

Why GAO Did This Study

Terrorism in East Africa has remained a concern of the United States since 1998, when al Qaeda bombed U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. As part of its efforts to address this threat, State launched PREACT in 2009 as a program for long-term engagement and capacity building in East Africa. PREACT—which focuses on countering terrorist threats, including al Shabaab, an al Qaeda affiliate based in Somalia—is managed by State’s Bureau of African Affairs and provides assistance in a region composed of 12 partner countries.

GAO was asked to examine PREACT, including (1) the role it plays in U.S. counterterrorism assistance to East Africa, (2) the extent to which funds allocated for PREACT since 2009 have been disbursed, and (3) the extent to which State considers key factors in managing PREACT. GAO reviewed agency documents and interviewed U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., and in Germany, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State improve the management of the PREACT initiative by taking steps to improve the documentation of key factors considered and by routinely collecting activity and funding information. State agreed with all three recommendations and stated that it is taking steps to address them.

View [GAO-14-502](#). For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., 202-512-7331, JohnsonCM@gao.gov.

COMBATING TERRORISM

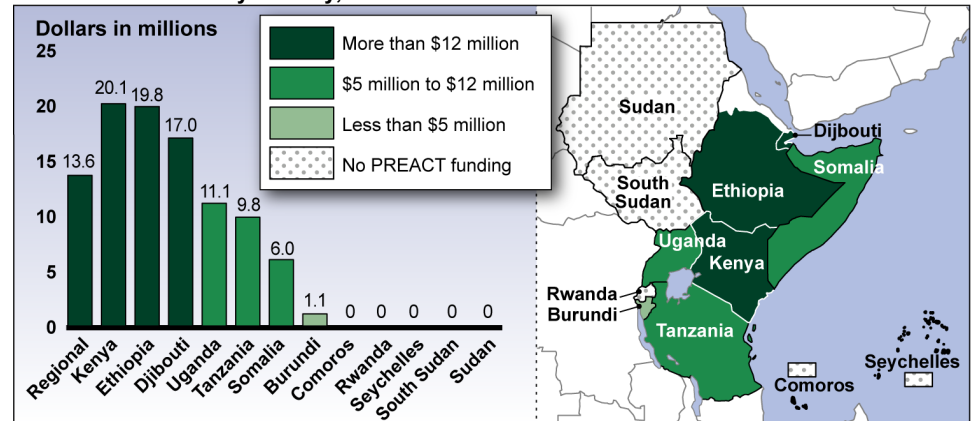
State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program

What GAO Found

State Department’s (State) Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT) supports U.S. counterterrorism efforts in East Africa. PREACT’s five goals focus on improving partner nations’ military capacity, rule of law, border security, ability to counter violent extremism, and ability to counter terrorist financing. PREACT has funded activities such as providing training for terrorist investigation techniques for Somali police, new communications equipment for the Ethiopian military, and computer literacy to teachers working with at-risk youth in Kenya. PREACT assistance is in addition to other U.S. counterterrorism assistance to East Africa and peacekeeping and stability efforts in Somalia.

As of November 1, 2013, State reported disbursing \$42.3 million of the \$104 million allocated for PREACT from fiscal years 2009 through 2013. Since 2009, State allocated PREACT assistance to countries near Somalia, as shown below.

PREACT Allocations by Country, Fiscal Years 2009-2013



Source: GAO based on State Department data; Map Resources (map). | GAO-14-502

State considers key factors in managing PREACT but lacks comprehensive documentation of factors considered when selecting activities and does not routinely maintain information on the status of PREACT activities or funding. Presidential Policy Directive 23 highlights key factors—partner country needs, absorptive capacity, sustainment capacity, U.S. efforts, and other donor efforts—as critical to building partner capacity and focusing limited resources. State reported considering these key factors when selecting PREACT activities. However, State did not consistently document its consideration of the five factors. In addition, State’s *Foreign Affairs Manual* calls for managers to collect program information to inform decision making and reporting. However, State does not routinely collect PREACT activity and financial information from implementing partners to enable it to have complete information needed to inform program management and accurately report on PREACT. For example, GAO discovered that State mistakenly allocated PREACT funds to Mauritius, which is not a PREACT partner, and the managing bureau was unaware of \$3 million in unobligated balances in Antiterrorism Assistance that are no longer available for obligation. Routinely collecting such information, as the *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* calls for, could enhance PREACT managers’ ability to make operating decisions, monitor performance, and allocate resources.