



1. Project Data

Project ID P165062	Project Name Quality Data for Decision Making	
Country Niger	Practice Area(Lead) Poverty and Equity	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-D3420	Closing Date (Original) 30-Jun-2023	Total Project Cost (USD) 18,720,462.79
Bank Approval Date 06-Jul-2018	Closing Date (Actual) 30-Jun-2023	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	20,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	20,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	18,720,462.79	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Project Development Objective (PDO) as stated in the Financing Agreement (Schedule 1, p. 5) and in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, page 5) was "**To improve the quality, availability, and use of macroeconomic and sector statistics**".

For the purposes of this review the PDO will be parsed into three objectives that will be referred to as PDO1, PDO2 and PDO3 as follows:



- PDO 1. To improve the quality of macroeconomic and sector statistics.
- PDO 2. To improve the availability of macroeconomic and sector statistics.
- PDO 3. To improve the use of macroeconomic and sector statistics.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

Component 1: Improvement in Data Quality and Use. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$11.0 million. The actual cost was US\$12.4 million. This component planned to support production of quality macroeconomic (national account, price, enterprise, and labor) and sector statistics (agriculture, planning and finance) and establishing a call center by modernizing data collection using tablets.

Component 2: Modernization and Professionalization of the National Statistical System (INS). The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$7.0 million. The actual cost was US\$4.4 million. This component planned to support institutional reforms through conducting a study assessing the optimal institutional structure of sectoral statistical services and supporting its recommendations. Activities included organizational restructuring of the INS for developing new staffing regulations and human resource development.

Component 3: Project Management and Coordination. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$2.0 million. The actual cost was US\$2.1 million. This component planned to support project coordination and fiduciary management.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project cost. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$20.0 million. The actual cost was US\$18.7 million.

Project financing. This project was financed by an International Development Association Grant (IDA) of US\$20.0 million. The amount disbursed was US\$18.7 million.

Recipient contribution. Recipient contribution was not planned at appraisal. There was no recipient contribution during implementation.

Dates. The project was approved on July 6, 2018, declared effective on December 19, 2018, and closed as scheduled on June 30, 2023.

3. Relevance of Objectives



Rationale

Country context. Niger is a geographically (in terms land area) and a fragile, conflict and violence (FCV) affected county in West Africa. The country ranked last among the 188 countries based on the Human Development Index (HDI). This was partly due to Niger's poor governance capacity.

Sector context. Niger has a decentralized statistical system with the National Statistical Institute (Institut National de la Statistique INS) as the entity responsible for providing official statistics. Before appraisal, the NNS adopted the National Data Quality Assurance Framework (NDQAF) that was based on international best practices (such as the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Data Quality Assessment and the Eurostat Quality Assurance Framework), for improving the quality of macroeconomic and sector statistics. This framework was yet to be implemented when this project was being prepared.

The main conclusions of the sectoral and institutional assessment of Niger's statistical system (*Rapport sur l'Etat de la Statistique*, June 2017) were: (i) Although INS produced various data, there were issues about the quality of the macroeconomic data; (ii) While line ministries collected sector statistics as a byproduct of their administrative work and service delivery, this data was neither processed nor compiled and disseminated in a systematic manner; and (iii) limited public financing of the National Statistical System (NSS), including for the INS and the line ministries contributed to the low capacity of staff to produce quality outputs. Therefore, the outcomes of improving the quality, reliability and use of statistical data for evidence-based policy making was important to the government strategy.

Government Strategy. The PDO was consistent with the Government strategy articulated in the second Economic and Social Development Strategy (*Plan de Developpment Economique et Social*, PDES) for 2017-2021. This strategy broadly highlighted the need for strengthening statistical information for decision making and citizen accountability. The PDO was also aligned with the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics. This strategy specifically underscored the need for meeting the demand for quality data through undertaking censuses, surveys, data processing and analysis, improving public access to statistical products through modern technologies and improving coordination within the NSS..

Bank strategy. The PDO was well-aligned with the Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD, 2017) and the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Niger for FY18-FY22. The SCD recognized that inadequate core funding hindered the efficiency of statistical operations. Of the three main focus areas of the CPF, the PDO was relevant to the third focus area: *Better Governance*. The current Bank strategy for Niger is currently under preparation.

Bank experience. This was the first major Bank-financed project aimed at building the statistical capacity in Niger. This project built on prior efforts to improve statistics capacity which were primarily grant funded and did not completely address the constraints in the field. While this project was being prepared, Niger was also participating in an IDA funded Regional Program aimed at harmonizing household welfare across eight West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries.

As the first of its kind, the project clearly addressed a clear need for building the foundational blocks for evidence-based policy making and a sector with broad externalities for other sectors. The three objectives of improving the quality, availability, and use of macroeconomic and sector statistics, were complementary and mutually reinforced each other.



The PDO was highly relevant to the Government strategy and Bank strategy for Niger. The project was pitched at an appropriate level, given the fragile country context. The project scope was expanded with the savings realized during implementation. The relevance of the PDO is rated as High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To improve the quality of macroeconomic and sector statistics.

Rationale

Theory of Change. The project activities aimed at improving the quality of statistical data through a combination of activities including through improving the legislative framework, building institutional capacities and replacing outdated equipment. The outputs of inputs such as training the staff of the NSS, the relevant ministries and agencies, professionalizing NSS, replacing obsolete Infrastructure Technology (IT) equipment and implementing the recently adopted National Quality Assurance Framework for Public Statistics (CNAQ/SP) were likely to contribute to the intended outcome of improving the quality of macroeconomic and sector statistics. The causal links between project activities, outputs and outcomes were logical. The intended outcomes were monitorable.

Outputs.

TA was provided as targeted for the following:

- The national accountants were trained for rebasing national accounts (Rebasing national accounts series means replacing the old base year for compiling price estimates to a more recent base year for computing constant price estimates for enabling comparisons of national income estimates over time).
- The project aided in financing purchase of survey and computer equipment and training staff for increasing the geographic coverage of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the different regions of Niger.
- The project aided in supporting the first enterprise census (which included informal enterprises as well) Nearly 98.9% of the country market units were enumerated.
- The Ministry of Agriculture staff were trained for producing agricultural statistics. Three studies on fisheries and fish farming, moringa and gum arabica were completed. A quarterly series extending from the first quarter of 2009 to the fourth quarter of 2022 was completed.
- Foreign Trade Statistics Service team were trained on preparing foreign trade statistics with EUROTRACE SQL SERVER software.
- The Ministry of Education staff were trained in filing questionnaires and processing school data.



- A National Survey on Fertility and Mortality of Children under Five was conducted as targeted.
- The project supported: (i) The pilot cartography and pilot enumeration for the fifth Population and Housing Census and the upcoming agricultural census; and (ii) establishing call centers in the INS using new technologies.
- The project financed the following studies: (i) A study on the impact of public infrastructure projects in Niger; (ii) Two studies on the effects of COVID-19 on the economy; (iii) A study on the impact of agricultural productivity; and (iv) A study on the impact of the informal sector on the Nigerian economy.
- The project supported the implementation of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Public Statistics (CNAQ/SP) adopted by the Government in 2017, through setting a committee responsible for evaluating and validating the publications of the INS.

Intermediate Outcomes.

- Rebased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) were released in a timely manner, and the CPI was revised and released quarterly. The GDP and CPI data were released on the INS website when the project closed.

Outcomes

The outputs described above aimed at increasing the number of statistical products that adhered to the National Statistical System (NSS) quality standards framework.

- The following statistical products were produced based on the NSS quality standards framework as targeted:
 - CPI with increased geographical coverage
 - rebased national accounts figures
 - Foreign trade statistics
 - Harvest Forecasting and Estimation Survey
 - Survey on Living Conditions of Households
 - Statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Transport
 - Statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Community Development
 - Statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Finance
 - Revised demographic projections
 - The statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Planning.

Efficacy of this PDO was rated as substantial as the intended outcomes were realized.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

Improved availability of macroeconomic and sector statistics



Rationale

Theory of Change. While the project activities related to PDO1 sought to improve the quality of macroeconomic and sector statistics, activities under PDO2 aimed at improving the availability of statistical data. Activities such as improving the information network in INS, installing high speed internet network in INS regional directorates, organizational restructuring of the INS for developing new staffing requirements and human resource development and introducing performance-based mechanisms for incentivizing staff were likely to help in improving the availability of macroeconomic and sector statistics. The casual links between inputs, outputs and outcomes were logical. The intended outcomes were measurable.

Outputs

- The INS and the Ministry of Planning website were renovated. 43 databases were posted on the INS website: The project supported the migration of the NIGERINFO database from the DEVINFO technology to the DATA FOR ALL technology.
- Two study programs involving 55 students were trained at the Niger National Statistic School (ENSTAT – Niger).

Intermediate Outcomes.

- The INS website provided public access to micro-databases as targeted.

Outcomes.

The outputs described above were expected to increase the number of core data that were produced and disseminated.

- 43 core data sets were produced and publicly disseminated, far exceeding the target of 20.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3

Objective

Improved use of macroeconomics and sector statistics.

Rationale

Theory of Change. The final step in the causal chain of the project was to improve the use of high-quality data. Activities such as strengthening demand for statistical data were likely to contribute to the desired outcome of improving the use of macroeconomics and sector statistics. The casual links between inputs, outputs and the intended outcomes were logical. The outcomes could be monitored.

Outputs.



- A communication plan was developed as targeted that considered local contexts for all large-scale NSS produced statistical activities.
- The civil servants, journalists, persons in charge of programming sectoral ministry activities and members of the traditional chiefs' associations in Niger were trained as targeted on using the statistical products produced under the project.
- Awareness raising activities were conducted as targeted.
- The Network of Journalists for the Development of Statistics (*Réseau des Journalistes pour le Développement de la Statistique*, RJDSN) was operationalized

Intermediate Outcomes.

- An online platform was established to collect users' feedback and gender relevance.

Outcomes.

- 340 government officials and private citizens were trained in the use of statistical information, far exceeding the target of 200.
- Two user surveys were conducted (one in 2018 and one in 2022) to assess the extent to which the training helped in enhancing performance of staff. The survey respondents included public and semipublic administrations, local authorities, technical and financial partners, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), public and private companies, universities, research and training centers. The results of the surveys showed a high level of satisfaction of data users with the produced statistical products. For instance, the survey in 2022 indicated an overall satisfaction rate of 86.2%.

Efficacy of this PDO is rated as substantial.

Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Overall efficacy is rated as Substantial, given that all the intended outcomes were realized.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency



It is universally acknowledged that good statistical information for evidence-based policy making is a public good with significant positive externalities. However, the benefits of good statistical information do not lend themselves to an economic rate of return analysis (PAD, para 67). Accordingly, and consistent with practice for similar projects, no economic rate of return analysis was performed for this project either at appraisal or at closure. Research in middle-income contexts indicated that the availability of quality, transparent and timely disseminated data reduces sovereign borrowing cost on international capital markets. The PAD noted that in a fragile context such as Niger, the national statistical office had limited opportunities for significant cost recovery and so the financial returns from this project will not be representative of the economic returns which are likely to be very high.

The ICR provides benchmarking information which indicated that the costs of administering household surveys in this project compared favorably with that of the peers in the region, despite the relatively low population density of Niger which can result in relatively higher travel costs between households and the security challenges in the country. The average cost of the survey per household was US\$311 in Niger, slightly higher than in Benin (US\$243), but lower than in Mali (US\$311) and nearly US\$450 for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The project demonstrated good value-for-money. The actual cost of planned activities were lower than their appraisal estimates and the savings realized during implementation were utilized for scaling up project activities. For example, initially the project planned to only support the population census by financing the drafting process of the population census document. However, because of the availability of additional resources, the project went beyond by also supporting two other phases of the population census: the cartography mapping pilot and the enumeration pilot exercises. The actual cost of implementation support (at US\$2.06 million), was only slightly higher than the appraisal estimate of US\$2.00 million, despite the fragile country context.

There were no serious operational inefficiencies, with all the planned activities completed within the originally scheduled closing date, despite the restrictions in the wake of the COVID – 19 pandemic and worsening security situation in the country which affected the household survey activities.

Overall efficiency is rated as substantial. Although there was no standard economic analysis, the project demonstrated good value for money in a fragile context.

Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable



* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

The Project was highly relevant to the Government and the Bank strategy. As all the intended outcomes were realized, overall efficacy is rated as Substantial. Efficiency is rated as Substantial. Although there was no standard economic analysis, there were no serious operational issues and the project demonstrated good value for money in a fragile country context. Taking these ratings into account, overall outcome is rated as Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Institutional Risk. There is risk to the sustainability of development outcomes given that the Government and the National Assembly is yet to adopt legislation (Law No. 2014-66), intended to strengthen the legal, institutional, and organizational framework of the NSS.

Financial Risk. There is also risk pertaining to the long-term financial viability of NSS, which in turn would undermine its ability to hire and retain quality staff.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The Bank team prepared this project based on the experiences from previous Bank-financed statistical building projects in fragile settings. Lessons incorporated included: (i) the need to have coordinated programs; (ii) provide support for organizational and management change; (iii) provide support for strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks; and (iv) transition towards a more focused and results-oriented approach for sustainability of outcomes. The analytical underpinnings of the project were robust and based on the Bank's SCD and other analytical products such as the Statistical Capacity Building Indicator and internal work comparing the experiences of Statistics Reforms in Africa (Hoogeveen, and Nguyen. 2016.- mimeo). The project appropriately included a Project Preparation Advance (PPA), which aided in commencing project activities soon after Bank approval.

The Project Management Team (PMT) in the National Statistical System (NSS), was responsible for project implementation. The PMT had experience with implementing Bank-funded projects. The implementation arrangement was appropriate, as project performance was not undermined by the arrangement during implementation.



The overall project risk was rated as substantial at appraisal due to the risks related to technical design, weak institutional and fiduciary capacities, and security risks. Several mitigation measures were incorporated at appraisal such as incorporating performance-based financing arrangements to focus on quality, relying on the coordinating role for INS to enhance budget allocation for well-performing line ministries, hiring dedicated procurement staff and partnering with third parties (Non-Governmental Organizations) to support implementation in insecure areas. The mitigation measures were appropriate, as project performance was not undermined by the risks identified at appraisal.

The arrangements made at appraisal for M&E and fiduciary compliance were appropriate (discussed in section 9 and 10).

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The Bank conducted twice a year supervision missions on average as per the norm during the project lifetime. These missions helped in providing targeted support to the respective agencies during implementation. The Bank maintained the continuity of leadership, with one task team leader during the project duration. In addition to the task team leaders, several other technical World Bank specialists provided training and advice to the respective agencies when needed. The team was proactive in adapting to changing circumstances such as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deteriorating security situation in the country. The support provided by the team aided in M&E and fiduciary compliance (discussed in section 9 and 10).

Overall Bank performance is rated as satisfactory.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The M&E design consisted of clearly measurable and well-defined indicators, pertaining to the three intended outcomes: (i) improving data quality; (ii) improving the availability and reliability of data reliability; and (iii) utilization of the macroeconomic and sector data; The indicators were directly attributable to the project activities. The baseline figures and the targets were specified at appraisal.



The National Statistical System (NSS) was responsible for monitoring project performance.

b. M&E Implementation

M&E implementation was sound and based on regular reporting of results, implementation progress and related issues by the Project Management Team (PMT) in NSS. Although there were Initial issues such as hiring key PMT staff and coordinating activities between the NSS and sector ministries, these were resolved two and half years after project effectiveness.

c. M&E Utilization

The PMT regularly reported data on M&E Indicators. The data was utilized to provide evidence on achievement of outcomes.

Overall M&E is rated as substantial.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

This project was classified as a Category C (no assessment project) under the World Bank's safeguard policies. The project funds only supported activities pertaining to institutional reforms and no safeguard policies were triggered at appraisal. There were no adverse environmental and social impacts identified during implementation.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

The Bank conducted an assessment of the fiduciary arrangements of the INS at appraisal. The fiduciary management risk was rated as substantial due to shortcomings in the financial management (FM) and procurement at arrangements of INS. FM and procurement specialists initially hired were replaced after a year due to poor performance. This resulted in ratings of moderately unsatisfactory during the relevant period. However these shortcomings were resolved when the INS hired FM and procurement specialists with relevant skills.

The overall fiduciary management was rated as satisfactory during implementation. There were no ineligible expenses and the financial audits were unqualified. There was no case of mis procurement.



c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None

d. Other

None

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR draws the following three main lessons from the experience of implementing this project, with some adaptation of language.

1. A simple design and modest targets may raise the potential for success in fragile settings, especially when implementing a project in a sector for the first time. When this project was under preparation, Niger had not previously implemented a large statistics capacity building project. Therefore, the results of this project deliberately focused on outputs that were easy to measure, and the targets set at relatively less ambitious results. The risks associated with project implementation did not materialize and the project scope was expanded with the savings realized during implementation. The lesson from this project is that appropriate target setting during design, may provide scope for the project to obtain its objectives and go beyond its results indicators.

2. Inclusive arrangements may help in when the project is introducing innovative systems. This project introduced the Project-Based Financing (PBF) incentive system in the National Statistical System (NSS). Under this system, the NSS staff participating in project activities provided incentives to improve their performance. Although the system did help in improving production of quality statistics, the arrangement caused resentment among the staff not participating in the system. Inclusive arrangements at design would have helped in ensuring that the system was perceived as fair. While the performance-based financing (PBF) arrangement helped the project to achieve and surpass its objective, it created some frustration within INS staff not benefiting from PBF incentives, hence the need to have a more inclusive PBF in the future.



3. A careful consideration of the implementation arrangements and tailoring them to the country context can help project implementation. In this project, the National Statistical Institute (INS), an autonomous entity, had to provide guidance to ministries which had a more prominent government role, and were responsible for generating the sector statistics. At the same time, the INS was a well-performing statistics provider, while the sector ministries' capacity to produce statistics was weak. Over time and through the implementation of different mitigation activities, this difficulty was resolved and the staff of the ministries were working closely with the INS staff. Since the project used the existing implementation arrangements of INS, it encouraged them to resolve institutional arrangements and implement the project to reach the PDO. The project had positive experiences working through existing institutional structures. In the case of INS, which had existing capacity, this was relatively frictionless. The project helped resolve significant capacity issues within line ministries, with the help of the INS, helping create sustainable arrangements and building on existing structures which are likely more sustainable than arrangements created exclusively for the project.

Further lessons highlight good practices regarding consultation and buy-in from the population as well as successful mitigation of risks related to the country's status as fragile and conflict-affected.

The IEG draws the following lesson from the experience of implementing this project.

The ICRR noted that use of less ambitious indicators was a necessary response to the country's lack of experience with large statistics and capacity-building projects. The project could have benefited from tracking relatively easy to collect metrics of data use, e.g., through the tracking of number of downloads of relevant data sets from the newly established websites.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is clear and evidence-based and complies with the guidelines. Overall, the ICR offers well-documented evidence for project indicators, and provides enough information to support ratings. The theory of change provided in the text clearly shows the casual links between inputs (project activities), outputs and the intended outcomes. The ICR provides relevant lessons.

One minor shortcoming is the length of the ICR. The main body of the text exceeds the recommended length of 15 pages.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial

