



Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 21-Jan-2021 | Report No: PIDISDSA28499

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Niger	Project ID P173013	Project Name Niger Adaptive Safety Net Project 2 Additional Financing	Parent Project ID (if any) P166602
Parent Project Name Niger Adaptive Safety Net Project 2	Region AFRICA WEST	Estimated Appraisal Date 29-Jan-2021	Estimated Board Date 02-Mar-2021
Practice Area (Lead) Social Protection & Jobs	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) REPUBLIC OF NIGER	Implementing Agency Cellule Filets Sociaux

Proposed Development Objective(s) Parent

The PDO is to improve the capacity of the Niger adaptive safety nets system to respond to shocks and to provide access for poor and vulnerable people to safety nets and accompanying measures.

Components

Strengthening the Adaptive and Scalable Safety Net System
Cash Transfers and Accompanying Measures
Cash for Work for Resilience
Project Management

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

Total Project Cost	130.00
Total Financing	130.00
of which IBRD/IDA	100.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	100.00
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IDA Grant	100.00
Non-World Bank Group Financing	
Trust Funds	30.00
SAHEL ADAPTIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM	30.00

Environmental Assessment Category

B-Partial Assessment

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

Introduction

1. **This AF has been requested by the Government of Niger (GoN) to help to respond to COVID-19 crisis, while continuing to strengthen the capacity of the adaptive safety net system to respond to shocks, and providing access of the poorest and the most vulnerable population to safety nets to build their resilience to climate vulnerabilities.** The AF would scale up the existing safety nets to strengthen resilience of poor and vulnerable to climate and other shocks. The proposed AF would also cover the financing gap associated with scaling up safety nets to provide emergency support to households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in urban and rural areas. Finally, the AF would further strengthen of the adaptive safety net system to enable its rapid response to shocks. The project is processed under the World Bank Policy for Investment Project Financing, paragraph 12: Projects in Situations of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints due to conflict, impending natural disaster and capacity constraints.

Country Context

2. **Despite the progress made in reducing poverty, Niger remains one of the poorest countries in the world.** In 2019, the extreme poverty rate remained very high at 41.4%, affecting more than 9.5 million people. A substantial improvement is recorded in rural areas where the share of rural population living under the national poverty line fell rapidly from 53.7 percent to 46.8 percent. However, urban poverty has increased from eight percent to 11.8 percent during the same period.
3. **Poverty in Niger has a strong gender dimension as societal norms and expectations limit the full economic potential of women.** High fertility (7.1 children per woman) has detrimental implications on the possibility for women to acquire education or participate in the labor force. Even when available to work, the presence of large families and children to take care of limit the employment choices of women.



4. **Niger is one of the countries with the youngest population in the world.** More than half of the population in Niger is under the age of 15 and the level of education is remarkably low. This young population is both a potential and a challenge, with many uneducated youth entering the working-age population every year. The strong population growth puts considerable pressure on the delivery of health, nutrition, and education services. Niger has been ranked among the worst-performing countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), which states that a child born in Niger today will be 32 percent as productive as she could be when she grows up, if she enjoyed complete education and full health (compared to a Sub-Saharan Africa average of 40 percent).
5. **Poverty reduction is closely linked to growth in agriculture and economic diversification.** With approximately eight out of ten workers employed in agriculture and nine out of ten poor individuals residing in rural areas, poverty reduction in Niger largely depends on the performance of the agriculture sector. Agricultural employment is poorly diversified and is focused on subsistence crops. With agriculture being 89 percent rain-fed, most jobs are seasonal with long down seasons. At the same time, there are increasing economic opportunities in off-farm employment. Low-skilled, off-farm self-employment is the most accessible opportunity for many rural households. About 20 percent of Nigeriens have diversified activities across agricultural and nonagricultural sectors, a combination which is associated with higher-income levels. Diversification in the rural nonfarm economy is also an important risk management strategy and a strategy to adapt to climate change for a large share of rural households.
6. **With an index of 30.2 in 2019, Niger ranks 101st out of 117 countries according to the 2019 Global Hunger Index, which combines four indicators: undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting and child mortality.** Niger suffers from a high rate of chronic undernutrition with the prevalence of child stunting being around 40.6 percent in 2016, which is still very high. The prevalence of undernourishment—indicating the percentage of the population with insufficient access to calories—fell between 2000 and 2010¹. Since 2014–2016, however, it has risen again, driven up by conflict and population displacement.
7. **Approximately one million people in Niger are currently (October-December 2020) in need of food assistance according to the latest Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis.** The CH reports that the number of people in need of food assistance could increase to more than 1.5 million from June to August 2021, a period that includes the peak of the lean season. The food security situation may worsen due to food price inflation. The prices of coarse grains, which are mainly domestically grown, seasonally declined as fresh supplies from the just concluding harvests improved market availability. However, prices of staple grains such as millet and sorghum are well above their year-earlier levels², mainly sustained by localized production deficits as a result of floods and pests, bottlenecks along the supply chain due to anti-COVID-19 measures and the persistent insecurity in certain localities in the regions of Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua and Tillabéry.
8. **The country is exposed to security threats because of the instability in countries of the subregion such as the Libyan conflict, the Mali crisis, and the Boko Haram armed attacks.** Niger is currently hosting over 220,000 refugees fleeing the crises rocking the neighboring countries. Since May 2019, the region of

¹ Grebmer, K. von, J. Bernstein, F. Patterson, M. Wiemers, R.N. Chéilleachair, C. Foley, S. Gitter, K. Ekstrom, and H. Fritschel. 2019. "2019 Global Hunger Index: The Challenge of Hunger and Climate Change." October. Dublin and Bonn: Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe

² FPMA Bulletin #10, 10 December 2020, FAO.



Maradi, in the south of Niger close to the Nigerian border, has experienced an influx of refugees from northwestern Nigeria. These groups continue to escalate attacks on both sides of the border, displacing an estimated 18,000 people within the region.

9. **Niger is particularly vulnerable to climate shocks due to its heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture and limited economic and institutional capacity to respond to climate variability.** Niger has already faced recurrent food crises triggered or exacerbated by climate variability and extreme events such as droughts and floods which affect agricultural productivity and hence rural household food security. Natural disasters have a devastating impact in Niger: in 2011 drought led to a food crisis that affected almost half of the population; in September 2020, flooding killed at least 65 people and affected about 490,000 people in 49 departments throughout Niger. The Sahel region has been identified among the most prominent climate change hot spots of the twenty-first century³ which will likely increase further the frequency and intensity of weather-related income shocks for Nigerien populations with limited risk mitigating strategies.
10. **Niger has been hard hit by the COVID-19 shock.** The GoN responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with precautionary measures that have contained the outbreak but weakened the economy. An inter-ministerial committee headed by the Prime Minister took several preventive measures, including the establishment of testing sites, equipping entry points in the country, introducing 14-day mandatory quarantine for everyone entering Niger, and eventually closing all borders. The President declared a state of emergency on March 29th, 2020, and social distancing measures were put into effect, including closure of non-essential business and education facilities, prohibition of gatherings, tightening of hygiene rules in the local markets and introducing a restriction of movement and a nightly curfew in Niamey. These measures have had positive effects on the spread of the disease, but they impacted the economy, affecting the well-being of the population and are likely to push many vulnerable households into poverty.
11. **The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated the vulnerability of rural and urban households already weakened by repeated climate shocks and conflict-induced food insecurity.** In 2019, 76 percent of the urban poor earn their income through informal self-employment mostly in small business activities such as street selling, barber shops, etc. Most of them are already survivalists with median daily revenue per worker being XOF 1,150 (an equivalent of US\$1.91), which make them especially vulnerable to any shock lowering domestic demand for services and products. In rural areas, about 80 percent of the labor force is engaged in the agricultural sector and depends on markets to sell their products and generate income. These households will be affected through a combination of decline of urban demand for agricultural and animal products, uncertainty of prices and availability of inputs (seeds, fertilizers, animal feeding, veterinary services). A large share of smallholder farmers are net buyers of agricultural commodities, especially during the lean season which make them vulnerable to increases in food prices due to supply chain disruptions. The negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis on remittances is likely to affect poor households in both urban and rural areas as in 2019, about a third of poor households were receiving either domestic or international remittances. In March 2020, the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis had estimated that about two million people would be food insecure during the 2020 lean season (June – August 2020), well above the 1.2 million people that were estimated to be food insecure in the same period in 2019. However, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures implemented to contain it, a COVID-19 impact assessment carried out in April 2020 by the Early Warning System (EWS) has estimated

³ Sultan, B., & Gaetani, M. (2016). Agriculture in West Africa in the twenty-first century: climate change and impacts scenarios, and potential for adaptation. *Frontiers in Plant Science*, 7, 1262.



that about 5.6 million people would be food insecure, including 2.7 million severe cases.

A. SECTORAL BACKGROUND

12. **Since 2011, the GoN has made important progress towards the development of an adaptive social protection system that builds resilience in Niger.** The Bank has been supporting the GoN's Adaptive Safety Net Project (SNP)⁴ for almost a decade, which contributed to the establishment of an effective and adaptive safety net system and the increased access of poor, food insecure and vulnerable people to the system. The system now comprises a cash transfer for resilience program, which is the base program targeting the poorest households, and a cash for work program aimed at strengthening the resilience of households to climatic shocks buttressed by a strong institutional and delivery framework. The cash transfer for resilience program is complemented by productive measures to support climate shock resilient livelihoods as well as human capital accompanying measures, fostering intersectoral links and connecting beneficiaries to providers offering complementary services such as nutrition, health, education, civil registration, and water and sanitation. Substantial progress has also been made in the development of a pilot program for a shock-response responding to droughts. Finally, the coordination and consultations among various stakeholders supporting the development of the adaptive social safety nets in Niger has improved.
13. **The SNP provided a firm foundation for the on-going ASP2.**⁵ The SNP covered a total of 95 communes (36 percent) and reached approximately 140,000 households across Niger providing an adaptive cash transfer program for resilience, and an additional 50,000 beneficiaries were involved in the cash-for-work program. The cash transfer for resilience program provided monthly transfers along with accompanying interventions designed to support either early childhood and human capital development, or livelihood diversification and productive inclusion with the aim of strengthening resilience to climate change. The SNP also successfully provided emergency cash transfers to 7,200 households in three regions to help them cope with the impact of conflict (Diffa and Tahoua) and drought (Agadez).
14. **The ASP2 is managed by the Safety Net Unit (Cellule Filets Sociaux, CFS), established within the National Framework for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (DN) in the Prime Minister's Office.** The CFS benefits from a nationwide reach, and has national, regional, and local staff with substantial implementation experience. Substantial progress has already been made in development of social system delivery framework, including procedures for identification, registration and payments to beneficiaries based on a well-performing monitoring and information system. The project has established a solid MIS and the identification, selection, and registration processes have evolved and are now based on electronic tools, thus improving efficiency. Payment modules allow for fast reconciliation and monthly payments. However, the Covid-19 crisis has emphasized the importance of modernizing the payment system for social cash transfers through transaction accounts to increase traceability of the programs while ensuring that beneficiaries have a safe way to store or save money.
15. **The foundations for the establishment of a Unifies Social Registry (USR) have been laid with the establishment of a Steering Committee, a Technical Committee and the creation of a Technical Unit to ensure its operation.** The USR has been placed under the leadership of the DN, which provides political oversight and ensure coordination with other social protection actors in Niger. However, capacity building

⁴ Safety Net Project (P123399), approved in 2011, closed on December 31, 2019

⁵ Adaptive Safety Net Project (P166602), effective since June 20, 2019



of the USR is needed and planned in the AF, particularly to strengthen institutional aspects. The USR will provide a unified database of socioeconomic information which can help to select beneficiaries of safety nets programs more accurately. It intends to enhance coordination among safety nets interventions and avoid duplication, as well as improve efficiency of service delivery in terms of cost and timing. A common database of around 400,000 households has already been established within the CFS. The database has been expanded in 2020 with the addition of more than 30,000 rural households eligible for the first phase of the cash transfer for resilience program and of more than 210,000 urban households in the context of the short-term response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

16. **The ASP2 focuses on empowering women in rural areas who are facing several constraints to increasing their productivity and having greater control on their own economic resources.** Women have low access to land, to finance, to skills and social norms limit their ability to access to market to trade their own products. In addition, the heavy burden from domestic activities reduces the time they could devote to develop their own income generating activities. The project activities are strongly gender oriented with almost all the beneficiaries of the cash transfer program for resilience are women. Under the cash transfer for resilience program, beneficiaries are encouraged to invest in their own children to break the intergeneration transmission of poverty, to participate in the saving groups to be able to invest in their own income generating activities. Women are also involved in the CFW interventions (40 percent of the CFW beneficiaries) and are the main beneficiaries of the productive inclusion accompanying measures. The CFS also supports the delivery of scholarship for adolescent girls to keep them longer at school and to avoid early marriage.⁶
17. **The ASP2 contributes to the prevention and resilience agenda of the government.** The cash transfer for shock response component of the project has been used in the past to provide assistance to households affected by conflict and displacement. In 2016/2017, the SNP delivered cash transfers over a 12-month period to 2,500 households in Diffa. Assistance was provided to members of the host communities, Internally Displaced Persons and Nigeriens returning from insecure parts of Nigeria. In addition to the shock response component which will be scaled up by the AF, the ASP2 project contributes to building prevention in areas at risk of conflict by building household resilience to shocks. The recent impact evaluation of the cash transfer program with productive accompanying measures revealed the positive impact on economic activities and diversification, food security, as well as women's empowerment. The project was found successful in raising psychological well-being, including future expectations of beneficiaries which captures expected economic and social status in the future. The project had also a positive impact on social well-being indices, raising social cohesion and improving community closeness.
18. **The ASP2 is complementary to other World Bank supported projects, and it will seek to foster synergies to other Bank-supported interventions.** The CFS is supporting implementation of a scholarship program to keep girls in school and related behavioral measures⁷. Links with employment and livelihood support interventions are being further developed through collaboration with the Youth Employment and Productive Inclusion Project (PEJIP, P163157) to strengthen links between social protection and labor systems. The ASP2 complements the interventions of the Niger Refugees and Host Communities Support Project (PARCA, P164563) in the regions of Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillaberi. The areas of interventions of the PARCA have been chosen following discussions with the ongoing project. The Safety Net Project will pursue

⁶ Program financed by the World Bank Health and Population project (P147638)

⁷ Financed by Population and Health Support Project (P147638).



dialogue and partnership with the PARCA to ensure coordination in the implementation of its Component 2, which plans to deliver an integrated package of services similar to Component 2 of the proposed project. The project is also working closely with the team of the West Africa Unique Identification for Regional Integration and Inclusion (WURI) Program to ensure full alignment with the priorities set for the development of the USR.

- 19. The ASP2 aims to improve the capacity of the adaptive social safety nets system in Niger to respond to shocks and to provide access for poor and vulnerable people to safety nets and accompanying measures.** It includes four components: (1) Strengthening the Adaptive and Scalable Safety Net System; (2) Cash Transfers and Accompanying Measures; (3) Cash for Work for Resilience and (4) Project Management.
- 20. The implementation of the ASP2 has been progressing successfully, and the progress towards achieving the PDO and the progress in implementation are both rated Satisfactory.** The progress includes:
- a. The strengthening of the social protection system framework and the reinforcement of the Safety Nets Unit's (Cellule de Filets Sociaux, CFS) implementation capacity are ongoing.
 - b. The enrollment of beneficiaries for the new cycle of the cash transfers for resilience and cash for work have been completed. To date, a total of 28,000 beneficiaries in 23 communes characterized by high poverty and food insecurity levels and vulnerability to climate shocks across Niger have been identified and enrolled in cash transfer for resilience program, receiving monthly transfers of XOF 15,000 (equivalent of US\$28) over a 24-month period. These cash transfers are delivered along with accompanying measures aimed to encourage investments in human capital as well as to improve livelihoods and facilitate adaptation and resilience.
 - c. The enrollment of the initial cohort of 4,400 beneficiaries of CfW component, designed to support poor people in areas that have been affected by persistent or recurrent weather and climate change-related shocks several times over the past few years, has also been completed. The CFW component allows local communities to undertake projects that are centered on climate change adaptation and resilience building, including projects that focus on increasing water security, reducing soil erosion and diversifying livelihoods. Village-level accompanying measures have been designed to ensure longer-term climate resilience, including the introduction of a community-based participatory approach to the design, management and maintenance of microprojects.
 - d. Significant progress has also been made in the development of a rules-based drought disaster risk financing mechanism based on objective early warning indicators and other relevant information for the scale-up of climate shock-responsive safety nets. The drought response pilot program has been finalized and it will be tested during the 2020/2021 agricultural season. Based on predefined rules and triggers, the ASP2 will provide monthly emergency transfers for a period of up to 12 months to vulnerable households in areas identified as affected by a drought.
 - e. In September 2020, Niger faced devastating flooding that killed at least 65 people and affected about 490,000 people who endured severe damage and destruction as a result of the flood. As a result, responding to a request by the GoN, the ASP2 is providing emergency support to 13,500 households impacted by floods in 5 regions of the country.



- f. As the first phase of the response to Covid 19 crisis, the ASP2 project was restructured enabling the GoN to launch on September 2020 an emergency cash transfer program designed to protect households affected by the crisis. The short term Covid-19 response is the result of joint efforts between the World Bank, UNICEF and the World Food Program under the leadership of the CFS. Out of the 500,000 expected beneficiaries of the Covid-19 short term response program, 400,000 are financed by IDA as a result from the project restructuration.
- g. Finally, to ensure rapid response to the COVID-19 crisis, and enable substantial scaling-up of the response, the safety net system has been strengthened by expanding the existing database in the CFS and collecting the household data for almost 300,000 households in 2020, developing the targeting tool to enable expansion of the program in urban areas (where the ASP2 was not present), and enrolling 399,000 households in the COVID-19 short-term response program.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Original PDO

The PDO is to improve the capacity of the Niger adaptive safety nets system to respond to shocks and to provide access for poor and vulnerable people to safety nets and accompanying measures.

Current PDO

The PDO will remain unchanged.

Key Results

- 21. **The proposed AF would maintain the original PDO and the original PDO level and intermediate indicators will remain relevant.** The existing PDO indicator related to measuring the capacity of implementing the ASP programs will be revised to also measure beneficiaries of cash transfers receiving payments through mobile accounts. New intermediate indicators will be introduced to measure progress in implementation of emergency response programs. Finally, targets of the outcome and intermediate indicators will be revised in line with the expansion of the coverage of the programs. All the changes are presented in the results framework.

D. Project Description

- 22. **Components.** The original structure of the Project would be maintained. The AF would ensure covering the financing gaps resulting from the Project restructuring, scaling up of programs supported under the Project, and including additional activities to further strengthen the capacity of the adaptive safety net system.
- 23. **Component 1. Strengthening the Adaptive and Scalable Safety Net System.** The proposed AF will continue supporting and increasing the efficiency of the safety nets system, including its ability to be rapidly scaled up in times of shocks and crisis, as well as strengthen national mechanisms for crisis prevention and



response planning and monitoring.

Subcomponent 1.1 Strengthening national systems

24. **Support the capacity of the EWS to collect, store and manage data:** The proposed AF will provide technical assistance, capacity building and goods for Niger EWS anchored at the DN to strengthen its capacity to collect, exchange, manage and analyze early warning data, especially related to climate events, that can then be used by the CFS to launch timely shock response interventions. A mapping of the key stakeholders involved in the EWS for climate shocks, food security and nutrition is under preparation and will be used to generate a roadmap to improve the EWS. The AF will finance capacity building activities of key actors and technical assistance. Specific attention will be given to promote and increase coordination with other government stakeholders and key partners such as the World Food Program (WFP).
25. **Design of a methodology for an early response to rapid onset shocks:** The proposed AF will support the process of establishing rule-based mechanism for scaling up the safety net systems to respond to rapid onset shocks. Building on the experience of the drought response program, the project will work on the development of a rapid onset shock response mechanism, which will be sequenced and will initially focus on floods, as flood is the second most frequent climate-related shock after drought.
26. **Expansion of the USR to cover the entire population in the most vulnerable areas:** The COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating floods that impacted Niger in 2020 highlighted the need to expand the social registry to ease and speed up the implementation of cash transfer assistance in response to shocks. The AF will finance the expansion of the USR in the most vulnerable areas in terms of food insecurity, poverty and exposure to climate shocks to facilitate the identification and selection of most vulnerable households in response to shocks.
27. **Equip the technical implementation unit in charge of the USR:** In To be fully operational and to ensure the ability of the USR unit to expand coverage in poor and food insecure areas, the technical implementation unit in charge of the registry will need to be reinforced with additional staff, including quality control and data management specialists, and equipped with hardware, software and servers for the USR. To ensure data integrity and data protection, complementarity will be built with West Africa Unique Identification for Regional Integration and Inclusion - WURI (P169594) which has institutional support to the newly created independent institution for personal data protection (Haute Autorité à la Protection des Données à Caractère Personnel – HAPDP).

Subcomponent 1.2 Supporting policy dialogue and inter-sectoral coordination

28. **The AF will continue to support the strengthening of the institutional and regulatory framework for the ASP and promote inter-sectoral coordination.** This sub-component will provide technical assistance to support the revision of the National Social Protection Policy and develop the accompanying regulations and operational guidelines to ensure that the core principles of the Adaptive Social Protection Programs are fully reflected. It will also finance technical support to the CFS for coordinating all the safety nets interventions and to the Ministry of Employment, Work, and Social Protection for strengthening the coordination with the DN. This sub-component support policy dialogue and collaboration across social protection institutions.



Subcomponent 1.3 Delivery tools, implementation, and monitoring of safety net interventions

29. **A new activity would be included in the AF, focused on the design and implementation of a digital payment model for the COVID-19 cash transfers in urban areas:** The proposed AF will support the development and operational setup for the introduction of digital payments in urban areas. Considering the lack of experience of the CFS in terms of digital payment, technical support will be needed to conduct the feasibility study for the use of mobile payment systems for social transfers, set up the payment system, develop the legal service agreements with the payment provider, and set up a payment reconciliation and monitoring system. .
30. **Strengthening of beneficiary information system:** The AF will also finance the development of modules to provide SMS or voice messages to beneficiaries via mobile phone as part of an integrated and transparent GRM system and to deliver key messages to beneficiaries regarding the COVID-19 prevention, the COVID-19 cash transfer program, digital payment system and other social programs. A toll-free number could be used to channel grievance from all safety net interventions

Component 2. Cash Transfers and Accompanying Measures

Subcomponent 2.1. Cash transfers

31. **Under Subcomponent 2.1, the AF will cover the financial gap and further scale-up of the cash transfer for resilience program, increasing the number of program beneficiaries from 50,000 households initially planned under the Project to 120,000 households.** The increase will: i) cover 90,000 poor and vulnerable households in poor and food insecure areas vulnerable to climate shocks using IDA financing and ii) support the medium and long-term recovery of 30,000 urban households impacted by the COVID19 shock that will be covered by the SASPP grant. The cash transfer for resilience program will be expanded to support recovery and resilience of households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Beneficiaries of the emergency cash transfers in response to COVID-19 will be eligible for participating in the cash transfer for resilience program. A total of 30,000 urban households will be selected out of the 150,000 households who received emergency support in response to the pandemic. Data on beneficiaries of the emergency COVID-19 program have already been collected and added to the USR which will facilitate the roll-out of the medium-term COVID-19 response program. Beneficiary selection will follow the same approach used in the first and second safety net projects and will be based on a Proxy Means Test (PMT) to select the poorest among the households identified as impacted by the pandemic. The availability of mobile phone data in the USR on potential beneficiaries in urban areas will allow the program to pilot the use of mobile phone payments to deliver medium-term assistance to households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subcomponent 2.2. Accompanying measures

32. **Update and implementation of human capital accompanying measures.** The AF will finance: (i) the update of human capital accompanying measures to incorporate messages related to COVID-19 prevention, as well as the lessons learned and recommendations from both the impact evaluating and the process evaluation conducted during the first project; and (ii) the scale up of human capital accompanying measures to cover the increased number of cash transfers beneficiaries.
33. **Design and piloting of additional accompanying measures, including aimed at furthering household**



resilience to climate change. The AF will enable the design and piloting of additional sets of accompanying measures. *Measures supporting rural households:* In Niger, most households in rural areas are engaged in agricultural activities. The agricultural sector is characterized by strong seasonality reflected in agricultural prices that are low following harvest and reach a peak during the lean season. Most farmers are net buyers of agricultural products; they typically sell crops at low prices following harvest and buy when prices are at their highest. Accompanying measures would be geared toward helping rural households take advantage of spatial and intertemporal arbitrage opportunities either by providing better access to market information or by incentivizing home storage. *Shock response accompanying measures:* In addition to the support provided through monthly cash transfer, a combination of shock response accompanying measures would be designed and piloted for households assisted by the drought response pilot. *Accompanying measures for communities affected by insecurity or displacement:* The project will also develop accompanying measures for communities affected by insecurity or displacement. Niger suffers from an increase in the number of violent attacks affecting communities along the borders with Nigeria and Mali. Considering the importance of community dynamics in Niger, the project will develop community-based interventions as a source of resilience in areas affected by insecurity or displacement.

34. **Scale up of productive inclusion accompanying measures.** Based on the first findings from Niger and other ASP countries on the positive impact of the productive inclusion package, the AF will finance its expansion from 50,000 beneficiaries that were initially planned under the Project to 60,000 beneficiaries, including the households whose livelihoods have been strained by COVID-19, with the aim of strengthening household resilience to climate change.

Subcomponent 2.3: Cash transfers for shock response

35. **Scale up shock response transfers to climate shocks:** Based on the trigger mechanisms and the processes defined under Component 1, the shock response sub-component will be scaled up to provide emergency cash transfers to vulnerable households in areas identified as affected by a shock. In 2020, the shock response was used to deliver assistance to 13,500 households affected by floods. A drought response mechanism was prepared under the ASP2 project and planned to cover 8,500 beneficiaries over a two-year period. The AF will finance the extension of this sub-component to cover a total of 23,000 households with emergency transfers in response to various climate shocks or security shocks.

Component 3. Cash for Work for Resilience

36. Under this component, the AF will finance the provision of cash for work opportunities to approximately 33,000 beneficiaries, who will receive a remuneration of XOF 1,300 a day for 60 days for two consecutive years. In contrast to the shock response component which support household affected by a shock in a given year, the cash for work component is designed to support poor people in areas that have been repeatedly affected by shocks over the past few years based on data collected by the early warning system. The CFW component allows local communities to undertake projects that are centered on climate change adaptation and resilience building, including projects that focus on increasing water security, reducing soil erosion and diversifying livelihoods. The CFW program includes village-level accompanying measures focusing on topics related to land, property rights, land degradation, and resilience. These accompanying measures have been designed to increase the impact and sustainability of microprojects and to strengthen the resilience of beneficiaries and their communities.



Component 4. Project Management

37. This component will cover expenditures related to the procurement of goods, works, services, and consultants necessary for the management of the project. This component will also continue to support activities to improve accountability and transparency in the use of project resources. Field-based sampling verifications/spot-checks will be conducted on a random sample of program communities and seek to assess the program’s operational processes, particularly with a view toward ensuring adherence to design and improving operational efficiency and information flows. Regular audits will be performed, including financial, technical, and procurement. In the case of the CfW programs the technical audits will help to monitor the implementation of the CfW microprojects, maximize community involvement and avoid potential difficulties that can result in delays.

Summary of the proposed changes

	Existing project activities that will remain supported under the AF	Proposed additional activities
Component 1: Strengthening the Adaptive and Scalable Safety Net System (Total US\$7 million)		
1.1: Strengthening national systems	Support to the DN at the technical and institutional levels to strengthen the capacity to monitor, geo-map, coordinate, and plan safety nets interventions	Support the capacity of the EWS to collect, store and manage data. Strengthen data collection protocols and methodologies
	Technical, operational, and institutional support to the DN to develop a rules-based disaster risk financing mechanism to support the scale-up of the safety net programs in response to shocks based on objective early warning indicators	Design of a methodology for an early response to rapid onset shocks such as floods, conflicts and health related shocks
	Support for the institutionalization and operationalization of an USR	Expansion of the USR to cover the entire population in the most vulnerable and food insecure areas
		Equip the technical implementation unit in charge of the USR with hardware, software, servers and additional staff, including quality control and data management specialists
1.2: Supporting policy dialogue and inter-	Support intersectoral coordination of safety nets	Technical support to the CFS for coordinating all the safety net interventions and to the Ministry of Employment, Work, and Social



sectoral coordination		Protection for strengthening the coordination with the DN.
	Support the revision of the National Social Protection Policy and development of the accompanying regulations and operational guidelines	
	Foster policy dialogue on disaster risk financing and shock-responsive safety nets	Support the development of the disaster risk financing strategy
1.3 Delivery tools, implementation, and monitoring of safety net interventions	Improvements and implementation of delivery processes for efficient and timely targeting, identification, registration, and payment of beneficiaries	Design and implement a digital payment model for the COVID-19 cash transfers in urban areas
	Improvement the capacity and flexibility of the MIS (system upgrades and expansion of electronic data collection approaches)	Strengthening of the GRM system through introduction of the SMS/call messaging system.
	Process and impact evaluations	
Component 2: Cash Transfers and Accompanying Measures (Total US\$165 million)		
2.1: Cash transfers for resilience	Payment of monthly cash transfers to beneficiaries for consumption support	Scale up of cash transfers to resilience program, especially in poor areas vulnerable to climate shocks
		Scale-up of ASP program to support long-term COVID-19 response in urban areas
2.2: Accompanying measures	Implementation of human capital accompanying measures	Review, update and scale up implementation of human capital accompanying measures (design of new tools and processes)
	Implementation of accompanying measures for productive inclusion	Scale up implementation of productive accompanying measures
	Payment of Lump-sum cash grant for economic activities	
		Design and piloting of additional accompanying measures (measures supporting rural households and households impacted by shocks)



2.3: Cash transfers for shock response	Cash transfers for emergency response to floods	Scale up shock response transfers to rapid onset shocks such as floods and conflicts
	Emergency COVID-19 response	Drought response safety net program based on a pre-defined satellite-based triggering mechanism.
Component 3: Cash for Work for Resilience (Total US\$18 million)		
3. Cash for work for resilience	Payment of cash transfers	
	Implementation of village level accompanying measures designed increase the impact and sustainability of microprojects	Design and pilot new accompanying measures to strengthen the sustainability of microprojects and increase resilience of communities
Component 4: Project Management (Total US\$20 million)		
4. Project Management	Support management of the Project	

38. **Climate and disaster risks screening, adaptation and mitigation.** Niger is at constant risk and exposure to climate and geographical hazards as exemplified by the recent floods that have affected about 490,000 people throughout the country in September 2020. Recent climate trends and projected climate change, including increasing temperatures, elevated evaporation rates, heavy rainfall events and potentially increased rainfall variability, may exacerbate existing challenges related to drought, floods and heat waves. The ASP2 is helping Niger to address climate vulnerability through its adaptive social protection system in several ways:

- Component 1 will strengthen the capacity of the Niger social safety nets system to respond to climate shocks i) by supporting the capacity of the EWS to collect, analyze and disseminate data on climate related shocks, ii) by establishing a disaster risk financing mechanism for scaling up the safety net systems in response to climate shocks and iii) by supporting the expansion of the USR which will ease and speed up the implementation of cash transfer assistance in response to shocks;
- Subcomponent 2.1 will finance a large extension of the cash transfer for resilience program, which will help 120,000 households, including those particularly hit by the COVID-19 shock, to mitigate the negative impacts of climate shocks and prevent the use of negative coping mechanisms that can have long-term detrimental effects on human capital accumulation. The cash transfer for resilience program, which has been shown to be effective in helping poor households adapting to climate shocks, will be expanded in areas highly vulnerable to climate shocks;



- Subcomponent 2.3 will support the Government’s emergency COVID-19 shock response to help households sustain consumption and ensure appropriate coping in the face of a combined impact of the pandemic and climate shocks like flooding and drought;
- Component 3 will leverage the CFW component to contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation by promoting microprojects such as half-moons and other rainwater harvesting techniques that have the potential to reduce soil degradation and increase yield and by providing accompanying measures to contribute to the sustainability of the microprojects, including community-level sensitization on land and property rights, land degradation, and resilience.

OTHER CHANGES

39. The AF will also require changes in the budget reallocation and in financing categories. Also, a two-year extension of the original closing date of the Project is proposed to ensure successful implementation and achievement of Project objectives. The new closing date would be June 30, 2026.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

40. **The ASP2 implementation will be carried out in coordination with the DN and the Ministry of Employment, Work and Social Protection in charge of Social Protection in Niger.** Technical assistance will be provided to the Inter-ministerial Committee for Social Protection, aiming at the implementation of the roadmap of policy reforms towards more efficient and better targeted programs, a more balanced spending between shock-response and core safety nets, and a more pro-poor social protection portfolio.
41. **The project will also strengthen the DN, in particular its EWS and M&E units.** The EWS unit will be strengthened in its capacity to collect, exchange, manage and analyze early warning data that can then be used to timely scale up the safety net system in response to shocks. The project will support the M&E unit in the creation of an information management system, which will improve its capacity to plan, monitor, and coordinate safety nets. The M&E system will be a powerful tool to evaluate the impact of interventions and provide lessons for improving the design and management of future activities. Eventually, the project will continue the efforts aimed at establishing the Unified Social Registry initiated with the SNP. While under the SNP, the USR was anchored under the DN’s Permanent Secretariat, the ASP2 will contribute to make the technical implementation unit operational by strengthening its human capacity and ensuring the necessary equipment.
42. **The project will continue to be implemented by the CFS, which will maintain the same structure and ways of working but might be expanded in accordance to needs.** Since 2017, the CFS functions under the CFS, within the DN. As CFS’s implementation arm, the CFS counts on a national office in Niamey, regional offices, and local staff at commune level. Its composition as well as the roles and responsibilities of each



staff are specified in the Operational Manual, which shall be revised in accordance to the Project needs. At present, CFS’s key national staff consists of a coordinator, a FM and administrative specialist, a procurement specialist, an internal auditor. Each regional office counts on a regional representative, an executive and financial assistant, and a regional supervision officer. At a commune level, a focal point is responsible for supervising and coordinating filed-level activities. Moreover, number of local field staff (animators/social workers) supports the implementation of activities in the villages. The needs associated with the expansion of the project activities will be assessed to inform a relevant adjustment to be reflected in the revised implementation manual.

F. Project location and Salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

The Project is nation wide and located in urban and rural communities in the regions of Agadez, Dosso, Maradi, Niamey, Tillabery, Tahoua and Zinder.

G. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Demba Balde, Social Specialist
Ibrah Hachimou, Environmental Specialist

SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	Yes	
Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities OP/BP 4.03	No	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	
Pest Management OP 4.09	Yes	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	No	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	Yes	



Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No

KEY SAFEGUARD POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

A. Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

1. Describe any safeguard issues and impacts associated with the proposed project. Identify and describe any potential large scale, significant and/or irreversible impacts:

Social Safeguards

Social risks management. The proposed AF is a low-risk operation from a social safeguards point of view. Physical displacement is not expected in this project. However, the project triggers OP/BP 4.12 (Involuntary Resettlement) as it may induce economic displacement of project-affected populations with respect to activities planned under Component 3. Indeed, some activities may result in demand for land acquisition as well as in social impacts on people and properties. As a consequence, the borrower may be required to (a) scope and assess the social impacts associated with subprojects if necessary; (b) undertake census, asset enumeration, and valuation of affected properties in cases of compensations and determine workable arrangements/framework for compensation payment; (c) ensure that client has budget for compensation when required; (d) Initiate and sustain meaningful consultations with local communities with the aim to creating awareness about the positive and negative impacts of the project; (e) resolve and/or incorporate stakeholder concerns in project design and implementation; and (f) hire experienced and well-qualified safeguards personnel and so on for project implementation. Some of the sites for investment may not be determined before implementation. If required, site-specific abbreviated or full Resettlement Action Plans will be developed once sites are determined and involuntary resettlement is unavoidable. These Resettlement Action Plans will also be disclosed in country and at the World Bank website and implemented before civil works commence. Grievance Redress Committees have been established in all the districts and operationalized under the parent project.

Security. As of now, there have been no security incidents under the on-going project, and the security risk is assessed as moderate. While the existing safeguard regulations under the project address the existing risks adequately, the Security Management Plan (SMP) will be prepared within six months from the effectiveness of the AF as a part of strengthening of the implementation framework under the AF. The security situation is closely monitored and, in case of increased security risk, the following steps are taken: (a) high risk security areas are excluded from the Project; (b) for areas that become high risk security areas during the on-going implementation, the implementation is immediately halted; (c) implementation in villages that are inaccessible due to security risks in the surrounding areas is halted, and the payments schedule adjusted. While the possible use of military escorts has been envisaged in high risk areas, this option will only be considered after it has been reassessed as a part of preparation of the SMP.

Gender and gender-based violence. The project recognizes the importance of gender-related constraints to women's full participation in social and economic activities and includes a set of interventions (community sensitization, outreach activities, and mentoring) to address some of these barriers including sociocultural norms. Through the mentoring of beneficiaries by village coaches and village assemblies organized by field workers on ECD accompanying



measures, the project will foster continuous and dynamic partnership with community actors. Active engagement with communities will be a priority over the course of project implementation, including through sensitization campaigns to educate and raise the awareness of women about their rights. Such an approach has been shown to prevent gender-based violence. The screening of risk for harassment and gender-based violence was conducted as a part of preparation of the Additional Financing, and the risk was assessed as moderate. Nevertheless, the SEA/SH Action Plan will be prepared during the initial six months following the effectiveness of the Project implementation to further strengthen the mitigation measures. Also, a formal code of conduct explicitly prohibiting sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment will be put in place and all Project staff will be required to sign it.

Data protection. The existing beneficiary registry ensures protection of personal information. Development of the USR is one of the major project activities focused on building adaptive capacity of the system. This work, which is being further strengthened under the AF, includes development of institutional and regulatory framework for the USR, including all the data protection protocols, strengthening of its implementation infrastructure, as well as the expansion of the data collection efforts to increase number of households in the USR. All the requirements to ensure data integrity and data protection will be put in place in close collaboration with WURI project and the Independent Institution for Personal Data Protection (HAPDP) created by the government.

Citizens' engagement. Citizens and civil society organizations are key partners in the planning and implementation of project activities and will be involved in monitoring implementation. This will help improve the economic, social, and environmental performance of the project, its sustainability, community ownership, and transparency and accountability in implementation. In this regard, the proposed project will assess the citizens' engagement by strengthening the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) that captures beneficiaries' feedback and level of satisfaction. In addition, satisfaction surveys will be conducted to assess stakeholders and beneficiaries' satisfaction. Finally, the Project Implementation Manual will continue to include a specific section on citizens' engagement and beneficiaries' participation.

GRM. The GRM system exists and all the PIU staff and service providers systematically receive training. Before any intervention a GRM is put in place in Project supported beneficiary communities, The GRM relies on committees that are set up at the level of each village to register complaints, report them to the PIU, and ensure that they are resolved. All members of these committees are trained, and they participate in all implementation activities including targeting, registration and payment of beneficiaries.

Environmental Safeguards

Some negative environmental and social impacts and risks that are mostly site-specific and easily manageable (typical of Category B projects) are expected under Component 3: activities are related to the CFW program and include village-level accompanying measures focusing on topics related to land, property rights, land degradation, and resilience. Under component 2, different accompanying measures are also expected to have positive environmental and social impacts, because they will be geared toward helping rural households develop community-based interventions as a source of resilience in areas affected by insecurity or displacement. Under Component 1, the payment mechanisms for social transfers, which will particularly benefit populations affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, will be strengthened and the USR will be expanded to include the entire population in the most vulnerable areas in terms of food insecurity, poverty and exposure to climate shocks.

Policies triggered. To comply with safeguards requirement, three environmental and social policies are still triggered: Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01), Pest Management (OP 4.09), and Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12). The



safeguards instruments disclosed in 2108, namely an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), a Pest Management Plan (PMP), and the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), have been updated to build on lessons learned and consider new context and reality, and they have been disclosed. These instruments will still provide the same basic principles and prerogatives to be followed once details of the physical footprint of the areas of new project interventions are known. Wherever deemed necessary, the borrower will prepare a site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

Capacity-building and M&E. Additional support has been envisaged under the AF to strengthen capacity and the M&E. Working in close collaboration with the PIU, the National Office for Environmental Studies and Impact Evaluation (BEEI) of the Ministry of Environment will still lead monitoring and overseeing of the implementation of environmental and social risks management, including the validation of the screening process for CfW activities and genuine consultation of beneficiaries. The PIU will also ensure that environmental and social M&E reports are prepared and submitted timely. Both the PIU and BEEI will work closely with the World Bank's social and environmental safeguards specialists to ensure due diligence, compliance, and capacity strengthening on safeguards.

2. Describe any potential indirect and/or long term impacts due to anticipated future activities in the project area:

It is anticipated that the Project will provide accompanying measures to contribute to the sustainability of the microprojects, including community level sensitization on land and property rights, land degradation, and resilience with no indirect and/or long-term negative impact in these areas. The Project will also result in long-term positive safeguard impacts in the Project area due to the Project's emphasis on ensuring sustainable environmental management of natural resources and reduction in the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, including climate resilience and mitigation of risks and other challenges faced by affected households.

3. Describe any project alternatives (if relevant) considered to help avoid or minimize adverse impacts.

Not relevant

4. Describe measures taken by the borrower to address safeguard policy issues. Provide an assessment of borrower capacity to plan and implement the measures described.

Mitigation of environmental risks: World Bank safeguard policy 4.01 on Environmental Assessments has been triggered. The Environmental Safeguards Management Framework (ESMF) developed for the previous project (Safety Net Project) has been updated to take stock of good practices and lessons learned, and consideration of the new project scope, context and reality, and it has been disclosed. The CFS will continue to use the Social and Environmental screening procedures to identify, assess, evaluate, mitigate and monitor the likely risks and impacts of the project and its related sub-projects. All key stakeholders involved in the Project will be systematically sensitized and trained on the processes based on the updated training assessment needs.

Based on lessons learned during the implementation of the previous safety net operation in Niger, a skilled environmental safeguard specialist has been recruited as a full-time staff within the project to provide technical oversight. Tools and trainings developed and adopted will continue to be used to address risks arising during micro-projects implementation. Protective gear will be provided to workers, along with adequate trainings on worksite safety measures. For activities such as tree planting, implementing agencies will have to facilitate some sensitization campaigns to prevent excessive tree cutting and wildfires. Partnership will continue with the National Office for Environmental Studies and Impact Evaluation (or BEEI the French Acronym for the Bureau d' Evaluation Environnementale et d'Etudes d' Impacts) that will monitor the micro-projects to ensure the respect of local social and



environmental norms.

Likewise, the World Bank operational safeguard Policy OP 4.09 on Pest management has been triggered to take into consideration the accompanying socioeconomic measures geared towards increasing agricultural productivity. An Integrated Pest Management Plan has been updated, consulted upon by the borrower and publicly disclosed thereafter, both in-country and at the World Bank website. This implies ensuring that modern efficient utilization of pesticide and fertilizer will be introduced, and farmers trained in their applications. Further, strict control mechanisms will be put in place to avoid potential adverse impacts such as pollution from agricultural runoffs.

5. Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people.

Key project stakeholders include the NGOs and firms involved in implementation, representatives of relevant line ministries who will be involved in the technical validation of the micro-projects selected for implementation; community representatives, and representatives from the BEEI. A workshop will be scheduled to disclose the safeguard instruments to the public (including these stakeholders).

B. Disclosure Requirements (N.B. The sections below appear only if corresponding safeguard policy is triggered)

Environmental Assessment/Audit/Management Plan/Other

Date of receipt by the Bank	Date of submission for disclosure	For category A projects, date of distributing the Executive Summary of the EA to the Executive Directors
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"In country" Disclosure

Resettlement Action Plan/Framework/Policy Process

Date of receipt by the Bank	Date of submission for disclosure
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"In country" Disclosure



Pest Management Plan

Was the document disclosed prior to appraisal?

No

Date of receipt by the Bank

Date of submission for disclosure

"In country" Disclosure

C. Compliance Monitoring Indicators at the Corporate Level (to be filled in when the ISDS is finalized by the project decision meeting) (N.B. The sections below appear only if corresponding safeguard policy is triggered)

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APPROVAL

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