Strengthening coherence between social protection and agricultural interventions
The case of Mali
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The case of Mali

Thu Hien Dao
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### Abbreviations and acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGIR</td>
<td>Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative</td>
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<td>AGR</td>
<td>Income Generating Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-KARED</td>
<td>Kaarta Research and Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANAM</td>
<td>National Agency for Medical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavioural Change Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCOSAD</td>
<td>District Orientation, Coordination and Monitoring Committees for Development Actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCOSAD</td>
<td>District Orientation, Coordination and Monitoring Committees for Development Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDE</td>
<td>Center of Studies on Economic Development, Universidad de los Andes</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENA</td>
<td>National Executive Agriculture Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEPAP</td>
<td>Centre for Agro-Pastoral Studies and Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERA</td>
<td>Regional Executive Agriculture Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLOCSAD</td>
<td>Local Orientation, Coordination and Monitoring Committees for Development Actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Joint Commission for Dialogue</td>
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<td>CN</td>
<td>National Commissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNOS-PS</td>
<td>National Council for the Strategic Orientation of Social Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNSA</td>
<td>National Food Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Planning and Statistics Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREDD</td>
<td>Strategic Economic Recovery Framework for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROCSAD</td>
<td>Regional Orientation, Coordination and Monitoring Committees for Development Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Food Security Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Technical Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTK</td>
<td>National Technical Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DFM</td>
<td>Directorates of Finance and Material Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>National Directorate of Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNDS</td>
<td>National Directorate of Social Development</td>
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<td>DNP</td>
<td>National Directorate of Fisheries</td>
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<td>DNPIA</td>
<td>National Directorate of Animal Products and Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNPSSES</td>
<td>National Directorate for Social Protection and the Solidarity Economy</td>
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<td>DNS</td>
<td>National Directorate of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNSV</td>
<td>National Directorate of Veterinary Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRDSES</td>
<td>Regional Directors of Social Development and Solidarity Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRH</td>
<td>Directories of Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBSA</td>
<td>Fonds Belge de Sécurité Alimentaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIES</td>
<td>Food Insecurity Experience Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIN</td>
<td>Republic of Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIMO</td>
<td>Labour-intensive public works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund For Agricultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPWRA</td>
<td>Inverse Probability Weighted Regression Adjustment</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOA</td>
<td>Law of Agricultural Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIPROMA</td>
<td>Inter-professional Mutual Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSAH</td>
<td>Ministère de la Solidarité et de l’Action Humanitaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPC</td>
<td>Ministère de la Sécurité et de la Protection Civile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIPs</td>
<td>National Agricultural Investment Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMA</td>
<td>Agricultural Market Observatory</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPAM</td>
<td>Office of Agricultural Products of Mali</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDA</td>
<td>Agricultural Development Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGRN-CC</td>
<td>Project for the Management of Natural Resources and Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLIAM</td>
<td>Programme de Lutte contre l’Insécurité Alimentaire et la Malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNPS</td>
<td>National Social Protection Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRP</td>
<td>Priorités Résilience Pays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>FAO Regional Office for Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMED</td>
<td>Régime d’Assistance Médicale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REOWA</td>
<td>FAO Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIMISP</td>
<td>Latin American Center for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSU</td>
<td>Unified Social Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Early Warning System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAPEP</td>
<td>Smallholders Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Local Agriculture Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLDSES</td>
<td>Local Service for Social Development and the Solidarity Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLPIA</td>
<td>Local Animal Products and Industries Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSV</td>
<td>Local Veterinary Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLV</td>
<td>Local Veterinary Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTGFS</td>
<td>Technical Unit for Social Safety Net Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>XOF</td>
<td>West African CFA franc</td>
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Executive summary

The objective of this report is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional architecture of the national social protection policy and assess the quality of its links and synergies with agricultural policies and programmes in Mali. To do so, it relies on both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

At national level, the analysis acknowledges that the government of Mali has strong political will to develop both social protection and agriculture sectors. Agencies in charge of coordination within each sector exist. However, political engagement to improve coordination and coherence between the two sectors is still weak. It is mirrored in a low awareness of the benefit of coordinated social protection and agricultural actions among government personnel. Policies and programmes implemented promote coherence only to a very limited extent. However, the national Jigisemejiri programme represents a good common ground to integrate social protection and agricultural interventions. It involves many ministries, including the ministries in charge of social protection and agriculture. The programme could thus serve as an example to push inter-sectoral coherence forward in the public policy agenda.

At local level, the report analyses the case of the FAO project OSRO/RAF/502/FIN “Productive safety nets as a tool to reinforce the resilience in the Sahel” implemented in the Nioro du Sahel Circle in the Kayes region from April 2015 to February 2017. It shows that, in many regards, combining social protection and agricultural interventions generates the highest impacts on improving the livelihood of poor and vulnerable populations. The Nioro Cash+ project was a single integrated programme with different components supervised by a single agency and implemented with the involvement of several local stakeholders. Horizontal and vertical coordination between and within sectors (social protection and agriculture) was, however, limited. With its targeting, the project extended the benefit of social protection to those who had not been covered before. It therefore complemented other existing programmes in serving the rural poor in a context of food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability.

Finally, the report concludes with a set of policy recommendations on how to improve the enabling environment and programmatic design to enhance the effectiveness of programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions in Mali.
1. Introduction

Around the world, there is a growing number of social programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions helping small family farmers escape poverty and hunger. According to FAO (2016), neither agriculture nor social protection alone can address all constraints faced by poor rural households. Combining them can minimize potentially undesirable impacts of each single intervention on its own, trigger synergistic effects through complementarity and extend benefits to subpopulations that are often not covered by either one of these or both types of interventions. Since they will often require the involvement of the two sectors of social protection and agriculture, challenges in terms of coherence may arise. When coherence is achieved, coordinated agricultural and social protection interventions can complement each other and generate greater impacts on a range of outcomes (Veras Soares et al., 2017). However, to achieve coherence, stakeholders will need to overcome many obstacles ranging from lack of political commitment to lack of coordination mechanisms between ministries and limited capacity of implementers on the ground.

Against this backdrop, this report aims to contribute to the identification of barriers and enabling factors in the coordination process between the agriculture and social protection sectors in order to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of their joint interventions. The focus is on the case of Mali – a low-income country situated in West Africa. FAO has supported the drafting of the new national social protection policy in Mali and its 2016–2018 action plan, both of which attach considerable importance to coherence and linkages with agricultural actions.

In 2015–2017, FAO implemented the project OSRO/RAF/502/FIN “Productive safety nets as a tool to reinforce the resilience in the Sahel” in Mali and Mauritania. In Mali, the intervention was carried out in the Nioro du Sahel Circle. It can be viewed as a practical case that involved integrating social assistance and rural development instruments to help vulnerable households coping better with shocks. The project’s primary objective was to offer a response to the critical humanitarian situation in many parts of the Sahel where around four and a half million people face recurrent food and nutrition crises. At the time of the project, this situation was caused by the late start of the rainy season, meagre crop harvests, armed conflict, low pastoral production and the residual effects of the Ebola outbreak. The Cash+ project in Mali originated from the ongoing quest by the Malian authorities and their bilateral and multilateral partners for greater food and nutrition security for the population, in a country that often suffers food shortages. The 2015 early hunger period could have exacerbated the deteriorating livelihoods of very poor households if no measures had been taken. There was an urgent need to help vulnerable populations better absorb and withstand shocks by responding to early warning signals.

The project relied on the provision of goods and services under two separate modalities with an identical monetary value: (i) a Cash only modality that involved giving cash to half of the beneficiaries; (ii) a Cash+ modality that gave the other half of the beneficiaries productive inputs (in the form of goats and animal feeds) as well as an amount of cash for them to meet certain urgent needs without having to wait for the proceeds from the livestock assets. In addition, the beneficiaries also benefited from training on breeding practices, nutrition, hygiene practices, and animal health monitoring. The project is commonly referred to as the Cash+ project, even though it also included a Cash only modality.
Following that project, two studies were carried out: a qualitative institutional analysis and a quantitative evaluation. The institutional analysis used a qualitative approach to assess the articulation between social protection and agricultural sectors (i) at the national level and (ii) in the case of the Nioro Cash+ project. More specifically, it identified the institutional architecture and the linkages between the two sectors; the enabling factors and institutional obstacles that facilitated or hindered the creation of linkages between them; and the strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation process. The quantitative study used impact evaluation methodology to assess the impacts of the Cash+ project on its beneficiaries across various livelihood aspects, namely food security, dietary diversity, hygiene practices, food and non-food expenditures, livestock production, non-farm activities, aspirations and expectations. It also investigated eventual heterogenous effects of the two modalities to answer the question of whether the combination of social protection and agricultural interventions generates better results than a social protection intervention alone, and under which conditions.

This current report synthetizes the findings of those two studies. It stresses both bottlenecks and good practices in the coordination mechanisms between social cohesion and agricultural sectors at national level and in the implementation process of the Nioro Cash+ project. The latter represents a practical case of the linkage between social protection and agriculture at the local level where projects get implemented. Based on those assessments, the report will propose a set of policy recommendations with the purpose of improving the effectiveness of existing and future social protection initiatives in Mali.

This report is organised as follows: Section 2 details the problem, rationale and analytical method. Section 3 presents the policy architecture and coordination mechanisms of the two sectors of social protection and agriculture in Mali. Section 4 focuses on the case of the Nioro Cash+ project. It evaluates the project’s level of synergy with other initiatives, as well as its implementation process and impacts on the beneficiaries’ livelihood. Section 5 concludes. Finally, Section 6 proposes a set of policy recommendations for achieving better articulation between social protection and agricultural dimensions, with the ultimate purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of existing and future social programmes.
2. Rationale, theory of change, and analytical methods

2.1. Rationale

In many contexts, there is a lack of coordination between social protection and agricultural stakeholders from the central government to programmatic levels. According to Slater et al. (2016), political, institutional and operational factors often pose barriers to ministries and government agencies to having cross-sectoral collaboration. The main reason may be attributed to the different policy prioritization and strategic approaches between sectors. The agricultural sector often pursues the objective of improving agriculture productivity and tends to work with “economic” sectors (manufacturing, infrastructure, trade, etc.). Ministries of agriculture are more inclined to focus on commercially oriented or large-scale farming, which can generate greater economic value. On the opposite side, social protection is traditionally in partnership with “social” sectors (health, education, nutrition, etc.). Ministries responsible for social protection mainly target vulnerable and subsistence family farmers. Therefore, joint actions across ministries of agriculture and social protection are still uncommon. In addition, even though many social programmes have social protection and agriculture dimensions, coordination between key stakeholders of the two sectors is not always pursued. It is mostly due to limited vision or understanding of what programmatic coherence would look like and lack of incentives, exchange of information, resources and capacities to engage in meaningful cross-sectoral coordination (ibid).

Programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions not only assist vulnerable populations to combat poverty but can also provide them with productive means to sustainably move out of poverty. A meta-analysis by Veras Soares et al. (2017) concludes that agricultural and social protection interventions can foster investments in productive assets; provide more stable, permanent and profitable sources of income; have positive impacts on food security, consumption and expenditure; and reduce poverty reduction. Moreover, combined interventions are shown to exert greater impacts than stand-alone interventions (Gilligan et al., 2009; Tirivayi et al., 2016). Thus, social protection and agriculture can play complementary roles in working towards the common goal of combating poverty.

For that to happen, coordinated efforts across different government agencies are needed. Policy makers and programme implementers of the two sectors must coordinate to ensure coherence of their actions so that potentially conflicting interactions between policies and programmes are avoided or minimized. They must also actively promote complementarities and synergies between agriculture and social protection interventions (Espinoza and Wiggins, 2016; Gordillo et al., 2016; Harman, 2016a, 2016b; Nehring, 2012; Slater and Nyukuri, 2016; Ulrichs and Mphale, 2016).

FAO (2016) defines coherence as “a systematic promotion of complementary and consistent policies and programmes across sectors, thereby creating synergies to combat rural poverty and food insecurity more effectively”. Coherence can be sought horizontally across agencies and their policies, programmes and operational systems, and vertically within each separate agency in order to ensure consistency between policy objectives and their translation into programmes and effective delivery on the ground. According to Leyton et al. (2017), the positive impacts that emerge from coherence of policies/programmes are manifold. Among others, it helps avoid the fragmentation of policies and duplication of tasks; eliminate contradictions or tensions among policies, programs or interventions; reduce operational costs; enable a more efficient use of public resources; and increase the efficiency of the interventions. Synergy is the desired result whereby different policies/programmes carried
out by two or more actors strengthen each other’s outcomes so that their value is greater than the sum of their individual parts.

To ensure coherence between policies/programmes and thereby create synergies, coordination is key. Although coherence and synergies may happen as a consequence of fortuity, they must preferably be systematically developed by intentional coordination between various stakeholders (Slater et al., 2016). Coordination defines the roles played by the stakeholders involved and regulates their interactions in such a way that they are willing and able to work together effectively, even when their initial own interests and ideologies may be in conflict (Repetto, 2005).

### 2.2. Project description and theory of change

The Cash+ project in Mali is a practical case to illustrate what can be achieved when combining social protection and agricultural interventions. The expected result of the project was to increase the resilience of poor and vulnerable households as a result of improved livelihoods, enhanced food security and better nutritional practices and attitudes. Those results were supposed to be achieved through: (i) a good project design, with the aim of ensuring coherence of its actions and synergy with other initiatives; (ii) favourable environment where coordination between different stakeholders would be smooth and concerted; (iii) good implementation of different modalities of social protection and agriculture.

#### 2.2.1. Description of the FAO’s Cash+ project

The Cash+ project in Mali was implemented from April 2015 to February 2017 in the Nioro Cercle in the region of Kayes, which is about 500 km in the north-west of Bamako and lies on the border with Mauritania. The choice of the Nioro Circle was justified by its location in Western Sahel, an area of Mali that experiences structural food insecurity linked to low agricultural productivity as a result of persistent unpredictable weather. The FAO’s project aimed to provide humanitarian support before the lean season\(^1\) of 2016 to the population at risk.

The selection of beneficiaries was conducted through targeting at three levels: selection of communes, of villages and of households. The project aimed to target the communes that were the most vulnerable to economic hardship and food insecurity, and where it could create synergy with other existing initiatives such as the Emergency Safety Nets project (“Jigisemejiri”)\(^2\) and the Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Program (PLIAM).\(^3\) Out of 16 communes in the Nioro Circle, five were chosen: Nioro-urbaine, Nioro Tougouné Rangabé, Guétéma, Simby and Yéréré. In some communes, villages were selected based on poverty criteria. In the others, villages were randomly chosen. In total, 36 villages were selected to benefit from the programme. The selection of the beneficiary households was accomplished using the Household Economy Approach method (Save the Children, 2016).

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1. The agricultural lean season in Mali usually lasts from July to September.
2. In Mali, the Emergency Social Safety Nets Project provides financial assistance to poor and food insecure households. Being implemented from 2014 to 2022, it aims at establishing foundation for a national safety net system for the whole country. Details about this project will be presented in the subsection 3.3 of this report.
3. The « Programme de lutte contre l’insécurité alimentaire et la malnutrition (PLIAM) dans les cercles de Nara et de Nioro du Sahel » was funded by the Belgian Food Security Fund (“Fonds belge de sécurité alimentaire” (FBSA)) from 2012 to 2016. The PLIAM aimed to sustainably improve the food and nutritional security of vulnerable groups in the Nara and Nioro Cercles of the Sahel. FAO provided technical assistance for the program.
under the expert leadership of an operational NGO partner and with the assistance of the local technical service responsible for social protection. The final list of 900 targeted households was made up of all the vulnerable households considered as “poor” and "very poor".

Figure 1. Location of the Nioro circle in Mali

Source: “cercle de Nioro” – Wikipédia image

Regarding its objectives and implementation modalities, the Nioro Cash+ project was an initiative that combined social protection and rural development objectives. The project used the following inputs: (i) cash; (ii) livestock inputs; (iii) food and nutritional knowledge.

Unconditional cash

With its experimentation-based approach, the Nioro Cash+ project made two types of cash transfers to the beneficiaries, both unconditional:

- 450 beneficiary households selected for the Cash only modality each received a total of XOF 100 000, paid in two XOF 50 000 instalments three months apart.
- The other 450 beneficiary households, selected for the Cash+ modality, received a single transfer of XOF 20 000, at the same time as the first instalment paid to the Cash only beneficiaries.

Following this framework, communities classified the households into four socio-economic groups based on the following characteristics: household size; area of land owned and/or cultivated, number of poultry, number of small ruminants, number of large ruminants and other productive assets, among others. Priorities were given to households with children under five, women, and of marginalized communities. On this basis, a community list of households by socio-economic category was established. Further observations and focus-group discussions verified the information and established a definitive list that would be validated by the general assembly based on the examination of inclusion and/or exclusion errors. Finally, the committee drew up a report which was validated and signed by all the members of the committee and the representative of the local administrative authority.
The unconditional nature of the transfers resided in the fact that the beneficiary households had no specific constraints with regards to the use of the money they received. They were therefore free to use it in the way they considered most vital at the time.

Livestock inputs

The livestock inputs, received only by the beneficiaries in the Cash+ group, consisted of: one herd of three goats - two female and one male - given to each Cash+ beneficiary household; 50 kg of livestock feed given to each beneficiary; knowledge of breeding techniques; veterinary observation; and preventive and remedial treatment. Three rounds of zootechnical support were provided for the 1,350 goats allocated to the 450 Cash+ beneficiary households.

In terms of agricultural inputs, the decision was made with the local technical services to provide goats. This decision was facilitated by the following arguments: (i) Nioro is a climatic area with very low rainfall, where the breeding of small ruminants is a very common secondary activity; (ii) the breeding of goats is more likely to produce results in a relatively short period; (iii) this kind of asset represents an investment that can lead to increased income, for example through the sale of milk or kids; and (iv) this decision had already produced convincing results in similar previous projects in Burkina Faso and Niger.

Food and nutritional knowledge

450 Cash+ beneficiaries acquired knowledge on best breeding practice. To improve food intake and raise awareness of the benefits of diversified food consumption, the project provided training to all beneficiaries, Cash Only and Cash+, on Essential Nutrition Actions, Infant and Young Child Feeding and hygiene practices. Two beneficiary women per village were trained by nutrition experts from the Ministry of Health and FAO. Two subsequent awareness sessions were conducted per village. The project also provided 36 culinary demonstration kits in all targeted villages. Sixteen boxes of soap were distributed to schools, town halls and the project beneficiaries.

In each village, all beneficiaries received either Cash Only or Cash+. In other words, no village had both Cash Only and Cash+ beneficiaries. The reception of Cash Only or Cash+ was totally random and independent of the beneficiaries’ preference. Ninety-nine percent of the people with whom the project had direct contact were women from the beneficiary households.

2.2.2. Theory of change

All FAO’s Cash+ projects are typically designed with three main components: (i) unconditional cash transfer, (ii) productive inputs and assets, and (iii) training and extension services (FAO, 2017). The first component corresponds to the “cash alone” intervention, while the latter two correspond to the “plus” interventions.

Recent research in the field has widely shown the positive outcomes brought on by cash transfers; however, cash alone does not ensure the achievement of longer-term and more sustainable socio-economic impacts (Roelen et al., 2017). The reason is that the effect of cash transfers can be constrained by behavioural mediators and/or environmental obstacles and trigger sub-optimal outcomes. For example, cash transfer programmes may face individuals’ behaviour that constrains impacts in areas such as nutritional habits, education and health. In such cases, programmes can consider adding behavioural change communication (BCC) and trainings on nutrition, sanitation,

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5 Therefore, there is a small abuse of terminology here as Cash Only beneficiaries not only received cash transfers but also trainings and support measures on nutrition and health.
child-rearing practices. Beneficiaries may consume all of the cash they receive, without investing in long-term capital, which would justify the need for providing financial management training and/or directly granting productive assets. Likewise, cash alone may not achieve desired outcomes when beneficiaries do not have easy access to health services, schools, markets or insurance (Veras Soares et al. 2017), especially in case of shocks. Combining cash transfers with other interventions or services (for example value chain development, market training, providing health insurance cards, offering productive tools that are not locally available, etc.) has the potential to boost impacts beyond the “income effects” of cash transfers alone.

In sum, Cash+ programmes seek to augment those income effects by complementing cash with additional inputs, components or linkages with external services. Cash alone is not always sufficient as a means to cope with the multidimensional and interrelated social and economic constraints, non-financial and structural barriers that the targeted beneficiary populations often face. By inducing further behavioural changes, providing information, creating awareness or by addressing supply-side constraints, the combination of cash and “plus” components may be more effective in achieving the desired impacts and ensuring their sustainability than cash alone (Watson and Palermo, 2016).

FAO promotes Cash+ both as a shock-responsive measure in short-term humanitarian interventions as well as a social protection practice to improve beneficiaries’ resilience in longer-term for example in stable environments, protracted crises and fragile contexts (FAO, 2017). The first component – unconditional cash transfers - can help rural population address immediate basic needs, bridge the food gap often faced before a harvest, protect assets from being sold out of distress, as well as remove financial barriers to kick-start productive investments. The second component – productive inputs and/or assets (e.g. livestock, seeds, processing equipment, planting materials, fertilizers, animal feed, fishing kits, etc.) – can help enhance agricultural production and improve income generation potential. The third component – training and extension services (e.g. technical training on crop and/or livestock production, entrepreneurship skills, financial literacy, nutrition and health practices) – aims to strengthen beneficiaries’ knowledge and productive skills, therefore maximize the impacts of the cash and productive assistance packages.

Figure 2 illustrates the theory of change of programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions. The combination of cash, agricultural inputs and trainings is expected to be efficient in addressing the multidimensional constraints that rural population may face when trying to improve their living condition and well-being. It helps address not only short-term issues caused by income and agricultural production shocks but also enhance beneficiaries’ long-term resilience by building capital/assets and improving health condition. In a larger perspective, its effectiveness depends on the enabling environment, which is conditioned by the coordination between social protection and agricultural sectors from political to programmatic levels, and the coherence of policies and actions.

When Cash+ programmes with different components of social protection and agriculture are well-designed and well-integrated into their environment, i.e. they are not in conflict with other existing policies or initiatives and, in the best scenario, actively seek to create synergy between them, we can expect that those programmes will achieve the desired results in the most efficient way. As such, they can generate the best outcomes that will ultimately help the poor and vulnerable population overcome hardships and sustainably improve their livelihood. In a longer term, working to strengthen policy coherence between social protection and rural development sectors would ensure Cash+ interventions’ perpetuity, ability to mobilise financial resources and allow the possibility for scaling them up, thereby guarantee longer-term impacts of the programmes on a larger share of beneficiaries.
2.3. Analytical methods

To assess the level of coordination and coherence of policies and actions of the social protection and agricultural sectors in Mali, this report combines the findings of two studies: a qualitative institutional assessment and a quantitative impact evaluation. They were both carried out within the framework of the Nioro Cash+ project. The following subsections will detail the analytical methods used to conduct those studies.

2.3.1. Institutional assessment methodology

The objectives of the institutional assessment study were to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional architecture of the national social protection policy and to assess the quality of its
links with agricultural policies and programmes in Mali. The study also qualitatively examined the coordination, implementation process, and impacts of the Cash+ project in the Nioro Circle. At each level (i.e. national or case study), the institutional analysis evaluated the level of coordination; identified the enabling factors which were correctly articulated and facilitated effective delivery of results; and highlighted the institutional obstacles and restrictions that could be hindering program/component articulation and actor coordination.\footnote{The institutional assessment followed the methodology developed by RIMISP and CEDE (2018).}

The framework classifies programmes’ coordination intensity into six levels ranging from lowest level (communication) to highest level (consolidation) based on Corbett and Noye (2008). They are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 3. Six degree of programmes' coordination intensity**

- **Communication**: where information is exchanged and discussed.
- **Cooperation**: where work groups or committees are established to support and exchange information, services and goals among programs.
- **Coordination**: where there are formal interinstitutional agreements for coordination. Stakeholders are also involved in joint planning.
- **Collaboration**: where actors (individual or collective), voluntarily give up part of their autonomy to gain mutual benefits and outcomes. This also implies a centralized operational administration.
- **Convergence**: where there is a real restructuring of services, programs, memberships, budgets, missions, goals, personnel, contractual arrangements for the reallocation of funds, shared resources and a leading agency.
- **Consolidation**: where there are multi-agent and multi-disciplinary plans and budgets, together with inter-agency groups that provide services, merged planning and human capital and shared assets.


The study looks at five aspects of the enabling environment affecting the degree of coherence in the social protection and agricultural policies, plans and programmes. These are:

1. **Political commitment**: It represents government’s engagement to pursue coherence between social protection and agricultural interventions. To push forward coherence on the political agenda, it requires building momentum in national policy processes as well as broad coalitions of support. Stakeholders can mobilise political commitment by generating and disseminating evidence on the value-added of coherence between agriculture and social protection, identifying policy champions and windows of opportunity for leveraging commitments.

2. **Policy context**: It recognizes the complementary roles of agriculture and social protection. Actors understand the need for achieving coherence and commit to effectively translate political will into action through policy/programme design and/or revision at central, regional and local levels.
3. Institutional coordination mechanisms: They exist to facilitate collaboration across different stakeholders and can be purposefully created to manage the coordination between social protection and agriculture. Existing mechanisms can be strengthened by ensuring adequate representation of stakeholders from the two sectors, harmonizing existing mechanisms and developing coordination guidance.

4. Funding mechanisms: They are important to establishing coherence between agriculture and social protection as they can reflect the priority given to coordination. Coordination between the two sectors can be supported by basket-funding within investment frameworks related to food security, rural development and poverty reduction.

5. Human capacities: Policy makers and government officers at national and local levels understand and can identify potential complementarities between agricultural and social protection programmes. To develop these skills and knowledge, a variety of approaches can be considered including in-class training, e-learning, experiential learning and on-the-job coaching.

Regarding programming and operational aspects, the study assesses practical approaches and interventions that policy makers and programme staff adopt to systematically pursue coherence between agriculture and social protection. Examples include establishing synergies with other existing programmes, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of targeting mechanisms, and designing programmes that are sensitive to rural and agricultural seasonality.

The study classifies social protection and agriculture programmes based on the typology proposed by Fernández (2016) and Slater et al. (2016), which determines the institutional architecture, enablers, and barriers to coordination:

1. **Different and independent programmes**, which are the responsibility of one or more institutions, and which fortuitously target the same population, and have goals or other characteristics that make them complementary. In these circumstances, there is no articulation, as programme design and implementation are based on the institutions’ own logic, but they coincide in specific territories and sets of beneficiaries. The implications of this is that there are no defined spaces for articulation, given that the targets are incidental.

2. **Programmes designed to be complementary**, which are the responsibility of a single institution, and that join into an integrated strategy. These are the cases in which the social protection programmes design their own economic-productive inclusion programs. For these initiatives, it is the social ministries themselves that design the productive programs, define the target population, and determine the resources involved. Difficulties related to coordination may arise due to the duplicity of the offer of programmes and the technicians’ lack of specialized knowledge. In such cases, although interinstitutional articulation exists, there is no intersectoral coordination.

3. **Different programmes with complementary goals**, which are the responsibility of different institutions that articulate amongst themselves. These programmes focus on interinstitutional articulation for synergy and can avoid duplicity and complement the technical knowledge vested in each institution.

4. **A single programme that combines social protection and rural development goals with different components which depend on different institutions**. The implementation depends on sectoral agencies and require intersectoral coordination for their implementation.

5. **Single integrated programme with different components implemented by single agency**. Intersectoral coordination is suppressed.
The conduct of the study started with an analysis of the main documents from the social protection and agriculture sectors, including the main policy, strategy, planning, programme and project documents. It proceeded with ex-post interviews (i.e. after the intervention) in the field to collect information relating to the implementation of policies/programmes and perceived outcomes from certain national, regional, local, district and community stakeholders.

The Cash+ intervention was carried in the Nioro Circle covering 36 villages of five municipalities: Nioro, Nioro Tougouné Rangabé, Guétema, Yéréré and Simby. As the time and limited resources did not allow all the five municipalities benefiting from the project to be included in the sample for the qualitative field survey, only two municipalities were chosen: the urban municipality of Nioro and the rural municipality of Simby, which has agroecological conditions slightly different from those of Nioro. In each of the municipalities, two villages were identified: one with beneficiaries of Cash+ and another with beneficiaries of simple cash. Thus, in consultation with local partners, the following villages were retained:

- In the Municipality of Nioro: the villages of Madonga and Dianwély-Rangabé
- In the Municipality of Simby: the villages of Dialakoro-Maréna and Diadiélá

Municipal authorities, village authorities, members of village committees, and the beneficiaries of the programme were interviewed in each village.

The study also conducted a small analysis of the National Social Safety Net programme Jigisemejiri. For this programme, the Koutiala Circle was selected in collaboration with the programme’s Management Unit. The villages chosen for the survey were Bana and Zandiéla in the rural district of M’Pesoba, and N’Gountjina and Sanga in the rural district of N’Gountjina.

### 2.3.2. Quantitative analysis methodology

To evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of the Nioro Cash+ project, the quantitative study used data from an impact evaluation survey conducted in October – November 2017. Since it was carried out nine months after the project ended in January 2017, it enables an assessment of the lasting effects of the project. The dataset contains 1151 households, among which 336 received only Cash, 344 received Cash+, and 471 non-beneficiary households formed the comparison group, selected from neighbouring villages which did not receive the intervention. In total, the impact evaluation dataset covered 58 villages, in which 36 were beneficiary and 25 were comparison villages. The comparison group was chosen according to the same criteria for selecting the project’s beneficiaries. Figure 3 depicts the locations of the three population groups in the Nioro Cercle.

Having a non-experimental design, the project did not apply a random process to select its beneficiaries. They were chosen following a specific set of poverty and vulnerability criteria. Therefore, it was important to make sure that the treatment groups and the control groups were comparable by correcting for the characteristics that made some households more likely to be selected by the project. Another issue was that the treatment is multivalued. The households were not either enrolled or not enrolled in the project, but the enrollees received two types of treatment, which was either Cash Only or Cash+. For these reasons, the study used the inverse-probability-weighted regression adjustment (IPWRA) to assess the impact of the project.¹⁸

¹⁷ In total, 220 beneficiary households are missing in the impact evaluation survey.
¹⁸ The IPWRA combines two models: one to predict treatment status and the other to predict outcomes by performing weighted regression. In the first step, the IPWRA estimates the probabilities of treatment, i.e. probabilities of the households participating in the programme, using multinomial logit estimator based on...
The same set of explanatory variables was used to predict both treatment status and outcomes. These variables corresponded to the observed characteristics of the households that were expected not to change with the project intervention. Those characteristics are supposed to affect both the treatment assignment and the outcomes of interest. The covariates were selected to reflect the Household Economy Approach criteria that were used to choose the beneficiary households. The set of covariates covered information on household demographic characteristics and wealth level, as well as characteristics of household head and attitude of main respondent.

The impacts of the project on its beneficiaries were quantified, reported and analysed. They covered many important aspects of livelihood such as food security, dietary diversity, farm and non-farm production, food and non-food consumption, hygiene, and attitude towards the future.
3. Degree of coordination between social protection and agriculture sectors in Mali

This section presents the assessment of the degree of coordination between social protection and agriculture in Mali. The nature of governmental mandates in highly cross-cutting sectors such as social protection and agriculture is that they do not have firm boundaries. This means that the successful implementation of social and agricultural interventions requires a great deal of collaboration between the relevant stakeholders. The quality of the coordination mechanisms is strongly affected by the organisation of key institutions of the two sectors and the ability of the existing types of mechanisms to promote coherence between them. This section will also evaluate the quality of the enabling environment which facilitated or hindered coordination. Finally, it will analyse the coordination between social protection and agriculture in the framework of the National Social Safety Net programme Jigisemejiri, which constitutes a practical case of programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions at national level.

3.1. Institutional architecture

3.1.1. Organisation of national agencies

Following the latest presidential election in 2018, the Government of Mali comprises 32 ministerial departments. Our analysis focused on the key ministries relevant to the social protection and agriculture sectors.

Since social protection is highly cross-sectoral and multi-dimensional, several ministries may be involved such as the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action, the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene, and the Ministry of Education. However, responsibility for supervising social protection lies with the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action.

The agriculture sector currently comprises three ministerial departments and a specialised commissariat that reports to the Presidency of the Republic. These are:

- The Ministry of Agriculture;
- The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries;
- The Ministry of the Environment, Sanitation and Sustainable Development; and
- The Food Security Commission (CSA).

In each ministry in the two sectors, the central units are:

- The Planning and Statistics Units (CPS);
- The Directorates of Human Resources (DRH);
- The Directorates of Finance and Material Assets (DFM); and
- The National Directorates.

The main National Directorates involved in managing the social protection and agriculture policies and programmes are:

- Under the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action: the National Directorate for Social Protection and the Solidarity Economy (DNPSES);
- Under the Ministry of Agriculture: the National Directorate of Agriculture (DNA);
• Under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries: the National Directorate of Animal Products and Industries (DNPIA), the National Directorate of Veterinary Services (DNSV), and the National Directorate of Fisheries (DNP).

Each of the five national directorates listed above is responsible for preparing the relevant parts of the national policy and for its coordination and implementation. They do not have legal personality and financial autonomy and are therefore reliant on the Directorates of Finance and Material Assets for financial resources.

The action of the Food Security Commission depends on three central technical bodies:

• The Office of Agricultural Products of Mali (OPAM);
• The Early Warning System (SAP); and
• The Agricultural Market Observatory (OMA).

According to the ministries, the decentralization of ministerial departments in the two sectors extends from the central services to the arrondissement and district services. In each circle and administrative region of Mali, the national directorates of each ministry in the two sectors are represented by a decentralized service called the Regional Directorate and the Local Service respectively. At the local level, such as the Nioro Circle, where the Cash+ project was implemented, the relevant local sector-based services for this analysis are:

• The Local Service for Social Development and the Solidarity Economy (SLDSES)
• The Local Agriculture Service (SLA)
• The Local Service for Animal Products and Industries (SLPIA) and the Local Veterinary Service (SLV).

3.1.2. Coordination mechanisms

There are two types of coordination mechanism in Mali:

• The coordination and monitoring mechanism for development actions, and
• The sector-based coordination mechanisms.

The development action coordination mechanism

This mechanism was introduced at regional, circle and district level by Decree n° 08-095/P-RM of 21 February 2008. It establishes (regional, local and district) Orientation, Coordination and Monitoring Committees for Development Actions (CROCSAD, CLOCSAD and CCOSAD). The responsibilities of these Committees include “ensuring coherence in the implementation of sector-based programmes” at the different administrative levels.

The CROCSAD, CLOCSAD and CCOSAD are sufficiently decentralized and can be used by all sectors and operate under the authority of the Head of the administrative district in question. Furthermore, these committees are generally very generic in terms of their composition, and thus sufficiently inclusive at every level.

Moreover, the meeting frequencies for the different sections of this mechanism (every six months for the region, every four months for the circle, every three months for the district, with the possibility of an extraordinary meeting) give them a degree of flexibility and make them accessible to stakeholders wanting to use them.
The sectoral coordination mechanism

Several coordination mechanisms are currently in place for the two sectors.

Coordination mechanism in the social protection sector

For the social protection sector, the main coordination mechanisms were established by Decree n° 2016-0677/P-RM of 5 September 2016, which created:

- At national level: the National Council for the Strategic Orientation of Social Protection (CNOS-PS) chaired by the Prime Minister; the National Technical Committee (CTN) for Social Protection chaired by the Minister for Social Protection; and the social safety net, mutual insurance and social security commissions.

- At regional and sub-regional level: the decision was made to use existing mechanisms at this level, namely the CROCSAD, CLOCSAD and CCOSAD, in accordance with Decree 08-095/P-RM of 21 February 2008.

The role of the CNOS-PS includes:

- The promotion of dialogue between participants on this issue of social protection, and
- The provision of guidance for the creation of coherence between social protection interventions.

The main Ministries in the agricultural sector and the Food Security Commission are members of this mechanism. However, we observe several issues with this mechanism, among others:

- The key services in the sector, such as the National Directorate of Animal Products and Industries and the National Directorate of Veterinary Services, are not listed as members of the National Technical Committee.
- There is also no reference to the desire for coherence between agriculture and social protection.
- The supreme body, which is supposed to meet once a year, had not met since it was created in 2016.
- The National Technical Committee and the National Commissions (CN) had already met but have not had the number of meetings prescribed by the statutes (two meetings a year for the CTN and four meetings a year for the CN).

Coordination mechanism in the agriculture sector

There are two types of coordination mechanism for the agricultural sector:

- The general sector coordination mechanism, and
- The specific mechanism for food security.

The general mechanism was established by Articles 186 to 191 of the Law of Agricultural Orientation (LOA) and organized by Decree n° 07-066/P-RM of 23 February 2007, as follows:

- At national level: the Higher Council of Agriculture (CSA), chaired by the President of the Republic; and the National Executive Agriculture Council (CENA), chaired by the Prime Minister;
- At regional level: the Regional Executive Agriculture Council (CERA), chaired by the regional governor.
The CSA and the CENA generally hold regular meetings, given the importance of agriculture to the national economy.

The specific food security mechanism was established by Decree n° 2017-0260/P-RM of 13 March 2017 and is composed as follows:

- At national level: The National Food Security Council (CNSA), chaired by the Prime Minister; the Coordination and Monitoring Committee (CCS), the Joint Commission for Dialogue (CMC) and the Technical Committee (CT), all chaired by the Food Security Commissioner. One of the explicit roles of the CCS is to “ensure the coherence of food and nutrition security programmes and actions”. CNSA, CCS and CMC are supposed to be held twice a year and CT once a month.
- At regional and sub-regional level: the regional, local and district food security committees, chaired by the regional governors, circle prefects and arrondissement sub-prefects respectively.

The Minister for social protection is a member of the CSA and represented at every level of the food security coordination mechanism. However, we observed the following issues with this mechanism, among others:

- The Minister for social protection is not a member of the CENA and the CERA.
- This mechanism is also not fully satisfactory in terms of the regularity of its meetings. None of the bodies regularly holds all its statutory meetings.

### 3.2. Assessment of the enabling environment for promoting coherence

This assessment of the enabling environment covers: (i) political commitment, (ii) policy context, (iii) institutional coordination mechanisms, (iv) funding mechanisms, and (v) human capacities.

#### 3.2.1. Political commitment

The Government of Mali holds high political commitment to developing the two sectors of social protection and agriculture. This can be seen in:

- Article 17 of the Constitution of Mali states that social protection is a right for all citizens. Article 26 of the Law of Agricultural Orientation highlights the need for social protection in the agricultural milieu.
- The strong emphasis placed on the funding of the agriculture sector and the importance given to this sector by the Strategic Economic Recovery Framework for Sustainable Development (CREDD), which is the frame of reference for all sector-based strategies and policies in Mali. For the period of 2016–2018, the CREDD was divided into two preliminary axes, three strategic axes, 13 priority areas and 38 specific objectives to allow the prospect of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. Rural development and food security are the Priority area 4 of Strategic Axis 1; and Social development, Humanitarian Actions and Solidarity are the Priority area 10 of Strategic Axis 2 of the CREDD.
- The major initiatives carried out or underway in the social protection sector, in particular through the introduction of a Medical Assistance Programme and the significant progress made in introducing a Universal Health Insurance Programme.
However, when it comes to the political will to improve operational coherence, the stakeholders surveyed tended to stress that it exists but at a low level. On this issue, below are the comments of two of the people surveyed:

“Very little work has been done to establish coherence, as the agricultural decision-makers consider social protection as no more than handouts.”

“There is little political will among the agricultural authorities. The proof of this is that not enough input subsidies reach poor farmers.”

There is currently a certain level of understanding and leadership in the social protection sector in terms of encouraging coherence, with a great deal of support from the technical and financial partners. Some of the recent results of this new momentum include:

- The annual conference on social protection, which will hopefully become institutional. That of 2016 placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of a greater expansion of social protection in the agricultural sector in Mali.
- The different working groups created; and
- The current introduction of a unified social register for social protection.

Ultimately, it must be remembered that even though political commitment is not yet at the desired level, the new initiatives underway give cause for hope. More work is required to improve political will in the agricultural sector and the achievements made in the area of social protection must be reinforced.

3.2.2. Policy context

The quality of the policy context is measured by the existence at this level of joint mechanisms that support and promote coherence between agriculture and social protection. The definition of a joint vision, the introduction of shared objectives and the creation of a common action plan all play a part in this (FAO, 2016).

In the social protection sector in Mali, action plans were created somewhat randomly. The enlightening comments below were made by a governmental stakeholder in the sector and corroborated by others:

“We have supervisory responsibility for social protection, which is why we should take responsibility for everyone. The PNPS and the PAN-EPS therefore include dedicated actions to protect rural populations. While we have been able to make progress for some of these populations, for others the result was almost zero. These were the activities to support agricultural production, for which we did not have specific funding; nor were they included in the programmes of the agricultural services.”

In the agricultural sector, the approach taken tended to favour isolated programmes that rarely considered social protection. One national stakeholder in this sector made the following comments:

“To be honest, although Article 26 of the LOA talks about social protection, as employees of the agriculture sector, we are limited in terms of understanding and implementation. From our point of view, the officials responsible for this sector must implement this, including in rural environments, as our role is to promote production and productivity.”
On the ground, we also documented an issue of limited awareness among civil servants about the relevance of social protection to agriculture. An official from the agriculture sector made the following comment on this subject:

“In truth, when I still worked at the regional and local levels, we did not look favourably on the actions of stakeholders who made donations in cash or in kind to rural populations. We thought that these actions demotivated people and prevented them joining in our own initiatives to boost production. But with hindsight, I am now convinced that interventions can produce better results if they are coordinated and applied at the same time.”

In short, even though high-level commitments existed to build up coherence between social protection and agriculture, they were not widely admitted and upheld across all political levels. The policies and programmes implemented in Mali promoted coherence only to a very limited extent. This means that the agricultural and social protection programmes generally developed separately. This is the weakest link in the policy environment. The stakeholders questioned at national level, whether governmental stakeholders or development partners, were unanimous in criticizing this situation.

3.2.3. Coordination mechanisms

An overview of the coordination mechanisms set up throughout the country shows that there is a desire to create synergy between the different stakeholders.

However, as mentioned in the subsection 3.1.2 coordination, mechanisms generally experienced the following problems:

- Certain mechanisms are very cumbersome due to the many bodies involved at national level.
- Very few, or even none of the statutory meetings are held.
- Certain stakeholders are not represented in some of the mechanisms.
- Little consideration is given to the financing and operation of certain mechanisms.
- There is no reference to the desire for coherence between agriculture and social protection as well as no linkage between the mechanisms in the two sectors.

One partner made the following comment about this issue:

“It is not that there are no coordination bodies, as there are several... But are they all relevant, how can they be integrated to the greatest extent and how can their operation be improved?”

3.2.4. Funding mechanisms

Funding mechanisms are an important dimension of the enabling environment. Our analysis aimed to identify the sources of funding and the reliability and durability of funding for agriculture and social protection programmes. It also gauged the extent to which funding affected coordination and the ability to pool resources so that joint programmes could be implemented.

Regarding agriculture, the Government of Mali currently states that it is dedicating almost 15 percent of its national budget to this sector, in accordance with the Maputo declaration. In addition to this national funding, many other outside financial resources are being invested into certain programmes and projects in the agricultural sector. However, the budget lines mentioned in the
different documents consulted do not have a clear line dedicated to coordination issues or the sharing of programmes.

The Government also provides subsidies for certain inputs, but they do not benefit the vast majority of small rural farmers. One governmental stakeholder in the agricultural sector had this to say about the access of vulnerable groups to input subsidies:

“To be honest, although certain inputs are subsidized, small-scale farmers cannot access them without specific measures. This is a problem that coherence between agricultural and social protection programmes could help to solve”.

Social protection does not receive as much state funding as agriculture. However, the funding of several interventions carried out by other ministerial departments could be entered into the accounts for this sector.

The following final observations emerge about funding mechanisms:

- None of the funding for the two sectors explicitly integrates the issue of coordination.
- None of the funding considers the possibility of pooling resources to enhance coherence.

3.2.5. Human resource capacities

The human resource qualities that are required to support coherence between social protection and agricultural interventions are:

- The ability to produce and share convincing data with a view to promoting commitment and shedding light on the processes for designing and implementing policies and programmes;
- The ability to facilitate inter-sectoral alliances and partnerships; and
- The ability to design, execute, monitor and evaluate coherent policies and programmes.

The inquiries into certain national services in the Sikasso and Kayes regions and the Koutiala and Nioro circles revealed that in general terms, the quality of the personnel in the two sectors did not allow these requirements to be met in full. The following general remark was made by officials in both sectors,

“There are woeful inadequacies at both quantitative and qualitative level”.

Several heads of service also made the following comment:

“Our officials carrying out activities on the ground are often not very interested in short-term skills training that could improve their performance. They would prefer long-term training that allowed them to access a higher public service position. This is a legitimate aspiration for any official, but it has a negative impact on the management of the workforce at the different levels.”

In both sectors, this situation is reflected in:

- An insufficient number and quality of employees, which can limit the performance of the programmes as they are not even linked; and
- Insufficient quality and skills to support coherence.
3.3. Jigisemejiri – the national programme combining social protection and agricultural intervention

At national level, the Jigisemejiri – “the tree of hope” - is a good example of a programme combining social protection and agricultural intervention. Jigisemejiri was officially launched in April 2014 (i.e. one year before the start of the Cash+ project) (World Bank, 2014). Due to the political and security crisis in 2011–2012, it was designed as an emergency operation whose financing came mainly in the form of an “Emergency Recovery Loan” from the International Development Association (IDA) (World Bank, 2012). The Ministry of Economy and Finance has been implementing the project, which originally consisted of three components:

- Component 1: Cash transfer program and accompanying to smooth income shock, increase household welfare, and protect human capital of children. It was designed to provide poor households with three years of support and contained three subcomponents:
  - Subcomponent 1: Direct cash transfers to poor households.
  - Subcomponent 2: Community/village level information sessions that promote good practices on nutrition, health, education and family planning.
  - Subcomponent 3: Preventive nutrition package to children under five-years-old and pregnant women.

- Component 2: Institutional support to establish basic safety nets system. It consists of building a Unified Social Registry (RSU), management information system (MIS), targeting and payment systems, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), management support, capacity building, etc.

- Component 3: Project management support to finance operational costs, equipment, daily supervision costs, audits, and training of personnel.

Jigisemejiri has become one of the key National Social Protection Policy (PNPS) programmes. The latest PNPS, adopted by Decree n°2016-0836/P-RM of 1 November 2016, set two general objectives: (i) to progressively create a system of protection against social risks for all citizens in general and for disadvantaged groups in particular; (ii) to develop mechanisms to prevent and manage disasters, accidents, catastrophes and other humanitarian crises. It will achieve its general objectives by accomplishing several specific goals. One of these goals is dedicated to social safety net issues and is entitled “Reduce poverty among the most marginalized populations and make sustained improvements to their access to basic social services”. Jigisemejiri has been renewed for a further three-year period and provides the basis and structures necessary for building a national safety net system for the whole country. The geographical coverage of the cash transfers component of the project will be gradually expanded and reach the target of 100 000 beneficiary households in 2022.

The project has created synergy with the National Agency for Medical Assistance (ANAM). Since June 2015, ANAM has begun the distribution of Régime d’Assistance Médicale (RAMED) cards to Jigisemejiri beneficiaries to have access to free health care across the country. It has also created a partnership with the Inter-professional Mutual Insurance (MIPROMA) to enrol beneficiary households in the voluntary medical scheme of MIPROMA (World Bank, 2018).

Since October 2017, two new components of the programme have been put in place (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2017):

- Component 4: Labour-intensive public works (HIMO)
Component 5: Income Generating Activities (AGR) mostly in the areas of small farming, small trade, livestock, poultry, agriculture and crafts.

This new phase relies on joint funding from the state, IDA, and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID).

The Income Generating Activities (AGR) targeted 10,000 beneficiary households among those benefiting from cash transfers. NGO partners on the ground conducted home visits to households to assist them in choosing the types of AGR they would like to follow, based on personal experience and results of market studies. Six types of activities were chosen, with the corresponding proportion of beneficiaries who have selected them are: market gardening (7%), condiments and cereals trade (19%), sheep and goat farming (26%), sheep and goat fattening (43%), poultry farming (5%), agriculture and handicrafts (1%).

In December 2017, the training of field officers on the techniques of implementing AGR took place (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2017). The training brought together around sixty participants, including those responsible for the National Directorates of Agriculture, Animal Production, Fisheries, Social Development and the Technical Unit for Social Safety Net Management and local NGO supervisors, heads of social development services in beneficiary regions of Sikasso, Koulikoro, Ségou, Kayes and Bamako. The work focused on the following themes:

- Market gardening, trade in agricultural products and agricultural inputs facilitated by the National Directorate of Agriculture (DNA); and
- Breeding of sheep and goats, and poultry farming facilitated by the representative of the National Direction of Animal Production and Industries (DNPIA).

During the first and second quarter of 2018, the NGOs carried out training for the beneficiaries according to the types of AGR they had selected. The training took place in two phases: one for the initiation of the AGR, and the second for the development phase of the AGR. The NGOs were asked to prepare modules in local languages in order to facilitate the understanding of certain technical terms and allow for better appropriation of these techniques. At the end of the technical training, they supported the beneficiaries in the development of their simplified business plans.

It is important to note that the agricultural interventions of Jigisemejiri and the FAO’s Cash+ programmes are different. The Cash+ project distributed productive inputs in the form of goats and animal feeds. It also supported the beneficiaries with regular zootechnical visits and provided trainings on good breeding practice. Jigisemejiri has been providing trainings on income-generating activities in agriculture as well as supporting the development of business plans.

Jigisemejiri promotes the AGR as a strategy to strengthen the resilience and productive capacities of beneficiary households besides receiving unconditional cash transfers. With this component, the project supports the articulation of national policies on social protection with agriculture. Its annual ordinary and extraordinary sessions are chaired by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and attended by representatives from different ministries, directorates, decentralised units and NGOs (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2018a, 2018b, 2019).

Among those attending these meetings are: Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries; Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training; Ministry of National Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family; Ministry of Environment, Sanitation and Sustainable Development; Regional Directors of Social Development and Solidarity Economy (DRDSES); the Heads of Local Services for Social Development and Solidarity Economy (SLDSES); the National Directorate of Agriculture; the National Directorate...
Following our typology, Jigisemejiri is an integrated programme that combines social protection and rural development goals with different components and the implementation depends on sectoral agencies. Therefore, it requires intersectoral coordination for its implementation. Jigisemejiri is basically a social protection programme that is designed to be consistent with the agricultural livelihoods of its beneficiaries. Coherence is achieved as the programme combines multiple interventions so that targeted households benefit from both agricultural and social protection. The degree of coordination is high. It is characterised by a centralized operational agency (i.e. the National Steering Committee (CNP) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance), in collaboration with other governmental actors in both social protection and agricultural sector.

However, our analysis has several observations regarding Jigisemejiri, and its fifth component in particular:

- The AGR activities have been implemented, but only once the cash transfer phase had ended. Therefore, this type of intervention has the disadvantage of not having the concomitant effects of the two modalities at the same time.
- This agricultural intervention purely consists of trainings. Therefore, its effect might not be comparable with interventions providing direct productive agricultural inputs like the FAO Cash+ project. Moreover, trainings in agriculture may not be an adequate response in an emergency situation.
- Opinions of Jigisemejiri stakeholders collected for the institutional analysis in the districts of M’Pesoba and N’Gountjina have confirmed the effectiveness of the programme in improving food availability, health, and schooling, etc. Nonetheless, some officials stressed the need for greater and more regular funding, more harmonised targeting methods, improved monitoring and evaluation framework, and better cross-sectoral coordination between all the relevant ministerial departments.

This section has presented an analysis on the degree of coordination and coherence between social protection and agricultural sectors in Mali. Overall, it acknowledges that the bases for coordination exist. The government of Mali has strong political will to develop the two sectors. Agencies in charge of coordination within each sector exist. However, political engagement to improve coordination and coherence between the two sectors is still weak. It is mirrored in a low awareness of the benefit of coordinated social protection and agricultural actions among government personnel. Policies and programmes implemented promote coherence only to a very limited extent. In this context, the national Jigisemejiri programme represents a good common ground to integrate social protection and agricultural interventions. With the new component on Income-Generating Activities (AGR) put into effect in October 2017, the ministries in charge of agriculture are involved in the project. This could serve as a concrete example to push forward coherence in the public political agenda.

_________________________________________________________
for Social Protection and the Solidarity Economy (DNPSES); the Technical Unit for Social Safety Net Management (UTGFS); the National Directorate of Health (DNS); the National Directorate of Social Development (DNDS); the National Committee for Civil Society; the National Federation of Rural Women; the Technical Unit of the Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework; and the Food Security Commission.
4. Case study: FAO’s Cash+ project in the Nioro Circle

The FAO’s Cash+ project in the Nioro Circle of Mali is a practical example of a programme combining social protection and agricultural interventions at local level. It was funded by the Government of Finland and implemented from April 2015 to February 2017 to bring a response to the Sahelian food crisis of 2014-2015. This section will present an assessment of the project’s implementation process and impacts on its beneficiaries. It aims to gauge the level of coordination between the project and stakeholders in social protection and agricultural sectors, and the strength of combined cash transfer and agricultural productive inputs.

4.1. Assessment of the implementation process

The implementation process of the Cash+ project is evaluated along three dimensions: its effort to create synergy with other existing initiatives, the level of coordination between the stakeholders involved in the project, and the effectiveness of its targeting mechanism.

4.1.1. Synergy with other existing programmes

During its implementation period, the Cash+ project encountered or was joined on the ground by several initiatives:

- The Programme to fight Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in the Nara and Nioro Circles in the Sahel (PLIAM), launched in 2012 for a five-year period.
- The Jigisemejiri social safety net programme, launched in Nioro in 2014 for a three-year period.
- The Project for the Management of Natural Resources and Climate Change (PGRN-CC), launched in 2014 for a five-year period and covering three districts of Nioro;
- The Programme to Improve the Agricultural Productivity of Smallholders in Sub-Saharan Africa (SAPEP), launched in 2015 for a five-year period and also covering 11 districts in the Nioro Circle; and
- The Regional Programme to Strengthen Resilience to Food and Nutritional Insecurity in the Sahel (P2RS), launched in 2016 for a 20-year period and covering 11 districts in the Nioro Circle.

The Cash+ project only developed certain synergies with the first two, PLIAM et Jigisemejiri. The coordinator of the PLIAM acted as the local coordinator for the Cash+ project. However, it is important to note that there was no mechanism that was officially established to regulate the coordination between those programmes.

The PLIAM was funded by the Belgian Fund for Food Security (FBSA) and included a health insurance aspect dedicated to improving the health of the populations benefiting from the programme. In this health component, the programme worked with the Malian Technical Union of Mutual Insurers to develop strategies that would make it easier for its beneficiaries to join together in mutual funds and create agreements between these funds and the health centres in the area of intervention. The Cash+ project recognized the impact of health on human capital and wanted its beneficiaries to make use of the mutual funds already introduced by PLIAM. To achieve this, meetings were held between the mutual fund team, the PLIAM coordinators and the Cash+ team. The involvement of the mayors in the relevant districts allowed the Cash+ beneficiaries to receive information on this
subject. However, this activity was not originally included in the logical framework of the Cash+ modality and there was no systematic follow-up to monitor the result.

When it was first introduced in 2014, Jigisemejiri created local organizations (the district and village committees) for targeting and for supporting the implementation of its activities. The Cash+ project did not want to start from scratch when it arrived on the ground the following year, so it relied on the same committees, galvanizing them whenever needed. Although there was no official contact between the two initiatives, the Cash+ project also acted on statements by the village authorities to exclude from its list of beneficiaries any household already selected by Jigisemejiri. The comments collected among the beneficiaries, which will be presented in subsection 4.1.3, reveal that the Cash+ project happened to act as a complement to Jigisemejiri as the latter could not serve all the population in need.

4.1.2. Stakeholders involved in the project

While the FAO Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa (REOWA) was responsible for global programme coordination in Mali and Mauritania, the Mali project itself was coordinated by the FAO Country Office in Bamako. In Nioro, the Coordinator of the PLIAM acted as the local coordinator of the Cash+ project on behalf of the FAO representative. Technical assistance was provided by FAO.

The design and implementation of the Cash+ project required the creation of a partnership between FAO and other stakeholders, with whom a local agreement was signed, for the performance of the following tasks in particular: (i) the targeting of beneficiaries; (ii) distribution of Cash or Cash+ benefits; (iii) training in good breeding practices; (iv) training in good nutritional practices; (v) zootechnical support; (vi) conduct of studies and surveys; and (vii) communication activities. All the stakeholders who contributed to the design and implementation of the project are listed in the Table 1, with their respective roles.

There was no formal coordination of the Cash+ initiative at national level, as the involvement of the ministries and the central technical services was limited to participation in certain restitution activities. The project was local in scale, covering five of the 16 districts in the Nioro Circle. In this respect, it should have been coordinated locally under the leadership of the prefect or their representative. The CLOCSAD, a permanent body already set up in every circle in Mali, could also have performed this role. But based on the information received from the different stakeholders, only the project launch and closure meetings were held in a broader context and chaired by the prefect of the Nioro Circle.

Monthly meetings were held during the project implementation phase. These were convened by the PLIAM Coordinator, FAO personnel based in Nioro and acting on behalf of FAO-Bamako. Participants were: (i) REOWA, if available; (ii) FAO-Bamako, represented by the PLIAM Coordinator; (iii) the local technical services that had signed an agreement (SLDSES, SLPIA, SLV); (iv) the NGOs and institutions that had signed an agreement (CEPAP, A-KARED, Kondo-Jigima). Local coordination within the districts and villages was provided by the formally established district committees and village committees respectively.

The weaknesses in the coordination were thus the absence of a formal mechanism involving ministries, their technical departments and their regional services, at national and regional level, and the low level of involvement by the administrative authority (prefect) in local coordination. Local coordination was therefore more informal, but its role was agreed and not contested on the ground.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name or business name (alphabetical order)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Agro-Pastoral Studies and Promotion (CEPAP)</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Implementation of Household Economy Approach targeting in the villages. Distribution of social safety nets (money or livestock inputs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Each beneficiary district</td>
<td>Participation in geographical targeting (choice of districts). Introduction and inspection of district targeting committees and supervision of village committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO representation in Mali (FAO-Mali)</td>
<td>Bamako</td>
<td>National project coordination in Mali Provision of technical support to stakeholders in the field, coordination of global project implementation and provision of technical support. Guarantor of implementation quality at technical and operational level, including the targeting of beneficiaries, the quality of inputs, the partnership, and monitoring and evaluation on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaarta Research and Development Agency (AKARED)</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Conducting of studies and research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kondo Jigima Microfinance Institution</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Distribution of cash transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Animal Products and Industries Service (SLPIA)</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Involvement in the selection and purchase of goats Involvement in the distribution of goats Training in best breeding practices Involvement in monitoring of goats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Service for Social Development and the Solidarity Economy (SLDSES)</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Involvement in identifying beneficiary households and targeting Involvement in the distribution of cash transfers and veterinary inputs Involvement in monitoring complaint management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Veterinary Service (SLSV)</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Involvement in the selection and purchase of goats Involvement in the distribution of goats Training in best breeding practices Veterinary support for goats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme to fight Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (PLIAM)</td>
<td>Nioro</td>
<td>Local project coordination Presidency of the different local meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA)</td>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>Coordination of the (operational and financial) programme at regional level Monitoring of activities Provision of technical support to the country teams where required Coordination of the programme communication actions Organization of launch and closing workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village councils</td>
<td>Each beneficiary village</td>
<td>Introduction and inspection of village targeting committees. Receipt and management of complaints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ elaboration based on project coordination information.
4.1.3. Targeting mechanism

The targeting method used by the project was community targeting combined with the Household Economy Approach method. The application of this process respected certain standards: (i) inclusive approach that involved communities; (ii) establishment of standard criteria accepted by all; (iii) leadership of the project by an NGO with expertise; (iv) monitoring of the process by the technical services; (v) verification of 100 percent of the households included, using a criteria checklist; (vi) replacement of households that did not meet the criteria; (vii) preparation of a validation list report; (viii) creation of the list/database by the NGO. Some villages operated a monitoring system in order to avoid, wherever possible, the same households being included in the list of beneficiaries for different projects running concomitantly or in close succession.

The beneficiaries were able to appeal, based on their own declarations and those of the district and village authorities, if they felt wronged by the choices of the targeting committees. However, there were no complaints regarding the Cash+ project in the villages where interviews were conducted. The targeting mechanism introduced for this project was not rejected or contested. The declarations of the stakeholders surveyed confirm this.

Ninety-nine percent of the beneficiaries identified as recipients by the project were women, thanks to awareness raising among male heads of household on the fact that women are more likely to use social transfers in a way that is more beneficial to the entire household.

The following statements from the district authorities and the targeting committee in Simby confirmed the effectiveness of the targeting and appeals system:

“The Cash+ project was very timely as it allowed other poor households who had not received a cash transfer under Jigisemejiri to be considered, as Simby is one of the poorest districts in Mali…”

“The project was effective, as real beneficiaries were chosen. Populations could appeal to our committee, but we did not receive any complaints.”

The following opinions from the village authorities and the targeting committee in Dialakoro-Maréna (Cash+ village) confirmed the involvement of the population in targeting and project management, and the uniqueness and transparency of the targeting mechanisms:

“We were responsible for targeting and validating the list of beneficiaries during the implementation of the Cash+ project. We also facilitated the distribution of services and the monitoring of their use.”

“We play the same role for all the programmes that come to our village, and this means we can coordinate the interventions and avoid duplications.”

“All those in need can be considered progressively if the different programmes coordinate their interventions.”

A Cash+ beneficiary in Dialakoro-Maréna stated:

“There were others before and after this project: Jigisemejiri, another project which made four transfers (two of XOF 39 000 and one of XOF 25 000) […] But none of us benefited from these other projects as in our village we ensure that the same people do not receive several successive benefits while others are still waiting.”

These statements by the beneficiaries of the Cash+ modality in Dialakoro-Maréna reveal that the populations were aware of the initiatives implemented in the village, even if they did not directly...
benefit from them. They also confirm that the village and district authorities attempted to include more poor people in the benefits of successive projects in the same location.

According to beneficiaries from the village of Madonga:

“In our village, it is possible for the same person to receive the benefits of several initiatives implemented simultaneously or consecutively. But we are not saying that this is a bad thing, as we do so with full knowledge of the facts. The people who find themselves in this situation really are those who are considered the poorest. This does not lead to any criticism or frustration among other people. This is why, in our group of beneficiaries, two also benefited from the initiative involving three cash transfers (two of XOF 39 000 and one of XOF 25 000).”

These statements further confirm the effectiveness of the targeting and appeals system. They also reveal that the Cash+ project, with its targeting practice, extended the benefit of social protection to those who had not been covered. As a result, the project succeeded in complementing other existing programmes in serving the poor and vulnerable.

In sum, the Nioro Cash+ project was a single integrated programme with different components supervised by a single agency and implemented with the involvement of several contracted local stakeholders. Horizontal and vertical coordination between and within sectors (i.e. social protection and agriculture) was limited. The level of coordination with other initiatives was at low level and no formal mechanism was established to monitor it. The positive aspect of the project’s implementation process consisted in the absence of reported conflict on the ground and its targeting process, which was complementary to other existing initiatives.

4.2. Impacts of the project’s different modalities on household wellbeing

This subsection presents the impact of the Cash+ project across different aspects of livelihood, namely food security, food diet, livestock production, non-farm activities, food and non-food consumption, hygiene, aspirations and expectations for the future. For the quantitative impact evaluation, we conducted cross-comparisons of outcomes between three groups of population: non-beneficiaries, Cash Only beneficiaries, and Cash+ beneficiaries. They represent three types of impacts:

- The impact of the Cash Only package when we compare the outcome of the Cash Only beneficiaries with the outcome of the non-beneficiaries
- The impact of the Cash+ package when we compare the outcome of the Cash+ beneficiaries with the outcome of the non-beneficiaries
- The incremental impact of receiving the agricultural intervention when households have already received a cash transfer, by comparing the outcomes among Cash+ beneficiaries with the outcomes among Cash Only beneficiaries.

Figure 4 visually summarises the quantitative results. In turn, the qualitative study reports the perception of the beneficiaries about the impacts of different modalities of intervention. In many regards, both quantitative and qualitative studies conclude that the impacts were more conclusive in the Cash+ modality than in the Cash Only modality.
4.2.2. Food security and dietary diversity

The food security situation is measured based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) methodology, which comprises eight questions to gauge the severity of people’s lack of access to adequate food. The higher the score the more severely food insecure is a household. The quantitative study reveals a significant impact of the Cash+ treatment on its beneficiaries, compared to the situation where they had not been included in the programme. On average, the proportion of households who never had to worry about having enough food to eat (when the FIES is equal to zero) increased by 70.5 percent with Cash+. The Cash+ beneficiaries were also 7.1 percent less likely to experience any level of food insecurity (when the FIES is greater than zero) than if they had received Cash Only.

The qualitative assessment gathered people’s view on this subject. Cash+ beneficiaries in Dialakoro-Maréna stated:

“The benefits we received made an important contribution: with the XOF 20 000, we were able to deal with the issue of food. Now (more than two years later), we still have several animals left after drinking and selling their milk.”

“The combined effects of the different projects were beneficial to our village, especially in terms of food, because here, no one can feed themselves with their crops for four months in a row.”
“The Cash+ project was particularly important in terms of the benefits felt by our village, as we are still feeling the benefits with the remaining goats after helping to improve our food, our health and schooling for our children.”

Regarding the impact of the programme on its beneficiaries’ dietary diversity, we considered two measures that capture the dietary diversity scores of children and women. We did not find positive impacts of the programme in diversifying the daily food consumption of children and women in the beneficiary households. The trainings on nutrition provided by the programme might not have been intensive and expansive enough to change the eating habits of the population. As only two women per village participated in those trainings, the knowledge might not have been well disseminated to the rest of the beneficiaries.

4.2.3. Hygiene practice

To assess the adoption of good hygiene practices among the beneficiaries, we considered two measures of whether the beneficiaries washed their hands with disinfectant and treated unsafe water before use. While only two women per village participated in the trainings on good hygiene practices, boxes of soap were provided to all beneficiary households, whether they received Cash Only of Cash+.

Compared to the situation in the control group, the beneficiaries of the program washed their hands more often with disinfectant than the non-beneficiaries, probably with the distributed soap. However, we did not find any significant change in the treatment of unsafe water.

Together with the insignificant results on dietary diversity presented in the previous section, this finding again suggests that the trainings on nutrition and hygiene provided by the programme might not have been far-reaching enough to effectively change the eating habits and food safety practices of all beneficiaries. The positive result of the indicator on handwashing with disinfectant may be due to the distribution of soap; without it, this result might not have materialized.

4.2.4. Farm and non-farm production

The programme supported livestock production through the distribution of goats and the provision of zootechnical monitoring to each household benefiting from the Cash+ kit. Unsurprisingly, given the focus of the programme and its main objective, we observed a significant increase in livestock production among the Cash+ beneficiaries. Cash+ beneficiaries’ average gross income from livestock was 68.5 percent and 88.2 percent greater than it would if they had been in the control group or received Cash Only. Households getting Cash+ also had a volume of livestock (measured by Tropical Livestock Units) that was 85.4 percent higher than if they had received Cash Only. These results are the gross effects of the programme, which indicate that Cash+ households still maintained and developed their livestock, which represents a sort of productive capital. This, perhaps, contributed to improving their food security situation compared to Cash Only households.

Vulnerable households also benefited more from the Cash+ package. It increased livestock holdings and returns from livestock production of labour-constrained households compared to labour-unconstrained households. Households that were female-headed and with below-median wealth level also had their livestock size and revenue improve more in comparison with male-headed and better-off households.

However, the qualitative study reveals that the quantity of livestock feed given to the Cash+ beneficiaries (50 kg) was not sufficient for the duration of the project and led some people to buy
more with their own money, which could have been to the detriment of another vital human need. Moreover, project beneficiaries and representatives of district committees also suggested to increase the number of female goats as it would allow for higher breeding efficiency.

The programme did not have any significant impact on the engagement of the beneficiaries in non-farm activities and their related profits.\textsuperscript{10} Probably the cash amount was too limited and since the project was of humanitarian nature, with a focus on agriculture, non-farm activities were not actively promoted.

\textbf{4.2.5. Aspirations and expectations}

The quantitative study did not find any significant impacts of the programme on the respondents’ expectations of better socio-economic conditions in the future. However, the study did observe positive and significant impacts of the programme on the aspirations for children’s education. The Cash Only and Cash+ beneficiaries were respectively 51.9 and 16.3 percent more likely to aspire that their children would reach university level compared to non-beneficiaries. The Cash Only beneficiaries were also 48 percent less likely to express that they would like no education for their children. Interestingly, we found that Cash+ beneficiaries were less ambitious than Cash Only beneficiaries. Cash+ beneficiaries were 16.7 percent less likely to aim for the university level and 47 percent more likely to have no ambition for their children’s education than Cash Only beneficiaries. The reception ofCash+ may have increased the optimism about being able to live from subsistence agriculture or generated a sense of attachment to subsistence agriculture among its beneficiaries.

The programme had unequal impacts on households of different characteristics. It boosted aspirations for children’s education in households that were headed by women more than in households headed by men. Higher positive change was also found among labour-constrained households compared to the ones that had no constraints on labour.

\textbf{4.2.6. Overall perceived impacts of different modalities}

The qualitative study documents that, in general, the beneficiaries were satisfied with the programme.

\textit{“Once my husband’s eldest sons had left to go and work in the city, we did not have enough people to grow our crops”},

said Maman Sow Diallo - a Cash Only beneficiary, whose meagre harvest was reaching an end when she received her money transfer.

\textit{“But for once, I don’t have to buy oil, groundnuts and soap on credit!” She was also pleased to know that she would receive another transfer, which meant that she could plan her purchases.}

Most of the beneficiaries receiving either Cash Only or Cash+ expressed their preference for the Cash+ kit. During the qualitative survey, a subsidiary question not included in the interview guides but asked to all the beneficiaries (Cash+ and Cash only) was the following:

\textit{“At the start of this project, if you had been given the choice between the Cash+ modality or the Cash only modality, which would you have preferred?”}

The prevailing answer to this question in both groups was as follows:

\textsuperscript{10} Even though the questionnaire does contain a question asking how the beneficiaries have used the received transfers (e.g. for consumption, investment or saving, etc.), the quality of the collected data do not allow to draw any statistics for that dimension.
“To be honest, at first we would have chosen the transfer of XOF 100 000 in two XOF 50 000 instalments three months apart.”

Opinions changed after the implementation of the project and everyone would choose the Cash+ modality if the project were replicated: the beneficiaries of the Cash+ modality due to their actual experience, the beneficiaries of the Cash Only modality following the good feedback on the Cash+ modality.

In this regard, the project received several positive feedbacks. According to the district authorities and the district committee in Simby:

“The beneficiaries who received XOF 20 000 and three goats were those who benefited the most.”

In turn, the following comment was made in the Cash+ village Dialakoro-Maréna:

“The programmes that took place in our village have generally been satisfactory. But we found the approach of the Cash+ project particularly effective, as it combined cash donations with livestock inputs.”

Sira Diatta was a Cash+ beneficiary whose husband had been very ill, and hospitalized in Kayes on several occasions, and as a result her plot of land in Sira Diatta had been abandoned. For the last two years she had only been able to manage by relying on the other villagers, who had provided food for her and her ten children. She has got her smile back,

“I’m now relieved that I have overcome this difficult period, and this small stock will allow me to be independent.”

The qualitative study concludes that in many regards, the impact was more conclusive in the Cash+ modality than in the Cash only modality. In future initiatives of this type, it is recommended that work should therefore focus on combining cash transfers and agricultural transfers at the same time.
5. Conclusions

According to the most recent statistics, about 80 percent of the global extreme poor live in rural areas where livelihood mostly relies on subsistence agriculture (FAO, 2015). In this context, many studies have shown that combining social protection (mostly in the form of social assistance) and agriculture interventions can be effective in helping poor people to cope with food insecurity, income volatility and to sustainably move out of poverty. When effectively combined, the two interventions can generate greater impacts than standalone interventions. In order to achieve this synergy, coordinated efforts of the two sectors are crucial. However, this type of coordination is not always understood and sought after by key stakeholders. It may be hindered by institutional obstacles such as lack of political will, weak coordination mechanisms, and limited capacities of policy makers and field officers.

The economy of Mali remains dependent on the performance of its agricultural sector, which is however extremely vulnerable to weather conditions (droughts, floods and low water levels) and major risk factors (health hazards, locust invasion, epidemics, and bush fires). Structural problems such as poverty and food insecurity still exist in several parts of the country. The Malian government puts a strong emphasis on developing the two sectors of agriculture and social protection for rural development and food security in its Strategic Economic Recovery Framework for Sustainable Development (CREDD).

Our analysis acknowledges the strong commitment and political will of the government of Mali to develop the social protection and agriculture sectors. However, there is still a lack of concerted action to achieve greater coherence between them. The policy framework to strengthen coherence between the sectors is still weak, as it is influenced by types of interaction that favour sectoral reinforcement and predominantly isolated conceptual approaches. Moreover, there are large numbers of existing mechanisms for coordinating the two sectors, but they are not sufficiently functional and have certain shortfalls in terms of representation. Above that, these mechanisms do not explicitly include the issue of coherence and linkages between the two sectors.

Regarding the funding mechanisms, agriculture receives priority funding in the national budget; these funds are also more stable than those of social protection including funding for social safety nets. Cross-sectoral coordination is also affected by the lack of pooled resources geared towards strengthening linkages between the sectors.

The field work revealed a huge shortage of decentralized human resources in both sectors. This shortage affects both the number and the quality of employees. Not only does this situation influence the satisfactory implementation of the sector-based programmes, it also impacts awareness of coherence. Many field officers in the agriculture sector did not understand well the relevance and potential benefit on promoting linkages between the two sectors.

Nonetheless, the Jigisemejiri programme is a promising venue for strengthening coherence between social protection and agricultural interventions at national level in Mali. It has recently introduced two new components of Labour-intensive public works (HIMO) and Income Generating Activities (AGR) mostly in the sector of agriculture. Collaboration has been pursued between the Ministry of Economy and Finance in charge of financing and managing the programme and the Ministries in charge of social affairs and agriculture.

The assessment of the implementation process of the Nioro Cash+ project documents a weak synergy of the project with other existing initiatives. It did not originally develop any specific...
coordination mechanism with other projects or programmes. However, during targeting and implementation, it has somehow created synergy with the PLIAM and Jigisemejiri programmes. Since the project intentionally included the non-beneficiaries of the Jigisemejiri programme, it can be concluded that in the end it complemented the Jigisemejiri programme by serving other households who were also in need. The process to select the beneficiaries was effective. The stakeholders surveyed also confirm that the project’s targeting mechanism was not rejected or contested.

The FAO’s Cash+ project constitutes a practical example of programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions in critical humanitarian context. The quantitative evaluation reveals that most of the initial objectives of the Cash+ project were met. Compared to the Cash Only modality, the Cash+ had longer-lasting impacts on food security and livestock production. Both Cash+ and Cash Only beneficiaries manifested better hygiene practices. Regarding the adults’ aspirations for children’s education, the Cash Only kit increased their aspirations for university level and decreased their aspirations for no education. The Cash+ adult beneficiaries also increased their ambition for children’s education. However, receiving Cash+ might have boosted the sentiment of attachment to subsistence agriculture as their beneficiaries had less ambition for university level than the ones who received Cash Only. The distributional impacts of the programme are also in line with what was intended. In many aspects, female-headed, labour-constrained and poorer households exhibited better outcomes in comparison with the rest of the households.

However, we did not find, on average, significant impacts of the project on the food security situation of households that received Cash Only, which might have been used to satisfy immediate needs thus had no lasting impact. Treating unsafe water was also not systematic in all beneficiary households. No positive impact of the programme on the dietary diversity of children and women was detected. We did not find significant impacts of the programme either on starting a new business or on revenue from non-farm activities. Similarly, the programme did not affect the respondents’ expectations for higher income and hope for better socio-economic prospects.

The programme did not reach its initial targets in terms of improving children’s and women’s dietary diversity and water purification. Taking this into account together with the opposite finding that it had long-lasting impact on livestock production suggests that the way in which the activities are implemented matters a lot for the programme’s final results. Rigorous zootechnical visits were carried out in each beneficiary household, while training on nutrition and hygiene only reached a limited number of beneficiaries, and awareness sessions and culinary demonstrations were plenary and might not have been intensive enough to change people’s habits. Therefore, close monitoring at household level seems to deliver more effective results.

Those narrow impacts may be attributed to the level of generosity of the transfer. The total amount of the transfer was equivalent to one fifth of the pre-intervention median level of annual household expenditure and was distributed only once. The number of supplementary activities of the Cash+ project was also not comparable with what is commonly offered by “graduation” programmes, since the latter are composed of more abundant activities such as regular coaching on financial management, access to market, and other livelihood trainings. Although the amount of the transfer and the duration of the project had an immediate effect on the food and nutritional situation of the beneficiary households, it was nowhere near enough to lift these populations out of poverty on a sustainable basis. Regarding the quantity of productive agricultural inputs, interviewees often stressed that the project would have been more successful if a higher number of female goats had been given out, as this would have allowed for higher reproductive efficiency of the goats.
6. Recommendations

From our analysis, several policy recommendations can be drawn with the objective to enhance the effectiveness of programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions in Mali.

First, improvement of the enabling environment will ensure coherence of policies and coordination mechanisms:

- **Raising awareness and political commitment:**
  - Stakeholders can make use of existing national food security and nutrition and agricultural policy processes to place coherence on the policy agenda, for example regional and national policy processes such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the preparation of the National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs). Other initiatives such as the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR), the next Strategic Economic Recovery Framework for Sustainable Development (CREDD), the social protection action plan, the process of developing the national social protection floors and the Agricultural Development Policy (PDA) are possible avenues to initiate high-level discussions on the need of coordination between agriculture and social protection.
  - Programmes that have successfully created linkages between social protection and agriculture should be encouraged to widely share their experiences in the public policy sphere.

- **Strengthening coordination:**
  - The government should mobilize and coordinate actions of all relevant ministerial departments for:
    - Managing the design and implementation of agricultural and social protection policies and programmes with the ministries in charge of agriculture and of social welfare;
    - Financing interventions with the ministries in charge of economy and finance, parliamentary committees; and
    - Supporting cross-sectoral coordination with national and decentralized steering committees and sector working groups.
  - The representativeness of key stakeholders in agencies of two sectors should be improved, for example including the National Directorate of Agriculture (DNA), the National Directorate of Animal Products and Industries (DNPIA), the National Directorate of Veterinary Services (DNSV), and the National Directorate of Fisheries (DNP) in the National Technical Committee for Social Protection; including the Ministry responsible for social protection in the current National Executive Agriculture Council (CENA).
  - The Regional, Local and District Orientation, Coordination and Monitoring Committees for Development Actions (CROCSAD, CLOCSAD and CCOSAD) should explicitly reinforce the articulation and coordination between the social protection and agricultural sectors.
  - Those committees should respect the schedule of their statutory meetings and hold other meetings dedicated to coordination issues between the two sectors more frequently.

- **Improving the funding mechanisms:**
  - More budgets should be allocated for the coordination mechanisms between the social protection and agricultural sectors.
  - The administrative procedure of pooled funding should be simplified.

- **Building up human resource capacities:**
Skills training programmes on the issue of coherence between social protection and agriculture should be prepared and proposed to all high-level, regional and sub-regional officials.

Partnerships could be created with international expert agencies, for example FAO, IFAD, World Bank to receive technical support and professionally designed training activities on coherence and linkages between agriculture and social protection.

Second, better programming can support coherence between social protection and agriculture and deliver effective results:

- Creating synergy with other programmes:
  - Since the conception stage, new social programmes/projects should be systematically designed in order to avoid potential harm, act as complement to and create synergy with other existing programmes.
  - Since it is national in scope, the Jigisemejiri programme deserves to be considered as a basis for coordination. For example, the current Jigisemejiri National Steering Committee can be extended to other stakeholders needed for the creation of linkages. The Unified Social Registry (RSU) created by the programme is a useful tool for targeting mechanisms. Since it contains details of actual and potential beneficiaries of social assistance, this dataset can help avoid duplication in data collection and inequity in targeting.
  - Coordination must be developed with decentralised governmental actors and local sector-based services such as the Local Service for Social Development and the Solidarity Economy (SLDSES), the Local Agriculture Service (SLA), the Local Service for Animal Products and Industries (SLPIA), the Local Veterinary Service (SLV), and the Regional Executive Agriculture Council (CERA).

- Improving the regularity and size of the transfer:
  - It is recommended that more regular transfers and of higher amount would enable beneficiaries to manage consumption and income shocks more easily.
  - More predictable transfers also offer security and alleviate liquidity constraints, thereby allowing the beneficiaries to engage in high-risk but more profitable long-term investment in their agricultural activities (e.g. higher expenditures on seeds, hired labour, new varieties of crop, etc.).

- Minding the specificity of the agricultural sector and rural livelihood:
  - Agricultural activities are seasonally orchestrated. Public works schemes implemented during planting and harvesting periods could have people pull out of their main occupations. On the opposite, well-timed public works schemes carried out during lean season can ensure the participation of beneficiaries, thereby diversifying their sources of income and helping them to overcome a period of insecurity.
  - Programmes providing livestock support or agricultural training should also be designed to encourage and assist beneficiaries to go beyond subsistence farming, diversify income with non-farm activities, and invest in long-term capital such as education. To this purpose, activities such as business coaching, skills training, value chain development, role-model exposure and intensive awareness raising campaign could be envisaged, among others.

- To effectively change people’s eating, cooking and hygiene habits, trainings should be combined with intensive awareness campaigns. Similarly, close monitoring at household level would ensure that agricultural interventions will deliver effective results.

- Making targeting more gender-aware:
Social programmes should have a process for primarily designating women as the recipients of transfers for households, in a society where men are the heads of household in most cases.

Making the national safety system more shock-responsive with agricultural interventions:

- One of the two objectives by the Government of Mali in the National Social Protection Policy of 2016 is to “develop mechanisms for preventing and managing calamities, disasters, catastrophes and other humanitarian crises”. It was also discussed in the national document of resilience priorities (PRP). Since 2016, the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery have been considering options for funding the possible scale-up of the Jigisemejiri in humanitarian crises. In September 2018, Jigisemejiri supported the emergency response to the drought, through cash transfers and food aid to more than 30,000 households in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food Security Commission in Kayes, Kolikouro, Segou, Mopti and Gao regions (World Bank, 2018). However, shock responsiveness can be considered for the component involving agricultural intervention as well. So far, only trainings on agricultural practices have been provided by Jigisemejiri. However, they do not seem to be an adequate response in case of shocks. The practice of combining transfer of money and agricultural assets in the humanitarian context of the Cash+ project can be capitalised and applied to a larger scale in permanent state programmes.

- According to O’Brien et al. (2018), shock-responsive systems are more complex than those for routine social protection as they involve a wider set of actors, require good coordination among them, and must be resistant in a crisis. In Mali, their analysis shows that the Government does express political commitment for shock-responsive social protection. However, political influence to secure resources is limited because of competing priorities, and institutional capacity for shock-responsive social protection is still largely insufficient to deliver effective results. More coordination and coherence should be pursued by a large number of stakeholders including the three main agencies responsible for supporting households affected by shocks: the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action (MSAH), the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection (MSPC) and the Food Security Commission (CSA).

Supporting capacity building of field personnel:

- Programmes should systematically provide trainings to their field workers to ensure that combined social protection and agricultural interventions are implemented in a coherent manner and able to create synergy.
- Relevant human resources from the social protection and agriculture sectors at local (circle) and district level must be included in the mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of initiatives.

Ensuring the stability of funding:

- Delays in funding can jeopardise the implementation of projects. National programmes carried out on wide scale and over a longer period often require large joint funding involving national and international contributions. Coordination must be reinforced to ensure that disbursements are not withheld and impede the progress of programmes.

Sharing experiences and lessons learnt:

- Programmes combining social protection and agricultural interventions should systematically formulate operational and strategic recommendations for increasing linkages between national protection programmes and policies and agricultural, food security and nutritional interventions.
- They must be encouraged to communicate the benefits of the articulated interventions, which can provide information on the appropriate institutional and operational design for such interventions.
Results from those projects should also be widely shared with the objective of advocating for the introduction of comprehensive national social security systems, as this is the best way to ensure the realisation of the basic right of everyone to social security and bring about fundamental and long-lasting social transformation.

All the above policy recommendations are intended to help the government of Mali, policy makers and programme implementers to ensure coherence between social protection and agricultural interventions, avoid fragmented actions and enable the construction and strengthening of national social protection systems that are fully integrated into broader strategies to promote livelihoods, rural development and resilience of communities.
Reference


RIMISP & CEDE. 2018. *Institutional analysis of the programs assessed within the framework of the project: “Improving the articulation between social protection and rural development interventions in developing countries: Lessons from Latin America and Africa”*.  


FAO, together with its partners, is generating evidence on the impacts of coordinated agricultural and social protection interventions and is using this to provide related policy, programming and capacity development support to governments and other actors.

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