I. Project Context
   Country Context
   Country context
   
   A. Country context
      01. Geography and climate. Niger is a land-locked country with an area of 1,267,000 km² (two-thirds of the country is located in arid and semi-arid zones). The climate is mostly arid (in 85% of total area, annual rainfall is less than 350 mm). Its population is estimated at 16 274 738 (annual growth of 3.3%).
      02. Poverty. Two-thirds of population lives below the poverty threshold. The Human Development Index ranks Niger 163rd out of 174 countries, with a per capita Gross National Income (GNI) of US$240. Only 29% of the population is literate and the child mortality rate is 198 deaths for 1,000 children. More than 50% of the population is affected by food and nutrition insecurity, with 22% of the population chronically suffering extreme food insecurity and 40% of children under five are underweight. Poverty has declined marginally over the last decade. However, its incidence has remained constant since the early 1990s, mainly due to lack of resources, low agricultural productivity, and high population growth.
      03. Economy. Niger’s economy has been affected by high variability of rainfall, fluctuating
terms of trade, and volatility of aid flows. These shocks severely affect human development and cause chronic food insecurity in Niger. Food insecurity is aggravated by the high incidence of rural poverty, which at household level translates into low purchasing power, lack of access to food by vulnerable groups, rampant malnutrition, and poor access to health facilities.

04. Dependence on natural resources and vulnerability to climate hazards. About 84% of the population depends on natural resources that are highly vulnerable to climate factors. Poor households, particularly female-headed households, are more exposed to shocks in production, in response to which they often resort to negative coping mechanisms such as the sale or consumption of seed stocks and sale of productive livestock. In Niger, climate change and variability are likely to increasingly affect land and water resources, biodiversity, production, food security, human health, settlements, and infrastructure.

05. Social and Security Situation: The security situation in many parts of the country is fragile. One of the reasons is the arrival of fighters previously enrolled in the Libyan army and who returned home recently. Most recent developments in Mali are also likely to have an impact on Niger, by exacerbating an already tenuous security situation (especially in the North), including bandits involved in criminal activities. In the South, events in Northern Nigeria, could easily affect Niger, particularly the densely inhabited and economically active southern parts of the country (from Dosso to Nguigmi).

06. Macro-economic achievements and challenges. Since 2000, Niger has developed a track record for macro-economic stability and has embarked on reforms to foster private sector-led economic growth, reduce the debt and improve social indicators. However, despite these gains, Niger continues to face persistent, long-term development challenges (demographic growth and climate crises affect overall economic growth, together with other combined factors, such as the Libyan crisis and social unrest in Mali and Northern Nigeria, as well as the European debt crisis and commodity market developments).

II. Sectoral and Institutional Context

B. Sectoral and Institutional context

07. National development policies and strategies. The Government adopted in 2011 a Strategic Orientation Note for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth’ including three key planning documents: (i) A strategic 2035 vision (called ‘Strategy for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth’ SDDCI-Niger 2035); (ii) a ‘Plan for Economic and Social Development’ (PDES) 2012-2015; and (iii) the ‘Interim Framing Program of Government Action’ (PICAG, 2011-2012). Particularly important is the PDES, which is considered to be the unique operational framework for the Government mid-term development agenda, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It comprises five strategic axes, among them the following: Creation of conditions conducive to sustainable, equitable and inclusive development; Food security and sustainable agricultural development; and Promotion of social development.

08. Food security. The Government has also adopted and started implementation of the so-called ‘3 N initiative’ (‘‘Nigeriens feed Nigeriens”) with key implementation principles, among others, of working through Commune; involving beneficiaries in planning and implementation of development projects; developing resilient crops; and scaling up sustainable management of natural resources.

09. Security and Development. In the aftermath of recent civil unrest, the Government has launched a Development and Security Strategy in Sahelian-Saharan Areas which aims to contribute to social and economic development by creating sustainable peace and security conditions in particularly sensitive geographic areas.

10. Decentralization. Within the context of decentralization reform, local governments
(Collectivités locales) have important comparative advantages in terms of knowledge of local socio-economic constraints and potential, climate-related hazards and appropriate mitigations measures. Elections in early 2011 brought new actors to municipal councils, put in place Regional Councils, and paved the way to a new constitutional and democratic life.

C. Higher Level Objectives to which the Project Contributes

11. The proposed third phase of the program will contribute to the achievement of Niger’s key development objectives, as well as to World Bank strategies in Africa, in general, and in Niger, in particular. It will be implemented in synergy with current development programs, in particular with current Bank-supported projects.

12. Poverty reduction. The project will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Government of Niger in terms of poverty reduction, through initiatives aimed at improving food security, raising the income of rural producers, and increasing, securing and diversifying food production. More particularly, it will support the implementation of key national development policies and strategies.

13. Decentralization. The project will also contribute to strengthening implementation of decentralization reforms and scaling up on-going initiatives aimed at empowering local governments, highlighting their leadership in local development. Particularly important will be the role of CAP3 to define and implement innovative forms of horizontal collaboration between Communes and to strengthen the capacities of Regional Councils.

Inset 1:
NIGER’S COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Over the recent years, Niger has made numerous efforts and committed itself to implementing key international Conventions, such as the following:

• The United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertification (UNCCD, 2008-2018), which is aimed to “to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, in the framework of an integrated approach which is consistent with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas”.

• The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which, dedicated to promoting sustainable development, recognizes the fact that biological diversity is not only about plants, animals and microorganisms and their ecosystems, but also about people and their need for food security and improved livelihoods.

• The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), whose objective is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

In Niger, the Environment National Plan for Sustainable Development (‘Plan National de l’Environnement pour un Développement Durable’ PNEDD) is the key document unifying all the efforts related to environment and sustainable development. Furthermore, specific financial commitments were aimed to implement these conventions, through a range of distinct and complementary projects.

By taking into account the approaches and results of all these initiatives, the proposed project will explicitly support the implementation of the different aspects of these Conventions. For the UNCCD, in particular, key aspects comprise the following:

• Participation of targeted populations in the design and implementation of initiatives to combat desertification
• Development of international and regional cooperation
• Development of partnerships between local governments, NGOs and agricultural land users
• Adoption of strategies to protect natural resources
• Design and implementation of regional and local action plans to combat desertification adapted to the different Nigerien agro-socio-ecologic systems.

14. World Bank’s objectives. The rationale for Bank involvement in the program, initiated in 2004 through this three-stage ‘Adaptable Program Loan’ (APL), remains valid and continues to provide a strong impetus. The proposed project is consistent with the current Bank’s Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) in Niger, in responding to the country’s social, economic and environmental conditions and taking into account the structural political and administrative reforms undertaken over the last years. The project will also support the objectives of the Bank’s Strategy for Africa, which emphasizes, among other things, the fact that Governance and leadership are the main challenges underlying Africa’s development. Close relationships will be established with other Bank-supported projects in Niger, particularly the following: (i) Community Action Project for Climate Resilience (CAPCR), a US$63 million project, whose objective is to improve the resilience of populations and production systems to climate change and variability in targeted Communes as part of the ‘Strategic Program for Climate Resilience’ (SPCR); (ii) Safety Nets Project (SNP), a US $70 million project whose main objective is to establish and support an effective safety net system for the poor; and (iii) Niger Basin Water Resources Development and Sustainable Ecosystems Management Program (AP, 2 A), a US$203.00 million program (including credit and grant), whose objective is to increase access to water for agriculture development and capacity for energy generation in the Nigerien part of the Niger Basin, as well as support local development in 9 Communes whose territory is located in the Niger river basin area of Tillaberi region.

15. Synergy with the Sahel and West Africa Program. Through its GEF financing, the proposed project is part of the ‘Sahel and West Africa Program’ (SAWAP) in support of the ‘Great Green Wall Initiative’ that aims to expand Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLWM) in targeted landscapes and in climate vulnerable areas in West African and Sahelian countries. The program, with a financing envelope of US$108 million, was approved by the GEF and LDCF/SCCF Councils in May, 2011, and addresses major issues related to land degradation and NRM for support of sustainable development and regional integration in twelve countries in the sub-region. Niger is one of the 12 participating countries.

16. Synergy with initiatives of other development partners. The project will also establish close collaboration with initiatives supported by other development partners (mainly United Nations agencies, European Union, and German, Belgian, French and Swiss cooperation), to support decentralization reforms, rural development, gender-sensitive community development, and sustainable land management (SLM). Particularly important will be the synergy with specific initiatives of the ‘Development and Security Strategy’ targeting disadvantaged geographic areas (mainly in the northern zones of Tillabery, Tahoua, Zinder and Diffa regions and all Agadez Region) affected by recent and/or current civic insecurity and unrest.

III. Project Development Objectives
II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE (PDO and GEO)
A. PDO and GEO
17. The development objective (PDO) of the proposed project is to strengthen the Recipient’s local development planning and implementation capacity as well as to improve the access of targeted population to social and economic services.
18. The Global Environment objective (GEO) is to promote sustainable land and natural
resources management and productive investments at the commune level in selected areas of Niger.

19. As with the two previous phases, the third APL phase will aim at empowering local
governments and community organizations to better participate in local development planning,
access investment facilities to better manage their natural resource base, improve livelihoods,
diversify incomes, and improve access to social services.

B. Project beneficiaries

20. The project will cover 255 Communes of Niger (this includes the 164 Communes that have
already benefitted from previous phases of CAP, and the remaining 91 Communes) and the 7
Regional Councils and 4 Urban Councils put in place in the aftermath of the elections of December
2010. More particularly:

• All the Communes and selected Regional Councils will benefit from initiatives related to
local governance and institutional capacity building.
• Some Communes will benefit from specific investments (individually or through inter-
communal modalities) – these Communes, out of which a further selection will be made, have
already been identified through a complete mapping exercise carried out in December 2012
(focusing on 130 Communes not covered by initiatives supported by other development partners).
• All the Regional Councils will benefit from consultations concerning their roles and
competencies in local development. However, for more specific capacity building initiatives, only
selected Regions will be directly covered (within a strategic partnership with other development
partners).

21. The number of direct beneficiaries of the investments of the project (excluding institutional
and capacity building initiatives) can be estimated to be between a minimum of 500,000 and a
maximum of 650,000 households of small-scale rural producers, including chronically poor
households living in disadvantaged and marginal areas.

22. Representatives of local governments (Collectivités locales) will also benefit from capacity
building initiatives aimed at building their technical and institutional capacities in planning and
monitoring local development (the initial mapping exercise will estimate their number). Finally,
representatives of line departments and private economic operators and local service providers will
indirectly benefit from a variety of rural sector-related activities (transport, storage and food
processing).

Inset 2:
SUPPORTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACH

Phase 3 of the APL will continue to address the gender-specific needs of its beneficiaries. While
building on the achievements of Phase 2, the proposed project will seek to increase women's
participation in the investment decision-making process, contribute to a more gender-balanced
access to land and financing, and reduce gender-related vulnerabilities. The approach is based on
the following key assumptions respectively related to environmental and climatic hazards, economic
opportunities and institutions:

• Women are disproportionately vulnerable to natural hazards due to social norms, entrenched
gender inequality and reproductive responsibilities, all of which constrain women’s mobility and
survival options.

• Women have less control over capitals, limited economic opportunities, and lack voice in
decision making. These factors reduce women's capacity to adapt and overcome hazards.
• Very few women have access to public institutions, and as a result are not able to access adaptation information and support.

C. PDO Level Results Indicators
23. The following key indicators will monitor progress towards achieving the objectives and their outcomes:
   (i) Percentage of targeted Communes that have defined and put in place governance practices in the areas of participation, financial accountability, and social equity
   (ii) Additional land area under sustainable land and water management (SLWM) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices (hectares) [GEF]
   (iii) Percentage of targeted farming households that have adopted sustainable agro-sylvopastoral practices
   (iv) Percentage of population of targeted Communes whose access to water (for agriculture, livestock, and human consumption) has improved.
   (v) Direct project beneficiaries (number), of which female (percentage) (IDA core indicator).

IV. Project Description

Component Name
Project Description
A. Capacity building. Supporting initiatives aimed at building the capacities of participating Communes and improving local governance
B. Local Investment Fund. Assisting Communes to make investments to improve sustainable land management (SLM), create and/or ensure maintenance of essential socio-economic infrastructures and facilities
C. Coordination, management and communication. Coordinating all the activities of the project, including general knowledge management & sharing, and monitoring and evaluation

V. Financing (in USD Million)

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VI. Implementation

VII. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

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Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10 | ×
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12 | ×
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37 | ×
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50 | ×
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60 | ×

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