



The Millennium Challenge Corporation

Working with Niger to Promote Education, Combat Corruption

The three-year, \$23 million Threshold program with the Government of Niger seeks to improve its performance on MCC's Control of Corruption, Business Start-Up, Land Rights and Access and Girls' Primary Education Completion Rate indicators. Specifically, the program will reduce public corruption, with an emphasis on the health and education sectors, by strengthening the legal framework, improving public procurement systems and supporting the anticorruption efforts of civil society and the media. The program will also streamline the process of starting a business by establishing the administrative, legal and regulatory structures required to implement business facilitation reforms. To improve land rights and access, the program will help improve policy reforms to reduce the time and costs associated with land ownership transfer, land valuation, building permitting and notarization. Finally, the program will bolster demand for girls' education by implementing public awareness campaigns, improving the quality of teaching, establishing methods to motivate and retain students, specifically girls, and building "girl-friendly" schools.

Program Components

Component 1: Improve Control of Corruption

Strengthen the Legal Framework, Audits and Prosecutions:

- Establish a national anti-corruption information system coordinated and managed by the National Statistics Institute in order to establish baseline data on corruption control, including perception-based and experience-based corruption statistics and information on enforcement and disciplinary measures.
- Build the capacity of approximately five hundred civil servants throughout the government in investigation and auditing corruption.
- Conduct a study on strengthening the current judicial framework with respect to combating corruption and support administrative and legislative reforms to implement the conclusions of the study.
- Build the administrative capacity of audit bodies and the judiciary to combat corruption.

Improve Transparency in Public Procurement:

- Enhance the Public Procurement Regulatory Agency's (ARMP) ability to conduct audits of procurements.

- Train members of public procurement commissions selected from the Public Procurement Regulatory Agency, the Ministries of Education and Health and senior officers of the public procurement directorate.
- Establish a website and a public procurement journal to publish tenders and criteria for selecting bids and to inform the public about the rules for public procurement.
- Draft and publicize all procurement schedules in the media.

Strengthen the Role of Civil Society Organizations and the Media.

- Train government officials in the area of public relations in order to publish inspection and audit reports in conformity with legal and human rights provisions.
- Train one hundred journalists on how to coordinate with civil society to investigate and process information in the fight against corruption.
- Provide support to disseminate information on laws and the rights of users of services in the education and health sectors.
- Launch an anticorruption media campaign.
- Support the inclusion of modules on corruption control in the outreach activities of other donors and civil society organizations active in the health and education sectors through existing coordination mechanisms.
- Establish a support and advisory mechanism to provide technical and financial support for civil society and media on corruption control, and set up civic action groups to develop anticorruption strategies within schools and health centers.

Component 2: Streamlining Business Creation and Land Access Procedures

Facilitate Business Creation

- Establish the administrative, legal and regulatory structures required to implement business facilitation reforms.
- Complete a study on alternative sources of financing for institutions dependent on business registration fees (as the Niger Threshold Program proposes to eliminate these fees) and an additional study on supporting business start-up.

- Computerize the processes for starting a new business.
- Develop and distribute “how to” guides on new business creation.

Improve Land Rights and Access to Land

- Implement administrative and legal reforms to reduce the time and costs associated with land ownership transfer, land valuation, building permitting and notarization.
- Conduct a study on the institutional framework required to implement necessary reforms, with the recommendations to be implemented during the second year of the Program.
- Organize a public awareness campaign to publicize land reform activities.
- Conduct a study on how to integrate Land Commission titles into Niger’s land registry, with the recommendations to be implemented in the medium-term as part of Niger’s broader rural development strategy.

Component 3: Girls’ Primary Education

Girls’ Education

- Design and implement a large-scale communication strategy and two hundred local action plans to increase girls’ primary school enrollment.
- Provide gender-sensitive training and student tutoring.
- Implement activities to motivate school-age girls to improve school performance, to include provision of school supplies, organized camps and student competitions.
- Support Associations of Mothers in Education to design and implement income-generating activities to support school financial sustainability.
- Provide incentive packages to female teachers to accept jobs in rural areas.
- Support the construction of up to two hundred “girl-friendly” classrooms.

Highlights of Expected Results of the Niger Threshold Program:

- Improve Niger’s score on the World Bank Institute Control of Corruption index.
- Reduce the cost for starting business by 84 per cent.

- Reduce the number of days to start a business from 24 to 14 and the number of procedures required from 11 to 7.
- Reduce the number of days to register property from 49 to 27 and the registration fee from 14 per cent to 8.25 per cent.
- Increase girls' primary education completion rate thirteen points to 44 per cent.
- Increase enrollment in girls' primary education by 5 per cent.
- Reduce the disparity between girls' and boys' completion rate by six points to 10 points.

Implementing Partner

The United States Agency for International Development will be the lead U.S. government agency implementing the program.

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Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. government corporation designed to work with developing countries, is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces sound political, economic, and social policies that promote poverty reduction through economic growth.