

**Participatory, Responsive Governance in Niger: Impact Evaluation Project Description 2015-2018**

**Submitted to:**

USAID/Niger

USAID/DRG

**Submitted by:**

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## Executive Summary

## [To be completed by AidData]

## Overall Impact Evaluation Standards:

The PRG is designed to be a principal contributor to the achievement of Development Objective 2 under the Niger Operational Framework: *Citizen Confidence in the state increased among target populations.*

Post-electoral activities focused on targeted citizen priorities under Phase 1 will provide initial contributions to results under IR 2.2: *Equitable access to public sector services increased in target areas* while continuing to contribute to the participatory processes under IR 2.2, including civic engagement in governance.

Our impact evaluation will focus on the post-electoral activities and IR 2.2. Our objectives for the impact evaluation follow those stipulated in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan provided in the PRG Program Description (PD) (p. 28), which states in part that:

“Given the innovative nature of this proposed project, the project design team recognizes the value of also developing an external impact evaluation to test the fundamental hypotheses and theory of change embedded in the project design, and to determine whether changes in outcome measures are directly attributable to the project. This aligns with the USAID Evaluation Policy, which requires new and innovative or pilot projects to be subject to impact evaluation and thus the counterfactual analysis needed to determine causality. We also recognize the particular importance of being able to show attributable results in USAID governance programming, and see evaluation of this project as an opportunity to try to prove intervention efficacy. Lastly, an impact evaluation of aspects of the PRG principal activity in its Phase 1 would allow for findings to be applied to improved project design and implementation in the anticipated Phase 2 scale-up. In this way, the impact evaluation will also play an important formative assessment role for the project.”

This evaluation will be funded by and designed in collaboration with the USAID DRG Learning team. As the PD Monitoring and Evaluation Plan further states (p28):

“Should the DRG Center approve this proposal, the impact evaluation will be managed directly by the DRG Learning team in Washington and they may have co-funding available up to $250,000. Following their standard practice, this means that the Learning team would manage the contract for this work, hiring an independent principal investigator from the academic community to lead the design and implementation of the evaluation. The evaluation questions and precise methodology would be developed in collaboration with the project AOR/COR and the USAID/Senegal Regional Program Office/M&E Specialist in order to adhere as well as possible to the project theory of change and implementation design.”

We will work with the implementing partner to ensure the success of the evaluation. As the PD Monitoring and Evaluation Plan states (p28):

“The evaluation design would be finalized in consultation with the principal PRG activity implementing partner, and would need to align with the project work plan so as to ensure that the project implementation timing and geographic targeting for the components under evaluation is conducive to rigorous impact evaluation methodology, particularly as needed to ensure validity. This relates in particular to the ability to isolate project inputs for the outcomes being measured, as well as to establishing equivalent control groups. Furthermore, the Request for Applications or Proposals for the PRG principal activity will note that there may be an impact evaluation of components of the activity and that the implementing partner would need to cooperate to make this possible.”

As reported in the monitoring and evaluation strategy below, this impact evaluation will clearly meet the standards of USAID’s 2011 Evaluation Policy. In particular, it will address the causal impacts of the PRG by obtaining and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data before during and after implementation of the program within a quasi-experimental framework.

## Summary of Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

This document provides an overview of the strategy and action plan for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) component of USAID’s Participatory and Responsive Governance (PRG) program in Niger. The overarching goal of the PRG project is to strengthen the collective responsiveness of the Nigerien government and its citizens to priority public needs in order to help mitigate what Nigeriens call a ‘*crise de confiance’* or ‘crisis of confidence’ between citizens and the state and ultimately bolster stability and governance in one of the world’s most fragile states. The project aims to strengthen collective responsiveness through three channels: 1.) political party campaigns; 2.) collective engagement and coordination of multiple stakeholders (government, non-government, donors) to undertake reforms that address citizen priorities; and 3.) capacity-building of local think-tanks, media, NGOs, and civil society to promote participatory governance.

The M&E strategy and impact evaluation (IE) will be implemented by AidData in collaboration with PRG implementing partners. The impact evaluation will be conducted by AidData staff and affiliated researchers. Proposed PIs on the project are: Ariel BenYishay (AidData Chief Economist, Assistant Professor of Economics at the College of W&M), Philip Roessler (Assistant Professor of Government at the College of W&M), and Lisa Mueller (Assistant Professor, Macalester College).

We (AidData PIs) envisage that the impact evaluation will focus on the second project outcome of the PRG: improved collective responsiveness through increased multi-stakeholder contributions to public goods provision, or public goods (PG) reform implementation, for short. In particular, the IE will assess the degree to which the PRG’s strategy for increased multi-stakeholder coordination and collective action leads to change in the coverage and quality of public goods that meet citizen priority needs.

We envisage that the other project outcomes of the PRG—responsiveness of political parties and local capacity-building to promote participatory governance—will not be *directly* evaluated in this impact evaluation, though the interactive effects of party responsiveness and capacity-building with PG reform implementation will be assessed.

The evaluation will employ an experimental design to test whether the PRG project on PG reform implementation leads to the theory of change motivating the intervention, in which research, dialogue and local action catalyzed by improved multi-stakeholder coordination and contributions lead to improvements in the coverage and quality of the targeted public goods that Nigerien citizens consider top priority. We propose the IE will employ a randomized roll-out design that entails the staggered roll-out of the PG reform implementation program across different clusters in Niger, in which the sequencing of the geographic clusters is randomly assigned.

This randomized design will allow us to causally estimate the effect of the PRG project intervention using panel surveys and changes in objective measures of public goods provision and access. We propose collecting the following data to allow us to identify the impact of the intervention:

1. Baseline survey and qualitative analysis at individual and cluster-level on socio-economic and socio-cultural indicators; political attitudes and engagement; strength of informal and formal institutions; multi stake-holder coordination and contributions; public goods provision and access; citizen preferences for public goods.
2. Baseline collection of administratively-measured behavioral data that reflect confidence in the state, including birth registrations, infant mortality, or tax compliance
3. Midpoint checks for compliance and change across key indicators for admin and community-level data.
4. Endpoint checks for compliance and change across key indicators for all data sources.

A timeline for the evaluation is described below, but the key aspects of the randomized roll-out is that only the clusters assigned to the treatment group will be the targets for the PRG PG reform program for the duration of the evaluation, currently expected to last approximately two years.

The cluster-level randomization will be stratified by region and matched pairs (with pairs formed on basis of socioeconomic, political, and ecologic characteristics). Statistical tests for the cluster-level randomization will be made using randomization inference techniques to maximize statistical power.

In addition, we also envision that a key program feature may entail eliciting participation by households in program activities. Randomizing the households who are targeted by these invitations/encouragement and comparing the changes in their attitude and behaviors to those not encouraged would provide a second dimension of evidence on the program’s household-level effects.

This rigorous research design and comprehensive data collection strategy will allow us to evaluate the degree to which the PG reform implementation program produces change in the the coverage and quality of public goods that meet citizen priority needs and strengthen citizen confidence in the state.

In addition to the analysis produced for USAID, the researchers will have the right to use the data to publish in academic and policy outlets. Drs. BenYishay, Roessler, and Mueller, together with USAID, will be solely responsible for keeping and maintaining versions of the data that contain identifiable information about subjects. Other parties will have access to anonymized data 6 months after the completion of the final evaluation report. This 6 months embargo period will allow the PIs to finalize their report. The data will be fully anonymized and secured before sharing with any third-party researchers.

## Impact Evaluation Design and Implementation: Activities and Deliverables

**Scoping study Fall 2015**: Two PIs travel to Niger to engage and discuss with USAID-Niger and PRG implementing partners on results of Political Economy Analysis (PEA), design of PG Reform Implementation Program, and design of impact evaluation.

**Draft Impact Evaluation Design, Fall 2015**: Drawing on Program Description document, PEA, and scoping trip, PIs draft design of impact evaluation. The PIs will work together with the implementing partner M&E specialist to tailor the impact evaluation approach based on their implementation strategy. Once the scoping study is complete, the impact evaluation design will be provided to USAID/ Niger and USAID/DRG within three months. We will solicit USAID feedback on the draft impact evaluation design and then revise to produce a final evaluation design within one month of receiving USAID feedback. There will also be an independent peer review of the impact evaluation design, described in greater detail below.

**Workshop Impact Evaluation design with DRG at Learning Conference or in Washington, Winter 2015/2016**: Two PIs travel to Learning Conference.

**Baseline Data Collection and Pre-program Implementation Late Spring/Early Summer 2016:** Once the evaluation design is finalized, we will begin the process of developing the baseline evaluation including the set of questions for the surveys and the qualitative analysis protocol (including interviews and focus groups). We will work together with the implementing partner M&E specialist to customize the baseline data collection questions and approach based on their implementation strategy. Data collection tools will be reviewed by USAID/DRG and its implementing partner (NORC) who will be tasked with local data collection. A PI might have to make himself or herself available for travel to Niger for enumeration training. Alternatively, or in conjunction, a staff person from NORC will likely travel to Niger to facilitate enumeration training. Two PIs travel to Niger to learn from baseline data collection and ahead of the launch of the PG Reform Implementation Program to coordinate on randomization strategy. Once the baseline evaluation is complete, a draft report will be provided to USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG within three months. We will solicit USAID feedback on the draft report and then revise to produce a final report within one month of receiving USAID feedback.

**PG Reform Implementation Progam, Summer 2016:** At least one PI travels to Niger to monitor program roll-out.

**Midpoint Analysis, Summer 2017:** At least two PIs travel to Niger to coordinate on midpoint analysis. The midpoint analysis, which we expect to occur during summer 2017, will directly follow up on the baseline and also include new information not anticipated in the baseline. Once the midpoint analysis is complete, a draft report will be provided to USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG within three months. We will solicit USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG feedback on the draft report and then revise to produce a final report within one month of receiving USAID feedback.

**Endline Analysis, Summer 2018:** At least two PIs travel to Niger to coordinate on endline analysis. We will conclude with an endline analysis in summer 2018 that directly follows up on the baseline and midterm evaluations. Once the endline evaluation is complete, a draft report will be provided to USAID/Niger, USAID/DRG and USAID/HESN within three months. We will solicit USAID feedback on the draft report and then revise to produce a final report within one month of receiving USAID feedback.

## Reporting Requirements

As previously mentioned, AidData will adhere to reporting requirements of HESN, USAID/DRG and USAID/Niger. USAID/DRG has a primary interest in ensuring the quality, rigor, and policy and academic relevance of its impact evaluations. Broad standards for co-funding include a focus on programs that are: 1) untested; 2) have the potential for replication in other contexts; 3) are strategically important for the Mission; or 4) are innovative in design or substance.

Meeting such standards is built into USAID/DRG’s reporting requirements. As such, USAID/DRG requires a peer review of the draft evaluation plan by other academics before co-funding is applied and research activities occur. The evaluation design document should be thought of a pre-analysis plan that outlines the theory of change behind the evaluation and evaluated experimental interventions, specific hypotheses to be tested, data collection tools planned along with data collection strategy (sample sizes, power calculations, geographic locations, etc.) This document should be approximately 30 pages in length, and initially prepared after the PIs complete their scoping trips. (There is further guidance on the format available.)

The peer review of the evaluation design can be facilitated formally through the Experiments in Governance and Politics (EGAP) group at Columbia University, of which USAID/DRG is an institutional member. Members of EGAP have signed full non-disclosure agreements to allow them to comment on in-design evaluation plans. The peer review will focus both on the technical soundness of the evaluation design as well as addressing USAID/DRG’s own strategic criteria regarding impact evaluations. The comments from EGAP should be incorporated into or addressed in the final evaluation design document, and will be used by USAID/DRG to make final determinations regarding co-funding. This peer review is in addition to the review and commenting period by HESN, USAID/DRG, and USAID/Niger described above.

USAID/DRG aims to have its comments and those of the peer review back to the PIs within a month of the submission of the evaluation design. USAID/Niger also expects that AidData will submit a draft evaluation design to the Mission for the same one month comment period. On USAID’s part, NORC will consolidate feedback from USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG and provide to AidData one single set of comments/questions from USAID, in a timely manner.

In regards to the HESN award, AidData will be required to meet all obligations as previously outlined in its award, including but not limited to: financial reporting, HESN M&E indicators, annual reports, etc.

AidData will also share with its HESN AOR any draft or final report shared with USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG so that the AOR can track its progress towards final deliverables and ensure that AidData is meeting its benchmarks in a timely fashion.

USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG also require that AidData submit an analysis report upon completion of each phase of the evaluation (baseline, midpoint, and endline). These reports will also have a commenting period of a month to allow USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG to provide feedback. In addition to these reports, USAID/Niger requests that AidData share with the Mission POC the biannual reports required by HESN, for information purposes.

The format for the evaluation design is as follows:

Regarding the analysis reports for each phase of the impact evaluation, USAID/Niger expects that a draft report be submitted to the Mission POC for Mission comment as well as to the USAID/DRG POC, followed by a final report, due one month after receiving the Mission’s comments. On USAID’s part, NORC will consolidate feedback from USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG and provide to AidData one single set of comments/questions from USAID, in a timely manner.

The format for the Analysis Report is as follows:

• Executive Summary—salient findings and recommendations, concisely stated (2 pp)

• Introduction—purpose, audience, and synopsis of task (1 p)

• Background—brief overview of the program, and purpose of the evaluation (2 pp)

• Design—data collection methods, including limitations and gaps (2 pp)

• Findings/Conclusions/Recommendations—evaluation findings discussion with understandable data visualizations for non-technical readers and broader policy findings & recommendations (31–33 pp)

• Issues—list of key technical and/or administrative concerns, if any (1–2 pp)

• References---including bibliography and other references as appropriate (as needed; not included in page count)

• Annexes—methods, schedules, interview lists and tables will be pertinent and readable. The evaluation SOW and instruments will be in the annexes. The final version of the report will be submitted to USAID/Niger in electronic format.

• Quantitative and qualitative data files will be submitted electronically, to the extent this can be done without revealing confidential identifying information. Qualitative data can be submitted in French, as the language of most respondents.

The report will not exceed 40 pages, excluding table of contents, acronyms list, executive summary, references and annexes. This format is consistent with the 2011 USAID Evaluation Policy.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Research Team:

Ariel BenYishay will be responsible for the execution of the PRG impact evaluation projects. BenYishay, Phil Roessler, and Lisa Mueller will serve as principal investigators for the project. They will report directly to USAID/Niger and USAID/DRG. BenYishay, Roessler, and Mueller will be responsible for the planning and execution of all phases of the impact evaluation. They will develop the evaluation design and coordinate with a survey firm to carry out the baseline, midpoint, and endline evaluations.

AidData:

AidData will be responsible for the reporting requirements of both HESN and USAID/Niger. In regards to the HESN award, AidData will be required to meet all obligations as previously outlined in its award, including but not limited to: financial reporting, HESN M&E indicators, annual reports, etc. In regards to USAID/Niger, AidData is responsible for coordinating with BenYishay, Roessler, and Mueller on the evaluation design report and analysis report at the completion of each phase of the evaluation, as well as for sharing with the Mission the reports required by HESN. AidData will review any reporting documents or any modifications to the scope of work prior to approval.

USAID/Niger

The primary point of contact (POC) for AidData and for USAID/HESN will be[name, role]. A secondary POC for AidData will be [COR for PRG mechanism], primarily for project-related technical concerns. The primary POC will be responsible for ensuring that communication is maintained between the Mission, HESN, DRG, and AidData, including through the required reporting listed above. Regarding reporting requirements, the primary POC will have final approval of the three required evaluation reports, and will review for information purposes, the reports required by HESN. The technical POC will be available to serve as liaison with the implementing partner and with any technical/field-based issues that may arise. The technical POC will be included in the Mission’s approval of the three evaluation reports, and will also view the interim reports required by HESN. The primary POC, however, has the responsibility of sharing these documents and soliciting the feedback and approval of others in the Mission, including the technical POC, as well as soliciting feedback from the primary POC in USAID/DRG.

USAID/DRG

The primary POC for AidData and for USAID/HESN will be Nicole Bonoff, Impact Evaluation Specialist for USAID/ DRG. The primary POC will be responsible for ensuring communication is maintained between the Mission, DRG, HESN, and AidData. The POC will also facilitate the peer review of the draft evaluation plan. The POC will be included in the Mission’s approval of the three evaluation reports, and will also view the interim reports required by HESN. NORC will also have the opportunity to review the three evaluation reports. Final approval of all reports is held by the primary POC for USAID/DRG. The primary POC will also be responsible for liaising through NORC that will provide the sub-contracting and management for data collection activities.

USAID/HESN

USAID/HESN will be responsible for the day to day project management of the USAID/Niger-HESN buy in. This means that the AOR for the HESN award to AidData will comply with reporting requirements under the award. He/she will also conduct periodic M&E on the progress of AidData’s PRG work to ensure that AidData is meeting its delivery timeframe on schedule. As necessary, the AOR will periodically communicate to USAID/Niger the status of AidData’s progress, as well as immediately notify the Mission if any problems arise during the course of this impact evaluation project.

## AidData Staffing and Management Plan

**Principal Investigators**

*Dr. Ariel BenYishay—*Dr. BenYishay is AidData’s Chief Economist and Assistant Professor of Economics at the College of William and Mary. He previously served as Lecturer in Economics at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. He also served as Associate Director of Economic Analysis and Evaluation at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. He has served as the principal investigator on a variety of large-scale experiments in developing countries, including Malawi, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands.

*Dr. Philip Roessler*—Dr. Roessler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government and Co-Director of the Center for African Development at the College of William and Mary. He is an expert on African politics and has conducted qualitative, quantitative and experimental studies in a range of African countries, including Sudan, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

*Dr. Lisa Mueller—*Dr. Mueller is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and African Studies at Macalester College. Her research focuses on civic engagement and political economy of development in Niger. She has directed surveys in Niger on protest participation and citizen-politician linkages and has conducted additional fieldwork in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. During summer 2015 she will be a Visiting Scholar at the West African Research Center in Dakar.

***Additional Personnel***

*Field Coordinator*— Full-time staff member based in Niamey during baseline data collection and initial program roll-out, and based in Williamsburg for technical support and data cleaning. Staff member will be responsible for coordinating training of data collection team, monitoring during collection, and tracking program status and randomization compliance during initial roll-out. The coordinator would also be responsible for obtaining administrative data from relevant national sources. Depending on funding, coordinator may return to complete midline and endline data collection. This individual will likely have a graduate degree or studies and have previous research experience in a similar setting.

*AidData Project Manager-* AidData staff member who will assist with compliance with USAID/ HESN and USAID/Niger reporting requirements and coordinating among team members.

*GIS Analyst*—AidData staff member who will assist in merging existing georeferenced datasets on population, economy, agriculture, ecology and other factors to ensure matched pairs are most precisely formed for the randomization.

*Policy & Communications Analyst—*AidData staff member who will assist with drafting policy briefs and communications materials to promote learning from the evaluation.

## 

## Budget Narrative

Funding will provide for 10.5 months of summer effort over the course of 3 years for Drs. BenYishay, Roessler, & Mueller, effort by an Evaluation Program Manager and GIS Analyst. To date, in-kind contributions have been provided by Drs. BenYishay and Roessler, as well as AidData’s Director of Operations, Fiscal Manager, and Evaluation Program Manager, to develop the Project Description and engage with USAID staff in the Mission and DC. In-kind support by AidData’s Director of Operations and AidData’s Fiscal Manager, via HESN funds, will continue during the lifetime of the evaluation activity (contingent on approval by AidData’s HESN AOR). Also included in the budget are the expected costs for the survey firm and field coordinator. These services would be contracted outside of AidData by USAID/DRG.

AidData has budgeted for 9 1-week trips over the course of the three years for Drs. BenYishay & Roessler. This will provide Drs. BenYishay & Roessler with the requisite time needed in-country to gather data, coordinate with partners, and execute other duties related to fieldwork throughout the duration of the project.

USAID/DRG has indicated that $250k is available for the data collection effort. In addition, AidData is willing to co-fund an additional $133k to support the time of the PIs, Program Manager, Travel, and William & Mary’s F&A. At current projected funding levels, this leaves a current gap of approximately $383k which would be required to carry the project to completion.

This is an approximate budget that is subject to change based upon review by the College of William & Mary’s Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP). The final budget will need to be approved by William & Mary’s OSP. Note that as faculty members, Dr. BenYishay and Dr. Roessler are eligible for an up to 2% raise issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia, currently before the State legislature. If authorized, this would then be reflected in their summer salary in the final version of the budget.

## Budget Outline

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Totals** |
| **Principal Investigators** | $53,741.83 | $36,902.85 | $38,010.04 |  |
| **Program Manager** | $22,462.23 | $22,462.23 | $23,584.00 |  |
| **GIS Analyst** |  | $4,522.77 |  |  |
| **Travel** | $13,768.00 | $19,932.00 | $26,576.00 |  |
| **W&M F&A** | $42,287.00 | $39,395.00 | $41,440.00 |  |
| ***Totals*** | ***$132,259.06*** | ***$123,214.85*** | ***$129,610.04*** | **$385,083.95** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Field Coordinator** | $46,053.00 | $46,053.00 | $22,553.00 |  |
| **Survey Firm** | $100,000.00 | $75,000.00 | $100,000.00 |  |
| ***Totals*** | ***$146,053.00*** | ***$121,053.00*** | ***$122,553.00*** | **$389,659.00** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Grand Total** | **$774,742.95** |