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Collaboration for strengthening resilience

Country case study

Niger

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Table of contents

1. Country and institutional context	1
1.1 Context of vulnerability and risk	1
1.2 Government resilience strategy, approach and coordination	2
2. Current strategies of the three agencies to strengthen resilience	4
2.1 Building ABSORPTIVE capacity by minimizing exposure and withstanding shocks	5
2.2 Building ADAPTIVE capacity by increasing capital (social, economic, environmental, natural, financial assets) and strengthening livelihood strategies	6
2.3 Building TRANSFORMATIVE capacity through support to policy, strategies and systems development	9
2.4 Monitoring impacts and measuring resilience	10
3. SWOT analysis for RBA collaboration and synergy for resilience in Niger	12
4. Recommendations and next steps for strengthened RBA collaboration on resilience	14

1. Country and institutional context

1.1 Context of vulnerability and risk

Niger is a landlocked, low-income and food-deficit country, ranking 187th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index¹. Life expectancy at birth is 58 years, and one in ten children will not reach five years of age². Of children under five, over 40 percent are chronically malnourished and about 15 percent acutely malnourished³, with malnutrition linked to a third of childhood deaths. The population of 17.8 million is predominantly rural and concentrated in the south, with nearly half living on less than USD 1.25 per day⁴. The population growth rate is very high, 3.9 percent, with more than half the population under 15 years of age⁵. Three-quarters of the population – and 82 percent of women – cannot read⁶. The lack of infrastructure, safe water and sanitation, low schooling, restricted production capacity, limited access to markets, gender disparities and urban/rural divide hinder development.

Agriculture (including livestock breeding) is the most important activity for the Nigerien population, contributing 45.2 percent to its gross domestic product (GDP)⁷. Farming supports 80 percent of the population, but climatic shocks (drought or floods), locust outbreaks, crop diseases and long-term stresses such as land erosion or shorter rainy seasons limit crop production⁸.

Competition for land due to rapid population growth leads to cultivation in marginal areas and depletion of natural resources. This situation is exacerbated by inequitable land rights for women, limited access to quality seeds, outdated farming methods, poor roads, limited market access and insufficient food processing.

During the 2011/12 food security and nutrition crisis, 6.4 million people were food insecure in the lean season, reflecting the limited resilience of poor households. Since the 1970s, droughts have become increasingly frequent (1972, 1983, 2004, 2009, 2011). Most times they have been followed by food crises (1973, 1984, 2005, 2010, 2012). Evidence from the 2009/10 crisis shows that it can take three or more years for the poorest households to recover. A year after the crisis, food security indicators continued to decline in half of the surveyed districts, despite the good harvest in 2010⁹. During the 2015 lean season (June-August), 1.2 million people were estimated to be food insecure in the country (*Cadre Harmonisé* Phases 3-5) while another 4.2 million people were “under pressure” (Phase 2)¹⁰.

1 United Nations Development Programme, 2014, *Human Development Reports*.

2 World Bank (2013).

3 Institut National de la Statistique, 2012, *SMART* (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition).

4 Institut National de la Statistique, *Niger en Chiffres 2014*.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 i3N, 2012.

8 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts a 20 percent reduction in the duration of the agricultural season by 2050 in the Sahelian zone.

9 WFP, 2013, *The Economics of Early Recovery and Resilience in Niger*.

10 CILSS and partners, *Cadre Harmonisé* June-August 2015 projected analysis, March 2015.

Recurrent climate-related shocks are reducing community resilience. Poor households report high levels of indebtedness, lack of assets or livestock, limited production capacity and insufficient food to eat or sell until the next harvest. Recurrent crises prompt migration and weaken social networks. Good harvests do not have a sustained impact on food security or livelihood recovery for households that have lost assets and livestock. When access to food is constrained, households rely on negative coping mechanisms such as changing consumption patterns, borrowing, early and distressed migration, taking children out of school and selling assets. These short-term strategies weaken household finances, limit human capital development and reduce long-term resilience to shocks.

The situation of women and households headed by women in rural areas is a concern in view of the migration of men, lack of access to basic services and markets and inequitable rights to land and assets, even though women's rights to resources are protected under the law. Women who head households are often widows relying on a single source of revenue, as well as remittances and trade.

1.2 Government resilience strategy, approach and coordination

1.2.1 Government resilience strategy

The Government's *Plan de Développement Economique et Social* (PDES) 2012–2015 aims to increase GDP growth, invest in social sectors and increase living standards. The plan is built around five pillars: (i) creating conditions for sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth; (ii) strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of public institutions; (iii) supporting food security and sustainable agricultural development; (iv) promoting a competitive and diversified economy; and (v) advancing social development.

The national strategy for the third pillar is 'Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens' known as *Initiative 3N* (i3N). Achieving food sovereignty through the implementation of i3N is the Government's top priority, as established in its June 2011 General Policy Statement. The i3N aims 'to strengthen national capacities for food production, supply and resilience to food crises and natural disasters'. It focuses on the following strategic axes:

- ▶ Axis 1. Growing and diversifying agricultural, forestry, livestock and fisheries production.
- ▶ Axis 2. Supporting urban and rural markets for small-scale producers.
- ▶ Axis 3. Boosting vulnerable groups' resilience to climate change, food crises and natural disasters.
- ▶ Axis 4. Improving the nutritional status of Nigeriens.
- ▶ Axis 5. Maintaining the momentum of reforms involving food security and sustainable agricultural development.

1.2.2 Communes de Convergence approach

Through the *Communes de Convergence* (C2C) approach, which means 'coming together with communes (municipalities)', the High Commission of the i3N (H*Ci3N*), in collaboration with UN agencies, aims to increase the resilience of communities by bringing together and grounding the efforts of humanitarian and development partners, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and local government, in country-owned and community-driven responses.

The C2C approach aims to create programmatic, thematic and geographical synergies among stakeholders working to improve resilience in the targeted communes, selected on objective criteria: food security, education, health, nutrition, livelihood zone and synergy of interventions.

The baseline survey carried out in 2014 by HCl3N, in collaboration with UN agencies, guides planning of interventions at the commune level and serves as the basis of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system documenting best practices and lessons learned.

1.2.3 National coordination mechanisms for resilience

With partner support, the HCl3N, which was created in September 2011, has established the overall resilience coordination mechanism in Niger and a platform for sharing experiences and information.

A *Comité Multisectoriel de Pilotage Stratégique* (CMPS) has been created for each axis of the i3N to promote multistakeholder policy dialogue on agriculture and food security and ensure effective coordination of activities with all partners. The HCl3N also aims to reinforce linkages between technical ministries (e.g., health, education, agriculture and livestock) and multisectoral partners. I3N is the national owner of Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) and is aligned with the Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel (AGIR Initiative).

The *Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des Catastrophes et des Crises Alimentaires* (DNPGCCA) guides prevention and emergency interventions based on an early warning and crisis prevention system, as well as food crisis and disaster management plans developed and implemented in close collaboration with partners.

2. Current strategies of the three agencies to strengthen resilience

The global RBA conceptual framework for resilience aims to strengthen three types of capacities of populations and organizations: absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity and transformative capacity.

Absorptive capacity	Adaptive capacity	Transformative capacity
The capacity to withstand threats and minimize exposure to shocks and stressors through preventative measures and appropriate coping strategies to avoid permanent, negative impacts.	The capacity to adapt to new options in the face of crisis by making proactive and informed choices about alternative livelihood strategies based on an understanding of changing conditions.	The capacity to transform the set of livelihood choices available through empowerment and growth, including governance mechanisms, policies/ regulations, infrastructure, community networks, and formal and informal social protection mechanisms that constitute an enabling environment for systemic change.

The Niger context offers clear opportunities for strengthening and scaling up the existing RBA resilience portfolio (both individual and joint)¹¹ in support of these three capacities. For starters, there is a chronic resilience deficit among the country's vulnerable and fast-growing population. The Government of Niger is committed to addressing the structural causes of recurrent food crises and collaborates well with the RBAs. And there are diverse and relevant ongoing RBA investments in the country, covering a broad spectrum of interventions in scale, nature (from direct food assistance to policy support and national system strengthening) and timeframe (from short-term emergency response to five-year and beyond investment plans), and building on a range of complementary tools and approaches.

It is recognized that most, if not all, single actions contributing to building resilience will strengthen more than just one of these three capacities. The three capacities form an integrated package and are highly complementary – for example, a functioning early warning system and a robust policy on early action and response will play a transformative role but also a major absorptive one. Similarly, within the context of many degraded areas in Niger, interventions primarily addressing adaptive capacities like integrated land rehabilitation, drought-resistant crops and water harvesting will play a role in strengthening both absorptive (e.g., to drought) and transformative capacities.

Nevertheless, joint and individual RBA efforts and projects have been aligned with the capacity to which they provide the greatest contribution in order to highlight: (i) how the RBAs have started investing in a number of areas that contribute to strengthening these capacities; (ii) the joint efforts initiated in building resilience; and (iii) the potential for strengthening individual, bilateral and trilateral resilience building efforts as per the context of Niger. While there is currently no RBA Niger-specific resilience strategy, reviewing individual actions identifies areas of opportunity and possible collaboration.

11 In Niger, each agency's resilience strategy is in line with the PDES and the i3N, and reflected in its operations: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) - Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2013-2016; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) - Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2013-2018; and World Food Programme (WFP) - Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200583, 2014-2016.

2.1 Building ABSORPTIVE capacity by minimizing exposure and withstanding shocks

2.1.1 RBA collaboration

FAO and WFP, together with the Government and other partners, are supporting the *Cadre Harmonisé*, which provides countrywide food security and nutrition analysis together with an estimation of the number of food-insecure people. By supporting the implementation of the *Cadre Harmonisé*, coordinated by CILSS (Permanent Inter-States Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) at regional level, **FAO and WFP** are strengthening national stakeholders' technical expertise on vulnerability analysis.

FAO and WFP, along with other partners, are working closely with and supporting the Government through the DNPGCCA, including in developing a contingency plan and annual response plans to assist vulnerable populations. These plans are playing a significant role in strengthening the national system responsible for the prevention and management of food crises and disasters, and ensuring greater coordination at times of crisis. The two agencies also actively participate in the Food Security Cluster (which they co-lead) and the Nutrition Cluster.

2.1.2 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

FAO provides immediate livelihood support to populations in need while protecting their existing assets and development gains, and strengthening their involvement in a productive livelihood system for the future. During lean seasons and in difficult years, FAO supports the Government in providing emergency livelihood support to vulnerable and very vulnerable small farmers, herders and fisherfolk. This includes productive inputs (e.g., seeds, small ruminants, fishing kits, etc.), vouchers, cash transfers and technical assistance. Other absorptive capacity efforts include the implementation of community radio networks (*Club d'Écoute*) and capacity development via farmer field schools (FFS).

2.1.3 International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

IFAD is using specific targeting and planning tools to build adaptive and transformative capacities. These are based on a *Pole de Développement Economique* (PDE) approach that emphasizes the appraisal of watershed management; production valleys; markets for agricultural products; and rural roads to connect markets, villages and production valleys, recognizing that market and economic dynamics are important for the resilience of small-scale producers.

2.1.4 World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP provides emergency response and seasonal safety nets during lean seasons and at times of shocks, through multisectoral conditional and unconditional food assistance. WFP also provides technical and financial support to the national early warning system through the *Cellule de Coordination du Système d'Alerte Précoce et Prévention des Crises* (CC/SAP/PC), *Institut National de Statistiques* for food security data collection and analysis and the *Système d'Informations sur le Marché Agricole* for data collection on agricultural and livestock prices.

2.2 Building ADAPTIVE capacity by increasing capital (social, economic, environmental, natural, financial assets) and strengthening livelihood strategies

2.2.1 RBA collaboration

Where the three RBAs, or only two of them, have programmes in the same geographic area, these activities are systematically aligned, to the extent possible, to be mutually reinforcing, using seasonal, livelihood and gender lenses. In some instances, this kind of collaboration has already resulted in the formulation and implementation of **joint RBA interventions, in coordination with the Government/HCi3N, to strengthen adaptive capacities.**

FAO and WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2012 to strengthen their strategic collaboration on community resilience building programmes, which led to the following partnerships:

- ▶ The Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA) pilot initiative promoting the purchase of locally produced agricultural products from smallholder farmers contributes to strengthening community resilience for food and nutrition security by intensifying smallholders' (especially women's) agricultural production, promoting local Government initiatives on local purchases for school canteens from farmer organizations and strengthening school feeding programmes.
- ▶ A joint FAO/UNICEF/WFP project (2014-2015) fosters partnerships, inter-agency collaboration and integrated programmes with community participation to enhance resilience building efforts. Activities include land rehabilitation through food assistance for assets work (WFP); seed distributions (FAO); treatment and prevention of moderate and acute malnutrition (WFP and UNICEF); awareness raising on essential family practices and nutrition (WFP and UNICEF); and school feeding (WFP).
- ▶ In 2012, FAO, UNICEF, WFP and UN Women launched a joint and integrated school feeding strategy to contribute to resilience building by using a multisectoral approach to support Government efforts on human capital development and local agricultural production. In this strategy, WFP focuses on school feeding, local purchase of agricultural products, nutrition education and scholarships for girls; FAO on the identification of market gardening sites, technical support for school gardens and the supply of agricultural tools and equipment; UNICEF on technical support (nutrition) for improving the food basket for school feeding, awareness raising on health and nutrition in communities, distribution of school kits and support for basic school furniture and material, as well as training and supervision of school management committees; and UN Women on enhancing women's role in the communities, strengthening women's capacities and identifying specific needs for women to improve their agricultural production.

Ongoing FAO-WFP resilience building programme

A joint two-year (April 2014 to March 2016) resilience project supported by USAID-Food For Peace builds upon both existing FAO and WFP programmes and recent collaboration (including support by France) by layering, aligning and scaling up agency-specific activities to build, restore and improve community assets to reduce the impact of shocks, increase household income and reduce early or abnormal out-migration. The project uses improved planning and programming processes (e.g., Seasonal Livelihood Programming and Community-Based Participatory Planning) and provides an integrated package of inputs for agricultural and pastoral improvement activities; farmer training; small dam construction for small-scale irrigation; mechanical ripping using heavy machinery to loosen the soil, facilitating subsequent food assistance for assets work; and gardening. These activities complement WFP PRRO activities (e.g., land rehabilitation activities for agricultural and pastoral lands through food assistance for assets, school feeding, nutrition and sensitization activities) implemented in the same sites, and offer a platform for broader partnerships.

FAO and IFAD: FAO provides technical assistance to the Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region (PASADEM) for FFS trainers' training. FAO's World Agriculture Watch also contributes to a study on family farming IFAD is currently conducting in the regions of Tahoua, Maradi and Zinder.

IFAD, WFP and FAO: The RBAs have established a partnership under the framework of IFAD's PASADEM and Ruwanmu (meaning "our water" in Hausa) Small-scale Irrigation Projects. These two projects are currently being merged into one programme, the Family Farming Development Programme (ProDAF), with a further expansion of IFAD and WFP collaboration. Under this partnership, WFP supports land restoration through food assistance for assets, while IFAD supports seed distribution and creation of seed shops, biological restoration of soils, rehabilitated land management, community capacities for surveillance of restored sites, as well as construction of small-scale irrigation schemes and gardening. The three RBAs are discussing further collaboration in which IFAD would complement ongoing FAO/WFP activities by constructing wells; equipping communities with motor pumps; supporting farmer associations; and rehabilitating roads to facilitate market access. This will increase smallholder farmers' capacity to improve their resilience and commercialize their production.

FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN WOMEN signed a concept note in 2012 for a joint programme 'Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women'. This project aims to improve rural women's empowerment, livelihoods and rights, and their integration into the national economy to enhance their resilience capacities. In line with the *Communes de Convergence* approach, activities are implemented in the same villages/communes and with the same beneficiaries where the four agencies are present. FAO and WFP are working together to strengthen rural women's organizations and improve their agricultural production and governance through the FAO CoOpequity approach (promoting governance and gender equality in producer organizations in Niger) and WFP's PAA and cash and voucher programmes (i.e., providing schools with cash and vouchers to buy local production for their canteens). IFAD provides livestock kits to women, and UN Women improves rural women's entrepreneurial capacities and creates income-generating opportunities through the provision of multifunctional platforms.

The above activities show a number of highly relevant initiatives that offer considerable potential for expanding coverage and for strengthening coordination, layering and sequencing of programmes.

2.2.2 FAO

FAO supports the Government's *Maisons du Paysan* strategy, providing a complete set of products and services to farmers at the local level to strengthen and diversify rural livelihoods. The programme further reinforces the national system of quality seed production and distribution, building on the FAO-supported national network of agricultural input shops, and also promotes access to financial services for farmers, including warrantage (credit inventory), a system successfully promoted and supported by FAO and farmer organizations in recent years. In various regions, FAO works with the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock and farmer organizations and cooperatives to support community-based adaptation to climate change, mostly through the promotion of good agricultural practices using FFS and pastoral FFS.

2.2.3 IFAD

IFAD's ProDAF's main objective is to contribute to long-term food and nutritional security and to strengthen resilience in the regions of Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder. Its development objective is to improve smallholders' revenues, climate change adaptation and access to local, urban and regional markets over the long term. IFAD's resilience programming and implementation include building the capacity of Government and non-governmental institutions and NGOs, and strengthening the capacity of water users' associations for sustainable water management at watershed level. The development of small-scale irrigation helps to improve smallholders' resilience to the shortcomings of rainfed production. Diverse local organizations, including farmer cooperatives and women's microcredit groups, will be strengthened in terms of internal organization, knowledge (e.g., agricultural techniques, technologies, management, etc.) and infrastructure/equipment.

IFAD also enhances agropastoral production and supports sustainable land management through the rehabilitation of degraded lands, forests and pastoral areas.

2.2.4 WFP

WFP provides a flexible combination of conditional (e.g., food assistance for assets) and unconditional assistance to the same vulnerable beneficiaries in targeted Communes de Convergence and other priority communes. Targeted communities also benefit from nutrition-specific activities (curative and preventative), school meals, school vegetable gardens and local milling and processing initiatives. Additionally, lean season targeted food assistance is provided to very poor households, coupled with nutrition supplements to prevent acute malnutrition and mortality (a targeted unconditional food distribution) for children between 6 and 23 months, and pregnant and lactating mothers from very poor households.

2.3 Building TRANSFORMATIVE capacity through support to policy, strategies and systems development

2.3.1 Government policies and strategies in support of resilience

The three RBAs support the Government in policy and strategy formulation for national resilience, and collaborate by using the strengths of each agency to reinforce institutional capacities at all levels, working closely with the HCl3N, ministries and other national institutions working on resilience. In line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and related resilience plan (i.e., *Plan d'action du Système des Nations Unies Pour la Résilience: Une Contribution au Plan National de Résilience*), they contribute to national debates and strategic thinking related to resilience building and initiatives on mitigating the effects of climate change.

IFAD regularly participates, along with other partners, in resilience and soil management discussions led by the Ministry of Environment.

FAO and WFP support the development of national sectoral strategies related to resilience for food security and nutrition, including the National Local Purchase Strategy, the National Nutrition Security Strategy, the National Cereal Bank Strategy and the National Support Plan for Vulnerable Populations. WFP also supports the National School Feeding Strategy and National Protocol for the Management of Acute Malnutrition. As members of both the REACH and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiatives, FAO and WFP support the HCl3N by ensuring nutrition-related issues are included in various national policies and strategies.

2.3.2 Systems development for resilience building

2.3.2.1 RBA collaboration

The three RBAs support the national bodies responsible for early warning, needs assessment, analytical work and preparedness efforts, and in planning both timely emergency responses and longer-term actions at national, subnational and local levels. While each RBA has specific analytical, planning and programming tools, they are leveraged to both strengthen national systems and inform the design of agency-specific initiatives supporting resilience.

For example, FAO and WFP support the DNPGCCA in early warning and vulnerability analysis at national and local levels through Community-managed Early Warning and Response Systems, the Food Security Monitoring System and the *Cadre Harmonisé*. Through the REACH and SUN initiatives, both agencies support the mapping of stakeholders engaged in nutrition-specific activities, and provide nutrition-related technical support to the NGO platform.

The RBAs also contribute to strengthening systems at various levels, including community networks (e.g., farmer organizations, women's groups); formal social protection and safety nets that can be expanded in crisis years; food value chains and local procurement; land tenure issues; and gender equality.

2.3.2.2 FAO

FAO actively supports national institutions, systems and capacities to strengthen resilience to shocks and crises by mainstreaming risk-sensitive approaches in Government, private, civil society and community-managed systems, through *inter alia*: supporting nutrition-sensitive policies and

programming for food security and agriculture actors; establishing and supporting FFS and pastoral FFS; providing technical assistance and capacity development to farmer and pastoralist organizations (both at local and national levels); supporting the national seed production and distribution system; and providing technical support for i3N monitoring and evaluation by placing permanent advisors within the HCi3N.

2.3.2.3 IFAD

IFAD-funded projects support and strengthen regional i3N systems and coordination for resilience by: conducting vulnerability assessments and analyses (including land degradation) to determine their effects on watershed systems and production, and to identify activities, annual work and budget plans; supporting activities that improve agricultural products to increase profitability for small-scale producers; reinforcing the capacities of Government agencies and *Groupement Services Conseils* operators on targeting processes that consider specific needs of women and youth; promoting preventative mother and child malnutrition through locally produced crop leaves (*Moringa Oleifera*); and providing irrigation products, communally-managed cereals banks and cash-for-work activities, in addition to rainfed crop production, during periods of high food scarcity.

2.3.2.4 WFP

WFP supports the Government and partners in implementing and using the three-pronged approach for resilience building in Niger. This is a consultative multidimensional programming approach for resilience that puts people and their livelihoods at the centre of planning, lays the foundations for multisectoral and coordinated programmes and connects governments, communities and humanitarian and development stakeholders to contribute to resilience programming and design. The three-pronged approach helps identify the geographical areas of convergence between historical trends of recurring food insecurity and natural shocks, together with overlays of land degradation (as a crisis amplifier) and nutrition status to determine where to place short-, medium- and longer-term operations (i.e., relief, recovery and enabling development) and their combinations, together with supporting systems (i.e., early warning, preparedness, etc.), which are key for resilience.

In designing interventions, WFP places gender equality at the centre of programming. Where food assistance for assets is used, land tenure and access of the most vulnerable to the assets created are central to the programme. Local value chain development is supported through the PAA. WFP provides financial and logistical support to the HCi3N and to Government technical services at the commune level to operationalize their activities.

2.4 Monitoring impacts and measuring resilience

2.4.1 RBA collaboration

Ongoing RBA programmes seek to support the improvement of existing monitoring systems, participate in assessments and use the data for programming and dialogue with Government and implementing partners. In 2014, FAO and WFP supported a joint (Government, FAO, UNICEF, WFP and other agencies) baseline survey in 22 *Communes de Convergence*. Joint baseline surveys have also been conducted in the FAO-WFP resilience programme supported by USAID.

2.4.2 FAO

FAO is working to systematically document experiences to identify, learn from and share good practices that can be replicated on a larger scale.

FAO is currently rolling out its Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) tool in Niger. The RIMA methodology considers the resilience of a household as determined by several pillars: (i) sensitivity to shocks; (ii) ability to adapt; (iii) income and access to food; (iv) social safety nets; (v) assets; and (vi) access to basic services. This analysis helps to understand which are the least resilient population groups (distinguished by gender of household head), where these groups are (e.g., between urban and rural areas, arid and less arid regions, etc.) and which pillars of resilience require more support. In Niger, adaptability, assets, sensitivity and access to basic services were identified as priority areas to support to increase resilience.

2.4.3 IFAD

IFAD's monitoring and evaluation system is based on several participatory tools to measure the performance of IFAD-funded projects and the overall Niger Programme. Quantitative objectives are monitored for each geographical area and the programme database is also directly linked to the *Système d'Information Géographique* tool in order to be reflected in the mapping of results.

Some of the tools used by IFAD projects include the *Système de Gestion des Résultats de l'Impact* survey, combined with complementary surveys for evaluation of impact. The new ProDAF will introduce tools for economic and financial analysis and for resilience to climatic changes in its monitoring and evaluation system.

2.4.4 WFP

The monitoring and evaluation system for resilience building activities is based on a sample of targeted households (sentinel households), and entails the construction of baseline, mid-line and end-line surveys to track changes, monitor food and nutrition status and provide data to measure change in community resilience. It uses a series of indicators, including: food consumption score; Coping Strategy Index; diet diversity score; expenditure of funds dedicated to food; duration of food stocks; community asset score; nutrition indicators; and very poor households' access to productive assets. WFP also continues to use routine monitoring tools such as distribution monitoring, post-distribution monitoring and food basket monitoring.

In addition, a pilot phase of data collection via mobile phones (mVAM) was launched in January 2015 in the Abala refugee camp in Niger. An mVAM strategy is being consolidated to clarify how this technology can be best used in the context of Niger and scarce resources. This system contributes to strengthening the monitoring of resilience building activities and facilitates the collection of 'real-time' information.

3. SWOT analysis for RBA collaboration and synergy for resilience in Niger

This section reflects major strengths and opportunities for RBA collaboration on policy and strategic areas as well as operations on the ground. Agencies are willing to further collaborate through joint and/or complementary initiatives and projects despite the modest level of current collaboration. The agencies will address certain factors as soon as possible to optimize their collaboration internally and with other partners, as highlighted in Section 4.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
INTERNAL	<p>Credibility: Good reputation and credibility of the RBA among Nigerien Government partners.</p> <p>Complementarity: Complementary RBA mandates, activities and tools.</p> <p>Resilience priority: Resilience building for food security and nutrition prioritized by the RBAs.</p> <p>Expertise: Growing RBA expertise in resilience programming and measurement.</p> <p>Experience: Recognized RBA experience (individual and joint) in providing support to vulnerable households, including good practices and new approaches.</p> <p>Results: RBA collaboration providing positive and promising results.</p> <p>Field presence: Existence of suboffices for FAO and WFP, and project offices for IFAD in the field.</p> <p>Regional bureau/headquarters support: Commitment from RBA headquarters and regional bureaus to provide tailored demand-driven support.</p> <p>Guidance: Production of programmatic guidance on resilience.</p> <p>Partnerships: Multisectoral, multilevel and multistakeholder partnerships developed with the Government and technical and financial partners, including operational and scientific partnerships with research, academic and technical institutes (e.g., University of Niamey, RECA, etc.).</p>	<p>Different programming processes and cycles of the RBAs could result in programme and funding delays.</p> <p>Lack of resources for resilience: Limited financial resources dedicated to resilience building activities.</p> <p>Insufficient staffing: Lack of staff to focus on resilience and/or RBA collaboration.</p> <p>Lack of visibility: Insufficient visibility of resilience programmes and initiatives, good practices and successful pilots.</p> <p>Weak monitoring and evaluation systems for activities conducted in the C2C.</p> <p>Weak RBA coordination mechanism: Weak coordination of joint initiatives, projects and pilots.</p> <p>Different geographical targeting priorities.</p>

	Opportunities	Threats
EXTERNAL	<p>Government leadership on resilience priorities (e.g., i3N, PRP-AGIR, DNPGCCA, etc.).</p> <p>Coordination: Political (HCi3N) and operational coordination of resilience.</p> <p>Framework for partnerships (e.g., UNDAF, thematic groups, clusters, etc.).</p> <p>Regional initiatives: Existing partnerships and joint activities in the Sahel region on resilience, such as CILSS and AGIR.</p> <p>C2C approach: Strong support from the Government, UN agencies and other financial and technical partners, fostering joint targeting and complementary interventions to operationalize resilience and measure impact in C2Cs.</p> <p>Interest of financial partners towards integrated multisectoral interventions to build resilience (e.g., World Bank on social protection, USAID and EU on food security, France, etc.).</p> <p>National technical capacities: Presence of good technical capacities among Government technical services and partners.</p> <p>Pilot country for several resilience initiatives.</p> <p>Current joint and complementary initiatives and projects: Possibility to learn from these joint efforts, extend/expand and further strengthen the RBA partnership towards resilience objectives in Niger.</p>	<p>Insufficient and lack of long-term/predictable funding for resilience activities.</p> <p>Lack of Government resources at national and subnational level (e.g., for technical services).</p> <p>Country size: Important needs spread over a large territory, leading to several constraints including those related to joint targeting and logistics.</p> <p>Recurrent shocks: High recurrence of climate shocks negatively affecting the population and ecosystem, which may affect development gains if sufficient resources are not allocated to long-term processes such as resilience.</p> <p>Land tenure: Sensitivities around land tenure issues that may hamper discussions around this subject, which is critical for achieving resilience objectives, especially the land regeneration activities.</p> <p>Insecurity in the subregion, North and border areas.</p>

4. Recommendations and next steps for strengthened RBA collaboration on resilience

The RBAs have begun a process of strengthening collaboration towards the resilience of poor, food- and nutrition-insecure and vulnerable people in Niger, in line with the RBA Conceptual Framework for Collaboration and Partnership for Strengthening Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition.

From the SWOT analysis, the RBAs identified two broad priorities to strengthen their collaboration on building the absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities required to enhance resilience.

The first priority, primarily 'transformative' in nature, is investing in policy dialogue on resilience and system development. This entails, for example, the gathering and systematic use of evidence from best practices on the ground, greater analysis on and measurement of the impacts of interventions and stronger coordinated efforts for delivering partnered actions.

The second priority will primarily tackle the 'absorptive' and 'adaptive' capacities by focusing on area-based investments for risk-prone vulnerable communities, building on existing complementary initiatives and projects. These efforts will focus on seeking greater geographic coverage of RBA interventions (where possible), increased layering and integration of RBAs' and other partners' interventions and stronger efforts to strengthen local capacities and promote livelihood diversification.

Defining these two broad priorities will strengthen RBAs' impact through a coherent approach to address resilience as a whole.

To strengthen resilience through enhanced collaboration at country level, RBAs in Niger have identified the following recommendations:

Areas of collaboration	Recommendations
Crosscutting areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on, strengthen and implement existing resilience-related strategies (i.e., i3N, AGIR and UNDAF); • Strengthen existing resilience coordination mechanisms, both from a strategic and technical standpoint, at national and decentralized levels; and • Strengthen joint resource mobilization efforts and advocate for long-term/predictable funding.
Policy dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide complementary and harmonized support to the <i>Priorités Résilience Pays</i>; • Ensure harmonized support to policy development and review; • Develop and share joint RBA messages on resilience; and • Contribute to the land tenure debate, identify solutions to include the most vulnerable in land-related programming and ensure their benefits in the long term.
Analysis and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock take RBA analysis, targeting and planning methodologies and tools, seek synergies and complementarities and use joint processes and tools to the extent possible; and • Support the roll out and use of analytical tools (e.g., <i>Cadre Harmonisé</i>, HEA, EFMS, ICA, RIMA) to increase joint geographical and beneficiary household targeting.

Areas of collaboration	Recommendations
Joint/ complementary programming and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the roll out and use of existing programming and planning tools to strengthen RBA collaboration for resilience, including detailed activities by priority areas, timeframes and responsibilities (e.g., strengthen the Plans de <i>Développement Communaux</i> through the 3PA in C2C and other communes); • Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of current joint/complementary RBA projects, including in the C2C and other priority communes (e.g., through greater integration and scale); • Develop innovations by integrating multisectoral interventions; and • Promote joint capacity building initiatives for the Government, RBA and other partners.
Monitoring impact and measuring resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonize monitoring and evaluation tools; • Strengthen the technical capacities of national institutions to monitor impact and measure resilience; • Document lessons learned, shortcomings and best practices from ongoing and future RBA collaboration and highlight how well the joint/complementary RBA projects are addressing their intended objectives, what is working and what is not, etc.; • Develop partnerships with academic/technical institutions to strengthen monitoring and evaluation and identify lessons learned and best practices; • Undertake joint evaluations, analyses and studies; • Increase visibility around the results of RBA collaboration on resilience; and • Share experiences with other countries.

Further consultations among the RBAs and with the Government and other partners will be undertaken to develop a concrete action plan that establishes clear priorities and realistic timeframes and responsibilities, taking into account the limited resources. The RBA Niger team will also seek to learn from successful experiences in other countries and rely, as needed, on RBA headquarters and regional teams.

FAO, IFAD and WFP country case studies
Guatemala, Kenya and Niger

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