



1. Project Data

Project ID P164563	Project Name Niger PARCA	
Country Niger	Practice Area(Lead) Urban, Resilience and Land	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-63080,IDA-D3690	Closing Date (Original) 30-Sep-2023	Total Project Cost (USD) 72,308,424.30
Bank Approval Date 12-Sep-2018	Closing Date (Actual) 30-Sep-2023	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	80,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	80,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	72,308,424.30	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Original Project Development Objective (PDO) was “to improve access to basic services and economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger” (Financing Agreement, page 6). The PDO was stated identically in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, page 1).

The PDO was not revised.



For the purposes of this Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) review, the objective will be assessed as follows:

PDO 1: To improve access to basic services for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

PDO 2: To improve access to economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

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

Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?

Yes

Date of Board Approval

21-May-2021

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

Yes

d. Components

1. Original components

Component 1 Community Infrastructure for Improved Access to Basic Public Services (cost at appraisal: US\$43.5 million; actual cost: US\$38.64 million) was to finance construction or rehabilitation of 328 community infrastructure sub-projects, including: schools; health centers; community centers; water supply and sanitation infrastructure; transportation infrastructure (rural roads, small bridges, and culverts); agricultural infrastructure (irrigation schemes, water supply for livestock and aquaculture, storage facilities); and rural markets and community storage. The sub-projects were to be designed to increase resilience to climate change risks (such as water scarcity and soil degradation). The sub-projects were identified using geo-spatial analysis and in consultations with the local governments (LGs) and communities. The sub-projects were to be labor-intensive and employ local labor force selected through the Bank's community-based targeting mechanism. The component was also to support the following activities related to infrastructure sub-projects: needs and beneficiary assessments, technical designs, and quality control.

Component 2 Support for Economic Opportunities (cost at appraisal: US\$25.5 million; actual cost: US\$25.01 million) was to finance the development of income-generating activities (IGAs) for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities. The focus was on stimulating private investments, restoring productive assets, and increasing productivity through skills development, increased access to markets, diversified livelihoods, improved inputs, and increased resilience to economic and climate shocks. There were two sub-components: (i) support to agricultural production, including crop production, livestock, poultry, agro-processing, and aquaculture (financing productive inputs, assets, training, and awareness building); and (ii) support to entrepreneurship: individual cash grants (US\$200 each) to finance IGAs.



Component 3 Coordination and Institutional Development (cost at appraisal: US\$5.0 million; actual cost: US\$3.58 million) was to finance capacity building at the following levels: community (local), municipal councils, departmental authorities, regional councils, and central government authorities. *At the community and municipal levels* (the main focus of the Project), support would be provided to integrate the crisis and recovery priorities into Commune Development Plans (PDCs) and to implement the PDCs through municipal Annual Investment Plans (PIAs). At mid-term review of the Project, it would be determined whether the developed communes' PIAs are of sufficient quality for selecting Component 1 investments on their basis. *At the regional and department levels*, support would combine provision of technology for Project monitoring (geo-enabled cell phone- and tablet-based system) and training to use it. *At the central level*, support would be provided to the Project Steering Committee to better coordinate activities in crisis-affected areas. *At strategic and policy level*, support would be provided to the High-Level Tripartite Committee on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus (CTHN) to ensure effective integration of humanitarian and development responses. This would include support to the Ministry of Interior to enhance its ability to collect the forced displacement (FD) data (through the Agence Nationale d'Enregistrement et d'Identification, ANEI).

Component 4 Project Management (cost at appraisal: US\$6.0 million; actual cost: US\$6.68 million) was to finance the overall Project management, fiduciary, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

2. Changes to components, results framework (RF) indicators, institutional arrangements, and component costs during implementation

First restructuring of May 2021 involved changes to the following: (i) RF indicators; (ii) component 2 sub-components; and (iii) institutional arrangements. One of these changes (a target reduction of an intermediate results indicator (IRI) due to costs increase) entailed a reduction in the Project's scope. The details are as follows:

- **One IRI target was lowered, entailing a reduction in the Project scope:**
 - The target for the IRI "Number of newly built or rehabilitated kilometers of rural roads" was reduced from 250 kilometers to 150 kilometers due to increased construction costs (caused by the security situation in Diffa and the increased prices for the imported construction inputs) (Restructuring paper, page 13).
- **One IRI target was increased:**
 - The target for the IRI "Number of meetings of the Technical Committee of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus at inter-ministerial level" was increased from 2 meetings to 3 meetings.
- **Four sub-indicator targets were lowered, with no reduction of the Project scope** because the related main indicators' targets remained unchanged. Specifically:
 - The targets for the PDO sub-indicator "Beneficiaries with improved access to economic opportunities (Refugees)" and for the IRI sub-indicator "Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for agricultural production and other income-generating activities (Refugees)" were reduced from 31,250 people to 20,850 people to reflect the actual structure of the population (one-third of the targeted 62,500 beneficiaries (note that this overall target remained unchanged), or 20,833 people, were refugees, below the 50 percent estimated at appraisal) (Restructuring paper, page 11-12).



- The target for the IRI sub-indicator “Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works (Refugees)” was reduced from 11,500 people to 7,700 people to reflect the actual structure of the population (one-third of the targeted 23,000 beneficiaries (this overall target remained unchanged), or 7,667 people, were refugees, below the 50 percent estimated at appraisal) (Restructuring paper, page 12).
- The target for the IRI sub-indicator “Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works (Women)” was reduced from 11,500 people to 2,300 people because the original assumption that one-half of the 23,000 beneficiaries of labor-intensive works (note that this overall target remained unchanged) would be female was unrealistic, especially in the cultural context of Niger (Restructuring paper, page 12).
- **A new IRI was added to the RF:** “Number of cash grant recipients trained under the project”, with two sub-indicators: for refugees and for women.
- **The two subcomponents of Component 2 - the agricultural and non-agricultural IGAs - were merged into one** due to the following: (i) the beneficiary-driven IGA choices (including across agricultural and non-agricultural activities; (ii) limited access to land for beneficiaries; and (iii) an overlap of inputs and activities across the two sub-components.
- **Institutional arrangements were modified to improve Project implementation efficiency.** At approval, the Project implementing agency was the government entity *Secrétariat Exécutif de la Stratégie pour le Développement et la Sécurité dans les Zones Sahélo-Sahariennes du Niger* or Executive secretariat for Strategy for Development and Security in Sahel-Saharan areas of Niger (SE/SDS). It was supported by IDA-financed technical consultants who, among other tasks, were charged with strengthening the operational capacity of the SE/SDS, aiming at a full transfer of Project management to the SE/SDS in the third year of implementation. However, the slow progress with capacity building efforts, as well as the low efficiency of the SE/SDS with respect to Project operations and decision making, was hindering Project implementation, and the original implementation arrangements were reviewed. As a result of the review, a newly created SE/SDS *Technical Unit*, comprising IDA consultants only, was made fully responsible for the day-to-day implementation and administration of the Project, while contract approvals remained a responsibility of the SE/SDS.

Second restructuring of May 2022 involved the following changes: (i) to components and to the allocation of funds across components; and (ii) to the RF indicators.

- **Changes in components: cancellation of some (mostly Component 1) activities and a scale-up of Component 2 activities.** The cancellations were mainly for construction sub-projects, including: (i) 52 classrooms in Diffa and Tillabéri; (ii) a road section in Tahoua; and (iii) 16 agricultural infrastructures in Diffa and Tillabéri. The main reasons were: (i) increased insecurity at the Project’s sites and beneficiaries’ desertion from the sites; (ii) a significant delay in commencing some of the Component 1 infrastructure sub-projects; and (iii) price increases.
- **Reallocation of funds across components due to the cancelled Component 1 activities and savings under Component 3.** A total of US\$4.85 million was reallocated from Component 1, including: US\$4.5 million to mobile cash transfer and training under Component 2, and US\$0.35 to Project management under Component 4. In addition, US\$0.6 million was reallocated from Component 3 to Component 4 (using Component 3 savings).



- **Increase in the RF indicator targets in relation to the changes in components.** Some of the Component 2 targets were increased. While there was a reduction of many Component 1 targets, one of them was increased. Specifically:
 - The targets for Component 2 PDO indicator “Beneficiaries with improved access to economic opportunities (Number)” and two Component 2 IRIs - “Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for agricultural production and other income-generating activities” and “Number of cash grant recipients trained under the project” - were increased from 62,500 people to 83,500 people. The targets for the related sub-indicators for refugees were increased from 20,850 people to 23,500 people. The targets for the related sub-indicators for women were increased from 31,250 people to 41,750 people.
 - The Component 1 IRI “Number of newly built or rehabilitated other infrastructure” had its target increased from 70 to 85.
- **Reduction in the RF indicator targets in relation to the changes in components.** Component 1 targets were reduced to reflect changes in components. Specifically:
 - The target for Component 1 IRI “Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works” was reduced from 23,000 people to 15,000 people. The related sub-indicator target for refugees was lowered from 7,700 people to 3,000 people.
 - The target for Component 1 IRI “Number of newly built or rehabilitated classrooms” was lowered from 200 classrooms to 148 classrooms.
 - The target for Component 1 IRI “Number of newly built or rehabilitated kilometer of rural roads” was lowered from 150 kilometers to 66.5 kilometers.

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

Project Cost: The appraisal estimate was US\$80.0 million, and the disbursement at closure was US\$75.17 million. The amount at closure included US\$1.26M that were still in the PTU’s Designated Account, to be returned to IDA (ICR, page 43). At IEG’s request, the team confirmed that the repayment to IDA was still pending at the time of the conclusion of this review, and the FM team was working on resolving a system glitch to finalize it. The rest of the difference between the appraisal estimate and the actual disbursement is explained by the coup d’etat of July 2023, which triggered O.P. 7.30 “Dealings with De Facto Governments”, suspending Project disbursements (ICR, page 24, 27).

Project Financing: The Project was financed by two IDA credits. For the first credit (IDA-D3690), the appraisal amount was US\$40.0 million and the actual amount at closure was US\$40.15 million. For the second credit (IDA-63080), the appraisal amount was US\$40.0 million and the actual amount at closure was US\$32.16 million.

Borrower/Recipient contribution: There was no Borrower’s contribution.

Project Dates: The Project was approved on September 12, 2018 and became effective on March 26, 2019. The MTR review was on November 17, 2021. The Project was restructured twice: (i) on May 21, 2021 and (ii) on May 27, 2022. The original closing date was September 30, 2023. There were no extensions, and the Project closed on the original closing date.



Coup d'état of July 2023. The coup d'état, which overthrew a democratically elected regime, affected the Project in many ways including through security deterioration, which made the implementation of some activities (including cash transfers) impossible, and due to border closures and trade restrictions, which delayed the delivery of key supplies and the finalization of some activities. The coup d'état triggered the WB's OP 7.30 titled "Dealings with De Facto Governments", leading to a suspension of Project disbursements, which remained in place until Project closure. (ICR, page 24, 27)

Split evaluation and attributing outcomes to the two Project objectives. Due to a reduction of the RF indicator targets both at the first (May 2021) and the second (May 2022) restructurings, a split evaluation, with two revisions, will be undertaken. The outputs under Component 3 *Coordination and Institutional Development* support both Project objectives, however, they align more with Objective 1, which supports improved service provision because Objective 2 is focused on community level development. Therefore, the efficacy of the Component 3 outcomes will be analyzed under Objective 1.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Country and Sector Context. At appraisal, Niger was one of the poorest countries globally, with a per capita income of US\$390 (2015), a 45 percent poverty incidence (2014), and ranking second to last out of 188 countries in the United Nations Human Development Index. Food crises were frequent, fueled by the country's exposure to droughts. The country was also exposed to a regional conflict, while remaining internally stable due to social cohesion and political settlements. Regional stresses significantly affected Niger: since 2011, armed attacks on the country's territory had been increasing, especially due to the crises in Mali and Libya, and the Boko Haram regional crisis. The country is part of the international efforts against Boko Haram and, at the time of appraisal (September 2018), Niger was hosting 280,000 displaced people, including 158,000 refugees, 109,000 IDPs, and 16,000 Nigerian nationals who had returned from Nigeria due to conflict. The inflow of forcibly displaced people concurred with a deterioration in the security situation and placed additional pressure on the poorest regions of the country. While the legal and institutional environment in Niger was supportive of the refugees and IDPs, the government lacked fiscal and administrative resources and relied heavily on development community to assist the forcibly displaced population. (PAD, pages 6-9) The situation was deteriorating during the years of Project implementation, and the total number of forcibly displaced people in Niger increased to 705,968 people by September 2023 (ICR, page 7).

Relevance to Government Strategies at approval. The Project was aligned with the government priorities at appraisal, specifically, with the following strategic axes of the Government's *Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy 2035* (SDIGS-Niger 2035): (i) *Security of the Territory*, which aimed at ensuring the safety of the population and property; (ii) *Revitalization and Modernization of the Rural Areas*, which aimed at a sustainable increase of agricultural production and productivity; and (iii) *Modernization of Government Institutions*, which aimed at ensuring that citizens enjoy quality public services. The Project aimed to contribute to the Government's commitment to progressive reforms related to forced displacement, which was communicated to the WBG by the Minister of Planning in a letter of June 20, 2017. (PAD, page 9; SDIGS Niger 2035)



Relevance to Government Strategies at closure. At closure, the Project was aligned with the 2023 Government of Niger *National Strategy on Sustainable Solutions for Internally Displaced People in Niger*, which the Project informed and which subsequently informed the government's *Strategy of Stabilization of Fragile Area*, which was to be adopted at the time of the ICR completion. (ICR, page 14)

Relevance to the World Bank Group's (WBG's) Assistance Strategies at approval. At appraisal, the Project was aligned with the World Bank Group's (WBG's) Niger's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY2018-22, which proposed that three filters be applied to all interventions: (i) gender (empowering women and girls); (ii) fragility (mitigating risks of conflict); and (iii) spatial inequity (focus on high-poverty and high-conflict regions) (ICR, page 14). The Project was also aligned with the following three objectives under the CPF Focus Area II *Improved Human Capital Social Protection for FY 18-22*: (i) manage forced displacement (objective 5); (ii) increase access to quality health services (objective 3); and (iii) increase access to quality education services (objective 4). In addition, the Project was aligned with the CPF Focus Area I *Increase Rural Productivity and Incomes* through planned interventions in two of the four focus regions identified in the CPF (Diffa and Tillaberi). The Project was also aligned with the CPF's strategic approach of consolidating safe havens and at-risk zones by ensuring critical basic infrastructure and services (including schools, health centers, water points, small roads, and social services) and creating economic opportunities (including Labor Intensive Public Works), productive inclusion, and training) for vulnerable youth, women, and displaced persons. The Project was aligned with the IDA18 strategic focus on supporting refugees and host communities and mitigating crises, as reflected in the new IDA18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities and a special Risk Mitigation Regime (RMR) allocation to mitigate the escalation of existing crises and contribute to the reduction of key fragility and conflict risks. (PAD, page 9-10)

Relevance to the World Bank Group's (WBG's) Assistance Strategies at closure. At closing, the project remained aligned with the WBG strategies, specifically, with the WBG Performance and Learning Review, which extended the CPFFY18-22 to FY2023 (disclosed in May 2022). The Project responded to the Focus Areas 1 and 2 objectives of: (i) improved availability of productive, climate-resilient infrastructure; (ii) increased access to quality education and training services; and (iii) improved social protection systems and youth employment in rural and at-risk areas. The Project was also aligned with the IDA19 Prevention and Resilience Allocation (PRA) objectives of: (i) improving youth and women's socio-economic integration; (ii) mitigating multidimensional insecurity, with a participatory approach to security management and stronger state presence in remote border areas and at-risk zones; (iii) preventing and managing conflicts related to natural resources, with a focus on intra-communal tension and population growth; and (iv) improving governance to manage conflict prevention and resilience.

Related World Bank operations.

At the time of the Project appraisal, the Niger portfolio included several operations that could create synergies with the reviewed Project because they targeted the chronically poor and vulnerable households in disadvantaged areas, overlapping with the areas hosting refugees. Specifically, the list included the following operations: (i) the Safety Net Project (P123399), aiming to establish and support an effective social safety net to increase access of the poor to cash transfers and cash-for-work programs, including in Tahoua, Tillaberi regions; (ii) the Youth Employment and Productive Inclusion Project (P163157), aiming to expand off-farm income generating activities for youth in Tahoua, Tillaberi, and Diffa regions; (iii) the Skills Development for Growth Project (P126049), benefitting youth aged 15-18 across the country; (iv) the Community Action Project, phase 3 (P132306), targeting small-scale rural producers in disadvantaged areas; (v) the Disaster Management and Urban Development Project (P145268); (vi) the Regional



Education Project (P147674); (vii) the Climate Smart Agriculture Project (P153420); (viii) the Support to Quality Education Project (P132405); (ix) the Population and Health Project (P147638); (x) the Sahel Regional Irrigation Initiative Project (P154482).

Overall, the Project was aligned with both the Government's and WBG's priorities at approval and closure. Therefore, the rating is High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To improve access to basic services for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

Rationale

The theory of change (ToC) for the Project was included in the PAD. It showed direct, logical causal links from inputs (activities) to outputs, to the intermediate outcomes, and to the PDO outcomes of the Project. To achieve Objective 1, the Project supported the following activities: (i) building and rehabilitating community infrastructure; and (ii) capacity building for municipal, regional and central administration. The expected outputs of these activities were: (i) community infrastructure (water points, schools, clinics, markets) constructed/rehabilitated according to the norms; (ii) labor intensive employment provided; and (iii) municipal annual investment plans incorporating IDPs' and hosts' needs created. The achievement of the outputs was expected to lead to the following intermediate outcomes: (i) improved access to community infrastructure; and (ii) improved government capacity to plan and deliver their mandate in areas affected by forced displacement. The achievement of these intermediate outcomes would ultimately result in the PDO outcome of improved access to basic services.

The ToC provided a comprehensive picture of the logic of Project interventions, listing all main inputs and outputs, intermediate outcomes, and the PDO outcomes. Importantly, it also provided a detailed illustration of the links across the results chain, from inputs to outputs, to intermediate outcomes, and to the PDO outcomes, thus presenting the logic of the Project through specific cause-effect relationships. The ToC had a minor deficiency: the critical assumptions were not listed.

Rationale

IRI results:

Community Infrastructure:



1. "Investments with functional O&M arrangements one year after completion (%)". The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the original target of 85 percent. The target was exceeded.
2. "Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works". The achievement at closure was 16,070 people, against the original target of 23,000 people. The target was 70.0 percent achieved (substantially achieved). The sub-target for refugees was 11,500 people, while the achievement at closure was 2,331 people; the sub-target was 20.3 percent achieved (barely achieved). The sub-target for women was 11,500 people, while the achievement at closure was 2,076 people; the sub-target was 18.1 percent achieved (barely achieved).
3. "Number of newly built or rehabilitated water distribution points". The achievement at closure was 62 water points, against the original target of 60 water points. The target was exceeded. The ICR noted that the water points were built using hydraulic infrastructure (boreholes, mini piped supply systems, and wells) and provided essential access to potable water, which was previously collected from localities 6 kilometers away, on average (ICR, page 16).
4. "Number of newly built or rehabilitated classrooms". The achievement at closure was 148 classrooms, against the original target of 200 classrooms. The target was 74 percent achieved (significantly achieved).
5. "Number of newly built or rehabilitated health facilities". The achievement at closure was 20 facilities, matching the original target. The target was reached.
6. "Number of newly built or rehabilitated other infrastructure". The achievement at closure was 99 sub-projects, against the original target of 70 sub-projects. The target was exceeded by 41.4 percent. The ICR noted that this included 25 housing units for teachers, eight administrative/training centers, and 23 market infrastructures, including the Telemces market which helped revitalize the surrounding Tillia commune and boosted own-source revenues of the local government of rural Tillia (ICR, page 16).
7. "Number of newly built or rehabilitated kilometers of rural roads". The achievement at closure was 66.5 kilometers, against the original target of 250 kilometers. The target was 26.6 percent achieved (barely achieved). The ICR noted that this led to a reduction in travel time between Taza and Tillia from 8 to 3.5 hours and to improved access to the Telemces cattle market in the Tahoua region, which was developed under the Project (among other benefits) (ICR, page 16).

Institutional Development:

8. "Operationalization of MIS for enhanced data collection on forced displacement (Yes/No)". The target was not achieved.

Note: The phrasing of this indicator as quoted above was introduced at the first restructuring of May 2021, modifying the original phrasing "Improved MIS for enhanced data collection on forced displacement". This modification added clarity without changing the meaning of the indicator (Restructuring paper, page 16); therefore, it is reasonable to use the modified phrasing in the discussion of the Original Project.

9. "Number of meetings of the Technical Committee of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus at inter-ministerial level". The achievement at closure was 2 meetings, matching the target. The target was reached.



10. “Number of municipal councils consulting their refugee and local populations annually in developing their annual investment plans”. The achievement at closure was 15 councils, matching the target. The target was reached.

Project Management:

11. “Percentage of grievances registered, related to delivery of project benefits, are addressed”. The achievement at closure was 99 grievances, against the original target of 80 grievances. The target was exceeded by 23.8 percent.

12. “Share of beneficiaries interviewed that feel project investments reflected their needs”. The achievement at closure was 83 percent, against the original target of 80 percent. The target was exceeded by 3.8 percent.

PDO outcomes:

1. “Beneficiaries with improved access to community infrastructure (Number)”. The achievement at closure was 869,940 people, against the original target of 470,000 people. The target was significantly (by 85 percent) exceeded. The sub-target for refugees was 141,000 people, while the achievement at closure was 244,856 people; the sub-target was exceeded by 73.7 percent. The sub-target for women was 235,000, while the achievement at closure was 297,305; the sub-target was exceeded by 26.5 percent.

2. “Number of direct beneficiaries”. The achievement at closure was 1,126,037 people, against the original target of 1,000,000 people. The target was exceeded by 12.6 percent.

3. “Number of municipal annual investment plans incorporating risk management aspects, including needs of refugees and host communities”. The achievement at closure was 15 plans, the same as the original target. The target was reached. In relation to the institutional development objectives, the ICR noted that the Project addressed the capacity of 15 municipalities in decision making on the forced displacement (FD) crisis, and at Project closure, the beneficiary local governments were routinely including refugee and IDP needs into their planning and budgeting. Enhanced data collection and a data system for the FD-related identification and enlistment at the General Directorate of Civil Status and Refugees was developed. The local governments were provided with equipment and training. The Impact Evaluation demonstrated that the Project’s entrepreneurship package led to increased trust towards leaders (vertical cohesion) and the community (horizontal cohesion). (ICR, page 18)

Rating. The Original Project under Objective 1 almost fully achieved its objectives, and the efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. All five PDO indicator targets were exceeded or reached; and 10 out of 14 IRI targets were exceeded, reached, or significantly reached. Out of the four IRI targets that were not achieved or barely achieved, two were less important because they constituted sub-targets for an indicator which target was reached; and one (kilometers of built/rehabilitated roads) was not reached due to a deteriorated security situation in the Project areas.

Rating
Substantial



OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

To improve access to basic services for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of the Objective 1 ToC under Original Project.

The following list comprises indicators with targets that were modified at the first restructuring (May 2021). Only IRI indicator targets were modified.

IRI results:

Community Infrastructure:

1. Sub-indicator “Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works (Refugees)”. The revised sub-target was 7,700 people, while the achievement at closure was 2,331 people; the sub-target was 30.3 percent achieved (partially achieved).
2. Sub-indicator “Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works (Women)”. The revised sub-target was 2,300 people, while the achievement at closure was 2,076 people; the sub-target was 90.3 percent achieved (significantly achieved).
3. “Number of newly built or rehabilitated kilometer of rural roads”. The revised target was 150 kilometers, while the achievement was 66.5 kilometers; the target was 44.3 percent achieved (partially achieved).

Institutional Development:

4. “Number of meetings of the Technical Committee of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus at inter-ministerial level” The achievement at closure was 2 meetings, against the revised target of 3 meetings. The target was 60.6 percent achieved (partially achieved).

Rating. The Revision 1 Project under Objective 1 almost fully achieved its objectives, and the efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. All PDO indicator targets were achieved; and 10 out of 14 IRI targets were exceeded, reached, or significantly reached. Out of the four IRI targets that were not achieved or barely achieved, two were less important (in one case, it was a sub-targets for an indicator which target was reached; and in the other case, it was an output level indicator (number of meetings)), while one target (kilometers of built/rehabilitated roads) was not reached due to a deteriorated security situation in the Project areas (a force majeure factor).

Revised Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 2

Revised Objective



To improve access to basic services for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of the Objective 1 ToC under Original Project.

The following list comprises indicators with targets that were modified at the second restructuring (May 2022). Only IRI indicator targets were modified.

IRI results:

1. “Number of beneficiaries employed through labor-intensive works”. The achievement at closure was 16,070 people, against the revised target of 15,000 people. The target was exceeded. The revised sub-target for refugees was 3,000 people, while the achievement at closure was 2,331 people; the sub-target was 77.7 percent achieved (significantly achieved).

2. “Number of newly built or rehabilitated classrooms”. The achievement at closure was 148 classrooms, matching the revised target of 148 classrooms. The target was reached.

3. “Number of newly built or rehabilitated other infrastructure”. The achievement at closure was 99 sub-projects, against the revised target of 85 sub-projects. The target was exceeded.

4. “Number of newly built or rehabilitated kilometer of rural roads”. The achievement at closure was 66.5 kilometers, matching the revised target of 66.5 kilometers. The target was reached.

Rating. The Revision 2 Project under Objective 1 almost fully achieved its objectives, and the efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. All PDO indicator targets were achieved; and 12 out of 14 IRI targets were exceeded, reached, or significantly reached. While the Institutional Development PDO target was reached, both IRI targets that were not achieved were for Institutional Development indicators, reflecting that the Project had some challenges with the implementation of its institutional development activities.

Revised Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To improve access to economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

Rationale

The theory of change (ToC) for the Project was included in the PAD. It showed direct, logical causal links from inputs (activities) to outputs, to the intermediate outcomes, and to the PDO outcomes of the Project. To achieve Objective 2, the Project financed the following activity: support to agricultural production and entrepreneurship. The expected output of this activity was: increase in agricultural and income generating



activities. The achievement of this output was expected to lead to the following intermediate outcome: restored assets and improved productivity. The achievement of this intermediate outcome would ultimately result in the PDO outcome of improved access to economic opportunities.

The ToC provided a comprehensive picture of the logic of Project interventions, listing all main inputs and outputs, intermediate outcomes, and the PDO outcomes. Importantly, it also provided a detailed illustration of the links across the results chain, from inputs to outputs, to intermediate outcomes, and to the PDO outcomes, thus presenting the logic of the Project through specific cause-effect relationships. The ToC had a minor deficiency: the critical assumptions were not listed.

Rationale:

PDO outcome:

“Beneficiaries with improved access to economic opportunities (Number)”. The achievement at closure was 77,874 people, against the original target of 62,500 people. The target was exceeded by 24.6 percent. The sub-target for refugees was 31,250 people, while the achievement at closure was 31,047 people; the sub-target was 99.4 percent achieved (almost fully achieved). The sub-target for women was 31,250 people, while the achievement at closure was 34,254 people.

The ICR reported that the geographic scope was expanded to include three additional areas (1 in south Tahoua region, and 2 in the Maradi region) in response to the 2021-2022 acute food crisis. Impact Evaluation demonstrated that the beneficiaries enjoyed an increase in disposable household income by 6 percent on average, in livestock ownership by 17 percent, in profits from non-farm businesses by 5 percent, and in schooling expenses by 14 percent, while the outstanding debt decreased by 58 percent (ICR, page 17).

Note: This PDO indicator measured the same result as the IRI indicator “Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for agricultural production and other income-generating activities”, therefore, the discussion of these results has been combined. Also please note that the phrasing of this IRI indicator as quoted here was introduced at the first restructuring of May 2021, merging the original two indicators: “Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for agricultural production” and “Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for other income-generating activities”. This adjustment was made due to the following: (i) Project design promoting beneficiary-driven IGA choices (including across agricultural and non-agricultural activities); (ii) limited beneficiary access to land; and (iii) an overlap of inputs and activities across the agricultural and non-agricultural sub-components. This adjustment did not change the scope or ambition of the Project; therefore, it is reasonable to use the modified phrasing in the discussion of the Original Project while adding up the targets for the original two indicators.

Rating. The Original Project under Objective 2 almost fully achieved its objectives, and the efficacy rating is Substantial: all targets were either exceeded or almost fully reached (more than 99 percent of the target was achieved).

Rating
Substantial



OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

To improve access to economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of the Objective 2 ToC under Original Project.

The following list comprises indicators with targets that were modified at the first restructuring (May 2021) and the IRI that was added at the same time.

IRI result:

The new IRI “Number of cash grant recipients trained under the project”. The achievement at closure was 81,310 people, against the target of 62,500 people. The target was exceeded by 30.1 percent. The sub-target for refugees was 20,850 people, while the achievement at closure was 31,139 people; the sub-target was exceeded by 49.3 percent. The sub-target for women was 31,250 people, while the achievement at closure was 35,483 people; the sub-target was exceeded by 13.5 percent.

PDO outcome:

Sub-indicator “Beneficiaries with improved access to economic opportunities (Refugees) (Number)”. The revised sub-target was 20,850 people, while the achievement at closure was 31,047 people; the sub-target was 48.9 percent exceeded.

Note: This PDO sub-indicator measured the same result as the IRI sub-indicator “Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for agricultural production and other income-generating activities (Refugees)”, therefore, the discussion of these results has been combined.

Rating. The Revision 1 Project under Objective 2 fully achieved its objectives, and the efficacy rating is High. All targets were exceeded.

Revised Rating

High

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 2

Revised Objective

To improve access to economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in select areas of the Republic of Niger.

Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of the Objective 2 ToC under Original Project.

The following list comprises indicators with targets that were modified at the second restructuring (May 2022).



IRI result:

“Number of cash grant recipients trained under the project”. The achievement at closure was 81,310 people, against the revised target of 83,500 people. The target was 97.4 percent achieved (almost fully achieved). The revised sub-target for refugees was 23,500 people, while the achievement at closure was 31,139 people; the sub-target was exceeded by 32.5 percent. The revised sub-target for women was 41,750 people, while the achievement at closure was 35,483 people; the sub-target was 85.0 percent achieved (significantly achieved).

PDO outcome:

“Beneficiaries with improved access to economic opportunities (Number)”. The achievement at closure was 77,874 people, against the revised target of 83,500 people. The target was 93.3 percent achieved (significantly achieved). The revised sub-target for refugees was 23,500 people, while the achievement at closure was 31,047 people; the sub-target was exceeded by 32.1 percent. The revised sub-target for women was 41,750 people, while the achievement at closure was 34,254 people; the sub-target was 82.0 percent achieved (significantly achieved). ICR reported that while the second restructuring of May 2022 was accompanied by a significant increase in the Objective 2 targets, the ongoing activities could not be completed as per those targets by closing, “largely due to operational factors following the July 2023 coup d’etat” (ICR, page 18).

Note: This PDO indicator measured the same result as the IRI indicator “Number of beneficiaries provided with cash grants for agricultural production and other income-generating activities”, therefore, the discussion of these results has been combined.

Rating. The Revision 2 Project under Objective 2 almost fully achieved its objectives, and the efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. Both the PDO indicator targets and IRI targets were either exceeded or significantly achieved (a drop in performance as compared with the Original Project and Revision 1 Project under Objective 2): the target increase that was implemented at second restructuring of May 2022 across the Objective 2 PDO indicators and IRIs was not achievable due to the force majeure factors (coup d’etat).

Revised Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Original Project:

For the Original Project, the rating for efficacy is Substantial: under Objective 1, all PDO indicator targets were exceeded or reached, while almost all IRI targets were exceeded, reached, or significantly reached; and under Objective 2, all targets were either exceeded or more than 99 percent achieved.



Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale

Revision 1 Project:

For the Revision 1 Project, the efficacy rating is Substantial: under Objective 1, all PDO indicator targets were achieved, while almost all IRI targets were exceeded, reached, or significantly reached; and under Objective 2, all targets were exceeded.

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 2

Overall Efficacy Revision 2 Rationale

Revision 2 Project:

For the Revision 2 Project, the efficacy rating is Substantial: under Objective 1, all PDO indicator targets were achieved, while almost all IRI targets were exceeded, reached, or significantly reached; and under Objective 2, both the PDO indicator targets and IRI targets were either exceeded or significantly achieved.

Overall Efficacy Revision 2 Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic analysis

1. At appraisal, economic analysis estimated an economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 22 percent and the net present value (NPV) of US\$18.2 million. Sensitivity analyses provided EIRR estimates ranging from 16 percent to 20 percent. The analysis used a discount rate of 15 percent over 15 years. Since the EIRR was above the opportunity cost of capital (represented by the discount rate), the Project was expected to be economically viable. The benefits considered in the analysis were: (i) improved water supply and sanitation, reduced water collection time, increased time for schooling and work; (ii) greater access to health care and education, and related productivity gains; (iii) improved productivity and incomes due to newly constructed/rehabilitated economic infrastructure (roads, markets, irrigation, agricultural facilities); and (iv)



increased agricultural productivity due to the provision of improved inputs, restored productive assets, diversified livelihoods, and increased resilience to shocks. The economic analysis was rerun at the second restructuring, resulting in the EIRR of 24 percent and the NPV of US\$22.0 million.

2. At closure, the ex-post economic analysis replicated the ex-ante approach (including the 15 percent discount rate and accounting for the measurable benefits under Components 1 and 2) but used actual Project cost. The EIRR turned out to be 47 percent, and the NPV was US\$53.2 million. The ICR reported that the higher EIRR and NPV, as compared to the ex-ante results, are due to a significant increase in the number of Project beneficiaries (869,094 people versus 470,000 people originally targeted) and the lower than expected cost of Components 1 and 2.

Administrative efficiency

The Project was implemented within the original financing envelope and without extensions. The adjustments made to the RF targets were consistent with the adjustments of components and the reallocation of financing across components. Only one PDO indicator target (out of four) was revised. Project implementation experienced delays in the first two years following Project effectiveness. To resolve the underlying issues, the first restructuring of May 2021 involved a modification of the institutional arrangements: the day-to-day implementation and administration of the Project was transferred from the original implementing agency SE/SDS to the newly created SE/SDS's Technical Unit, comprising IDA consultants only, while contract approvals remained a responsibility of the SE/SDS. This modification was timely and led to increased Project efficiency. Overall, the two restructurings were effective and supported the reallocation of funds across components and adjustments to activities that were necessary considering the external factors (worsening security situation and political crisis (coup d'état)) while staying within the original overall Project design. The ICR underscored that the on-time delivery of expected results, with Project costs in line with regional benchmarks, was remarkable given the FCS operating context (ICR, page 19).

Considering economic efficiency, both at appraisal and at closure, and a strong implementation record, Project's efficiency is rated Substantial.

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	✓	22.00	86.30 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	47.00	86.10 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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



6. Outcome

	Original Project:	Revision 1 Project:	Revision 2 Project:
Relevance of objectives	High		
Efficacy:			
Objective 1	Substantial	Substantial	Substantial
Objective 2	Substantial	High	Substantial
Overall efficacy	Substantial	Substantial	Substantial
Efficiency	Substantial		
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Outcome value	5	5	5
Amount disbursed (US\$ mn)	13.40	47.95	73.91
Disbursement percentage	18.1%	46.7%	35.1%
Weight value	0.91	2.34	1.76
Total weight	5.00		
Overall outcome rating	Satisfactory		

The Overall Project Outcome rating is Satisfactory because all three projects – Original, Revision 1, and Revision 2 – were rated as Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Institutional. The original Project design envisaged capacity building within the SE/SDS, followed by a full transfer of Project management to the SE/SDS in the third year of implementation. However, the capacity building efforts were not successful, and the SE/SDS could not take on the responsibilities for Project management. Low institutional capacity creates a risk to the sustainability of Project outcomes, as it relates to maintaining the built/renovated infrastructure and to a continued support for the creation of economic opportunities at the community level.

Financial. The infrastructure built or rehabilitated under Component 1 will need regular maintenance to remain functional. Government capacity to finance maintenance is limited, and without continued donor support, there is a risk to the operational quality of the infrastructure.

Political. The volatile political situation and increased violence in specific areas of the country prevented the Project from implementing some of the planned activities in the locations with reduced security. The July 2023 coup d'état overthrew a democratically elected regime and triggered the WB's OP 7.30 "Dealings with De Facto Governments", which remained in place at Project closure. This political situation and the FCS



context of the country's development creates a risk to the sustainability of the outcomes of development assistance overall and of the reviewed Project in particular.

Government ownership/commitment. The July 2023 coup d'état and a related change in government created a risk to a continued support of the Project objectives and to its outcomes' sustainability.

Exposure to natural disasters. The Project was affected by natural disasters, including flooding which had a damaging impact on six Project sites (communes). In 2021/2022, a delayed rainy season negatively affected the harvest, contributing to the food crisis in all Project's regions. Considering climate change, such events are expected to increase in both severity and frequency, creating a risk to both Component 1 and Component 2 outcomes.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The ICR reported that quality at entry was adequate. The Project's design followed a three-pronged approach that was effective in the FCS context and mitigated tensions between forcibly displaced people and host communities. Project design utilized: (i) a spatial approach that was status blind, (ii) evidence-based decision making to identify investments, and (iii) a participatory approach that engaged all stakeholders. Project design integrated international lessons from operating in an FCS context. Lessons taken into account in Project design included the following: a simple, realistic design; stakeholder inclusion; consideration of the political economy and investment sustainability; and strategic sequencing of preparatory activities, including robust preparatory studies to identify intervention sites and establish pre-prioritized investments lists via geo-location. The Project collaborated effectively across sectors within the WB, and with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), inter-ministerial government entities, and local governments. The usage of a robust Geo-enabled Monitoring and Evaluation System (GEMS) supported timely decision making. The Project's design anticipated implementation challenges, equipping Project implementation with flexibility and agility to make and execute adjustments and still achieve expected outcomes. (ICR, page 26)

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The ICR reported that the supervision was effective and adequate for the FCS operating context and transient beneficiary group; the WB team successfully implemented both restructurings and adjusted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team was able to efficiently operate in the FCS context and adapt the Project as required during the July 2023 political crisis (coup d'état). The team was proactive in flagging implementation issues and proposing mitigation measures to adapt to the changing context. Fifteen missions were conducted over the 5-year implementation period; regular bi-monthly progress meetings and technical component meetings took place; and the Aide Memoires and the Implementation Status and



Results Reports (ISRs) were produced timely, providing candid and detailed progress updates. The team composition was stable, with the same TTL and the core team throughout Project duration. The team included members with a solid FCS working experience. The Project was closed on time and implemented within the original financing envelope.

However, there were two deficiencies. *First*, the Project experienced delays in the first two years of implementation, mainly due to the inefficient original implementation arrangement. *Second*, there was a procurement-related deficiency, and during an 18-month period from May 2020 to November 2021, the rating for procurement was Moderately Unsatisfactory due to persistent shortcomings. Both issues were successfully addressed during the first restructuring of May 2021: the new implementation structure supported improved Project efficiency, and the procurement rating increased to Moderately Satisfactory and further to Satisfactory, which was maintained during the last year of implementation.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The original RF reflected the logic of Project interventions in the PAD and was linked to the PDO and the ToC. The ToC was sound and reflective of the RF. The objectives of the Project were clearly specified, and the indicators encompassed both PDO objectives (outcomes). All RF indicators had baselines, targets, and were time-bound. The M&E plan was well defined. The ICR stated that the RF was simple and well-designed and used a relatively small number of well-defined and relevant performance indicators, enabling data collection, monitoring, and analysis (ICR, page 24). The indicators mostly remained unchanged during implementation: only one IRI was added; one IRI slightly rephrased for clarity; and two IRIs were merged into one, mainly to reflect the beneficiaries' preferences under Component 2 community sub-projects' implementation. The indicator targets were also set at an adequate level, and their adjustment during the two restructurings was applied mostly in relation to the security situation and the related need to cancel some of the Component 1 activities while increasing activities under Component 2.

b. M&E Implementation

The ICR reported that during implementation, M&E systems were applied as per the original design and adjusted as appropriate. The modifications to the RF strengthened the Project's results tracking to align targets with expected outcomes, without changing the overall RF logic. Institutional responsibility for M&E was clearly established at appraisal, with the Project Technical Unit (PTU) given the responsibility for information collection and reporting through regional PTUs. The Project considered the security situation and used the enhanced Geo-enabled Monitoring and Evaluation System (GEMS) and its Kobo Tools Box, allowing for a remote digital data collection. The Project invested in training and equipment of local



entities to use GEMS, avoiding travel for M&E data collection to sites in the areas of low security. GEMS reporting was complemented by routine PTU monitoring (while considering the level of security), in close coordination with UNHCR, enabling Project results to be consolidated across intervention sites and regions. (ICR, page 24)

c. M&E Utilization

The ICR reported that the M&E system enabled robust, systemic tracking of Project progress and was able to flag key issues for rapid remediating actions. It was used to inform Project management and decision making in a timely manner, enabling reporting of all 18 Project sites (including 11 fragile and difficult to reach sites). The data were reported up to the central level, and the GIS maps were regularly updated to monitor Project activities across the 1,185 georeferenced sites for monthly implementation progress. GEMS helped increase the accountability of reporting and provided a platform for real time monitoring, backup, and sub-project mapping. The Project's M&E data also supported the IDA19 Prevention and Resilience Allocation (PRA) for Niger. (ICR, page 25)

Given the well designed RF, as well as use of innovative tools such as GEMS for remote data collection and GIS maps given the security situation, the M&E quality is rated as High.

M&E Quality Rating

High

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Environmental and Social Safeguards. At appraisal, the Project was classified as Environmental Category B-Partial Assessment due to the small-scale infrastructure works under Component 1 and the provision of agricultural inputs under Component 2. The following safeguard policies were triggered: OP 4.01 "Environmental Assessment" (due to the works involved in the sub-projects under Component 1), OP 4.09 "Pest Management", OP/BP 4.11 Physical Cultural Resources, and OP/BP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Project Pest Management Plan (PPMP), and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) were prepared, reviewed, cleared by the Bank and the Government, and disclosed on June 7, 2018, prior to Project appraisal. (PAD, page 37). The Project complied with the safeguards during implementation, resulting in a consistent Satisfactory rating (ICR, page 25)

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management (FM). The ICR reported that the Project demonstrated continuous FM compliance. The FM rating was mainly Satisfactory throughout Project implementation, and appropriate control procedures were in place. The rating was Moderately Satisfactory once, prior to the first restructuring; this was due to the following: (i) the Project's weak financial performance (9.3% disbursement rate in



November 2020); (ii) a qualified audit opinion for the Project preparation advance; and (iii) the absence of a monitoring system to identify overdue justified advances. These weaknesses were addressed by May 2021 (the date of the first restructuring), and full financial management compliance (with a Satisfactory rating) was reestablished and maintained until Project closure. (ICR, page 25)

Procurement. The ICR reported that the procurement rating fluctuated during Project implementation. While the rating was Moderately Satisfactory from April 2022 to July 2022 and Satisfactory from November 2022 to the Project’s closure in September 2023, previously, there was an 18-month period from May 2020 to November 2021 when it was Moderately Unsatisfactory due to persistent shortcomings, including the following: (i) untimely bid evaluations by the PTU, mainly due to the unclear division of responsibilities between the PTU and the line ministry, and the limited availability of the members of the bid evaluation committees, which were appointed by the ministry; (ii) weak PTU capacity to manage the procurement plan via the WB’s STEP system; and (iii) the PTU’s excessive workload of preparing two other WB operations in 2019-2021. After the first restructuring in May 2021, procurement responsibilities were clarified; the PTU’s management of contracts and STEP improved; and the PTU’s workload reduced as the other two operations took effect. In addition, throughout its preparation and implementation, the Project was affected by the following shortcoming in the WB procurement performance, partially explained by a high turnover of the WB procurement staff: limited responsiveness and delays in approval of procurement plans, PTU recruitments, and completion of prior reviews of procurement documents for larger contracts.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

d. Other

11. Ratings

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

12. Lessons

The following lessons were derived from the ICR (based on ICR, pages 27-28):

1. In the FCS context, a geo-spatial/area-based approach to project monitoring and execution, supported by innovative technologies and integrated in project decision making, can be an effective project implementation tool. In the reviewed Project, such approach proved



to be highly effective and provided several benefits: supported Project flexibility and ability to adapt to the changing security environment; protected against the possibility of influential stakeholders directing investments according to their interests; gave the locally elected officials (e.g., mayors) an opportunity to justify investment choices to their constituents; and provided a secure and efficient way to transfer cash to beneficiaries in fragile areas. In order to have timely local information about the dynamic security and forced displacement situation in its sites and quickly adapt to it, the Project, while operating in three regional implementation offices, used the innovative robust Geo-enabled Monitoring and Evaluation System (GEMS) as a design and implementation tool.

GEMS helped to identify the location, sector, and size of the infrastructure investments and IGAs, and later provided real time observations of the Project sites, supporting the need to swiftly switch sites due to a growing insecurity and/or beneficiary abandonment of the sites. Use of a nation-wide telecommunication operator for mobile cash transfers allowed the Project to efficiently expand its geographic reach and increase the number of the IGA activities' beneficiaries.

2. In the FCS environment, well-designed procurement documents that integrate the cost of operating in low security situations, use standard construction designs, and are transparent regarding security, can be essential to attracting private sector companies with a solid knowledge of the local context and market-competitive pricing. The reviewed Project used high-quality procurement documents, with a breakdown of works by infrastructure type (education, health, water infrastructure, etc.) and by municipality; and the bidding documents and contracts that integrated security costs and were financially viable. The use of standard Nigerien infrastructure designs promoted timely infrastructure completion, effective operations and maintenance (O&M) and repairs with materials available at local markets, at local prices and with local know-how. As a result, the Project attracted responsible service providers who delivered results.

3. Empowerment and engagement of the communities and the government (central, regional, local) during project preparation and implementation can promote project sustainability through increased ownership and strengthened state presence in fragile areas. In the reviewed Project, government and community ownership of investments was critical for the sustainability of Project outcomes, as it helped to strengthen State presence in fragile areas, thus stabilizing them. This was achieved via various means, including: signing of the Project-related memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with the central and local authorities; provision of office equipment and capacity training for government entities; provision of access to IGAs resulting in increased disposable household incomes and enhanced socioeconomic activities; provision of market infrastructure resulting in boosted local government revenues; and the use of a public lottery to finalize beneficiary lists for the labor intensive public works and the GEMS-based investments, which supported the legitimacy of related decisions.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR



The ICR provides sufficient technical details to understand the value-added of the activities and the outcomes of the Project; a good justification of the PDO relevance; comprehensive and robust evidence on most aspects of Project's evaluation; and a clear linking of evidence to findings. The ICR is technical, analytical, and has internal consistency. The lessons learned are linked to the narrative and the ratings and are useful for future lending operations in the FCS context. A minor deficiency is that the ICR's efficacy analysis is not entirely clear: while a split evaluation is applied (as appropriate), there is no separate discussion of the original and revised projects, making the analysis somewhat confusing. However, overall, the ICR provides candid and analytical discussion of the Project's achievements and deficiencies, and therefore, the Quality of ICR is rated as Substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial