

**ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS
THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN**

**BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 30 JUNE 2025**

Programme Title & Project Number - Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Niger - MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00132319	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results Country: Niger Locality: Regions Dosso (Department Boboye with Council Areas: Fabirdji, Kankandi) Region Maradi (Department Gazaoua with Council Area Gazaoua; and Department Dakoro with Council Area Tagriss) Total programme beneficiaries: 15,000 (12,000 women, 3,000 men) Total programme Indirect beneficiaries: Participants target (2025)¹: 9,752 (7,200 women; 2,552 men) small-medium holder farmers/landowners and rural transporters The strategic result is to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the SDGs.																				
Participating Organization(s) FAO, IFAD, UNWOMEN, WFP	Implementing Partners 1. Government partners - Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock - Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs - Ministry of Crafts and Tourism 2. National NGOs : CDR, ONADIL, AEDL, DIKO, FUSAHA, PED/W, FUGPN MOORIBEN, ASADI, AHILA, ADESP 3. Consultants and design office: INTES																				
Programme/Project Cost (US\$) <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total approved budget as per project document: USD 5,000,000 for 5 years</td> <td>MPTF Contribution for 2025:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FAO USD 2,150,000</td> <td>FAO: USD 579,854</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IFAD USD 1,110,000</td> <td>IFAD: USD 336,538</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WFP USD 870,000</td> <td>UN Women: USD 189,670</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UN WOMEN USD 870,000</td> <td>WFP: USD 289,970</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>NA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agency Contribution by Agency (if applicable)</td> <td>NA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Government Contribution (if applicable)</td> <td>NA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable)</td> <td>NA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL:</td> <td>USD 834,130</td> </tr> </table>	Total approved budget as per project document: USD 5,000,000 for 5 years	MPTF Contribution for 2025:	FAO USD 2,150,000	FAO: USD 579,854	IFAD USD 1,110,000	IFAD: USD 336,538	WFP USD 870,000	UN Women: USD 189,670	UN WOMEN USD 870,000	WFP: USD 289,970		NA	Agency Contribution by Agency (if applicable)	NA	Government Contribution (if applicable)	NA	Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable)	NA	TOTAL:	USD 834,130	Programme Duration Overall Duration 5 YEARS Start Date : 25/05/22 End Date : 24/05/27
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Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval. Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i>² ☒ Yes ☐ No Date: May 2022-August 2025 Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable <i>please attach</i> ☐ Yes ☒ No Date: dd.mm.yyyy	Report Submitted By - Name : Boureima YACOUBA - Title : National Coordinator - Participating Organization (Lead) : FAO - Email address : Boureima.Yacouba@fao.org																				

¹ The targets were adjusted to avoid overlap in the reports. The figures were based on the highest number of beneficiaries reached per outcome in Niger.

² Mid Term Review (MTR) report (preliminary findings) will be reported and attached as annex to the annual Work Plan 2026. Final MTR report will be disclosed as annex to the Annual Report 2025.

ABBREVIATIONS & ACCRONYMS

AEDL	Action Educative pour le Développement Local (local NGO)
ADESP	Actions pour le Développement Économique et Social des Populations
ASADI	Actions pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et le Développement Intégré
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEAP	Agropastoral School
CDR	Contribution to Rural Development
DC	Dimitra Clubs
CDP	Communal Development Plans
DIKO	Local NGO
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGA	Income-Generating Activity
INTES	Innovation and New Technologies for Socio-economic Studies
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Funds
MAGEL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
ONADIL	Organisation Nigérienne d'Appui au Développement des Initiatives Locales
PED/W	Peace and Development /Wedditaare
PO	Producers Organisation
PUNO	Participating United Nations Organizations
RWEE	Rural Women's Economic Empowerment/
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme

NARRATIVE REPORT

I. Summary

The achievements of the JP RWEE in Niger, during this first half of the year 2025, have enabled the programme to contribute to improving the living conditions of the populations in the target area. Overall, the participants have achieved significant improvement in market gardening production, increased food diversification, increased agropastoral production and improved processing and storage capacities (Outcome 1) as well as an improvement in incomes for the women receiving these supports, job creation for women and young people hence reducing rural exodus (Outcome 2). The emergence of female leadership and greater participation by women in decision-making at the household and community levels (Outcome 3), as well as the creation of a more gender-responsive political environment (Outcome 4).

The progress in implementation is in accordance with expectations and in terms of activities, the programme is on track with 55% of activities planned completed and started, although for security reasons that emerged during the semester, some activities³ initially planned for the reference period were postponed to the following semester. This slight deteriorating security situation in the country and the government, had required to include some security measures such as armed escorts for UN agencies and national and international NGOs to go on the ground; this impacted on the programme which delayed the completion of certain activities implemented directly by the agencies without going through a local partner. However, palliative measures have been found to carry out most of these delayed activities during the second half with state services, at least in the Maradi region, where the security situation is more stable.

The mid-term review of the program was planned for the third quarter of 2025, but the Terms of Reference and all data collection tools were developed during the reference period, which allowed the consultant recruitment process to be launched on time. This review is of crucial importance to the program, as its findings will be used to develop the work plan for the coming years (2026 and 2027) and to inform operational decision-making and the adjustments needed to ensure local appropriateness and sustainability of the program.

During the second half of the year, the program will continue to implement the work plan, focusing on completing agricultural activities, launching nutrition activities, and continuing activities such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), Club Dimitra, pastoral kit retrocessions, and capacity building for beneficiary communities. However, four (4) activities may be postponed until 2026 due to security constraints that require implementation actors to use armed escorts, the cost of which has not been planned for.

II. Results

Outcome 1: The food and nutrition security of rural women and their households is improved, contributing to equitable and sustainable food systems (Beneficiary Target 2025 – 2,500 Total – women 2,000 + men 500) – 100 % achieved⁴.

³ activities 1;2.3, 1.1.9 and 2.2.5 OF AWP 2025

⁴ In terms of outcome 1, the 2,500 people expected to be affected have been covered. These same people will benefit from other packages of activities planned for the second half of 2025.



Having fully implemented and started half of the activities planned during the first half to the year, this outcome is on track. The upcoming rainy season during the fourth quarter will see an acceleration in implementation, for a foreseen completion of all at the end of the year

During the first six months, women and men from the four (4) intervention communes, have improved their access to resources. More specifically having received seed kits, goats and poultry. These assets have strengthened women's livelihoods, multiplied the initial capital received and, above all, enabled them to cope with the pastoral hunger gap and the period of food shortage, which is usually difficult for vulnerable households in the intervention.

Similarly, with the capacity-building component, programme participants will be supported in agriculture and livestock farming. As such, 20 millet producers (16 men and 4 women) were trained on biological control techniques against millet leaf miners, (such as bracon breeding)⁵ and ten (10) men farmers in these four (40 communes where also identified, trained and equipped as phytosanitary brigadiers. Supported by these farmers, trainings will cascade as scheduled in all 40 intervention villages once the 2025 rainfed agricultural season starts. The ultimate goal is to increase production and yields of millet and thus improve household food and nutritional security.

For those farmers investing on livestock, the programme has identified, trained and equipped four (4) women in Dosso Region as para-veterinary auxiliaries, for required rapid interventions to treat any outbreak of epizootic disease before it decimates livestock or poultry. In Maradi Region, the program built two (2) cattle feed banks (BAB) (one in Gazaoua and one in Soly) which have helped to improve the capacity of these communes to store cattle feed, especially during the pastoral lean season. The training will be provided by the programme before the onset of the rainy season, which is always accompanied by massive attacks on crops by pests. This will enable farmers in the programme area to take steps to protect their crops and livestock and improve agricultural and livestock production. Training and awareness-raising on nutrition have not yet started, but the implementing partner has been identified, and the contracting process is due to begin in the 3rd quarter of 2025.

Outcome 2: Increased income, decent work and economic autonomy for rural women to secure their livelihoods and strengthen their resilience. (*Beneficiary Target 2025 – 6,000 Total – women 4,000+ men 2,000*) – 34 % achieved.

While percentage achieved of beneficiary target has been lower than planned during the first half of the year, continued efforts towards strengthening women's capacities and skills, and increased access to value chains have proven key to boost income and improve their nutrition.

During the reference period, the program set up two (2) food banks based on baobab and moringa leaves for 50 women from the villages of Débé Débé (Kankandi RC) and Rodji Peul (Fabidji RC). In late 2024, the programme began developing two (2) sites where the food banks would be set up, with the construction of a wire fence (around 0.5 ha per site) to protect the sites from animals and the forest nurseries, the sinking of a well on each site to facilitate access to the water that would be used to water the plants, and the installation of a simple irrigation network that could be controlled by the beneficiaries to limit the women's working hours. Subsequently, through the NGO AHILA, the programme set up forest nurseries for 50 women beneficiaries and their households. These nurseries, which are in full development at the end of the semester, will be used to improve the nutrition of the children and women, and to increase their income from the sale of the baobab and moringa plants and leaves they produce.

⁵ The millet ear miner is a harmful butterfly caterpillar that lays its eggs on millet ears and causes considerable damage that can destroy an entire crop. To combat it, biological control is used by breeding and releasing a natural enemy, the braconid wasp, which devours the caterpillars that attack the ears.



Four (4) training sessions were carried out between May and April 2025 to improve women's access to market information and mobile banking services via digital tools where 160 women (40 women per commune) participated. The participating women, being entrepreneurs, were introduced to financial management using digital technologies, so that they can make their businesses more efficient and sustainable. With this initiative, women receive each week the prices of agricultural and non-agricultural items from different localities directly on their phones, which allows them to decide when and in what market to sell their products to generate maximum profit.

During the first half of the year, the programme distributed motorcycles equipped with trailers to beneficiaries involved in Outcome 1 activities. This intervention has facilitated the transportation of market garden produce to nearby markets, thereby improving access and reducing post-harvest losses. It has also contributed to income generation for rural women and created decent employment opportunities for unemployed young men. Importantly, it has strengthened community resilience in the face of security-related shocks and helped curb rural exodus. Many young men recruited by women's groups to operate the motorcycles chose to remain and work within their communities, reversing previous migration trends toward urban areas. The provision of motorcycles and trailers to four (4) women's groups—comprising a total of 108 women—has significantly improved the economic prospects of both women and youth.

To further advance youth employment and local service provision, the programme established three fully operational community shops offering mobile phone charging and repair services. This initiative not only provides a sustainable source of income for young people but also facilitates the transfer of technical skills, thereby contributing to the development of human capital. By making these essential services available at the community level—where they were previously accessible only in urban centers—the programme has helped close a critical service gap and enhance local resilience.

Complementing these efforts, the programme also conducted awareness-raising sessions on decent work and conflict prevention, reaching 500 individuals—including 298 women—across four (4) communes during the first half of the year. These sessions aimed to equip young people with knowledge and strategies to resist recruitment by Non-State Armed Groups (GANEs), while promoting peaceful community engagement and access to rural employment opportunities. This activity will continue into the second half of the year, reinforcing the programme's commitment to inclusive development and long-term stability.

The programme has equally made substantial progress in strengthening women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion. At the beginning of 2025, 50 VSLAs were established and equipped, directly benefiting 1,500 women—an average of 30 per group. These groups received comprehensive training in governance and financial management, aligned with the seven (7) standard modules of the VSLA approach. This community-based savings and credit mechanism, widely appreciated by participating communities, has not only facilitated income generation but also fostered social cohesion and enhanced women's leadership across all programme localities.

The impact of the VSLAs supported by the JP RWEE in the communes of Kankandi, Fabidji, Gazaoua, and Tagriss has been particularly noteworthy, leading to the creation of additional groups. As a result, the total number of VSLAs has grown to approximately 100, now encompassing around 2,500 women. These efforts have significantly improved rural women's access to credit for income-generating activities. Encouraged by these results, neighboring villages—including 19 women's groups in the Dosso region—have requested support to formalize their own initiatives. In response, the joint programme supervision mission conducted in May 2025 recommended that UN Women, the lead agency for this activity, provide coaching to the newly formed groups and equip them with essential management tools such as notebooks and cash registers.

Outcome 3: Rural women's voice and capacity for action are strengthened with a view to better leadership and their full participation on an equal footing within their households, communities,



organizations and in systems of governance. (*Beneficiary Target 2025 – 712 Total – women 700+ men 12 – 98% achieved.*)

Progress in implementation is satisfactory, as one-third of the activities planned for this result have been completed and the remainder, mainly new capacity-building sessions and restitutions of training courses conducted during the reference period, should be completed before the end of the year without any major constraints.

With the Dimitra Clubs already up and running by 2024, the programme proceeded during the first half of the year, to build members' leadership capacities and improve their skills to participate in local governance and decision-making structures. For this, four (4) community dialogues and consultation mechanisms (one (1) per commune) were organized to promote positive changes in discriminatory gender norms and attitudes and knowledge sharing. Thanks to these mechanisms, women and men in the four (4) communes reported are now able to express their aspirations and needs and put forward their points of view, including in meetings with male leaders. In addition, the programme made a significant contribution to the emergence of female leadership through leadership training sessions in the two (2) regions, reaching a total of 55 people, including 48 women members of the Dimitra Club communal networks, five (5) state technical service agents and two (2) staff from the NGO AEDL in charge of setting up and supervising the Dimitra Club.

The cascade of training courses began in June 2025 and will continue throughout the second half of the year, with the 48 women members of the Dimitra Club trained to equip the women of the programme's 40 villages to express their needs and aspirations, as well as those of their community, in decision-making processes. Ultimately, these training courses have enabled the women to influence decisions in other decision-making bodies; to be more attentive to the differentiated needs of women, and to develop their leadership skills and increase their participation in community decision-making meetings.

More specifically, in the Dosso region, the 75 women mediators supported by the programme are determinedly pursuing activities aimed at strengthening social cohesion. They have carried out awareness-raising activities on key issues such as peace, natural resource management and women's rights, whether at general assemblies or through radio debates. Thanks to their collaboration with traditional and opinion leaders, these women community mediators have succeeded in managing several marital conflicts and community disputes. The awareness-raising work undertaken by these women mediators to encourage women and young people to draw inspiration from the success of certain initiatives has led to the creation of several formal and informal groups in four (4) municipalities involved in the project. VSLA groups and Dimitra Clubs have been set up and are continuing their activities with the support of the mediators and members of the former groups formed as part of the project.

Outcome 4: Gender-sensitive legal frameworks, policies and institutions strengthened to create an enabling environment for rural women to secure their livelihoods, rights and resilience. (*Beneficiary Target 2025 – 500 Total – women 300 + men 40 – 5% achieved.*)

Under the Outcome 4, the JP RWEE continues to build capacity at both the central and local levels to support the creation and maintenance of an environment conducive to women's economic empowerment. To understand this low % of achievement, it is essential to emphasize that, most activities in this outcome are institutional support measures that consist of assisting the government in implementing or disseminating gender-related policies. The two (2) activities targeting women are scheduled for the last quarter of the year.

At national level, the programme supported the Ministry of Population, Social Action and National Solidarity in revising the “Stratégie Nationale de l'Autonomisation Economique des Femmes et des Filles (SNAEF)” and its five-year action plan for the period 2025-2029. This process, steered by the Ministry, saw the participation of all the technical and financial partners working in this field in Niger, to bring it



more into line with the country's current context and related themes such as women's entrepreneurship, climate change, migration, etc. The country now has a national strategy for the economic empowerment of women and girls. Thanks to the JP RWEE, the country now has strategic documents guiding and harmonizing the various economic empowerment initiatives. This process has been appreciated by all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Population, Social Action and National Solidarity. These documents will be rolled out across the country's eight (8) regions in the second half of 2025.

At departmental and municipal levels, and in partnership with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, a series of capacity-building sessions were organized for departmental and municipal managers in the Boboye department. These workshops equipped the managers with tools of gender-responsive planning and budgeting in the four (4) communes covered by the programme and beyond. According to their feedback, previous processes for drawing up Communal Development Plans (CDP) had not incorporated shared tools, nor had they involved the various socio-economic strata in data collection. Commitments were made to remedy these shortcomings as technical support on gender integration in the CDPs was requested and new communes (Gazaoua and Tagris from the Maradi region) will be considered for the 2026 intervention.

Several initiatives have engaged directly with women and men, facilitating access to spaces where they could contribute to more gender responsive policies and environments. Concretely, the programme supported a female entrepreneur from the Maradi region to take part in an inter-generational panel discussion on “For all women and girls: equal rights and empowerment”. Hosted by government representatives from the entrepreneurial sector, ambassadors accredited to Niger, researchers, women entrepreneurs and national research institutions, the panel provided a forum for sharing experiences, challenges and opportunities, as well as presenting economic initiatives led by Abdou Moumouni University. The presence of sectoral ministries provided an opportunity to exchange views on the State's strategic orientations, as well as on completed and ongoing initiatives.

Several women processors were also supported later on to participate in the “Made in Niger” fair organized in Niamey from May 27 to 31, 2025 by the AWIP-Niger Executive Secretariat in conjunction with the Niger Ministry of Trade and Industry. The event was attended by at least 1,000 women entrepreneurs from the country's eight (8) regions. This activity enabled women to discover the engineering of other women, and to initiate and/or strengthen partnerships between women and technical and financial partners. As part of the study linked to the existing intra- and multi-sectoral analysis of social protection, the process is underway with the recruitment of the consultant and the drafting of the inception report.

The programme has also sought to engage men in gender equality. Together with beneficiaries, municipal authorities and the support of the implementing partners, criteria for selecting male champions to join the “HeforShe” campaign, have been agreed and

III. Delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned, successes

During the reporting period due to unforeseen challenges at programme inception, significant **delays** happened in the reaching the required thresholds to initiate goats kit rotation (these being key to ensuring sustainability and expanding support to additional women participants). An outbreak of animal disease shortly after distribution led to substantial goat losses in the Dosso region, while the 2024 floods further impacted livestock among initial beneficiaries and disrupted distributions in parts of Maradi. To address this, the programme has introduced corrective measures for the remainder of 2025, including a revised rotation schedule, strengthened technical support, and targeted awareness-raising through VSLA groups to help women rebuild their livestock assets and resume the rotation process.



Security was also one of the major **challenges** faced by the programme during this period. Following the deterioration in the security situation, the government, in order to better protect its partners, required armed escorts for all field missions. The cost of these escorts, which were not initially foreseen, put a brake on field supervision missions. However, the programme found palliative solutions by pooling resources between the four (4) agencies to cover the escort costs and organize several monitoring missions in all four (4) programme communes.

Several key lessons emerged during the first half of the year, offering valuable insights to inform future programming. First, regarding the **rotation of pastoral kits**, there is a need to review and adjust the current strategy to ensure timely and equitable distribution across all four (4) beneficiary groups. Delays in kit rotation have highlighted the importance of improved planning and coordination. Second, the **active involvement of men and local leaders** has proven to be a powerful lever for enhancing the programme's impact and ensuring the sustainability of its achievements. In communities where men are engaged, women report receiving greater support in decision-making and resource management. This underscores the importance of adopting an inclusive, community-based approach. Moving forward, the programme will place greater emphasis on involving men in community market gardening initiatives, training on land conflict prevention and management, and advocacy efforts to promote women's access to land. Third, the importance of **creating safe spaces for women to exchange ideas** has become increasingly evident. Through platforms such as Dimitra Clubs and VSLAs, many women have demonstrated increased awareness, self-confidence, and leadership. Strengthening these platforms will be essential to sustaining this momentum and fostering peer learning and solidarity among women.

Finally, as observed in 2024, **Dimitra Clubs continue to play a pivotal role** in building women's self-esteem and social recognition. Access to training, leadership roles, and dialogue forums has empowered many women to speak publicly and take on responsibilities within their communities. As one member of a Dimitra Club in Débé Débé, Kankandi commune (Dosso region), shared: *"I became president of our group; before, I didn't even dare to speak in front of men."* These testimonies reflect the transformative potential of inclusive, community-driven approaches and will guide the program's continued investment in women's empowerment.

IV. Performance Indicator Table

Performance Result Indicators at outcome and output level are measured at the end of the year. Therefore, no changes will be reported bi-annually. For status of Performance and Results Framework (PRF), please refer to [Niger Annual Country report 2024](#).