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**NIGER COUNTRY STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION**  
VIRTUAL NATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT



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April 2021

REPUBLIQUE DU NIGER  
MINISTRE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE L'ELEVAGE

FIDA

**Centre FEMININ DE LOUDURE (CFEL)**

Pole de Developpement Economique (PDE) de : Doungou  
Commune de Matameye  
Village de : Maguiroumi Peul  
Année de création : 2017  
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## Background

*Since 1980, IFAD has financed 15 rural development projects in Niger, providing US\$351 million in loans and grants.*

*In 2020, IOE conducted its **second country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE)** in the country, covering the period 2011-2020.*

*The workshop, co-organized by the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Agriculture and IOE, in collaboration with the West and Central Africa Division of IFAD (WCA), presented an opportunity to discuss key findings and recommendations with the Government of Niger, IFAD Management and stakeholders in the country.*

*The workshop was held in virtual form and attended by 50 participants.*



## The workshop



In his **keynote remarks**, **Mr Indran Naidoo**, Director, IOE, stressed the importance of independent evaluation in assessing development results impartially and drawing recommendations to improve IFAD-funded contributions to poverty reduction and rural development. As for the Niger CSPE, a general finding was that in a challenging context characterized by recurrent production crises, climate change and armed conflict (in border areas), the IFAD-funded programme contributed to building resilience among households and communities. Projects supporting rainfed and irrigated agriculture, and support to better access to quality seeds and fertilizers, have contributed to increasing yields and reducing exposure to climate risks. Other successful cases were the regeneration of local vegetation, and the rehabilitation of land through simple techniques that local communities are now able to master and maintain. Combining environmental restoration activities with “food-for-work” initiatives created incentives for communities to engage in activities that are

labour-intensive but provide collective benefits in the long term.

Mr Naidoo also noted the increasing attention of the Government of Niger and IFAD to market infrastructure and market management committees. He observed, however, that the cost of market infrastructure had increased beyond targets, which reduced the budget available for infrastructure for basic needs, such as drinking water, health and sanitation and functional literacy.



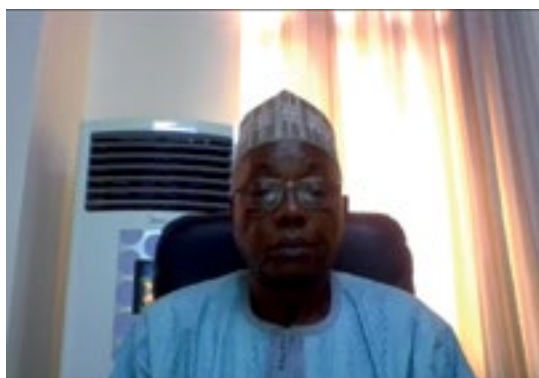
In his introductory remarks, **Mr Donal Brown**, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department of IFAD, noted the long-standing collaboration between IFAD and Niger: 15 projects have been approved since

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1980, with a total cost of US\$765 million including IFAD financing, government counterpart funding and international cofinancing.

Mr Brown commended Niger on its effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic through very early actions and the adoption of appropriate preventive measures, and noted that IFAD will continue to support the country's effort to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 through IFAD's Rural Programme Stimulus Fund, as well as repurposed and new investments. He expressed gratitude for Niger's contribution to the IFAD12 replenishment. Mr Brown also noted satisfaction with IOE's CSPE, its findings and its recommendations, and committed to use them in the preparation of the next country strategy.



The Minister of Agriculture of Niger, **Dr Alambédi Abba Issa**, reminded the audience that the President of the Republic of Niger, **H.E. Mohamed Bazoum**, appointed his first government as recently as 7 April 2021. One of the new programmes of the President is named "Renaissance Acte 3 – Consolidate and

advance", and addresses challenges that are also relevant to the country's collaboration with IFAD: (i) the declining safety, which affects an increasing number of peaceful citizens and places them at risk of the unlawful activities of criminal groups; and (ii) access to socio-economic services, including nutrition. The Minister expressed support for the findings and recommendations of the CSPE and reiterated his commitment to collaboration with IFAD, which he would carry out in consideration of the triad: "density, effectiveness, scope".



**Mr Fabrizio Felloni**, Deputy Director, IOE, and lead evaluator, delivered a **presentation**. With due consideration to the challenges of the context, the evaluation had an overall positive appreciation of the programme of cooperation between Niger and IFAD. The IFAD-funded programme paid increasing attention to boosting the trade and commercialization of agricultural products. The opportunities are clear; however, the benefit-cost ratio is not well documented.



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An area where performance was weaker was support to microenterprises. The key problems included the following: (i) credit terms and conditions were not well adapted to small-scale producers; and (ii) the project strategy and priorities around microenterprise development had not been developed clearly.

The programme made considerable efforts to expand and diversify partnerships and to forge links with the decision-making process on public policy. However, not enough was done to communicate project experiences in order to enrich the policy dialogue.



Mr Felloni also presented the CSPE's main recommendations.

**1. Complete the transition towards an integrated programme approach**, in particular by: (i) refining the programme's geographical targeting and giving priority to the consolidation of results; and (ii) ensuring that programme-supported activities are integrated with regional and communal development plans.

**2. Revisit the approaches adopted for the economic development poles and for value chain support.** In particular, it was recommended to: (i) better document the benefits of market infrastructure on small producers; (ii) launch a participatory exercise to identify the most relevant value chains for small-scale producers and the bottlenecks hindering their inclusion, ultimately in order to strengthen the bargaining power of small-scale producers.

**3. Restore the balance between major structural investments to create economic development poles and interventions in support of basic infrastructure** and income-generating activities targeting the poorest, including women.

**4. Introduce an integrated approach** to support agricultural production, natural resource management and protection, and climate change adaptation, in a conflict-sensitive perspective.

**5. Review the approaches supporting small enterprises that could benefit young people especially.** Notably, it is recommended to formulate priorities in developing enterprises and the technical

assistance they need, taking into account emerging opportunities in the economic development poles (e.g. enterprises providing services for production, processing and commercialization) as well as in infrastructure development (e.g. local construction and maintenance enterprises). Financial services have to be adapted to the needs of small entrepreneurs.

**6. Strengthen IFAD representation in consultative platforms with the Government and partners.** IFAD needs to ensure its presence or clarify its position, and present contributions to make its work better understood and recognized.

During the discussion, government representatives, as well as country representatives from the African Development Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) expressed their support to the evaluation recommendations. *Inter alia*, they highlighted the importance of working in the following areas:

1. focus on integrated development approaches (synergies between natural resource management and production) and attention to managing conflicts, including the importance of securing land tenure;
2. further support to the economic development poles and trans-border trade, but with an effort to reduce the costs required to establish the poles;
3. maintaining attention for immediate basic services to the communities (water, sanitation, functional literacy); and
4. revisiting the strategy to support rural

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enterprises, including beyond production (processing, marketing, small-scale construction).



**Ms Nadine Gbossa**, Regional Director, WCA, Mr Amath Pathe Sene, Head of Hub and Country Director ad interim, WCA, Mr Lawan Cherif, Country Officer, WCA and Mr Boubacar Altiné, National Senior Technical Assistant in Political Dialogue, expressed broad agreement with the CSPE's findings and recommendations. They congratulated the Government of Niger on an overall positive performance of the country

programme in the past ten years, in spite of the challenges that the country faces.

Ms Gbossa noted that “business as usual” is not an option and that the reflection on the future strategy will need to pay attention to the topics of: “fragility, demographics, climate change, development, employment of the youth, and migration”, and how these are integrated into the agricultural policies and national agricultural investment plans, involving stakeholders from the public sector, private sector and local governments. She noted that WCA attaches importance to being innovative in Niger through its projects, and highlighted broader initiatives funded by IFAD or in which IFAD is a partner, such as the Rural Stimulus Facility to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, the Joint Programme for the G5 Sahel countries, joint national and regional initiatives with the other Rome-based agencies, a new collaboration with the Green Climate Fund on integrated management of climate risk, and a pilot project with the Agricultural Bank of Niger on inclusive green finance.

Ms Gbossa also informed us of the future opening of an IFAD country office in Niger, in order to be closer to operations and further engage with partners in the country.



## The next steps

By May 2021, the WCA Division of IFAD and the Government of Niger will elaborate an Agreement at Completion Point, explaining how they intend to follow up on the recommendations of the evaluation, and the attendant timeline and mutual responsibilities.

The evaluation and the Agreement at Completion Point will be presented to the Evaluation Committee of IFAD on 30 June 2021. The new IFAD strategy will be presented to the Executive Board of IFAD in April 2022.



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