



**Country programme workplan in Niger
May 2018**

Total budget requested

US\$ 800,000

Beneficiaries to be reached with this contribution

Period	2017		Total 2017	2018-2019		total 2019
	women	Men		Women	Men	
Direct beneficiaries	14,700	1,300	16,000	14,745	1,375	16,120
Indirect beneficiaries	17,041	8,568	25,609	17,041	8,568	25,609

Duration of project:

1 July 2018 – 30 September 2019

1. Background Information

Niger is a landlocked Sahelian country with a population estimated at 17 138 707 million inhabitants (RGPH¹ 2012). Women account for 50.29% of the population (RGPH 2012), and mainly live in rural areas (78.3%). In Niger’s context, factors such as climate change, drought-related contingencies, food and nutrition crises, regular floods, locust invasions, and a large influx of refugees, create a difficult environment that threatens rural people’s livelihoods. Rural women and girls face specific constraints that hamper their well-being and socio-economic potential (4 out of 5 poor people are women). These constraints include: illiteracy (literacy rate for those aged 15 and above is 19.1% - 2015), very high fertility rates (7, 6 children per woman – EDSN² 2012), limited access to productive resources (land, agricultural inputs, finance and credit, extension services, and technology); high burden of domestic work; low access to public services, social protection, information, innovations, local and national markets and institutions due to entrenched cultural norms and security challenges.

It is in this context that in November 2012, a Concept Note was signed by FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, as a result of a consultative workshop held in Niamey (*Note Conceptuelle Programme Conjoint Niger*) in order to develop the country document of the global joint program on “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (JP RWEE). This document illustrates the added value and strengths of each agency, synergies between different activities, principles of collaboration, program’s delivery, roles and responsibilities and description of the activities. The JP RWEE in Niger puts particular emphasis on rural women’s empowerment, poverty reduction, food and nutrition security, resilience, climate change adaptation, social mobilization and community development. Activities in these areas appear to be a priority to break the vicious

¹ Recensement General de la Population et de l’Habitat – General Population and Housing Census.

² Enquête Démographique et de Santé, Demographic and Health Survey.



circle of shocks and humanitarian crisis, as well as their induced effects on the precarious living conditions of the population.

This program is perfectly aligned with the development objectives of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF-2014-2018) of Niger³, in particular with its three cross-cutting themes (human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability) and within the Thematic Area 1 (resilience), 2 (social development and human capital) and 3 (governance, peace and security). In addition, the JP activities will contribute to the process of the SDG Acceleration Framework (MAF), which in Niger is oriented towards achieving food and nutrition security. By enhancing the agricultural productivity of rural communities, improving their food and nutrition security, and ensuring rural women and men's access to resources, information and services, the JP RWEE makes an important contribution to the work carried out by the United Nation System (Système des Nations Unies - SNU) in Niger.

The interventions of the JP are also in line with the development objectives of the Government of Niger, notably the 3N Initiative ("*Les Nigériens Nourissent les Nigériens*"). In order to increase the country's resilience to food and nutritional crises and reduce poverty through agricultural reform, a national food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural development strategy called 3N initiative, "Nigériens feed the Nigeriens" has been developed. The Government of Niger has introduced its 3N Initiative in 2011; its overall objective is to "help the people of Niger to be free from hunger and guarantee them the conditions of full participation in domestic production and the improvement of their income". Within this framework, the approach of the "communes de convergence" has been developed to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. According to this approach, development actors should conduct complementary activities in the poorest geographical areas to reduce vulnerability, maximize impact and ensure continuity between humanitarian and development interventions. Therefore, JP RWEE interventions target the same villages/municipalities and beneficiaries so as to maximize impact.

The JP RWEE is also in line with the National Gender Policy of Niger and its five-year plan (2018-2021). The Niger's national gender policy was revised (and adopted on 10 August 2017) to take into account the contextual issues and the current challenges with the integration of new themes related to population growth acceleration, to climate change and humanitarian emergencies. The vision of Niger's national gender policy is one of "building, together with all stakeholders, a society without discrimination, where men and women, girls and boys have the same opportunities of participating in its development and enjoying the benefits of its growth". In order to implement this policy, a five-year plan (2018-2021) was developed, divided into four (4) axis. The Joint Program, "Accelerating progress toward the economic empowerment of rural women" (RWEE), contributes to the implementation of all of them⁴.

³ United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF-2014-2018), http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Niger/Niger_UNDAF-2014-2018.pdf

⁴ The four axes are:

- **Axis 1:** Improvement of the sociocultural environment in relation to demographics, peace and security for greater equity between men and women.
- **Axis 2:** Strengthening of the institutional and legal framework for the effective application of the rights of women and girls, the fight against gender-based violence and the equitable participation of men and women in the management of the power.
- **Axis 3:** Economic empowerment and growth in relation to the sustainable management of the environment, climate change, disaster and risk management, migration and humanitarian emergencies.
- **Axis 4:** Strengthening of institutional mechanisms and organizational frameworks for coordination, monitoring and evaluation and partnership.



To ensure transparency of the process among all stakeholders, including government relevant ministries, an Advisory Technical Committee has been created to provide technical advice, oversee the allocation of funds to the different components of the country program, and ensure synergies. This Committee is composed by representatives of the participating UN agencies as well as the gender focal points of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, a representative of the Directorate for the Economic Empowerment of Women within the Ministry of Advancement of Women and Protection of Children, and a representative of the 3N Initiative (*“Les Nigériens Nourissent les Nigériens”*). The Committee has been very useful to facilitate a real participatory process. A high-level National Steering Committee has been put in place to provide advice on the program’s strategic vision and implementation.

For the implementation and coordination of the JP RWEE in Niger, FAO is the lead agency, and the main entry point is its Dimitra club approach. In April 2015, field activities started at Falwel municipality area (Dosso region); in October 2015 in Djirataoua municipality area (Maradi region), and in 2016 in Sokorbe and Guidan Amoumoune municipalities. At the moment, activities are going on in (20) twenty villages of the four municipalities: Falwel and Sokorbe in Dosso region; Djirataoua and Guidan Amoumoune in Maradi region. Villages were selected by the national technical committee in collaboration with local authorities⁵. The identification is based on consensual criteria agreed at technical committee meetings and validated by the municipality (For example: the village of Dollou II in Djirataoua municipality area has been identified because more than 50% of the population are women. Also, each target village is a central one around which satellite villages gravitate and the population is over 500 inhabitants. This enables a larger outreach and a greater number of beneficiaries.

In terms of results, good qualitative and quantitative results have been achieved in terms of joint work, women’s participation in local institutions in community level; transform local norms for a better life of all families; reducing violence; agricultural production, better nutrition and access to income for rural women. Best practices are capitalized through annual workshops where all relevant stakeholders at local and national levels meet to identify and discuss emerging lessons learned and challenges.

The total allocation received to date by Niger from the JP RWEE Trust Fund is USD 2,388,257, which allowed for the continuation of activities up to April 2018. Main results achieved so far are listed below:

2015-2016:

Ten villages have been identified in 2015 in Falwel and Djirataoua councils and ten more have been identified in the end of 2016 in Sokorbé and Guidan Amoumoune councils. The JP RWEE joint program worked to ensure that the basic conditions for the economic empowerment of women in Niger are guaranteed (such as improvement of schooling of the girls and the elimination of illiteracy of the women, improvement of access to information, goods and services for women, reinforce the leadership of the rural women, improvement collaboration and to reinforce synergies among the four agencies on the ground etc.) Currently, 3600 beneficiaries (2400 women and 1200 men) members of 120 Dimitra clubs (as entry points of the joint programme) have been reached and main results are:

⁵ Some criteria: (i) the number of the population and its disaggregation by sex; (ii) the specific requirements of the activities to be implemented (not less than 500 inhabitants for the profitability of the multifunctional platforms); (iii) administrative villages and hamlets; (iv) the distance between villages etc.