



<b>1. Project Data :</b>
<b>OEDID:</b> C2122
<b>Project ID:</b> P001968
<b>Project Name:</b> National Agricultural Research Project
<b>Country:</b> Republic of Niger
<b>Sector:</b> Research
<b>L/C Number:</b> Cr. 2122-NIR
<b>Partners involved :</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b> Ridley Nelson, OEDST
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Madhur Gautam
<b>Group Manager:</b> Gregory Ingram
<b>Date Posted:</b> 08/05/1999

**2. Project Objectives, Financing, Costs and Components :**  
*Total Project Costs at Appraisal: US \$28.0 m; Total Project Costs Actual: US \$22.08 m; IDA Financed at Appraisal: US \$19.9 m equivalent; IDA Financed Actual: US \$20.4 m equivalent. Originally a five-year project, it closed seven and a half years after effectiveness.*

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen national capacity for agriculture research planning and implementation. More specific objectives were: to improve priority setting and resource allocation methodology; to improve coordination in the formulation and execution of national and international agricultural research programs; to improve research programming, budgeting and financial management; to improve staff planning, training, recruitment and career development; and, to strengthen linkages between research, extension services and farmers through the on-farm adaptive research and participatory research programs. In 1997 the basic development objective was adjusted, but without a formal restructuring, to: strengthening the National Agricultural Research Institute's (INRAN) capacity for the development of improved technologies that would raise productivity and increase the income of farmers on a sustainable basis. This was a response to concerns that insufficient attention to technology development and technology transfer was embodied in the original objectives.

Main components were: improvements to INRAN's basic network of research centers, with emphasis on existing facilities, and on the physical infrastructure at INRAN headquarters; technical assistance and staff training; equipment vehicles and supplies and the operating and maintenance costs associated with the implementation of the priority research programs; equipment and operating costs needed by research staff for the periodic training of extension staff and for the implementation of the off-station adaptive research program. Accompanying reforms included: a change in the statute of INRAN defining its relationship with government; and, reorganization of INRAN redefining technical and financial responsibilities.

**3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives :**  
 With respect to the initial capacity building objective, outcome was unsatisfactory. There were some achievements in the areas of research planning, research coordination, financial management, staff training, research extension linkages, and civil works. However, the project failed to establish an efficient agricultural research institution with autonomous management of its staff, as well as its funds. The project did not achieve effective statutes and by-laws and well functioning governance bodies. More specifically: the capacity building objectives of the project were partially achieved. Several governance bodies were established but most did not function effectively for various reasons including limited farmer representation on the management council. Improvement of coordination in the formulation and execution of research was substantially achieved. Five multidisciplinary research programs were created. Improvement of research planning, budgeting and financial management was only partially achieved. A long-term strategic plan and one medium-term plan were prepared. However no forum was setup to coordinate donor interventions. Achievement of the objectives was constrained by lack of a budget line for each research project. Implementation was slowed by long delays in procurement. Improvement of staff planning, training and recruitment was partially achieved. A human resource management unit was established. However, most important for long term development impact, government did not adopt the proposed statute which would have allowed INRAN to hire, reward and fire staff independently. The project was allowed to become effective without properly fulfilling a

condition of effectiveness related to this issue .

#### 4. Significant Achievements :

The first hybrid sorghum for the Sahel with high yield potential (3 to 4 tons under average 400mm) was produced. A number of other high yielding and the drought tolerant cultivars were developed . The three international consultants to help INRAN plan the research programs and mentor junior scientists made a significant contribution . Support from international scientists through collaborative research programs and networks was a major determinant in the improvement of research output.

#### 5. Significant Shortcomings :

Project management was often rated as satisfactory by supervision missions, but was questionable . Overall management of the project by INRAN was weak during the first four years . In particular, procurement performance was very poor. Notwithstanding an original intention to plan within the financial and management constraints of the system, counterpart funding problems slowed the implementation of the training program and the recruitment of consultants. Amendment to the credit agreement in 1995 to waive the 14 percent counterpart funds required for training and consultants improved the situation . The failure to adopt the statutes related to autonomous management resulted in many scientists leaving the Institute for more rewarding jobs in international institutions and in the West Africa region. The scientific director changed seven times during the 8 years of project implementation. M&E was poorly planned and poorly implemented . No sustainable funding mechanism was included in project design which would have enabled the Institute to generate revenues and cover at least part of its costs . The project is clearly unsustainable. Project design was weak with no clear definition of the type of research institution expected and no indicators for expected minimum research output . Bank supervision was weak, there were only nine supervision missions over 8 years. The midterm review was late.

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
<b>Outcome :</b>	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	
<b>Institutional Dev .:</b>	Partial	Modest	
<b>Sustainability :</b>	Unlikely	Unlikely	
<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Deficient	Unsatisfactory	
<b>Borrower Perf .:</b>	Deficient	Unsatisfactory	
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		Satisfactory	

#### 7. Lessons of Broad Applicability :

1. Real farmer participation in the development of a research agenda and in the allocation of research funds is important. 2. Cost recovery mechanisms, even if on a modest initial scale, should be incorporated into project design to ensure some movement towards financial sustainability . 3. A special procurement commission (used in the last year of this project) can help with chronic procurement delays . 4. Conditions for effectiveness, once allowed to pass, are unlikely to be adopted during project implementation . 5. Lack of results-based performance indicators from the outset can contribute to a lack of clear understanding of project objectives across changing project managers and within the borrowing country and can result in a narrow view, and reduced continuity, in supervision .

8. Audit Recommended?  Yes  No

#### 9. Comments on Quality of ICR :

Satisfactory. the lessons section is particularly well done . The rating of deficient Bank performance in appraisal and supervision shows fair and balanced judgment . Some attempt at an economic analysis would have been possible . As with most ICR's, the future operations section is weak .