



Irish Red Cross

ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY, IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS, AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN NIGER:

Consolidating and expanding IRC's livelihood and food security activities among highly vulnerable households and communities

Zinder Region, Niger

2015 PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	2
<u>Problem Statement</u>	4
<u>Food Insecurity and Vulnerability</u>	5

Past and current IRC programming	9
Coordination and Strategic Alignment	10
Programme Narrative	11
Project Area / Location	11
Beneficiary Identification	14
Village Diagnostic	14
Goal and Objectives	15
Programme Areas and Activities	15
Livelihoods and Food Security	15
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	17
Capacity Building	17
Cross-cutting issues	18
Security	18
Gender	20
Sustainability	21
M&E Goals	22
M+E Framework	23
M+E Resources	24
Programme Management and Implementation	24
Organizational Capacity	24
Implementation Team	24
Programme staff	24
Volunteers	26
Technical Support	26
Niger Red Cross Society (NRCS)	27
IFRC and Red Cross/Red Crescent partners	27
World Food Programme	28
Nigerien Government Agencies	28
Annex 1: Niger Background and Context	29
Background and Context	29
Niger Overview	29
Government	29
Demographics, Health and Education	30
Drought and Environmental Change	30
Annex 2: Logframe	32

Annex 3: Timeline

Executive Summary

Niger is one of the poorest countries in Sahelian West Africa. More than 75% of the population live in an estimated 40 % of the national territory. Most Nigeriens rely directly or indirectly on agro-pastoralism or agriculture for their livelihood. Food insecurity, drought, flood, insect infestations, animal disease and civil unrest have periodically pushed families and communities beyond their abilities to cope.

The Irish Red Cross (IRC) has been working in Niger since 2005, and has been implementing livelihood and capacity building programmes since 2008. The IRC works in close collaboration with the Red Cross Society of Niger, Belgian Red Cross, local institutional partners, communities and individuals to reduce food insecurity and to build strong and sustainable livelihoods among some of Niger's most poor and vulnerable populations. The IRC programming in Niger is aimed at improving livelihoods, ensuring food security, and strengthening families' abilities to cope and adapt to the highly risk and disaster prone environment.

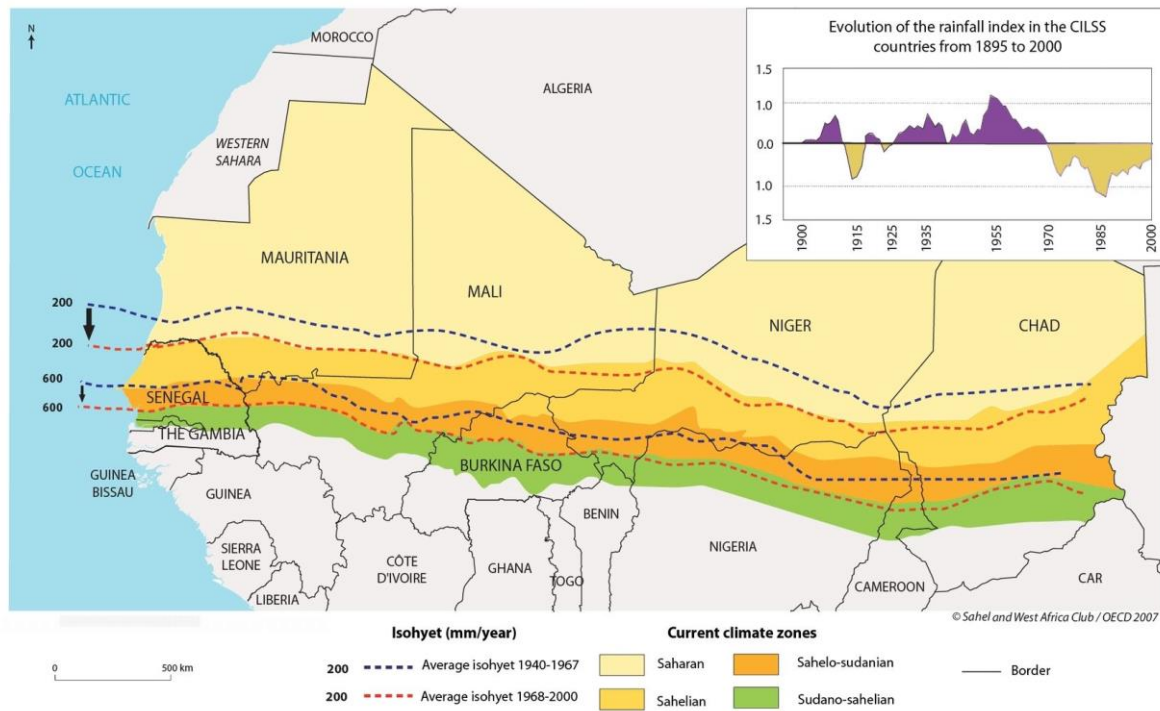
Since 2008 the IRC has responded to the significant needs in Tanout and Belbéji Departments in Zinder region and has developed exceptional knowledge and relationships with local institutions, local leaders and the local population. The IRC has directly reached the populations of 75 different communities, impacting directly more than 5% of the total population of Tanout department (close to 30,000 people in over 5000 households). The 2015 programme consolidates ongoing work while extending activities to provide additional assistance to vulnerable households in identified beneficiary communities in Tanout, Belbéji and Gouré districts.

The programme focuses on livelihoods and institutional and community capacity-building. As well as water and sanitation initiatives, it provides ongoing support, monitoring, and evaluation to communities and activities established since 2008 in Tanout and Belbeji (including cereal banks, safe water wells, habbanae goat production), while establishing activities in communities in Gouré.

Key programme objectives:

- 1) Improve food security in the divisions of Tanout and Belbedji through animal breeding (habannaé) in 22 of the 30 former villages supported by IRC and 15 new villages in Gouré department.
- 2) Maintenance and functioning of cereal banks and management committees, identification of communities for new/rehabilitated cereal banks and cereal distribution.
- 3) Reduce labour burden on women and girls, through higher efficiency wood stoves and tree planting for fuel wood.
- 4) Contribute to environmental protection through land recuperation.
- 5) Improve access to potable water and reduce water borne diseases and death related to water, hygiene and sanitation in targeted communities
- 6) Strengthen capacity of the Niger Red Cross Society and local communities to undertake activities to reduce food insecurity and prepare for and respond to emergencies.
- 7) Consolidate past activities and provide ongoing monitoring and support to ensure long-term sustainability.

The 2015 programme reflects the IRC commitment to sustained, long-term engagement, as well as a multi-sectoral approach to tackle the many roots of insecurity. The programme is focused on reducing vulnerability and building sustainable livelihoods for the medium to long term, and includes provisions for preparing communities and institutions to better respond to emergencies.



Source: Agrymet Regional Centre (ARC), SWAC / OECD Isohyet (mm/year) Current climate zones © Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD

Problem Statement

Niger consistently ranks among the poorest countries in the world and is one of the countries most affected by natural disasters; since 2010, nearly one in ten Nigeriens are regularly affected by natural disasters.¹

Up to 90% of the population depends directly or indirectly on agro-pastoralism for livelihood and food security, and increasingly frequent and erratic climatic shocks push many Nigeriens to the limit of their coping abilities. According to recent UN OCHA reports, more than 2 million households in Niger suffer from *chronic* food insecurity. Food prices continue to rise and diseases like cholera are a persistent threat.²

A humanitarian trend analysis in 2012³ described a bleak scenario:

1. High likelihood of food prices increasing at the regional and international level. This will directly impact each country and decrease food accessibility for vulnerable populations.
2. Likely decrease in security due to armed groups in Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria. This will directly impact on food accessibility of the affected population.
3. Potential decrease of cereal availability in markets in Niger, due to social and economic tension in Nigeria.
4. On-going decline in the amount of remittances usually received due to economic crisis in Europe/North Africa and return of economic migrants from Libya/Cote d'Ivoire.

Attempts to meet the increasing food needs of a growing population on limited arable land with outdated farming practices and poor access to high quality seeds and agricultural inputs

¹UNDP disasterstatistics : www.undp.org

²OCHA report accessed at reliefweb : <http://reliefweb.int/node/466260>

³Humanitarian Dashboard Sahel, January 2012, OCHA: <http://reliefweb.int/country/ner>

has led to a deterioration in soil fertility, overgrazing of pastureland, and conflict over land and water resources. Exploitation of wood resources (for cooking and sale) further deteriorates the productive capacity of the land and accelerates desertification.

To avoid or minimize the impacts of climatic and other shocks on vulnerable populations in Niger there is a clear and ongoing need for programming that builds long-term household and community resilience, food security, and sustainable livelihoods, which the IRC provides.

Food Insecurity and Vulnerability

Structural and acute food insecurity is a reality in Niger. Food insecurity in the Sahelian zone is not new, but a number of factors have combined to increase the vulnerability and number of affected families and individuals. These are: a declining economy largely based on subsistence agriculture; high population growth rates putting increased pressure on limited resources; poor coverage of basic services, leading to a population that suffers from poor health and nutrition status; limited education and restricted access to existing services; poverty; political instability and related population movements; susceptibility to regional and global economic pressures; and sensitivity to agro-ecological stresses.

Vulnerability surveys and needs assessments have shown that the roots of food insecurity in Niger are multidimensional and include both failures related to supply (agro-pastoral production and distribution) and demand (purchasing power)⁴. A number of key interrelated problems need to be considered when understanding and responding:

Environmental Change

- Increasingly frequent and severe climatic shocks: much of Niger falls within the semi-arid to arid Sahelian eco-region. Water availability is limited even in the best of years, and women and children routinely spend hours each day obtaining water for domestic and agricultural use. When available, water is not always safe for consumption and contributes to disease and poor health. During drought years, water shortages lead to the failure of crops and the death of animals.
- Deforestation: Trees are removed at increased rates to satisfy demands for fuel wood (both for personal household use and to be sold on local markets to generate small revenues). Reduction of tree cover reduces protection of arable land from heavy rainfall and windstorms, resulting in increased soil erosion and decreased productivity; it reduces transpiration, and affects micro-climates.

As fuel wood resources are depleted manure is increasingly used as a fuel source; the manure is no longer available to fertilise soils, leading to reduced soil fertility and reduced yields.

- Crop and fodder production is vulnerable to insect infestations, including locusts, which can destroy entire crops in the region. Mono-cropping and heavy reliance on a few staples mean that a severe outbreak can devastate food and fodder crops, dramatically increasing food insecurity.

Population Growth

⁴The main sources of information and analysis to measure levels of vulnerability are the Institute for National Statistics (*Institut National de la Statistique du Niger*) and the Niger Government's Early Warning System (*Système d'Alerte Précoce*), working in partnership with United Nations (UN) agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Niger has one of the world's fastest growing populations, at 3.9% following the last population census results in 2012. Large families have traditionally been important to provide labour for domestic and agro-pastoral activities. Progress has been made in reducing child and infant mortality but as the population expands, increasing pressure is placed on the already stressed resource base. Reducing population growth is key to Niger's long-term development and depends largely on improving the conditions and opportunities for women. Greater opportunities for schooling (especially for girls) and improvements in standards of living contribute to declines in fertility rates, and improved maternal and child health.

National and Regional Instability

A basic coping strategy of many Nigeriens is to migrate for wage labour. Remittances provide an essential contribution to many household economies (for food, agricultural inputs, school costs, or healthcare expenses). Unrest in Nigeria, Libya, Mali and the Central African Republic means that many Nigeriens are unable to earn cash. Traditional migrant populations are forced to return to or to remain in Niger. The Boko Haram insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria has led to upwards of 100,000 people (many of them Niger nationals) fleeing into the Diffa region of Niger. Instability also affects cross-border trade. Niger is less able to import many of the staples upon which it relies in times of shortage. Increasing pressure on the land and water resources threatens to increase tension between the various communities, and conflict between pastoralists (nomadic) and agro-pastoralists (sedentary villagers) is not uncommon.

(Negative) Coping Strategies

Nigeriens have developed a range of coping strategies to deal with the difficult and unpredictable environment, but most households exist on the margins. These include reducing in number and size of meals and/or diversity of foods consumed, asset depletion, tree-cutting for firewood and charcoal sales⁵. Education suffers: children are pulled out of school and put to work to earn money for food.⁶ Seasonal migration is a common strategy, and often results in women and children being left particularly vulnerable. Limited means of generating income and little or no access to external financial support compounds their precarious position. While migration is common, a study conducted by the IRC and the NRCS shows that although many families are dependent on remittances, approximately 90% of community members remain at home when local resources and means of livelihood are sufficient to meet needs; that is to say that migration is not preferred or desirable for the vast majority of Nigeriens.

Livelihoods are intricately linked to food security: stresses on livelihood systems increase the pressure on the food security system and a food security crisis, in turn, weakens the structural situation, in terms of both poverty and food security, in these principal ways⁷:

- Livestock losses, poor agricultural productivity and migration (often seasonal) become evident. A food insecure household is likely to include the following weaknesses: food stocks to last for less than four months directly after harvest; very few livestock; an income lower than 200 FCFA (0,30 €)/person/day; no access to a diverse and nutritional range of food.
- Households with limited production capacity and other sources of income, and insufficient stocks have less capacity to obtain sufficient, nutritious food. In remote areas, it is difficult for buyers and sellers to reach markets. As people consume a less diverse

⁵Aker et al. discuss household coping strategies. Such negative coping mechanisms have also been routinely observed by IRC's field staff.

⁶Reports from Save the Children working in Niger, 2012

⁷*Plan National de Contingence: Volet Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle, République du Niger Cabinet du Premier Ministre, November 2007.*

range of food their health and nutritional status suffers, as does their capacity to be productive. Coping strategies worsen the situation, with households selling assets including crops and reproductive livestock. When such strategies are regularly used during the lean season, external shocks can push these household from chronic into acute food insecurity.

Six groups at the household level in Niger are considered to be particularly vulnerable to food insecurity:⁸

1. Small-scale agriculturalists with limited land;
2. Small-scale pastoralists with few livestock;
3. Agro-pastoralists and pastoralists who are becoming sedentary and have little land and few livestock;
4. Pregnant and lactating women, especially when they are single parents;
5. Populous households and especially children;
6. Female-headed households, where the balance between productive activities and household tasks is uneven (not enough time for productive activities).

Children under the age of five, as well as the elderly are also exposed to poor nutrition, especially in conjunction with poverty and lack of integration in family and community networks. Widows and widowers are often highly vulnerable, particularly when they are responsible for small children, and when they are lacking familial or community support networks (due to migration, for instance). The status of women is low in Niger and leads to specific vulnerabilities; this can be exacerbated during times when the men typically leave to take livestock to water/pasture or in search of seasonal labour.

Integrated solutions

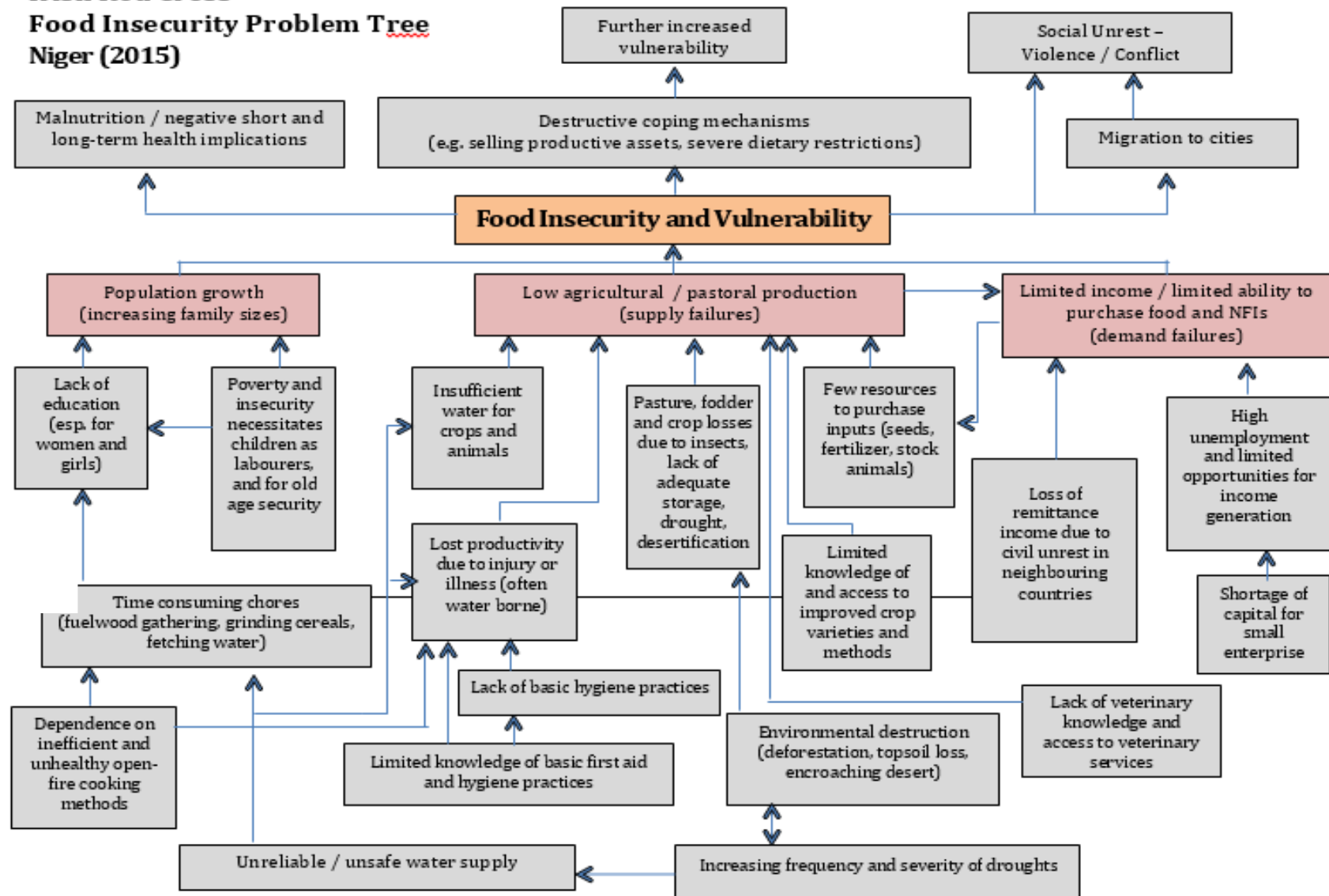
Food security depends on *availability, access, and utilization*. The following page shows a problem tree for the target area, with the roots of food insecurity. The IRC programming in Niger recognizes the complexity and multiple causes of food insecurity, and aims to address specific core issues identified through needs assessments and discussions with individuals, community leaders and local and regional government officials.

In addition to specific needs related to agricultural production, water and sanitation and livelihood opportunities, supporting resilience and longer-term food security requires:

- ✓ Strong relationships built on trust
- ✓ Reliable partnerships with local institutions and government
- ✓ Ongoing support and commitment beyond short one-off interventions
- ✓ A focus on building individual, household and institutional capacity

⁸Identified by the *Programme Complet de Sécurité Alimentaire (PCSA)* and described in the *Plan National De Contingence. Volet Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle*, November 2007.

Irish Red Cross
Food Insecurity Problem Tree
Niger (2015)



Past and current IRC programming

The IRC has been active in Niger since 2005, when it intervened in the Agadez region during the food crises. Food and cash distributions were implemented in partnership with the British Red Cross (BRC), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and Niger Red Cross Society (NRCS).

Since 2008, the IRC has implemented integrated community-based programming focused on improving livelihoods and increasing long-term food security, primarily in Zinder region. From 2008-2014, the IRC provided assistance (both direct and indirect) to over 120,000 individuals across 75 communities in Tanout and Belbéji departments with a range of interventions, identified and prioritized by local communities.

In 2013 a consortium was established between the Belgian and Irish Red Cross Societies, to collaborate on and expand the reach of activities in Niger. In October 2013 the Belgian Government Development Cooperation (DGD) approved an 18 month proposal with co-funding from IRC (Irish Aid/IFRC agreement) to expand Livelihood activities to a further 15 communities in the Tanout region. Belgian Lottery also allocated funds to construct three Cereal Banks in communities where IRC is present. An additional three year Community Resilience project proposal, targeting the Kiéché community in the Dosso Region (South-West), (with co-funding from IRC) was approved by the Belgian Government DGD fund. A 24 month project was submitted in June 2015 to the Belgian government for the expansion of our activities in Gouré department. The project was approved in late August 2015 with an anticipated start date of 1 November. The 2015 Niger programme is also supported by Land Rover (construction of water systems in two communities), Electric Aid Ireland (to stock cereal banks; distribute fuel-efficient stoves; and to repair a well) and a private donation (to stock cereal banks).

Previous programme outputs include:

- 15 boreholes constructed and 4 rehabilitated; 10 wells constructed and 4 rehabilitated, to improve access to drinking water for more than 33,780 people in 30 communities. In 2014 a pilot project was launched to construct a mini water tower to supply three communities. This will be completed in early 2015.
- Construction and/or rehabilitation of 51 cereal banks (for grain storage) along with training and technical support for management committees, directly benefiting 9,708 members and their families.
- Support to the development of expertise and sustainability of animal husbandry in 75 communities through the distribution of over 5,453 goats and the training of 75 animal health technicians.
- Diversification of vegetable and crop production for about 6,000 people in 75 communities through drip irrigation and distribution of 33.4 tons of improved seeds to 2,118 households.
- Environmental protection and restoration by planting 13,797 trees, preparing and managing 76 km of firebreaks and promoting the use of locally made fuel-efficient stoves.
- Emergency cash transfer and cash for work operations with more than 5,000 direct beneficiaries.
- Training of 966 Niger Red Cross Society (NRCS) volunteers on diverse topics (project management and income generating activities as well as report, communication and mobilization skills).
- Training of 150 community-based focal points on core themes: Hygiene/sanitation, Red Cross movement; community mobilization.

The IRC has also developed expertise and capability to respond to emergencies: in 2010, in partnership with the UN WFP, the IRC leveraged its strong presence within the region to successfully carry out an emergency food distribution for over 130,000 individuals. The IRC also partnered with UN FAO to distribute seeds and provide technical advice to thousands of farmers in the region to help them cope with the devastating agricultural losses following severe drought. In addition, a cash transfer programme (CtP) was conducted in early 2012.

Lessons from working in Niger

Through many years of working in Niger the IRC has learned important lessons that inform the current programme design:

- ✓ The roots of household and community insecurity are many and cannot effectively be addressed through a single intervention; mutually reinforcing interventions that target multiple issues (agricultural production, water supply, sanitation, capacity, etc.) are needed.
- ✓ Engaging with both traditional authorities and government officials is important to acceptance and local ownership – relationships are key, and it is important to make longer-term commitments.
- ✓ Women are key to achieving long-term improvements in food-security and livelihoods, and must be actively engaged and directly targeted in programme activities.
- ✓ Migration is common and must be expected; thus flexibility in implementation (including plans for training new community focal points, for instance), is critical.
- ✓ The need to include an education component in support of capacity building of programme component management committees.
- ✓ The need to have flexibility and adaptability to be positioned to respond to more frequent occurrence of emergency situations.
- ✓ The need to retain a longer term perspective including continuous monitoring of previous programme activities.
- ✓ The importance of the added value of an adult literacy component to the success of activities

Coordination and Strategic Alignment

The Niger Country Programme is a core programme of the IRC and is guided by its ‘The Way to 2018’ Strategy. The goals and objectives of the Niger programme are informed by learning from within and outside the organization and are aligned with key stakeholder priorities and strategies. This alignment recognizes both local and national priorities as well as best practice in humanitarian assistance.⁹

The IRC supports the position of the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) which notes that “there is a growing understanding within the international humanitarian community on the need to put further effort and emphasis on preparedness and on

⁹See for example the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005),

resilience”¹⁰ and with the commitments of the EU's 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid'¹¹ which notes that “building resilience should be ever present in humanitarian and development interventions in fragile countries both in pre- and post-crisis situations”. This recognition – that with increasing climatic and global economic insecurity we must emphasize helping vulnerable families and communities develop resilience - is a key insight and guides the IRC approach in Niger.

There is a growing consensus that post-crises responses are not sufficient, and that engagement needs to be anticipatory and pro-active in regions of high vulnerability. Niger is clearly in one such region: the Global Needs Assessment categorized 139 developing countries on the basis of crisis and vulnerability indices and identified high priority areas. 23 countries emerged as “extremely vulnerable» and Niger figures prominently among these countries.

Regarding the situation in the Sahel, Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) noted that “while short-term humanitarian aid will save lives, action urgently needs to be taken to build the resilience of the most vulnerable people to shocks, and to strengthen community coping mechanisms.” A clear emphasis is also given to the quality and efficacy of the humanitarian response. The Commission is committed to improving the overall quality and coordination of the humanitarian system response. DG ECHO supports capacity-building for its implementing partners, whether international organisations or NGOs, to enable them to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies. As a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the IRC is committed to capacity building both of local Red Cross society partners and community partners. The IRC also works closely with Niger government departments, drawing on their expertise (for instance from the department of agriculture and animal husbandry) and aligns programmes with department and regional priorities (such as the government priority to have functioning cereal banks in communities throughout the country).

The European Union has strong aid and development commitments within the African continent, as does Ireland. The Irish Government has highlighted that “Ireland is playing a leading role in encouraging action to combat global hunger, focusing in particular on Africa.”¹² The IRC has put much emphasis on its engagement with Niger, and through its work is helping to fulfil this broader Irish commitment to the peoples of Africa.

Running throughout the various strategies is a common commitment to accountability and high standards of development effectiveness. The IRC is committed to accountability, openness and transparency in all aspects of its programme decision-making and implementation.

Programme Narrative

Project Area / Location

As in previous years, and given the high and persistent needs, IRC proposes to continue and consolidate activities in Tanout and Belbéji departments, and to start phase-in activities in a new division (Gouré). Strong relationships have been developed and maintained in this region

¹⁰Commission Staff Working Paper: Humanitarian aid strategy for 2012 DG ECHO, European Commission Brussels, 21.11.2011 SEC(2011) 1426 final

¹¹Adopted by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on 18 December 2007 – OJ 2008/C/25/01 of 30.01.2008

¹²IRELAND AND AFRICA: Our Partnership With a Changing Continent: AN AFRICA STRATEGY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE. SEPTEMBER 2011

throughout the 2008-2014 period¹³. During 2015 IRC plans a phasing-out process, in some communities, especially in the Tanout department. Reflexions on this, and an eventual expansion of activities to other departments, have been initiated among team members, the Niger Red Cross management, and local authorities in Zinder.

Zinder region is located in the centre of Niger and covers almost 12% of the national landmass (see map below). It is bordered by the regions of Agadez, Diffa, Maradi and in the south by Nigeria. Zinder city is on the main transport routes between the capital Niamey and Diffa and between Agadez and Nigeria and lies approximately 900km from Niamey. Zinder has a mainly rural population and the economy is predominantly agriculture-based. Deposits of silver, manganese and gypsum have been identified but are not currently being mined. Recent discovery of oil resources, however, has provided some hope for additional sources of revenue, and the country's first oil refinery (a Chinese-Niger joint project) began production in Zinder in 2011. Development of the industrial and formal commercial sectors is limited and formal employment opportunities are few. The proximity of Nigeria (200km from Zinder City to the border) and relatively good transport links provide important trade routes for a variety of imports and exports. The main exports from Zinder are agro-pastoral products – cereals and livestock. The main imports from Nigeria are petroleum products, manufactured goods and construction materials, but petroleum imports may see a marked decrease in coming years, if Niger's goal of becoming self-sufficient in petroleum is realized.

Administratively, the region comprises ten Departments: Gouré, Dungass, Damagaram Takaya, Takietah, Magaria, Kantché, Mirriah, Belbéji, Tesker and Tanout. These are made up of 45 rural and 10 urban Communes¹⁴. The Region of Zinder also contains a Sultanate¹⁵ and various levels of traditional authorities and chiefs. These are recognized by the hierarchy of the Niger civil administration. Traditional chiefs, who retain leadership following the patriarchal line, have certain administrative authorities, and facilitate reconciliation with the civil administration.

The region is flat, with a gradual progression from fertile soils suitable for arable farming in the south to the Sahara desert in the north. Pastoral and agricultural activities are practised, with wage labour supplementing these traditional livelihood strategies. Vegetable cultivation during the rainy season (June to October) for both consumption and sale also contributes to food security and family income. Zinder suffers from environment-related problems – desertification, insect infestations, and deforestation, limited and unreliable rains.

Much of Tanout department does not receive enough rainfall for successful year-round agriculture. Thus most inhabitants in this intervention zone practice some variation of agro-pastoralism, keeping animals such as goats and cattle as a way to supplement income and provide important livelihood and food security.

Few international agencies are present in the Zinder region to meet the growing needs of the rising population. These include the French Red Cross as a partner National Society in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

¹³Given the strong community-based approach of the IRC programming, it is essential to develop and maintain close relations with traditional authorities and local institutions.

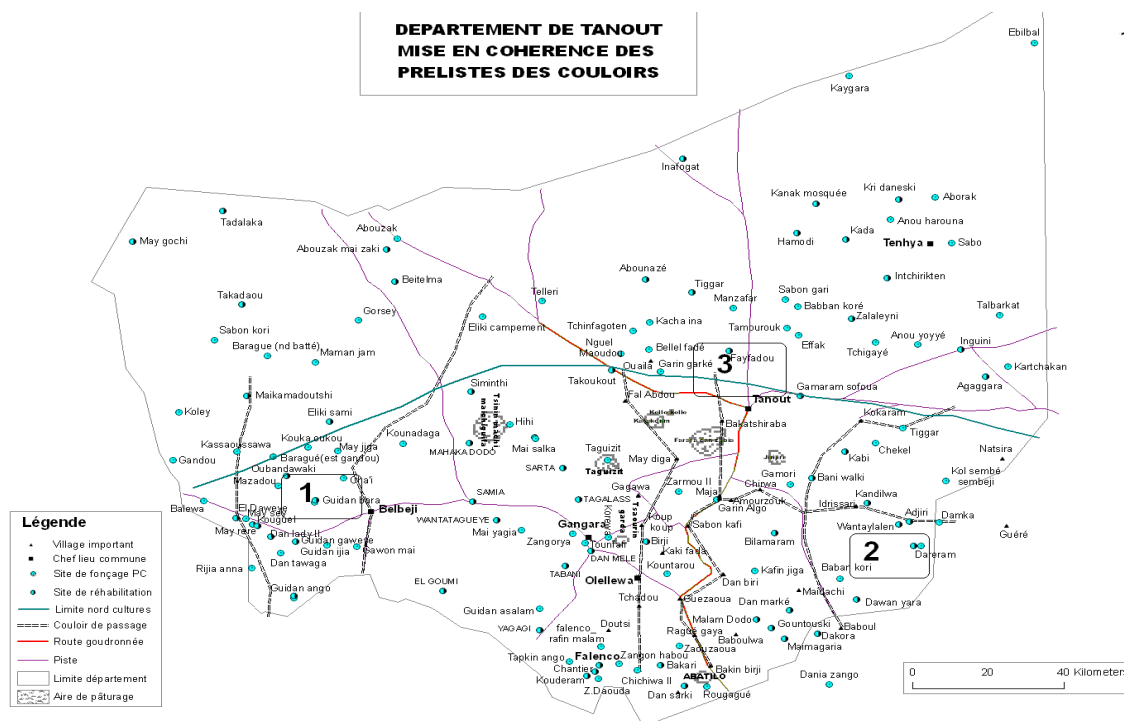
¹⁴These are: Gouré, Magaria, Matamèye, Mirriah, Tanout, Zinder I, Zinder II, Zinder III, Zinder IV and Zinder V

¹⁵ A Sultanate covers several Cantons. Each Canton comprises several villages.

Map of Niger showing area of programme implementation:



Map of Tanout Department showing three zones of programme implementation:



Beneficiary Identification

Village Diagnostic

The IRC has worked in 75 different villages in Tanout and Belbéji departments. For the 2015 programme, activities will be focused in some of these communities to reinforce previous interventions and fill the gap as per the recommendations of a study conducted by an external consultant, in December 2014.

In 2015 data will be collected from the Gouré Department, to identify vulnerable communities and beneficiaries, in advance of the launch of a new project in November. Participatory assessments involving discussions with government authorities and other agencies will be followed by field visits to the communities and include meetings with local leaders, data collection and focus group discussions. Diagnostic visits will allow for the identification of 15 communities at least. Selection will be based on criteria such as: existing structures and facilities, presence of technical and financial partners, willingness to engage actively, etc.

Beneficiary Selection

The IRC works to identify and support the most vulnerable families and individuals within the target communities. Selection processes are carried out for each activity; they are based on information gathered through household surveys and community discussions. Targeting criteria include household (HH) vulnerability criteria, such as: Single parent; Elderly; Disabled; chronically ill (e.g. HIV infected); Female-headed. Some interventions benefit entire villages (e.g. cereal banks), while others are targeted at the individual and/or household level (e.g. 'habbanae' breeding support). For each activity, selection may involve needs assessment, community meetings, and household visits. Potential beneficiaries must have the desire and ability to take advantage of a specific intervention.

The proposed 2015 programme will reach approximately 12,000 beneficiaries (1,500 households) located in at least 15 villages which have been previously supported by IRC. Others outside the target villages' benefit indirectly through interventions such as repaired water points, trained repair technicians, and increased livestock production in the region. See table 1 below for an approximate breakdown of beneficiary numbers and villages by main activity.

Table 1: Programme beneficiaries

Sector of intervention/ Activity	Anticipated Number of Villages	Anticipated number of beneficiaries
Livestock Breeding (habbanae)	15	5,000
Agricultural diversification	15	5,000
Environmental protection	10	4,000
WASH (Water, sanitation and hygiene)	10	10,000
Capacity building	15	6,000

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the programme is to consolidate the community resilience in the division of Tanout and Belbéji in the region of Zinder in Niger and expand our intervention in the new division of Goure through the strengthening of livelihoods and community-based coping mechanisms. The programme aims to work closely with vulnerable communities and households in Tanout and Belbéji Departments in order to achieve the key objectives, as outlined on page 3 above.

Programme Areas and Activities

The IRC recognizes the importance of sector integration for reducing vulnerability and improving food security.¹⁶ The 2015 programme includes activities in three main areas: Livelihoods, WASH, and Capacity building.

Livelihoods and food security

- ✓ Livestock breeding - 'Habbanaé' mostly supervision of previous intervention
- ✓ Cereal banks – maintenance, supply of cereals and support to committees
- ✓ Labour-saving and environmental initiatives
- ✓ Recuperation of land

WASH

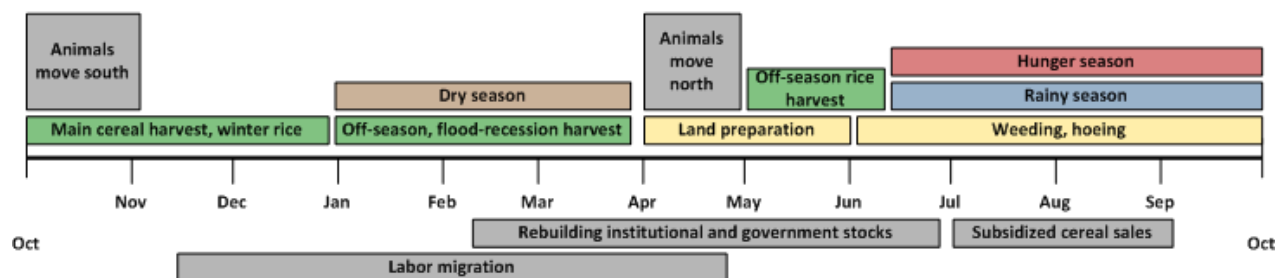
- ✓ Hygiene and sanitation education and promotion
- ✓ Well repair and construction of a mini AEP in Oubandawaki community

Capacity Building

- ✓ Institutional strengthening
- ✓ Training for Niger Red Cross Society
- ✓ Community-based capacity building

Livelihoods and Food Security

The programme seeks to address key underlying causes of vulnerability by supporting increased livestock and agricultural production and reducing labour burdens (particularly for women). Livelihood and food security activities will be implemented in all target communities in Tanout and Belbéji departments, and technical support will be provided to livelihood activities implemented in earlier phases of the programme. Village diagnostics, awareness-raising and animal distribution will begin in 15 new communities in Gouré.



¹⁶ The IFRC stresses the importance of integration into other sectors such as water and sanitation and capacity building, as well as coordination of efforts with external partners. Food Security in Africa: IFRC Annual Report. April 21, 2009

Livestock breeding - 'habbanae':

Since 2008 with the support and encouragement of the Niger ministry of agriculture, the IRC has been successfully implementing 'habbanae', which is an adaptation of a traditional system, whereby goats are distributed to vulnerable families in a village (first phase). Each household takes responsibility for the animals until offspring are produced and have been weaned. The original animals are then transferred to a second household (second phase). The transfers continue, gradually increasing stocks across the community, beginning with the most vulnerable families. The entire system is overseen and supported by community 'habbanae' committees, with technical support from the government ministry responsible for livestock and breeding.

For the 2015, IRC proposes the purchase and distribution of 1, 500 goats to vulnerable families to help rejuvenate the practice of habbanae in the communities, and to provide training for animal health technicians and technical support/advice in animal husbandry.

Key objectives:

1. Increase livestock holdings among vulnerable households through increased participation in *Habbanaé* programme.

Key activities:

1. Sensitization campaign
2. Establishment and training of management committees
3. Procurement and distribution of animals
4. Veterinary service training
5. Follow up and support to individuals and committees

Cereal Banks:

Cereal Banks (grain storehouses) are a critical means by which local people can buffer against seasonal price shocks and food shortages. As part of its 2015 programming, the IRC proposes providing follow up visits and support to cereal banks and community management committees.

Key Objectives:

1. Ensure maintenance and functioning of cereal banks and management committees.

Key Activities:

1. Follow up, including support and training (as necessary) to management committees.
2. Identification of cereal banks in the zone that are candidates for rehabilitation, and cereal distribution, as well as identification of candidate villages for new cereal banks.

Labour-saving and Environmental Initiatives:

Environmental change and degradation is an underlying cause of much of the food and livelihood insecurities facing the people of Niger. One significant problem relates to the traditional method of open-fire cooking. This requires considerable amounts of fuel wood (in a landscape where trees are exceedingly scarce) and gathering wood takes time and effort. The open fire burns inefficiently and creates much smoke, causing health problems as well as a fire hazard. Although a shift entirely away from wood is not practical (other fuels are expensive and not readily accessible) a move to more efficient wood burning stoves has many advantages: reduced labour for women and children collecting wood; less exposure to harmful smoke; shorter cooking time (greater heat output); lower risk of fire and burns; reduced deforestation. The proposed intervention involves

working with the Ministry of Environment to distribute and promote 500 locally produced fuel efficient stoves, and to plant over 3,000 trees.

Soil degradation due to extreme weather conditions is a major challenge in the Zinder region where agro pastoralism is the main means of survival. The problem is compounded by lack of awareness of environmental protection. The Niger government has a Cash for Work strategy to guide humanitarian actors working with communities to recover infertile soil, which is supported by other actors in Niger, including UN WFP. IRC adheres to the strategy and will work in communities where other actors are not present. As well as the recovery of soil for food production, IRC will provide training on basic environmental protection.

Key Objective:

1. Reduce labour burden and exposure to smoke among women and girls through higher efficiency wood stoves, and tree planting for fuel wood.
2. Contribute to the fight against desertification through soil recuperation activities.

Key Activities:

1. Community sensitization of the importance and use of improved stoves.
2. Purchase and distribution of 500 locally made fuel efficient stoves.
3. Follow-up on use of stoves.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The WASH programme addresses the serious issues of poor access to safe water and poor sanitation and hygiene practices in target communities which results in disease and the consequent loss of productivity and high healthcare burden.

A Knowledge, Practices and Coverage (KPC) survey will be undertaken to identify key areas of weakness, and an appropriate hygiene promotion strategy developed and implemented. Local community-based focal points will be trained to serve as resources within the communities.

Key Objectives:

1. Increase sustainable access to, and use of, sources of safe water through water system construction, maintenance and effective water management.
2. Enhance practice of safe hygiene and sanitation.
3. Contribute to a reduction in disease burden in target communities.

Key Activities:

1. Training of community pump repair technicians.
2. Pump repair / rehabilitation.
3. Construction of a mini-AEP.
4. KPC Survey amongst target groups.
5. Adapt and update Hygiene Promotion Strategy.
6. Development and Implementation of hygiene promotion campaigns.
7. Selection and training of Community Focal Points.

Capacity Building

The ability of individuals, communities and institutions to build and maintain resilience, and reduce vulnerability to food and livelihood insecurity depends significantly on their knowledge

and capacities. Equally, the ability of an intervention to provide lasting, sustainable results depends on the degree to which beneficiaries are implicated in its design and implementation (degree of ownership), and to what extent they have the tools and ability to provide necessary support to a project once the outside actors have left.

The 2015 programme includes capacity building activities for the NRCS and local communities.

Staff and volunteer training and visibility for NRCS / Local community capacity building:

Key Objectives:

1. Strengthen the capacity of the Niger Red Cross Society and local communities to undertake activities to reduce vulnerability to food insecurity, build sustainable livelihoods, and prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Key Activities

1. Coordination and Mobilisation of Red Cross Community.
2. Support to the functioning of NRC (Zinder regional branch and Belbéji sub-branch).
3. Training session on hygiene and sanitation for NRC volunteers and community members.

Cross-cutting issues

Security

Although generally stable, Niger presents an uncertain and shifting security situation that brings challenges to an already difficult logistical and operational environment. Security is an ever-present concern, and the IRC makes safety and security a priority within all its programming. With ten years of presence in Niger, IRC has established strong relationships and a solid understanding of the operational environment.

Background

Problems of security have been significant in Niger over the last eight years. A predominately Tuareg ethnic group emerged in February 2007 (the Nigerien Movement for Justice (MNJ)) attacking several military targets in Niger's northern region causing instability throughout 2007 and 2008. Niger agreed a comprehensive peace deal with Tuareg rebel groups, providing amnesty to the Tuareg rebels who had given up their weapons.

In 2013, there were security incidents in the areas of Agadez, Arlit and Niamey. In Agadez and Arlit, suicide bombing attacks were carried out on May 23rd targeting a military facility, and a mine operated by the French company Areva. At least 20 people died. On June 1 an organised breakout occurred at a military prison in Niamey, resulted in two fatalities and the escape of some 23 prisoners, including high profile Boko Haram members. Some were later recaptured. Otherwise the situation was calm during the rest of the year. The Niger government has taken measures to ensure that people and their properties are secured and free movement is ensured. Consequently most international and national Non-Governmental organizations are able to implement their programmes, but with a higher level of vigilance.

Boko Haram has carried out a number of atrocities in Northern Nigeria since 2013, forcing Nigerians to flee and Nigériens to return to the Diffa region of Niger¹⁷. It is estimated that over

1. ¹⁷Zenn, Jacob. (2012). Niger, Nigeria Step Up Cooperation Against Boko Haram. World Politics Review. October 31, 2012. <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12463/niger-nigeria-step-up-cooperation-against-boko-haram>

100,000 people fled in to Diffa during 2014. This creates additional security concerns and puts enormous pressure on existing resources in the region, forcing the Niger authorities to create camp accommodation, which had been avoided until recently, due to the additional security risks this brings. Boko Haram has carried out incursions into Diffa since January resulting in multiple deaths and massive destruction in border communities. Despite declaring a State of Emergency in early 2015, and the intervention of French and regional African forces, the border areas around Lake Chad are not secured and remain porous.

The deteriorating security situation in southern Libya raises fears of increased terrorism and trafficking into Niger and on to Mali. As part of Operation Barkhane (a joint operation of the armed forces in the region and France), French forces have set up a base in Madama (in the extreme north of the country) to track movement over the southern Libya-Niger border.

In the south along the border with Nigeria, criminal elements smuggle everything from fuel to rice to automobiles. To the west violent incursions across the border from Mali into Niger occurred at least twice in 2014, resulting in the death of a number of Nigérien border guards.

Absorption of Nigériens who have been obliged to return home (from Libya, Algeria, Nigeria and the Central Africa Republic) into the local economy is a challenge. The committee for monitoring the arrival of returnees in Zinder suggests that there are tens of thousands of returnees in the different departments of Zinder alone. Many of the returnees and other community members attempt to go back to Libya or Europe. In mid-2013, 92 people, mainly women and children, died when they were abandoned by their guides as they crossed the desert towards Algeria.

Current Situation

The IRC was the victim of armed bandits on February 22nd, 2011. A group of armed men attacked traders returning from Adjéri Market. IRC staff on their way to Gargada came across these bandits. Money, an IRC vehicle, and all personal valuables were stolen. To date the bandits have not been located or identified. As a result of this, and the potential of other such incidents, IRC undertook a full security review and heightened security regulations in Zinder to restrict movement of international staff travelling to field locations. Movements outside of the capital, Niamey, are limited (and at times restricted) for expatriate staff.

A consequence of the delicate security situation is that, despite tremendous need and vulnerability within the population, few of the many international agencies active in Niger operate in the regions further from the capital, including the Tanout and Belbéji area. As a result, the presence and activities of the IRC are particularly important. Another consequence is that programme activities can easily be disrupted. Thus patience, flexibility and understanding are required by donors, managers, implementation staff, and beneficiaries alike.

Security procedures in both Niamey and Zinder are reviewed where necessary. The Government of Niger has increased its security forces in the border areas. Under bilateral cooperation, Niger armed forces have benefited from US government airplanes and trucks to allow them to perform their duties more effectively.

The IRC is committed to assisting those in need in Niger, while minimizing risks to its partners, staff, and local populations. The IRC follows IFRC and ICRC protocols and responds proactively to the security situation in Niger by taking specific steps:

- Working closely with IFRC, UN agencies, ECHO, and other international and national actors to closely monitor the situation.
- Maintaining and regularly updating security protocols and emergency plans, and ensuring all staff and volunteers are familiar with these protocols and plans. Maintaining strong relations with all stakeholders including communities and local leaders, in order to reduce the possibility that the IRC would be directly targeted.
- Modifying security rules as required, including implementing movement restrictions.
- Maintaining flexibility in programme planning and implementation, and effectively managing beneficiary expectations in the event that programme activities are disrupted.

Gender

In Niger, as elsewhere, women are the cornerstones of the household and village economy, and no serious attempts at reducing vulnerability or increasing food security would be successful without their full inclusion. Programming that seeks to improve long-term food security must be grounded in a clear understanding of women's multiple roles, and pay particular attention to the needs and realities of women within the household, community, and society.¹⁸

The status of women is low in Niger and there are persistent disparities between men and women in most areas, including access to productive resources, financial assets, land, employment, health, and education, as well as inequalities in the division of labour. Women have primary responsibility for food and nutrition within the household; play active roles in producing, storing, rationing, and preparing food, and are typically responsible for obtaining fuel wood and fetching water for domestic and agricultural use. Women also have primary responsibility for childcare, education and family health, including transmitting information and knowledge of hygiene and sanitation practices. The inequalities in the division of labour are further exacerbated at certain times of year, such as when the men of the households leave to take livestock to water/pasture or migrate in search of seasonal labour.¹⁹

Violence against women and girls is a major concern, particularly in terms of forced early marriage, genital mutilation, sexual assault and spousal abuse. Among the reasons for continued gender disparities is the absence of a coherent legal framework; weak national capacities in knowledge of gender-related tools which fail to mainstream them in policies; divergent approaches by different actors; and, socio-cultural resistance.²⁰

The IRC recognises the critical importance of targeting, supporting, and actively engaging women in all of its development programming. The IRC is committed to the principles of equality and gender mainstreaming²¹ and these principles guide programme design and implementation, and help ensure that there is no sex-based or other discrimination in the allocation of resources, access to opportunities or distribution of benefits.

¹⁸During a recent visit to Niger in November 2011, World Bank Vice President for Africa Obiageli Ezekwesili placed particular emphasis on the need to promote increased participation by women, and urged the authorities and populations to strive to put a stop to the severe marginalization and multifaceted injustices that besiege women in Niger.

¹⁹ The daily workload of women, especially those in rural areas, is estimated at between 16 and 18 hours per day. The domestic workload in the daily timetable of women negatively affects care of children, school enrolment of girls, literacy education, and development of productive activities.

²⁰For a report on the problem of discrimination and violence against women see OCHA's IRIN : <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=75720>

²¹See Irish Red Cross International Department Strategic Plan 2007-2012.

Steps are taken to help ensure equal, active and effective participation of women in IRC activities:

- Actively striving for balanced gender representation among NRCS volunteers, and in decision-making and management processes (local committees and community focal points). Specific care is taken to appeal to women during community meetings and recruitment processes, and to provide positive female role models (e.g. woman already involved in a project) who can attest to the value of becoming actively involved.
- Issue-based sensitisation training on discrimination against children and women.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of how successfully women are being incorporated into and supported by programme activities using sex disaggregated monitoring and evaluation data.
- Giving equal opportunities to male and female candidates during recruitment and election processes, including in village structures, and encouraging women to apply.

Programme interventions are designed to improve the lives of women and girls, by reducing work burdens, and empowering women to have greater independence and financial security through knowledge sharing, literacy, and income generating activities. Since girls are often kept out of school to help with domestic chores, these interventions can also serve to convince parents to keep girls in school.

- The provision of higher efficiency stoves reduces fuel wood requirements, and reduces the amount of time women and girls spend collecting fuel wood. The stoves also produce less smoke, reducing levels of exposure.
- The habbanae activity helps women build their family herd sizes and their knowledge of breeding and animal health. It also provides additional nutritional support (meat and milk) and/or income.
- Training activities for committee members help women members improve literacy and numeracy skills.

Sustainability

Sustainability in the context of IRC programming in Niger is understood in two principal ways:

1. Sustainability of outcomes – the ability of the programme to deliver real and durable benefits over the long term. A key question is, ‘are the benefits likely to be maintained for an extended period after assistance ends?’
2. Environmental sustainability–the ability of the programme to effectively minimise environmental impacts and/or to produce positive, long-term environmental benefits.

The goal of the IRC programme is to bring both short and long-term benefits to beneficiaries. A further goal is to build independence, self-reliance and capacity to continue/move beyond the existing interventions. Features of the proposed programme specifically promote sustainability:

- ✓ participatory processes with active participation of diverse stakeholders
- ✓ focus on community ownership and control
- ✓ emphasis on training, increasing knowledge and skills
- ✓ commitment to institutional strengthening

- ✓ commitment to equal participation of women in programme activities, committees, decision-making structures
- ✓ strong collaboration with government agencies who can provide ongoing/long-term support
- ✓ a commitment to providing accompaniment and support to local committees and beneficiaries
- ✓ increased communication on activities

Risks

This is a medium-term livelihood programme in a disaster prone and food insecure environment. Drought is inevitable in the zone of intervention and flooding, pest, disease, locust attacks and price shocks are all very real risks to the region and the programme. These factors can easily affect the ability of the programme to deliver its desired impacts.

Similarly, there are additional threats to programme sustainability that are unfortunately beyond the scope of the IRC or other actors to influence through planning or management. Such threats include major civil unrest, large-scale population movements or environmental crises.

Exit Planning

In order to maximise the ability of local people to consolidate gains from project activities there is the need for careful exit planning as well as some targeted ongoing support. Planning a partial exit strategy, in Tanout department, will begin in 2015 and will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, including beneficiaries, and where possible will provide clear expectations regarding plans for ongoing or future support. This has been set as a priority as a high level of coverage has been achieved in certain communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E Goals

The IRC is accountable for the efficient and effective use of the resources entrusted to it and is committed to effective monitoring and evaluation of its programme interventions. This involves tracking progress and measuring results (both the positive and negative, and intended and unintended effects of an intervention). M&E is important to provide accountability to stakeholders, as well as key information that can be used to:

- inform decisions and guide and improve ongoing project/programme implementation
- advance organizational learning and knowledge-sharing for future programming

The goal of the IRC in Niger is to provide a realistic M&E system that provides clear and timely indication of project progress, successes and shortcomings, including learning opportunities, while minimising the chance of burdening programme staff with excessive or unreasonable requirements. It also aims to build capacity in M&E within the local staff team, the NRCS, and local communities.

M+E Framework

Effective M&E begins with a clear understanding of programme goals and objectives, and a logic model that presents clear links between activities, outputs and outcomes, and includes SMART indicators.²²

The development and implementation of the M&E system for the 2015 programme includes:

1. **Finalisation of detailed M&E plan** – once the detailed vulnerability assessments are completed for the target villages, specific methodologies and tools are finalized, and roles, responsibilities and timelines will be clearly defined.
2. **Baseline** – a baseline data collection survey is undertaken to gather data against which programme progress will be measured.
3. **Ongoing project activity monitoring** (monitoring against activity plans) of individual activities is conducted in line with the detailed M&E plan, in order to improve implementation or modify the approach if required. Activity reports are a key output of these process monitoring activities. The ongoing monitoring includes:
 - a) Rapid M&E checks- participatory and largely qualitative community based M&E visits in order to verify actual and likely impacts of interventions in communities, evaluate vulnerability targeting, and make any final adjustments to interventions as necessary.
 - b) Community Based M&E -Programme staff continue to support community-centered monitoring practices, including literacy and numeracy training for members of community-based management committees. This approach both builds the capacity of the community and allows staff and volunteers to monitor progress more rapidly and efficiently.²³ Monitoring carried out by the population itself helps enhance transparency and the quality and people's ownership of the information.
 - c) Regular meetings of the field team (weekly, monthly) to exchange information, gather findings, review, evaluate and propose adjustments to work plans.
4. A study was conducted late in 2014 to review the status of our intervention since 2008 and identify gaps in some communities. Priorities for 2015 have been identified based on the recommendations which inform the decision regarding communities for phase-out.
5. **External/Independent evaluation** – an independent evaluator will be engaged, in early 2015 to evaluate programme activities over the 2008-2014 period. Lessons learned and recommendations from this evaluation will inform all future IRC planning and the design of future strategies.
6. **Annual Reporting** - Reporting on performance against the objectives set by the log frame and programme plan will be provided in an annual report. The IRC will provide lessons learned that will be incorporated into future policies and activities.

Key Challenges:

²²The detailed programme logic model is attached below. SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound.

²³The types of CBME envisaged may be in the form of basic notes, poster plans or pre-defined log books (which can be designed and printed by the programme). An example may be that a well or cereal bank committee member or a CBFP records the dates and main issues or events such as trainings or awareness raising sessions that have occurred, and these are monitored. Other examples may be that volunteers could be asked to monitor and record results or impacts of other interventions such as stoves, micro-irrigation or agricultural inputs. It should be brief, clear, tightly defined and practically useful.

- 1) Staff capacity in monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- 2) Limited budget to support MER activities as per standard requirement.

M+E Resources

The M&E system is closely integrated into programme design and implementation, and is supported by managers and programme staff. In addition, dedicated M&E human resources, in the form of an M&E officer, and a PMER delegate support M&E activities throughout the programme. All stakeholders including volunteer, community members, local technical government partners and the NRC regional representatives are involved in MER roles. The Evaluation to be carried out in early 2015 will be funded by the Belgian and Irish Red Cross

Programme Management and Implementation

Organizational Capacity

The IRC has implemented bilateral programmes since 2005 (programmes in Niger, Malawi, Indonesia and Sri Lanka) in addition to on-going multilateral support to major emergency appeals across the globe. During this period, the Society developed a new International Department and a 2007-2012 Departmental Strategy as well as a more focussed Africa Strategy 2009-2014. The Society expanded its resource base with a range of partners including Belgian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Irish Aid, WFP and FAO, in Niger, in particular. There was a scaling up of support to the IFRC and ICRC in terms of financial and human resources and increased organisational engagement on policy, particularly in relation to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Disaster Response Law (IDRL), Beneficiary Communications and Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The IRC in Niger has a strong team of experienced and motivated local and expatriate staff, and a well-established and effective organisational structure with clear lines of responsibility and reporting. The presence of experienced staff and tested operational systems and procedures facilitates project start-up activities. The Niger IRC mission is able to begin implementation activities immediately and scale up activities as outlined in this proposal as resources permit.

Implementation Team

The 2015 programme implementation team comprises:

Coordination and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 Country Representative (expat) ✓ 1 Finance Administration Delegate (expat) ✓ 1 PMER Delegate (expat) ✓ 1 Finance administration assistant ✓ 01 Finance officer ✓ 1 logistics officer ✓ 3 domestic staff ✓ 13 guards/ 6.5 drivers 	Programme staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 Field Office Coordinator ✓ 1 Programme Capacity Building Officer ✓ 1 Livelihoods Programme Officer ✓ 1 M&E Programme Officer ✓ 1 Water, Sanitation and Construction Officer ✓ 2 Livelihoods Programme assistants
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Programme staff

Country Representative

- Leads and manages all programmes and operations of the IRC
- Represents the Belgian/Irish Red Cross Consortium in Niger.

- Manages a delegation of expatriate and national professional staff and is responsible for supervising the progress of all programmes being implemented in Niger.
- Takes the lead on future programmes and/or funding opportunities in-country.
- Interacts with IRC partners in Niger and in the West Africa region, and represents the IRC in all relevant forums.
- Reports directly to the IRC head office in Dublin.

Finance and Administration Delegate

- Plans and organises financial management, administration, logistics and human resource functions of the IRC delegation.
- Responsible (under the overall control of the IRC in Dublin), for the funds, budget, administration, contractual matters, training and insurance of the delegation.
- Advises the National Society on financial and administrative matters.
- Manages the Finance, Administration and Logistics Departments

Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Delegate

- Ongoing development of in-country PMER capacity. Responsible for strengthening and improving PMER systems of Irish Red Cross/Belgian Red Cross Consortium in Niger to enhance the impact of current and new programmes/services.
- Supports capacity of local partners ensuring accountability for results in programme delivery in accordance with recommended international standards.
- Supports improvements in beneficiary communication to inform activities.
- Supports the Programme Officer and departments in reviewing programmes/activities.
- Supports the Country Representative in building and maintaining the image and profile of the IRC with local authorities, international organisations, donors and other organisations.

The **Field Office Coordinator**, under the direction of the Country Representative, oversees the administrative, financial and human resource management of the Zinder office.

The **Monitoring and Evaluation Officer** assists the IRC in partnership with the Niger Red Cross to measure the outputs, progress and performance of the programmes with direction and advice from the PMER delegate. He/she ensures documentation and accurately analysis of activities and that programme data is retained in a systematic, accessible and centralised format. The M&E Officer also contributes to the production of interim M&E reports.

Capacity Building Officer/Niger RC Liaison Officer

Under the supervision of the PMER Delegate, the Capacity Building Officer/Niger Red Cross Liaison Officer (NRCLLO) liaises with the NRCS and is responsible for the organisation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of capacity building activities; (re)training of volunteers, establishment of mentoring system and involvement of the NRCS volunteers within the livelihoods activities; training given by NRCS volunteers to Community-Based Focal Points; and the small-scale programmes to be implemented by the NRCS.

The **Water and Sanitation (Watsan)/Construction Officer** oversees the engineering aspects of the programme, including any construction or rehabilitation work to ensure value-for-money, quality of materials and construction, adherence to contracts, etc. Reports to the PMER Delegate.

Livelihoods Programme Officer

Oversees all aspects of the livelihoods programme excluding the construction and rehabilitation projects. Responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the activities to the PMER delegate. Manages a team of three programme assistants in charge of implementing the activities in the field together with the NRCS volunteers.

Livelihoods Programme Assistants

Provide financial, administrative and technical support to the Livelihoods Programme Officer to ensure efficient management of the programme. They oversee the programme activities in each community under the supervision of the Livelihoods Programme Officer.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a key resource for the Red Cross in Niger. The Niger Red Cross Society has a pool of volunteers who are ready to assist with programme implementation activities. These volunteers have been integral to the delivery of past and current IRC programmes.

In theory, all volunteers have received training in Red Cross principles, and a number have received additional skills training in first aid, community mobilization, etc. In practice, not all volunteers have received the same level of training. IRC supports the development of volunteers through refresher training. They will be trained as part of the capacity building and livelihoods programme activities. The 2015 programme provides training in a variety of areas for up to 25 volunteers. The aim is to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence and to prepare them to assist effectively in the implementation of IRC and Niger Red Cross activities.

Long-time, well-experienced NRCS volunteers (4 with the NRCS Liaison officer - capacity building team, 6 for the livelihoods team, 1 for WASH activities and 2 for monitoring and evaluation) will assist with the 2015 programme. Any new volunteer recruitment is undertaken in close collaboration with the NRCS following clear and transparent selection criteria.

When assisting with programme activities, volunteers receive a per diem to cover basic costs (food, transport and accommodation where relevant), at a rate fixed by the national society.

Technical Support

The majority of expertise required for successful programme implementation is available within the existing IRC staff teams (both in-country and at headquarters). We also have available technical support from all the Government technical services as the Red Cross is an auxiliary of the State in Niger. The use of targeted external expertise is called upon when required.

6.3 Coordination and Partnership

The IRC coordinates with a range of partners in implementing programme activities in Niger. Coordination meetings are attended with national, international and government agencies as per coordination schedules available in Niamey and Zinder. Coordination with the IFRC Niger office in Niamey ensures coherence and consistency in the approaches of the IRC and the IFRC.

Communication of, and agreement on, the overall programme and each specific activity ensures transparency and accountability to both the partner and the target groups. For external service providers, Memoranda of Understanding and/or contracts are signed following strict adherence to the procedures for procurement and service provision to ensure that sufficient controls are in place for the timely completion of activities in the most cost-effective manner.

Niger Red Cross Society (NRCS)

The IRC works in close partnership with the Niger Red Cross Society (NRCS) to deliver assistance to those most vulnerable, and has put particular emphasis on strengthening the capacity of the host National Society to deliver humanitarian assistance.

The guiding principles for the relationship between the IRC and the NRCS are based on mid to long-term development cooperation:

- A spirit of partnership and equality;
- Mutual support, respect and cooperation;
- Opportunities for regional cooperation; and
- Positive, independent relations with government.

The IRC offers technical expertise and other resources to support the NRCS to assist the most vulnerable people of Niger. The programme is implemented in partnership but is locally owned and driven. An effective programme will continue to be implemented through this partnership re-enforced through coordination with the wider Red Cross Movement, with international and national agencies and with technical support from relevant government departments. Programme decisions are transparent and the IRC consults and communicates with stakeholders on all aspects..

A Programme Implementation Committee established at the start of the 2008 – 2010 programmes coordinates to ensure that the IRC-NRC partnership continues to function positively. It ensures regular communication within the different levels of the NRCS and between the IRC and NRCS. This facilitates joint ownership of the programme, joint representation to external stakeholders, and strengthens the joint mission of the NRCS and the IRC. The IRC attends national NRCS meetings such as the General Assembly and other national workshops and conferences along with other partner national societies. The IRC Country Representative meets and consults regularly with the NRCS President in Niamey.

IFRC and Red Cross/Red Crescent partners

In late 2013 the IRC entered into a Consortium with the Belgian RC. The IRC Country Representative represents both national societies in country. The main Red Cross partners working in Niger are the French Red Cross Society (FRCS), Spanish Red Cross Society, Qatar Red Crescent, the Luxembourg Red Cross, Monaco Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The IRC coordinates with these organisations regularly. IRC and RC/RC partners are committed to ensuring that this coordination continues in a structured way. At the national level the NRCS takes the lead in the coordination of the RC movement. At Regional level in Zinder, the IRC and the FRCS ensure coherence in their programme approach, in partnership with the NRCS through a monthly coordination meeting held between FRCS, NRCS and IRC. The ICRC is largely concentrated in the Diffa and Agadez Regions. The IRC is in regular contact for security issues. Monthly meetings are scheduled for the programme period at national and regional levels.

Any large scale emergencies in Niger will also be coordinated with RC/RC partners. The IFRC provides support to NRCS programmes in Niger in line with its mandate and is committed to ensuing close coordination on this with the IRC.

World Food Programme

The IRC has developed a range of partnerships with WFP including those related to emergency food distributions and the supply of cereals to cereal banks.

Nigerien Government Agencies

The relationship between the IRC and Government Ministries and their Departments at Regional and Sub-Regional Level is important for the success of the programme. Local authorities and ministry departments at Regional, Department and Commune levels provide technical advice and specifications for specific activities. The departments of Hydraulics, Health, Community Affairs, Agriculture and Animal Resources and Environment ensure that the activities meet the technical requirements of the Government of Niger. The Extension Officers for the ministry departments at Commune and Department level conduct specific training in the communities supported by the IRC personnel and NRCS volunteers. Using this methodology, the IRC is assured that programme activities are endorsed by the host Government and will remain closely aligned to the overall development objectives for the country. MOUs are developed with the Government Ministries for specific activities.

Annex 1: Niger Background and Context

Background and Context

Niger Overview

Niger is landlocked within the Sahel region of West Africa. It covers an area of 1,267,000 km² (making it the largest country in West Africa) and has a rapidly growing population of approximately 17, 129 076 inhabitants (2012 statistics from NIS), 83 % of whom reside in rural area. The average density of the population is 13 inhabitants/km² with some variances between regions. Niger consistently ranks near the bottom of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index.²⁴ It has a GNI per capita of \$873, and over 75% of the population survives on less than \$2 a day.²⁵

It is one of the most fragile and vulnerable environments in the world and is periodically hit by drought, flood, insect infestations and animal disease that undermine livelihoods in the largely agrarian and subsistence-based economy.²⁶

Government

There has been apparent stability in the country since the election of Mohamadou Issoufou (Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism) as the president of Niger on 12 March 2011. He continues to rule.²⁷ Since the resignation of the speaker of the parliament as member of the government coalition, and his 'self-imposed' exile in France since 2014, to avoid charges for alleged criminal activities, some political tension prevails in the country.

Niger has a weak economy that is based largely on agriculture including agro-pastoralism, with some mineral resource exploitation - mainly uranium and expanding oil production. The majority of Nigeriens are engaged in subsistence agriculture or agro-pastoralism (some 90% of the population) or informal economic activities. The principal crops are cereals - predominately millet and sorghum - which account for up to 85% of agricultural production. It has been estimated that millet provides as much as three quarters of total calories consumed.²⁸

Foreign exchange comes mainly from the production and export of uranium, livestock, onions, gold, and, since 2011, petroleum, as well as from foreign aid. Niger is the world's fourth largest producer of uranium. The French nuclear power company Areva controls the two national mining companies. It runs Niger's two uranium mines and is developing a major new mine. The opening of the latter has been postponed due to low commodity prices and insecurity. In 2014, the Niger Government negotiated a more favourable deal with Areva, with reduced tax breaks and increased royalties to be remitted by the company. Future growth may be sustained by exploitation of oil, gold, coal, and other mineral resources, but Niger has few financial resources to invest in the exploitation of its natural resource base. Various foreign interests are active within the country, notably China, and Niger's first oil refinery (a joint-venture between the Niger government and the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC)), began production in Tanout

²⁴ Niger ranked 187 of 187 countries on the 2013 HDI. UNDP Human Development Reports : hdr.undp.org

²⁵UNDP, 2014 Human Development Index

²⁶Much has been written about the fragility of the Sahelian eco region. A classic discussion is provided in 'The Fragile Environment' by Friday and Laskey (eds.), 1989.

²⁷'Niger presidential election 'is example for Africa''. March 12, 2011. BBC World Service: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12724965> Accessed January 5, 2013.

²⁸'The Fragile Environment' by Friday and Laskey (eds.), 1989.

province in late 2011.²⁹ It is hoped that the refinery will make Niger self-sufficient in petroleum, and will bring much-needed revenue to the government. Niger is currently unable to absorb all of its oil production and has begun exporting to some neighbouring countries.

Niger shares a common currency - the CFA franc - and a common central bank - the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) - with seven other members of the West African Monetary Union. In 2000, Niger qualified for enhanced debt relief under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and concluded an agreement with the Fund on a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF)³⁰. Despite benefiting from debt relief, government revenues are low, and services are limited, especially outside of the larger population centres. An IMF mission in October/November 2014 anticipated an overall rebound of economic growth in 2014 to 6.5%, from 4.1% in 2013. This is expected to grow further as new natural resource production projects begin in 2017 and 2019. The 2015 budget (17 trillion CFA/3.2 billion USD), approved by Parliament in November 2014, shows an increase of 2% on the 2014 figure and an increase of 3% in investments. The main areas for investment will be security, food security, energy, education and health.

Demographics, Health and Education

Niger has a population of approximately 17.1 million. Some 83 percent live in rural areas and many live in small villages of only a few hundred individuals. The population is growing at 3.7 percent a year, and over half of Nigeriens are under the age of 15. The fertility rate is among the highest in the world, and although estimated totality fertility rates have declined somewhat (decreasing from approx. 7.8 in 1985-1990 to 7.2 in 2005-2010³¹) decreasing mortality rates suggest that there will be considerable population growth for a generation, as the large cohort of children reach child bearing age and may even quadruple by 2050, if significant progress is not made in access to/acceptance of family planning techniques. The population suffers from poor healthcare, malnutrition and insufficient access to health services. For every 1,000 live births, close to 100 die in infancy. Life expectancy at birth averages 58.4 years.³² Despite bleak statistics, there are some encouraging signs regarding health: there is a National Health Plan 2011-2015, and thanks to the creation of 2500 health posts since 2000, and the development of more than 850 integrated health centres and district hospitals, there has been a positive impact on access to health facilities, especially in rural areas. The Ministry of Public Health Statistics for 2013 indicate that apart from the Capital, the ratio of doctors and nurses to the number of inhabitants remains considerably below the WHO norms. The mean number of years of schooling among adults is less than two. While the situation is improving (newer reports suggest this is increasing to 5.4 among young adults), only an estimated quarter of Nigeriens can read. School enrolment is low, particularly among girls who are often kept out of school to help with domestic chores (and to get married), and for whom education tends to be less valued.³³

Drought and Environmental Change

The country spans the Saharan, Sahelian and Sudano-Sahelian agro-ecological zones, and rainfall

²⁹ 'As refinery opens, Niger joins club of oil producers' (AFP) – Nov 28, 2011. Accessed January 5, 2013.

³⁰ 'Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI)—Status of Implementation and Proposals for the Future of the HIPC Initiative'. International Development Association and International Monetary Fund. November 8, 2011

³¹ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision.

³² UNDP Human Development Index 2014

³³ Ibid.

ranges from 200 millimetres (mm) per year in the northern regions to 800 mm in the south between May and August. Precipitation varies substantially across the country both within and across years³⁴. A majority of households depend on rain-fed agriculture, with staple food crops consisting of millet, sorghum and fonio, and cash crops including cowpeas, peanuts, cotton and sesame. Erratic weather and changing climate increase insecurity. Inter-annual deviations in rainfall are positively associated with fluctuations in agricultural output, as yields depend upon the timing and quantity of rainfall. Drought is positively correlated with food crises and famine. An estimated one-third of the country's population died during the "great famine" of 1931, with approximately 250,000 drought-related human fatalities occurring in the Sahelian region between 1968-1974 and 1983-84.³⁵ Niger experienced six major droughts between 1980 and 2005. In 2005, an estimated 2.4 million Nigeriens were affected by severe food shortages, with more than 800,000 of these classified as critically food insecure. Niger also suffered from both drought and harvest failures in 2009/2010, with 2.7 million people classified as vulnerable to extreme food insecurity³⁶. Worryingly, the longer-term rainfall trend) suggests an encroachment of desert conditions, which adds further pressure to the already precarious livelihoods and agricultural production in the country.

³⁴Nicholson SE, Some B, Kone B. 2000. An analysis of recent rainfall conditions in West Africa, including the rainy seasons of the 1997El Nino and the 1998 La Nina years. *Journal of Climate* **13**: 2628–2640.

³⁵ See Aker et al., (2011)

³⁶FEWS Net Niger.<http://www.fews.net/niger>

Annex 2: Logframe

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Title: Consolidate and contribute to community resilience in the Tanout, Belbedji and Goure sub divisions of Zinder Region in Niger				
Main objective: Contribute to resilience and capacity building of communities and the Red Cross in Tanout Belbedji and Goure departments				
Objective 1 - Livelihoods and Food Security : Improve food security in the Tanout and Belbedji departments through animal breeding (habbanae) in 22 of the 30 villages supported by IRC and 15 New villages in Gouré département				
Outcome (Impact)	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
1.1. Breeding/Habbanae is improved in the vulnerable communities who have lost their animals or which were not completely covered by previous activities	1,1.a Number of households actively participating in Habbanae	1100 goats (800 females + 300 males planned)	supporting documents, distribution reports	There aren't any major outbreaks of animal diseases which weaken or kill animals. There are no major food security crises which would force beneficiaries to sell or slaughter their animals. There is sufficient access to water and fodder.
	1,1.b Change in the level of animal stocks in targetted households (after 12 months)	Increase by 30%	Monitoring report	
1.2. Collective ownership and sustainability of the activity is developed through the reinforcement of management committees	1,2.a Number of management committees who are independent and autonomous	15 functional committees	Training report, List of participants	
	1.2.b Satisfaction levels of management committees	80% of management committee members express their satisfaction	focus group, enquête	
	1,2. c. Number of animal rotations achieved	At least 50% within one year	Monitoring and evaluation report	
Objective 2 - Livelihoods and Food Security : Ensure appropriate maintenance of existing cereal banks, effective functioning of cereal bank management committees and identification of candidate communities for future new/rehabilitated banks and cereal distribution				
Outcome (Impact)	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification	
Purchase and distribution of cereals to cereal banks	2,1 Number fo tones of cereal distributed	40 tones of cereals		
2.1 Training of Cereal banks Management committees	2,2.a Number of management bodies in place and trained	15 Management Committees	Report on Management Committee establishment and training	
	2.2. b Management committee members are properly trained	75% of Management Committee members who say that the training is 'very useful' or 'useful' and 75% of members who can remember some important information	focus group, survey	
	2,2.a Number of management committes which are functioning efficiently and autonomously	At least 50% of Management Committees	Rapport de suivi, survey	

Output (Result)	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
2.3 The different management bodies are fulfilling their roles and the cereal banks are a living community resource	2.3.a Satisfaction levels expressed by members regarding cereal bank management	80% of members are satisfied with the functioning of the management committees	focus group, survey	The communities and management committees, in particular, are motivated and engaged in cereal bank activities
	2.3.b. Coherence between documentation, physical stock and financial resources	< 5% margin of error (conformity)	monitoring report	
2.4 Communities have access to technical support from the Irish Red Cross and the State technical services	.2.4.a Satisfaction expressed by cereal bank committee members regarding the level of technical support and advice	At least 80%	focus group,enquête	
	2.4.b. Number of visits to cereal banks by Irish Red Cross team and government representatives	1 visit each 3 months with service technique / 4 visits	Visit Reports	
	2.4.c Full membership participation in management of the cereal banks	70% of members participated in the management of cereal banks	Visit Reports	
Objective 3 - Livelihoods and Food Security :Reduce labour burden on womens' and girls' through higher efficiency wood stoves in targetted households				
Outcome / Impact	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
3.1.1Increase in the number of beneficiaries possessing and using improved stoves	3.1.1.a Number of improved stoves distributed	1958 distributed in the 2014 villages targetting 979 beneficiaries	Distribution Reports	Availability of stoves on the market and beneficiary buy-in disponibilité des foyers sur le marché et engagement des bénéficiaires
	3.1.1. b Number of households using the improved stoves in an appropriate way after 3 months, 6 months	> 80%, of regular usage	Survey	
Objective 4 - Livelihoods and Food Security : 4.0 Contribute to environmental protection through land recuperation				
4.1Communities are mobilized and organized to conduct environmental protection activities	Sesitization anf mobilization of communities	02 Sensitization sessions	activity report	availability of funds and beneficiary buy-in
	Training of communities	02 training sessions	activity report	
	Identification and training od beneficiarries	ND	activity report	
Objective 5 - WATSAN :Improve access to potable water and reduce water borne diseases and death related to poor water quality and hygiene and sanitation in targeted communities				
Outcome (Impact)	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
5.1 Improved access to potable water in the targetted villages	5.1.a Number of new water points constructed, including mini AEP	1	Call for Tender, invoice, payment and follow up report	
	5.1.b number of water points repaired	4	Call for Tender, invoice, payment and follow up report	
	5.1.c Average time gained by men/women fethcing water in the dry season	1H	focus group,survey	
	5.1.d Averaged time gained by men/women fethcing water in the rainy season	30 mn	focus group, survey	
	5.1.e Reduction in the proportion of households consuming stagnat water during the rainy season	25%	focus group, survey	

Community ownership of wells and development of community initiative	5.2.a Number of management committees in place and trained	2	training report, list of participants	
	5.2.b Number of well repairers trained	15	training report, photos	
	5.2.c Number of community focal points and volunteers trained in hygiene and sanitation	18 (15 focal points and 3 CRN volunteers)	training report, photos	
	5.2.d Number of volunteers trained in PHAST	10	training reports, photos	
5.3Hygiene and sanitation is improved in the targetted villages	5.3.a. Number of awareness campaigns carried out	ND	training reports, photos	
	5.3.a. Number of community selected for latrines construction	5	training reports, photos	
	5.3.a. Number of beneficiaries identified for family latrines construction	15	training reports, photos	
	.3.b Proportion of people in the targetted villages who have improved knowledge, practices and attitudes to hygiene issues	ND	Water committee records; HH surveys	
	5.3.c Proportion of households who think that washing hands with soap helps to prevent illnesses	ND	focus group, survey	
	5.3.d % of households who believe that illnesses can prevented through good hygiene practice	ND	Water Committee Records; household survey	
	6.3.eReduction in the prevalence of diaorrhea in children under 5 years	ND	Water Committee Records	
	5.3.f Reduction in the amount of litter	ND	Survey	
	5.3.i Reduction in the level of open defecation	ND	surveys; FGD	
Objective 6 - Capacity Building : Strenghten Capacity of the Nigérien Red Cross and the local communities to undertake activities to reduce vulnerability to food insecurity and prepare for and respond to emergency				
Outcome / Impact	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
6.3 Improved knowledge and understanding of the Red Crossat community level	6.3.a. Number of community members participating in Red Cross activities	Increase in participation	Project records	
	6.3.b. Number of events organised to promote and raise awareness of Red Cross activities in Niger	International Red Cross Day is celebrated	Programme Records and Branch Reports	
	6.3.c Number existing of Focal Points (male v female)	ND		
	6.3.d % of community members capable of giving a basic description of Red Cross principles	70% of households are able to give a basic description and to cite at least two activities it carries out	Questionnaire; Focus Group Discussions	
Niger Red Cross infractural capacity is improved	6.5.a Consturction of shower and WC at the Belbédji department office	shower and WC constructed		
	6.5.b Purchase of photocopier for Belbedji office	1 photocopier		
	6.5 ,c Purchase of computer for Tanout department office	1 computer		

