



# Project Information Document (PID)

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Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 06-Feb-2020 | Report No: PIDA28098



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country Niger	Project ID P168779	Project Name Niger Learning Improvement for Results in Education Project	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 11-Feb-2020	Estimated Board Date 31-Mar-2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Planning	Implementing Agency Ministries of Basic Education	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve the quality of teaching and learning conditions in select regions, and strengthen education planning and management

Components

- Improving teaching practices
- Promoting Learning for girls and boys
- Strengthening systems and building capacities for the delivery of education services
- Project administration and coordination
- Project advance
- Unallocated

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	140.00
<b>Total Financing</b>	140.00
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	140.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS**

**World Bank Group Financing**



International Development Association (IDA)	140.00
IDA Credit	20.00
IDA Grant	120.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

**B. Introduction and Context**

Country Context

**1. Niger, a landlocked Sahelian country of about 21.5 million people, is in the heart of a turbulent region.**

The most immediate vulnerability is related to the growing regional insecurity and violent extremist groups, which threaten the country’s stability and fuel pre-existing intercommunal tensions. Among key drivers of fragility, the marginalization of youth in the form of limited economic opportunities, difficulty accessing land and low education levels exacerbates an already challenging socioeconomic situation. Further, the context of insecurity, and the presence of insurgent groups, makes youth vulnerable to radicalization. Governance challenges also hamper the already weak delivery of public services and have resulted in widespread popular dissatisfaction.

**2. Although poverty rates have fallen, this drop has been outweighed by rapid population growth rates, resulting in a large increase in the absolute number of poor people in Niger.** Per capita GDP was US\$895 in 2015 (constant 2011 US\$), making Niger one of the poorest nations in the world. Between 2005 and 2014, the incidence of income poverty fell from approximately 54 percent to approximately 45 percent. However, the absolute number of people living in poverty rose from 6.8 million in 2005 to 8.2 million in 2014. Overall population growth accelerated from 3.1 percent between 1988 and 2001 to 3.9 percent between 2001 and 2012 and the population of Niger now stands at about 21.5 million. This is explained by the highest fertility rate in the world which averages 7.6 children per woman, and a rapid decline in child mortality. With the number of children increasing by 730,000 per year, the state is burdened with extremely high demands for investments in education and health services. These factors have also constrained welfare more generally: Niger has consistently been ranked near to last in the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index since 2010.

**3. Niger’s low human development outcomes are a binding constraint to promoting growth and shared prosperity.** Life expectancy at birth is estimated at about 61 years. The under-five mortality rate is 104 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate is 553 per 100,000 live births - higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) average of 546. Only 52 percent of children receive a complete set of vaccinations and 44 percent of children under five are stunted and, as a result, at risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can last a



lifetime. The World Bank Human Capital Index shows that Nigeriens born today will only reach 32 percent of their productivity potential, due to serious deficiencies in health and education services. Equally worrying is the fact that learning poverty has been estimated at 99 percent in Niger, meaning that most children cannot read and understand a simple text by the age of 10<sup>1</sup>.

**4. Strengthening human capital features among the key priorities of Niger’s strategic vision for 2035** as elaborated in the Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy (SDDCI 2035). The strategy proposes a long-term plan for a prosperous and peaceful country with a diversified and dynamic economy that can create jobs for its young population. In line with this vision, the Economic and Social Development Strategy for 2017-2021 (*Plan de Développement Economique et Social* - PDES) aims to bring about a transformation of the country at all levels and to eradicate poverty and inequality. Its goals are to reduce the incidence of poverty from 39.8 percent in 2016 to 31.3 percent in 2021, achieve an average annual economic growth rate of seven percent, and raise the tax rate to 20 percent. The PDES also aims to achieve structural transformation of the economy by strengthening the secondary (manufacturing) sector, including transformation of the rural economy, modernization of public administration and revitalization of the private sector. As outlined in the SDDCI 2035 and the PDES, providing quality education is central to the Government’s strategy to transform its human capital, start its demographic transition, and support rapid, sustainable and inclusive growth.

**5. The security and displacement situations further exacerbate pressure on services and impact hosting regions already characterized by high poverty levels and lack of positive state presence.** Various regional conflicts, including the crisis in Mali, the Boko Haram regional crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, and rising insecurity in northern states of Nigeria, are causing major displacement towards and within Niger and are having an adverse impact on economic activities and access to public services. According to UNHCR estimates in September 2019, the country is hosting close to 440,000 people displaced by conflict. This includes both refugees from Nigeria (161,000) and Mali (57,000), located respectively in the southern Diffa and Tillaberi-Tahoua regions; 30,000 Nigerien returnees from Nigeria (Diffa) as well as 187,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Diffa and Tillaberi-Tahoua). Across all forced displacement situations, the conditions for women and girls are even more difficult. Gender-based violence (GBV) and survival sex are relatively prevalent and economic opportunities and access to education are very limited for women and girls. Unless the gender dimension of the situation is effectively dealt with, progress is likely to remain elusive.

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

**6. The formal education system in Niger consists of two years of pre-primary school, six years of primary education, four years of lower secondary education, and three years of upper secondary education.** The Government considers primary and lower secondary education as basic education (*Base I & Base II*). Currently, only primary education which is provided primarily by the public sector, is mandatory, and the official school enrollment age is seven. The education system is administered by a complex and sometimes overlapping network of six ministries, including the Ministry of Primary Education (*Ministère de l’Enseignement Primaire, de l’Alphabétisation, de la Promotion des Langues Nationales, et de l’Education Civique – MEP*) who is responsible for pre-primary, primary (public and private), and non-formal education (literacy, Koranic schools), and the Ministry of Secondary Education (*Ministère des Enseignements Secondaires – MES*) who manages general secondary education.



7. **As described above, Niger’s education system is evolving in a context marked by heavy demographic pressure, limited resources and risks of major vulnerabilities.** The population is expected to increase from 22 million in 2018 to 35 million in 2030 which is resulting in a massive demographic shift of the population, with 53 percent of Niger’s population under 15. Such growth places immense pressures on the education system which will see the entering population for the first year of primary school grow from 730,000 currently, to more than one million children each year until 2030.

8. **In response, the Government of Niger has prioritized the education and training sectors in its budget.** In 2016, public spending on education accounted for 20.7 percent of the total budget and 5.2 percent of the Growth Domestic Product (GDP). With such high level of public funding, the education system will likely struggle to mobilize additional public resources or even maintain this level of public funding, especially given the competition with other priority sectors such as security or health. Yet, additional resources and more efficient spending will be necessary to keep pace with growing demand for education, and provision of school spaces, teacher recruitment and training, among others. In addition, risks related to drought, food insecurity, floods, population movements caused by armed conflict, teachers' strikes and violence in school settings regularly disrupt educational service delivery in the country.

9. **Despite government priority given to the sector, schooling indicators in Niger remain among the lowest in Africa.** The number of students enrolled in the education system has increased steadily over the past ten years but at variable rates according to the education cycle. The average annual growth between 2009-10 and 2016-17 was 16.5 percent in preprimary, 7 percent in primary, 13.9 percent in lower secondary, and 16.7 percent in upper secondary. Overall, students enrolled in the basic education cycle (primary and lower secondary levels) increased from 1.98 million in 2009-10 to 3.4 million students in 2016-17. The public sector has supported the largest share of this increase and enrolls 96 and 87 percent of students at the primary and lower secondary levels respectively. However, the schooling coverage progressed very slowly over the same period and remains low in comparison with countries in the sub-region. In 2016-17, the gross enrollment rate (GER) was only 11.8 percent in preprimary, 72.2 percent in primary, 30.7 percent in lower secondary and 7.6 percent in upper secondary (against, respectively, 3.9 percent, 60.1 percent, 17 percent and 3.6 percent in 2009-10). This means that the education system does not have the capacity to enroll much of its school-age population and keep pace with the demographic growth. In addition, many students leave the education system without completing any cycle. Only 8 percent of students who enter primary school access upper secondary school, and only 4 percent complete the secondary education cycle.

10. **The low education coverage translates into a large out-of-school population.** Overall, 51 percent of children aged 7-12, and 60 percent of children aged 13-16 are considered out-of-school<sup>2</sup>. This population is comprised of both children who never enrolled in the education system and those who have dropped out. Although there is a dearth of accurate information on the out-of-school population, these numbers likely include children attending religious school (*Makarantas*). Educational opportunities are unequal and vary significantly according to the place of residence, gender and social background. They are particularly unfavorable for girls and rural students, but all the regions, except for Niamey, are affected by high out of school rates, as shown in figure 2.

11. **Both supply and demand side constraints negatively impact access and retention in the Nigerien**

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<sup>2</sup> Country Education Status Report (RESEN-2018)



**education system.** On the supply-side, constraints may include the absence of a school or long distance to schools. In addition, retention is severely affected by schooling discontinuity whereby a school does not offer all levels of a cycle: only 60 percent of primary schools in Niger, enrolling 50 percent of students, offer a complete cycle of education. Where supply exists, parents may have a perception that public school does suit their religious or cultural beliefs, and therefore refrain from enrolling their children. Demand-side constraints are also financial. Although primary school does not have formal fees, some parents are unable to afford the informal costs of sending their children to school (transport, food, books etc.), or prefer to keep them home to support agricultural and domestic chores. This perceived short-term opportunity cost is aggravated by a lack of confidence in the public-school system due to poor learning conditions and outcomes. The acknowledged corruption in the public administration which in the education sector takes the form of ghost teachers, patronage and favoritism, tends to further erode the population's trust in the system and impedes overall efforts to improve education outcomes.

**12. Girls are especially disadvantaged in access to quality education services, especially in rural areas.** Expansion of access to basic education has been accompanied by progress in the gender parity index that improved from 0.81 in 2010 to 0.87 in 2017, which represents significant progress given the high demographic pressure (3.9 percent per year). However, a significant gender gap persists and increases as students move through the education system. Girls' access to the first year of primary school is standard in urban areas but is only 44 percent in rural areas. In primary school, the GER was 90 percent for boys compared to 79 percent for girls in 2016. The primary completion rate also shows a gender disparity and stands at 64 percent for boys and 56 percent for girls. Indeed, it is not only initial access that is a challenge, but higher drop out and repetition rates for girls that do make it to school. In 2016, about 7 out of 10 girls completed basic cycle 1. The gap continues to widen by education level: at the lower secondary level, the GER is 44 percent for boys and 36 percent for girls, while the completion rate is 20 percent for boys and 15 percent for girls.

**13. Niger's security situation further complicates the delivery of basic education services in certain areas.** The regions of Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabéri, already characterized by high levels of poverty and a lack of positive state presence, are particularly affected by attacks by armed groups and extremists as well as inter-ethnic violence resulting in forced displacement of populations and school closures. For the academic year 2018-19, more than a hundred schools have been closed due to terrorist threats on teachers, population, security forces and burning of classrooms. Since October 2018, 30 schools have been closed in the Diffa region due to insecurity, preventing 114,300 children from attending school. With the recent deterioration of the situation along the border with Burkina Faso, 58 primary schools and 2 secondary schools have suspended their activities in the Tillabéri region. In response, since March 2017, the Government of Niger declared a state of emergency in twelve departments in the regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua along the border of Burkina Faso and Mali.

**14. Some interventions are ongoing to benefit refugee populations which are particularly vulnerable, in the affected regions.** The Government in collaboration with UNHCR, has been integrating refugee children into national education programs since March 2016. In the regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua, refugee children from Mali are now fully integrated into the Nigerien curriculum and the Ministry of Education works to ensure the availability of teachers in the hosting schools. This strategy includes upgrading semi-permanent school infrastructure, and building new classrooms, housing for teachers and latrines. However, national capacity is limited, and many gaps remain in the provision of an adequate education service for all children in general, and displaced populations in particular.



**15. High repetition and dropout rates for all children highlight serious internal efficacy and efficiency issues.**

In 2016-17, the repetition rate was 3.6 percent in primary, 20.5 percent in lower secondary, and 19.7 percent in upper secondary. While repetition in primary school has decreased since 2010, it has increased in secondary school and reaches the highest level in the sub-region. The internal efficiency coefficients are 82.3 percent in primary school and 53.2 percent in lower secondary school, meaning that 17 and 45 percent of resources respectively allocated to these cycles are wasted due to high repetition and dropout rates. Years of expected schooling are progressing particularly slowly: on average students completed 5 to 6 years of education in 2016-17, against 4.7 years in 2009-10. Although Niger is one of the sub-Saharan countries with the highest share of public spending on education as a percentage of GDP (5.9 percent), its school-life expectancy remains much lower than the regional average of 8.1 years in comparator countries, which underlines the inefficiency of the education system

**16. For children who have dropped out of the system, non-formal education in Niger consists of** (i) bridge classes (a 9 month intensive “bridge” program to formal education for children aged 9-12); (ii) Alternative Education Centers (targeted toward 12-14 year olds which consists of 4 years of schooling, and is followed by technical and vocational secondary education or integration into the working world); (iii) Second Chance Schools or ESC (target 9-13 year olds for a duration of 3 years of training and which lead to general secondary education); and (iv) Renovated Koranic Schools or ECR (9-14 years old) which lead to formal Franco-Arab education. The numbers enrolled in these programs per 100,000 inhabitants are still low, suggesting that this sub-sector, while critical given the number of out of school youth, is in its infancy and undersubscribed.

**17. For children enrolled in the education system, weak education outcomes translate into a severe learning crisis.**

The Human Capital Index shows that children in Niger can expect to complete 5.3 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 2.6 years, with a learning gap of 2.7 years. The 2014 PASEC survey showed that at the beginning of primary school (CP), more than nine out of ten students have language learning difficulties and nearly three-quarters of students at the same level have significant difficulties in mathematics. According to the same source, at the end of the primary schooling cycle (CM2), less than 10 percent of pupils have adequate reading and mathematics performance. The 2015 Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) survey also revealed that only one in nine (11.2 percent) children could read a simple sentence, fewer than one in two children were able to perform a one-digit addition, and only two out of five children could do one-digit subtraction. The average performance score of students in the public schools was 21.7 percent in French and 11.5 percent in mathematics.

**18. Teachers, one of the most fundamental ingredients of learning, are seldom qualified, incentivized, supervised or supported in the context of Niger.**

Teacher Training Colleges are administered by two separate Ministries: initial and pre-service training for preschool and primary school teachers is delivered by the *Ecole Normale d'Instituteurs* (ENI) under MEP, while MESRI provides pre-service training to secondary school teachers through the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (ENS). Thanks to the eleven Teachers' Training Colleges (ENI) which are spread throughout the national territory, the teacher production capacity is, in theory, sufficient to meet the additional needs of 6,000 primary school teachers per year. However, this is not the case in lower secondary school where training is only offered by the ENS. Moreover, the entry criteria and the training framework at ENI and ENS do not guarantee the quality of incoming and outgoing applicants' profiles.



**19. While the teacher diploma is the official level of qualification for primary school teachers in Niger, in practice teachers represent only 7 percent of the teaching staff.** The lion's share of the teaching force is made up of assistant teachers (82 percent), and an additional approximately 10 percent of teachers teach with no qualifications. Occasional professional development opportunities are provided, but the overall efficacy of in-service training is hampered by the lack of skilled trainers, absence of mechanisms to identify training needs, the low base of content and pedagogical competencies of both trainers and teachers, lethargic coaching units, and absence of a strategy or appropriate framework for teacher professional development. Increasingly concerned with the underperformance of both students and teachers, in 2017, the Government of Niger launched a national assessment of primary school contractual teachers (which represents 70 percent of the teaching staff) which showed that only 34 percent of them met the minimum requirements. This stocktaking exercise was considered as a necessary first step in supporting teacher management and deployment reforms.

**20. In addition, teachers are not adequately supervised nor held accountable by school directors and inspectorates.** According to the SDI survey, during unannounced inspection visits, 16.6 percent of teachers were absent from school, and 27 percent were absent from the classroom. On average, the actual teaching time in public schools is 4 hours and 13 minutes per day, or 1 hour and 28 minutes below the official time provided. Furthermore, school directors are not equipped with the necessary skills to effectively manage schools as they are usually selected from groups of experienced teachers and receive no pre- or in-service training for their new roles. In addition, the existing 470 school inspectorates in the 8 regions (among which 100 are newly created inspectorates without any adequate financial and human resources) are currently unable to play a critical role in the quality of the learning process given pedagogical support staff to teacher ratios and limited resources (including adequate training).

**21. Lack of strategic management of teachers also impacts education service delivery.** MEP and MES are faced with numerous constraints, including limited control over staff, random deployment and utilization of teaching staff, lack of supervision and regulation mechanisms at all level of HR management, staff turnover, lack of management tools and software, and lack of communication between and within ministries of education. The inefficiencies of teacher management are symptomatic of a lack of high managerial and technical capacity to provide a clear strategic and operational direction for the sector, and limited capacity for personnel planning, management and supervision, as well as overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E). These factors are made worse by the lack of linkages between resources and outcomes resulting from the absence of incentives to perform.

**22. Young Nigeriens entering primary school are not school ready.** Evidence shows that children who receive cognitive stimulation and quality pre-primary education in their early years have a greater school-life expectancy and better learning results. In Niger, only 11.8 percent of children age 5-6 are enrolled in a form of preschool education, of which 50 percent are girls. This is one of the lowest rates in the West and Central Africa region- where the average is 29 percent. In addition, the share of enrollment in community preschools has been decreasing since 2016 due to the closing of many of these preschools or their transfer to the public sector. Very few preschool teachers are qualified to educate young children. Only two of the existing eleven ENIs in Dosso and Diffa regions, offer training for pre-primary teachers.

**23. Lack of educational inputs in the classroom and weak management of resources also hamper the learning process.** While the student-teacher ratio in primary schools at the national level has improved, with a ratio of 37 to 1, there are large disparities across regions. Poor instructional conditions and weak



management are also characterized by a lack of textbooks and guides and an imbalanced distribution of resources. Furthermore, 52 percent of primary schools are built of precarious materials, such as straw huts, and are therefore subject to climate hazards.

**24. A complex curriculum reform in national languages has been under way for more than a decade.** Planned in 2004 and launched in 2009, MEP officially started its experimentation in 2012. In the face of budgetary uncertainty and the many implementation challenges, some of which resulted in negative impacts on children's learning in schools targeted by the reform<sup>3</sup>, the Government of Niger and the DP's Local Education Group (LEG) have agreed to put the reform on hold and carry out an external evaluation to assess the technical viability and financial sustainability of the reform, and propose potential solutions for a more rigorous budgeting and programming of subsequent phases. Meanwhile, MEP revised the 1988 version of the primary school curriculum to provide a simplified program that will allow teachers to teach to the level of their students. Under this new program (*Programme rénové*) finalized in September 2019, MEP plans to develop basic scripted lessons and exercises to provide teachers with detailed guidance through structured and effective pedagogy.

**25. Management of the sector is constrained by lack of reliable information, and weak implementation, coordination, and evaluation.** In the absence of regular student assessments, the government is unable to act upon evidence and align system elements to address learning gaps. Because Niger does not have a national system with adequate structure, mechanisms and skilled staff to carry out large-scale standardized assessments of student outcomes, the Ministries of Education resort to international comparative assessments such as PASEC or SDI and occasionally administer numeracy, literacy or subject tests on a sample ad-hoc basis, with limited human and financial resources. Overall, the capacity to produce, manage and analyze education data for planning purposes is extremely low at all levels (national, regional, school), which seriously constrains the ability to pilot approaches in the education system and introduce accountability and transparency mechanisms. Data is generally collected through the administration of cumbersome, paper-based questionnaires at the school level and processed at the central level by unqualified staff using limited resources.

**26. The move towards a higher degree of decentralization presents both challenges and opportunities for the education sector.** Niger started to operationalize the decentralization of the State with the first local elections in 2004 and the establishment of regional councils in 2011. However, the process remains largely incomplete and regional and local authorities (*Collectivités Territoriales*) do not yet play their part. A key focus of the decentralization agenda in the education and training sector was to ensure proper deployment of human resources, efficient allocation of resources to schools, an enhanced budgetary process to ensure strong links between resources and objectives, and improved monitoring and evaluation. To this day, the education system remains largely centralized, especially in its budgetary process, and the regional education directorates (*DREN – Directions régionales de l'éducation nationale*) do not perform their intended role, which under the new modality would include responsibilities such as school construction, school mapping, procurement of school supplies, and teacher recruitment. In addition, schools do not have autonomy and resources to improve education outcomes at their level, and communities are insufficiently involved in the definition of needs, decision-making and accountability mechanisms. Four main constraints to effective decentralization are identified in Niger, namely (i) the weak management capacities, (ii) the unclear division of labor, (iii) the

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<sup>3</sup> The report found that school manuals were not delivered on time, and in some cases not at all, and that teachers did not receive adequate training to support the reform. (Ministry of Primary Education, Republic of Niger, 2017)



lack of human and financial resources and inadequate financing mechanisms for local authorities and (iii) the absence of mechanisms to ensure performance and accountability at all levels.

**27. As stated above, Niger places high priority on the education sector as a key driver of human capital and economic growth** as articulated in Program 3 of the PDES. To meet the increasing demand for education, the Government mobilized significant financial resources: in 2016, public spending on education represented 24.2 percent of total public expenditures, compared to only 16 percent in 2008. Yet, a volatile economic and financial environment, difficulties in further mobilizing domestic resources and increased spending on national security are impacting the State's capacity in financing the education sector. In 2018, public spending on education decreased to 17.3 percent of total public expenditures. In addition, budget implementation is weak, with an average rate of 55 percent for the education investment budget over the past years. In a tight budgetary environment, Niger is increasingly dependent on foreign aid: in 2017, external financing represented 33 percent of the State's total revenues. In the education sector, 65 percent of foreign aid is implemented outside the Finance law and state financial circuits, which raises issues in terms of alignment of the development partners interventions with the national program.

**28. The Government's action in the sector is guided by the "Education and Training Sector Program" (PSEF) which defines key objectives by sub-sector over a ten-year period.** In basic education, the PSEF 2014-2024 places an emphasis on revamping the teaching policy to facilitate effective teacher allocation and management, strengthening initial and in-service teacher training, and making the teaching profession more attractive. Other strategic orientations include the development of multi-grade teaching, construction of classrooms, introduction of national languages in the first years of primary education and development of a new model of rural lower secondary schools. A review of PSEF implementation conducted in February 2019 revealed some limited results but also showed that many additional interventions were carried out even though they were disconnected from the PSEF planning, raising questions about the relevance of both the plan itself and the strategic management of the sector. Serious challenges in collecting and analyzing data for the education system caused the Government to postpone the preparation of the next ten-year education plan (PSEF) to 2022.

**29. In the meantime, a three-year transition plan (PTSEF, 2020-2022) has been approved and prepared with support from development partners to improve the education information management system (EMIS) as well as sector governance more broadly.** The PTSEF sets short-term priorities to develop equitable access to education, improve the quality and retention, and enhance the management of the education services. Key measures include the development of a mechanism to manage student flows, addressing semi-permanent schools, alternative models for school construction including for rural lower secondary schools, enhanced analysis and monitoring of teacher absenteeism, improvement of the learning environment in the early grades through school grants, evaluation and continuation of the curriculum reform and revamping of teacher initial training, development of multi-grade teaching and complete overhaul of statistical analysis and collection systems. In addition, in October 2019 MEP endorsed in a Roadmap for improving the monitoring and management of educational quality (*amélioration du pilotage de la qualité*) at the central, deconcentrated and local levels. The Roadmap includes the following four priority areas for primary education: (i) development of pedagogical tools and innovations, (ii) revamping of the pedagogical support to teachers, (iii) promoting a social contract to enhance stakeholder's accountability and performance, and (iv) overhaul of the student assessment and counselling system.



### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

To improve the quality of teaching and learning conditions in select regions, and strengthen education planning and management

Key Results

- Targeted primary education teachers demonstrating new teaching practices in the classroom
- Targeted teachers with proficiency in reading instruction
- Number of children benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning
- Number of national large-scale standardized learning assessments complete

### D. Project Description

#### **Component 1: Improving Teaching Practices**

30. Component 1 aims to improve the quality of teaching at primary and secondary levels by supporting a series of innovative interventions which enable teachers to adopt interactive, student centered, teaching approaches. The component will do so by: (i) enhancing the quality of pre-service teacher training through interactive, action-based teaching approaches, and rehabilitation of ENI/ENS; (ii) establishing a technology enabled coaching and supervision model to improve in-service teacher training and performance; (iii) increasing the quality and supply of teaching and learning materials; and (iv) improving accountability and transparency through cross cutting governance measures in each of the sub-components including performance based grants and improved distribution of learning materials.

#### **Subcomponent 1.1 Strengthening Teacher Education Colleges**

31. The purpose of this component is to create a sustainable, quality initial teacher training and preparation program to ensure quality classroom instruction at pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels. It aims to do so by reorganizing, upgrading, and building capacity of the 11 existing Teacher Education Colleges (*Ecoles Normales d'Instituteurs* - ENI, *Ecole Normale Supérieure* – ENS). The project will support (i) overhaul of the curriculum, training methods and pedagogical tools; (ii) Improved governance through performance grants and capacity building; and an improved training environment based on results of a physical audit to be carried out of each of the colleges.

#### **Subcomponent 1.2: Developing a teacher coaching and supervision system**

32. This sub-component aims to improve the quality of classroom instruction by developing a teacher professional development (TPD) program and delivering local and individualized coaching activities to upgrade the knowledge and pedagogical practices of teachers with a focus on early grade reading. The project will build upon existing platforms, essentially through the revitalization of CAPED at the primary level (*Cellule d'Animation Pédagogique* – pedagogical advisory unit) and the UP at the secondary level (*Unités Pédagogiques* - Pedagogical Unit) through a new model of coaching, initially focused on improved reading



instruction in early grades, and potentially scalable to other subject areas and levels of education based upon performance.

### **Subcomponent 1.3: Teaching and Learning Materials**

33. The objective of this sub-component would be to ensure the availability of relevant educational materials in the classroom. It would include the following: (i) the development and digitalization of various teaching materials at the primary level including a clear sequencing and simplification of the school curriculum, basic scripted lessons, and accompanying student readers, standardized exercises and classroom assessments in the 2-3 most-spoken national languages, and French; (ii) Supplementary early grade books in local languages, including locally developed leveled books and read-alouds; (iii) creation, edition and reproduction nationally of student and teacher manuals at the secondary level; and (iv) improved supply chain management and distribution mechanisms for all teaching and learning materials will be supported at both primary and secondary levels.

### **Component 2: Promoting learning for girls and boys**

34. Component two aims to improve learning for vulnerable populations in Niger by providing critical alternative pathways to education to meet their learning needs. The interventions are targeted to the most vulnerable in Niger, including girls, displaced children, and out of school rural poor. The component is comprised of a series of direct interventions focused on improving reading proficiency and adapted to different student populations and settings, with complementary awareness-raising activities within communities. The three pronged approach is comprised of (i) targeted community based prevention activities to provide remedial support for children considered at risk of dropping out of the system; (ii) an accelerated “catch up” or second chance program targeted towards children in the most vulnerable regions of Niger so that they may engage or reengage in formal education; and (iii) integration of reading and numeracy curriculum into makarantas to ensure provision of foundational skills.

### **Subcomponent 2.1: Remedial Prevention Programs**

35. By building on promising approaches already under implementation in Niger, as well as others in the region, this subcomponent aims to support remediation prevention programs which integrate additional instruction outside of school hours and supports during the school day to support mastery of foundational skills and higher rates of academic completion. The activities will focus specifically on promoting the acquisition of reading proficiency, as well as numeracy. Support to at-risk students with difficulties will include:

- **The reintroduction of the "initiative qualité"**, a national mechanism for the adequate identification of and support to students with difficulties through remedial sessions which are integrated into the primary school calendar.
- **Community Based Remedial Prevention via the PMAQ program.** PMAQ is a remedial education program designed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), focused on reading and math using a participatory and community-based approach. The program will target children currently enrolled at the primary and lower secondary education level, in municipalities with the highest dropout and repetition rates.
- **Learning spaces for Girls.** This intervention aims to introduce a holistic, community engaged approach to support girls' attendance and completion in secondary school. It consists of (i)



provision of life skills; (ii) local mentors which act as role models and supports for girls; (iii) provision of material supports where necessary; and (iv) family and community engagement to create environments that support girls' success in school and beyond.

### **Subcomponent 2.2 Second Chance Programs for out-of-school children**

36. Given the large out of school population, in which girls, children from rural areas, and those from non-educated households are particularly prevalent, the project will support the development of an accelerated “catch up program” with a particular focus on these marginalized populations, to integrate children into the formal school system. This reintegration program will target children age 7 to 12 in the municipalities with the highest percentage of out of school in the 5 most deprived regions, including those that have higher rates of displaced children.

### **Subcomponent 2.3 Grants for Results in Reading and Math to Selected Makaranta Schools**

37. This subcomponent will introduce the teaching of foundational skills into makaranta schools, which do not currently provide opportunities for enrolled children to learn literacy and numeracy. The component aims to (i) foster policy dialogue on cognitive and socioemotional development of children in the non-formal settings of Makaranta schools, and (ii) introducing a minimum number of hours a week dedicated to the teaching of foundational skills into the curriculum of 100 targeted Makaranta schools, on a voluntary basis via a call for proposals

## **Component 3: Strengthening systems and capacities for the delivery of education services**

38. The lack of efficiency of the education system is symptomatic of the weak institutional and human capacity in the sector, and the absence of accountability mechanisms and performance-based incentives. Component 3 will strengthen the governance of the education sector by supporting a series of interventions at the central, regional and local levels, in line with the ongoing decentralization process.

### **Sub-component 3.1 Performance Based Management**

39. This sub-component will focus on improving the governance and decentralization of the system by introducing performance grants with clear equity and quality indicators by each level of management in the education sector, based on evidence-based practice from the region. The current highly centralized approach to planning, and implementation, mean that inspectorates and pedagogical advisers meant to play a critical role in improving the quality of learning at district and school level, have limited training, limited decision-making abilities, and in turn, limited accountability. Further, a weak system of school grants results in limited discretionary resources at the school level to fund key quality and equity improvements. The introduction of performance-based contracts at three levels: (i) regional; (ii) inspectorate; and (iii) school level, will necessitate clear roles and responsibilities and achievable targets by level, meant to strengthen accountability in the management chain, as well as decision making capacity.

### **Sub-component 3.2 Strengthening education human resource management (HRM)**



40. This sub-component will support implementation of the new human resources (HR) strategy developed by the MEP and MES, aimed at better deployment of teachers across the country and increased performance of local education authorities. MEP and MES have recently developed plans and strategies to overcome HR deficiencies, with support from World Bank Projects (PCDS - Capacity and Performance of Public Sector for Service Delivery, and PAEQ – Support to Quality Education Project).

**Sub-component 3.3 Monitoring, evaluation and accountability**

41. The combination of school-based management (SBM) components that are crucial for enabling a better learning environment points to a set of variables that foster managerial autonomy, the assessment of results, and the use of this information to promote accountability. This sub-component will strengthen the processes and tools that underlie the renewed emphasis on accountability throughout the system.

**Component 4: Project administration and coordination**

42. The component would finance the logistics and human resources for the overall project management to facilitate project implementation. It will aim at ensuring effective implementation of the proposed project through efficient coordination mechanisms, proper FM and procurement practices, and effective M&E of project outcomes at the national and sub-national levels.

**Component 5: Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC)**

43. A no-cost CERC will be included under the proposed project in accordance with OP/BP 10.00 (Investment Project Financing), paragraphs 12 and 13, for contingent emergency response to an eligible crisis or emergency, as needed. This will allow the government to request rapid reallocation of project funds to respond promptly and effectively to an eligible emergency or crisis that is a natural or artificial disaster or crisis that has caused or is likely to cause a major adverse economic and/or social impact.

Legal Operational Policies	
	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

44. The rehabilitation/construction activities under Subcomponent 1.1 include civil works that will generate adverse environmental and social risks and impacts. Among these are potential impacts related to: (i) air quality, noise/vibrations, water and sanitation, solid waste; (ii) risks of localized soil degradation, despite the fact that washout works will be limited in depth. (iii) accidents caused by construction machinery traffic and possible non-compliance with safety; (iv) community health and safety related to potential traffic and road safety risks to affected communities and road users throughout the project life cycle. There are no significant long-term or irreversible adverse impacts expected from project implementation. The risks and impacts are expected to be globally site-specific.

45. The National Office for Environmental Assessment (*Bureau National d' Evaluation Environnementale* - BNEE) is



responsible for monitoring and overseeing of the implementation of environmental and social risk management, including the validation of the screening process and genuine consultation of beneficiaries. The BNEE implementation capacity and reporting quality still needs improvement. The project implementation agencies (MEP and MES) have never dealt with the new World Bank Environmental and Social Framework. Thus, the client has no experience or capacity in applying the expanded ESF beyond aspects that are generally included in the OP's, and significant efforts will be required to capacitate the PCU and familiarize the BNEE during project implementation. The ESCP will reflect the relevant actions and measures that will ensure the project compliance to the relevant environmental and social standards.

## **E. Implementation**

### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

#### **At the central level**

46. The responsible agencies will be the Ministry of Primary Education (MEP) and the Ministry of Secondary Education (MES).

47. The oversight of the program will be ensured by the Project's Steering Committee (PSC), composed, at a minimum, of representatives of the Ministry of Planning, MEP, MES, University of Abdou Moumouni (UAM) and the World bank as an observer. The PSC will provide (i) project oversight, strategic guidance to project implementation and ensure coordination with other existing or proposed overlapping activities and programs; (ii) oversee project implementation and approve Annual Action Plans (AAPs) and Budgets; (iii) review and approve project progress reports; and (iv) assess project achievements. The SC will need to be in place prior to effectiveness.

48. Furthermore, a Technical Monitoring Committee (TMC) will be established for both ministries (MEP and MES) Their main role will be to technically coordinate and oversee the implementation of the AAP and provide advice and recommendations to the Steering Committee. They will be responsible, among other things to: (i) ensure consolidation of the different work plans into a budgeted Annual Action Plan to be submitted for the approval of the SC; (ii) ensure the AAP's consistency with the PDO; (iii) validate the terms of reference for studies, consultancies, etc., ensuring their compliance with the objectives of the project; and (iv) oversee implementation of the AAP, monitoring compliance with the planned, programmed and implemented activities. The TMC will comprise the Secretary Generals MEP and MES, all Directorate describe in the table 4 and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU).

49. A Project Coordination Unit (PCU), under the direct supervision of the Secretary General of MES, will (i) be responsible for coordination, monitoring aspects, overall FM, internal audit, disbursement, procurement functions, and Technical Assistance (TA) of the Project, (ii) liaise with the coordination structures and the MEP and MES departments and (iii) transfer skills to MEP and MES departments during the project's implementation. It will also carry out the consolidation of project documents, including the Project Implementation Manual (PIM) and the Financial Management Manual, annual work plans and budget, M&E reports, and other progress reports. It will also facilitate internal and external communication and other supporting activities, as requested. The unit comprises a coordinator, fiduciary staff, IT Staff and a Technical



Assistance Taskforce, all recruited as per TOR acceptable to the world Bank. The Taskforce will provide TA to the ministerial departments based upon a detailed TA plan developed for each component.

### Technical Implementation

50. In line with his/her normal mandate, the SG of the MES would ensure the overall technical coordination of the implementation of the project. Implementation of project activities will be under each government entity depending on the distribution of roles and responsibilities components.

51. At decentralized level, a Regional Technical Support Unit (RTSU) will be set up for coordination and follow up of field activities. The RTSU, reporting to the PCU, will be a small unit that will work closely with the Regional Education Directorate, MEP and MES. The RTSU mandate is to : (i) support the implementation of project activities within its specific coverage area; (ii) provide technical and management support to project beneficiaries; (iii) periodic progress reports; (iv) implement the M&E; (v) field activities follow-up and data transmission to the APCU; (vii) ensure the compliance of various sub-projects with the operational rules and procedures; and (viii) provide technical support to beneficiaries and service providers.

52. The RTSU will be based in the regional directorate MEP/MES or office rent by the project and will work directly with the eight-regional Directorate MEP and MES. The small team will consist of a Regional Coordinator, and one Accounting Assistant and an internal controller.

53. The project implementation manual will be adopted before project effectiveness as a compendium of procedures for the project's implementation, encompassing the administrative, fiduciary, M&E, and social and environmental safeguards procedures. It will include detailed terms of reference for all the PCU staff. The manual describes how the project activities will be implemented and the relations, roles, and responsibilities of each contributing unit or institutions. The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) will update the PIM on a regular basis. Directors and heads of units of the MEP and MES who are responsible for project activities will work as technical leads. The Project Implementation Manual will specify the implementation arrangements and detailed information on project-supported activities. A manual of procedures will be endorsed to define the PBC process and the detailed roles and responsibilities of all actors at the central, regional, district, and school levels.

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