



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P123399	<b>Project Name</b> Niger Safety Net Project	
<b>Country</b> Niger	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Social Protection & Jobs	
<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> IDA-49200,IDA-D1130,TF-A2304	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b> 30-Jun-2017	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 93,953,042.18
<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 19-May-2011	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 31-Dec-2019	
	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>
Original Commitment	70,000,000.00	8,500,000.00
Revised Commitment	98,992,629.58	8,498,601.59
Actual	93,953,042.18	8,498,601.59

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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

The Project Development Objective (PDO) as set out on page 5 of the Financing Agreement and page 4 of the Project Appraisal Document was *to establish and support an effective safety net system which will increase access of poor and food insecure people to cash transfer and cash for work programs.*



The PDO was revised in February 2012 to read as follows: *to establish and support an effective **and adaptive** safety net system that will increase access of poor **and vulnerable** people to cash transfer and cash for work programs.*

The ICR undertook a split evaluation of the project. The ICRR does not. Drawing on the PDO and original outcome indicators, the intended outcome appears to be “increased access...to programs” by means of establishing safety nets (the output). The new outcome indicators, introduced with the adaptive system, seem to indicate that the establishment of safety nets was the outcome. The ICRR is adopting the original interpretation and assesses Efficacy on the basis of the following reformulation of the objective:

“increasing access of poor and vulnerable people to adaptable cash transfer and cash for work programs.”

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

Yes

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

Yes

**Date of Board Approval**

07-Apr-2016

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**

No

**d. Components**

The project had four components:

**Component 1: Establishing a safety net system** for delivering cash transfers and implementing cash for work programs (estimated cost at appraisal US\$ 3.20 million; actual cost US\$5.19 million). Building on lessons learned from piloting that preceded the project, the component was to build a national safety net system including a management information system, targeting and payment systems, and monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as necessary capacity building to operate the systems.

**Component 2: Provision of cash transfers for food security** (estimated cost at appraisal US\$48.60 million; actual cost US\$59.18 million). The component included cash transfers and accompanying measures to increase incomes and human capital among an estimated 80,000 poor and food insecure households in the five poorest regions of Niger (95 percent of poor households in the country). It included three sub-components to allow a gradual run-in and scale-up of the cash transfer system:

**Sub-component 2.1** (starting phase): the provision of cash transfers to approximately 10,000 beneficiaries in two of the poorest regions (Dosso, Maradi).

**Sub-component 2.2** (expansion phase): based on a positive assessment of the implementation of the cash transfer system during starting phase, expansion to scale in all five regions.



**Sub-component 2.3** (accompanying measures): awareness campaigns and training modules in eight essential family practice activities (health, nutrition, sanitation) conditional on receiving the cash benefit. The accompanying measures had been developed in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), who had field-tested them and found that they had led to significant improvements in child health. They were to be implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

**Component 3: Cash for work** (estimated cost at appraisal US\$10.50 million; actual cost US\$17.68 million). The component was to provide short-term income support to an estimated 60,000 individuals participating in labor-intensive public works schemes. The schemes were to be targeted at areas experiencing temporary acute food insecurity. The project was to finance wages as well as non-wage costs, and work was to be overseen by NGOs.

**Component 4: Project management** (estimated cost at appraisal US\$7.70 million; actual cost US\$11.89 million). This component was to finance all costs related to the management of the project.

### Significant changes during implementation

The project underwent three restructurings and included one case of Additional Financing:

A first restructuring was undertaken in February 2012. Project funds of US\$ 1.19 million were reallocated to sub-component 2.1 to deal with additional demand for cash transfers that arose from crop failures and workers returning from Libya and Cote d'Ivoire. The number of potential beneficiaries increased from the original 10,000 to 12,500.

Additional financing in the form of an IDA grant of US\$ 22.5 million was provided in March 2016, accompanied by US\$8.5 million in trust fund resources from the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program (SASPP) to support adjustments to the project. The PDO was revised to include a scalable, adaptive safety net for times of crisis; and the revised project also supported the expansion of project coverage to three more regions, becoming nationwide.

Two further restructurings in March 2018 and May 2019 extended the closing date of the project, mainly to ensure a smooth transition from the Safety Net Project to a new Second Adaptive Safety Net Project that became effective in May 2019.

### Other changes

With the introduction of the additional financing and the revised PDO, the project name was changed to "Adaptive Safety Net Project." and the names of components 1 to 3 were similarly revised to add clarity, albeit without significantly changing the substance of the project or its components.

A new **sub-component 2.2a** was added at that time: "productive measures to support the promotion of resilient livelihood." It was to include such measures as strengthening the operation of community savings program activities through trainings on financial education, provision of small grants to test alternative



livelihood options with high income generating potential, linking of beneficiaries with access to microfinance or banks to gain access to credit, and support to improve agricultural productivity through partnership with the Bank-funded Climate Smart Agriculture Program.

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

Project cost. At appraisal, total project cost was estimated at US\$70.00 million. Actual project cost at closing was US\$93.94 million.

Financing. The project was financed by two IDA credits totaling US\$92.5 million (US\$70.0 million and US\$22.5 million, respectively) and an SASPP Trust Fund contribution of US\$8.5 million. A total of US\$84.86 million (US\$62.9 million and US\$22.5 million, respectively) of the IDA funds were disbursed. The full amount of the trust fund was disbursed. Total disbursements added up to US\$93.94 million.

Dates. The project was approved on May 19, 2011 and became effective on October 11, 2011. The original closing date, June 30, 2017 was postponed once to December 31, 2019, at which time the project closed. The additional financing – the second IDA credit of US\$22.5 million – was approved on April 7, 2016 and closed on June 30, 2019 fully disbursed. The trust fund was approved at the same time and closed on June 30, 2018 fully disbursed.

### 3. Relevance of Objectives

#### Rationale

The original and revised PDOs were relevant to the country situation, government policy and Bank strategy. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, characterized by widespread poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition due to a hostile climatic environment (the country is located along the edge of the Sahara desert) and the absence of sustainable safety nets to alleviate poverty and build resilience among the population against external shocks. The project built on Niger's national social protection policy (2011) and its strategy for food security (2012), and was aligned with its economic and social development plan (2017-2021) and its focus on setting up a permanent safety net system to replace the largely *ad hoc* emergency programs focused on addressing short term acute crises. The project is consistent with the ongoing policy dialogue between the Bank and Niger reflected in the current Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY2018 to FY2022. Following the Systematic Country Diagnostic of 2017 that set out core constraints to reducing poverty and improving shared prosperity by 2030, including social transfers as a means of not only coping, but also building resilience, the CPF includes social protection among its three focus areas, and it continues to support the further development of an adaptive safety net system as well as measures to address socio-economic aspects of displacement. While the project was introducing an institutionally challenging safety net system, it was, with capacity building, in most instances appropriately scaled. The addition of the adaptive mechanism, introduced in mid-stream and appropriately supporting the objectives of the project, would not, however, be completed within the project time frame (see Section 4).



## Rating

Substantial

## 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

### OBJECTIVE 1

#### Objective

Increasing access of poor and vulnerable people to adaptable cash transfer and cash for work programs

#### Rationale

The objective was to be achieved by establishing and implementing an adaptable safety net system that could deliver cash to targeted beneficiaries, either for work (community micro-projects) or accompanied by other measures that would strengthen their resilience. “Other measures” included accompanying measures that encouraged income generating and productive activities, or provision of advice on family health, nutrition, and sanitation; and support to households in coping with climate change shocks and disasters, mainly by scaling cash assistance to the affected households. The latter mechanism – climate change and disaster relief - was expected to be fully in place only under a second Adaptable Safety Net Project (P166602).

#### Outputs

Most of the core elements of an adaptable safety net system were put in place and were operational at the time of the ICR:

- i. a targeting system, including intake, registration and selection of beneficiaries and based on proxy means-testing (PMT) and community validation;
- ii. a payment mechanism using established micro-finance institutions and mobile phone companies to deliver payments to beneficiaries;
- iii. grievance mechanisms;
- iv. a monitoring and evaluation function to assess the performance of the delivery system; and
- v. a dedicated management structure, including a management information system to help manage the data base of all potential and actual beneficiaries and monitor all processes relating to targeting, registering, and payment.

Work was underway towards finalizing the crisis mechanism (the adaptable component) that, once fully in place, was expected to further strengthen the adaptability of the safety net and the resilience of beneficiaries to a variety of shocks, including climate and disaster ones; and on developing a unified social registry to combine multiple user programs.

The family health-related accompanying measures had already for some time been tested in the field by UNICEF, and evaluations had indicated that trainings and sensitization programs were leading to improvements in child health. Linkages with early disaster warning systems were under development and



once in place were expected to further strengthen the adaptability of the safety net to a variety of shocks, including climate and disaster ones. This is expected to be finalized under a new, second Safety Net Project (P166602).

Based on a composite indicator that assessed the adequacy of institutions and staff introduced into the safety net system, as well as the functioning of the core elements of the system, the ICR determined that “the key systems required for a well-functioning national safety net program were set up.” Targets set for key indicators were being met (see Outcomes), which would indicate that the components were operating as expected. Implementation is being monitored and periodically evaluated, including through field audits, and elements will be adjusted as necessary.

In addition to regular project monitoring, larger-scale evaluations (two impact evaluations and a mid-term review) have documented the effectiveness of the project in facilitating household savings and investment activities, promoting parenting practices, and in targeting performance, i.e. building people’s resilience and human development. In particular, they have underlined the value of combining cash transfers with community outreach as means of improving children’s health, nutrition and cognitive development; and with productive inclusion (training and accompaniment) as a means of economic diversification and income generation, including women’s empowerment.

## **Outcomes**

Achievement of project outcomes was observed using the following key indicators:

A total of 149,000 households (or some 1 million individuals, assuming an average household size of seven) had access to the cash transfers compared to an original target of 126,500 households as the cash transfer component increased. The targeting approach (PMT and community validation) proved effective in targeting the poor: a household targeting evaluation found that 83 percent of beneficiary households were classified as chronically poor. A subsequent World Bank-initiated study found that PMT was more effective than other methods in identifying chronically poor households.

Of the 149,000 households, 87,000 households participated in one or more accompanying measures compared to a target of 107,000 as security considerations and cultural factors relating to child rearing limited participation. Cultural considerations were somewhat mitigated by participants being able to select among several maternal and child health-related interventions and consequently participation in accompanying measures was able to exceed the end target of 90 percent, reaching 93 percent coverage.

An evaluation of the impact of accompanying measures indicated that exposure to accompanying measures (by means of community meetings, group discussions and home visits) was likely to yield positive behavioral changes in instances where mothers who actively participated were more likely to adopt preventative health practices. Exposure to preventive health practices did not, however, appear to show up as positive growth or cognitive development effects. The ICR plausibly assumed that to appear, such effects may require significantly longer exposure to accompanying measures.

An impact evaluation of the effects of cash transfers on resilience of beneficiary households carried out prior to the introduction of adaptive approaches under the revised project indicated that cash transfers can on their own mitigate the effect of shocks, as recipients are more likely to use savings mechanisms and diversify



economic activity than non-recipients. This result appears to confirm findings in other countries that safety nets, adaptive or not, can help improve resilience.

A total of 50,256 households benefited from cash for work activities, exceeding the target of 30,000. These activities generated 3.4 million days of temporary work, or 94 percent of the target. The shortfall reflected absences and in some instances insufficient availability of workers.

As part of cash for work activities, the project rehabilitated 579 community-level infrastructures (micro-projects) compared to a target of 600. All 579 micro-projects were operational at project closing.

Building on the disaster risk financing mechanism, the safety net system was able to scale up in response to shocks, benefiting some 4,700 exposed households, 94 percent of the targeted households. Each household received monthly transfers of FCFA10,000 for a period of 12 months.

### **Rating**

Substantial

## **OVERALL EFFICACY**

### **Rationale**

Based on the above outcomes, the project mostly was able to achieve the objective. It established the institutional setting and developed the systems for an effective safety net that successfully covered 83 percent of targeted chronically poor households with transfers, in most instances increasing coverage of the chronically poor and vulnerable groups. While there was a shortfall in the number of households benefiting from accompanying measures, largely for external reasons, attendance among participants remained high. Impact evaluations noted the positive effects of cash transfers on household welfare and food security, and in coping with climatic shocks; of accompanying measures on household resilience and human development. Benefits from cash for work activities far exceeded the target for beneficiary households.

### **Overall Efficacy Rating**

Substantial

## **5. Efficiency**

The PAD and the ICR analyzed benefits of the cash transfer program and the cash for work program applying conventional methods for estimating their economic impact. In both programs, the results reported in the ICR exceeded those envisioned in the PAD. Likewise, ICR results for both programs were in line with international experience.



For cash transfers, drawing on the analysis in the ICR that looks at consumption vs. cost of a productive inclusion package (a grant plus training), the economic impact of the package exceeded its cost after 18 months; few programs have proven to be cost effective over such a short period of time. In addition, cash transfers have indirect positive spillover effects on the local economy

The cost effectiveness of the cash for work program outperformed estimates at appraisal and were in line with international experience. The ICR undertook an analysis of the cash for work program based on how much it costs to transfer US\$1 to the beneficiary population, incorporating three variables: labor intensity, wage targeting performance, and new wage gain. The resulting cost effectiveness was calculated at 0.52, and the total cost of transferring US\$1 in net wage to a food insecure person at \$1.92. Comparable costs range from \$1.80 (Ethiopia) to \$1.98 (Liberia).

Other considerations also contributed to enhancing efficiency. Close engagement with parliamentary leadership, including their participation in field missions, broadened the appeal of the project and strengthened political commitment to the program, facilitating its implementation. Synergy with other projects, notably through the availability of its database and systems for other interventions, helped lower targeting and implementation costs for this project as well as other interventions. While the closing date was extended by over two years, this had a number of benefits: it allowed a phased expansion of coverage, starting with the poorest regions and progressively expanding nationwide; it resulted in better targeting (including through the timely launching of a unified social registry), resulting in an ICR-estimated 83 percent of participants being poor compared to 87 percent in Ethiopia and between 74 and 86 percent in Liberia; and it allowed the introduction of flexibility into the safety net to better cope with the impact of climate risk and improve the resilience of poor and vulnerable people. Administrative costs remained moderate at some 10 percent of lending.

At the same time, the project faced challenges that moderately reduced efficiency: a government decision to change project coordinator contributed to slowing down implementation, as did occasional delays in cash payments due to cash shortfall problems.

### Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable



ICR Estimate	0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
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\* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

## 6. Outcome

Relevance was rated **high**, reflecting that the project was well targeted at priority concerns and largely scaled to the government’s absorptive capacity. Efficacy was likewise **substantial**, with minor shortcomings in achieving set objectives. Efficiency was **substantial**, in line with results in comparable countries. These ratings are consistent with minor shortcomings in the project’s preparation and implementation, producing an outcome rating of **satisfactory**.

### a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

The PAD rated the overall risk to the development outcome as high, acknowledging risks relating to political stability due to recent regime change and a fragile security situation; potential imbalances between a weak institutional framework and a complex project design, i.e. the setting up of cash transfer and cash for work programs; and the challenges of maintaining the financial sustainability of those programs. While the ICR did not give a rating for risk post-project, it discusses the risk to the development outcome (Section D) and notes that these same risks remain, albeit somewhat reduced during implementation. The security situation remains fragile and may threaten operations on the ground, but the government has remained committed to the interventions supported by the project. Institution building, including expanded operational capacity, was completed as planned (and will continue under a second safety net project), raising absorptive capacity for new technologies. Project outcomes indicate that institutional development has been successful as core elements of the safety net have been put into place, ranging from targeting, through payment systems to grievances and management. Fiscal-financial challenges remain and are increased with the COVID-19 pandemic and an increasingly fragile environment; they leave sustainability dependent on donor support. The latter currently appears to be stable, including with the continued participation of the Bank through its engagement in the follow-up project and in related community development operations. Still, despite tangible improvements, the overall risk to the development outcome remains high.

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry

The project was strategically relevant, addressing poverty and vulnerability in Niger by starting the process of replacing *ad hoc* emergency assistance with permanent safety net structures. The introduction of an adaptive approach during implementation to deal with environmental shocks would further



strengthen the project's focus on alleviating poverty and building resilience. The project was consistent with the Bank's ongoing policy dialogue with Niger on food security and safety nets, emphasizing technical and financial assistance to set up and operate key programs. Design drew on the Bank's extensive and similar experiences in other sub-Saharan countries, as well as economic and sector work in Niger. The latter had examined the main causes of poverty, the relevance of existing safety net programs, and the feasibility of different methodologies for building a safety net system. Findings had pointed to the need for a regular transfer system and the importance of accompanying measures to expand the effects of cash transfers. Close involvement of national stakeholders (which included participation in Bank missions and continued during implementation) ensured integration of project management into the institutional framework. Likewise, engagement with the main bilateral donors and NGOs created a common platform for supporting safety net. A cash transfer pilot fed into the detailed design of the project, and the design itself sought complementarities with other Bank interventions, including in particular ongoing community action programs. Implementation arrangements centered around the Prime Minister's Office, where a safety net unit was introduced to establish and manage the safety net system, giving it a strong profile. M&E arrangements built on a consistent results framework. The project logic was in principle straightforward and linked to indicators that allowed progress to be monitored and outcomes to be assessed. However, the formulation of the framework introduced some uncertainty regarding outcomes and outputs, reflected in the ICR; for example, did the project view the establishment of the system as an outcome, or was that determined by the delivery of services through that system, or by changes in behavior among the beneficiaries? The project had a gender aspect, with women being the recipients of the cash transfers and the main beneficiaries of the accompanying measures. While a key gender indicator had been introduced – "female beneficiaries" -- it did not point to a specific gender focus beyond the fact that half the recipient household population consisted of women. Nonetheless, many of the accompanying measures were oriented towards preventive care for women and children, and it would not have been improbable that a clear majority of direct beneficiaries were women. The project fell under environmental classification "B." Fiduciary compliance was deemed satisfactory (see Section 10 on Other Issues). The risk assessment (risk rating "high") took into account the political and institutional challenges facing the country.

### **Quality-at-Entry Rating** Satisfactory

#### **b. Quality of supervision**

Formal supervision missions were undertaken twice yearly and were complemented by technical missions. The missions focused on building institutional capacity and on supervising fiduciary and safeguard aspects. Results are reported in Sections 4 and 10. Bank inputs and processes during implementation were satisfactory; the Bank fielded an experienced team with extensive knowledge of safety net development in general and in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, and their experience is reflected in the progress that was made in setting up a system that largely was able to meet expectations based on project outcomes. While a second safety net project has been launched building on the results of this one, successful transition is influenced by uncertainties surrounding security concerns. During implementation of this project, the supervision team was able to adapt to unexpected situations as they arose: at the technical level, by adjusting the project to respond to the unexpected return of migrants from neighboring countries; and by introducing an adaptable function to strengthen the productive impact of transfers and help address short term environmental shocks. The project adapted to precarious security through remote programming



to monitor activities when access was not possible while also adapting to circumstances when mobility was difficult because of insecurity – police escorts, motorbikes, donkeys, etc. Such challenges did make timely payment delivery and provision of supporting activities difficult but appear not to have unduly affected achievement of output and outcome targets.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**

Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Satisfactory

## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The ICR (p. 6) developed a detailed results framework that defined the objectives of the project and links between outputs and outcomes. Indicators focused on setting up the safety net and monitoring access to the cash transfer systems once the safety net was in place. Longer-term evaluations focused on process (the functionality of core components), targeting efficiency, and the impact of the program on behavior change such as levels of consumption, nutritional status and food security. A management information system allowed for rigorous M&E, including mid-term and end-of-project evaluations to assess progress towards the PDO, notably by assessing the impact of the project on beneficiaries, assessing the quality of works, and overall project efficiency. The focus of the evaluations was on process to assess the effectiveness of project implementation, targeting evaluation and notably the extent of targeting errors, and the impact of the project on change in behavior.

### **b. M&E Implementation**

Monitoring was undertaken by the Bank supervision team in collaboration with the project's safety net unit, originally located in the prime minister's office and consisting of a steering committee, a technical unit, and regional offices. The unit was subsequently introduced as part of a national agency for prevention and management of food crises, linking the safety net system to disaster risk management.

The results monitoring framework pre- and post-AF was mostly implemented as planned, albeit with a few challenges. Data collection occurred manually instead of electronically, as had been expected, leading to delays in data entry and monitoring, and consequently in the distribution of data for analysis. Movement restrictions due to security concerns occasionally delayed the conduct of some project activities, notably the timely distribution of benefits.

Four impact evaluations were carried out – one on targeting effectiveness, one on accompanying measures for behavioral change, one on productive inclusion measures, and one on cash transfers for resilience. All captured key project achievements. A planned evaluation of cash for work schemes was



not conducted (due to security concerns); it was replaced by a subsequent qualitative review of the cash for work component.

*[TTL: why manual data collection – what was the problem?]*

### **c. M&E Utilization**

Monitoring during implementation allowed several improvements to be introduced into the project. These included the introduction of adaptability to address crises; scaling up of the cash transfer function; and improvements in targeting. The impact of climatic shocks promoted the design of AF by encouraging adaptability (scaling) of cash benefits in combination with productive measures to build resilience against such shocks. The targeting effectiveness evaluation drew attention to the primacy of PMT as a targeting mechanism in the Nigerian environment. An impact evaluation of accompanying measures for behavioral change drew attention to the need to engage with health centers in addressing the challenge of undernourished children.

### **M&E Quality Rating**

Substantial

## **10. Other Issues**

### **a. Safeguards**

The project was categorized as environmental assessment category “B” and triggered two safeguard policies: OP 4.01 - Environmental Assessment and OP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement, primarily due to the potentially negative, although limited and localized, impact of cash for work projects. An Environmental and Social Management Framework was prepared to consider such safeguard measures in implementing cash for work micro-projects. A third safeguard policy on Pest Management (OP 4.09) was triggered during the additional financing restructuring. It was linked to productive inclusion measures conducted in partnership with the Bank’s Climate Smart Agriculture Program. An Integrated Pest Management Plan was prepared to ensure the efficient use of pesticides and fertilizers,

The ICR reported that the project complied with the triggered safeguards policies, and the project implementation unit was considered capable of applying and complying with environmental and social policies, procedures, and regulations. Performance on environmental safeguards was upgraded from moderately satisfactory to satisfactory after the implementation of a set of recommendations formulated in the mid-term review in 2016. All micro-projects subject to classification were compliant with the environmental and social assessment procedures.

### **b. Fiduciary Compliance**

Financial management. Fiduciary compliance was deemed satisfactory. Both procurement and financial management performance were rated "moderately satisfactory" by the supervision mission on the occasion



of the additional financing. Based on the recommendations of the supervision mission, the project strengthened fiduciary controls and developed an action plan accordingly. The last audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2018 were submitted to the World Bank on time with an unqualified audit opinion, and the audit reports were found acceptable to the World Bank.

Procurement. Procurement activities included contracts to equip and supply consultant services to the safety net functions that were being introduced under the project. An initial procurement plan for the first 18 months of project implementation was updated annually. The ICR notes that procurement was rated “moderately satisfactory,” as the grievance redress mechanism registered a small number of incidents that resulted from insufficient clarity in procedures (concerning referrals, follow-up on complaints, and timeliness in addressing complaints). The ICR recommended that the GRM manual be updated to ensure a more rigorous application of incident reporting procedures.

**c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)**

With micro-finance institutions being given a key role in payment delivery, financial services spread to underserved areas, including services that fell outside the strict limits of the project.

**d. Other**

**Gender.** The role of women as the recipients of the cash transfers was enhanced. They were the main beneficiaries of accompanying measures, and their role in community savings and credit activities was enhanced, as opportunities for investment in productive assets opened up for them and contributed to their economic empowerment.

**Institutional strengthening.** The project brought the safety net agenda into the political discourse and thereby facilitated the introduction of initiatives for poverty alleviation as a way of building resilience against climate effects. Active engagement of parliamentarians in field missions and workshops engendered political support. Identification of key social reforms raised the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending on safety nets, and drawing attention to adaptive initiatives helped build the framework for resiliently addressing climate change.

**11. Ratings**

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



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Quality of ICR	---	Substantial
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## 12. Lessons

The following lessons are drawn from the ICR:

**In a context of recurring shocks, high poverty rates, and limited resources, multi-year government cash transfers can be effective in mitigating the welfare effects of climatic shocks and contributing to resilience.** In Niger, cash transfers targeting poor households increased consumption by about 10%, largely benefitting households affected by droughts. Cash transfers also fostered these households' resilience by facilitating savings and economic diversification.

**"Cash-plus" programs can yield more cost-effective results for household well-being than cash-only.** The project included measures to improve human development and human capital outcomes (e.g. child health and nutrition, reproductive health, early child stimulation, etc.) and promote productive inclusion as integral elements of the cash transfer intervention. Project evaluations showed that cash-plus can boost investments and diversify off-farm income-generating activities, leading to significant increases in revenues and profits compared to cash-only. However, in including "cash-plus" measures, cultural sensitivities may influence take-up. In this case, some beneficiaries perceived some interventions, notably ones relating to parenting, child development, and women's empowerment as foreign to local culture (ICR, para. 38). This points to the need to focus on better understanding cultural barriers, for instance through participatory research, when seeking cost-effective results.

**The sustainability of cash for work microprojects and their impact on resilience can be enhanced with participatory planning, securing land tenure, and ensuring an adequate time span for effective changes to take place.** The project introduced a community-based participatory approach to the design, management, and maintenance of microprojects. Legal documents secured land tenure and ensured long-term asset utilization. Likewise, cash for work projects were extended to two years. These measures contributed to sustainability of the public assets created through the projects.

## 13. Assessment Recommended?

No

## 14. Comments on Quality of ICR



The quality of evidence and the analysis presented in the ICR was satisfactory. It was results-oriented and presented a coherent theory of change, including the discussion of critical assumptions underlying it. Distinctions between key concepts – poor/vulnerable, adaptability/resilience -- were well made; on the other hand, a clearer distinction between outcomes and outputs would have been helpful. Overall, the ICR provided sufficient evidence to assess the project.

**a. Quality of ICR Rating**  
Substantial