Faced with the increasing deterioration of the security context and socio-economic realities in the regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua, the European Union (EU) has decided, in consultation with the State of Niger, to launch a multi-sectoral program entitled “Intervention in Support of Security and Stabilization in Niger (I3S Niger)”.

The objective is to support the efforts of the State of Niger to meet the challenges of maintaining security, returning civil administration and public services, and restoring a serene environment conducive to the resumption of socio-economic activities (school, health, pastoral, agricultural, commercial) in the villages.

To this end, the European Union has mobilized, through its Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (ICSP), significant resources, and three technical partners (Enabel, Expertise-France, and Search For Common Ground) specialized in security, development, and peacebuilding issues.

However, the implementation perspective is that of a global approach. The program pays particular attention to complementarity and coherence within the program but also with other actions carried out by the EU and its Member States to:

- Promote good collaboration between the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and the Nigerien Armed Forces (NAF);
- Ensure consistency in the priority action areas identified by the ISF and the NAF;
- Ensure consistency in confidence-building actions with the population.
The governance of the program relies mainly on a Strategic Committee that brings together the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministries in charge of Defense and Internal Security, the "Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix" (HACP - High Authority for Peacebuilding), the Delegation of the European Union (DEU), the diplomatic representations of the EU member countries, and the diplomatic representations of Burkina Faso and Mali.

On the operational aspects, the privileged interlocutors are the Ministries of Defense, Security, and the HACP. The latter ensures the operational coordination of activities related to social cohesion with the support of Search.

The approach is that each implementer carries a specific program component but acts in concert with the others. Search contributes to the coordination and coherence of these three components under the political guidance of the Delegation of the European Union (DEU).

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**Component I**

**“Support to the security and stabilization of Niger (SOSESTA)”**

The component “Support to the security and stabilization of Niger” implemented by Enabel is aimed at the 3 internal security forces (ISF): the Nigerien National Guard, the National Gendarmerie, and the National Police. The project aims to:

- **Reduce the vulnerability** of the internal security forces by strengthening the physical security of their barracks and the living conditions of their agents.
- **Strengthen their capacity to ensure the security of the population**;
- **Improve trust** between representatives of the State, particularly the internal security forces, and the population.

The main results expected from this first component are:

- Security arrangements and living conditions in ISF camps are improved;
- Confidence between the ISF and the population is improved.

The main activities of Component 1 are based on:

- Improving the living conditions of the Internal Security Forces in their environment;
- Supporting defence systems;
- Carrying out works and improvements to the Internal Security Forces' sites;
- Strengthening the operational capacities of the Internal Security Forces (ISF);
- Identifying the needs of the population and developing an action plan to strengthen trust between the ISF and the population;
- Communication and awareness-raising activities on the work of the Internal Security Forces;
- Support for certain local development actions that promote confidence-building between the ISF and the population.
Component II
"Strengthening the confidence of the population, the presence of the State and its security capacities in Niger (RENFORCES Niger)"

The component "Strengthening the confidence of the populations, the presence of the State and its security capacities in Niger" implemented by Expertise France is mainly aimed at the Nigerien armed forces (NAF). This 18-month initiative contributes to the stabilization of the Tahoua and Tillaberi regions. Launched in 2020, "RENFORCES Niger" improves security, as well as trust between the population and the defense forces to facilitate the maintenance of civil administration, public services, and economic activities in insecure areas. To do this, the approach is twofold:

- **Strengthen the capacities** of the NAF and, in particular, the military engineers to better respond to the security situation in the targeted regions;

- **To contribute to the improvement** of trust between the population and the NAF to promote the return of basic services in the targeted locations.

The main results expected from this second component are:

- The protection of identified rights-of-way and living conditions are improved so that the units stationed there can conduct their operations and be less vulnerable to attacks by armed terrorist groups (ATGs);
- In targeted areas suffering from a lack of State presence and public services, the support of the military engineers allows for the realization of actions that respond to the needs of the population and promote civilian confidence in the NAF;
- Spaces for dialogue are created and encourage the reduction of tensions between the military and civilians;
- The populations have a better understanding of the mandate and operational capabilities of the armed forces, and joint initiatives contribute to improving trust and relations.

The main activities of Component 2 revolve around:

- Improving the living conditions of the Niger Armed Forces in their environment;
- Construction of a 700-man military camp in the Tillabéri region;
- Rehabilitation of critical points on the Mangaize-Tiloa road, about 70 km long;
- The identification of the needs of the population and the realization of community work to reinforce trust between the NAF and the population;

Component III
Building tomorrow "Mu Gui na Gobé"

The component carried by Search for Common Ground Niger is primarily aimed at civil authorities and communities while integrating the internal security forces and the Nigerien armed forces. The objective of "Building Tomorrow" is to lay the foundations for long-term stabilization of the northern border communities of Tillabéri and Tahoua by strengthening:

- Trust between the defense and security forces, the authorities, and the population;
- Vertical cohesion between civil and customary authorities and the population;
- Horizontal inter and intra-community cohesion.
The main expected results are:

- Collaboration between the population and the security and defense forces (SDF) to improve security is strengthened;
- A process of behavioral change of the SDF is initiated;
- Information sharing and coordination between the SDF, authorities, and communities are strengthened;
- The capacities of authorities and communities to analyze and respond to conflicts are strengthened;
- Stabilization projects are defined and implemented jointly by the authorities and the communities;
- Inter and intra-community social cohesion is strengthened;
- The local peace architecture is strengthened.

The main activities of Component III revolve around:

- Training of the SDF, civil and traditional authorities, and civil society on conflict transformation, non-violent communication, prevention of sexual violence, and protection of civilians;
- The organization of workshops for reflection and popular expression to allow the targets to make recommendations to improve the protection of civilians;
- The implementation of joint solidarity actions to meet the needs of communities;
- Training of peace ambassadors (including mayors), traditional and religious leaders, and civil society representatives on conflict analysis, prevention, and transformation;
- The development and implementation of stabilization plans at the territorial and village levels;
- The production of radio programs to conduct a communication campaign giving voice to local actors and authorities to present the stabilization plans and highlight its successes and lessons learned;
- The organization of dialogue sessions to strengthen intra- and inter-community relations to promote peaceful conflict management;
- The organization of participatory theater performances contributing to trauma management and opening the way to dialogue on sensitive issues and recent conflicts;
- The revitalization of the peace committees set up by the HACP and the creation of others when the communes do not have them;
- The creation of a peace center allowing members of the peace committees to organize or participate in workshops for reflection.