

BORDER SECURITY IN THE SAHEL
BUILDING A REGIONAL PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE
AND ACTION

MALI'S BORDER SECURITY



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Mali's security agencies and forces are struggling to manage worsening threats along the country's borders. Their ability to secure seven borders is hampered by structural challenges and critical capacity gaps at the operational level. Responsibility for border security is divided among seven distinct security forces reporting to four different ministries. Complicating the lack of centralized authority is the fact that all of Mali's security institutions have a border security mandate and no ministry or security service has full authority. These structural issues shape four critical capacity gaps, detailed in *An Assessment of Mali's Border Security Capacity and Capabilities*, a companion report to this *Skills Development Plan*.

Border Security in the Sahel: Building a Regional Platform for Dialogue and Action in Mali is a UK DFID-funded project being implemented by a consortium comprised of Strategic Capacity Group (SCG), International Alert, and Aktis Strategy. The project is designed to help Mali better manage its borders by increasing societal participation in and oversight of border control. In support of this effort, SCG developed this *Skills Development Plan* and the companion report, *An Assessment of Mali's Border Security Capacity and Capabilities*. Both reports draw on numerous interviews conducted during 2015-2016 with security force personnel, government officials, members of civil society, and international observers.

The objective of this *Skills Development Plan* is to address four critical operational capacity gaps: (1) human and materiel resources; (2) coordination; (3) training; and (4) community engagement. Gaps in personnel and equipment cannot be solved through skills building. The highly siloed structure of Mali's border security system is a structural problem that also impedes operational capacity. However, skills building—properly tailored to Mali's capacity needs—can contribute to larger border management challenges and address critical capacity gaps in coordination, training, and community engagement. This report details those recommendations, which are designed to support Mali's efforts to improve border management and can inform donor activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The skills development recommendations are organized into three categories. The first two categories—Recommendations for Capacity Building of Border Security Forces and Recommendations for Institution Building of the Border Security Sector—are further subdivided into Coordination, Training, and Community Engagement Recommendations. A final category addresses General Recommendations for Capacity Building in Mali.

Recommendations for Capacity Building of Border Security Forces

The first category of recommendations focuses on building the capacity of Mali's border forces—the Army, Gendarmerie, Police, National Guard, Customs, Forest Guards, and the Central Office Against Drugs (CNO).

Coordination

The first set of recommendations aims to improve coordination among Mali's border security forces at the tactical and operational levels. Each of these recommended training and skills development interventions should be designed to meet specific *skills development objectives*, enabling recipients to:

- Understand the operational utility of inter-force coordination;
- Understand information sharing techniques and processes;

- Analyze models of inter-force coordination;
- Assess the utility of inter-force coordination techniques, processes, and models for Mali;
- Adapt international best practices to the Malian context; and
- Apply inter-force coordination techniques, processes, and information sharing models.

Specific recommendations for capacity building include:

1. **Coordination Recommendation 1:** A sequence of training modules on the benefits and best practices for coordinating forces *at the national level and at the regional level*.
 - Module I demonstrates the operational utility of effective coordination and how to implement it using international best practices.
 - Module II demonstrates how to operationalize effective coordination and develop an implementation plan at the *national or regional* level.
 - The target audience includes senior commanders from each of Mali's forces at the national level and commanders from each force present in the selected *region(s)*.
2. **Coordination Recommendation 2:** A sequence of training modules on the benefits and best practices of coordination among forces *at the commune and cercle levels*.
 - Module I demonstrates the operational utility of effective coordination and how best to implement it using international best practices.
 - Module II demonstrates how to operationalize effective coordination and develop a *commune or cercle-level* work plan.
 - The target audience includes commanders from each force present in the *selected commune(s) or cercle(s)*.
3. **Coordination Recommendation 3:** A stress-test exercise that simulates the shared operational challenges *at the national level* to build trust and relationships.
 - This exercise serves as a capstone to the modules in **Coordination Recommendation 1** or as a stand-alone activity.
 - The target audience includes *national level* commanders from each of Mali's forces.
4. **Coordination Recommendation 4:** A stress-test exercise that simulates the operational challenges of *commune, cercle, and regional* forces in building trust and relationships.
 - This serves as a capstone to the modules in **Coordination Recommendations 1 or 2** or as a stand-alone activity.
 - The target audience includes security force commanders at the *commune, cercle, and regional* levels.
5. **Coordination Recommendation 5:** Incident response simulation(s) to build capacity for coordination and joint operations planning *at the national level*.
 - Three tabletop simulations focused on border security, each using a different incident.
 - Incident scenarios will be developed in consultation with Malian government personnel, based on perceived threats and concerns.
 - Incident scenario examples include violent drug trafficking, large-scale civic unrest, and a cross-border terrorist incursion.
 - The target audience includes *national* force commanders and senior government officials.
6. **Coordination Recommendation 6:** Incident response simulation(s) to build capacity for coordination, planning, and joint operations *at the regional level*.
 - Three tabletop simulations for each selected region, using a different incident scenario.
 - The operational environment in the selected region will determine the selection of incident scenarios.

- Incident scenario examples include violent drug trafficking, migration crisis, and cross-border terrorist incursion.
 - The target audience includes security force commanders and administrators at the *regional* level.
7. **Coordination Recommendation 7:** Incident response simulation(s) to build capacity for coordination and joint operations *at the commune or cercle level*.
 - Three tabletop simulations for each target area, using a different incident scenario.
 - The operational environment in the selected commune will determine the choice of incident scenarios.
 - Incident scenario examples include violent drug trafficking, inter-communal violence, and a cross-border terrorist incursion.
 - The target audience includes security force commanders and administrators in the selected *commune(s)* or *cercle(s)*.
 8. **Coordination Recommendation 8:** Two deep-dive modules on existing information sharing practices to identify and mitigate gaps *at the national level*.
 - Module I assesses Mali's existing mechanisms for information sharing and introduces international best practices.
 - Module II offers recommendations to mitigate existing information sharing gaps.
 - The target audience includes national commanders from the security and defense forces who are tasked with information sharing, intelligence analysis, or intelligence dissemination responsibilities.
 9. **Coordination Recommendation 9:** Two deep-dive modules on existing information sharing practices to identify and mitigate gaps *at the commune, cercle, and regional levels*.
 - Module I assesses Mali's existing mechanisms for information sharing and introduces international best practices.
 - Module II offers recommendations to mitigate existing information sharing gaps.
 - The target audience includes commanders at the *commune, cercle, and regional* levels who are tasked with information sharing responsibilities.
 10. **Coordination Recommendation 10:** Training modules to build skills for joint patrols.
 - In concert with **Institution Building Recommendation 5**, training will focus on specific skill sets to enhance coordination of joint patrols.
 - The target audience includes commissioned and non-commissioned officers at the *commune, cercle, or regional* levels.
 11. **Coordination Recommendation 11:** Create an inter-force collaboration network *at the national level*.
 - Hold monthly network meetings in Bamako to enable members to build trust and share challenges and best practices.
 - Each network meeting will feature a facilitated discussion on a key aspect of border security.
 - Topics will be developed in consultation with network members and be tailored to address relevant gaps and needs.
 - The target audience includes senior force commanders.

Training

The second set of recommendations aims to address gaps in the current training of Mali's security forces. Each recommended training and skills development intervention should be designed to meet specific *skills development objectives*, enabling recipients to:

- Understand Mali's changing threat environment and to analyze the impact on border security;
- Evaluate the operational utility of human rights and rules of engagement;
- Apply current international best practices in border security; and
- Incorporate existing and new equipment to enhance operational effectiveness and interoperability.

Specific recommendations for building the capacity of Mali's forces include:

1. **Training Recommendation 1:** Introductory modules on understanding the current threat environment and its impact on operational requirements.
 - Ten module topics include cross-border terrorism, drug smuggling, arms smuggling, foreign fighter movement, migration and refugee crises, cross border inter-communal violence, commodity smuggling and informal border economies, pastoral and farmer conflicts, cross-border banditry, and cross-border violence targeting the mining industry.
 - Topic selection will be coordinated with Mali's training officials.
 - The target audience includes new and existing commissioned officers.
2. **Training Recommendation 2:** Senior strategic seminars on Mali's evolving threat environment.
 - Short seminars tailored to help senior commanders and policy makers understand and manage emerging security threats.
 - The target audience includes force commanders at the *policy/strategy* level.
3. **Training Recommendation 3:** In-service training on human rights and rules of engagement *at the commune or cercle level*.
 - One-day workshops focused on building and testing understanding of human rights and rules of engagement.
 - The target audience includes commissioned and non-commissioned officers at the *commune or cercle* level.
4. **Training Recommendation 4:** Train-the-Trainer courses on human rights and rules of engagement.
 - Courses are designed to educate instructors on what to teach (content) and how to teach it (methods of instruction).
 - The target audience includes instructors at Mali's security force academies.
5. **Training Recommendation 5:** In-service training modules on international best practices for border security *at all levels*.
 - Modules demonstrate the value and applicability of international best practices for Mali's border security.
 - The target audience includes enlisted personnel and officers.
6. **Training Recommendation 6:** Train-the-Trainer course on best practices for border security.
 - Courses are designed to educate instructors on what to teach (content) and how to teach it (methods of instruction).
 - The target audience includes instructors at Mali's security force academies.
7. **Training Recommendation 7:** Technical training to support effective utilization of newly procured and donor-supplied equipment for border security.
 - Training topics could include (a) effective adoption of independent systems to address tactical level requirements; (b) adequate planning for integrating independent or joint

systems into border security planning; and (c) collection and adoption of best practices to make effective and efficient use of new technologies and incorporate them into the local context.

- The target audience includes security force personnel at the appropriate level.

Community Engagement

The third set of recommendations aims to address gaps in how Mali's forces engage with local communities. Each recommended training and skills development intervention should be designed to meet specific *skills development objectives*, enabling recipients to:

- Understand the operational benefits of community engagement;
- Identify key obstacles to community engagement; and
- Evaluate and adapt strategies for community engagement.

Specific recommendations for building the capacity of Mali's forces include:

1. **Community Engagement Recommendation 1:** Facilitated seminars on the shared responsibility of border security among communities and forces *at the commune, cercle, and regional levels*.
 - Facilitated seminars to teach core human security concepts, identify the roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder, and underscore the operational (output) and strategic (procedural) benefits of co-shared responsibilities.
 - The target audience includes commissioned and non-commissioned officers at the *commune, cercle, and regional levels*.
2. **Community Engagement Recommendation 2:** Facilitated workshops to help security officials enhance operational effectiveness (output) by leveraging community engagement.
 - Workshops focus on community engagement techniques and explore practical implementation strategies.
 - Workshops delivered as a stand-alone training or in concert with **Community Engagement Recommendation 3**.
 - The target audience includes commanders at the *regional and national levels* and non-commissioned and commissioned officers at the *commune and cercle levels*.
3. **Community Engagement Recommendation 3:** Three-part facilitated workshop to enable security personnel to overcome obstacles to community engagement *at the commune and cercle levels*.
 - Part I focuses on the obstacles to community engagement and develops mitigation strategies.
 - Part II focuses on implementation and identifies any additional challenges.
 - Part III identifies best practices and lessons learned, standardizing them for consumption at the regional and national levels.
 - The target audience includes commissioned and non-commissioned officers at the *commune and cercle levels*.
4. **Community Engagement Recommendation 4:** Workshop focused on corruption as a key obstacle to community engagement and force effectiveness *at the commune, cercle, and regional levels*.
 - Workshop focuses on explaining how corruption erodes trust and operational effectiveness.
 - The target audience includes enlisted personnel at the *commune, cercle, and regional levels*.

5. **Community Engagement Recommendation 5:** A series of three facilitated seminars to plan joint community engagement initiatives *at the commune, cercle, and regional levels*.
 - Part I assesses international best practices, analyzing the community engagement approach employed by each force, and develops a joint plan to enhance community engagement.
 - Part II focuses on the status of implementation and identifies any additional challenges.
 - Part III identifies best practices and lessons learned, and standardizes them for consumption at the regional national levels.
 - The target audience includes representatives from all forces present in the selected *commune, cercle, or region*.

6. **Community Engagement Recommendation 6:** A series of three facilitated seminars to enhance civil society engagement and develop initiatives *at the regional and national levels*.
 - Part I assesses international best practices and focuses on developing a plan to enhance civil society engagement.
 - Part II focuses on the status of implementation and identifies any additional challenges.
 - Part III identifies best practices and lessons learned.
 - The target audience includes force commanders at the *regional and national* levels.

7. **Community Engagement Recommendation 7:** Workshop on effective strategies for media engagement *at the regional level*.
 - Workshop identifies and evaluates different approaches for engaging with traditional media (TV, radio, print) and new media (bloggers, social media).
 - The target audience includes officers at the *regional* level.

8. **Community Engagement Recommendation 8:** Seminar on effective strategies for public communications at the *commune and cercle* levels.
 - Seminar offers international best practices and approaches on public communications for enhanced community engagement.
 - The target audience includes officers at the *commune and cercle* levels.

Recommendations for Institution Building within the Border Security Sector

The second category of recommendations focuses on building the capacity of Mali's security institutions with a border security mandate. These include the Ministry of Defense and Veterans, the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Ministry of Environment and Sanitation. Each Institution Building Recommendation is further organized according to the specific capacity gap it is designed to address. The specific recommendations for institution building include:

Coordination

1. **Institution Building Recommendation 1:** Develop a national border security lead (individual or entity).
 - One individual or entity should be designated to lead Mali's border security efforts to address the lack of coordination and duplication of resources.
 - Through facilitated seminars, and based on international best practices, support senior government officials in designing and creating a national border security lead.
2. **Institution Building Recommendation 2:** Develop an inter-force border security intelligence hub dedicated to collecting, analyzing, and disseminating relevant border security information.
 - The unit supports the border security lead (individual or entity) outlined in **Institution Building Recommendation 1**.
 - Through facilitated seminars, and based on international best practices, support senior government officials in designing and creating the border security intelligence hub.
 - Design joint trainings and other engagement opportunities for security force personnel tasked with analyzing border security to build mutual trust and enhance future collaboration.

Training

3. **Institution Building Recommendation 3:** Develop a Center of Excellence for Border Security.
 - Develop a Center of Excellence for Border Security mandated to collect lessons learned on border security operations from each of Mali's forces; standardize training on border security for all of Mali's forces; analyze operational requirements and results; develop new training opportunities; disseminate best practices and lessons learned; and engage with international partners.
 - A priority area to be explored by the Center is lessons learned from joint patrolling.
 - Through facilitated seminars and mentoring with service academy commanders and government officials, assist Mali in developing a Center of Excellence for Border Security at one of the service academies.
4. **Institution Building Recommendation 4:** Develop a standardized border security curriculum.
 - Develop a standardized border security curriculum to be offered at all of Mali's service academies.
 - Through facilitated seminars, support instructors from the service academies and the Center of Excellence to develop a standardized curriculum on basic border security functions.
5. **Institution Building Recommendation 5:** Develop and institutionalize joint force border security training and education.

- Develop an implementation plan that identifies appropriate training length, a trainee ranking system, career development requirements, adequate curriculum content and standards, and necessary human and capital resources for the creation of adequate programs of instruction.
 - Through facilitated seminars, support instructors from the service academies and the Center of Excellence to address the issues covered above.
6. **Institution Building Recommendation 6:** Enhance effective use of specialized human capital.
- Develop programming and institutional mechanisms to ensure that specially trained personnel are regularly assigned to posts that make best use of their skills and know-how.
 - Through facilitated seminars, support senior commanders, managers, and human resource personnel to develop programming and institutional mechanisms to better utilize officers with special training.

Community Engagement

7. **Institution Building Recommendation 7:** Develop and institutionalize regular community engagement forums to enable community leaders and force commanders to engage quarterly *at the commune and cercle levels*.
- Develop programming and institutionalize processes for quarterly community engagement forums between community leaders and force commanders at the communal level. First established at border flash points or in areas of particular tension, forums would be generalized throughout Mali's border regions as soon as operationally feasible.
 - Through facilitated seminars, support commanders and planners to develop programming and institutional mechanisms for quarterly engagement forums.

General Recommendations for Capacity Building in Mali

The final category of recommendations addresses cross-cutting or general skills building and training interventions. These include:

1. **General Recommendation 1:** Train forces jointly so they can operate and coordinate effectively.
 - Where practicable and feasible, train personnel from all of Mali's forces and institutions together.
 - With the exception of select force-specific instruction, design training content and utilize methods of instruction to contribute to more effective and coordinated border management in Mali.
2. **General Recommendation 2:** Prioritize skills building and training to enable Mali's forces to "do more with less."
 - In a limited resource context, skills building and training to develop human capital can mitigate the operational impact of limited equipment and materiel gaps.
3. **General Recommendation 3:** Develop systems for iterative training to enhance impact and outcome.
 - Develop training systems that use iterative, continuous, or sequential training methods, building capacity at introductory through advanced levels.
 - Designate new and existing training at different levels of competencies and identify prerequisites.
4. **General Recommendation 4:** Link forces' career advancement to training and continuing or in-service education.
 - Promotion, advancement, and specialization should be linked to completion of designated basic, mid-level, and advanced training and skills building identified in **General Recommendation 3**.
5. **General Recommendation 5:** Foster an institutional culture of learning.
 - Institutional leaders and operational commanders should stress the importance of skills building and training and lead by example, participating in senior-level skills building and training opportunities.
 - Institutional mission statements should reflect the value of skills building and training.



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