

# Evaluation of five FAO projects funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency in Cameroon, Chad, Mali and the Niger

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# **Evaluation of five FAO projects funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency in Cameroon, Chad, Mali and the Niger**

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## Abstract

This evaluation covers five projects funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), implemented in four countries: Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Niger. Four projects are funded under the 2017–2020 Strategy for Sweden’s humanitarian aid while one project is funded under the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali, initiated in response to the food crisis in Mali in 2018.

This evaluation aims at providing independent evidence on relevance, outcomes and organisational performance. The evaluation also aims at drawing lessons and highlighting good practices that will serve as a basis for strategic, programmatic and operational learning and improvements by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), SIDA and other stakeholders. A mixed methodological approach to data collection (quantitative and qualitative) was used, including a literature review, semi-structured interviews with key informants, focus group discussions with beneficiaries and two household surveys in Mali and Niger.

The projects evaluated aimed at improving food and nutrition security and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households through livelihood protection and rehabilitation in an emergency context (Lake Chad Basin crisis, displacement and climate shocks).

The evaluation findings indicate an improvement in agricultural production, livestock production and dietary diversity, as well as a strengthening of social cohesion within the communities. Several measures put in place by the interventions – such as the involvement and training of local partners, investment in goods and equipment, and the establishment of productive assets – contribute to the sustainability of achievements. However, there are factors that hinder the sustainability of some of the achievements.

FAO should make strategic choices for the implementation of multi-year financing interventions for a better contribution to resilience and beyond the strict humanitarian intervention. It should also strengthen synergy/collaboration between FAO projects and other interventions for experience sharing, allowing more effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of interventions. Moreover, in fragile and emergency contexts, it is important that FAO adapts its tools and procedures to be more flexible and accelerate contracting and procurement procedures.



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## **Abbreviations and acronyms**

IGA	Income-generating activities
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
FFS	Farmer field school
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
NGO	Non-governmental organization
IDP	Internally displaced person
VIP	Village irrigated perimeter
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework

## Executive summary

1. As part of the Swedish Humanitarian Assistance Strategy 2017–2020 (Government of Sweden, 2017) and the Strategy for Swedish Cooperation with Mali (Government of Sweden, 2016), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) funded five projects in four countries, namely Cameroon, Chad, Mali and the Niger. These projects were implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) from January 2017 to December 2019, with the exception of the two projects in Mali, which ended in December 2020.
2. In terms of relevance, the interventions are aligned with national strategies and programs, priorities identified by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF, UN System in Cameroon, 2018; Chad, 2017; Mali, 2015; and the Niger, 2014 and 2019), humanitarian response plans (HRP, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, and 2019), FAO country programming frameworks in the respective countries (FAO Cameroon, 2013; FAO Chad, 2017; FAO Mali, 2017; FAO Niger, 2013), the SIDA Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance (Government of Sweden, 2017) and the 2016–2020 SIDA Strategy in Mali (Government of Sweden, 2016). Their design is based on an analysis of the context and the needs of the beneficiaries. The intervention modalities and planned activities are adequate. However, the projects did not provide for an integrated approach to activities (production, training, income-generating activities) for the benefit of each beneficiary, an approach that is necessary for building community resilience. The interventions took into account the principles of accountability, conflict sensitivity and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The targeting processes have been also effective in identifying the most vulnerable populations that need support. However, some of the modalities have proven to be ineffective. In particular, operational and technical partners are not involved in strategic planning, and the quality of the conflict-sensitivity analysis has been hampered by a lack of partner capacity.
3. In terms of effectiveness, interventions contributed to an increase in production. The availability of fresh vegetables has been improved and off-season production has been diversified. The farmer field school (FFS) models implemented have yielded mixed results. Animals' health status has improved, and most beneficiaries have recorded births, allowing them to reconstitute their herds. Food consumption-related interventions have contributed to improved food diversity and good diet knowledge. Stakeholders' capacities have been strengthened. The number of livelihoods of beneficiary households has changed little, the capacity of communities to cope with shocks has been strengthened, although their level of resilience is still modest. Cash support for vulnerable families, provided outside the lean period, was not very effective. Finally, the population has adopted the Dimitra Club approach, which has helped to strengthen social cohesion through a variety of activities.
4. In terms of efficiency, FAO engaged to ensure the proper implementation of interventions, but the monitoring and evaluation tools were not fully implemented, and the adaptive intervention management was insufficient. Internal processes contributed to delays in the implementation of interventions. There are synergies or complementarities with other FAO interventions, although some opportunities have been missed.
5. A thorough gender analysis was lacking in the project design; nevertheless, a high proportion of women benefited from the interventions, which contributed to strengthening their access to capital and leadership roles in households. Dimitra Clubs have enabled women to speak up at the community level, particularly in the Niger.

6. In terms of sustainability, several measures put in place by the interventions – such as the involvement and training of local partners, investment in goods and equipment, and the establishment of productive assets – contribute to the sustainability of achievements. However, the lack of support for local seed production, the isolation of FFS and the late start of certain important activities do not favour sustainability. Finally, despite relevant multi-year funding, FAO's action remained limited to the humanitarian response. The complementarity between humanitarian and development funding implemented in Mali, although relevant, has been only marginally effective, due to delays in the implementation of activities.
7. Based on these findings, the evaluation makes the following recommendations: i) strengthen FAO's internal mechanisms (such as contracting, procurement, product delivery procedures) for greater efficiency in project implementation; ii) make strategic choices in implementing multi-year funding interventions in order to go beyond humanitarian assistance and contribute to resilience; iii) apply the lessons learned in programming and monitoring to elaborate and implement future FAO interventions; iv) strengthen the effectiveness of certain investments, through the training and equipping of mill repairers in areas that have benefited from mill support, and finalise the management agreements negotiated and agreed upon with the populations using developed pastoral areas; v) in the framework of future interventions, support the local establishment of seed producer groups and organize seed fairs as a means of distribution to beneficiaries; introduce *Caisse de résilience* as a sustainable capacity building approach to support producers in the various activities of FFS (rainfed, market gardening or livestock production); vi) introduce a new phase of the project in Mali in order to rehabilitate the investments made and ensure the impetus of real integrated local development; and vii) conduct an in-depth gender analysis during project design in order to understand women's access to resources, their activities and the constraints they face; adapt activities according to the needs identified; replicate the Dimitra Clubs approach, particularly in Cameroon, Chad and Mali.

# 1. Introduction

1. The Office of Evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was requested by the Emergency and Resilience Division and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), to evaluate multi-year resilience projects funded by Sweden in the Sahel. This report presents the results of the final evaluation of five SIDA-funded projects implemented by FAO in four countries, Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Niger, from January 2017 to December 2020, within the framework of the 2017–2020 (Government of Sweden, 2017) Strategy for Sweden’s humanitarian aid and the Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Mali (Government of Sweden, 2016). The evaluation, launched in June 2020, was conducted by a team of independent experts under the coordination of the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED). It draws its primary sources of evidence from the review of projects in the five countries and is a single evaluation; it does not evaluate each project individually.
2. The qualitative part of the evaluation mission, which took place between July and August 2020, was conducted by a team of independent experts under the coordination of the FAO Office of Evaluation. This was followed by a quantitative household survey that took place between March and April 2021. The results of the survey are included in this report.

## 1.1 Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

3. This evaluation has a two-fold purpose:
  - i. On the one hand, it aims at providing independent evidence on relevance, results and organisational performance and reporting on main findings achieved to SIDA, FAO, and project beneficiaries.
  - ii. On the other hand, it aims at drawing lessons and good practices from this experience, which will serve as a basis for strategic, programmatic and operational learning and improvements for FAO, SIDA and other stakeholders (government counterparts, other UN organisations, implementing partners, beneficiary households, communities, groups and institutions at the local level).
4. The objectives of this evaluation are many:
  - i. analyze the relevance of the project;
  - ii. assess the effectiveness of the project, the outcomes achieved, the effects and changes generated;
  - iii. assess the efficiency of the project, the timely achievement of outcomes and the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system and internal mechanisms;
  - iv. analyze the coordination and partnership, the quality of collaboration, the mainstreaming of improvements related to the partnership, the added value of humanitarian-development projects in the same areas;
  - v. analyze gender mainstreaming and, more generally, gender relations and equality in project design and implementation; and
  - vi. analyze the sustainability of the project, the implementation of an exit strategy, the ownership of achievements, the contribution of the multi-year financing approach and the sustainability of the achievements without external assistance.
5. The evaluation is structured around six evaluation criteria:
  - i. **Relevance.** To what extent were the projects relevant in meeting the needs and priorities of countries, FAO, SIDA and the target populations?

- ii. **Effectiveness** Have the intended outcomes on targeted households, communities, institutions and local organizations been achieved and have there been any unintended outcomes (both positive and negative)?
  - iii. **Efficiency.** To what extent did FAO's internal operational support functions facilitate project efficiency? What were the main challenges?
  - iv. **Coordination and partnership.** To what extent have the coordination and partnership arrangements in the project areas and project activities with sector partners, local institutions and implementing partners contributed to the quality, ownership, effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions?
  - v. **Gender mainstreaming.** Have gender considerations been taken into account in the project objectives and design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of women and men, and in the identification of beneficiaries? Have gender relations and equality been affected by the projects or will they be affected by the projects?
  - vi. **Sustainability.** To what extent has SIDA's multi-year financing approach (and in particular the complementary funding between humanitarian and development in Mali) contributed to increased sustainability of outcomes and improved resilience of populations? Have other factors contributed to the sustainability of outcomes?
6. In order to answer these key questions, they were broken down in an evaluation matrix<sup>1</sup> developed by the evaluation team, under the coordination with the FAO Office of Evaluation, during the initial phase of the mission (see Appendix 3).
7. The evaluation covered all the activities implemented by projects. The qualitative phase covered all four countries, based on interviews with stakeholders (Mali and the Niger), remotely or in person (Cameroon and Chad), and literature review. The quantitative survey covered two countries (Mali and the Niger).
8. The main targets and intended users of these evaluations include:
- i. staff of FAO country offices in Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Niger; FAO decentralized offices in these countries; and headquarters divisions involved in the project, that could use the evaluation findings in the implementation of future similar projects at national, regional and global levels;
  - ii. the Governments of the four countries and in particular the ministries involved, that may implement the evaluation findings and lessons learned in other similar initiatives in the future;
  - iii. the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the Emergency and Resilience Division, for decision-making on the development and funding of other interventions to improve community resilience; and
  - iv. others implementing partners that will integrate the lessons learned from this experience into their own initiatives.

## 1.2 Methodology

9. To answer the question on relevance, the team conducted a literature review to analyse the alignment of the projects with i) relevant national policies (food security and livelihoods, agriculture, livestock, environment, climate change adaptation, social protection and humanitarian support); ii) FAO strategic objectives; iii) FAO priorities at country level; and iv) United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (in the development area) (UN

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<sup>1</sup>The matrix indicates the sub-questions and/or information needs for each question, as well as the source of information and data collection methods.

System in Cameroon, 2018; Chad, 2017, Mali, 2015; and the Niger, 2019) and/or humanitarian response plans (HRPs) (in the humanitarian area) (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c and 2019), the SIDA Strategy for Humanitarian Aid (Government of Sweden, 2017) and the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Mali (Government of Sweden, 2016). Based on the interviews with partners conducted in the first phase of the evaluation, the team analysed the relevance of project activities to the needs of the beneficiaries and the context and the quality of targeting. Beside analysing whether protection and conflict sensitivity analyses were taken into account and whether humanitarian principles were respected, it reconstructed the theory of change of the intervention. Finally, an analysis of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in the implementation of the project was conducted.<sup>2</sup>

10. To answer the question on effectiveness, the evaluation team relied primarily on key informant interviews. The evaluation adopted a qualitative approach while ensuring consultation with a sufficiently representative number of partners. The sample had a good representation of the different intervention typologies (distribution of inputs and seeds, distribution of small ruminants and livestock kits, income-generating activities, nutrition education, cash transfers, farmer field schools [FFS], village savings and loan associations, Dimitra clubs, etc.). The evaluation team developed and tested interview guides to facilitate the meetings.
11. Some project activities were identified for a household survey, namely i) distribution of inputs and seeds; ii) distribution of small ruminants and livestock kits; iii) income-generating activities; iv) nutrition education; v) cash transfers; vi) FFS; vii) Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs); and viii) Dimitra clubs. This household survey incorporates the questionnaire on self-evaluated resilience. Quantitative data collection was carried out under the responsibility of structures contracted locally by FAO in Mali (AMRAD, *Association Malienne de Recherche-Action pour le Développement*) and in the Niger (University of Diffa). In the Niger, the survey covered a sample of three municipalities (Goudoumaria, Maïné-Soroa, Chétimari), 17 villages, with a total of 504 beneficiaries, including 110 for cattle feed, 100 for income-generating activities (IGA) cash, 98 for goat kits, 63 for nutrition kits, 44 for market gardening seeds and 89 for rainfed seeds. In Mali, it covered a sample of two municipalities (Alafia and Timbuktu) in Timbuktu, six villages with a total of 360 beneficiaries: 66 for input and seed distribution activities; 78 for small ruminant distribution; 68 for land restoration; 76 for IGA cash; 72 for nutrition education. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with heterogeneous and homogeneous groups of beneficiaries were also conducted in the same localities. In total, nine mixed FGDs (men, women, youth) were conducted with beneficiaries of the different activities, in nine villages of three municipalities in the Niger and 14 mixed FGDs in six villages of two municipalities in Mali. The data allowed to assess the beneficiaries’ resilience level and to measure the project’s contribution to impact. The main results of the survey have been integrated directly into this report.<sup>3</sup>
12. To analyse efficiency and coordination/partnership, the evaluation team discussed the quality of collaboration and identified strengths and areas for improvement with operational and technical partners (FAO country office, implementing non-governmental organization [NGO] partners, relevant ministries and decentralised services). The evaluation focused on FAO’s internal mechanisms and their contribution to the success of the interventions. To this end, the team interacted with FAO personnel at country level (programme, procurement, human resources), the Resilience Division at headquarters and the Regional Office, and verified the effectiveness of these

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<sup>2</sup> The analysis of the humanitarian-development nexus was based on a review of the types of activities supported (emergency, development), the sequence of activities and the transition from emergency to recovery, carried out through literature review and interviews with stakeholders.

<sup>3</sup> The survey reports are available and can be consulted if needed.

mechanisms during meetings with partners. In addition, the team discussed the following with the Swedish Embassy and the Resilience Division at headquarters: the improvements introduced through learning from other SIDA projects, donor guidance, the quality of collaboration between FAO and other projects, the added value of the multi-year financing model, and the relevance, effectiveness and complementarity between humanitarian and development funding in Mali.

13. To analyse the issue of gender mainstreaming, the evaluation team conducted a literature review which allowed, among other things, to assess the extent to which the gender dimension was taken into account in the project objectives and design in order to respond to the needs, priorities and constraints of women and men, as well as the mechanisms put in place to emphasise the priority given to gender issues in the identification of beneficiaries. In addition, the evaluation team exchanged views on this topic with FAO personnel, implementing partners and technical services. Particular attention was paid to consulting women during the second-phase household survey. The FAO Policy on Gender Equality (FAO, 2021) was used as an important reference for the evaluation, as well as the guidelines developed by OED on assessing gender mainstreaming in FAO interventions (FAO, OED, 2017).
14. To answer the question on sustainability, the evaluation team relied primarily on interviews with key informants among FAO personnel, technical services and implementing NGO partners, to analyse the projects' development of an exit strategy and the sustainability of outcomes. The FAO Resilience Division and the Swedish Embassy were also consulted to analyse the contribution of multi-year financing to increasing the sustainability of outcomes.
15. The evaluation applied the Norms and Standards for Evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG, 2016) as well as its ethical guidelines (UNEG, 2008), to ensure the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants. It also complied with the OED manual, procedures and methodological guidelines. It adopted a collaborative and transparent approach towards internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. The triangulation of evidence and information collected, as well as the feedback sessions organised at the end of the mission, supported the validation and analysis and reinforced conclusions and recommendations.
16. Given the security and health context, and the difficulty of accessing the intervention zones for direct data collection, the evaluation opted for online data collection directly in principal towns or regional capitals as appropriate. The qualitative phase of the evaluation therefore focused on investigations with partners by telephone or Skype or Zoom interviews in each country, taking into account security and health information. In Cameroon, some additional data was collected from some direct beneficiaries via telephone.

### **1.3 Limitations**

17. The mission noted some difficulties that could be considered as limitations for this evaluation:
  - i. As most of the interviews with partners in this phase were conducted by telephone, Skype or Zoom, the poor quality of telephone networks and internet connections was a major difficulty. Indeed, for interviews that would have required two hours face-to-face, some exchanges had to take place over several days due to the poor network quality and network interruptions.
  - ii. The poor responsiveness of some partners to emails sent to make appointments was a problem. Several emails from the evaluation team remained unanswered (partners did not check their emails regularly or were very busy), thus prolonging the data collection phase.

- iii. Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to travel to the intervention areas to meet with key stakeholders and validate the reported outcomes; this could lead to less reliable results and bias in the data collected remotely by telephone.
- iv. The implementation of other interventions by FAO did not ease the collection of project-specific information from beneficiaries, who tended to be confused between the different projects. The team therefore had to ensure that beneficiaries were reoriented to report only project-specific information.
- v. Some of the beneficiaries found it difficult to use their memories given the relatively long observation period (since 2017), which made it quite difficult to collect information. As a result, the team had to recall recent and important events that occurred in the region (floods in 2017 and 2019, attacks by the Boko Haram sect in 2018 or bomb explosions at the big market in Maroua in 2017) as benchmarks in order to minimize the margins of error in the information reported.
- vi. Finally, the contracting process with the University of Diffa and the NGO AMRAD was particularly lengthy in terms of FAO procedures, which extended the duration of the study.

## **1.4 Structure of the report**

18. The evaluation report is structured as follows:
  - i. Section 1 provides an overview of the evaluation including the purpose, target audience, scope, objectives, methodology and limitations.
  - ii. Section 2 presents the background and context of the project.
  - iii. Section 3 presents the evaluation findings organized around the evaluation questions related to the following criteria: i) relevance; ii) effectiveness; iii) efficiency; iv) coordination and partnership; v) gender mainstreaming; and vi) sustainability.
  - iv. Section 4 sets out the main findings and recommendations.





## 2. Background and context of the intervention

### 2.1 Background of the intervention

19. In 2016, the FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division conducted a study on lessons learned from the SIDA contribution agreement 2014–2016 (FAO and SIDA, 2016), aiming at guiding the 2017–2019 programming cycle. The main findings of this study were as follows:
  - i. The 2014–2016 SIDA-FAO three-year contribution agreement was an innovative funding mechanism that clearly responds to humanitarian needs, particularly in protracted crisis contexts. It is particularly recommended for supporting the agricultural livelihoods of vulnerable households that need to be built over time, in line with the agricultural calendar.
  - ii. Establishing baseline information at the beginning of project implementation would allow for proper assessment and documentation of evidence-based results to clearly indicate the impacts of projects in the process of building resilience in vulnerable communities.
  - iii. No specific strategy was defined in the agreement. This lack of guideline means that the involvement of different countries in this agreement has not been fully exploited (no sharing of experiences or pooling of resources). The number of countries targeted could also be reduced and it would be appropriate to capitalize on sustainable and positive impact initiatives.
  - iv. Women beneficiaries of the interventions rarely occupied leadership positions in the countries visited. Considerable efforts are still needed in gender mainstreaming by FAO, especially as SIDA is paying particular attention to this.
20. The study made the following main recommendations:
  - i. Encourage multi-year projects in protracted crisis contexts to reduce vulnerability and humanitarian needs in a long-term and sustainable manner.
  - ii. Support the flexibility and proactiveness of humanitarian funding to ensure that needs are met as early as possible and thus minimized.
  - iii. Define the strategic directions of the agreement to ensure coherence between projects.
  - iv. Establish, as far as possible, continuity with the projects of the previous agreement, building on operational experience and strengthening the best initiatives.
  - v. Intensify FAO's efforts in gender mainstreaming for SIDA-funded projects.
  - vi. Increase the amount of humanitarian funding provided by SIDA to FAO to ensure the fulfilment of its mandate, which is particularly relevant in contexts of chronic crisis; anticipate and, where possible, reduce delays in programme design and early disbursement phases, to ensure that responses are effectively aligned with the agricultural calendar.
21. In response to these recommendations, five projects were developed and implemented under the Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid, 2017–2020 (Government of Sweden, 2017) and the Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali (Government of Sweden, 2016). They were expected to contribute to: i) a needs-based, rapid and effective humanitarian response; ii) increased protection of people affected by crises, with increased respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles; iii) increased leverage for people affected by crises; and iv) increased capacity and effectiveness of the humanitarian system. Gender equality, conflict sensitivity and resilience were to be integrated into all projects developed under the strategy.

## 2.2 Description of the five projects implemented

22. In Cameroon, the Boko Haram crisis in the Far North region has led to a deteriorating food security situation. The project "Strengthening the resilience of food insecure IDPs, returnees and host communities in Cameroon" aims at building the resilience of internally displaced persons, returnees, and host communities in severely food insecure districts. The project's target districts (or sub-divisions) are Fotokol, Kousseri, Makari, Mora, and Koza (all located in the Far North), which, according to a March 2017 survey of the International Organisation for Migration, hosted the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The project was implemented over a three-year period and had three expected outcomes: i) Outcome 1: Improved maize, sorghum and cowpea seeds, fertilizers and sprayers for vulnerable IDPs, returnees and host households; ii) Outcome 2: Practical training through FFS provided to farmer groups; and iii) Outcome 3: Unconditional cash transfer provided to beneficiaries (year 3 only). This last outcome was not implemented due to a decision by the government of Cameroon forbidding unconditional cash distribution in the country.
23. In the Niger, the project "Emergency assistance to refugees/returnees and IDP victims of Boko Haram crisis and resilience building in the Niger" is implemented in the Diffa region, which is severely affected by recurrent climatic variations and where hundreds of thousands of refugees and returnees from Nigeria fleeing Boko Haram attacks have settled. The project was implemented over a three-year period and relies on three expected outcomes: i) Outcome 1: The production capacity of vulnerable households and host families is strengthened for improved nutrition; ii) Outcome 2: Improved income opportunities for refugees/returnees and IDPs to promote diversification of food consumption; and iii) Outcome 3: Strengthened accountability and communication.
24. In Chad, the project "Support to agropastoral households affected by the Lake Chad crisis in Chad" is implemented in the Lake Chad region (bordering the Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon), which is one of the most vulnerable areas of the country in socio-economic terms. Insecurity, the threat of Boko Haram, the closure of the Libyan border, and population movements are negatively affecting the local economy, which is already suffering from isolation, climatic and environmental fragility, and demographic pressure. The project targets food-insecure agro-pastoral households with nutritional deficits, poor households with recurrent low agricultural production, households with malnourished children, and households affected by the crisis in the Lake region (returnees, IDPs, and host community households). It was implemented over two years, and the following outcomes were expected: i) Outcome 1: Strengthen mechanisms for diversification, processing and conservation of agricultural products; ii) Outcome 2: Facilitate empowerment of women's groups through savings and credit systems; iii) Outcome 3: Support household recapitalization through the distribution of small ruminants; iv) Outcome 4: Diversify household income sources through income-generating activities; and v) Outcome 5: Strengthen community capacity for disaster risk reduction (DRR).
25. In Mali, the north of the country has been facing a persistent security crisis since 2012 that affects household livelihoods, already weakened as a result of climate change. Two SIDA-funded projects were both implemented over a two and a half-year period.
26. The project "Strengthening the resilience of vulnerable agro-pastoralists' households affected by security crisis in Mali" (OSRO/MLI/701/SWE) has three outcomes i) Outcome 1: households acquire the goods and services needed to rebuild their production capital; ii) Outcome 2: hectares of pastureland have been restored and regenerated through "cash-for-work" and "food-for-work" activities; and iii) Outcome 3: production units have been established and improved.

27. The second project, entitled "Strengthening the Resilience of Vulnerable Populations to Climate Vulnerability" (OSRO/MLI/804/SWE), was implemented in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu and aimed at complementing the emergency assistance provided by humanitarian stakeholders (including under the first project mentioned OSRO/MLI/701/SWE), which consisted mainly of input distribution and training. The targeted beneficiaries were the same households and were expected to receive more development-type interventions (rehabilitation, restoration, IGAs, etc.) through this new project, to build the resilience of the population. This project and its evaluation should contribute to the available documentation on the effects and impacts of interventions with humanitarian and development aspects. The three expected outcomes of the project were: i) Outcome 1: households have improved capacities to cope with climate variability; ii) Outcome 2: incomes of vulnerable households, particularly female-headed, are increased; and iii) Outcome 3: nutrition and social protection of beneficiary communities are improved.

## 2.3 Theory of change

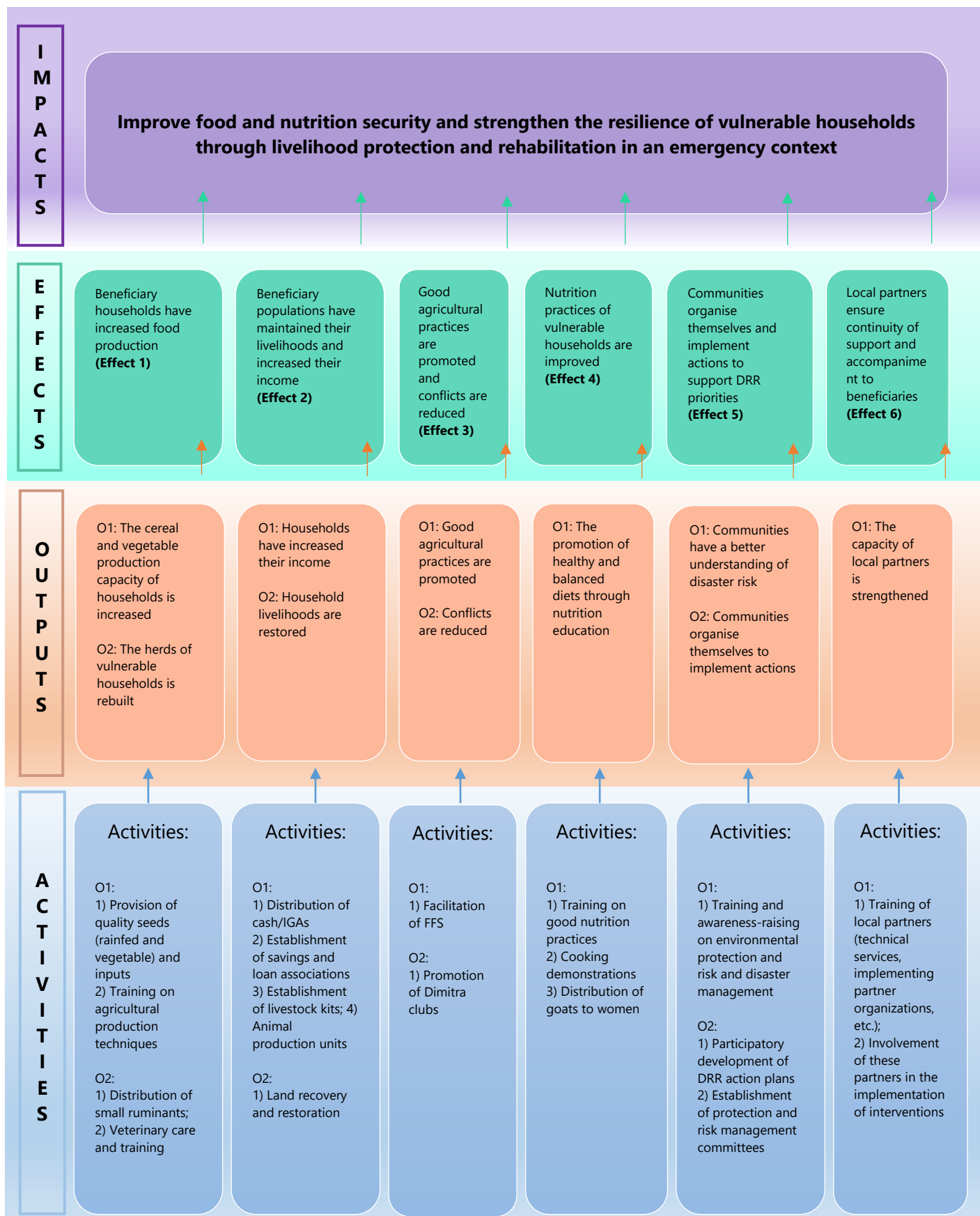
28. Each of the five projects had a specific objective determined by the country context and priorities, but the projects also shared common characteristics and objectives.
29. The overall objective of the projects was to improve food and nutrition security and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households through livelihood protection and rehabilitation in an emergency context (Lake Chad Basin crisis, displacement and climate shocks).
30. The main activities and the number of households targeted by the five projects are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Main activities and number of households targeted by the five projects**

Main activities of the interventions	CHD/701	CMR/701	MLI/701	MLI/804	NER/701
Distribution of inputs and seeds	X	X		X	X
Savings and loan systems	X				
Distribution of small ruminants	X				X
Distribution of livestock kits			X		
Livestock production units			X		
Income-generating activities	X			X	
Farmer field school		X			X
Capacity building in disaster risk management/reduction	X				
Cash for Work			X	X	X
Nutrition education				X	X
Land restoration			X	X	
Dimitra Clubs					X
Number of households targeted	10 000	9 000	6 300	4 000	35 400

31. In general, the intervention logic is realistic in design and the proposed activities are relevant to achieving the intended outcomes. The interventions aim at improving food and nutrition security and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households through livelihood protection and rehabilitation in an emergency context. The theory of change (see Figure 1) has identified six mutually reinforcing hypotheses that contribute to this objective.

**Figure 1. Theory of change diagram**



### 3. Main findings

#### 3.1 Relevance

**Finding 1.** The interventions are consistent with national strategies and programmes, priorities identified by the UNDAF and HRP in the different countries, FAO country programming frameworks, FAO Strategic Objective 5 “Improving Resilience”, FAO regional initiatives, the SIDA Strategy for Humanitarian Aid and the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Mali.

32. In Mali, the two projects are part of Mali’s humanitarian response plan for 2017–2019, which is part of the first objective of the Food Security Cluster, namely, “Provide to individuals in an emergency a coordinated and integrated assistance necessary for their survival” and also pursues the second objective of the Cluster, “Support populations vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity to better cope with agro-climatic and security shocks by strengthening their livelihoods”. They contribute to the 2017, 2018 and 2019 National Response Plans (NRPs) led by the Office of the Food Security Commissioner (Republic of Mali, 2017, 2018, 2019a), which target a population in a food crisis situation by highlighting joint actions undertaken by the Malian Government and its partners. Both projects are fully in line with Mali’s economic and social development priorities defined by the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development of Mali (CREDD) (Republic of Mali, 2016), with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Mali’s Zero Hunger SDG 2 “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” by 2030. They are consistent with the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (Republic of Mali, 2019b) and with Mali’s 2015–2019 “Country Resilience Priorities” (Republic of Mali and Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative, 2015).
33. In the Niger, the project is consistent with the 2017/2021 Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES) (Republic of the Niger, 2017). Axis 3 of this plan, “accelerating economic growth”, is broken down into three programmes, the second of which, “sustainable food security and agricultural development”, corresponds to the 3N Initiative strategy “Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens”, a variation of the “Zero Hunger” strategy for the Niger. By helping to strengthen the production capacity of vulnerable households and host families and to improve income opportunities for refugees/returnees and IDPs in order to improve the diversification of food consumption, the project is perfectly aligned with axis 6 of the Zero Hunger strategy “Strengthening the resilience to food insecurity of the most vulnerable in the face of shocks and crises”.
34. In Chad, the project focuses on household food insecurity. It targets food-insecure agro-pastoral households with nutritional deficits, poor households with recurrent low agricultural production, households with malnourished children, and households affected by the crisis in the Lake region (returnees, IDPs, and host community households), to reinforce their resilience. It is thus aligned with the development and food & nutrition security policy, through: i) the 2016–2020 Five-Year Development Plan (Republic of Chad, 2016); ii) the National Rural Sector Investment Plan (PNISR 2016–2022) (Republic of Chad and NEPAD, 2016); and iii) the National Nutrition and Food Policy (PNNA 2014–2025) (Republic of Chad and UNICEF, 2013).
35. In Cameroon, the project is aligned with the country’s growth and employment strategy (Republic of Cameroon, 2009), which aims at reducing poverty to a socially acceptable level between 2010 and 2020. Indeed, it aims at strengthening the resilience of communities in areas suffering from a severe food crisis, through improved access to inputs for vulnerable IDPs, returnees and host households and practical training through FFS offered to farmer groups. This strategy is based on three pillars: i) growth strategy; ii) employment strategy; and iii) governance and strategic

management of the state. The development of the agricultural sector is identified as one of the main sources of economic growth (according to the NAIP, Republic of Cameroon and NEPAD, 2014) and an important employment niche. This vision is based on the Rural Sector Development Strategy (RSDS) (Republic of Cameroon, 2016) which had been developed in 2005 and revised in 2015 (for the period 2015–2020) and an operational plan (the National Agricultural Investment Plan or NAIP, Republic of Cameroon and NEPAD, 2014).

36. FAO-supported interventions have complied with the annual humanitarian response plans to address the crises that have been occurring in the intervention areas for several years. In particular, they have met food security needs identified under the leadership of food security clusters and technical food security groups, with the objective of protecting the livelihoods of crisis-affected populations and enabling them to withstand shocks through coordinated emergency assistance. This assistance also aims at laying a solid foundation for the early recovery and resilience of populations affected primarily by the regional conflict in the Lake Chad Basin and by other shocks (floods, food crises).<sup>4</sup>
37. With respect to project 804 in Mali focused more on a medium-term momentum, the intervention is consistent with UNDAF Effect 5, signed between the Government of Mali and the United Nations System agencies (United Nations System in Mali, 2015): "Disadvantaged populations particularly women and youth, benefit from increased productive capacities and opportunities, in a healthy and sustainable environment, conducive to poverty reduction."
38. The Country Programming Frameworks of Cameroon, Mali, the Niger and Chad (FAO Cameroon, 2013, FAO Mali, 2017, FAO Niger, 2013 and FAO Chad, 2017) establish different priority development areas to guide the partnership with FAO and the support provided. The projects are fully consistent with the identified priority areas: development and sustainable management of natural resources; strengthening the resilience of groups vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity in the face of climate change, crises and disasters; strengthening the resilience and social protection of populations vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity; and sustainable intensification, diversification of production and development of agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries value chains.
39. FAO's institutional objectives and orientations are also materialised through these projects, especially FAO's Strategic Objective 5 which urges all FAO actions to increase the resilience of people's livelihoods to threats and crises. In addition, the projects fit well with the two major FAO regional initiatives, namely the "Africa's Commitment to End Hunger by 2025" (FAO, 2016a) (now 2030) initiative corresponding to SDG2, and the "Building Resilience in Africa's Drylands" initiative (FAO, 2016b).<sup>5</sup>
40. The interventions are fully aligned with SIDA's Strategy for Humanitarian Aid (Government of Sweden, 2017). Indeed, SIDA has a humanitarian portfolio and multi-year humanitarian financing that has further opened the door for development-oriented funding to northern Mali, for example, whereas development efforts were previously primarily directed to the south. The focus on the protection and needs of returnees and the need to systematically target child protection

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<sup>4</sup> The main priorities of the working groups are: facilitate consensus on priorities and create response synergies; generate information and evidence to enrich the quality of the food response; and ensure that protection, accountability and gender aspects are taken into account in the implementation of the response.

<sup>5</sup> This initiative focuses on: i) improving threat information and warning systems; and analysis and measurement of resilience, for example in Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Mali, the Niger, Senegal, Somalia, and Uganda; and ii) promoting social protection systems and approaches in the agriculture sector in target Sahelian countries such as Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, the Niger, and Senegal.

and involve local stakeholders has been a top priority. Sahelian countries suffer one crisis after the other against a backdrop of chronic food insecurity. Development interventions aimed at curbing the negative trend in the ever-increasing need for food aid, are not succeeding in stamping out these crises. With the increasing effects of the Nigerian crisis in the Niger, for example, resources are being mobilised to respond to the Diffa crisis after the Malian refugee crisis. SIDA has focused on sustainable solutions and exit strategies in the refugee and IDP crisis, in a context where humanitarian funding is either not increasing or remains low despite increasing needs. SIDA's focus in recent years has been to respond to the immediate needs generated by the crises in Cameroon, Mali, the Niger and Chad. Food security interventions have focused on child malnutrition and resilience initiatives with a high degree of learning. Innovative pilot approaches specific to these contexts are continually supported while coordination and access continue to be a priority.

41. Mali is a priority country for SIDA-resilience building interventions. Interventions are aligned with the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali (Government of Sweden, 2017) based on three pillars: i) strengthening democracy and gender equality and increased respect for human rights; ii) protecting and securing people and property and eliminating violence; and iii) improving the environment, reducing climate impact, and building resilience to environmental impact, climate change, and natural disasters. Project 701 does not fit directly into this strategy, but it does aim at strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations in the regions most impacted by climate change and environmental degradation. Project 804 meets the third pillar. In addition, the targeting of female heads of households and the attempt to work on conflict analysis are partly transferable to Pillars 1 and 2. In addition, the interventions are also aligned with the work plan developed by the Swedish Embassy in Bamako, based on the Swedish Cooperation Strategy and characterised by a greater integration of resilience in the portfolio and the way to ensure close links between humanitarian and development interventions.

**Finding 2.** The projects are based on an analysis of the context and the needs of the beneficiaries that involved stakeholders at different levels. The interventions are relevant and help strengthen the livelihoods, resilience and protection of beneficiaries. However, some modalities were found to be ineffective; moreover, operational and technical partners intervene within the framework of a contractual relationship that does not support strategic planning.

42. The projects evaluated are based on a good understanding of the context thanks to: i) FAO's collaboration with technical services that ensure direct feedback from the field, the latter providing supervision and monitoring of beneficiary communities, and therefore mastering their constraints; ii) the availability of the results of studies on the intervention localities conducted by institutions partnering with FAO; iii) the participation of stakeholders in project meetings organised by FAO, allowing their suggestions to be taken into account; and iv) reports from implementing partner organisations on various projects implemented by FAO in the localities.
43. Although the projects involve stakeholders at different levels, there are no direct mechanisms for community participation in the design of the interventions as such, with the exception of Cameroon and the Niger, where communities participate in orientating the project. In Cameroon, at the beginning of each season, workshops were held in the villages to discuss the orientations to be taken regarding the type of crops. These discussions do not only reflect the existing needs in the area in terms of inputs, but more specifically the crops that are grown by the beneficiaries. In the Niger, for IGA support, the beneficiaries themselves define the type of IGAs they want, while the seed varieties are defined in agreement with the decentralised technical services that supervise the farmers. As far as operational and technical partners are concerned, they are very rarely or not at all consulted on a strategic level. They carry out the activities included in the



memoranda of understanding, without any strategic planning, acting only within the framework of a contractual relationship.

44. The interventions overall address the needs of target groups in climatic-variable, food insecure, nutritional deficient areas and the well understood expectations of disadvantaged rural populations affected by insecurity linked to the Boko Haram sect and armed groups. The interventions match the different needs of the population in areas that are less accessible (currently and for some time), less supervised.<sup>6</sup> The interest of beneficiaries in the interventions is therefore confirmed. The choice of these interventions is justified by the exploitation and analysis of national data on poverty, food security, nutritional deficit, the persistent security crisis, and the number of people who are vulnerable due to insecurity and climate shocks.
45. The results targeted by the interventions are fairly standard. The activities developed to achieve these results are also the expected activities and appear adequate.<sup>7</sup> They contribute to strengthening and protecting the livelihoods of the population.
46. For example: In Mali, the north of the country has been facing a persistent security crisis since 2012 that affects household livelihoods, already weakened as a result of climate change. The interventions were designed to complement the assistance provided through input distribution and training. The targeted beneficiaries were expected to be the same households and to receive more development-type interventions (rehabilitation, restoration, IGAs, etc.) through a second intervention, to complement the emergency response and build sustainable resilience.
47. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis shows that the areas supported are relevant because they correspond to the main activities carried out by households. In the Niger, agriculture (57 percent), trade (15 percent) and livestock (12 percent) are the three most common activities; compared to agriculture (39 percent), livestock (13 percent) and trade (7 percent) in Mali. The targeting of seeds (millet, cowpea, and sorghum) is also relevant, as demonstrated by the survey data. In the Niger, millet (26 percent) is the main rainfed crop ahead of sorghum (18 percent). In cultivation, they are associated with cowpea (17.6 percent), sesame (14.4 percent), groundnut (11.7 percent) and sorrel (9.6 percent).
48. However, some modalities were found to be inappropriate, indicating weaknesses in the feasibility analysis of some activities. In the Niger, access to land has been very limited due to the refusal of host communities to make land available for agricultural or pastoral FFS. In an extremely deteriorated security context, the possibility of signing service contracts with companies located outside the intervention zones should be examined. Indeed, in the context of insecurity in Mali, the companies recruited experienced real difficulties in carrying out the work due to the difficult access to the intervention zones. It is also important to rethink the feasibility of operations that were successfully carried out in the past in secure areas but are now difficult to carry out because of the security context. This is the case for the genetic improvement of livestock and the

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<sup>6</sup> This is confirmed by stakeholders, including FAO country teams, technical services, and implementing NGO partners

<sup>7</sup> Donations of productive inputs; distribution of small ruminant kits; training in veterinary care; cash transfers to strengthen IGAs; setting up of VSLA groups to strengthen the mobilisation of local savings and facilitate women's access to credit; recovery and restoration of degraded land; facilitation of FFS; facilitation of Dimitra clubs; training on good nutritional practices/cooking demonstrations; distribution of goats to improve young children's nutrition, mainly for the benefit of women; training and awareness-raising of communities and traditional leaders on environmental protection and risk and disaster management; participatory development of disaster risk reduction action plans; establishment of risk protection and management committees; and training and involvement of local partners in the implementation of interventions.

installation of bio-digesters in northern Mali, which have not been implemented due to the security situation.

49. With respect to project 804 in Mali, the objectives are perfectly relevant, particularly with respect to the search for a transition between emergency and development. However, the implementation of the related activities (seven outputs and 50 activities) remains ambitious considering the short duration of the project (between 13 and 16 months) and the much deteriorated security context in northern Mali.

**Finding 3.** The design of the interventions took into account the principles of accountability to the affected populations, protection and conflict sensitivity, respect for humanitarian principles and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Moreover, targeting processes have been effective in identifying the population most likely to be considered vulnerable to receive support.

50. Humanitarian principles were not violated in the sense that there was total independence and neutrality of the targeting and more generally of the interventions. During interviews, neither staff, cooperating partners, nor organisations working directly with FAO mentioned any examples of deliberate discrimination. The projects targeted households eligible for humanitarian assistance.<sup>8</sup> The geographic areas targeted are socio-economically vulnerable and characterised by persistent security crises.<sup>9</sup>
51. The Niger, for example, has been facing a crisis in Diffa for so long that both the authorities and the population have largely integrated the rules of humanitarian intervention. In this country, the agricultural services with which FAO has collaborated are supervising seasonal agricultural aid in a transparent manner by identifying the areas in deficit. As for other support, such as goat kits or IGAs, the communities participated in the identification of beneficiaries and follow the criteria chosen in agreement with the targeted populations. Finally, Dimitra clubs have enabled the affected populations to be better informed and to communicate with the project.
52. In general, beneficiaries were targeted on a community basis, using the Household Economic Analysis methodology. Targeting committees were set up in each village to identify project beneficiaries, and the evaluation did not note any complaints about their effectiveness.
53. Once the targeting committees are set up, they carry out an initial targeting based on the socio-economic characteristics of households, including women and youth. This classification is then compared with the analysis of the data collected in the field by FAO, indicating the degrees of vulnerability. The final validation of the lists is done with the support of the populations/beneficiaries who designate those who are suitable or not to benefit from the interventions. The targeting process was generally facilitated by the implementing partner organisations, except in Cameroon where the process was facilitated by the technical services (zonal extension agents).
54. The interventions also tried to take into account the analysis of protection risks associated with food or agricultural assistance. Food assistance activities have thus reinforced the consideration of vulnerabilities (gender, age, minority groups, female heads of households, breastfeeding mothers and people with disabilities) and mitigated physical and psychological risks for the targeted communities. This food and agricultural assistance has always been organised in public

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<sup>8</sup> Food-insecure agro-pastoral households with nutritional deficits, poor households with recurrent low agricultural production, households with malnourished children, and households affected by the security crisis (returnees, IDPs, and host community households).

<sup>9</sup> Diffa, Lake Region, Northern Mali, Northern Cameroon.

places during the day to avoid beneficiaries being exposed to security risks, with the choice of modality (in-kind, cash or voucher) taking into account the potential exposure of the targeted people to specific risks.

55. Accountability to the population remains modest. There has been little feedback and communication with both beneficiaries and implementing partners, due to insecurity, especially in Mali. In Cameroon and Chad, the establishment by the project of village committees ensured a certain level of accountability to beneficiaries. The committees worked closely with the FAO office and helped identify beneficiaries and their needs. In the Niger, in particular, Dimitra clubs provided a communication channel for reporting project information to the people, but also for escalating information from the people to the project and beyond. Complaints committees have also been set up in each village to give the community an opportunity to report any irregularities. There is little information on how this mechanism works and even less documentation about any complaints.
56. Projects in Mali have attempted to adapt holistic approaches that take into account the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.<sup>10</sup> The design of interventions that focused on rehabilitating productive assets, such as Village Irrigated Perimeters and small vegetable gardens, was intended to play a large part in rehabilitating households and strengthening their livelihoods. This was the case in Mali, where FAO adopted a sequential and synergistic approach between these two projects, one of which (701) addresses humanitarian needs while the other (804) focuses on development activities to achieve collective results. Emergency project 701 aimed at bringing vulnerable pastoral households affected by the security crisis and climate change out of emergency situations in the regions of Gao, Menaka and Timbuktu, mainly through the distribution of agricultural and pastoral inputs, training and cash or food-for-work activities. Project 804 was intended to support the same households by complementing emergency interventions and building their resilience to ensure their recovery, through development-type interventions (rehabilitation, restoration, IGAs, etc.).
57. The investments made in village irrigated perimeters (VIP) and small vegetable gardens (SVG) (infrastructure and equipment) should considerably improve the production means of the populations concerned by these structural investments. However, the very slow start-up of projects and sometimes the uncertain quality of the achievements and/or investments put into perspective the projects' effectiveness in this transition from emergency to development is (see section Effectiveness). Moreover, the short monitoring period after the receipt of aid and the lack of data collected do not allow us to say if there has been a clear change in the households supported at the end of the projects.<sup>11</sup>
58. A conflict-sensitive analysis of the intervention was conducted during the formulation phase in the various countries, where insecurity is at its highest and has deteriorated over the past three years. In such a context, the analysis of conflicts and their factors appears to be an essential activity for understanding the situation and how it affects the populations. However, the projects have overestimated the capacities of the implementing partners, who recognise that they have not received the necessary support from FAO to be able to carry out a rigorous and more structured

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<sup>10</sup> Increasingly, the approach to aid is intended to link two previously separate areas, namely humanitarian and development, making up the nexus. Though the term covers different realities, it corresponds to an evolving global reflection: the frontier between humanitarian and development is porous, moving and the strict separation between the two activities is often artificial in the face of the multiple reality of the contexts.

<sup>11</sup> The project was implemented with great delay and the activities were set up almost at the end of the project, thus limiting the possibility of monitoring. The lack of monitoring made it impossible to generate data to assess the functioning of the activities and the situation of the beneficiary households.

analysis of the immediate and underlying causes of these old or new conflicts, and in particular to conduct a gender analysis, as women are subject to significant violence during these periods of conflict. These realities require the partner to have the necessary tools and technical skills to highlight the logics behind the violence and avoid any potentially unexpected negative impact.

59. In a nutshell, the interventions are aligned with national strategies and programmes, priorities identified by the UNDAF/HRP, the FAO country programming framework, the SIDA Strategy for Humanitarian Aid and the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Mali. They are based on an analysis of the context and the needs of the beneficiaries. The intervention modalities and planned activities are adequate and allow for the strengthening of community resilience. However, some of the modalities have proven to be ineffective. Operational and technical partners are not involved in strategic planning. The interventions took into account the principles of accountability, conflict sensitivity and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The conflict-sensitive analysis of interventions was hampered by the lack of partner capacity. Finally, targeting processes have been effective in identifying the population most likely to be considered vulnerable to receive support.

## 3.2 Effectiveness

### 3.2.1 Production increase

#### 3.2.1.1 Rainfed production

**Finding 4.** The interventions allowed for the use of quality seeds into an environment that was very poor in terms of varieties and weather resilience capacities, thus strengthening the means of production and improving yields. Although households are largely satisfied with the quality and quantity of seeds distributed, delays in seed availability and pest attacks are frequent, as well as insecurity which has reduced production opportunities at some sites. Finally, technical supervision and training on cultivation techniques are rated as weak.

60. Maize, sorghum, millet and cowpea seeds, fertilizers and sprayers have been acquired by FAO and distributed to vulnerable IDPs, returnees and host households in the four countries. On this basis, various agreements with the technical services have made it possible to ensure the follow-up and technical support of beneficiaries. Thanks to this technical support, the interventions have improved production and thus, the availability of cereals in the intervention areas, although the results and the level of satisfaction of beneficiary households vary from one country to another. In the Niger, survey data indicate that 50 percent of households interviewed received some form of coaching. This coaching was related to composting techniques, soil preparation techniques, crop protection methods and cultivation techniques (rarely). In Mali, 62 percent of households benefiting from rice production received coaching on soil preparation techniques, composting techniques and cultivation techniques. Findings from the focus discussion groups indicate that, thanks to the project, the capacity building of beneficiaries on good agricultural practices and the regular monitoring by agricultural technicians of the rice-growing perimeter in the villages of Issafaye and Kabrara, were highly appreciated, especially for rice cultivation, which remains the staple food of the people of northern Mali.
61. In Cameroon and Chad, technical supervision has helped strengthen the production capacities of households, which have acquired production skills and capacities that allow them to generate grain stocks and meet their needs while preserving their already acquired livelihoods. According to stakeholder interviews, with improved production, beneficiaries are no longer forced to sell their livelihoods to meet their immediate needs.

62. Results emerging from the household survey in the Niger indicate mixed trends in average production between the beginning and end of the intervention. While the majority of beneficiaries (54 percent) argue that production has increased, a significant proportion (46 percent) say that it has rather decreased (40 percent) or remained the same (6 percent). For those who believe that production has increased, this was due to, among other things, good seed quality (40 percent of respondents), regular technical monitoring (21 percent), fertilisation techniques (13 percent), good rainfall (10 percent), and cultivation techniques (7 percent). Also in the Niger, production provided food coverage for two to four months.<sup>12</sup> In two municipalities (Chetimari and Rakka) out of the nine visited in the Niger, beneficiaries report that yields have increased. Some producers say they have stored a certain amount of seed for the next season, because they appreciated the quality and productivity of this millet variety. Some beneficiaries report that their production increased from five to fifteen bags of millet between the beginning and end of the intervention.
63. In Mali, 41 percent of beneficiaries of rice production said that production had decreased, compared to 59 percent who said the opposite. Delays in seed availability and rising waters that invaded crops<sup>13</sup> were cited as causes of production losses. According to the results of the household survey in Issafaye and Kabara in Mali, production was sufficient to cover the population's needs. Thanks to free seed and input supplies, beneficiaries have significantly increased crop yields, which has contributed to improved household nutrition. As a result of this intervention, households have harvested more bags than in the past and are able to cover their food needs for an average of six months.
64. Significant results in Timbuktu and Mopti, Mali, were noted by stakeholders,<sup>14</sup> where fonio and cram-cram seeds were delivered between the first and third week of August. In the case of Mopti, the implementing partner encouraged beneficiaries to get seeds through other means and not to wait for FAO seeds. This helped the populations to carry out activities during the right period. In general, the pastoral populations responded positively to the work of common interest, which made it possible to develop areas beyond expectations. The communities quickly understood their interest and accepted that only the most vulnerable families would be paid. In the case of bourgou fields, they existed previously but had been abandoned.
65. However, several factors affected the implementation of the intervention and hampered the achievement of results. In Cameroon, the low quality of seeds reduced production or the possibility of production at some sites. It should be noted that in 2018: i) poor seed quality (mouldy maize seed packets reduced emergence rate and the area planted) affected yields; ii) aphid attack on cowpea accentuated by the ineffectiveness of Biobit treatment against these pests, hindered the achievement of results; and iii) the low flow rate of some water bores, given the very high level of the water table during the last quarter, also represented a serious handicap to the conduct of an off-season campaign on the two hectares developed (Mali).
66. In the Niger, the household survey shows that the production of the vast majority of households was affected by environmental phenomena: pest attacks (31 percent) and crop pests (5 percent), insufficient rainfall (22 percent), soil infertility (17 percent), poor seed quality (2 percent),<sup>15</sup> and

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<sup>12</sup> Household survey in the Niger, Djajéri Dagra.

<sup>13</sup> Household survey in Mali.

<sup>14</sup> FAO country team, technical services, implementing NGO partners.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that there is a risk of confusion among farmers as to the origin of seeds. The Diffa region has hosted a multitude of humanitarian stakeholders with very different approaches, some of which are beyond the control of the food security technical groups, which are supposed to regulate interventions to avoid duplication. Some of the observations made by farmers may therefore be linked to seeds from other more humid regions of the country. In addition, some seeds donated by other partners do not always come from approved suppliers.

delays in acquiring seeds (3 percent).<sup>16</sup> In addition, rainfall was a limiting factor in the intervention area, with poorly distributed rainfall in time and space that could lead to aborted planting or low yields. Due to pest attacks and caterpillars, many beneficiaries hardly harvested at all.<sup>17</sup> They therefore regretted that the project did not offer phytosanitary products to combat the pests encountered in the area.

67. Seed redistribution also compromised results in the Niger. In several localities, beneficiaries claim that African hospitality does not allow a farmer to acquire an asset and keep it for himself. As a result, beneficiaries also shared seeds with their close relatives and neighbours, which did not allow them to fully maximise the benefits of the intervention.<sup>18</sup> This phenomenon was also observed by several partners working in Diffa.<sup>19</sup>
68. The evaluation notes that the supervision of households without access to land and who were conducting vegetable-growing activities behind their shelters, was not easy to implement by the agricultural services, which prefer to work in the field with a larger audience. This modality would have been better monitored with dedicated staff. It is all the more unfortunate that this proximity to vegetable crops is a real factor of change in the improvement of the diet if the accompaniment is well done. Indeed, the residual water from the household benefits the plants grown nearby which can make a real difference in the nutritional quality of the meal (moringa oleifera, tomato, orange-fleshed sweet potato, etc.). It is also possible to grow grasses or hedges that are palatable to animals, which, if pruned regularly, can provide food for one or two goats during the months of pastoral hunger. A lactating goat in a household with young children can greatly contribute to preventing child malnutrition.
69. Finally, the abandonment of certain sites due to the security situation in Mali must be mentioned. For example, the small vegetable garden in Baima was handed over on 12 March 2020, but tensions on the ground degenerated, leading to the departure of the population from these localities.

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<sup>16</sup> The focus group discussions in the Niger revealed the low quantity of rainfed seed distributed, the good quality of millet and cowpea seed, and the low quality of sorghum seed, whose variety was not adapted to the area and therefore did not produce.

<sup>17</sup> The black *Pachnoda interrupta*, which attacks corn ears at the milk stage, the brown *Rhynifisia infescata*, (which attacks the ears before the milk stage), and the very black caterpillars, which totally devastated the crops.

<sup>18</sup> Results from Focus Group Discussions.

<sup>19</sup> Project team, FAO Niger Office.

### Box 1. Testimony of a beneficiary of seeds and inputs – Mali



A farmer who benefited from the free distribution of seeds and inputs from the FAO project in Kabara in northern Mali said, "before this assistance, I had all the difficulties in obtaining seeds and inputs. I used to take the seeds on credit or I used to ask my brothers and friends for support. The intervention helped me to strengthen my capacities in the cultivation of rice, which is our staple food, thanks to the free distribution of seeds and inputs, to the training, to the extension of good agricultural practices and to the regular follow-up of the agricultural technicians on the perimeter. This assistance has allowed me to significantly increase my agricultural yields this year and to improve my family's diet. The seeds and inputs received are of good quality, I sowed after most people in the village, but I harvested before them and I was very surprised this year with the good yields achieved on the 0.25 hectare garden. Thanks to this intervention, I was able to have the number of bags needed to cover my household's food needs this year.

#### 3.2.1.2 Off-season production

**Finding 5.** The interventions allowed the development of small vegetable gardens and the provision of small equipment to beneficiaries. The technical support was of good quality though it was insufficient. The host families and the authorities allocated plots to IDPs for vegetable growing, despite the constraints of access to land.

70. The interventions made it possible to provide the beneficiaries with means of production such as water points, fences, inputs and small equipment, allowing the development of small vegetable-growing areas. These means of production were accompanied by training and technical support during the campaign from the nurseries, provided by the technical services. According to the results of the survey, confirmed by the focus group discussions, the technical support was insufficient, as only half of the beneficiaries stated that they had received support. Given the increased difficulty of accessing land, all types of land were explored: basins and natural depression zones that retain water, areas developed with hydro-agricultural boreholes, and finally, beds or backyard gardening. In all cases, as part of the interventions, beneficiaries were allocated a plot within cultivable areas by the host families or plots were selected by the local authorities for the displaced populations.

**Finding 6.** The interventions improved the availability of fresh vegetables and diversified off-season production.

71. The interventions have considerably broadened the range of products produced by the beneficiaries.<sup>20</sup> Thus, all the classic productions, from lettuce to carrots and tomatoes, have been introduced and promoted. In addition, it should be noted that the cultivation of maize, which was not very productive in the Niger due to a long cycle, has been revived thanks to the introduction of more adapted varieties. Indeed, in the Niger, some farmers have innovated by starting maize cultivation in May with irrigation and ending the cycle with wintering. Since yields were far below what was traditionally done during the rainy season, this new practice was adopted by those who had access to irrigation. But the most remarkable result is related to the harvest period. Indeed, the hardest period of food shortage usually occurs in September, before the millet harvest in

<sup>20</sup> Results of the household survey and focus group discussions. The target populations in the Niger were only growing bell pepper and millet alternately, and thus had a good mastery of these two technical itineraries.

November. However, this maize planted in May is harvested in September, exactly at the peak of the hunger gap.

72. In Chad, beneficiaries report that their tomato, onion, and okra production increased by two to three bags each year and is now stabilising at around 10 to 15 bags per season, whereas prior to the intervention, few farmers were able to harvest ten bags at the end of the season. According to stakeholder<sup>21</sup> interviews, the interventions have generated increased availability of fresh vegetables for self-consumption or economic opportunities, particularly for women. Tomatoes, which used to be scarce and difficult to transport from other parts of the Niger, are now present on vendors' stalls for many months.
73. Finally, interviews with stakeholders<sup>22</sup> revealed satisfactory indicators for the "off-season" component in Mali. First of all, potato cultivation in Timbuktu and Mopti has become a real economic activity and a source of income. In addition, women's associations have embarked on this potato production campaign thanks to the facilities and hope to take advantage of the large local markets to generate substantial income.
74. Moreover, beneficiaries said that the training they received as part of the interventions, improved their agricultural production. This training greatly improved their capacities in production, conservation, but also in the processing of agricultural products, especially vegetables (tomato, red beet, carrot). While their food production was previously limited to corn, the situation has evolved towards a good diversification and a significant improvement of their nutritional practices.
75. In the Niger (Goudoumaria, Kadelaboua), an improvement and diversification of irrigated production is observed thanks to the seeds introduced by the project (lettuce, cabbage, tomato, carrot), which are of better quality with good germination power and high nutritional value. It is likely that most of the seeds gave a much higher yield than the ones farmers had before the intervention.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2.1.3 Livestock production

**Finding 7.** Many households have rebuilt their herds with goat kits. Animals' health status has improved, and the majority of beneficiaries have recorded births.

76. In the Niger, the intervention provided vulnerable households with goat kits (three pregnant goats) and ensured their vaccination and deworming. This goat kit was accompanied by a donation of 100 kg of cattle feed per kit, which was given in one go to the families at the same time as the animals, during the project.

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<sup>21</sup> FAO country team, technical services, implementing NGO partners.

<sup>22</sup> FAO country team, technical services, implementing NGO partners.

<sup>23</sup> Findings from Focus Group Discussions.



**Figure 2. Livestock kit beneficiaries in the Niger**



77. The project contributed to safeguarding pastoral systems by facilitating access to cattle feed. The modality of selling cattle feed at a moderate price adopted by the project is a strategy that is in line with the practice of the Government of the Niger. This finding, which emerged from discussions with stakeholders,<sup>24</sup> was confirmed by focus group discussions (in Chétimari and Djajér Djajeri).<sup>25</sup> Animals received prophylactic and curative treatment, along with care and hygiene measures. FAO empowered livestock services to conduct a quarantine to ensure the good health of goat kits provided; about 50 percent of the beneficiaries received training on livestock management according to the survey results. Most households expressed their satisfaction with the timing of distributions, the quality of care, and the animals provided. More than three-quarters of households rebuilt their herds and developed income-generating activities as a result of the intervention. This livestock provide income for the breeders, but also organic manure that is transported to the farms. The number of goats increased from 84 at the beginning of the project to 410 at the end of the project, an increase of 388 percent. Beneficiaries acknowledge that this increase is thanks to the herd reconstitution operation of the FAO project, which distributed pregnant goat species that are particularly suitable for livestock multiplication. This is considered an innovation that has allowed high reproduction in a short period of time, despite the delay of the operation. All the beneficiaries say they had births. A total of 218 kids were born from the animals distributed by the project.<sup>26</sup> Some beneficiaries in Chad say, "thanks to the intervention, we have milk and the animals serve as capital for income-generating activities (IGAs) when we sell them.

<sup>24</sup> FAO country team, implementing NGO partners.

<sup>25</sup> Aerial fodder is threatened by caterpillars, while in recent years, *Acacia tortilis* pods, which are the main fodder for ruminants during the dry season, are attacked by worms. Thus, the pods are of poor quality and are not consumed by ruminants. Livestock that consume them falls sick.

<sup>26</sup> Household survey in the Niger.

**Box 2. Testimony of a beneficiary of small ruminants – Mali**

“Before the project, my dream was to do animal breeding, with a few heads of small ruminants in my household, so that in case of urgent need, they could help me meet unforeseen expenses; but I did not have the means to fulfil my dream. Thanks to the FAO project, my dream has finally come true. I was selected in my neighbourhood to receive assistance. I received three goats, one he-goat and two she-goats. There were three births that allowed me to have three other goats, two he-goats and one she-goat. These goats really helped me to face certain needs without having to rely on someone else’s help. For example, I sold two he-goats to meet two urgent needs of my family. Currently, I have one he-goat and three she-goats left that produce milk that we consume and I also hope to have more kids in the coming months. For now, I give thanks to God and I thank FAO for this precious assistance that allowed me to fulfil my dream but also to face my urgent needs thanks to the sale of two goats. The project supported other vulnerable people in the village by offering them a few goats that have enabled them to build up a breeding nucleus. We all thank the FAO project, its partner and donors for this important assistance and urge them to continue assisting vulnerable people in difficult circumstances.”

78. However, several factors affected the implementation of the intervention and hampered the achievement of results, particularly in the Niger: i) unsuitable breeds;<sup>27</sup> and ii) the poor health status of nearly 50 percent of beneficiaries who reported having received an animal in poor condition.

### 3.2.2 Sustainable livelihoods (VSLA groups, IGAs, livestock kits, livestock production units and land restoration)

**Finding 8.** Several important investments have been set up to sustain production (development of rice fields, development of grazing areas, sowing with fonio and cram-cram in flooded areas and bourgou in flooded areas, and vital equipment for the herds). Failure to sign conventions on the management of developed areas could lead to potential conflicts over natural resources in Mali. Opportunities to strengthen social cohesion and reduce tensions have been missed.

79. To support the rice growing season, FAO supported three regions of Mali (Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu) by developing four Village Irrigated Perimeters and providing equipment (motor pumps, motor cultivators, threshers), inputs (seeds, fertiliser, diesel and oil) and training. Thanks to the partnership with FAO, the Regional Directorate of Rural Engineering in Mali implemented technical feasibility studies. Workcamps were carried out during the 2018 winter season for 12 000 hectares and 2019 for 7 500 hectares. In the last year, technical and small equipment reinforcement targeted the populations participating in the workcamps. In general, the pastoral populations responded very positively to these works of common interest.
80. Several pastoral water bores were constructed during two agricultural seasons: in 2018, a dozen water points were constructed, mostly in Timbuktu; and in 2019, all the sheds were built in Timbuktu, while Gao was equipped with a water bore, for a total of ten sites and five additional water bores completed in the three regions. However, the management agreements for the

<sup>27</sup> The survey in the Niger shows that beneficiaries received Sahelian goats and red goats of Maradi in general. However, one of these two breeds distributed is not productive in eastern Niger.

developed areas were not reviewed as planned until the end of the project.<sup>28</sup> This is a great missed opportunity to strengthen social cohesion and reduce tensions. Indeed, in these troubled times, withdrawal into the community is strong and mistrust is such that tensions over natural resources can quickly escalate. In the context of these interventions and operations, there was therefore a unique opportunity to create spaces for negotiation among users on how to manage the sometimes disputed natural resources.

81. In Cameroon, the establishment of village committees that include traditional and administrative authorities (sub-divisional officers, etc.) has helped to manage and silence any potential tensions. Moreover, as concerns conflict prevention, the project contributed to the strengthening of social cohesion. Indeed, all socio-economic and cultural categories belonging to these localities were concerned by the activities implemented, and widely represented among the beneficiaries.

**Finding 9.** Mali projects have adopted an integrated approach creating synergy between their humanitarian and development objectives. A participatory social engineering approach was used to identify the implementation sites and the beneficiaries. Awareness-raising sessions organised for all stakeholders fostered synergy between the two projects. Some activities were implemented late or were lacking; hence the need for a new phase to give impetus to integrated local development.

82. In Mali, the projects adopted integrated approaches that were part of a development vision through the implementation of sustainable activities, such as the combination of water bores,<sup>29</sup> sheds and biogas that could be pursued in a second phase to give impetus to integrated local development. The intervention logic was two-fold: satisfy the emergency needs of the population by distributing inputs at the start of the project and consolidate this emergency phase with a resilience phase by building infrastructure and ensuring complementarity between the interventions to better capitalise on their effects (water bores, sheds, biogas, milk kits, IGAs, platform). According to interviews with FAO, a social engineering approach – involving technical services and representatives of the beneficiary communities – was adopted to identify the sites where the water bores would be installed, the beneficiaries of the action and the needs in terms of animal production and productivity. In addition, project information, awareness-raising and mobilisation sessions were held for communities and local authorities. The introduction of renewable energy such as biogas technology was intended to help reduce the burden of household chores by reducing the time required to collect wood or dung. However, according to interviews with stakeholders,<sup>30</sup> there is no certainty of community ownership of this technology and its sustainability remains fragile.
83. Several training workshops were organised for the 300 households identified in 2018 to provide start-up support for the identified IGAs and effective implementation to ensure sustainability of the services beyond the life of the project. However, technical factors have affected the effectiveness of this activity. In the Niger, only partial implementation was possible, for example, due to delays in the distribution of cash planned for this activity.<sup>31</sup> The results are therefore unlikely to live up to the expectations of the intervention. During the 16-month intervention in

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<sup>28</sup> Interviews with stakeholders: technical services, implementing NGO partners.

<sup>29</sup> The pastoral water bores set up in the three regions are equipment intended for herd management, but require a great deal of work before their implementation, in order to negotiate the management methods upstream. To do this, the projects have planned information and awareness-raising sessions for the communities, the signing of contracts with technical services to supervise the communities, and meetings with NGOs for community mobilisation. The water bores were also installed where the populations needed water. A management committee has been set up for each water bore.

<sup>30</sup> Technical services, implementing NGO partners.

<sup>31</sup> In the Niger, the cash transfers that were supposed to launch the activities were delayed until 19 and 20 April 2019 for the first batch and December 2019 for the second batch. As a result, follow-up and support were very limited or non-existent for the second batch.

Mali (project 804), beneficiaries took greater ownership of IGAs, but apart from the multi-functional platforms that were handed over during the project period (July in Mopti and December in Gao), all of the IGAs waited for the cash transfer to arrive in July 2020, while the materials to equip the dairy associations only arrived in June 2020. The IGAs were barely launched before the end of 2019, the end date of the project. Insecurity had a strong impact on delays. Finally, the majority of beneficiaries did not benefit from any capacity building to help them manage the IGAs, even though contracts were signed with technical services to this end. While it appears difficult to report on the income from activities that have just been launched, it is also not possible to measure the impact of these potential revenues at the level of the targeted households. It is therefore not possible to draw up a positive balance sheet at this point, apart from the presumed strengthening of their beneficiaries.

84. In spite of this, some localities in Mali appreciated these IGAs, as some beneficiaries testify (Box 3).

### Box 3. Testimony of a beneficiary of cash transfer – Mali



"We left our village following repeated attacks by armed robbers in northern Mali. We ran away leaving everything behind: equipment, animals, barns, etc. The situation calmed down and we returned to our village, but robbers had taken everything. We were really suffering when the project arrived. I received a cash transfer with which I started my small business. The income I earn allows me to take care of my small needs and to provide food to my family. I am really happy with the arrival of the project".

85. In Mali, beneficiaries say that the cash-for-work support provided for the construction of dykes around the rice fields has enabled farmers to mark out paths and prevent water from overflowing. In their opinion, and thanks to this support, they were able to produce good harvests, and their grouping around productive assets has promoted rapprochement and social cohesion within the villages.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Household survey in Mali, in Issafaye and Iloa.

#### Box 4. Testimony of a beneficiary of IGA cash – Mali



A rice seller and IGA cash beneficiary lives with her grandchildren in northern Mali. "Before the project intervention, my small local rice business was almost bankrupt. I did not have the means to strengthen my business because I am a widow and I support all the family expenses alone. Economically, I was living in a precarious situation and I had no external support. I couldn't find any money and I couldn't even talk about saving any. I was lucky enough to benefit from the IGA cash from the FAO project which helped me a lot in my business. The changes that occurred in my life thanks to this assistance from FAO are enormous. I received money to be able to run my local rice business and with the income I earn, I can take care of my family in terms of food and health. The intervention made me come into my own, because I no longer ask others to help me feed myself. By God's grace, I can work with my hands and the project has really helped me in my business. Thanks to the profits of my small business, I am able to take care of my family by paying for food, clothes and other necessities. I also manage to save some money, and I send my grandchildren who live with me to the Community Health Centre when they are sick. I also give them money for recreation at school. I thank FAO and its partners for supporting me when I mostly needed support in my small business, which is my main source of income to support my whole household."

86. Income-generating activities supported by the project fostered improvements in community life, such as the sale of condiments, rice and local juice. These activities allow women to save money and take care of some of the family's needs, in the same way as their spouses. They report being somehow independent in their households now.<sup>33</sup>

#### 3.2.3 Promotion of good agricultural practices (farmer field schools)

**Finding 10.** The models of FFS that have been implemented are mixed: they are often successful but sometimes difficult to implement.

87. Thanks to the FFS developed in Cameroon, several beneficiaries reported having learned and put into practice new agricultural practices and knowledge, such as the use of fertilisers (incorporation of organic manure into the soil), sowing in rows, the practice of composting, early ploughing, biological insecticide treatment, etc. For most of the beneficiaries who participated in the training, there is a clear improvement or positive changes in their "agricultural habits" thanks to the adoption of new practices that have a probable positive impact on agricultural yields.<sup>34</sup> Thus, each theme has associated trainings and responds to problems/challenges identified by the beneficiaries and leading to new agricultural practices. The results of the implementation of FFS in Cameroon show that there is a lot of interest in this initiative. According to the project's activity reports, FFS were only partially implemented during the first year of the project due to insecurity. A total of 40 FFS were implemented compared to the 45 expected for the entire project, i.e., 15 FFS in 2018 (three for cowpea, seven for maize and five for sorghum) and 25 FFS in 2019 (seven for cowpea, ten for maize and eight for sorghum).
88. Still in Cameroon, capacity building of local implementing partners on the approach is deemed sufficient by the technical services of agriculture and the implementing operational partner, to conduct a good FFS process. For example, in 2018, the capacities of 15 zonal extension agents

<sup>33</sup> Focus group discussions in the villages of Kabara, Iloa, Dag Bodel Issafaye and Timbuktu in the municipalities of Timbuktu and Alafia, Mali.

<sup>34</sup> Interviews with stakeholders.

and 25 local group representatives were strengthened. In the second year, the nine zonal extension agents and two supervisors dedicated to FFS received training in Kousseri. The implementing NGO partner (CODAS CARITAS) and the technical services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Sustainable Development complied with the overall FFS process. However, there were delays in the implementation of FFS due to: i) insecurity, which made travel risky; ii) the late availability of community spaces dedicated to the FFS; iii) the failure of beneficiaries to keep appointments for monitoring activities; and iv) the late availability of inputs.

89. In the Niger, the FFS model was very difficult to implement due to several factors: i) collaboration problems<sup>35</sup> between the implementing NGO partner and the technical services; ii) the targeted populations had difficulty finding plots for the establishment of collective demonstration plots; iii) FFS were not the priority of the technical services; and iv) the weak monitoring by FAO.<sup>36</sup> The outcome remains poor, as only two out of five FFS have been implemented at the agricultural level and none at the pastoral level. The concept of pastoral FFS is interesting but has not been well shared and explained by FAO to the implementing partners, even though FAO organised workshops to internalise its intervention strategy to stakeholders at the start of the project. Hence, there is a need for periodic meetings for planning reviews between FAO and the implementing partners.<sup>37</sup>
90. Nevertheless, in some municipalities, some technical training activities<sup>38</sup> had an effect on human capital. In the focus group discussions, beneficiaries said they had learned techniques for preparing the land, sowing, choosing seed varieties and managing crops, which they put into practice. The survey results show, however, that the implementation of FFS activities has encountered some constraints, such as drought, absenteeism of members, lack of seeds for crops, lack of awareness among stakeholders, and non-compliance with the timetable in decreasing order.

### 3.2.4 Promotion of social cohesion (Club Dimitra)

**Finding 11.** The Club Dimitra<sup>39</sup> tool was well adopted by the target populations, leading to increased social cohesion and improvements in other areas.

91. The Dimitra clubs set up by the intervention in the Niger, enabled the affected populations to be better informed and to communicate with the project. According to the focus subgroup discussions, they strengthened social cohesion within communities. Within these clubs, the organisation by age group and affinity shows the ability of people to associate, create spaces for communication, and reflect together on consensual solutions to adversity. The theme of protection and conflict sensitivity was widely discussed within the Dimitra clubs, allowing everyone to express their experience of violence in this crisis. In ten months of operation of these Dimitra clubs in the four sites (Chétimari, Boudouri, Guidan Kadji and Sayam), the communities

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<sup>35</sup> As concerns the pastoral field schools, the problem was the collaboration between NGO WVI and the Directorate of Livestock. Despite the intermediation of the FAO sub-office, they did not agree on the costs of the terms of reference for implementing the activity until the last moment.

<sup>36</sup> Monitoring missions are very limited at the FAO level for security reasons, limiting access to the sites and consequently the effectiveness of these missions. Indeed, on several occasions, field missions were suspended by the authorities or the UN system and even when they were authorised, security measures limited the stay at a site to a strict minimum (one to two hours maximum), which limited the effectiveness of these missions. This, combined with the late sharing of specific reports by the partner, did not allow FAO to identify and remedy some shortcomings in time.

<sup>37</sup> Interviews with stakeholders.

<sup>38</sup> Measurement and analysis of agro-ecosystems, phytosanitary treatment, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Dimitra Clubs are groups of women, men or young people – mixed or not – who decide to organise themselves to act together on their own environment. They meet regularly to discuss about the problems they face in their daily lives, to make decisions and to take action to solve them.

themselves declared that they were proud/satisfied with the various results generated by the actions they initiated and undertook (2018 activity report of NGO APEBA).

92. Thus, the Dimitra clubs have opened up real spaces for dialogue and exchange first between women and men separately, but also in plenary later on. According to interviews with stakeholders, they have played their role as facilitators but also as a sounding board to escalate information or not from the targeted populations to the project and more broadly to the authorities. This de facto strengthened the participation of the targeted populations in the day-to-day monitoring of activities.
93. The activities developed by Dimitra clubs, which are still active, have freed up speech and set in motion a process of reflection within the affected populations that did not stop with the intervention. These spaces have helped to kill off the great tensions created by the displacement of crowds and could be used as much as possible to show the populations that they are the only ones who can impose their will on the ground.<sup>40</sup>
94. Finally, the Dimitra Club action went far beyond the intervention's expectations, with a 133 percent completion rate, 40 clubs established by the beneficiaries themselves (i.e., 160 clubs established for a target of 120).<sup>41</sup> Thus, according to interviews with stakeholders,<sup>42</sup> the ownership of the tool by the target populations opened up multiple opportunities that the project did not really seized. In addition to their own community projects, in almost all sites, Dimitra clubs started partnering with other programs intervening in the localities. The institutionalisation of several clubs thanks to projects of economic interest, in agriculture or in livestock, through their legal recognition, has given them the necessary opening to dive into economic activities and search for financial partners. In Boudouri, more than twenty clubs have already been registered. These recognised Dimitra clubs have already started partnering with the International Organisation for Migration Program in charge of building habitats and latrines at the sites as well as with other structures for strong collaborations and alliances (according to the 2018 activity report of NGO APEBA, January 2019). These are surely organisations that will remain active even after the project ends and can be used by other interventions in the future. This was confirmed during focus group discussions with members of the Dimitra clubs. Indeed, the people who have invested in these clubs do not need the project to support them. In fact, some of the clubs have set up village savings and loan associations that provide small loans to members to solve their problems. NGOs have often helped them to develop leisure activities (such as Langa, a traditional fight between communities, theatre, horse racing and sanitation sessions).

### **Box 5. Dimitra clubs: community listeners' clubs empower women and men**

Dimitra clubs are rural groups of women, but also men and youth who organise themselves on a voluntary basis to discuss development problems and challenges and find solutions together, in their community using their own resources, without relying on external support. These clubs contribute to the achievement of FAO projects and programs in areas such as nutrition, peace, food security and climate change adaptation. FAO facilitates their establishment and provides them with training and supervision. They are self-managed and boost social and economic development in their communities. These groups work with community radio stations, which broadcast interactive programs in local languages to increase knowledge and understanding of issues that are important to

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<sup>40</sup> Interviews with stakeholders.

<sup>41</sup> 69 Dimitra clubs for adult women with a total of 2 070 members; 38 Dimitra clubs for adult men with 1 140 members; 20 Dimitra clubs for girls with 600 members; 21 Dimitra clubs for boys with 630 members; 12 mixed youth clubs with 180 girls and 180 boys, for a total of 4 800 members, 2 850 of whom are women directly involved in the dynamic Dimitra club in Diffa. (FAO, 2018 activity report of NGO APEBA, January 2019).

<sup>42</sup> Implementing NGO partners, FAO teams.

the lives and livelihoods of communities. They enable their members and listeners to build skills in agricultural and livestock practices, reducing food shortages, building resilience, hygiene and sanitation, health, nutrition, and food security.

In the Niger, for example, the Boudouri "Yaki Da Hamada" (i.e., fight against desertification) club has been instrumental in building social cohesion within the community and disseminating hygiene-related activities. Thanks to FAO support, the club benefited from a radio, batteries and small photovoltaic panels that recharge the battery. With a Secretary General who oversees the accreditation and administrative management, the club is made up of 25 to 30 members who have organised themselves to create and contribute to a common fund that supports members when needed. The club supported one community member to build a wall for his house and another member to pay for health care at the Maloumdi health centre. Members also seek outside support to address problems beyond their capacity.

Source: FAO, institutional website. "Community listeners' clubs empower rural women and men" and household survey in the Niger.

### 3.2.5 Diet diversification and ownership of essential family practices (nutrition education)

**Finding 12.** Food consumption interventions were successful, from training to cooking demonstrations at the village level with well-identified implementing partners. They contributed to an improvement in diet diversity and knowledge for a good diet despite some limitations and missed opportunities in nutrition training.

95. In the Niger, with a partner like World Vision International (WVI), the intervention was well equipped to meet objectives related to essential family practices. Considering the heavy burden of child malnutrition in the Niger, the project's nutrition education mission was geared toward a support mode well-mastered by World Vision. Thus, its well-tested model was adopted throughout the sub-region and consisted of bringing together groups of mothers with children at risk of moderate (or borderline) acute malnutrition to learn and practice recipes using available and accessible food to strengthen young children's health and diet. This concept, based on positive deviance, i.e., reinforcing good practices as an example by avoiding the stigmatisation of households with malnourished children, has the great advantage of integrating an initial screening that makes it possible to identify children at risk and thus save lives through prevention.
96. In Mali, the intervention made it possible to collect all the good nutrition practices from the beneficiary populations in order to integrate them into a training manual, an approach that strengthens community ownership. Moreover, the cascade of trainings carried out on the basis of the training manual, combined with cooking demonstrations and village talks on essential family practices, as well as radio programs, made it possible to implement in a complementary manner the whole range of available and effective media at the field level. However, everything was not perfect; indeed, the training manuals and hand-outs that were to be given to the trainees never arrived. However, according to interviews with stakeholders,<sup>43</sup> the activities and timetable were well received and gave hope for behavioural change in the area of nutrition. Behaviour change is the result of iterative awareness-raising and training campaigns that need to be organised more than once, as it has been the case.
97. Finally, WVI remained within its comfort zone by focusing only on the "management of moderate cases", even in the community, without exploring the training and information of women and men in households on prevention. FAO should have required WVI to implement this mission of nutrition training for the population. Collaboration with community radio stations, and especially with Dimitra clubs, could have been set up to inform and educate young people, women and men about the benefits of specific foods. This could have been programmed in correlation with the

<sup>43</sup> Implementing NGO partners, FAO teams, and technical services.



different seasonal productions (vegetables in the dry season, moringa, etc.) and to the attention of decision-makers (example: mothers-in-law in weaning practices which are the cause of many child malnutrition situations). It is also worth noting that cooking demonstrations have been organised to complement this essential activity of promoting the consumption of garden products.

98. According to interviews with stakeholders, the introduction of new foods and recipes has allowed for diet and nutrition diversification at the household level. Roots and tubers, fruits and vegetables, energy foods, and vitamin A are part of the meals prepared by households. These findings are confirmed by the results of focus group discussions in the Niger.<sup>44</sup> One challenge noted, however, is that vegetables are not available at all times of the year.
99. The food consumed by households before the interventions was mostly energy-rich, in the form of dough/balls, rich in vitamin A, animal protein and vegetable protein. Following the interventions, households are consuming more vegetables and fruits, tubers and roots. 90.63 percent of women are able to give some examples of foods needed for a good diet. Households use more millet and rice (energy), then cowpeas (vegetable protein), sweet potatoes, cassava, and potatoes (tubers and roots). They use and distinguish foods rich in vitamin A, such as carrots, tomatoes, sheep meat, goat meat and fish or poultry meat.<sup>45</sup> The evaluation notes a high level of participation (96 percent) of women in the nutrition education sessions organised by the project, which enabled them to understand the correct methods for feeding their babies and to respect the food and body hygiene of their children to ensure their proper growth. Women confirm that old practices lead to health problems among children. They go further saying that thanks to the awareness raising on malnutrition, children's diet and cooking demonstrations, mothers are gradually adopting a change of behaviour for the well-being of their children.<sup>46</sup> In addition, 88 percent of households introduced new foods that they did not eat before, mainly vegetables.

**Finding 13.** Stakeholders<sup>47</sup> capacities have been strengthened.

100. Technical services and implementing NGO partners have been involved and trained. This confirms the level of capacity building in Chad and Cameroon and to a lesser extent in the Niger and Mali. The ability to duplicate the training received by communities and technical services, was highlighted during interviews with stakeholders in Cameroon. For example, at the FFS level, for each theme developed, the technical services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Sustainable Development were associated/involved on the one hand and CODAS CARITAS on the other. This situation has had the merit of promoting throughout the project an effective transfer of knowledge between FAO, the technical services and the beneficiaries. FAO always involves technical services and implementing NGO partners: the former for monitoring and technical support and the latter for community mobilisation and support-accompaniment. Thanks to these actions, their roles are better recognised by the communities. Similarly, as concerns the capacity building, particularly in relation to "good agricultural practices and management of FFS", it is worth noting that technical services and local NGOs are able to continue monitoring and

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<sup>44</sup> Many women report that they have learned to cook meals they had never made before. They learned how to cook rice with fat, potato stew, appetisers, and fufu with moringa leaves. They especially used moringa, cabbage and carrots in children's food. The women who learned to cook participated in a cooking competition, and those from Chétimari won the first prize.

<sup>45</sup> Household survey in the Niger.

<sup>46</sup> Household survey and focus group discussions and in Mali.

<sup>47</sup> Technical services, implementing NGO partners.

supporting beneficiaries/vulnerable people in their respective areas of competence after the project.

### 3.2.6 Contribution to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations

**Finding 14.** The interventions lightly increased livelihoods.

101. Survey results in the Niger and Mali show that the number of household livelihoods has changed, but only slightly. Some environmentally destructive activities, such as cutting and selling wood, have disappeared and been replaced by more livestock (+13), agriculture (+2) and trade (+14) activities promoted by the project.

**Table 2. Activities carried out before and after the project in the Niger**

	Before	After	Difference
Employee	6	5	-1
Farmer	68	70	2
Breeder	35	48	13
Worker	6	10	4
Trader	23	37	14
Housewife	19	15	-4
Marabout	3	4	1
Craftsperson	1	3	2
Fisher	3	2	-1
Unemployed	2	0	-2
Student	7	8	1
Fodder seller	2	0	-2
Woodcutter	1	0	-1

**Finding 15.** The capacity of communities to cope with shocks has been strengthened, but their level of resilience remains modest despite FAO support. There was a lack of an integrated approach that benefits the same target groups (production, training, income-generating activities) and allows them to engage in productive activities, thus contributing to strengthening their resilience.

102. In Chad, the capacity to cope with shocks for beneficiaries in general and for ten communities in particular, has been sustainably strengthened by the project through capacity building and support for the development of disaster risk management/DRR plans within each of these ten communities. Trainings were organised for communities in the project areas to strengthen their knowledge, skills and technical capacities and to help reduce risks and disasters (fires, floods, bushfires, droughts, epidemics, etc.). These trainings resulted in the establishment of ten structured and trained risk and disaster management and protection committees to raise the awareness of communities.<sup>48</sup>
103. The participatory development of these DRR action plans at the community level has empowered the communities to organise themselves to implement actions to support their DRR priorities. The implementation of these plans has reduced conflicts between local authority structures, i.e., unequal relationships between groups (inequalities related to social status, income, gender, etc.). To this end, greater emphasis was placed on public awareness and training of traditional leaders in environmental protection and the above aspects of disaster risk management.<sup>49</sup>
104. Training and awareness-raising activities on risks and disasters were conducted only in the Chad project. They were based on transparent and participatory conflict management mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness. As such, conflict management structures and their operating mode in

<sup>48</sup> For each of the ten communities, a disaster risk management/reduction plan was developed.

<sup>49</sup> Interviews with implementing NGO partners, FAO teams, technical services.

these ten communities were organised so as to compensate for the unequal power relations between stakeholders and to ensure greater inclusiveness and consistency. A total of ten risk and disaster protection and management committees (three in Daboua, four in Bagassola and three in Bol, according to the final report of project OSRO/CHD/701/SWE) were structured and trained to raise community awareness on the actions undertaken under this project.

105. FAO defines resilience as the ability to prevent disasters and crises as well as to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from them in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner. This includes protecting, restoring and improving livelihoods systems in the face of threats that impact agriculture, nutrition, food security and food safety. As such, stakeholders, including FAO and implementing partners, agree that resilience-building interventions have benefited indigenous people more than IDPs and refugees. Indeed, these indigenous beneficiaries in Mali, the Niger,<sup>50</sup> and Chad had the necessary land resources to implement their various agricultural activities over the long term. As a result, they have been able to benefit from interventions that protect, restore, and improve their livelihoods system in the face of threats to agriculture. The situation is often different for IDPs and refugees. For the latter, the instability of their situation was already a constraint on their ability to access land for various agricultural activities; thus, the restoration and improvement of their livelihoods systems as a result of the interventions was very limited.
106. It is highly likely that structural investments will impact on the lives of beneficiaries and strengthen the livelihoods of beneficiary communities, but given these findings, the level of resilience of beneficiary households remains mixed. This finding is reinforced by the results of surveys in Mali and the Niger on self-perceived resilience. These indicate average levels of resilience, reflecting a modest capacity of beneficiaries to cope with shocks and diversify or modify their main livelihoods despite the project support. Building resilience requires implementing activities in an integrated manner (combining several activities such as training, production, and income-generating activities), which was not the case for the interventions in Mali and the Niger. (See Appendix 2 for the results of the resilience survey).
107. In summary, the interventions contributed to an improvement in livestock production. Food consumption-related interventions have contributed to improved off-season production, food diversity and good diet knowledge. Animals' health status has clearly improved, and the majority of beneficiaries have recorded births, allowing most of them to reconstitute their herd. However, some activities were implemented late or not at all, compromising the achievement of expected outcomes. The FFS models implemented have been mixed. Stakeholder capacity has been strengthened, but remains limited for continued support to beneficiary communities. Finally, the number of livelihoods of beneficiary households has changed little, the capacity of communities to cope with shocks has been strengthened, although their level of resilience is still modest. The targeted population adopted well the Dimitra Club tool, which has helped to strengthen social cohesion in a variety of areas for action. Mali projects have adopted an integrated approach creating synergy between their humanitarian and development objectives.

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<sup>50</sup> In the Niger, for example, the majority of beneficiaries received support for rainfed or irrigated seeds. The project adopted a strategy of concentrating its activities in an integrated manner: seeds, IGA cash, goat kits, nutrition on a more limited number of beneficiaries, for whom resilience was really strengthened (Guidan Kadji, Boudouri, and Chetimari). For beneficiaries of seeds, especially rainfed seeds, despite the input quality, they are still dependent on the whims of the rain.

### 3.3 Efficiency

**Finding 17.** FAO used all of its resources to ensure the proper implementation of interventions, but the support from the administrative system was weak, due to bottlenecks inherent to procedures.

108. FAO ensured good financial management of the interventions. Thanks to its contribution, the allocated funds were managed according to clear and transparent procedures. According to interviews with stakeholders,<sup>51</sup> FAO also provided technical added value in the implementation of activities, such as the provision of vegetable and rainfed seeds, training on targeting, etc. It also provided quality technical support staff in the field.
109. The evaluation noted the existence and effectiveness of the support provided by operational and technical units of FAO country offices, which was noticeable in several ways. Indeed, these units demonstrated their effectiveness in taking into account the real needs expressed in relation to the interventions. For example, when funds were needed to implement actions, these entities (operational and technical units) played the expected crucial role in accelerating the process of granting funds. Even if the constraints of the administrative system support (human resources, procurement, administration) are entirely attributable to administrative bottlenecks, it should be noted that this administrative system (human resources, procurement, administration) has generally not been very effective.

**Finding 18.** Monitoring and evaluation tools have not been fully implemented and adaptive management of interventions has been weak.

110. The monitoring and evaluation system has weaknesses. The logical framework indicators (far from being SMART) are limited to data collection at the output level and do not allow to analyse the results and impacts achieved in some countries. This weakness has hindered the possibility of adaptive management and generating lessons for future projects. In addition, the evaluation notes the lack of data collection in the baseline or end line situation. Only the intervention in Cameroon developed a baseline. In this case, the monitoring and evaluation data helped to influence decision-making at two levels minimum: i) the Quality Assessment Review provided for in the memorandum of understanding with an implementing partner, revealed weaknesses or shortcomings that made it possible to replace it; and ii) the decision to set up a security stock at the level of Regional Offices on the basis of monitoring information from the local offices in Yaoundé. This information reveals difficulties in meeting implementation deadlines due to delays in making inputs available to beneficiaries.
111. In general, it is worth noting the absence of a monitoring-evaluation unit at the intervention level, or when it exists, its late establishment, almost at the end of the intervention, particularly in Cameroon. In Chad, the monitoring and evaluation system, which is the responsibility of consultants, was affected by the high replacement rate of these consultants. The contractual instability of the people in charge of this mechanism weakened the performance of the monitoring-evaluation system.

**Finding 19.** FOA's internal procedures delayed the implementation of interventions.

112. Internal procedures for disbursements, memoranda of understanding, and input procurement slowed the implementation of some activities. Each year, the time it takes for implementing partners to have a signed memorandum of understanding allowing them to begin implementation, remains a slowing factor that affects the planning and implementation of

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<sup>51</sup> Implementing NGO partners, FAO teams, technical services, UN.

interventions. In addition, with the annual recruitment process of implementing partners and the change of partners, interventions are put on hold for a few months to enable the new partner take over.

113. According to the results of stakeholder interviews,<sup>52</sup> in several interventions and in most countries, the evaluation noted delays in the distribution of seeds and inputs at times that are not in line with the agricultural calendar, due to FAO's internal procedures, which are often lengthy.<sup>53</sup> However, these delays are also caused by other factors such as: i) difficulties in accessing intervention areas due to the security situation; ii) poor road conditions; and iii) weak operational capacity of implementing partners resulting in the late delivery of inputs.
114. In Chad, for example, the evaluation noted overall delays in the first year of implementation, mainly due to the mechanisms for disbursing funds and granting the budget code. Indeed, although the agreement-in-principle to fund the project was known, launching the fundraising or procurement mechanism was procedurally slow. The other two years were also marked by delays in the acquisition of inputs; delays mainly due to the bulk purchasing strategy put in place, which consisted of putting together the call for tenders of different projects operating in the same sector of activity and having similar needs, in order to fulfil them at the same time. This strategy affected the planning of many projects, resulting in delays in the implementation of planned activities.
115. In Cameroon, the campaigns were marked by the late availability of seeds due to FAO internal procedures and the delay in targeting beneficiaries.

**Finding 20.** Delays in the completion of VIPs and in the availability of inputs and equipment, as well as inadequate finishing, have been detrimental to the 2019 season and to the sustainability of the schemes. Delays in the availability of fonio and cram-cram seeds reduced the expected biomass production, despite initiatives to ensure production. Finally, cash support for vulnerable families was provided outside food shortage periods, to the detriment of its effectiveness. FAO's capacity has been insufficient to adapt its procedures to emergency situations, but efforts are being made in terms of authorised expenditure ceiling.

116. Several activities were implemented with delays due to internal procedures and therefore had negative consequences on expected production and yields: the distribution of goats during the last season coinciding with the end of the project;<sup>54</sup> the late supply (almost at the end of the intervention) of some small vegetable gardens,<sup>55</sup> some inputs and equipment<sup>56</sup> (in the four countries).
117. Out of the four VIP sites, only the two Timbuktu sites saw the rehabilitation companies get to work in time to ensure acceptance of the works before the start of the agricultural season. At the other two sites:
  - i. Site 1: work was started too late (reception in September 2019, while the season starts in June). In the case of this VIP, a breach in the dike was the major problem. As soon as it was repaired, the rice farmers were able to start transplanting and thus saving a season that did not start well. Finishing work was not included in the initial estimate. The fact that the dike is not covered makes it susceptible to gullying, which is significant in Mopti

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<sup>52</sup> Implementing NGO partners, FAO teams, and technical services.

<sup>53</sup> In fact, when the order for inputs exceeds the tonnage threshold at the country level, the contract can no longer be concluded locally. The procurement procedure is then carried out at the regional (FAO) or global level.

<sup>54</sup> Internal ordering procedure.

<sup>55</sup> Late commencement of work in connection with internal ordering procedures and insecurity.

<sup>56</sup> Internal ordering procedure.

given the fairly heavy rainfall (up to 1 000 mm per year), which could quickly jeopardise the investment made (within a few years).

- ii. Site 2: Work has not much progressed and the overflow of the river has stopped everything, compromising the rice paddy campaign.
118. The inputs and equipment were handed over to rice growers several months late, hampering the support normally implemented in a calm climate. For example, in Gao, work on the VIP was halted, so the inputs handed over were kept for the 2020 season. At the other sites, this late supply led to sowing with bin-run seeds and reduced the impact of the intervention.
  119. The results of interviews with stakeholders indicate that fonio and cram-cram seeds were generally made available late<sup>57</sup> in Mali during the third decade of July 2018. According to the technical services, this month's delay reduced the expected biomass production, given that the biomass peak was reached during the last decade of August. In 2019, seeds were made available too late in two out of three regions to expect good biomass production.
  120. The rehabilitation works of VIPs or the development works of pastoral areas could not be launched in 2017, they did take place (even with a little delay) during the lean periods in 2018 and 2019. On the other hand, the monetary transfer (Cash for Work) planned as compensation for working days as considerably delayed.<sup>58</sup> This completely obliterated the objective of supporting the populations during the lean season. Thus, the 2018 work was paid in March 2019 (i.e., eight months after the site works) and the 2019 work was paid in 2020 (i.e., 12 months after the site works). The complexity of cash transfer operations in these very fragile security conditions prevented the achievement of the intended objective. Moreover, in practice, making vulnerable populations work by promising wages that are paid the following year can generate frustration and is not likely to ease tense situations.
  121. A consultation between UN agencies on best practices in this area would have helped avoiding such a situation and especially its reoccurrence in 2019.<sup>59</sup>
  122. FAO's ability to adapt its procedures to emergency situations was limited. This is evidenced by the procurement (seeds, equipment, etc.) procedures and the recruitment procedures for implementing partner organisations, which were always delayed.
  123. One positive aspect noted by the evaluation is that the authorised expenditure ceiling has been increased at the FAO Country Office in Cameroon.<sup>60</sup> This decision will make procurement procedures more fluid and reduce delays in obtaining and making available seeds for distribution to beneficiaries, for example.

**Finding 21.** Synergies and complementarities with other FAO interventions were developed especially in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and the Niger.

124. According to interviews with stakeholders, there are synergies and complementarities with other FAO interventions, but they remain modest. Although at the country office level, coordinators

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<sup>57</sup> Internal ordering procedure.

<sup>58</sup> Internal procedure for making cash available.

<sup>59</sup> The World Food Programme (and other NGOs) implements this type of seasonal activity every year during the food crisis.

<sup>60</sup> The Representative can order or conduct certain procurement procedures for amounts over USD 200 000, this is almost double what was previously authorised.

participate in meetings to discuss projects, in the field, these exchanges do not lead to concrete achievements.

125. In the Niger, FAO has succeeded in ensuring the complementarity of its projects implemented in the same area (NER/701/SWE and NER/804/ITA), which have pooled the supply of inputs (seeds and cattle feed). Similarly, project NER/701/SWE developed synergies with the interventions of other agencies (World Food Program, International Organisation of Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) whose beneficiaries received seeds while's project beneficiaries received food aid or shelter.
126. In Chad, a complementarity of actions is observed in certain areas where, in addition to the activities of project CHD/701/SWE, complementary activities (like that of project CHD/803/SWE) are developed in terms of pooling the use of equipment and capacity building through the organisation of training. An Irish-funded project in Kanem showed a similar situation.
127. There were opportunities for complementarity with the two projects (MLI/701 and MLI/804) implemented by FAO in Mali, and in particular with project 701. However, the delay in project MLI/804 did not allow the targeted support to be provided on time (as it was for project MLI/701), which was a missed opportunity for complementarity.<sup>61</sup>
128. There is a lack of leadership in the interventions; this prevents the implementing partners from having a global vision of their project, especially possible synergy between projects. For example, in Mali, project MLI/804 targeted the Mopti region to carry out activities of another SIDA project through the Mali Climate Fund in the area of fisheries and fish farming, but no form of collaboration was encouraged between the two interventions.
129. In summary, FAO engaged to ensure the proper implementation of the interventions, but the monitoring and evaluation tools were not fully implemented and the adaptive intervention management was poor. Internal procedures contributed to delays in the implementation of interventions and delays were experienced at several levels. Delays in the availability of fonio and cram-cram seeds reduced the expected biomass production, despite the actions taken to ensure production. Cash support for vulnerable families was provided outside food shortage periods, to the detriment of its effectiveness. Finally, FAO's capacity to adapt its procedures to emergency situations was weak and the synergies or complementarities developed with other FAO interventions were modest.

### 3.4 Coordination and partnership

**Finding 25.** The process of selecting NGO partners followed a well-defined procedure and the partnership is appreciated; however, the signing of protocols is time consuming and coordination remains poor.

130. Operational implementing NGO partners are selected through a transparent and documented procedure. According to FAO personnel in the Maroua and Kousséri sub-offices interviewed, the mechanism put in place to assess performance and the strengths & weaknesses of collaboration with implementing partners, is adequate and functional. This is the Quality Assessment Review, or an evaluation carried out by FAO, based on the memorandum of understanding signed with each partner in terms of expected and achieved results.

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<sup>61</sup> Project 801 was originally planned to help 1 500 herders cope with the pastoral lean season in 2018 after a poor winter in 2017.

131. In general, the partnership is well received by both sides, with each stakeholder demonstrating promptness and efficiency in carrying out the tasks assigned. Only delays in signing memorandum of understanding are sometimes noted, as they often offer very little time for implementation in relation to the agricultural calendar. Moreover, by signing annual memoranda of understanding, FAO does not give its partners good visibility of interventions.
132. At the regional level, discussions with stakeholders<sup>62</sup> reveal the poor coordination of action between FAO, technical services and implementing NGO partners. For example, in Mali and the Niger, these stakeholders work very little together and report individually to FAO. If there were good coordination, partners would share the overall project objectives and participate more actively in the respect of shared planning.
133. Stakeholders also note that there is weak leadership from the heads of the four country offices at the local level, giving the impression of a vacuum. Indeed, the Intervention Coordination, based in the capital, seems very far from the field. This is confirmed by local stakeholders, for whom the decision-making centre is indeed far from the field, and this does not facilitate its proactivity. Heads of office are responsible for monitoring several projects and as such they are only representative coordinators who wait for instructions from the Coordination.

**Finding 26.** Despite relevant multi-year financing, FAO's action has remained limited to humanitarian response, with little added value.

134. Faced with long-lasting crises, FAO and SIDA wanted to innovate with multi-year emergency funds that would: i) strengthen FAO and allow it to better organise itself for increased efficiency; and ii) accompany populations beyond the annual donation to better work on the emergency-development-peace nexus. Despite this new type of funding, the operational mode remained the same. While the first year was launched with difficulty, it should be noted that the vast majority of support (goat kits + livestock feed and IGA cash) was provided in the last quarter of interventions in Mali. FAO did not take advantage of the multi-year nature of the project to be more effective and to put in place an organisation that would avoid or limit the delays that occur each year.
135. FAO's work has thus remained limited to humanitarian response, even though it uses multi-year financing. Indeed, interventions have very often targeted new/different beneficiaries each year, without following up on beneficiaries from previous years, except in Chad, where FAO claims that beneficiaries from previous years have been followed up by the implementing NGO partner under the current year's agreements, and in the Niger, where FAO has opted to focus on the same beneficiaries for certain activities (IGA cash, goat kits, nutrition) during the life of the project. It would have been more relevant to work on the same targets for a few years in order to sustain the outcomes. The signing of annual memoranda of understanding with implementing partners is also more in line with a supposedly short-term humanitarian response. It would have been more appropriate to sign multi-year memorandum of understanding or another form of memorandum of understanding adapted to this context to allow partners to plan more effectively.
136. In addition, it is clear for all interventions that apart from carrying out the activities foreseen in the annual memoranda of understanding, the group of partners is little used during project implementation. The relationship is contractual and the stakeholders are not asked to contribute strategically. They are limited to carrying out what is asked of them. A three-year project is then

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<sup>62</sup> Implementing NGO partners, FAO teams, and technical services.



reduced to the sum of three separate years with no strategic planning for the partners. Partners have seen very little difference in this new type of funding for interventions.

**Finding 27.** Complementarity between humanitarian and development funding is relevant in Mali, but is inefficient.

137. While the relevance of the complementarity between the two projects seems well thought out (agricultural investments in Mali such as VIPs and small vegetable gardens of project 804 were to complement the pastoral support of project 701), the timing of the interventions calls into question its effectiveness, with the development project intervening almost at the end of the deadline.
138. However, these investments are complex and time consuming to be implemented at the community level, as compared to a simple goat distribution. Ideally, a multi-year emergency project such as project 701 would be complemented by project 804 that would start 18 months later and outlast it by 18 months (i.e., two three-year projects that would start 18 months apart). In the case of project 804, the delivery of a majority of the investments (sometimes with defects) in the last quarter of 2019 (or even the first quarter of 2020) poses a real risk to the sustainability of these investments. Moreover, if project 804 had lasted longer, the IGA components (provided for in both projects) could have been supported and thus, met expectations. But the investments were made without any follow-up.
139. Finally, while the abandonment of the Ménaka area is understandable in the project 804 (because of the lack of satisfactory follow-up and the lack of capacity to absorb purely agricultural investments), it should be noted for Mopti that the change of implementing partner in the Gao region between the two projects 701 and 804 confused the situation regarding the activities initiated during the project 701. It is common for a new operator to be reluctant to take over the work of another partner (especially in these areas). It is therefore not surprising that project 701 sheds were not followed up by the project 804 operator.
140. In summary, the process of selecting NGO partners followed a well-defined procedure and the partnership is appreciated; however, the signing of protocols is time consuming and coordination remains poor. Despite relevant multi-year financing, FAO's action has remained limited to humanitarian response, with little added value. Although the relevance of complementarity between humanitarian and development funding in Mali has been established, its effectiveness has remained weak.

### 3.5 Gender

**Finding 28.** Gender considerations were fully integrated into the targeting process, and women were highly involved in the activities. The monitoring and evaluation system presents statistical data disaggregated by gender. However, the projects did not include a gender strategy for gender equality and women's empowerment. This would have allowed the identification of activities specifically adapted to their needs.

141. No in-depth gender analysis was carried out at the time of project design. Gender-disaggregated indicators in the different logical frameworks were not included in the project design. As a result, planned activities did not pay particular attention to the specific needs of women in a tense security context. During implementation, however, efforts were intensified to achieve the goal of gender equality. Moreover, the evaluation found that targeting took into account criteria that highlighted household vulnerability, such as the presence of malnourished children and the

existence of vulnerable households headed by a woman or a young adult. These targeting criteria minimised any risk of marginalisation of a group of people or women.

142. The evaluation notes good participation of women in project activities. The most significant livelihoods support to households (goat kit and IGAs) was targeted primarily at female-headed households in over 90 percent of cases, as were the sensitive cash transfer receipt activities. Women are also represented in complaints and targeting committees. Their very constitution takes into account gender mainstreaming in order to ensure that women are represented in them.
143. Gender-disaggregated statistics of beneficiary groups are provided at the end of the implementation of interventions. In all the activities, the identity of beneficiaries were disaggregated by sex and status (refugee, returnee, IDP, host). However, these statistics do not specify the age groups of the beneficiaries or whether specific disabilities reported at the beneficiary level are taken into account.

**Finding 29.** The projects have contributed to the social and possibly economic empowerment of women, enhancing their self-esteem and their role in the household.

144. The projects in general contributed to the social empowerment of women and strengthened their voice in the communities. In particular, Dimitra clubs in the Niger have allowed women to express themselves through real spaces for dialogue and exchange, first between women and men separately, but also in plenary sessions later on. This work in communities much affected by the crisis have also enabled women to express their point of view in a Nigerien society where public space is essentially male.
145. The support provided by the projects has enabled women to develop a source of income, which provides them with financial resources and potentially contributes to their empowerment within the household. Income-generating activities should also increase their ability to care for family members, as their testimonies indicate. Interviews with women in Cameroon and Chad reveal that the resources from the interventions have strengthened the role of women in the household. Indeed, the implementation of agricultural activities has allowed them to develop their financial autonomy and thus strengthen their leading role in their household. As a result, a growing number of women claim that the implementation of agricultural activities using inputs received from FAO has made them active people who are no longer dependent, or who are less dependent, on the resources provided by men. The empowerment is even more emphasized for those whose crops provide income to support household expenses.
146. According to women in decision-making positions in their households in Mali and the Niger (see Box 2, Box 3 and Box 4), access to modest, but still substantial, capital was not an option. In the Niger in particular, the savings banks established by women within Dimitra clubs have enabled significant financial mobilisation. All of the amounts mobilised are managed and used by these women as they see fit in various development activities, with a view to making them grow and increasing their banks (according to the 2018 activity report of NGO APEBA).
147. This opportunity changed the self-perception and confidence of women in these situations.
148. Despite these positive findings, it is still early to speak of transformative gender change at the community level.
149. In a nutshell, targeting processes were effective in identifying the population considered most vulnerable to receive support and gender considerations were fully integrated into the process. Although a thorough gender analysis and sex-disaggregated indicators are lacking in project

design, a high proportion of women have benefited from the interventions, which contributed to strengthening their access to capital and leadership roles in households, contributing to their social and economic empowerment.

### 3.6 Sustainability

**Finding 30.** It is highly likely that various measures put in place by the interventions – such as the involvement and training of local partners, investment in goods and equipment, and the establishment of productive assets – will contribute to the sustainability of achievements.

150. At the institutional level, the involvement of government technical services in the implementation and monitoring of the interventions represents a guarantee of sustainability, encouraged and reinforced by the recognition of their role by the beneficiary communities, although this may be hindered by the government's limited resources. Similarly, the strengthening of their capacities – particularly through "good agricultural practices" – and the management of the FFS, will enable them to continue providing monitoring and support to vulnerable people in their respective areas of competence. On the other hand, the projects have not put in place well-defined exit strategies; this hinders the sustainability of the intervention achievements.
151. At the community level, beneficiaries have demonstrated commitment and ownership of the interventions supported by the project. This was facilitated by their participation in the design and implementation of activities. They have acquired skills and capacities that will enable them to continue the activities in the future. There is thus an ownership and commitment at the community level that entails the sustainability of the intervention achievements. It is possible to point out here the great vitality of the Dimitra clubs in the Niger that were initiated by the project and which no longer depend on it. Indeed, the people who have invested in these clubs do not need the intervention to support them. Beneficiaries have taken initiatives other than the intervention activities but inspired by the project. According to the results of the focus group discussions, the Dimitra clubs have established other partnerships and expanded their area of activity; the small ruminant beneficiaries are able to find other sources of food for their animals. This is also a positive aspect that provides evidence of their commitment.
152. At the technical level, it is worth noting the vitality of the off-season stimulated by the project in Cameroon and the Niger, with beneficiaries managing to keep busy in the dry season thanks to vegetable growing. Off-season cultivation will probably continue, given the economic stakes. According to the results of the survey in the Niger, women, men and young people at the vegetable-growing sites claim they generate resources from this activity. This is a motivation to continue this production, even if the availability of vegetable seeds is likely to pose a problem in the short term. Finally, the equipment made available is now the property of the beneficiaries. They will be able to continue their activities even after the project.

**Finding 31.** However, there are factors that do not favour the sustainability of certain achievements, such as the lack of support for local seed production, the isolation of FFS and the late start of certain important activities.

153. The interventions supported the provision of seeds to beneficiaries, acquired each year from external suppliers. Those who were able to produce and save seeds will be able to use them over a maximum of two or three seasons. This situation could have been different if the intervention had identified and trained groups of beneficiaries working specifically on seed production. This approach would have had the merit of at least building the capacity of some of these beneficiaries and would have made these types of seeds available locally.

154. FFS, as promoted by the interventions, are not sustainable because they are isolated, although in Cameroon, beneficiaries have continued to set up some FFS on their own after the intervention thanks to the dynamism of village committees.
155. The initial planning of some interventions called for the implementation of longer-term activities (Mali, the Niger), which were intended to build household resilience, during the first two years. These activities finally started in the last quarter of the intervention (sometimes the last month, IGAs and goat kits). This calls into question their effectiveness and sustainability. The same applies to the late implementation of village irrigated perimeters. Given that the learning of measures and rules for the maintenance of sites and equipment could not be done during the intervention (management committees), there are doubts about the continuation of the activity.
156. The setting up of mills in the framework of IGA support for beneficiaries, without training users to repair them, does not guarantee the continuity of the activity. In fact, the repair charges of these mills is a major source of expenditure that reduces the resources generated from the IGAs set up. These funds could have been dedicated to strengthening the household food basket rather than to the daily repair of the mills.
157. The implementation of interventions that take into account the new needs expressed by the populations of the affected areas, could promote sustainability. These new needs are, for example, the desire to introduce spirulina and eggplant seeds as part of the interventions.
158. Finally, the approach of management agreements negotiated and agreed upon with the populations using the developed areas, is relevant. However, failure to sign these agreements could weaken the achievements and the potential of this approach in terms of conflict management.
159. In summary, several measures put in place by the projects – such as the involvement and training of local partners, investment in goods and equipment, and the establishment of productive assets – will contribute to the sustainability of achievements. However, the lack of support for local seed production, the isolation of FFS, the late start of certain important activities and the weak capacity of the government, could undermine certain achievements.



## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

160. Based on the results of this evaluation, the evaluation team develops its conclusions and recommendations.

### 4.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1.** The projects are consistent with national strategies and programmes, priorities identified by the UNDAF and the HRP, the FAO country programming framework, FAO institutional objectives, FAO regional initiatives, the SIDA Strategy for Humanitarian Aid and the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden’s development cooperation with Mali. The interventions are relevant, based on an analysis of the context and the needs of the beneficiaries, allowing for the strengthening of the beneficiaries’ livelihoods, resilience and protection, although the design of some interventions has not been well adapted to the duration of the implementation. Targeting processes have been effective in identifying the population most likely to be considered vulnerable to receive support. Intervention modalities are adequate and involve stakeholders at different levels, although some modalities proved to be less effective due to the security context and challenges in accessing land. The interventions took into account the principles of accountability to the affected populations, protection and conflict sensitivity, respect for humanitarian principles and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. However, the quality of interventions’ conflict-sensitive analysis was unsatisfactory and the complaints committees need to be supervised to enable them carry out their expected tasks.

**Conclusion 2.** The interventions have contributed to an improvement in agricultural and animal production through the development of vegetable-growing areas and seeded grazing areas, and through input support coupled with training and technical support. This has led to a diversification of production and the availability of fresh produce, contributing to an improvement in self-consumption and the creation of income-generating activities. This support also contributed to the reconstitution of herds and the improvement of animal health. Despite the positive contributions, external (security and environmental) and internal (internal procedures, weak technical supervision and inadequate modalities), factors affected the optimal achievement of outcomes. Technical supervision was of high quality, but training on cultivation and vegetable-growing techniques was insufficient. Delays in input availability and pest attacks, have reduced rainfed production possibilities at some sites. The IGA cash was distributed late, making it impossible to provide effective support to beneficiaries. Some investments, such as sheds, pastoral water bores and bio-digesters, were not appropriate for achieving strong impacts over the duration of the project. Finally, the process of signing management agreements negotiated and agreed upon with the populations using the developed areas, has not been completed, which could generate potential conflicts in Mali over natural resources.

**Conclusion 3.** The process of ownership of essential family practices has worked well, from training to cooking demonstrations at the village level with well-identified implementing partners, reinforcing communities’ knowledge of balanced food rations and food diversification. A high degree of variety is noted in household food consumption precisely in the Niger, indicating good dietary diversity. However, this ownership process has had some limitations related to the lack of manuals and hand-outs for trainees and the weak influence of FAO. Indeed, the latter left the partner organisation to make choices that were not necessarily the best.

**Conclusion 4.** The projects introduced activities considered innovative in their contexts, including Dimitra clubs, FFS, management agreements for developed areas, and the integration of pregnant she-goats in the distribution of goat kits, combined with a free stock of livestock feed. The Club Dimitra approach was well adopted by the target populations. It has proven to be a key element in strengthening social cohesion, enhancing the role of women in the community, and supporting local livelihoods. New agricultural practices have been adopted by beneficiaries, thanks to the FFS models, although their

implementation has been delayed. Pastoral developments were well received by pastoral communities who demonstrated good ownership by participating in the work.

**Conclusion 5.** The capacity of communities to cope with shocks has certainly been strengthened, but the analysis of self-evaluated resilience shows that beneficiary communities are still not very resilient to shocks despite the FAO intervention. The promotion of an integrated approach that would benefit the same target groups (production, training, income-generating activities), would allow them to engage in productive activities and would contribute to strengthening their resilience. The sustainability of the intervention achievements that depend on the monitoring and support of technical services, could be hindered by the government's limited resources. The achievements of the community-based interventions that do not require additional support from partners, have a high probability of sustainability, given the commitment of the beneficiaries and their ownership of these activities, particularly the Dimitra clubs.

**Conclusion 6.** FAO has provided technical added value in the implementation of activities and assigned quality technical support staff in the field. However, the cumbersome internal procedures of the Organisation combined with the weak operational capacity of partners contributed to delays that were detrimental to the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of certain interventions: delays in the provision of seeds and agricultural inputs, delays in the completion of VIPs, delays in cash support to vulnerable families, etc. All this raises the question of FAO's capacity to adapt its procedures to emergency situations. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms remain weak and do not allow the drawing of lessons on project outcomes, let alone the adaptive management of interventions. Moreover, synergy and complementarity with other FAO interventions were very poor.

**Conclusion 7.** The process of selecting implementing NGO partners followed a well-defined procedure and the partnership is appreciated; however, the signing of memoranda of understanding was time consuming and coordination remained poor. Despite relevant multi-year financing, FAO's action has remained limited to humanitarian response, with little added value. The timing for implementing the two types of interventions was not ideal for demonstrating the effectiveness of complementarity between humanitarian and development financing in Mali. Finally, in terms of multi-year sustainability, certain types of planned activities cannot be considered in interventions of less than three years.

## 4.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** Strengthen FAO's internal mechanism for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of projects. To this end, the following actions are necessary: i) strengthen collaboration and synergy between the Programme and Procurement Units in order to limit delays in input supply contracts and delays in contracting partners; ii) strengthen local coordination of interventions, build dialogue and local presence, and strengthen synergy and collaboration between the various FAO projects; iii) strengthen conflict-sensitive analyses of interventions through the development of appropriate tools; and iv) strengthen accountability mechanisms, particularly the complaints mechanism.

**Recommendation 2.** Make strategic choices for the implementation of interventions with multi-year financing for a better contribution to resilience by going beyond humanitarian aid: i) promote an integrated approach aimed at the same target groups enabling them to engage in productive activities and in the sustainable management of natural resources; intensify support at the beneficiary level so that the same beneficiary can benefit from three activities: production, training and income-generating activities; and ii) take into account, from the project design stage, the number and type of beneficiaries followed throughout the project, the duration of the contract with the implementing partners, the articulation of activities over several years or a longer period of time, and an integration between the different activities to contribute to the resilience of the communities.

**Recommendation 3.** Use the lessons learned in programming and monitoring practices in the formulation and implementation of future FAO interventions. To do this, the following actions are

necessary: i) set up a rigorous and close monitoring-accompaniment system of beneficiaries; and ii) carry out studies at the beginning and end of the project to influence decision-making in the framework of an adaptive management.

**Recommendation 4.** Strengthen the effectiveness of certain investments, by training and equipping mill repairers in the areas that have benefited from mill support, and finalise the management agreements negotiated and agreed upon with the populations using the developed pastoral areas in order to guarantee better management of the vital equipment (pastoral water bores, sheds, simple wells, etc.) put in place for herding. This process would allow for the sustainability of investments. Explore opportunities through Dimitra clubs and other means of dissemination to strengthen the effects of agricultural production by combining them with nutrition education training.

**Recommendation 5.** As part of future interventions: support the local establishment of seed producer groups; organise seed fairs as a means of distribution to beneficiaries; introduce *Caisses de résilience* as a sustainable capacity building approach to support producers in different FFS activities (rainfed, vegetable or livestock production). The approach integrates a technical component (FFS), a financial component (savings group) and a social component (Dimitra clubs). As pest attacks have proven to be the main factor that hinders production, solutions to counter them should be tested in FFS.

**Recommendation 6.** Repeat a new phase of the project in Mali in order to rehabilitate the investments made and give impetus to a real integrated local development. The two previous projects would thus be better promoted and the effectiveness of the combination of emergency and development could be better expressed.

**Recommendation 7.** Conduct a thorough gender analysis during project design stage to understand women's access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face; and tailor activities according to the needs identified to improve their economic and social empowerment. Given the positive results of the Dimitra clubs in the Niger, replicate the approach in other countries, particularly in Cameroon and Chad.



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## Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Organization	Position
Abakar	Mahamat Nour	Delegation of Livestock	
Abolgo	Pierre	FAO Cameroon	Focal point, FAO Sub-Office, Maroua
Aboukar	Mamadou	N'GADA Mutuelle d'épargne et de crédit of Diffa, the Niger	Programme officer
Aliodjbril	Hamza	FAO Niger	Head of Diffa office, leader of project 701 in 2019
Baby	Mohamed	FAO Mali	Head of Gao and Kidal office
Balfroid	Camille	FAO	Lead Technical Officer
Bealoum	Marcel	FAO Chad	Procurement Unit
Bichair	Damaris	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, (Cameroon)	Sub-division delegate, zonal extension agent at Mora
Bitang	Doubla	CODAS CARITAS Maroua (Cameroon)	Secretary General of the diocesan committee
Boukar	Mamadou	Fédération des associations et collectifs pastoraux de Diffa (FACPAD), the Niger	Programme Officer
Brou	Landry	FAO Niger	Head of operations
Bruno	Marta	FAO, Rome (OED)	Resilience Evaluation Portfolio Coordinator
Coumare	Mahamadou	Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Mopti, Mali	Focal point
Dan Malam	Moussa	FAO Niger	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Diakité	Luc	Regional Directorate of Hydraulics, Timbuktu, Mali	Director
Diarra	Adama	FAO Mali	Leader of project 804
Diarra	Oumar	Regional Directorate of Livestock, Timbuktu, Mali	Director of Livestock production
Dicko	Alhousseyni	FAO Mali	Leader of project 701
Diguera	Wahilo	FAO Chad	Administration and finance
Djajdjing	Birwe	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon	Zonal extension agent, Fotokol
Djiguy	Cissouma	NGO CSPEEDA Mopti, Mali	Project Manager
Djimet	Mahamat	CHORA (Chad)	
Doumbia	Abdoulaye	NGO CSPEEDA Mopti, Mali	Project Manager
Eba	Etienne	FAO Cameroon	Procurement Officer
Gangnon	Cyprien	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Lead project coordinator
Genot	Luc	FAO Niger	Deputy County Representative
Gori	Abdallah	ANADER	Facilitator
Guifayi Mateso	Georgette Jolie	High Commissioner's Office for Refugees	
Guedjeo	Salomon	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon	Zonal extension agent, Mawa
Haranga	David	CODAS CARITAS Yagoua, Cameroon	Secretary General of the diocesan committee
Hategekimana	Gabriel	FAO Mali	Head of operations
Hinrichs	Angela	FAO, Rome	Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer, OER – SIDA Focal Point in the FAO Emergency Division
Ingram	Lewis	FAO, Rome	Funds Mobilisation and Partnership Specialist, OER
Isseine	Ben Douala	CHORA, Chad	
Kanagara	Alphonse	FAO Cameroon	Emergency Operations Specialist

<b>Last name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position</b>
Konaté	Seiba	FAO Mali	Head of Mopti office
Lamana	Adoum	CHORA, Chad	
Mahama	Ali Issaka	FAO Niger	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Mahamane	Adamou	FAO Niger	Head of Maradi office
Mahanlmbaye	Bandoum	Delegation of Agriculture	
Maiga	Amadou	NGO APROMORS Timbuktu, Mali	Director
Maiga	Issa	NGO ANI Gao, Mali	Project Manager
Mamadoulaibou	Aissa	FAO	Lead Technical Officer
Massao	Mahamat	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon	Zonal extension agent, Makary
Mbraougue	Kidmo	FAO Cameroon	Head of Kousseri Sub-office
Machinda	Ndimba	FAO Cameroon	Human resources Officer
Ngam	Jean Clauzel	FAO Cameroon	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Ngardingal	Joli Bonheur	FAO Chad	Former provincial head of office, Lac
Ngardinga	Nodjimadji	FAO Chad	Head of Bol office
Ngueba	Steve	FAO Chad	Human resources
Nzeyimana	Christian	World Food Program	
Omorou	Soumana	NGO NOHO Gao, Mali	Project Manager
Ouattara	Gustave	FAO Chad	Monitoring and evaluation manager
Polini	Céline	FAO, Rome	West Africa Emergency Team in charge of Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso
Robichaud	Marc	FOREX Company, Mali	Director
Sadou	Abdoulwahidou	FAO Chad	Procurement Officer
Sorto	Mahamat	FAO Chad	Programme officer
Sow	Coumba	FAO, Sub-regional Office for West Africa	Sub-regional Resilience Coordinator for West Africa and Sahel
Sylla	Mohamed	FAO Cameroon	Emergency Coordinator
Tchatchoua	Gerald	FAO Cameroon	Programme Officer
Tengnäs	Ana	Swedish Embassy	
Vågberg	Erik	SIDA	Member of the Sahel Office and migration theme
Yahyah		FAO Niger	Leader of project WVI, Diffa
Yattara	Mahamane	FAO Mali	Head of Timbuktu office

## Appendix 2. Analysis of self-evaluated resilience

161. The evaluation collected data on beneficiary households' self-evaluated resilience. The analysis was organised per capacity,<sup>63</sup> in the event of the following main shocks: climatic risks, phytosanitary/pest risks, conflicts/violence. Each shock is then rated on an evaluation score of 1 to 5, where 1 represents high resilience and 5 represents no resilience at all. The average of all evaluation scores is presented in the next matrix.

Capacity	Shocks	Average score in the Niger	Average score in Mali
Absorption capacity, the Niger: 3.3 Absorption capacity, Mali: 3.4	- Climate risks	3.3	3.3
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.5	3.6
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	3.1	3.4
Adaptive capacity, the Niger: 3.7 Adaptive capacity, Mali: 3.3	- Climate risks	3.7	3.2
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.8	3.5
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	3.5	3.3
Transformative capacity, the Niger: 3.0 Transformative capacity, Mali: 3.7	- Climate risks	3.0	3.6
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.1	3.9
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	2.9	3.7
Anticipatory capacity, the Niger: 3.5 Anticipatory capacity, Mali: 3.5	- Climate risks	3.6	3.4
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.7	3.6
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	3.4	3.5
Knowledge and information, the Niger: 3.0 Knowledge and information, Mali: 2.8	- Climate risks	2.9	2.5
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.0	2.8
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	2.9	3.2
Learning capacity, the Niger: 2.7 Learning capacity, Mali: 2.6	- Climate risks	2.9	2.5
	- Conflicts/Violence	2.6	2.6
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	2.5	2.8
Financial capital, the Niger: 3.7 Financial capital, Mali: 3.8	- Climate risks	3.7	3.7
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.9	3.8
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	3.6	3.8
Social capital, the Niger: 2.7 Social capital, Mali: 2.7	- Climate risks	2.7	2.5
	- Conflicts/Violence	2.7	2.8
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	2.7	2.8
Political capital, the Niger: 3.2 Political capital, Mali: 3.4	- Climate risks	3.3	3.2
	- Conflicts/Violence	3.2	3.5
	- Phytosanitary/pest risks	3.0	3.5
<b>Average per country</b>		<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>Average of the two countries</b>		<b>3.25</b>	

162. The analysis of the data in the table indicates an average score of 3.2 in the Niger and 3.3 in Mali, reflecting a modest level of resilience and difficulties for beneficiary communities to cope with shocks. This means that the majority of households are unprepared and unable to recover from these shocks. They are not able to change their main source of income or livelihood if necessary,

<sup>63</sup> Absorption, adaptation, transformation, anticipation, knowledge and information, learning, financial, social and political.

nor are they able to find a way to bounce back after a shock. Indeed, a majority of them said they do not have the financial resources to survive shocks. However, their responses remain mixed in terms of policy and government support in the event of shocks.

## Appendix 3. Evaluation matrix

No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
<b>Evaluation Question 1 (Relevance) – To what extent were the projects relevant to meeting the needs and priorities of countries, FAO, SIDA and the target populations?</b>						
1.1	Is the project relevant and coherent with national strategies and programmes and in what way?	<p>1.1.1 Level of alignment of project objectives and activities with relevant national policies (food security and livelihoods, agriculture, livestock, environment, climate change adaptation, social protection and humanitarian support, etc.)</p> <p>1.1.2 Level of compliance of the actions implemented with the regional priorities in the intervention sectors</p> <p>1.1.3 Funds come from two sources (humanitarian and development): alignment with government priorities in ML 804</p>	<p>FAO personnel</p> <p>Implementing partners</p> <p>Technical services</p> <p>Activity documents and national strategies</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Literature review</p> <p>Focus Group Discussion</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Restitution of preliminary results</p>	<p>Triangulation of information</p> <p>Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop</p>	<p>Affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- security and health situation</li> <li>- access restrictions to communities</li> </ul>
1.2	To what extent have stakeholders been consulted and involved in the project (drafting workshops with potential partners, preliminary field survey, what are the major and minor project objectives)?	<p>1.2.1 Level of communities' participation (men, women and youth) in the selection, design, planning, implementation, and monitoring of actions and in the targeting of beneficiaries</p> <p>1.2.2 Level of local authorities' participation (choice of municipalities, sites, beneficiaries) establishment of community structures (management, orientation, selection and coordination committees)</p> <p>1.2.3 Level of technical services' participation in the selection, design, planning and implementation and monitoring of actions and in the targeting of beneficiaries</p> <p>1.2.4 How is coordination with other humanitarian stakeholders (NGOs) carried out, and is there evidence of complementarity without overlapping or an overlapping of actions?</p> <p>1.2.5 What is the level of collaboration or acceptance between partners? Does multi-year financing allow for greater independence from the central authorities? The Chadian project changed partners after the first year because the former was considered too close to the State. How was this change of partner perceived by the Government and by FAO?</p>	<p>FAO personnel</p> <p>Implementing partners</p> <p>Technical services</p> <p>Community leaders</p> <p>Municipal authorities</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Activity design and planning documents</p> <p>Activity reports</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Literature review</p> <p>Focus Group Discussion</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Restitution of preliminary results</p>	<p>Triangulation of information</p> <p>Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop</p>	<p>Affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- security and health situation</li> <li>- access restrictions to communities</li> </ul>
1.3	Were the approach and activities planned and	1.3.1 Level of relevance of project objectives and activities to these	<p>FAO personnel</p> <p>Implementing partners</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Literature review</p>	Triangulation of information	<p>Affected by:</p>



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No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
	implemented by the project adequate to strengthen the livelihoods, resilience and protection of beneficiaries?	needs 1.3.2 Level of relevance of modalities (distribution, FFS, VSLA, etc.)	Technical services Municipal authorities Community leaders Beneficiaries Activity documents	Focus Group Discussion Surveys Restitution of preliminary results	Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	- security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
1.4	To what extent has the project taken into account in its design, the principles of accountability to affected populations, protection and conflict sensitivity, respect for humanitarian principles and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?	1.4.1 Accountability to affected populations and respect for humanitarian principles 1.4.2 Protection and conflict sensitivity (what measures have been adopted, what measures have been implemented? Were security analyses conducted (ML804 project)? If so, were they used? 1.4.3 Humanitarian-development-peace nexus	FAO personnel Technical services FAO Resilience Division Swedish Embassy Activity documents	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation  - access restrictions to communities
1.5	To what extent does the project contribute to the FAO Country Programming Framework, the Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation, organisational results and strategic objectives of the UN system?	1.5.1 Level of alignment of the project with FAO strategic objectives 1.5.2 Level of alignment with the FAO CPF 1.5.3 Level of alignment with the UNDAF (development) and/or the HRP (humanitarian) 1.5.4 Level of alignment with the SIDA strategy for humanitarian assistance 1.5.5 Level of alignment with the 2016–2020 Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali	FAO personnel Activity and strategy documents Swedish Embassy FAO Resilience Division	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
<b>Evaluation Question 2 (Effectiveness) - Have the intended project outcomes on targeted households, communities, institutions and local organisations been achieved and have there been any unintended outcomes (both positive and negative)?</b>						
2.1	To what extent has the project contributed to protecting, rehabilitating and strengthening the livelihoods of beneficiaries (individual, household, community)?	2.1.1 Contribution to the protection, rehabilitation and strengthening of livelihoods: beneficiary targeting incorporates the protection dimension (refugees, returnees, IDPs, households with disabilities, acceptance of all ethnicities in contexts of community tensions) Activities implemented, <sup>64</sup> gaps, response to beneficiaries' needs, quantity of support, quality of implementation (on time, quality of inputs, content of support, monitoring/training, mobility/availability of beneficiaries, redistributions, strengths and weaknesses, etc.) and their effects.	FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities

<sup>64</sup>Provision of agricultural inputs, distribution of small ruminants and related training, cash transfer, FFS, social cohesion, VSLA group, IGAs, livestock kits, livestock production units, land restoration, disaster risk management, nutrition education

Appendix 3. Evaluation matrix

No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
2.2	<p>Did the project allow the beneficiary populations to increase their food production?</p> <p>Note: Achievement of outcomes: qualitative evaluation + evaluation in relation to the indicators of the logical framework</p>	<p>2.2.1 Increase in agricultural production (distribution of inputs and seeds)</p> <p>2.2.2 Increase in livestock production (distribution of small ruminants, training)</p>	<p>FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys</p>	<p>Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop</p>	<p>Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities</p>
2.3	<p>Did the project enable beneficiary populations to protect and strengthen their livelihoods in a sustainable manner?</p> <p>Note: Achievement of outcomes: qualitative evaluation + evaluation in relation to the indicators of the logical framework</p>	<p>2.3.2 Livelihoods protection (cash transfer)</p> <p>2.3.2 Sustainable livelihoods (VSLA groups, IGAs, livestock kits, livestock production units and land restoration)</p>	<p>FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys</p>	<p>Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop</p>	<p>Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities</p>
2.4	<p>Did the project enable beneficiary populations to promote good agricultural practices and social cohesion?</p> <p>Note: Achievement of outcomes: qualitative evaluation + evaluation in relation to the indicators of the logical framework</p>	<p>2.4.1 Promotion/ adoption of good agricultural practices (FFS)</p> <p>2.4.2 Promotion of social cohesion (FFS, Dimitra Club)</p> <p>2.4.3 Has the analysis on conflict prevention strengthened the communities on this theme (especially in Mali)</p>	<p>FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys</p>	<p>Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop</p>	<p>Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities</p>
2.5	<p>Did the project enable beneficiary populations to diversify their food consumption and promote good feeding practices for children?</p> <p>Note: Achievement of outcomes: qualitative evaluation + evaluation in relation to the indicators of the logical framework</p>	<p>2.5.1 Diversification of food consumption (nutrition education)</p> <p>2.5.2 Adoption of good feeding practices for children (nutrition education)</p>	<p>FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys</p>	<p>Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop</p>	<p>Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities</p>

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No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
2.6	Did the project enable beneficiary populations to strengthen their disaster risk management capacities?  Note: Achievement of outcomes: qualitative evaluation + evaluation in relation to the indicators of the logical framework	2.6.1 Strengthening disaster risk management capacities (disaster risk reduction training)	FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
2.7	To what extent have the capacities of stakeholders (government technical services, local authorities, communities, cooperating partners) been developed?	2.7.1 Types and volume of training provided 2.7.2 Level of stakeholder capacity building 2.7.3 Capacity to duplicate these trainings	FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
2.8	To what extent has the project contributed to building the resilience of vulnerable populations  Note: Achievement of outcomes: qualitative evaluation + evaluation in relation to the indicators of the logical framework	2.8.1 Do communities and households now feel able to anticipate, respond, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses? 2.8.2 Has the project been able to ensure the recovery of vulnerable populations, and have they evolved and are they able to project themselves into sustainable social development? Has the project been able to help them recover so that they are now able to carry out other activities?	FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Municipal authorities Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
2.9	What are the positive or negative unexpected outcomes of the project?	2.9.1 Positive or negative unexpected outcomes of the project at the community level 2.9.1 Positive or negative unexpected outcomes of the project at the level of targeted local institutions and organisations	FAO personnel Local technical services Implementing NGO partners Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussions	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
<b>Evaluation Question 3 (Efficiency) - To what extent did FAO's internal operational support functions facilitate project efficiency? What were the main challenges?</b>						
3.1	Were outcomes achieved in a timely manner and according to the planned schedule?	3.1.1 Implementation delays and reasons for these delays 3.1.2 Analysis of project delays due to SIDA procedures. 3.1.3 Analysis of project delays due to internal FAO procedures (how do internal FAO procedures delay implementation?) 3.1.4 Are FAO and SIDA able to adapt their procedures for greater efficiency?	FAO personnel Regional technical services Implementing NGO partners Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion Surveys	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
3.2	To what extent were internal FAO mechanisms effective and did they contribute to a	3.2.1 Existence and effectiveness of synergies/complementarities with other FAO activities/projects	FAO personnel (procurement, human resources)	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks,	Affected by: - security and health situation - access

Appendix 3. Evaluation matrix

No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
	successful or less successful intervention?	3.2.2 Existence and effectiveness of support from headquarters and regional hubs (Dakar Accra) 3.2.3 Existence and effectiveness of the FAO Regional Office and Resilience Division 3.2.4 Effectiveness and limitations of support from the Country Office's operational and technical units 3.2.5 Effectiveness and limitations of support from advocacy and knowledge management units 3.2.6 Effectiveness and limitations of administrative system support (human resources, procurement, administration)	Regional technical services Implementing NGO partners Resilience Division Regional Office		analysis workshop and validation workshop	restrictions to communities
3.3	How effective is the monitoring and evaluation system?	3.3.1 Existence and functionality of the monitoring and evaluation system (tools, frequency of collection, means and mode of collection, by whom, etc.) 3.3.2 Adaptive management: how are data used to influence decision-making in the framework of the programme? 3.3.3 Analysis of performance indicators: quality of formulation, relevance, number 3.3.4 Main weaknesses of the system	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Project document and logical framework Routine and annual monitoring tools Minutes of internal programme meeting Annual programme progress reports			
3.4	To what extent has the work relation with donor affected project implementation?	3.4.1 Project monitoring by the donor 3.4.2 Donor guidance that has (positively or negatively) influenced the achievement of the project	FAO personnel Swedish Embassy FAO Resilience Division	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
<b>Evaluation Question 4 (Coordination and partnership) - To what extent have the coordination and partnership arrangements in the project areas and project activities with sector partners, local institutions and implementing partners contributed to the quality, ownership, effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions?</b>						
4.1	What is the quality of collaboration between FAO and its implementing partners?	4.1.1 How FAO selects partners. 4.1.2 Effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to assess their performance, and strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration. 4.1.3 Quality of coordination and monitoring of partners. 4.1.4 Quality, ownership, effectiveness and efficiency of interventions through FAO's collaboration with partners	FAO personnel Local technical services Implementing NGO partners	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
4.2	To what extent have the lessons learned from other SIDA-funded projects, allowed for improvements to be incorporated into the project?	4.2.1 Evidence of shared experiences and learning with other SIDA projects 4.2.2 Ownership, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of interventions through FAO collaboration 4.2.3 Improvements thanks to learning from others SIDA projects	FAO personnel FAO Resilience Division Swedish Embassy	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities

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No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
		4.2.4. Does the project participate through its partners in regional coordination? 4.2.5 Is there complementarity between projects? Does the targeting rely on other partners Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs?				
4.3	What is the added value of the multi-year financing model?	4.3.1 Relevance of the multi-year approach to meeting humanitarian-development-peace commitments 4.3.2 Added value of the multi-year financing model 4.3.3 Does the long planning brought on by multi-year projects give partners what more time to think strategically? Has multi-year financing been conceived as the sum of individual years or have the projects capitalised on this multi-year humanitarian approach? Are there any changes in approaches related to multi-year financing?  4.3.4 How has FAO been able to capitalise on this aspect, what is the evidence?	FAO personnel FAO Resilience Division Swedish Embassy	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
4.4	What is the added value of the presence of humanitarian and development projects in the same intervention area?	4.4.1 Relevance and effectiveness of complementarity between humanitarian and development financing in Mali 4.4.2 Relevance of these projects in ensuring continuity after emergency situations in order to prevent excessive fragility and to prevent a relapse				
<b>Evaluation Question 5 (Gender) - Have gender considerations been taken into account in the project objectives and design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of women and men, and in the identification of beneficiaries? Have gender relations and equality been affected by the projects or will they be affected by the projects?</b>						
5.1	To what extent was gender prioritised in project design?	5.1.1 Consideration of gender in project objectives and design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of women and men 5.1.2 Mechanisms put in place to emphasize gender in the identification of beneficiaries 5.1.3 Access to land is an important element for women. How has this theme been taken into account in the activities carried out?	FAO personnel Implementing partners Activity documents	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
5.2	Have gender relations and equality been affected by the project?	5.2.1 Are gender-disaggregated statistics of beneficiary groups available? 5.2.2 What are different groups' (M/F) self-evaluations of the project impact? 5.2.3 What are the effects of the project on gender relations and equality? What is the added value of the multi-year financing model?	FAO personnel Implementing partners Beneficiaries Technical services	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities

Appendix 3. Evaluation matrix

No.	Sub-questions	Measure/indicator	Main sources of information	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Information quality
		5.2.4 Evolution/change in women's and men's protection needs as a result of the project?				
<b>Evaluation Question 6 (Sustainability) - To what extent has SIDA's multi-year financing approach (and in particular the complementary humanitarian and development funding in Mali) contributed to increased sustainability of outcomes and improved resilience of populations? Have other factors contributed to the sustainability of outcomes?</b>						
6.1	Has the project developed and implemented an exit strategy?	6.1.1 Exit strategies developed by the project	FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
6.2	To what extent have the populations taken ownership of the project's achievements and lessons learned?	6.2.1 Ownership strategies developed by the project 6.2.2 Level of ownership of the achievements and lessons learned by the populations	FAO personnel Technical services Implementing NGO partners Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
6.3	Did SIDA's multi-year financing approach (and in particular the complementary humanitarian and development funding in Mali) contribute to increased sustainability?	6.3.1 Contribution of multi-year financing to increasing the sustainability of outcomes. 6.3.2 Other success factors that contributed or not to the sustainability of outcomes.	FAO personnel FAO Resilience Division Swedish Embassy	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities
6.4	How can we do better in the future?	6.4.1 What processes are in place to identify, document, share and use best practices and lessons learned? 6.4.2 What opportunities exist to build on successes and improve weaker areas of programming (implementation and outcomes)?				
6.5	To what extent are the outcomes achieved by the project likely to be sustained without external assistance (especially for VSLA, FFS, etc.)?	6.5.1 Measuring the sustainability of outcomes - What is the evidence that the outcomes and impacts of the programme can be sustained beyond the life of the program? - Is there evidence that activities and results are already, or can be, replicated without the project? - What would it take to ensure this? - What is the capacity of community leaders to ensure that program outcomes are sustainable, and what support would be needed to ensure this?	FAO personnel Implementing NGO partners Beneficiaries	Semi-structured interviews Literature review Restitution of preliminary results Focus Group Discussion	Triangulation of information Validation through: stakeholder feedbacks, analysis workshop and validation workshop	Affected by: - security and health situation - access restrictions to communities

## Appendix 4. Theory of change

163. No theory of change was developed for the projects. Nevertheless, the evaluation team deemed it appropriate to develop a single theory of change for all five projects by formulating six main hypotheses.
164. The overall intervention envisages achieving its impact (improve food and nutrition security and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households through livelihoods protection and rehabilitation in an emergency context) through six hypotheses, which are themselves based on different outputs, the results of project activities.
165. **Hypothesis 1. Beneficiary households have increased their food production.** Two outputs are expected to achieve this: Firstly, the cereal and vegetable production capacity of households is increased, thanks to the provision of seeds (rainfed and vegetable) to households and quality inputs, and to training in agricultural production techniques. These activities contribute directly to the production capacities of households in terms of material goods (kits) and knowledge, thus helping to achieve Output 1. Secondly, the herds of vulnerable households is reconstituted through support for recapitalisation, through the distribution of small ruminants, training and veterinary care. These activities contribute directly to the rebuilding of household livestock in terms of material goods (animals) and knowledge, thus helping to achieve Output 2. Thus, with these additional resources, vulnerable households should be able to achieve Hypothesis 1.
166. **Hypothesis 2. Beneficiary populations have maintained their livelihoods and increased their income.** Two outputs are expected to achieve this: Firstly, households have increased their income through: the distribution of cash that allows them to start income-generating activities; the establishment of savings and loan associations to facilitate the mobilisation of local savings in order to facilitate women's access to small loans; the promotion of profitable IGAs; and the establishment of livestock kits and livestock production units. These activities contribute directly to the improvement of household incomes, thus contributing to the achievement of Output 1. Secondly, household livelihoods are restored through land recovery and restoration activities. These activities protect and strengthen community livelihoods in a sustainable manner, thus contributing to the achievement of Output 2. Thus, vulnerable households should be able to achieve Hypothesis 2.
167. **Hypothesis 3. Good agricultural practices are promoted and conflicts are reduced.** Two outputs are expected to achieve this: Firstly, good agricultural practices are promoted. To achieve this, the project is engaged in building the capacities of agricultural producers through the facilitation of FFS. This activity contributes directly to the promotion of good agricultural practices, thus contributing to the achievement of Output 1. In addition, a better knowledge and appropriation of crop cycles and therefore of fertilizers in an environment under pressure (climate change) allows for a more sustainable local management of natural resources and minimises conflicts that may result from the management and exploitation of natural resources. Secondly, conflicts are reduced. To this end, the project envisages the promotion of Dimitra clubs. This activity directly contributes to minimising conflicts that can result from the management and exploitation of natural resources with the arrival of displaced or refugee populations and to strengthening social cohesion. Thus, at the end of the action, the communities will accept each other and live together in harmony, thus contributing to the achievement of Output 2. Thus, vulnerable households should be able to achieve Hypothesis 3.
168. **Hypothesis 4. Nutrition practices of vulnerable households are improved.** To achieve this hypothesis, the project plans to promote healthy and balanced diets through nutrition education,

particularly for women, and intends to implement several activities to achieve this: training on good nutrition practices, cooking demonstrations and distribution of goats to improve the nutrition of young children in refugee households, mainly for the benefit of women. In this way, households will be able to diversify their food consumption and adopt behaviours that improve their eating habits, which should contribute to the achievement of hypothesis 4.

169. **Hypothesis 5. Communities organise themselves and implement actions to support DRR priorities.** Two outputs are expected to achieve this: Firstly, communities have a better understanding of disaster risks, thanks to the training and awareness raising of communities and traditional leaders on environmental protection and risk and disaster management. These activities directly contribute to improving communities' knowledge of DRR, thus contributing to the achievement of Output 1. Secondly, communities are organising themselves to take action, thanks to the project's support for the participatory development of DRR action plans at the village/municipal level, taking into account the priorities of the poorest/most vulnerable men and women, and the establishment of protection and risk management committees. These activities enable communities organise themselves to implement actions in support of their DRR priorities. This allows them, in the event of a serious threat, to act in advance to reduce the risks, thus contributing to the achievement of Output 2. Thus, vulnerable households should be able to achieve Hypothesis 5.
170. **Hypothesis 6. Local partners ensure continuity of support-accompaniment to beneficiaries.** Activities that train local partners (technical services, implementing partner organisations, etc.) and involve them in the implementation of interventions, build local capacity. This allows them to ensure the continuity of support and accompaniment to beneficiaries after the project.
171. Together, the six hypotheses are mutually reinforcing: i) beneficiary households have increased their food production; ii) beneficiary populations have maintained their livelihoods and increased their incomes; iii) good agricultural practices are promoted and conflicts are reduced; iv) nutrition practices of vulnerable households are improved; v) communities organise themselves and implement actions to support DRR priorities; and vi) local partners ensure the continuity of support-accompaniment to beneficiaries. Thus, resilience to climate and economic shocks is improved (impact).





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