity-building and change of practices and behavior induced amongst border forces and other security agencies, change of local staff or leadership would lead to loss of institutional memory in the current areas of intervention of the project. This further supports the view that the various capacity-building activities need to maintain a long-term perspective to provide opportunities for continuous improvement for new and old staff. Part of the initiation of new officials to the border regions could include training on expected behaviors and best practices promoted by the project. While staff turnover in project areas represent a risk, it could also have positive effects whereby those moving to other areas help transfer their knowledge and experience, resulting in improved practices in their new areas of work.
 - Financial risk is always significant with government and implementing partners claiming that the end of the project's financial support could seriously affect their financial capacity to continue to sustain its results. For example, rehabilitated infrastructures need funds to be maintained and prevent their degradation in the medium term. The community prevention committees will need a minimum of funds to ensure the financing of the communication costs and possibly the community activities that they will take the initiative to organize. This in a context where security risks are pushing several international donors to withdraw from these risky regions.
 - The project made good progress in enhancing the role of women and youth in peace building and community social cohesion including through support to economic activities, training and infrastructure rehabilitation. However, by continuing to deteriorate, the security situation brings its share of new social problems such as inter-ethnic tensions, the proliferation of drugs and banditry or the influx of internally displaced people beyond the capacity of communities to accommodate them.

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS



Finding 23. Gender equality and empowerment were an integral and important component of the project, with innovative approaches to build the capacity of women groups in Mali and engage a larger women proportion in the communities. Vulnerable groups, such youth and IDPs, were also targeted by the project's activities, while ensuring no beneficiary or participant will be at risk of harm due to the project activities.

- 7.1 As mentioned in the previous sections, gender equality and empowerment were important features of the project's design, directly translated in its implementation approach by the partnership that the project established with two important women groups in Mali. Although it is difficult to estimate the proportion of the project budget allocated to gender equality, this proportion is close to 40% of the total budget, with more than 90% of the second outcome of the project allocated to activities targeting specifically women or their groups. Gender equality was mainstreamed across the project activities, with proper representation of women in the nearly 80 CPCs (30% of women) created and reinforced by the project, with equal appropriate representation in training organized for government border management agencies, with 40% women receiving vocational training and support to create a revenue generating activities, with significant women participation in community engagement events and with exclusive training targeting women affiliated or working with the women groups in Gao and Ménaka, Mali. Consistent and multi-dimensional support provided to COFEM and CAFO women groups by the project was deemed by the project managers as an innovative and promising approach to be replicated in any future similar interventions. The project performance indicators were systematically disaggregated by gender, as well as activity and performance monitoring data when collected. As such, the project design and its implementation can be rated as **Gen 2** ("**Gender equality is a significant objective**".) on the Gender Marker scale.
- 7.2 Vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, internally displaced persons and other disadvantaged or marginalized groups have benefited from the project interventions. The rehabilitation and equipping of health and community centers will benefit all local and migrant communities, people with physical difficulties, women and other disadvantaged or marginalized groups. Women, as illustrated, benefitted from special attention with targeted training, rehabilitation of structures they use to engage in their communities and exercise economic and social activities and were provided, as well as a group of youth, with kits to start their own revenue generating activities. The project has also taken particular care during its community-based activities not to endanger the safety and lives of participants and beneficiaries, in particular local and traditional leaders who are targets of VEGs and their intimidations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevance

For Global Affairs Canada

- To the extent possible, consider simplifying the project document template, as well as its Logic Model and Theory of Change in proportion to its scope, duration, budget and the ability to monitor its results. Consider also streamlining and simplifying the narrative and financial reporting templates.

For IOM Management:

- For future projects of the same size and scope, consider reducing the number of the project's result streams (three in the first phase of the project), and consequently, the number of small-scale activities for more impactful and far-reaching larger activities.
- Continue positioning gender mainstreaming and women empowerment as a central component of any future similar projects and their implementation and sustainability strategies.
- Consider and assess targeting other border zones in Mali and Niger, such as south of Mali or Dosso in Niger, where access and security issues are still less predominant and where the need for the project's contribution is real.

Coherence

For IOM Management:

- Seek enhanced coherence and complementarity with IBM and Community Stabilization interventions of other UN and international organizations operating in the targeted areas.
- Develop a multi-year action plan for the IBSM framework, with detailed implementation and monitoring plans.

Effectiveness

For IOM Management:

- Continue logistically and technically supporting CPCs and strengthening their relationships with the local authorities and defense & security forces.
- Clarify the mandate and role of the communal and departmental committees and enhance their technical capacities to follow-up and monitor interaction between communities and security forces, as well as the outcomes of the community-based activities.
- Increase the reach and the scope of RGAs to reduce the risks of recruitment of youth by VEGs and enhance the engagement of youth community groups.
- Continue associating, when possible, security forces to community events and activities to improve dialogue and communication.
- Design and implement a consistent training plan targeting border officers in the two countries.
- Continue supporting cross-border forums and meetings to ensure experience sharing and reinforced cooperation.
- Implement a comprehensive and integrated monitoring and accountability system to follow-up on the results of the projects' activities.

- Improve coordination mechanisms with other IOM interventions such as NCCI and the German and US-funded IBM projects.

For National/Regional Authorities:

- Clarify the role of the Communal and Departmental Monitoring Committees and support their technical ability to collect more information on the results of community-based activities.
- Consider implementing a system intended at securing communications between CPCs and security forces and improving the reactivity of defense and security forces.

Efficiency

For IOM:

- Better budget certain management functions such as M&E and liaison with local civil society.
- Factor security costs in activity implementation, especially infrastructure rehabilitation and securing community events.

Impact

For IOM:

- Provide implementing partners and Communal Monitoring Committees with training and resources to better capture the intervention impacts.
- Continue supporting CPCs and the organization of community-based events for the potentiality of their longer-term impacts.

Sustainability

For IOM:

- Develop a hand-over or an exit strategy, detailing the measures to be taken by the partners to ensure the results of the project will be sustainable on the longer-term.

For Global Affairs Canada

- Consider funding a second phase of the project, integrating lessons learned and best practices from the first phase, to build on the results and impacts attained by the first phase.

LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

The project can be generally assessed as having attained most of its outputs and partially contributed to its expected intermediate and ultimate outcomes. Some good practices and lessons learned can be derived from this evaluation to inform future interventions or to be considered by IOM management to sustain the observed results:

- **Community Perception Studies** – Provided valuable information on the community needs and expectations, as well as to scope and target the project’s activities.
- **The IBSM Mechanism** – Provided a coherent and consistent framework to guide the project’s design and implementation and ensure complementarity with other interventions.
- **The targeting and empowerment of women groups** – can potentially lead to enduring and sustainable results.
- **Associating security forces to community activities** – helps creating trust and initiating dialogue and communication between communities and the local authorities & security forces.
- **Gender mainstreaming** – And the capacity-building and empowerment of women groups was an innovative approach, that should be advocated for the potential Phase II of the project and also in other areas and for other projects to be designed in the future.
- **Cross-border activities** – Gathering the main actors in the two countries is highly valued for its ability to induce a more effective collaboration and experience-sharing.
- **Adaptive and flexible management:** While the project faced a changing environment, its management and donor adopted an adaptive and flexible approach that allowed the project to be successful in achieving most of its outcomes and to expect a good probability of good long-term impact and sustainability.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Evaluation Matrix

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Evaluation Question</i>	<i>Data Source</i>
<i>Relevance</i>	Did the project's objectives respond to national priorities and the expectations of beneficiary communities in terms of security, social cohesion and peace consolidation?	Desk Review KII- Donor KII - IOM Staff KII-Government Partners
	To what extent has the project adapted to the evolution of its environment, in particular on the political and security levels, and what risk mitigation strategies have been put in place?	Desk Review KII - IOM Staff KII - Government Partners
	Was the intervention well formulated (results framework, risk matrix, etc.) to meet the needs of the beneficiaries?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
	Were there any major risks that have not been taken into consideration by the project teams?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Government Partners
<i>Coherence</i>	Internal Coherence: To what extent did the project synergize and interlink between other interventions implemented by IOM Mali and Niger regarding the project's thematic area, as well as align with interventions by other UN agencies?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
	External Coherence: To what extent did the project synergize and interlink between interventions of the Governments and donor communities regarding the thematic area?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
<i>Effectiveness</i>	To what extent have the project outputs and outcomes been achieved in accordance with the stated plans?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
	What were the main internal and external factors that positively or negatively influenced the attainment of the project's expected results?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Government Partners KII-Implementing Partners
	In which areas did the project achieve the more and less important	Desk Review

	performances? What were the influencing factors?	KII – IOM Staff KII – Government Partners KII-Implementing Partners
	To what extent did the project's stakeholders participate in its implementation?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Government Partners KII-Implementing Partners
	To what extent has the project adapted or is able to adapt to changing external conditions, such as COVID-19, in order to ensure project outcomes?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Government Partners
	To what extent have the project's coordination and monitoring mechanisms at the different levels been implemented, functional and effective?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
<i>Efficiency</i>	Were the funds mobilized for the project sufficient to carry out all the activities and achieve the expected results?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners
	To what extent have the mechanisms put in place made it possible to optimize the use of available resources, increase synergies and complementarity in action?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners
	To what extent have the activities been implemented in the most efficient way, including through the selection of implementing partners, compared to possible alternatives tested under other projects?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
	To what extent did the Monitoring & Evaluation systems used to ensure efficient management of the project?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
<i>Impact</i>	Which positive/negative and intended/unintended effects can be attributed to the project?	KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners KII – Border officers KII – Community Partners FGD – Community Partners FGD – Border Officers

	Did the project take timely measures for mitigating any unplanned negative impacts?	KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners KII – Border officers FGD – Border Officers
Sustainability	What was the degree of involvement and ownership of the project by the beneficiaries, in particular the municipalities and government technical services at the different stages of the project (design, implementation and monitoring of activities to ensure their proper continuity)? What were the strategies implemented?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners KII – Border officers KII – Community Partners FGD – Community Partners FGD – Border Officers
	Are there any structural, social, political or security risks that could threaten the sustainability of project results?	KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners KII – Government Partners
	To what extent have lessons learned been continuously documented and disseminated to interested parties?	Desk Review KII – IOM Staff
	What are the strategies and mechanisms envisaged to ensure the enhancement, replication or extension of the results achieved?	KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners KII – Government Partners
Gender & Human Rights	To what extent did the project contribute to gender equality, women and youth empowerment and human rights-based approaches?	Desk review KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners
	To what extent has the gender dimension been integrated into the project cycle and more particularly into its formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting stages?	Desk review KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners
	If the target groups suffered unforeseen negative effects, did the project managers take the appropriate measures?	Desk review KII – IOM Staff KII – Implementing Partners
	Were the data collected during the project implementation appropriately disaggregated (e.g. by age, disability, displacement, ethnicity, gender, nationality, migration status)?	Desk review KII – IOM Staff

Annex 2. Evaluation Scoring Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Dimensions measured	Rating (1 to 5)	Justification for rating
<p>RELEVANCE</p> <p>IS THE INTERVENTION DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</p> <p>VALIDITY OF PROJECT DESIGN</p> <p>The validity and logic of the project design as seen in the results matrix (RM).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of alignment with national priorities, strategies, policies and IOM priorities. - Level of evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were involved in project design. - Existence of needs assessment. - Level of integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation. - The validity and logic of the project design as seen in the results matrix (RM). 	4/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was well-aligned with the national priorities in both countries, as well as with IOM regional and global frameworks and strategies. - The targeted communities were surveyed on their needs and expectations, and various government and civil society stakeholders consulted on their understanding of the project's design and projected activities. - Gender was mainstreamed and potential vulnerable groups well targeted by the project's design and implementation. - The Logic Model of the project and its RM were coherent and detailed. However, some stakeholders assessed the project's structure as too complex and requiring more resources to be implemented.
<p>COHERENCE</p> <p>HOW WELL DOES THE INTERVENTION FIT?</p> <p>The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of compatibility and coordination with other interventions of the sector. 	4/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project was well coordinated with other IOM IBM/CS/PBF interventions in the targeted areas. However, further synergy with the actions of other international NGOs could have been sought.
<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>IS THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES?</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which the project objective and outcomes were achieved. - Effectiveness of collaboration and coordination with partners and stakeholders. 	3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project objective and outcomes were partially achieved, in particular because of the security situation and its challenges. - Coordination and collaboration with partners were effective thanks to the project management and the appropriate selection of implementing partners.

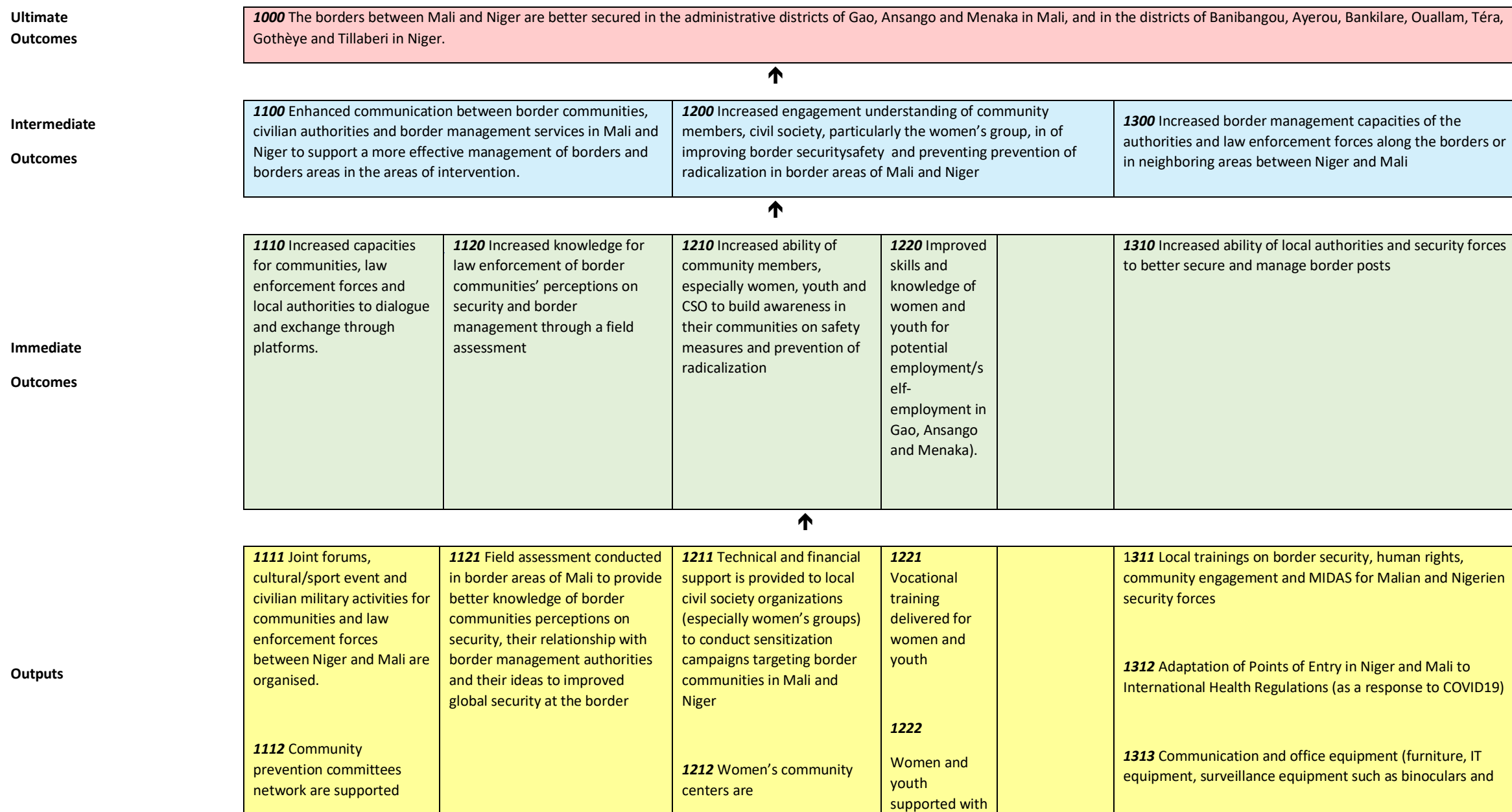
<p>its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of involvement of beneficiaries in project processes. - Resilience/agility to manage and monitor risks, or unexpected internal/external factors. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through community-based activities, CPCs, monitoring committees, training and RGAs, the beneficiaries were involved in the project's implementation. - The project was able to monitor its external risks and to adapt to changes in its immediate and regional environment.
<p>EFFICIENCY</p> <p>HOW WELL ARE RESOURCES BEING USED?</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic use of resources (human, physical and financial). - Timeliness of interventions (ability to stick to project timeline). - Respects Reporting requirements. 	<p>3/5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The human and financial resources of the project were used efficiently. - Some of the project's activities had to be delayed or canceled due to the security situation or political events. Two NCEs were consequently required and granted by the donor. - Reporting was considered too complex and time-consuming; especially in the absence of an operational M&E system.
<p>IMPACT</p> <p>WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE INTERVENTION MAKE?</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher level effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The significance of short- and long-term effects and changes of the project. - The significance of negative effects/changes. 	<p>3/5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some early impacts could be observed. But more time and resources are needed to assess the longer-term impacts of the project. - No significant negative impacts were reported, which could be attributed to the project's intervention.
<p>SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>WILL THE BENEFITS LAST?</p> <p>The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporality/permanence of Outcomes achieved. - Extent to which processes and deliverables put in place by the project continue to deliver benefits beyond its lifecycle. - Extent of integration of project in national/local structures. - Existence of follow up projects/mechanisms and handover. - Evidence of resources within IOM and/or 	<p>3/5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some outcomes can be permanent If appropriate support continue to be provided. - Institutional structures and processes are in place to ensure the project's sustainability; but need to be further reinforced. - No follow-up to the project or exit strategy have yet been developed. Discussions on a second phase are still ongoing.

	partners to continue to deliver project Benefits.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limited resources available to government or implementing partners to sustain the project's results.
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Annex 3. List of the Evaluation Key-Informants

Categories	Number of respondents
Project Staff	
IOM Mali	06 project management staff
IOM Niger	06 project management staff
Government Partners	
Security Border Officers - Mali	03 Officers
Security Border Officers - Niger	03 Officers
Local/Municipal Officials - Mali	03 Officials
Local/Municipal Officials - Niger	04 Officials
Implementing Partners	
Implementing Partners - Mali	04
Implementing Partners - Niger	03
Community Groups	
CPC Members - Mali	14
CPCs Members - Niger	17
Women Group - Mali	18
Youth Group - Mali	20
Total Respondents	103

Annex 4. Project Logic Model



<p>(communication equipment, transport and logistics assistance for community meetings)</p> <p>1113 Coordination/sustainability structures at communal and/or departmental level in Northern Tillabéri and Mali created (if context allow)</p> <p>1114 Cross-border discussion forum between authorities and communities from Mali and Niger are facilitated to identify the needs and possibilities to address them in a joint manner</p> <p>1115 Ad-hoc community based activities and fora are conducted</p>		<p>constructed/rehabilitated in Ansango and Menaka (Mali)</p> <p>1213 Women’s organizations of Labbezanga and Ansango receive trainings on human rights, the prevention of violent extremism and advocacy</p>	<p>income generating activities</p>		<p>metal detectors) provided to the police in Kongo Kiré or other strategic border posts</p> <p>1314 Kongo Kiré border post or other relevant border posts (PoEs) in Tillabéri region, Niger (built by IOM) as well as the Regional Direction of the National Police in Tillabéri are rehabilitated, including adaptation to International Health Regulations</p>
<p>1111 Organize joint forum, cultural/sport event and civilian military activities for border communities and</p>	<p>1121 Conduct a field assessment of border communities perceptions on security, their relationship with border management authorities and</p>	<p>1211 Conduct 2 awareness raising campaigns on social cohesion and collaboration with law enforcement, one on each side of the border</p>	<p>1221 Provide vocational training for women and youth</p>		<p>1311 Provide local trainings on border security, human rights, community engagement and MIDAS for Nigerien security forces</p>

Activities

<p>law enforcement force between Niger and Mali.</p> <p>1112 Support the community prevention committees network (communication equipment, transport and logistics assistance for meetings)</p> <p>1113 Create coordination/sustainability structures at communal and/or departmental level in Northern Tillabéri and Gao</p> <p>1114 Facilitate cross-border discussion forum between authorities and communities from Mali and Niger to identify the needs and possibilities to address them in a joint manner</p> <p>1115 Conduct ad-hoc community based activities and fora to respond to urgent social cohesion issues, based on Action Plans developed by Municipalities</p>	<p>their ideas to improved global security at the border</p> <p>1122 Publish and share the assessment report at national and local level</p>	<p>1212 Rehabilitate/build 2 women’s community centers</p> <p>1213 Provide trainings on human rights, the prevention of violent extremism and advocacy to Women’s organizations of Labbezanga and Ansango</p>	<p>1222</p> <p>Provide starter kits for Women and youth to start/improve their income generating activities</p>	<p>1312 Provide personal protection, hygiene equipment, set up basic installations and training agents for compliance of points of entry with International Health Regulations</p> <p>1313 Provide communication and office equipment (furniture, IT equipment, surveillance equipment such as binoculars and metal detectors) to the police in Kongo Kiré border posts</p> <p>1314 Rehabilitate Kongo Kire or other strategic PoEs in Niger, including adaptation to international health regulations and rehabilitate the Regional direction of the National Police of Tillabéri</p>
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