

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
IDENTIFICATION/CONCEPT STAGE**

Report No.: PIDC31145

Project Name	Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Capacity Building of Small and Marginal Farmers
Region	AFRICA
Country	Niger
Sector(s)	Crops (80%), Animal production (20%)
Theme(s)	Nutrition and food security (70%), Other rural development (30%)
Lending Instrument	Lending Instrument
Project ID	P156863
Borrower Name	Ministry of Agriculture
Implementing Agency	PROGRAMME D' ACTIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES
Environment Category	B - Partial Assessment
Date PID Prepared	08-Mar-2016
Estimated Date of Approval	20-May-2016
Initiation Note Review Decision	The review did authorize the preparation to continue

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. Two-thirds of the population in Niger lives below the poverty threshold. The 2014 Human Development Index ranked Niger at the bottom of the 187 ranked countries with an estimated per capita Gross National Income (GNI) at purchasing power parity of US\$ 873. Only 29 percent of the population is literate, and the child mortality rate is 198 deaths for 1,000 children. More than 50 percent of the population is affected by food and nutrition insecurity, with 22 percent of the population chronically suffering from extreme food insecurity; 40 percent of children under five are underweight. Poverty has declined marginally over the last decade. However, its incidence has remained constant since the early 1990s, mainly due to lack of resources, low agricultural productivity, and high population growth.

2. About 84 percent of the population depends on natural resources that are highly vulnerable to climate factors. Niger's economy has been affected by high variability of rainfall, fluctuating terms of trade, and volatility of aid flows. These shocks severely affect human development and cause chronic food insecurity in Niger. Poor households, particularly female-headed households, are more exposed to these shocks and often resort to negative coping mechanisms such as the sale of productive livestock or consumption/sale of seed stocks. Food insecurity is aggravated by the high incidence of rural poverty, which at household level translates into difficult access to food by vulnerable groups (particularly children and pregnant/lactating women), malnutrition, and poor access to health facilities.

3. Since 2000 Niger has had a good track record for macro-economic stability and has embarked on reforms to foster private sector-led economic growth, reduce the debt, and improve social indicators. However, despite these gains, Niger continues to face persistent, long-term development challenges. In addition, returning refugees from Nigeria and security risks related to Boko Haram and others have become more serious in recent years.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

4. The Government adopted a PRSP - the 'Plan for Economic and Social Development 2012-2015' (PDES) in August 2012. It represents an operational framework for the Government's mid-term development agenda, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It covers the following strategic axes: (i) creation of conditions conducive to sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development; (ii) food security and sustainable agricultural development; (iii) promotion of a competitive and diversified economy; and (iv) promotion of social development. The National Environment Plan for Sustainable Development ('Plan National de l'Environnement pour un Développement Durable'/PNEDD) is the key document unifying all the efforts related to environment and sustainable development. Niger has also made numerous efforts and committed itself over the recent years to implementing key international environmental Conventions, such as the United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertification (UNCCD, 2008-2018), the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

5. On April 18, 2012, the Government also adopted and started implementation of the '3 N Initiative' ("Nigériens feed Nigériens") for sustainable food security and agricultural development, representing axis 3 of the PDES, whose objective is to protect communities from hunger and malnutrition and guarantee them adequate conditions to participate in production and income generating efforts. Key implementation principles of the initiative stress, among others, the following: (i) working through local governments/communes; (ii) involving beneficiaries in planning and implementing development projects; (iii) developing resilient crops; and (iv) scaling up sustainable management of natural resources.

6. IDA is supporting the government strategy through a 12-year Adaptable Program Loan (APL) called Community Action Program (CAP)/Programme d'Action Communautaire (PAC). Two phases of this APL have been completed. The third phase (CAP-3) was approved in May 2013 and is currently under implementation. The APL contributes to the achievement of Niger's key development objectives of reducing poverty through initiatives aimed at improving food security, raising the income of rural producers, and increasing, securing, and diversifying food production. The project also supports the implementation of key national development policies and strategies, and is implemented in synergy with current development programs, in particular with current Bank-supported projects.

7. The proposed PHRD proposal is in line with the Government's objective to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition; empower and organize small and marginal land-holders (specifically focusing on women); and provide adequate support to enhance production and income-generating efforts. There has been progress in goal of reducing vulnerability (Pillar Two of the Country Partnership Strategy; CPS) as access of poor and food-insecure people to safety net programs has increased by 45 percent. Thus, the proposed PHRD grant could help deepen this momentum and make some further steps in selected Communes to make additional advances towards food security.

The grant will be a stand-alone pilot, but it will complement the ongoing APL and be implemented by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of CAP-3.

8. The problem of malnutrition. Malnutrition in Niger is structural and endemic. The prevalence of malnutrition has remained above the 10% warning threshold. During the years with food crises the level of malnutrition was at or above the emergency threshold of 15%, as was the case in 2005 (15.5%), in 2010 (16.7%), and 2012 (14.8%). Acute malnutrition results in stunting which affects about 42.5% of children under the age of five (Nutrition Survey 2013). For children ages 6 to 2 months 20 percent suffer from moderate to severe malnutrition. Child nutrition has experienced only limited improvement, even though the practice of exclusive breastfeeding increased from 9% in 2009 to 23% in 2012. The main factors explaining this are the frequency of infectious and parasitic diseases, insufficient capacity in terms of social and cultural practices of care, and limited access to health care and clean water. Micronutrient deficiencies are also a problem: disorders due to iodine deficiency are endemic, and vitamin A deficiency is a major public health problem; the prevalence of anemia is very high among the most vulnerable groups.

9. Malnutrition is particularly serious in the regions of Maradi and Tahoua. The situation is critical in the Maradi region where acute malnutrition rates exceed 15% even in a “normal” year. Only two regions (Diffa and Zinder) recorded significant drops of more than 4 percent in prevalence between 2012 and 2013. Nine hundred and forty-four care centers for severe malnutrition and 1,180 recovery centers have been set up across the country. The proposed Project will seek to complement these interventions, while closely linking the health, food security, and other sectors that can contribute to nutrition.

Relationship to CAS/CPS/CPF

10. The Bank Group Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Niger for the period 2013-16 is pursuing the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing strategic objectives, articulated as CPS pillars: (1) promote resilient growth, (2) reduce vulnerability, and (3) strengthen governance and capacity for public service delivery. It was approved by the Board on April 30, 2013. A Performance and Learning Review (PLR) was undertaken and a client survey carried out. Respondents confirmed the validity of the strategic development priority with an increased interest in food insecurity among others. This PHRD grant proposal is fully consistent with the objectives of the Niger CPS as it will help reduce the vulnerability of the most vulnerable (that are women and children) by making nutrition-sensitive fruits and vegetables available to them. It will also support small-scale irrigation and capacity building activities for small and marginal farmers in two of the most affected regions of the country.

II. Project Development Objective(s) Proposed Development Objective(s)

11. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase nutritionally-adequate food production in two selected provinces, leading to increased household food consumption and dietary diversity.

12. The PDO will be achieved by: (a) building capacity of small and marginal farmers (especially women); (b) increasing the production of high-nutrient-content food, including fruits and vegetables for consumption (and where feasible commercialization); and (c) sensitizing and communicating (and thereby encouraging demand) on foods such as fruits and vegetables with a high nutrition value.

Key Results

13. The key outcomes expected are:

- Increased volume of production of biofortified crops and micronutrient-rich crops in fields and home gardens of the targeted communities; and
- Increased number of household members reporting nutritional benefits (quality and quantity) from bio-fortified crops and home garden production.

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

14. The PHRD funded Project is being designed as an integral part of third phase of the IDA-financed Community Action Program (CAP-3) and will be implemented by the PCU of CAP-3. The CAP program seeks to reduce poverty through initiatives aimed at improving food security, raising the income of rural producers, and increasing, securing, and diversifying food production. CAP is a national program, but since the PHRD grant funding is limited, the PHRD-funded activities will focus on nutrition work in only two regions (Maradi and Tahoua).

15. The PHRD will focus on increasing production of vegetables and fruits, including biofortified crops, such as beans and sweet potatoes (OFSP). Female producers are expected to use the limited space available for production of a range of fruits/vegetables, improving access to a variety of micronutrient-rich foods to accompany the biofortified crops. It is expected that production increases will be destined primarily for consumption by infants and their mothers, rather than for sale, although it is understood that women farmers will need to sell a fraction of their crops to meet their minimum cash requirements.

16. The project will have three components: Component 1 will focus on mobilizing small farmers, particularly women, and strengthening their capacities and knowledge of production of fruits and vegetables. Component 2 will promote improved production of horticulture crops with high nutritional value largely via small-scale irrigation from wells, which the project will finance. Component 3 will support the sensitization and communication to promote food preparation, storage, and consumption of horticultural products with high nutritional values.

17. Component 1: Mobilizing small farmers and strengthening their capacities: The objective of this priority area is to build capacity of small farmers to increase their knowledge on producing food with a high nutritional value. This will include empowering small and marginal farmers, especially women, strengthening of women producer groups/associations, promoting farmer-to-farmer services, and linking the farmer associations with other public and private sector agencies for the projects' nutrition-related purposes. Activities will include technical assistance, training, and

investments in farmer-led knowledge and to provide community-to-community extension services.

18. Component 2: Promoting improved production of horticulture crops with high nutritional value: The objective of this Component is to improve nutritional and livelihood outcomes for small female farmers and their families. Activities will seek to improve productivity by technical assistance, training, and particularly investments in wells and small-scale irrigation covering around 250 hectares in the at least 100 villages to be selected.

19. In some areas and/or to some extent, horticulture already is a part in the economic activities of the population in terms of their production, marketing, processing, and transportation. This component will support the introduction and/or intensification and diversification of horticultural production with high nutritional value. It will support women producer groups, and communities in the targeted regions with technical advice and inputs (seeds, plants, cuttings, inorganic and organic fertilizers) to boost horticultural production of moringa; vegetables (tomatoes, cabbage, onion, carrot, eggplant, watermelon, melons, etc.), tubers (cassava, sweet potato, potato, etc.), legumes (cowpeas, green beans, peas, sesame, etc.) and citrus (lemon, orange, guava, tangelo, etc.), mango trees in their own farms (in their own farms).

20. Component 3: Sensitization and communication to promote increased consumption of horticultural products with high nutritional value. Horticultural products are mentioned in the current agricultural strategies of Niger, but the general public is often not well informed about the importance of their consumption for human health. The commitment of the government, through this project, will result in better information and communication for the consumption of horticultural products. This will include training in conservation, small-scale processing and storage, cooking, and related small equipment. The overall medium and long-term objective would be to increase fruit and vegetable consumption from currently 35.4 kg per person and year. Even though the work under this component would aim to increase consumption of horticultural crops in the villages of the two targeted regions, there would likely be some benefits to neighboring villages in terms of dissemination of some of the messages.

IV. Safeguard Policies that Might Apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	x		
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		x	
Forests OP/BP 4.36		x	
Pest Management OP 4.09	x		
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		x	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		x	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12			x
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x	

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	2.5	Total Bank Financing:	0
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Financing Gap:	0	
Financing Source		Amount
Japan Policy and Human Resources Development Fund		2.5

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