



PROJECT INITIATION PLAN (PIP)

Pilot Phase for the Implementation of a Stabilisation Mechanism in the Liptako-Gourma Region

October 2020 – March 2022

Country/Region/Global: UNDP/RSCA/RP
LGA Stabilisation Facility Project Initiation Plan (version 13 October 2020; final)

Project Title:	Laying the foundation for Stabilising the Liptako-Gourma Region – A Pilot cum Inception Phase for the Establishment of a Stabilisation Facility for the borderlands between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger
Expected SP Outcome(s):	
SP Outcome 3:	Strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis
Signature Solution 2:	Strengthen effective, accountable and inclusive governance
Expected RPD Output(s):	
Outcome 3:	Regional institutions sustain peace and build resilience to crises and shocks
Initiation Plan Start/End Dates:	October 2020 to March 2022
Implementing Partner:	UNDP and the Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA)
Implementing zones:	The Liptako-Gourma region with a focus on the border areas of following sub-national regions in: <u>Burkina Faso:</u> East, North and the Sahel regions <u>Mali:</u> Mopti, Gao, Menaka, Tombouctou regions <u>Niger:</u> Tillabery, Tahoua and Dosso regions

Brief Description

This 18 months Project Initiation Plan (PIP) for a Pilot cum Inception Phase, aiming to lay the ground for a full-fledged Stabilisation Facility in the Liptako-Gourma region, has been elaborated subsequent to a Concept Note used for initial consultations with internal and external stakeholders and in parallel with a consultancy assignment to stake stock of the current context in the Liptako-Gourma region in the form of a literature based conflict analysis and a mapping of major ongoing crises response. Further, it builds on UNDP's prior experience of stabilisation as well as on lessons learnt from its ongoing stabilisation programme in the Lake Chad Basin. As laid out in this PIP, it aims to deliver on 8 key activities in relation to 3 overall programmatic outputs, namely: **1. Strengthened capacity and analytics for implementation, 2. Demonstrated results on the ground and 3. Strengthening political support for scaling-up, coordination and extended stabilisation.** The justification for enhanced efforts in the area of stabilisation is found in the fact that while military efforts are being stepped up to respond to escalating levels of violence, all stakeholders agree that the long-term solution must address the root causes of the conflict, hence the need to create conducive conditions for the return of state-controlled civil security, effective conflict prevention and resolution and enhanced livelihoods - which are all part of the essence of stabilisation - as a transition towards long-term sustainable development. Provided the assumptions under this PIP are confirmed, a key output of this pilot phase will be a comprehensive programme document for a full-fledged Stabilisation Facility.

Programme Period: Oct 2020 – March 2022

Atlas Project Number: _____

Atlas Output ID: _____

Gender Marker: _____

Total resources required 13,251,600

Total allocated resources: _____

• Regular 1,500,000

• Other:

○ Germany (TBC) 5,800,000

○ UN CSM (TBC) 500,000

○ Government _____

Unfunded budget: 5,451,600

In-kind Contributions _____

Agreed by LGA:

Agreed by UNDP:

ACRONYMS	
AFDB	Africa Development Bank
AS	Alliance Sahel
AU	African Union
IFPA	Integrated Priority Action Framework (G5 Sahel)
CILSS	Inter-State Committee to combat Drought in the Sahel
CIMIC	Civil-Military Coordination
CSM	United Nations Climate Security Mechanism
CO	Country Office
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DOP	Policy Orientation Document (LGA)
DPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Commission for West African States
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
GCO	Organized Crime Groups
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
G5S	Group of Five for the Sahel
HQs	Headquarters
ICG	International Crisis Group
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IS	Intervention Strategy (LGA)
LCB	Lake Chad Basin
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LGA	Liptako-Gourma Authority
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MNE	Monitoring & Evaluation
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NY	New York
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P3S	Partnership for Security & Stability in the Sahel
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PIP	Project Initiation Plan
PMSU	Programme Management Support Unit
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies & Procedures
PVE	Prevention of Violent Extremism
RBM	Results Based Management
RC/HC	United Nations Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
RR	UNDP Resident Representative
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
RSCA	UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa in Addis Ababa
RSF	Regional Stabilisation Facility

RSS	Regional Stabilisation Strategy
SA	Sahel Alliance
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children Funds
UNISS	United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
UNS	United Nations System
USD	United States Dollar
VE	Violent Extremism
WAEMU	West Africa Economic and Monetary Union
WASCAL	West African Science Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use
WFP	World Food Programme
WB	World Bank

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I. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

This Project Initiation Plan (PIP) for a Pilot cum Inception Phase aims to lay the ground for a full-scale Stabilisation Facility in the Liptako-Gourma region. It has been elaborated subsequent to a Concept Note used for initial consultations with internal and external stakeholders and in parallel with a consultancy assignment to take stock of the current context in the Liptako-Gourma region in the form of a literature-based conflict analysis and a mapping of major ongoing crises response¹. Further, it builds on UNDP's prior experience of stabilisation² as well as on lessons learnt from its ongoing stabilisation programme in the Lake Chad Basin and other relevant programmes in the Liptako-Gourma region, including PBF-funded programmes. The formulation, during this pilot phase, of a Stabilisation Strategy and programme document for the full-fledged Stabilisation Facility will however consider the specific context of the Liptako-Gourma region.

The rationale underpinning the need for a pilot cum inception phase encompasses the following dimensions:

- *Politics*, i.e. the need for a shared understanding of and strong commitment to required political processes to sustain stabilisation efforts,
- *Analytics*, i.e. the need for in-depth and ongoing analysis of the conflict, its actors and effectiveness of crises responses,
- *Capacity*, i.e. the need to assess and reinforce required capacity for implementing stabilisation, and
- *Results*, i.e. the need to pilot test UNDP's approach to stabilisation on the ground to collect lessons learnt and demonstrate results to other stakeholders.

The present 18-months Project Initiation Plan (PIP) is therefore structured around three programmatic outputs incorporating these four dimensions, namely:

Output 1: Strengthened Capacity and Analytics for Implementation of the Pilot Phase,

Output 2: Demonstrated Results on the ground,

Output 3: Strengthened Political support for Scaling up, Coordination and Extended Stabilisation.

Building on the outcome and lessons learnt under each of these outputs, as further detailed in the following chapters, a key expected outcome of the pilot cum inception phase will be a comprehensive programme document, including a well assessed theory of change and results framework, for a full-fledged Stabilisation Facility for the Liptako-Gourma region, housed by the Liptako-Gourma Authority, and well situated within regional strategic frameworks with a clearly defined value-added and well established coordination mechanisms in relation to other actors.

1. The Liptako-Gourma Region

1.1. Background

The tri-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, referred to as the Liptako-Gourma region, has since (approximately) 2015 become the epicentre of the escalation violence which engulfs the Sahel. The conflict drivers include a complex mix of political grievances, jihadi ideologies, competition over access to and sharing of natural resources, protection of interests linked to wide-spread transboundary organised crime, inter- and intra-community conflicts related to rivalries in the quest for traditional chieftdom, etc. while the perpetrators of violence include several violent extremist groups, armed political movements, organized criminal groups, self-defence groups and militias. Some of these groups also cooperate, openly or tacitly, around joint interests. Based on graphics posted by the International Crisis Group (ICG) analyst Jose Luengo-Cabrera, the reported fatalities

¹ Forthcoming in October 2020

² As summarised in its position paper 'UNDP's Approach to Stabilisation' (no date).

for the first half of 2020 are at 90% of the (full) 2019 annual tally³ for the entire Western Sahel, most of which has taken place in the Liptako-Gourma region.

It is against this background that international, regional and national actors have increasingly been mobilising in the fields of security, development and humanitarian aid to stem the violence, protect civilians, address humanitarian needs and create the necessary conditions for a return to peaceful governance and development. Recently, the international community, including the EU and the AU, have announced reinforced military efforts as well as much needed initiatives to enhance coordination and cooperation between security and defence forces, state actors and civilians to help ensure that tactically successful military action is backed up by national and regional capacity to ensure a return to state-controlled and civilian led security, a reinforcement of state presence, access to social services and support for local livelihoods, with the overall objective of reducing or eliminating violence, build trust and establish the preconditions for addressing the root causes of the conflict and the political grievances.

In this context, UNDP considers the time ripe for pilot testing its approach to stabilisation, understood as support for the transition period from violent conflict to post-conflict early recovery, building on its experience in the Middle East and currently in the Lake Chad Basin, while at the same time taking stock of the complex landscape of actors and conflict drivers in Liptako-Gourma and seeking to formulate a value proposition within the emerging strategic policy and programmatic frameworks for the region, in close consultation and coordination with other actors on the ground. In this endeavour, and based on their request, UNDP will support the Liptako-Gourma Authority, a sub-regional organisation operating in cross-border areas between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, with which UNDP has an ongoing partnership since its inception in 1970 and which has recently seen its mandate extended from a focus on cross-border cooperation on natural resources management and infrastructure to also include security.

1.2 Context

The Liptako-Gourma region refers to **the tri-border region between Mali, Niger and Burkina**

Faso, historically defined as the area covered on the one hand by the early 19th century Liptako Kingdom in today's Eastern Burkina Faso and on the other hand by the right side of the river Niger's loop in Mali and Niger, known as the Gourma. Based on today's administrative division and in the context of this proposal, the sub-national regions concerned include in Burkina Faso: the East, North and the Sahel regions (with populations of 1,212,284, 1,185,796, and 968,442 respectively); in Mali: the Mopti, Gao, Menaka and Tombouctou regions (with populations of 2,036,209, 542,304, 54,456, 674,793 respectively) and in Niger: the Tillabery, Tahoua and Dosso regions (with populations of 2,715,186, 3,327,260, 2,040,699 respectively⁴). The Liptako-Gourma region has over the past years⁵ become **the epicentre of violence** in the West African Sahel region, with devastating effects for the local population who suffers the combined and hybrid violence from armed jihadi/terrorist groups, local bandits, organised

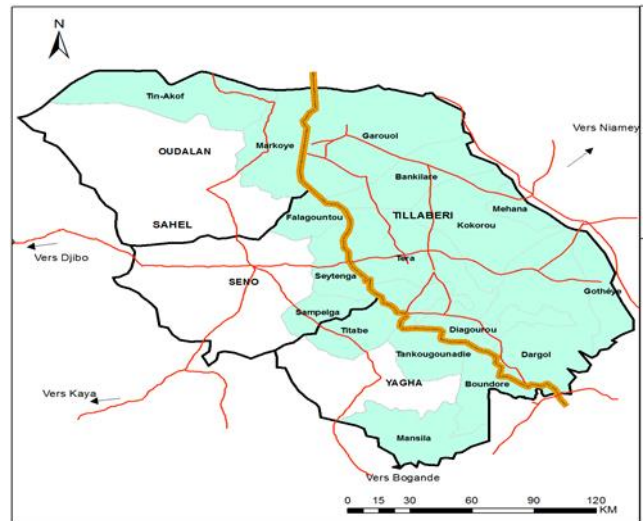


Figure 1: Cross-border area between Sahel region (Burkina Faso) & Tillabéry (Niger)

³ <https://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2020/07/24/trends-in-political-violence-in-the-sahel-for-the-first-half-of-2020-a-few-comments/>

⁴ **a. Burkina Faso:** 4th General Census of the Population & Housing, 2006: (latest was 2019 but data not available yet); **b. Mali:** 4th General Census of the Population & the Habitat of Mali (RGPH-2009); **c. Niger:** 4th General Census of Population & Housing-2012

⁵ Approximately since 2015 and the emergence of the Katiba Macina, a local armed group in Central Mali affiliated with the group/coalition referring to itself as Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), translated to 'Group to Support Islam and Muslims' (GSIM) which in turn is affiliated with Al Qaida.

transnational crime and – increasingly – self-defence groups and inter-communal violence. Consequently, the Liptako-Gourma region has become the centre of attention of national, regional and international stakeholders in the Sahel, including military, development and humanitarian actors. There are also fears, and some evidence⁶, that the conflict may spread further south to the coastal states unless it can be contained and effectively addressed.

Growing violence and insecurity only increase entrenched vulnerabilities in the Liptako-Gourma region. Very high population growth rates are recorded (between 3 and 4% per year) and the strong demographic growth is reflected in the youth of the population. Young people under the age of 15 represent around 50% of the cross-border population⁷. Without viable employment opportunities and suffering from a growing sense of hopelessness, they are less involved in political processes and risk becoming easy targets for radicalised recruiters who lure them by cunning or by force with various religious arguments, financial incentives, messages of hope, and often, with violence⁸.

Specific risks and vulnerabilities weigh on women, due to the marked gender inequalities and the deteriorating security situation. Women participate less in economic and political life. “The lack of access to land deprives African women of an important economic tool for improving their livelihoods.”⁹ They have little access to education and reproductive health, and low awareness of HIV/AIDS. In the Sahel, Tillabery and Tahoua regions, more than 75% of women ages 20 to 24 get married before the age of 18. They are subject to increased risks of sexual violence in the face of growing insecurity and the proliferation of armed groups. The rise of violent extremist groups threatens their rights.¹⁰ Insecurity has accentuated the dependence of women on men to protect them from violence. This may lead some mothers to encourage young men to join armed groups for protection against other armed groups or the security forces that they would not trust. At the same time, where male family members are absent due to the conflict, or killed, women must support their families. Many women have therefore become heads of households and income earners, despite the challenges they face in highly patriarchal societies. As such, they have demonstrated resilience by finding endogenous solutions to meet needs. This remains little known and underestimated by the community, which accentuates women’s marginalisation and exclusion in the prevention and management of conflicts.

The region is characterised by low levels of income and high multidimensional poverty.

A vast majority of the population of Liptako-Gourma (90%) live in rural areas. The economy is little diversified and centred around agriculture and livestock farming. Agricultural production is low and only represents a small proportion of the GDP. Extensive traditional livestock farming, suitable to the ecosystems in the area, is economically profitable to all three countries. However, water and fodder scarcity, the reduction of grazing land as a result of agricultural land expansion, and mounting insecurity have disrupted traditional transhumance corridors. This in turn fuels tensions between farmers and livestock

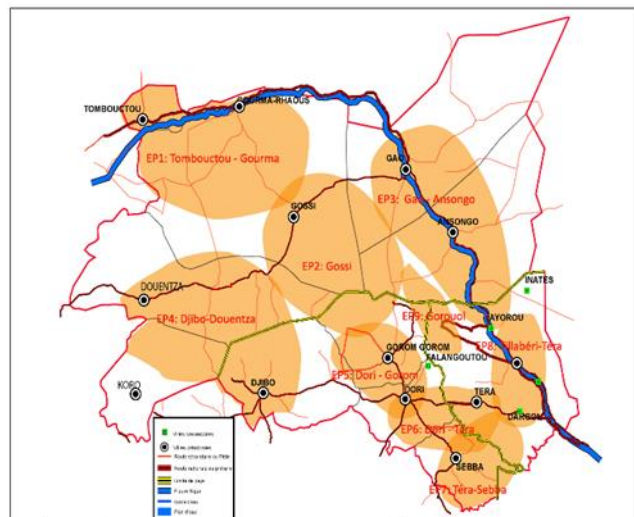


Figure 2 The crossborder regions of Liptako Gourma

⁶ Refer e.g. to a recent attack (June 11 2020) on an Ivorian military post at the border with Burkina Faso <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/10-soldiers-killed-attack-ivory-coast-border-post-200611143031833.html>; and a recent report by Crisis Group: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/c%3%B4te-divoire/b149-lafrigue-de-louest-face-au-risque-de-contagion-jihadiste>

⁷ Ref OECD/OCHA/UNICEF: Preliminary analysis of risks and vulnerabilities and in the cross-border regions of Liptako-Gourma (2019)

⁸ Ref OECD, Ibid (2019)

⁹ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/afhdr_2016_lowres_en.pdf

¹⁰ Ref OECD, Ibid (2019)

herders around access to resources (water, land and pasture).¹¹

Climate change and natural hazard-related disasters exacerbate these vulnerabilities. Since the 1980s, the Liptako-Gourma region has regularly been affected by drought and floods. Gao region is particularly vulnerable. Drought and environmental degradation have a negative impact on food and nutrition security, access to drinking water for people and animals, and households purchasing power. In addition, approximately 100,000 people are annually exposed to the risk of flooding in the border area. The Niger region of Tillabery is especially at risk, partly as a result of the overflow of the Niger River. A lack of consultation regarding the management of dams may lead to cross-border flooding. Existing climate and hazard analyses have reached different conclusions on the relative levels of vulnerability to floods and droughts of each specific geographic area. These discrepancies point to the challenges in obtaining reliable climate risk assessments at the local level, which further complicates the identification of appropriate solutions.¹²

Organised transnational crimes in the border region contribute to establish a climate of insecurity and violence. The common borders are both transit zones for weapons and drugs and consumption areas. Weapons from the looting of Libyan stocks during the popular uprising constitute[d]¹³ the bulk of arms flows in the Liptako-Gourma Triangle. Meanwhile, the trade of craft weapons built by local gunsmiths in rural areas of the border is also significant. Arms-emitting markets have been identified on the Mali side and in the north of the Tillabery region. Livestock theft and organised crime are a considerable resource for armed groups and are often a source of conflict between border communities. The area is also a place of migrant smuggling, with partnerships between terrorist groups and networks of migrant smugglers.¹⁴

Despite these multiple risks and vulnerabilities as laid out above, **the Liptako-Gourma Region also has a strong potential and assets to deal with these risks and vulnerabilities which deserve to be strengthened and protected.** The existence of common socio-cultural dynamics across the borders between the three countries is a factor of cohesion. Communities generally use traditional mechanisms rather than formal authorities to resolve their differences. Confidence in religious leaders to resolve conflicts is strong among all ethnic groups, for both women and men. Faced with common issues and threats in the border areas, national authorities and regional bodies have established formal frameworks to strengthen cross-border cooperation at all levels (institutional, legal and security). Many social initiatives are being carried out in the area and deserve to be supported, documented and replicated where possible. In the Liptako-Gourma region, rich with groundwater, many dams have been built for drinking water supply, market gardening, irrigated agriculture, fishing or for livestock. The region also has important meadowlands that can be a factor of integration between the populations.

2. The case for stabilisation in Liptako-Gourma

The current wave of violence in the Sahel region erupted in 2012 with the fourth Toureg rebellion in Mali, which was overtaken by armed groups confessing themselves to Jihad, who rapidly gained control over large areas of Mali's northern regions. This, in conjunction with a military coup in Bamako and a perceived threat of state collapse led to a joint military intervention by ECOWAS and the AU followed by the French Operation Serval, which managed to push back the assailants but not to control the territory, despite the establishment of a UN peacekeeping force, MINUSMA. Since that time, and **following the split and re-organisation of many of the armed groups, the conflict has expanded south and east to the Liptako-Gourma region** which today suffers the highest numbers of attacks and displacement and also hosts several international and regional security

¹¹ Ref OECD, Ibid (2019)

¹² Ref OECD, Ibid (2019)

¹³ See also the recent study by the Small Arms Survey: [The West Africa–Sahel Connection: Mapping Cross-border Arms Trafficking](#) (December 2019) which analyses the links between illicit arms trafficking and other forms of trafficking and organised crime in the region. The study reveals that highly organized trafficking networks move sizable arms quantities across large areas of land north of the Niger River. Arms trafficking south of the river is more characterized by lower-level arms flows and local intermediaries engaging in so-called 'ant trade'.

¹⁴ Ref OECD, Ibid (2019)

forces¹⁵ as well as numerous development and humanitarian actors, in addition to national security forces.

As summarised by the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix of 23 June 2020: “The Central Sahel area, and in particular the Liptako-Gourma region, which borders Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, is affected by a complex crisis involving growing competition over dwindling resources; climatic variability; demographic pressure; high levels of poverty; disaffection and a lack of livelihood opportunities; communal tensions; the absence of state institutions and basic services; and violence related to organised crime and Non-State Armed Groups. **The crisis has led to the death of an estimated 4,000 people in 2019 alone and triggered significant displacement of populations in the three affected countries.** As of 23 June 2020, 1,422,112 individuals have been displaced, including 1,256,917 Internally Displaced Persons (88% of the displaced population) and 165,195 Refugees (12% of the displaced population). Sixty-six per cent of the displaced population (941,951 individuals) were in Burkina Faso, while 18 per cent resided in Mali (258,370 individuals), 11 per cent in Niger (163,178 individuals) and 4 per cent in Mauritania (58,613 individuals).”¹⁶

While the state has struggled since independence to assert control over and offer services to the populations in the remote and cross-border areas which make up the Liptako-Gourma region, the situation has significantly worsened due to the upsurge in violence and attacks over the past years. In a press release from August 2019, UNICEF reports that “in the central Sahel, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have witnessed a six-fold increase in school closures due to attacks and threats of violence in just over two years, from about 500 in April 2017 to 3,000 in June 2019.”¹⁷ There are also reports on the closure of health centres, municipalities, courts and police stations since state representation has been the target of attacks by violent extremist groups. Traditional, religious and opinion leaders, as well as teachers and representatives of various civil organisations perceived to cooperate with or support the state, have also been targeted and killed or have fled to nearby more secure locations. Taken together, this leaves **a growing institutional vacuum which the insurgent groups aspire to fill in competition with the central state.** It has also led to the formation, reinforcement and formalisation of self-defence groups, with the explicit or tacit support of the central state and security forces, taking over certain state functions notably in the area of security where the state itself no longer has the capacity to protect its population.

In addition, **the security measures taken by the three states** in the affected regions, including states of emergencies and curfews, bans on motorbikes and limitations on local markets, **have further eroded the confidence of the populations in the state**, as they suffer the double burden of violent attacks and counter-terrorism measures which, taken together, severely jeopardise their mobility and livelihoods¹⁸.

With the onset of Covid-19 and additional strict measures taken by the three governments including closure of borders and schools, the already highly vulnerable populations of Liptako-Gourma are further impacted¹⁹. For the food insecure people and all others living in this area, Covid-19 is seen as an additional crisis that will exacerbate multiple existing vulnerabilities. Mitigation measures tend to reinforce physical isolation of remote and landlocked communities. As a result, by the end of 2020, projections by the World Food Programme indicate that an additional 7.4 million people may be food insecure in these three countries as a result of Covid-19, for a total of 12.9 million food insecure²⁰. **Most of the Liptako-Gourma region is expected to be in a level 3 food security crisis during the ‘lean season’ June to August 2020** as reported by e.g. the

¹⁵ Including the French troops under Operation Barkhane, European troops under Task Force Takuba, the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSMA, etc.

¹⁶ <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/west-and-central-africa—liptako-gourma-crisis-monthly-dashboard-6-23-june-2020>

¹⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/school-closures-west-and-central-africa-triple-2017>

¹⁸ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/cost-of-counter-terrorism-for-civilians-in-liptako-gourma>

¹⁹ https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20200429_acaps_vulnerabilities_to_covid-19_containment_measures_in_burkina_faso_mali_and_niger.pdf

²⁰ Ref. LGA/WFP: Conflits persistants, pertes de terres agricoles et insécurité alimentaire récurrente dans la région du Liptako-Gourma (July 2020)

Food Crisis Prevention Network²¹. Closure of schools and displacement of unaccompanied children and youth further increase their vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups.

All armed groups operating in Liptako-Gourma participate in one way or another in the economy of trafficking and local conflicts. Illicit activities are essential to the establishment, expansion and survival of extremist groups in the Liptako-Gourma region. These mainly take the form of trafficking in weapons, drugs, motorcycles and fuel, along with cattle rustling, artisanal gold mining and poaching. Violent extremists benefit from these activities and also act as service providers or 'regulators' of these activities. **Efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, and other forms of insecurity, must be based on an understanding of the links between the various phenomena that feed it.** This will ensure that no action taken in relation to one phenomenon or actor will have counterproductive consequences.²² While addressing organised crime will be key to tackling the conflict(s) in Liptako-Gourma and to formulating long-term sustainable solutions, short term stabilisation efforts need to understand the intricate and localised linkages between organised crime, local conflict and livelihoods to avoid exacerbating tensions or to design mitigating measures²³.

Despite the substantive efforts to date by the three states and their international partners to quell the insurgency and protect the populations, the expected impact is not sufficiently visible as violence and insecurity keep growing. This is largely explained by the complexity and fast-changing nature of the context, including the regional and cross-border dynamics and the number of actors committed to support the affected countries. Therefore, **increasing emphasis is put on adjusting and strengthening coordination, and on improving the sequencing between security, humanitarian and development interventions** involving both national and international actors. This has resulted in several high-level political meetings and initiatives seeking to address the need for an overarching joint framework for intervention along the security and development continuum. This includes the creation of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5S) in 2014 and its Joint Forces in 2017, the establishment of the Sahel Alliance in 2017, the French-German initiative for the Security and Stability in the Sahel (P3S) in August 2019, the French-led Coalition for the Sahel (January 2020)²⁴ as well as announcements by both ECOWAS (September 2019) and AU (February 2020) to reinforce military interventions and investments in the 'fight against terrorism' in the Sahel. Recently, i.e. in the first half of 2020, international, regional and national forces have claimed several military victories and a gradual change of power relationships on the ground to their advantage²⁵.

It is against this backdrop that UNDP considers that **a case can be made for pilot-testing short-term stabilisation interventions** to complement reinforced national and international military and security operations by supporting the transition towards state-controlled and civilian-led security (i.e. primarily the police) to ensure community safety, as well as the return and consolidation of the central state and of local government. In the past, going back to Operation Serval but also to more recent tactically successful military operations, such interventions have not been backed up by national and cross-border capacity to take control of the territory and deploy sufficient state presence to ensure protection and regain the confidence of the populations and hence prevent the armed groups from returning, which over time has allowed the armed groups to re-organise, return and expand their territorial presence.

²¹ <http://www.food-security.net/en/topic/food-and-nutrition-crisis-2020/#rub-5>

²² Assanvo et al. Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, Institute for Security Studies (Dec 2019); <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war-26-eng.pdf>

²³ The complex interplay between security and organised crime and the unintended consequences of policy measures to curb illicit activities is also well illustrated by the International Crisis Group report: Managing Trafficking in Northern Niger (January 2020); <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/285-managing-trafficking-in-niger.pdf>

²⁴ The Coalition is a comprehensive framework encompassing and structuring international (primarily European) support and many of the other prior initiatives under its four Pillars namely Pillar 1: International military interventions (incl. Barkhane and Takuba); Pillar 2: Reinforcement of regional and national military capacity (incl. EUTM Mali and Sahel); Pillar 3: Re-deployment of state services including civil security (incl. P3S) and Pillar 4: Support for resilience and development (incl. Sahel Alliance).

²⁵ See e.g. <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1007297/politique/la-coalition-pour-le-sahel-une-reussite-franco-africaine/>

The main hypothesis for stabilisation, as different from other types of peace building initiatives, thus includes the following assumptions, to be further tested on the ground during the pilot phase:

- Against the background of international efforts to support national and regional security forces and some initial signs of success on the ground, there is a need to simultaneously support the capacity of the states in the sub-region to complement military interventions with rapid civilian action to sustain the absence of violence, (re-)deploy civilian security and offer early 'peace dividends' for the population. *Stabilisation efforts thus need to coordinate and cooperate closely with military and security forces.*
- Given both the historical marginalisation of the region, the further withdrawal of the state due to conflict, and in many instances a history of weak governance and elite capture, there is an urgent need to support the return of the state and reinforced confidence in state services, with a focus on civil security, justice²⁶ and basic social services. *Hence, stabilisation interventions clearly support one party to the conflict, namely the legitimate but reformed and accountable state.*
- In order to sustain military gains and ensure stabilisation over time, and given the limited capacity and credibility of the state in many instances, *close cooperation with local government, traditional authorities, civil society and the local communities themselves will be required.*
- In order to build trust, support social cohesion, prevent recruitment to armed groups and encourage the return of displaced populations, *stabilisation will require a mix of different interventions at the local level, including support to effective mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution (including natural resource management²⁷), enhanced social and political inclusion (including of women and youth²⁸) and supporting people's livelihood.*
- Given the volatile security context, rapidly changing and highly localised conflict dynamics as well as heightened tensions between communities and thus the need to always apply a strong conflict sensitivity lens (i.e. 'do no harm') to any intervention, *continuous and highly granular conflict analysis will be required to maximise the chances of success for stabilisation efforts.*
- Finally, given the fact that stabilisation is only a transitional intervention, meant to create favourable conditions for the return of the state and longer-term reforms and development interventions, *a strong political commitment by national and local authorities, and their regional partners, to ensure sustainability of initial stabilisation efforts is a pre-requisite for success.*

In parallel to **pilot testing short term stabilisation** and the assumptions laid out above, and in response to a request from the Liptako-Gourma states in reference to the experience in Lake Chad²⁹, UNDP further proposes to support the formulation of **a locally owned and regionally anchored concerted strategic framework for medium- to long-term stabilisation of the region** which will allow for the gradual expansion and scaling-up of local level stabilisation initiatives in close coordination with other existing and emerging frameworks and region-wide coordination mechanisms, including the Africa Union's (AU) revised strategy for the Sahel (forthcoming) and the European Coalition for the Sahel. Such a strategic framework should offer a platform for regional and cross-border cooperation and the political support to the longer-term reform processes required to address the underlying causes and drivers of the conflict. Rather than being 'yet another strategy for the Sahel', it should serve as a practical tool for the Liptako-Gourma states to reinforce their cooperation and position themselves in relation to other existing frameworks.

²⁶ This may, given the nature of the conflict, include elements of transitional justice, which will be further assessed and discussed in the context of formulating precise action plans for stabilisation, or in the context of 'extended stabilisation'; see next chapter.

²⁷ Given the complex nature of the conflict, fuelled by competition over dwindling natural resources on which people's livelihoods are largely based, improved local governance of natural resources and a better understanding of the impact of climate change on the same, will be critical to sowing the seeds of sustainable solutions.

²⁸ Building inter alia on the experiences from and tools developed by UNDP's regional Prevention Violent Extremism (PVE) programme.

²⁹ A formal written request for such support has already been submitted to UNDP from the Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA); see Chapter 4.

3. UNDP's Approach to Stabilisation

UNDP has extensive experience of supporting stabilisation in various parts of the world but also recognises that its interpretation of the concept has been different in different context. Therefore, in 2016/2017 UNDP commissioned a stock-taking exercise of stabilisation interventions in 11 countries³⁰ which subsequently led to the formulation of a UNDP position paper on its approach to stabilisation which stipulates³¹:

'UNDP conceives stabilisation as a time bound, integrated programme of activities in areas cleared and held through military action intended to create confidence in, and provide support to an ongoing peace process internationally recognised through a Security Council mandate while laying the building blocks for longer-term peace building and development by delivering a peace dividend to local communities and seeking to extend legitimate political authority. This definition and its application may vary depending on the country context.'

The position paper goes on to explain the **three main pillars** of (immediate) stabilisation, namely:

- I. Rehabilitation of Essential Infrastructure and Basic Services,
- II. Physical Security and Access to Justice,
- III. Revitalisation of the Local Economy.

It also refers to the distinction UNDP has applied in certain contexts (notably in Lake Chad Basin) between **'immediate' and 'extended stabilisation'**, where immediate stabilisation takes place over a maximum 18 months period and covers the three pillars above while extended stabilisation refers to longer-term reforms and peacebuilding types of interventions to address underlying and root causes to conflict, e.g. in the areas of governance and reconciliation.

As stated above, the definition and application of the concept of 'stabilisation' will vary depending on the country context. One of the purposes of the pilot phase is precisely to better understand the context and to adjust UNDP's approach to stabilisation to optimise its impact in the Liptako-Gourma context while taking stock of other stabilisation-like programmes in the region and UNDP's experiences of stabilisation elsewhere.

For stabilisation in Liptako-Gourma, one of the most **relevant prior experiences to learn from should be the UNDP supported stabilisation facility in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region**, given the similarities in context and purpose. This Regional Stabilisation Facility (RSF) is a funding and implementation mechanism in support of immediate stabilisation of 'Boko Haram affected areas' in the four member states (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria), hosted by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). It also supports the implementation of the LCB Regional Stabilisation Strategy (RSS), adopted by the LCBC member states and endorsed by the AU as the long-term political framework for stabilisation. In the absence of 'an internationally recognised peace process supported by a Security Council mandate', as stipulated by the UNDP definition of stabilisation, the RSS and its 'guarantors', notably the AU, become the overarching political framework under which stabilisation takes place and the political momentum is upheld³². A key aspect of this political framework is the presence of the AU mandated Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which as part of its concept of operations shall also contribute to Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), i.e. stabilisation.

In Liptako-Gourma, efforts are ongoing to establish a similar political and security framework, which could be leveraged in the accomplishment of stabilisation objectives in the region. The Liptako-Gourma region coincides with the 'central front' of the G5S Joint Forces and the intergovernmental organisation covering this region – the Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA) - has since 2017 received an expanded political mandate that also covers security, similarly to the LCBC. The LGA member states, i.e. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, have decided to formulate a Stabilisation Strategy for the region (similar to the RSS) for which they have requested UNDP's

³⁰ Pillay and Hoeven (van der): Stabilisation: An Independent Stock-Taking and Elements of a Possible Corporate Approach for UNDP (2017)

³¹ UNDP's Approach to Stabilisation (no date).

³² However, the RSS was developed subsequent to UNSC Resolution 2349 (March 2017) which inter alia calls for greater regional cooperation and coordination to manage the conflict, support early recovery and address the root causes of the conflict.

support. In addition, as mentioned above, France leads a European initiative in support of the G5S countries to link reinforced security action with stabilisation and development - the Coalition for the Sahel, and the AU announced at its latest summit in February 2020 that it will send a temporary force of 3000 troops to the Sahel in support of the G5S Joint Forces. The Liptako-Gourma region thus presents a more complex landscape of international actors compared to the Lake Chad Basin. **The proposed 18-month pilot phase will allow LGA and its member states, supported by UNDP, to situate its stabilisation facility within this emerging concerted political and security framework for the region.**

Whereas the LCB/RSS was adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council in December 2018, the Stabilisation Facility itself (the RSF) was only launched in July 2019 and will thus have less than one year of operational experiences to share with the LGA, and lessons-learned are hitherto more operational than strategic. Nevertheless, given the shared context of a cross-border region, the presence of violent extremist groups, a history of limited state presence and similar grievances by the population, and stabilisation efforts led and coordinated by a regional organisation, the LCB RSF/RSS experience should be highly relevant for the Liptako-Gourma region and **sharing experiences between the two regions and regional organisations will thus be a key feature of the pilot phase.**

In addition, UNDP will capitalise on its long experience from and current presence in the Liptako-Gourma region. For example, with funding from the Peace Building Fund (PBF), UNDP developed and implemented a cross-border project in the Liptako-Gourma region between 2017 and 2019, aiming to improve community security and social cohesion of the populations by mitigating vectors of conflicts such as marginalisation of young people, lack of trust between local populations and the security forces, and the conflicts between farmers and herders. This project also took account of early data on youth vulnerability to recruitment by violent extremist (VE) groups and interventions were tailored to most at-risk youth. Two other relevant PBF-funded projects are currently being implemented by UNDP in the region, namely 1) a pilot cross-border project between Burkina Faso and Mali in support of the implementation of G5 Sahel's Integrated Youth Strategy, seeking to support peace and security through participatory governance involving young people as actors of peace and development agents, and 2) a project on conflicts related to natural resources which builds on the involvement of women and seeks to reinforce resilience to the effects of climate change for the reduction of community and cross-border conflicts related to natural resources. Finally (3), there is also a recent Joint UN Programme in support of cross-border cooperation in Liptako-Gourma, funded by Sweden and launched in January 2020, that can offer relevant experiences and potential synergies with the stabilisation initiative. This Joint UN Programme comprises 8 UN agencies coordinated by UNDP and seeks to support resilience and conflict prevention in the Liptako-Gourma border regions.

4. Partnerships and approach to Stabilisation in Liptako-Gourma

In promoting stabilisation in the Liptako-Gourma region, **UNDP will work closely with and support the capacity reinforcement of the Authority for the Integrated Development of the Liptako-Gourma States** (the 'Liptako-Gourma Authority'; LGA)³³ with which UNDP has a long-standing partnership since its establishment in 1970. Through LGA and its established governance and decision-making structures, close cooperation will also be established with its member states.

LGA was originally established to support the cooperation and pooling of resources of its three member states (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) in the management of shared natural resources and infrastructure in the border areas. In 2017, LGA's mandate was extended to also include security which makes it legally and politically well situated to host a Facility for support to Stabilisation, not least in light of the extent to which tensions around Natural Resource Management (NRM) fuel the conflict. These efforts will however take place in close cooperation and coordination with other regional organisations (G5S, WAEMU, ECOWAS and the AU) and within the prevailing continental and regional frameworks, taking account of the principle of subsidiarity.

Recently, UNDP has been supporting LGA to formulate a new 'Document for Political Orientation' ('Document d'Orientation Politique; DOP) and an 'Intervention Strategy' (Stratégie d'Intervention;

³³ In French: l'Autorité de Développement Intégré des Etats de Liptako-Gourma; ALG

SI) to be formally adopted by the next Summit of the Heads of State. The SI, which is a comprehensive strategic document in support of operationalising LGA's mandate, refers to **the need to develop more specific thematic intervention strategies, of which one should be a Stabilisation Strategy**. In a letter to UNDP's Africa Director in January 2020, the LGA Executive Secretary ad interim (ES a.i.) requested UNDP's support to accompanying LGA in developing its Stabilisation Strategy and a mechanism for its implementation.

As demonstrated by several recent conflict, risk and resilience assessments of the Sahel and the Liptako-Gourma region, many of which UNDP has commissioned or actively supported³⁴, the spiralling levels of violence are explained by a complex mix of historical, structural, spill-over, local and triggering factors. These conflict dynamics, while sharing many common characteristics and underlying causes, can however look very different from one locality to another which points to the need for highly localised and granular context and conflict analysis before designing interventions, to ensure stabilisation support packages are specifically tailored to each location and are as conflict sensitive as possible in order not to worsen existing conflict dynamics. In addition, quick feedback loops which can take into account the volatile context and enable flexible and adaptive programming will be required, as will close coordination with other actors on the ground, including security actors. This has led UNDP to suggest **the need for a 'Knowledge Hub' located in LGA and operating in partnership with independent think tanks and research institutions**³⁵ which possess the required expertise, methodology, infrastructure and independence to lend credibility to the analysis and objectively support monitoring of progress. This Knowledge Hub should be closely linked to the MNE system of the Stabilisation Facility for both immediate and extended stabilisation and will - during the present pilot phase (for lack of resources and initial capacity) – most likely primarily be focusing on the latter.

Among the common characteristics feeding into the conflict across the borderlands of the Liptako-Gourma region is a perceived and real sense of **historical marginalisation**, of being abandoned by the state and not (sufficiently) included in national political processes, or benefiting from the allocation of state resources and access to infrastructure and social and governance services, including justice and security. The historically limited presence of the state has been further exacerbated by the on-going conflict which has led to the closure of schools, clinics, courts and police stations, unprecedented levels of internal displacement³⁶ and an increased need for protection which the state has not been able to respond to. Instead, self-defence groups, sometimes actively supported by the state, have emerged with the risk of further eroding confidence in state institutions.

A key objective for stabilisation will thus be to strengthen the presence of the state, and of local government, and the (re-) building of confidence in state institutions, including security services, as a prerequisite for a renewed social contract between the state and its citizens. None of the UNDP supported stabilisation efforts, therefore, will be labelled with UNDP or supporting donor logos but **all interventions will be undertaken in the name of the state, local government or LGA**. In return, this will demand a strong and credible commitment from LGA and its member states to guarantee security and sustain investments over time since a backlash in the form of renewed and retaliatory attacks on the local population would further erode confidence in the state, reinforce grievances and likely lead to increased support for armed groups perceived to offer more effective protection and services. On the other hand, should the state succeed in protecting its citizens, sustain initial investments and lay the ground for a transition towards peace, this will enable other

³⁴ UNDP: 'Mapping of crisis intervention in the Liptako-Gourma region' (forthcoming Aug/Sept 2020), Alliance Sahel: Evaluation of Risk and Resilience (draft Oct 2019), AfDB/WB/UN/EU: Evaluation of Prevention and Peace Consolidation in Burkina (Oct 2019), UNICEF/OCHA/OECD: Risk and vulnerabilities in Liptako-Gourma (Dec 2018), etc.

³⁵ Initial suggestions for partnerships have included the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) with which LGA already has an MoU; the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) which already undertakes extensive data collection and research in the region on public perceptions of security, which is highly relevant for stabilisation; and the Ecole de Maintien de la Paix in Mali with which UNDP's Country Office already has an established partnership. There are also preliminary discussions with the WB on cooperation around Knowledge management in both the LCB and LG regions. Finally, synergies and cooperation will be sought with other UNDP programmes such as the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programme based in Addis Ababa.

³⁶ From IOM Displacement tracker: As of 23 June 2020, 1,422,112 individuals have been displaced, including 1,256,917 Internally Displaced Persons (88% of the displaced population) and 165,195 Refugees (12% of the displaced population). Sixty-six per cent of the displaced population (941,951 individuals) were located in Burkina Faso, while 18 per cent resided in Mali (258,370 individuals), 11 per cent in Niger (163,178 individuals) and 4 per cent in Mauritania (58,613 individuals).

humanitarian and development actors to also move in and for the necessary political processes of reconciliation and reshaping the social contract to take-off.

This points to the importance of **close and trustful dialogue and coordination with regional, national and local authorities, in particular with the security services**, in the process of identification of the sites and the planning and implementation of stabilisation interventions. **These sites should be strategically selected from a political-security perspective in a logic that contributes to stabilisation of the area beyond the site itself**, because the chosen locality is important for the surrounding areas from a political, security, economic and/or social point of view. It could e.g. be an important market place, a transport hub, key segments of a main road, a model for social cohesion, a centre for access to state and local government services, or interventions that allow for the return of displaced populations, or help prevent organised crime or the recruitment to armed groups, or for other strategic reasons that can only be known by the authorities themselves and discussed in the local context. Ideally, the initial site selection should also prepare for the next round of expansion of immediate stabilisation, based on security strategies, the capacity of the state and local government to sustain investments, and the presence of other humanitarian, stabilisation and development actors.

As endorsed by the joint political consultations conducted by LGA and UNDP with LGA member states in February 2020, **successful stabilisation in Liptako-Gourma will require a strong focus on cross-border cooperation**. UNDP will therefore support the selection of cross-border sites and corridors for immediate stabilisation as a contribution towards enhanced cross-border security cooperation. However, site identification for piloting immediate stabilisation intervention must primarily be strategic from a security-political point of view, while at the same time be justified from a **needs perspective** (to avoid the risk of being perceived as political favouritism) and with a strong **conflict sensitivity perspective** to minimise the risk of exacerbating existing tensions by being perceived as favouring certain groups, areas or actors over others. For reasons of budget limitations during the pilot phase, up to five intervention sites will be selected.

To support the process of site assessment and formulation of stabilisation action plans, including the required civil-military joint planning, and to ensure security during implementation, UNDP proposes to convene local level 'Partnership Platforms' in connection with the selected sites, composed of relevant actors present on the ground and actively delivering services to the local population, including, most importantly, in the area of security. These Partnership Platforms will have a key role in ensuring security, providing early warning of a potentially deteriorating situation, and in monitoring and sustaining the 'stabilisation relevance' of the selected sites and interventions over time. The composition and role of the Partnership Platforms may differ from one context to another and may also evolve over time, something which has to be agreed through a process of political dialogue in each specific context and around each selected site, based on the national and regional security architecture in place.

5. The primacy of politics, civil-military cooperation and coordination

As has been repeatedly emphasised, **stabilisation is inherently political in its nature**, pointing to the importance of sustained trust-building political dialogue at regional, national and local level in order to confirm and strengthen political support for the process and the active buy-in of all concerned stakeholders, not least the security forces. While extensive initial political consultations at both regional and national level have already taken place, as laid out below, the deepening of these ongoing dialogues will be a key feature of the pilot phase.

Following initial discussions between UNDP and LGA throughout 2019 on the establishment of a 'stabilisation mechanism' and the subsequent formalisation of UNDP-support to LGA for the same by exchange of letters as referred to above, **UNDP and the LGA conducted joint missions in February 2020 to inform and consult with various political authorities of the LGA member states**, supported by the Chair of the LGA Ministerial Council, the Minister for Plan(ning) in Niger. In each country, the delegation met with the ministries of Defence, Security, Humanitarian Affairs and Interior and Territorial Administration to discuss the establishment of a stabilisation mechanism for the Liptako-Gourma region and obtain feedback and guidance. The mission garnered the political support of the member states including the LGA Ministerial Council which in its communique following its most recent ministerial council meeting (May 2020) "*instructed the Executive Secretariat*

of the LGA to continue consultations to expedite the development of the Stabilisation Mechanism and to ensure that the direction given by Ministers during the joint ALG-UNDP circular missions to member states in February 2020 is taken into account; [and] called on member states to support the region's stabilisation process, particularly on the security front”.

Simultaneously, at the regional level, initial consultations took place with the **AU Commissioner for Peace and Security**, the Office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission as well as with the **President of the ECOWAS Commission** who all expressed strong support for the initiative. Consultations with other regional organisations, notably the G5 Sahel and continued in-depth consultations with AU and ECOWAS were temporarily postponed because of the Covid-context but will resume – physically or virtually – as part of the early implementation of the pilot phase. Given the planned reinforced support to the G5S Joint Forces and Secretariat by both the AU/ECOWAS and the Coalition for the Sahel, in-depth joint UNDP-LGA **consultations with G5S will be an urgent priority** and will inter alia focus on how to conceptualise and operationalise the role of LGA in G5S's central front and under the Coalition framework.

In addition, **consultations with potential donors and European capitals are ongoing**. Germany has expressed its commitment and is providing technical support to the formulation of the pilot phase. Germany has also supported consultations with other European capitals. As pilot phase implementation starts on the ground, these consultations will be mirrored by engaging the donors and partners in-country, notably Germany, France and the EU, but also key national and international stakeholders and coordination platforms, including the Sahel Alliance (of which UNDP is a member) which is stepping up its efforts of coordination and visibility including support for the Integrated Framework for Priority Action (IFPA) presented by the G5S at its latest Summit in February 2020 as a joint framework of intervention for all Sahel Alliance member organisations.

Given the highly political nature of stabilisation and the key importance of civil-military coordination (CIMIC) for stabilisation - not to be confused with CIMIC for humanitarian purposes - UNDP will further **liaise closely with the RC/HC and the UNCT** in the three countries to clarify roles and mandates and to ensure transparency. This will also require pro-active and close consultations and liaison at the level of regional hubs (Dakar and Addis Ababa) and HQs (N.Y.). To the extent other UN organisations are present on the ground at the selected sites for immediate stabilisation, close coordination and cooperation will be sought in the spirit of ONE UN.

Further, stabilisation interventions are squarely placed within the **‘humanitarian-development-peace/security-nexus’** (the ‘triple nexus’) which is an international and UN policy priority with prior and current UNDP experiences to draw on, notably in Mali. Despite the many sensitivities linked to the ‘triple nexus’, which is sometimes perceived to challenge humanitarian principles and agreed criteria for development funding, experience also shows that coordination and cooperation between humanitarian, development and security actors can be less challenging at the local level in the spirit of solving joint and immediate problems. Close cooperation with other UN Agencies will also be sought in connection with extended stabilisation and in support of the implementation of LGA's forthcoming Stabilisation Strategy. Joined-up UN system support to the latter should be aligned on the three Pillars of the Support Plan (SP) of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS).

6. The need for a Pilot cum Inception Phase - and beyond?

The purpose of the pilot phase is to provide the foundational elements for a subsequent full-fledged stabilisation facility in the areas of **politics, analytics, capacity and initial results**. While all these aspects are required and jointly make up a whole which is bigger than the sum of its parts, the emphasis in terms of effort and funding, and the arena for harvesting results, will be the pilot implementation of immediate stabilisation. However, taken together, all these areas of work, which also underpin the formulation of the pilot phase outputs (below), will feed into the formulation of the full-scale stabilisation facility and the establishment of initial programme management capacity and governance mechanisms, allowing for a seamless transition from the pilot phase into the full-scale facility.

In summary, the rationale underpinning the need for a pilot cum inception phase encompasses the following aspects;

- **Politics:** The importance of establishing a shared understanding of stabilisation and its requirements by all concerned stakeholders via continued, pro-active dialogue and hence ensure the necessary political buy-in, ownership, partnerships and coordination / cooperation required for success and as a stepping stones for future political processes in support of stability;
- **Analytics:** The need for a deeper understanding of the context, the conflict dynamics and the various actors on the ground to help shape the proposed interventions but also to design and start putting in place mechanisms for continuous conflict analysis and feedback loops, including basic MNE. This also entails taking account of the ongoing mapping exercise of the current conflict context and crisis response landscape as well as the ambition to capture and build on experiences from the Lake Chad Basin (LCB);
- **Capacity:** With a view to both effectiveness and sustainability, there is a need to assess and reinforce the institutional capacity of LGA and to reinforce implementation capacity of UNDP for rapid delivery, scaling-up and sustainability. This also includes the development of an agile implementation methodology that allows for learning from experience in implementing pilot immediate stabilisation and hence 'what works' in Liptako-Gourma, taking account of the volatile security situation and the prevailing Covid-19 context;
- **Results:** The ambition to demonstrate results to relevant stakeholders including LGA, other regional organisations, LGA member states, the UN System (UNS) and donors. Results should primarily be understood to mean tangible progress towards stabilisation at the local level, measured as progress towards stabilisation objectives specifically defined for each locality, but it will also refer to results in terms of putting in place initial capacity to prepare for expansion and scaling up and demonstrating the effectiveness of UNDP's proposed model.

Hence, **the pilot phase will inform the development of the full-scale Stabilisation Facility in key areas such as:**

- relevance and demonstrated rationale of the suggested approach to stabilisation in the current context in Liptako-Gourma, primarily by way of promising initial results under immediate stabilisation;
- complementarity, coordination and cooperation with other actors, including regional organisations, regional and international security forces and other donors and development partners;
- political ownership and commitment of LGA and its member states, including civil and military security forces and local authorities;
- feasibility and appropriate strategies to ensure access and safety in a highly challenging security environment;
- effective mechanisms for civil-military cooperation/coordination;
- UNDP's capacity to deliver in partnership with other organisations and LGA's and Member States' need for capacity reinforcement for scale-up and sustainable delivery over time;

Without pre-empting on the outcome of the pilot phase with regard these issues, as well as other questions that will surface during the pilot phase, **the full-fledged Facility may consider and incorporate aspects** such as:

- broadening the scope of political and cooperation partnerships to include other regional organisations such as the G5S and ECOWAS;
- closer cooperation with MINUSMA and other UN agencies and offices in implementing both immediate and extended stabilisation;
- intensifying collaboration with emerging security and development policy and coordination frameworks in the region such as the Coalition, P3S, the Sahel Alliance (including the WB), IFPA, etc.;

- closer and institutionalised learning and exchange of experience in the area of stabilisation within UNDP and with other partner organisations.

7. Expected outputs during the Pilot Phase

Against the background and context outlined above and as explained in more detail below, the proposed 18 months inception cum pilot phase will cover **three programmatic outputs and eight key activities** as follows below. A comprehensive theory of change will be formulated for the full-fledged Facility and build on the experiences and lessons learnt during the pilot phase.

Output 1: Strengthened Capacity and Analytics for Implementation of the Pilot Phase: Preparatory Activities aiming to establish the required management and governance framework for the Pilot Phase while also laying the ground for the next phase of the programme:

1. Pilot Phase Governance and Management structures agreed and established, through political consultations, including an organisational capacity assessment of LGA and reinforcement of UNDP delivery capacity;
2. The Knowledge Hub designed, and foundational elements established to ensure basic analytical capacity and Monitoring and Evaluation (MNE) capacity during pilot phase, including lessons learnt from the LCB.

Output 2: Demonstrated Results on the ground: Pilot Implementation of Immediate Stabilisation supported by local level mechanisms for civil-military and service delivery coordination (Partnership Platforms):

3. Immediate Stabilisation action plans implemented in up to five sites, based on geo-strategic importance for stabilisation and assessment of conflict dynamics and needs, and sequenced based on available budget, capacity and support from national and local stakeholders;
4. Local level Partnership Platforms for civil-military and service delivery coordination established and functional at the sites of implementation.

Output 3: Strengthened Political support for Scaling up, Coordination and Extended Stabilisation: Continuous political consultations at regional, national and local levels to reinforce a shared understanding of and political commitment to the proposed stabilisation facility at all required levels which is a prerequisite for success.

5. Improved contextual understanding and coordination with all stakeholders based on continued political consultations and information sharing;
6. A Stabilisation Strategy for the Liptako-Gourma region formulated, with UNDP support, and adopted by LGA member states;
7. A well-informed programme document for the scaling up and roll out of a Liptako-Gourma Stabilisation Facility in coordination and complementarity with other crisis response programmes.
8. An ambitious communication and advocacy plan for the visibility of regional stabilisation efforts and to demonstrate progress in implementation of activities. It will also be used for resource mobilisation.

Below follows a detailed list of the activities to be implemented under each of the three programmatic outputs.

OUTPUT 1: Strengthened Capacity and Analytics for Implementation

Activity 1: Pilot Phase Governance and Management structures agreed and established, including an organisational capacity assessment of LGA and reinforcement of UNDP delivery capacity

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 1:

1.1 The required Pilot Phase governance structures are established³⁷

Based on further consultations with the LGA, its member states and other actors (UN/RCO, donors, civil society) and taking account of the selection of intervention sites for immediate stabilisation:

A Steering Committee for the pilot phase is established, with endorsed ToRs, inter alia to:

- provide overall guidance and direction for the implementation of the pilot phase, including necessary adjustments to the project document,
- facilitate the formation of the Partnership Platform(s) for immediate stabilisation,
- approve the action plans for and oversee the implementation of immediate stabilisation in the selected intervention sites,
- provide guidance and direction for the formulation of a project document for the full-scale stabilisation facility based on lessons learnt from the pilot phase.

1.2 The required UNDP project management capacity has been identified and mobilised

Minimum capacity for pilot phase implementation is estimated to be:

- A regional task team posted to the LGA HQs in Ouagadougou, including a Project Manager/Coordinator, a CIMIC Adviser, a Project Analyst/MNE Adviser and a Procurement/Operations Analyst plus administrative support in the form of an assistant and a driver,
- Three full-time national Stabilisation Officers, serving as focal points in each of the three UNDP Country Offices (but not necessarily posted in the capital; tbc),
- Technical advisory and programme support (50%) provided by a Stabilisation Specialist/Advisor based in the Dakar Hub,
- Direct operational, financial and administrative project implementation support provided from the Regional Service Centre in Addis, respective COs (see activity 1.2) and the Dakar Hub, as needed,
- The Regional Programme Management Support Unit (PMSU) in Addis will be responsible for quality assurance of project implementation, project financial management and its reporting and accountability to the partners.

1.3 The required capacity for sequenced implementing up to five action plans for immediate stabilisation has been identified and put in place

- A staffing plan for each of the COs will be established in connection with developing the action plans for immediate stabilisation, taking into account UNDP's experiences in LCB.

³⁷ See also section II on Governance and Management arrangements

1.4 An institutional capacity assessment of the LGA is conducted³⁸

The assessment will cover the entire organisation, including central support functions such as planning & budget, human resources, sustainable financing and governance but with a focus on LGA's new security mandate and required capacities to sustainably support immediate and extended stabilisation.

- Based on the assessment, a medium-term strategy for institutional capacity development of the LGA is elaborated and submitted to LGA for approval and operationalisation. This capacity assessment will also inform the risk analysis for the full-fledged proposal.

1.5 Initial catalytic capacity established in the area of climate security to undertake baseline analysis together with the UNDP-DPPA-UNEP Climate Security Mechanism (CSM)

A climate and security risk expert may be posted to the task team, should earmarked funding be available, to undertake the following tasks and as a contribution towards foundational elements of the Knowledge Hub (see Activity 2 below):

- A sub-regional study of climate-related security risks / climate fragility, drawing from the guidance documents in the UN Climate Security Toolbox,
- Based on above, provide input to the LGA Stabilisation Strategy in the area of climate-security, in close consultation and cooperation with other relevant sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS, CILSS and WASCAL, as well as the AU and the support currently offered by UNDP to the AUC in the area of Climate Security,
- Support to the design of the Knowledge Hub (below) and the MNE system in the area of NRM / conflict and climate security,
- Provide input to the full-fledged Programme Document for the Stabilisation Facility, including its risk assessment and risk management strategy,
- Contribute to the UN Climate Security Mechanisms (CSM) knowledge management and UN Community of Practice on Climate Security,
- Support and capitalise on country level (Mali, Burkina and Niger) climate-security assessments as relevant,
- Identify good practices and lessons learnt for mainstreaming of climate security into stabilisation programming.

Activity 2: The Knowledge Hub is designed, and foundational elements established to ensure basic analytical capacity and MNE during pilot phase, including collecting lessons learnt from the LCB.

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 2:

2.1 Design the Knowledge Hub

Building inter alia on the LGA capacity assessment, experience from the LCB Knowledge Management Platform and the need for data collection and analysis in order to ensure stabilisation relevance, conflict sensitivity, adaptive programming and minimum MNE capacity for the pilot phase, a detailed proposal for the Knowledge Hub will be developed. This proposal should be structured in terms of phases, identifying the (minimum) need and capacity for knowledge management during the pilot phase versus the full programme implementation phase. The knowledge hub however remains an integral part of the proposed Facility and of a future reinforced LGA organisation.

2.2 Explore and conclude partnerships for the Knowledge Hub

³⁸ This will also consider and coordinate with similar support under other ongoing (or forthcoming) programmes such as the UN Joint Programme on cross-border cooperation.

The design of the Knowledge Hub should consider the potential advantages of implementing data collection and analysis in partnership with local and regional think tanks and research institutes to ensure quality and integrity (see chapter 4 under section I). Synergies and complementarity with other relevant ongoing UNDP (-supported) programmes such as the Climate Security Mechanism (see activity 1.5) or the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programme³⁹ in Addis Ababa will also be considered in this context.

2.3 Collect and assess experiences from the LCB/RSF and other relevant programmes in Liptako-Gourma

This will be done on a continuous basis supported by the Stabilisation Adviser in the Dakar Hub but for certain areas and activities there might be need for external consultants to support the process and help formulate a feasible and relevant approach to immediate stabilisation specifically for the selected pilot sites Liptako-Gourma and given the limitations under the PIP. Specific areas of relevance for the Liptako-Gourma stabilisation facility will be to review the experience from LCB/RSF in relation to:

- the site selection, assessment, formulation and implementation of action plans for immediate stabilisation including the process for and actual formulation of 'stabilisation objectives' for each site,
- the support for extended stabilisation, how it links to and builds on immediate stabilisation, including the selection of subsequent rounds of sites for immediate stabilisation, and how it coordinates with other programmes for early recovery and peace building,
- the conceptual and programmatic choices regarding the application of a PVE-lens to stabilisation in the LCB/RSF and best practices/lessons learned for the Liptako-Gourma region,
- the design and role of the Knowledge Management Platform in LCBC and how it can support conflict analysis and MNE,
- etc.

Output 2: Demonstrated results on the Ground – Pilot Implementation of Immediate Stabilisation

Activity 3: Immediate Stabilisation action plans implemented in up to five sites, based on geo-strategic importance for stabilisation and assessment of conflict dynamics and needs

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 3:

Building on the guidance from assessing the LCB/RSF experiences of immediate stabilisation (activity 2.3),

3.1 Continue consultations with the LGA secretariat and political authorities in member states, defence and security ministries, on generic and context specific criteria for selection of sites for immediate stabilisation and subsequently on the identification of the sites themselves⁴⁰

Generic criteria will include:

- Security guaranteed over time for the local population and for implementing agencies,

³⁹ The PVE programme is currently working on a second generation flagship research report referred to as the 'Journey 2.0' where data collection is planned to cover all three LG countries and suggestions have been made to develop a specific chapter / report for LG which would be highly relevant analysis for the Stabilisation Facility.

⁴⁰ A process has already started to consult on and identify sites for immediate stabilisation, facilitated by the LGA. In the case of Burkina Faso and Niger sites (at the level of 'commune rurale' [district]) have been provisionally selected for further validation, including break-down at village level and complementarity with sites in the other countries from a cross-border cooperation perspective. These sites appear to have been proposed while also taking into account the sites suggested for the Joint UN Programme for cross-border cooperation in LG.

- Relevance from a stabilisation point of view, i.e. from a political-military security perspective, taking into account the need for cross-border stabilisation,
- Access and feasibility of implementation within existing budgets, including demand and support by the local population,
- Based on needs, conflict sensitivity and do-no-harm in light of local conflicts/ tensions/ stakeholders,
- Commitment by national and local authorities to sustain investments over time.

3.2 Conduct rapid and in-depth assessments of selected areas as per guidance resulting from activity 2.3 and minimum MNE requirements for the pilot phase

- Rapid immediate assessment to confirm relevance and feasibility of the selected sites, including basic needs and most immediate priorities as well as the presence of other actors delivering services,
- Surveys of community perception of security and social cohesion, serving inter alia as a baseline to measure progress towards stabilisation objectives,
- Conflict Analysis: local level conflict dynamics and conflict sensitivity assessment, to establish a baseline and monitor progress, and to ensure interventions are informed by conflict sensitivity⁴¹,
- Human Rights due diligence assessment of the security forces which will participate in and benefit from immediate stabilisation,
- In-depth needs assessments along UNDP's identified three pillars of immediate stabilisation in selected zones, namely 1. security, governance & justice, 2. livelihoods and supporting the local economy, and 3. rehabilitation of infrastructure and access to basic social services,
- Climate fragility assessment (tbc⁴²),
- Gender equality will be mainstreamed in all the assessments above.

3.3. The action plans for the implementation of immediate stabilisation are formulated, based on lessons learnt from LCB, the assessment of selected areas, available budget and consultations with the Partnership Platforms, and subsequently approved by the Pilot Phase Steering Committee.

Without pre-empting the outcome from assessing lessons learnt in LCB (activity 2.3) and of the local assessments, immediate stabilisation action plans usually cover investments in the following areas:

- Rehabilitation and provision of essential infrastructure and basic social services,
- Physical security and access to justice, including transitional justice as well as conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, including PVE related interventions, as relevant,
- Support to livelihoods and revitalisation of the local economy, e.g. based on UNDP's 3x6 methodology⁴³.

Given the limited time frame for the pilot phase (18 months), the action plans for immediate stabilisation may have to be considerably shorter in LG than is the case of the LCB/RSF (where they are formulated for an 18 months implementation period, notwithstanding delays linked to operational challenges and the Covid-19 context) and / or be conceived of in terms of phases (e.g. of 6 months).

⁴¹ The precise methodology for this will be retained during PIP implementation, building on the experiences in LCB and in other programmes in LG. It will likely include a dedicated VE-risk assessment based on existing VE-analysis tools from the Regional PVE Project.

⁴² The approach to climate fragility assessment will build both on experiences from the LCB and be based on support from the UN Climate Security Mechanism in N.Y. which may also be in a position to co-fund some activities, and / or by the climate security expert who may join the initial task team, provided funding be available for this.

⁴³ More information on this methodology is found here: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/global-toolkit-on-the-3x6-approach--building-resilience-through-.html>. However, this methodology is currently being revised to take on board lessons learnt and incorporate adjustments to the current Corona-context.

3.4 The approved action plans are implemented by UNDP, UN partners, local service delivery contractors and the local community itself.

Activity 4: Local level Partnership Platforms for civil-military and service delivery coordination established and functional at the sites of implementation

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 4:

4.1 Identify all stabilisation-relevant actors present on the ground at the selected sites

This refers to actors delivering services in the areas of security, humanitarian aid and development, including national, local and traditional authorities and local, national and international partners.

4.2 Develop and adopt, by the Steering Committee, the ToRs for the Partnership Platforms, based on the guidance from national authorities and the steering committee.

The Partnership Platforms are meant to provide the necessary civil-military/security cooperation for stabilisation purposes at the local level, including:

- ensuring security by assessing the security environment and providing early warning;
- contributing to local level assessments by sharing existing prior analysis and guiding on priorities,
- contribute to the formulation and monitoring of stabilisation objectives and action plans for the area,
- guiding and overseeing implementation including contributing to adaptive programme management, as relevant.

4.3 Enable the efficient functioning of the Partnership Platforms over time and across borders.

- This may require some form of secretarial function under the LGA (tbd).

Output 3: Strengthened Political support for Scaling up, Coordination and Extended Stabilisation

Activity 5: Improved contextual understanding and coordination with all stakeholders based on continued political consultations and information sharing

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 5:

5.1 Systematically conduct regular political consultations with all concerned stakeholders to inform both immediate and extended stabilisation, guide pilot phase implementation and help shape the full-fledged programme document.

Concerned stakeholders include:

- regional organisations (G5S, WAEMU, ECOWAS and the AU) and regional armed forces,
- national stakeholders (will depend on the context but shall include Ministries of Defence, Interior and Security as well as national military and civil security actors; the Ministries of Justice and Agriculture, animal resources, and the environment are also likely key stakeholders given the importance of access to justice for conflict prevention and the degree to which the conflicts evolve around natural resource management),
- international partners and donors,
- regional policy frameworks and coordination platforms along the security – development continuum including the Coalition for Sahel and the Sahel Alliance,
- national policy and coordination platforms,

- sub-national and local authorities,
- UN Missions, Offices and Agencies at country and regional (and possibly HQs) level, including MINUSMA and UNOWAS.

Activity 6: A Stabilisation Strategy for the Liptako-Gourma region formulated by LGA with UNDP support, adopted by LGA member states and endorsed by the concerned regional organisations⁴⁴

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 6:

6.1 Formulate and adopt ToRs for a consultant who will support LGA and its member states to draft a stabilisation strategy including consultations with concerned stakeholders.

Activity 7: A well informed programme document for the scaling up and roll out of a Liptako-Gourma Stabilisation Facility in coordination and complementarity with other crisis response programmes

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 7:

7.1 Develop ToRs and recruit a consultant who will support UNDP, LGA and its member states to formulate a comprehensive project document for the implementation of a full-scale Stabilisation Facility, including a risk assessment and risk management strategy.

This project document could overlap with the ongoing pilot phase (PIP). As soon as it is approved, it will replace the PIP.

Activity 8: An ambitious communication and advocacy plan for the visibility of regional stabilisation efforts and to demonstrate progress in implementation of activities. It will also be used for resource mobilisation.

Detailed Activities linked to Activity 8:

Activity 8.1: A detailed communication and advocacy plan will be developed to ensure visibility of the results and support the engagement with stakeholders.

Activity 8.2: Based on the communication plan, a fund-raising strategy will be elaborated and implemented, for the pilot phase and beyond.

II. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. Governance arrangements during the pilot phase

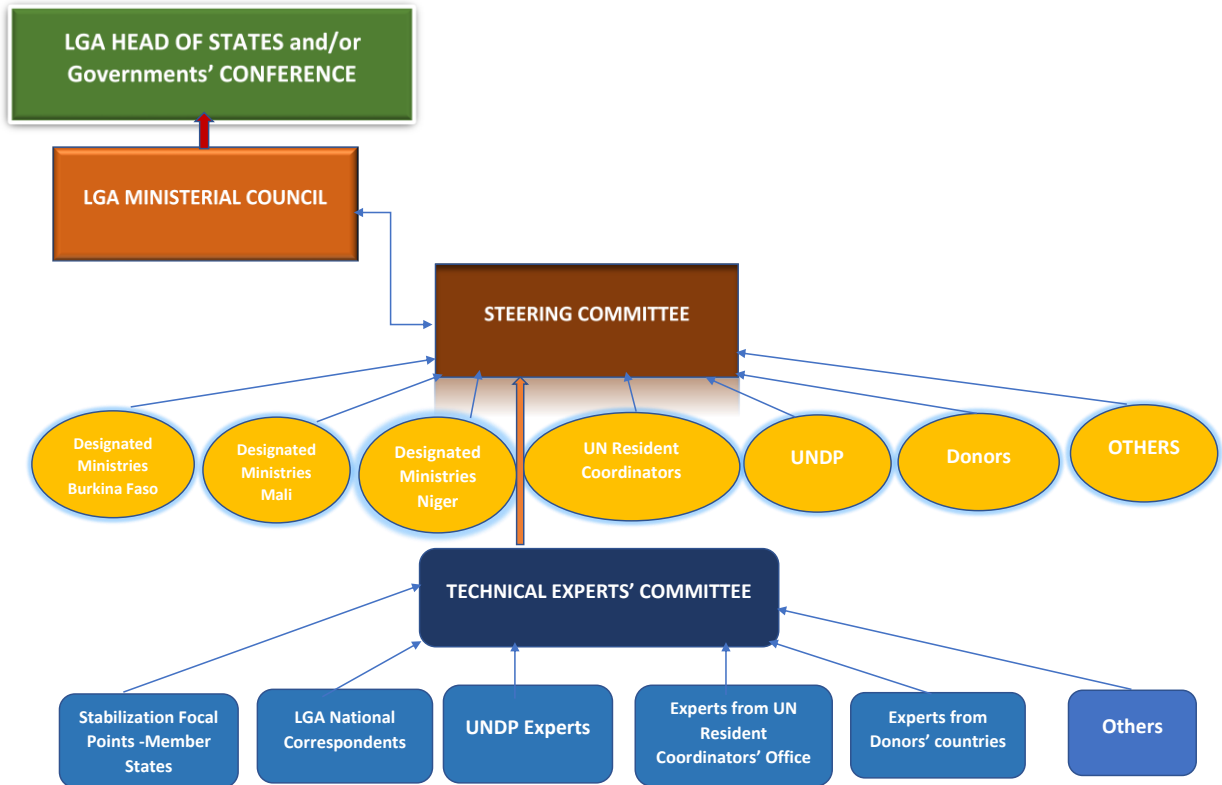
- At the very beginning of the implementation the present Project Initiation Plan (PIP), a Steering Committee will be established to inform and advise the LGA Ministerial Council on regional level political decisions in the area of stabilisation and to guide the implementation of the pilot phase programme, including the approval of adjusted work plans and of the action plans for immediate stabilisation at the pilot sites.
- Subject to further political consultations, the Steering Committee could e.g. be composed of the LGA National Correspondents and other representatives of key ministries concerned by stabilisation, the LGA Executive Secretary (or his designated representative), donor representative(s), RCO, UNS and UNDP representatives at country and / or regional level.
- For regional level political decision making on stabilisation in the sub-region, the LGA Heads of State Conference, guided by its Ministerial Council, remains the highest decision-making

⁴⁴ This will be an outcome of further political consultations but should consider endorsement by G5S, ECOWAS and the AU.

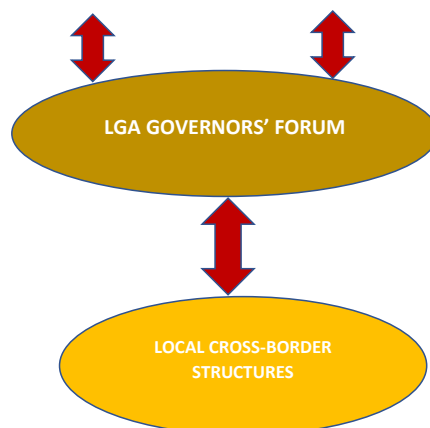
body with delegation to the Executive Secretary of the LGA, as per established procedures and practice and due consultations and vetting by member states.

- The Partnership Platforms, composed of key security and development actors present at the sites of immediate stabilisation, while not seen as an integral part of the governance structures, will play an advisory role to UNDP, LGA and the Steering Committee, as relevant, in terms of shaping and monitoring the contribution of immediate stabilisation towards overall stabilisation objectives.

2. Proposed Governance Structure of the Steering Committee:



REGIONAL CROSS-BORDER COORDINATION FRAMEWORK – IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AT REGIONAL & LOCAL LEVELS



3. Management arrangements during the pilot phase

- The LGA Stabilisation Facility Project Initiation Plan (PIP) will be implemented under UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) by the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA), using the existing Regional Programme and management structures of UNDP Africa, and in line with the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa Accountability Framework.

- On a day-to-day basis, the PIP Project Manager, based at the LGA in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, will have the authority to run the project on behalf of UNDP and in accordance with the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) and issued Delegation of Authority.
- The Dakar Hub, in collaboration with the Regional Programme (including the PMSU), will be responsible for launching the PIP and fostering and maintaining partnerships, facilitating coordination and providing operational support and programmatic oversight to the implementation of the PIP.
- The Dakar Hub Manager will be responsible for influencing and promoting the LGA Stabilisation work, fostering strategic partnerships, engaging with respective stakeholders and for coordination with the LGA and Member States, in close consultation with the UNDP Resident Representatives (RRs) in all the three countries.
- A Stabilisation Specialist, responsible for providing technical and programmatic guidance and oversight for successful achievement of the results in the PIP, will be recruited and will be based in Dakar.
- UNDP Country Offices (COs) through the RRs, will maintain political dialogue with member states, including key ministries involved in the stabilisation process. UNDP COs will implement through their office structures all country level activities under this PIP, as in line with the SBAAAs, signed between UNDP COs and the host governments, for specific countries.
- The Stabilisation Advisers placed in each Country Office will support the RRs and follow the day-to-day activities at country level and report to the RRs and to the Project Manager in Ouagadougou. UNDP COs will foster partnership with donor representatives and ensure that information is shared at the regional level.

4. Funding modalities and budget considerations during the pilot phase

- The LGA Stabilisation Facility PIP will operate as a basket fund to enable multiple donors to provide cost-sharing for the implementation of the PIP. Whenever possible according to sources of funds and regulations pertaining, the partners are discouraged from earmarking funds for countries or outputs. In accordance with DIM definition, the LGA Facility PIP basket fund will be managed strictly in accordance with UNDP Financial Rules and Regulations.
- The PIP will be funded through catalytic unearmarked UNDP core funding provided from the Regional Programme for Africa (up to USD 1.5 million) and supplemented by non-core resources, including a pledge from Germany (up to EUR 5 million), while consultations with other donors will continue during pilot phase implementation. There is also a preliminary earmarked contribution of 0.5 million USD from the UN Climate Security Mechanism for climate–security work (activity 1.5).
- While UNDP will be fully responsible for the overall planning, coordination and consultations linked to the activities and outputs listed above, other UN agencies may be involved in the implementation of immediate stabilisation activities, depending on the selection of target areas and the presence of other agencies, as well as the ‘stabilisation relevance’ of their ongoing activities.
- To the extent there would be both multiple donors and multiple implementing agencies envisaged for the full scale LGA Stabilisation Programme, advantages in establishing a Joint UN Programme and /or a Multi-Party Trust Fund (MPTF) will be explored during the pilot phase. Should the LGA PIP Basket Fund transition into a full-fledge LGA Stabilisation Basket Fund, the transfer of funds will be discussed with the participating donors.
- Given the discrepancy between pledged funds (approx. 7.8 million USD, including UNDP core funds) and total estimated budget (approx. 13.3 million USD), phased options have been presented as different budget scenarios⁴⁵, as follows:

⁴⁵ These scenarios are developed in more detailed in the attached excel sheet.

A. Budget scenario of 7.8 million USD:

- Core staff cost remain the same, however, the costs affiliated to the country implementation project teams and respective operational costs would be slightly reduced
- Only (maximum) three sites for immediate stabilisation in three countries at a maximum total cost of 1.1 million USD per site can be carried out;
- The further adaptation of this model would look into reducing the number of countries, which would allow higher costs per site, or increasing the number of sites.

B. Desired budget scenario of 13.3 million USD:

- Implementation of immediate stabilisation in 5 sites and 3 countries at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million per site.

III. MONITORING
1. Monitoring during the Pilot Phase

- The monitoring functions will be fulfilled by the LGA PIP management and implementation team following UNDP regular monitoring procedures. Support and guidance will be provided from the RSCA (PMSU and RBM teams) and the Dakar Hub, as necessary. The LGA Facility PIP Project Manager/Coordinator will oversee and review the pilot phase activities to ensure meeting of the objectives and goals set in the PIP.
- The pilot phase will adopt an adaptive programming approach with an initial 18-months workplan and budget (i.e. the PIP) updated on a six-months basis as required. Quarterly progress reports will be prepared for UNDP and 6-monthly for donors. More frequent informal written and oral briefings will be considered and agreed with the partners once the pilot phase is launched and the Steering Committee is formed.
- Other partners responsible for implementation of activities, incl. UN Agencies and local service contractors, will report to UNDP who will consolidate reports to the donors.
- A light MNE Framework will be developed and pilot tested under the PIP, including a system for monitoring the implementation and results of immediate stabilisation activities in target areas and how this feed into broader stabilisation objectives. The MNE system will be closely aligned on the Knowledge Hub which will serve to institutionalise data collection and knowledge management. The MNE system will establish baselines and monitor progress against the set indicators in the Results and Resources Framework (RRF), collect lessons learnt and provide the basis for adjusting programming to a highly volatile context. It will also inform the development of the full-scale Stabilisation programme document. Experiences should be collected from the LCB/RSF and from other partners and interventions present in Liptako-Gourma on the most relevant indicators at local and regional level for measuring progress towards stabilisation, likely including community perceptions of security, social cohesion, improved livelihoods, willingness to return, etc.
- In order to collect data, ensure continuous conflict analysis at local, cross-border and sub-regional level, and to inform the M&E system, the partnerships foreseen under the Knowledge Hub should rapidly be put in place.
- The Partnership Platforms at the sites selected for immediate stabilisation will also have a role in monitoring and sustaining the 'stabilisation relevance' of the selected sites and interventions over time.

2. Risk Management

The following risk matrix was developed with and approved by the member states. The risk assessment and mitigation strategy will be further developed and approved by the Steering Committee at the upstart of the pilot phase implementation.

Risks	Likelihood (high, medium, low)	Severity of impact on pilot phase (high, medium, low)	Mitigation strategy (and responsible person/unit)
Security			
The deterioration of the security situation due to the occurrence of attacks that could jeopardize the implementation and monitoring of interventions (absence of beneficiaries, restriction of staff movements in intervention areas, etc.)	High	Medium	Use of local actors who have less limitations of movements in the affected areas and not concerned by UNS' restrictive security measures. Review of the project and recalibration of activities depending on the situation
Untimely attacks by armed groups or occupation of the intervention zones of the pilot phase by those groups	High	High	Defence and Security Forces to secure pilot phase implementation zones
The pilot phase risks exposing implementing partners to the threat and retaliation of armed groups	High	High	Using the police and gendarmerie for information sharing and protection
Operational			
The internal procedures of UNDP, member states, and/or the LGA could reduce the implementation of pilot phase activities	High	High	Determine interventions by implementing/responsible partners from the beginning of the elaboration of joint initiatives
Low technical and institutional capacity or lack of local implementing partners	Medium	Medium	The following measures will be favoured: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening institutional and technical capacities, 2. Focus on implementation procedures, 3. Recruitment of national staff and United Nations volunteers, 4. Organization of coordination meeting with implementing partners
Low coordination and synergy between the different implementing actors	Medium	Medium	Involvement of UNDP management (meetings on certain elements)
Political			
Changed political context or change of national policy due to fragile political and security situation.	Medium	Medium	Involve all stakeholders in the implementation of the pilot phase to the situation analysis and ensure neutrality in the envisaged options and operations

IV. WORK PLAN: ANNEX 1