

**Global Food Security Strategy
(GFSS)
Niger Country Plan**

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Table of Contents

Acronyms	4
Introduction	5
1. Food Security and Nutrition Context	6
1.1. Country Priorities	6
1.2. Key Drivers of Poverty, Hunger, and Malnutrition	7
1.3. Status of Greatest Constraints to the Food and Agriculture Market Systems	9
1.4. Regional Market Potential	12
1.5. Partnership Landscape for GFSS	14
2. Targeting	15
2.1. N’Konni and Gaya	17
2.1.1. Beneficiary Targeting	17
2.2. Maradi, Zinder, and southern Tillaberi	18
2.2.1. Beneficiary Targeting	18
2.3. Tillaberi	18
2.3.1. Beneficiary Targeting	19
2.4. Targeted Value Chains	19
2.4.1. Small Ruminants	19
2.4.2. Poultry	20
2.4.3. Cowpea	21
2.4.4. Market Systems for Rural Foods	21
3. Results Framework	23
3.1. Problem Statement	23
3.2. GFSS Goal for Niger	23
3.3. Theory of Change	23
3.3.1. Theory of Change at Goal Level	24
3.3.2. Theories of Change at Component Level	24
3.4. GFSS Country Plan Contribution to Niger’s Agricultural Transformation & Strategic Transition	31
4. Program Components	32
4.1. Enhanced Social and Ecological Risk Management Systems	32
4.2. Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being	33
4.3. Improve Health, Family Planning, and Nutrition Outcomes	36

4.4. Enhance Governance of Institutions and Organizations	38
4.5. Enhance Social, Economic, and Political Agency of Women and Youth.....	39
4.6. Stakeholder Engagement Platforms	39

Acronyms

AYC	African Youth Charter
CRA	Climate Resilient Agriculture
GDA	USAID Global Development Alliance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFSS	Global Food Security Strategy
GON	Government of Niger
HC3N	Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	Intermediate Result
LWR	Lutheran World Relief
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PRAPS	Sahel Pastoralism Support Project
PSNP	National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Security Policy
REGIS-AG	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth
REGIS-ER	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience
RISE	Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced
SDP	Sahel Development Partnership
SUN	Scaling up Nutrition
USADF	United States African Development Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	U.S. Government
VEO	Violent Extremist Organizations
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Introduction

The GFSS Country Plan for Niger was co-written with the USG interagency involved in food security and nutrition work in Niger after extensive consultation with stakeholders from government ministries, private companies, universities, research institutes, and international and local NGOs and organizations. This document also received extensive review and commentary by USG interagency partners in Washington, DC. As a living document, it is intended to be updated as needed in consultation with those parties over time.

The GFSS Country Plan serves as an overarching framework for integrated food security and nutrition programming. The plan is intended to describe the key drivers of food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty. These key drivers stem from a complex set of underlying conditions that exist at the individual, household, community, and system level. At the design and procurement stages, the targeting, results framework, and program components will require further refinement to operationalize integrated and holistic approaches. Interventions at all levels will need to work in complement to each other to sustainably tackle food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty. In particular, the most vulnerable and poor populations do not have sufficient assets, skills, and capabilities to participate in market operations. These populations will need to be supported to develop capacity over time to participate in value chains so that they can become a viable livelihood option. As GFSS programming is refined through the design, procurement, and implementation processes, selected value chains will explicitly prioritize inclusive growth and interventions will include support to the most vulnerable and poor populations to enable them to graduate into selected value chains and benefit from the GFSS-supported livelihoods and market development.

Budget assumptions for interagency contributions to this plan reflect the FY 2017 Estimate and FY 2018 President's Budget, based on information publicly available at the time this document was prepared. Out-year budget assumptions reflect a straight-line to the FY 2018 President's Budget. Any funding beyond FY 2017 is subject to the availability of funds, as determined by the President's Budget and a Congressional appropriation. Budget assumptions may require revision in the future, based on future President's Budgets.

1.0 Food Security and Nutrition Context

The Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) in Niger currently includes contributions from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the U.S. Department of State, and the United States African Development Foundation (USADF). The whole-of-government GFSS in Niger contributes to improving agricultural and livestock production and productivity, reducing malnutrition, increasing macroeconomic growth, managing annual and less frequent shocks and stresses, developing and strengthening the private sector, reinforcing government reforms, and countering violent extremism. Current GFSS programming includes the MCC compact, which is focused on agriculture and irrigation, and on improving pastoralist livelihoods in cooperation with the World Bank, USADF work with small scale farmers and businesses, diplomatic efforts by the Department of State and others. Agricultural and nutrition funding programmed through a pre-existing USAID resilience platform called Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) represent a large portion of GFSS investment in Niger. RISE is a larger suite of projects, including Food for Peace, all contributing to resilience goals, as households in Niger are subject to shocks and stresses on at least an annual basis. Future agricultural programming in Niger will also include a focus on agriculture livelihoods for youth and populations vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups under the Sahel Development Partnership (SDP).



**Graphic is for conceptual understanding only, and is not scaled relative to programmatic or budget size.*

Interagency partners programming on the ground are as of March 2018, may change, and are subject to budget availability. Other funding streams for RISE I/II that are not considered part of GFSS but will work in tandem with GFSS through the RISE program include maternal and child health, family planning, private sector competitiveness, peace and security, and governance funding.

1.1 Country Priorities

The Government of Niger's (GoN) highest priority for food security is access to water, as it is both the greatest constraint to macroeconomic growth and the most pressing daily concern of the rural population. The GoN's second priority for food security is reclamation of degraded lands. In 2012, the Government of Niger established a High Commission to address the Presidential Initiative Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens, or HC3N, to coordinate national and donor development programming in food security and nutrition. The

High Commissioner holds the rank of minister and reports directly to the President. HC3N is supported by a series of action plans to accelerate results, which prioritize improvements in water access, agricultural production, and resilience. However, Niger's budgetary priorities remain focused on security, and public funds for education and social welfare have been diverted to national security. Still, a significant amount of GoN funding does go to the food security budget, and in the past five years, the GoN has contributed 3 percent of its own national budget to food security spending, representing a total equivalent of \$508 million dollars.

In 2016, Niger launched its first multi-sectoral nutrition policy, the National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Security Policy (PSNP) with an established a specific budget line for nutrition in order to track spending. Niger also has the National Agricultural Investment Plan and the regionally-reviewed Priorities Resilience Pays, or PRP.

1.2 Key Drivers of Poverty, Hunger, and Malnutrition

Niger is the largest landlocked country in West Africa. Agriculture contributes 47 percent of Niger's GDP, but 80 percent of the population remains rural and dependent on agriculture for survival, with millet and sorghum as the principal staple crops. Even with agriculture as the primary occupation, 83 percent of Nigerien households earn income from non-agricultural sources, and non-agricultural income represents over 10 percent of overall income for 77 percent of households. Non-agricultural income is also a temporary source of income for 30 percent of households, and a critical source of income for 46 percent of households in that it provides income in time of stress. The population of Niger is concentrated in the Sahelian zone, which receives 150-600 mm of rain per year, with rain-fed agriculture subject to increasingly varied timing and amounts of rainfall, and both urban and rural areas susceptible to flooding and drought. Over the past 30 years, agriculture has expanded into pastoral zones. This has created and exacerbated conflict between herders and farmers (CILSS, 2016). Very little surface area in Niger is irrigated. Of the 270,000 hectares of land with large and small-scale irrigation potential, only about 37 percent is currently irrigated. Irrigation potential along the Niger River, one of the country's only year-round water sources, is estimated at 30,000 hectares, yet merely 9,000 hectares of this potential are in operation.

In the RISE midline quantitative survey, conducted in the RISE zone of Maradi, Zinder, and Tillabéri, approximately 96 percent of households reported exposure to a shock during the previous year such as drought, food price increases, health care expenses, and animal disease or pest outbreaks. Although the most common shocks are climate related, the ones that are hardest to recover from are anthropogenic (fires) or psychosocial. About half of all households were unable to recover. Some of these shocks are likely interrelated, as animal disease outbreak may kill a family's livestock, reducing their ability to pay for health care expenses. Primary coping strategies in Niger were selling livestock, borrowing, eating less food, and migration. The RISE qualitative survey baseline results showed that social capital, crucial for the borrowing strategies, was the single most important factor in shock recovery. The survey also indicates that secondary education, which is strongly correlated with literacy in Niger, is one of the capacities most strongly correlated with the ability to recover from a shock. Resilience programming will focus on capacities and strategies known to improve recovery from shocks and stresses.

Niger has the highest birth rate in the world, with a fertility rate of 7.8 children per woman, and the effects of this on food security cannot be overstated. As of 2017 the population was nearly 21 million

people, with 70 percent under the age of 30 and a 4 percent population growth rate. The RISE midline survey found that 60 percent of Nigerien children in the current RISE zone are stunted, compared to 45 percent nationally, and 16 percent of all children are wasted, compared to 15 percent nationally, presenting a national health crisis even during good years and in non-conflict zones (EDSN 2017).¹ Stunting rates do not differ by season, but there is significant increase in the prevalence of wasting during the lean season. According to the 2015 RISE baseline², close to 70 percent of those surveyed in Niger were food insecure. Within that, pastoralists were more likely to experience food insecurity but agriculturalists had the lowest levels of dietary diversity, consuming very low levels of dairy and meat.

Addressing malnutrition rests on addressing the multiple and complicated factors determining the availability and consumption of clean water and nutritious, diverse foods. Availability of diverse food is limited due to shocks, climate change, population growth, and underdeveloped food systems. Access is primarily constrained by insufficient purchasing power. Child feeding practices are also poor and only 23 percent of children are exclusively breastfed in the first six months of life (EDHS 2012). Lack of water and poor drinking water quality contribute significantly to malnutrition and disease in Niger. Although 67 percent of households have access to an improved drinking water source, only 9.3 percent of households have an improved toilet. Most households also have livestock in the family compound area, so the ingestion of feces is likely widespread. Prevalence of diarrhea among children 6-11 months old in Niger is 28 percent and among children 12-23 months is 23 percent (EDHS 2012). In addition to drinking water for human consumption, water for livestock and water for agricultural productive use are limiting constraints to the economy at the household and national scale.

The extremely disadvantaged position of women, including inadequate care of mothers and young children, coupled with high levels of early marriage and pregnancy, lead to an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. This cycle is worsened by the lack of education. Children of less educated parents are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and in the current RISE zone 88 percent of the population is not literate, with 78 percent of women and 69 percent of men having never attended school. Cultural and social norms are another crucial driver as they prevent the uptake of practices that lead to improved nutrition. In addition to a lack of decision-making power, women and girls spend much of their time fetching water. Their need to do other household chores also competes with their ability to closely monitor what their children are eating and drinking. In many villages there is insufficient water for drinking, handwashing, and food preparation. Drinking water is prioritized, and handwashing and food preparation are substandard or practiced with dirty or no water. The nutritional status of women and girls is also poor, with 59 percent of pregnant women and 45 percent of non-pregnant and non-lactating women suffering from anemia (EDHS 2012).

Poor food safety likely contributes significantly to malnutrition. Niger's food safety system is still in its infancy. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock coordinates the inspection of imported and exported products, but lack of funding and infrastructure is a significant limitation to the food safety system. Very

¹ *Niger Enquête Démographique et de Santé dans les Zones d'Intervention*, 2017 (preliminary results). Rates of malnutrition are markedly better in urban areas which impact national averages. According to the 2017 DHS, rates of stunting among children under five were 55 percent in Maradi and 67 percent in Zinder. The RISE midline is technically not comparable to the DHS, but is the primary source of information for USAID program management.

² Resilience in the Sahel-Enhanced (RISE) Project Impact Evaluation. Vol. 1.
http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/rise_ie_baseline_resilience_2016.pdf

few studies have assessed contaminants in food in Niger; the extent of mycotoxin contamination in a typical Nigerien diet is almost completely unknown. Exposure to biological species that can cause foodborne disease (bacteria, viruses, and fungi) is also of high concern. Given the lack of water, low water quality, high rate of open defecation, and low prevalence of handwashing, food hygiene and food preparation practices are likely quite poor and actively contributing to the levels of malnutrition.

Another primary cause of widespread malnutrition is poverty. The RISE midline quantitative assessment shows that 76 percent of households in the RISE zone in Niger live on \$1.90 or less per day. The chronic under-productivity of Sahelian agriculture contributes to food insecurity, inadequate diets, malnutrition, and ultimately stunting. The most recent severe drought in the Sahel was in 2012, only two years after the famine of 2010.

Numerous studies state that violent extremism thrives in ungoverned spaces, and Niger typifies this description. In northern Tillabéri, numerous violent attacks have occurred since late 2016, due to increasing influence from violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in the tri-border area with Mali and Burkina Faso. As of early 2018, some villages in Tillabéri are under VEO influence. The lack of presence of the national government in these areas explains in large part the ability of the VEOs to gain influence in Niger, exploiting existing tensions between ethnic groups and between herders and farmers.

1.3 Status of Greatest Constraints to the Food and Agriculture Market Systems

According to the MCC constraints analysis, completed in July 2013, which is based on a growth diagnostic, the binding constraints to broad-based economic growth in Niger are access to water for agriculture and livestock, regulatory and institutional barriers to trade, and government regulation of business. Niger's total renewable water resources, based on the International Water Management Institute, are lower than most other countries in West Africa. Yet, even these are underexploited; in 2000, Niger only withdrew 6 percent of available renewable water resources. Poor use of water resources inhibits agricultural and livestock development. While the country theoretically has limited irrigation potential, the MCC analysis indicates that only 16 percent of irrigable land is under irrigation.

Niger's agricultural sector is dominated by the three key cereal crops: cowpea, sorghum, and millet, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's total agricultural area (FAO). Since 2000, millet and sorghum production has more than doubled, mostly driven by increases in area cultivated. Despite strong growth in production in recent years, cereal production is volatile year to year, driven largely by periodic droughts. This production increase has come at a cost. The expansion into pastoral areas and increasingly marginal areas for agriculture over the past 30 years is evident from large-scale analysis, with the reduction in grassland and ecosystem services and the increase of herder/farmer conflicts (CILSS, 2016). The definition of "field" for rural families has changed from 5 hectares to 0.5 hectares in the past 40 years. With the current birth rate, even massive increases in production and productivity will not satisfy the population's need for consumption. Because much of the sorghum and millet is destined for household consumption, and production of these crops is central to men's identity, the decreasing availability of land will contribute to social destabilization as men have fewer options to gain a position in society.

Yield gap analysis conducted in Niger on sorghum and millet again reinforce that the primary constraint is water. The national average yield in Niger for rain-fed pearl millet is 0.53 metric tons per hectare, with a yield potential of 1.18 MT/ha without irrigation. With irrigation, the potential is 4.03 MT/ha. For

sorghum, the national average yield is 0.35 MT/ha, with a rain-fed potential of 3.3 MT/ha and an irrigated potential of 5.62 MT/ha (GYGA, 2016). Niger's average cereal yield is among the lowest in the region (World Bank, 2016). Fertilizer use is among the lowest in the region, having remained at an average of 0.6 kilograms per hectare for decades (FAOSTAT, 2016). Yields will also improve with the use of improved seeds, but due to varying mechanisms of seed procurement and distribution, the actual use of improved seeds in Niger is difficult to assess. The availability of quality seeds in Niger is decreasing as local production of quality seeds has declined, largely due to competition from subsidized seed distribution. The fertilizer reform plan that was adopted by the GoN in January 2018 is intended to lead to more efficient distribution and increased availability of fertilizers. Seed sector reform will include a focus assisting farmers to purchase rather than waiting for free seeds. Distributed seeds are often of low quality or even fake. The status of pesticides is less well known, but in general pesticide use is low and not applied professionally. Counterfeit and mislabeled products are present in the marketplace, and illiterate farmers have difficulty identifying, mixing, measuring, and applying any chemical inputs correctly.

Since 2000, Niger has also rapidly increased its production of higher value meats, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables. Other high-value horticulture and animal products, including goat and cattle products, have increased steadily, doubling since the beginning of the last decade. Much of the recent growth in vegetables is attributable to rapid increases in onion, chili pepper, and tomato production. Between 2011 and 2014, onion production more than doubled, to nearly 1 million tons (FAOSTAT, author's calculations). Horticultural products in general are more subject to post-harvest loss than staples that can be easily dried, but inadequate storage, drying, and packaging as well as transportation issues contribute to losses of all agricultural goods. However, food exports, notably cowpea, onions, and livestock, are the second most important export after uranium, and are primarily exported to Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire. These trading partners are of growing importance for Niger's food products, and this trade includes the rural population and has benefits accruing at local levels. Although official figures report food and animal export commodities at \$241 million, this is likely underreporting the value of the food and livestock trade due to the volume of unreported informal trade. Nigeria is an essentially bottomless market for Nigerien agricultural and livestock exports. The livestock trade is dominated by live sales, but also includes hides. Cowpeas and onions are also contributing significantly to the national trade volume.

Current livestock productivity at the farm level is hindered primarily by insufficient water, feed, and veterinary services. Engagement in regional and international livestock markets is hindered by road harassment, lack of investment in animal processing opportunities, and outdated trading, transport, and sales practices. The lack of veterinary services causes severe mortality among poultry, particularly due to Newcastle's disease. Ruminants also suffer from lack of vaccination and access to veterinary care, with disease causing significant animal deaths in localized areas. Niger only has one modern slaughterhouse, with the vast majority of slaughter occurring in backyard or back of shop conditions. Meat export is therefore nearly nonexistent.

Despite the importance of agricultural trade with Nigeria, trade faces several important barriers. The Nigerian naira devalued in 2016, and lost nearly a third of its value almost overnight. The effect of the naira devaluation on Niger's economy cannot be overstated. Producers were devastated, although consumer goods became cheaper. A much more regrettable side effect was the loss of Nigeria as a destination for Niger's seasonally-migrating labor force. Seasonal labor migration has been a feature of Sahelian life for generations, and remittances from migrating household family members are a crucial lifeline for most Nigerien families. Because most Nigeriens are poorly educated relative to their

neighboring countries, they are less competitive for lucrative jobs, and tend to participate in unskilled labor, field labor, or begging in their destination countries. As the effects of the devaluation were felt even in Tillabéri, the lack of appealing migration opportunities may have fed recruitment opportunities for violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in that region.

The third major binding constraint to macroeconomic growth in Niger is the regulatory and institutional structure governing the trucking and transportation sector. Implementation of the 1972 ECOWAS Inter-State Road Transportation Convention has led to red tape and inefficiencies in trucking. Trucks are also poorly maintained and overloaded. Road harassment at checkpoints also adds significant costs to transportation both within Niger as well as across borders. Traffic levels are still very low in Niger compared to similar countries, making it difficult to justify increased investment in roads.

Government regulation of business is also a binding constraint to inclusive growth in Niger. According to the MCC constraints analysis, formal firms cite practices of the informal sector as the most significant constraint to business growth. As is typical of developing countries, Niger has a robust informal sector, but the tax and regulatory environment actively discourages the transition from informal to formal; fewer than 10 percent of currently operating formal firms in Niger began as informal businesses. Informal non-agricultural businesses contribute between 23 and 29.5 percent of Nigerien GDP. Informal agricultural production contributes another 39.5 to 41.1 percent. Informal businesses employ 90 percent of workers in Niger, tend to be relatively profitable, have an average of 5.25 employees, including family, and have relatively low investment. This indicates that the informal sector is a target audience for GFSS and has potential as a platform to promote savings and investments to spur a ground-swell of participation and adoption in food security and climate resilient innovations.

The government's extension systems are understaffed and have no operational budget. The government itself does not prioritize any given value chain; its goals are focused on access to water and reclamation of degraded lands. Donor funding is frequently projectized. Commune governments treat the national extension agents as fee-for-service providers, paying them a daily rate to visit the community. Unfortunately, donor-funded NGOs also pay for technical visits from these agents, providing a disincentive to the national government to allocate operational budget to their own extension agents.

Capacity limitations at the individual and household level also constrain production. As previously mentioned, 88 percent of households in the target zone for current resilience programming are illiterate and innumerate. This low level of human capacity is frequently mentioned by field staff as a constraint to improving production techniques, calculating profitability of revenue-generating activities, running a farm as a business, calculating fertilizer and pesticide applications, tracking health progress, and recording minutes of meetings. Physical and legal access to land reduces both the production potential of land as well as the amount of investment a farmer is likely to put into his field. Women's access to land is usually restricted to a portion of her husband's field. In most cases, women do not inherit land. In many cases, women are not permitted to allocate their time as they please between "their" land and their husband's land, although with project support many women have been allowed to spend more time on the parcels allotted to them. The high birth rate means that progressively smaller parcels of land are inherited by each generation. As land gets scarcer, women's access is reduced accordingly. In addition, much of Niger's farmed land is degraded and has low productivity in its current state.

Despite some promising trends in agricultural growth, other household constraints to agricultural production are influenced by the regulatory environment (AgCLIR, 2015). Access to finance is very

limited throughout Niger; and the widespread illiteracy compounds this problem. Access to market infrastructure is a crippling lack for many producers in rural Niger, along with crop storage, price information, rural road networks, and grades and standards for agricultural products. Nevertheless, by improving market management in several livestock markets, communes have drastically increased municipal revenues, sometimes doubling or tripling normal tax income from these markets. This income then is used to improve market infrastructure or provide other services to the population. Resilience programming in Niger is directly addressing all of those constraints, and encouraging local governments to address them directly as well whenever possible.

1.4 Regional Market Potential

Value chain investments in small ruminants, poultry, and rural foods will promote the development of commercially oriented agriculture. With millions of people with just a few animals and half a hectare of land, the commercial potential of an individual is relatively low. However, the potential of aggregated production is strong, as is shown with Niger's large live animal, cowpea, and onion exports. Projects are currently aiding producers to group themselves, plan production, and engage in profitable markets as diverse as a poultry restaurant in Maradi or ruminant markets in Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire. USG investments in Niger and in the region, together with large commitments from other donors, will enable Niger to engage more strategically with other regional actors, and to capitalize on its economic potential from its competitive advantages in livestock, onion, and other chosen crops. If producers increase livestock exports, they will have more purchasing power to buy relatively cheaper staple crops, as they currently do for most of the year. Policy improvements on trade and business could vastly expand Niger's production and consumption potential, and enable it to more fully participate in the larger regional economy, which is currently driven by Nigeria and to a lesser extent other coastal countries.

With population growth, increases in incomes, and urbanization occurring across much of West Africa, urban and coastal demand for red meat and other forms of animal protein has expanded significantly. A new class of consumers with disposable income and preferences for higher-quality meat has emerged, which is reflected in more product differentiation in urban supermarkets and specialized butcher shops. While open-air sales of beef bone-in and without bones in public markets still predominate, new opportunities for livestock producers to increase incomes through serving these more demanding markets is growing and represents a significant investment and economic growth potential over the next several years. Virtually all of the long-distance livestock trade in West Africa continues to consist of live animals, with huge untapped possibilities for increasing the slaughter of ruminant livestock in Sahelian countries for shipment of chilled meat to coastal West African markets. Significant challenges to this transformation include high-cost electricity and transportation, lack of working capital, and others, although examples are now beginning to emerge in the region that can be expanded and duplicated.

The traditional livestock trade is concentrated within specific ethnic groups who eschew written contracts, operate on trust, and buy and sell livestock based on color, visual estimates of condition and carcass weight, festival timing, and visual estimates of animal sale value. Increasingly, however, there are opportunities to move towards establishing regular, traceable, contract-based deliveries for supermarkets, large volume food import and distribution companies, and specialized butcher shops. This can reduce the need for certified intermediaries, who served to control theft in the past, but with the advent of larger buyers in more isolated markets with less market-aware sellers, have been known to collude with buyers to depress prices. Remote individual livestock sellers are unaware of market prices and can be easily

taken advantage of, and since the use of these intermediaries is required, they have little recourse. Current interventions include increasing knowledge of market prices among sellers, and holding fairs where sellers can sell directly. The intermediaries are still important actors in the value chain, but projects are also working with them to reduce collusion. Projects are aggregating sellers and increasing their capacity to engage in larger scale sales, including international markets. Several producer groups have sold large quantities of Nigerien livestock at fairs in Senegal or Cote d'Ivoire, representing aggregations of just a few animals per farmer. Thus far these sales have generated significant revenue for the sellers. Continued investment in reducing the costs of cross-border trade, including road harassment, will benefit the entire sector and increase Niger livestock producers' ability to engage in export markets.

Development of the meat sector also has significant potential for job creation, as meat processing generates high levels of employment. The FAO estimates that for 30 head of cattle, slaughtering requires 20 workdays, processing requires 80 workdays, and marketing requires four workdays. An opportunity to facilitate the creation of new jobs lies in addressing the poor quality of cattle, the lack of necessary support infrastructure, including slaughtering facilities, veterinary services, transport, cold chain development, milk and dried meat product storage, and new models of contracting. Although the sector remains highly traditional, there is a new generation of livestock producers and investors with whom to partner. The estimated number of jobs directly generated by livestock activities is significant and well-integrated into most rural households and there is a comparative advantage of Niger and Sahelian countries to exploit the large opportunities present to supply the growing markets of West Africa.

Attracting new investments and developing new financing models for the sector is important as livestock producers, traders, and butchers have significant difficulty accessing credit, and the value chain is highly illiquid. Banks do not lend to traditional traders with few or no assets other than live animals, which are not treated as moveable collateral. Supporting investments and access to finance to key players in areas such as abattoirs, cold-storage and transport, feed production, and veterinary services are high potential opportunities to increase value-addition. Support for investments aimed at increasing the efficiency and availability of animal feed, the largest factor in production costs, are also priorities with successful companies operating mills along the Niger River, particularly in the Office du Niger zones in the Segou and Mopti regions in Mali. Analysis by the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub identified that livestock fattening investments are also profitable (more than 10 percent) and the returns are promising enough to merit expansion of cattle-fattening practices at the commercial scale.

Rural livestock markets are frequently the largest single source of revenue for communes. USAID projects have improved market management and doubled or tripled municipal income, which the commune has then used to finance market improvements or provide other needed services to their population. In instances like these, improving access to rural markets translates to improved government services for everyone. USAID will invest in growing the commercial sector of its chosen value chains of small ruminants, poultry, and rural foods. The first step is engaging local actors in local markets as agents of their own change, to ensure that Nigeriens can fully participate in the markets in Niger, rather than being displaced by other West Africans, as is largely the case with much of the job market. Early in the GFSS strategy, relatively more resources will be invested in the population so that they may engage fully; as the strategy develops, relatively more resources will be allocated to growing the economy in general.

1.5 Partnership Landscape for GFSS

Niger's annual budget is approximately \$3 billion. Niger is highly dependent on budget support from donors. Although USAID had a significant presence in Niger historically, the mission in Niger closed in the 1990s. The country office in Niger re-opened in 2012, and the first USAID projects began to implement again soon after. The USAID profile in Niger is significant, but is relatively new to operations in this context. Most donor investments are in humanitarian assistance; USAID is one of the most important funders both of humanitarian and development assistance.

The USG and the government of Niger, together with the European Union and the World Bank, are all working toward a more collaborative and communicative approach to both humanitarian assistance and development assistance in Niger. The structures of collaboration are robust, with monthly meetings based on sector and type of assistance. Emergency actors are well coordinated by OCHA and the Cellule de Coordination out of the Prime Minister's office. In Niger, the Cadre de Concertation, the organizing body for addressing food security, focuses on emergency humanitarian assistance. However, recent discussions with numerous donors are revealing a broad desire to incorporate more long-term, development approaches into this assistance. The active involvement of the Prime Minister also guarantees strong Government of Niger coordination.

All donors and the Government of Niger would like to see the same level of commitment and coordination for development assistance as well. In recent years, the European donors and the GoN espoused the idea of "communes de convergence," or communes where multiple donors invested, with the assumption that a critical mass of investment would result in significant commune development. Communes are roughly equivalent to counties at a public administrative level, and each commune has from about 50 to several hundred villages, depending on its population density. The donor community chose 35 communes de convergence. Commune-level interventions will need to be coordinated in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

In general, the European Union and World Bank fund the GoN directly with budget support. Typically, the Government of Niger then uses that funding to form a project, and for food security the implementing ministry is the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. To date, there have been over 40 significant government projects operated with donor funding, variously using basket funds, loans, or outright grants. There are about 20 projects still operating. By far the largest single project is The National Program on Drinking Water Provision and Hygiene, funded by a loan of \$1.2 billion with the African Development Bank.

The changing security situation in the Liptako-Gourma area, which is the Niger-Mali-Burkina Faso region, has also changed the partnership landscape. OCHA has begun to coordinate the humanitarian response in the region, as the donor community plans for numerous internally displaced persons due to actions by the Sahel G5. Going forward, OCHA will continue to coordinate emergency response.

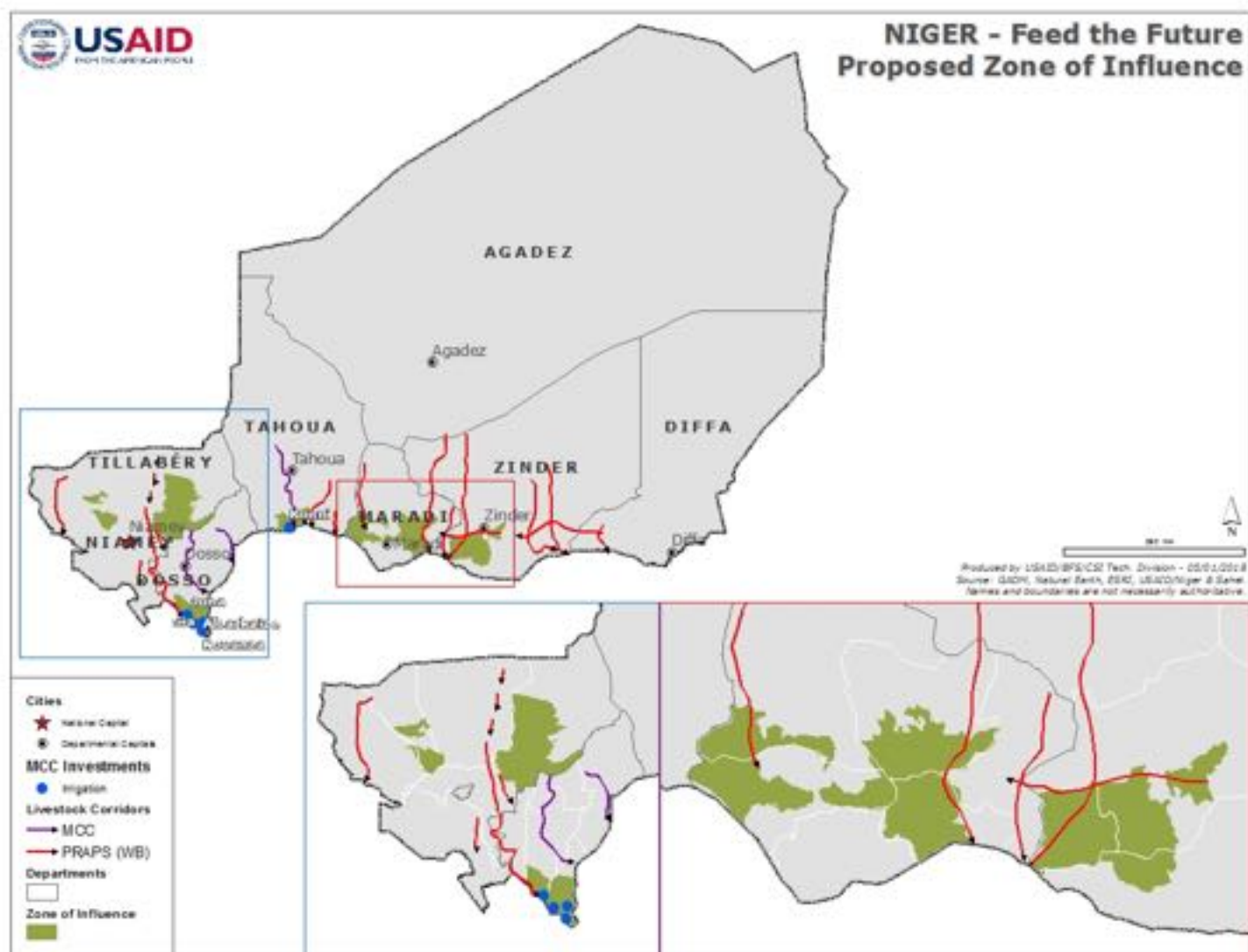
MCC's contributions to the World Bank's Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS) and Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) projects guarantee a close collaboration in the future. USAID will strongly encourage active collaboration between ongoing projects and these two new projects. Programming under GFSS will actively coordinate and collaborate with these projects. The Belgian Cooperation has taken the lead on livestock. They are intervening directly in Dosso in improving genetic quality of breeding stock in Niger, and they are also improving water management and pasture conditions

for sedentary and transhumant livestock. In the Zinder area, the Luxembourgais are the lead for water and sanitation.

2.0 Targeting

The GFSS Zone of Influence in Niger will include specific communes in Maradi and Zinder and Tillabéri under RISE and SDP, as well as specific communes in N’Konni and Gaya under MCC (See Figure 1). These areas have been chosen for a variety of factors around vulnerability and represent a continuum of readiness and potential for agriculture-led economic growth. Accordingly, the programming strategy for each area considers the appropriateness of interventions for the given context. N’Konni and Gaya are at the higher end of the continuum and are thus targeted for direct investment in public goods such as irrigation and roads. These investments are expected to benefit the population of N’Konni and Gaya broadly, with other areas benefiting from increased trade. Maradi and Zinder are in the middle of the continuum, and interventions target the most vulnerable to get them to a point where they are able to participate in and benefit from economic growth. Finally, Tillabéri is at the lower end of the continuum due to instability and security concerns. Here, the programming is focused on short-term interventions to stabilize the situation and prevent it from deteriorating. The overall geographical footprint of all of the projects under GFSS is likely to be similar, but likely smaller due to the Government of Niger’s request for focused and concentrated resources.

Figure 1. GFSS Zone of Influence



The U.S. African Development Foundation has no geographical restrictions and does not target specific populations. However, to qualify for an USADF grant, applying businesses or organizations must be 100 percent African-owned. In Niger, grants are focused on livestock and irrigated agriculture, primarily horticulture.

2.1 N’Konni and Gaya

The MCC compact, in its Irrigation and Market Access Project, will rehabilitate two irrigation perimeters of approximately 2,500 hectares each, rehabilitate over 300 km of key market access roads, conduct capacity building of beneficiaries and stakeholders, and undertake a short-list of key reforms to attract private sector investment in agriculture and improve durability of public investments. One of the irrigation perimeters is in southern Dosso, near Gaya, and will include the formation and strengthening of water user associations, savings groups, and producer associations. The other irrigation perimeter is in N’Konni in southern Tahoua and will also be supported with similar capacity-building investments. In this location, the project has strong likelihood to build synergies with a USAID Global Development Alliance (GDA) project implemented by Lutheran World Relief (LWR). The roads to be rehabilitated connect some of Niger’s most agriculturally productive areas with local and regional markets, namely Niamey and regional centers in western Niger, as well as Nigeria and Benin.

The MCC compact also includes the Climate-Resilient Communities Project, which will operate along transhumant corridors and communes in those corridors in Tillaberi, Dosso, Tahoua, and Maradi. This project is implemented in partnership with the World Bank. MCC has contributed to two World Bank projects: Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS) and Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA). Some of the activities planned in this project will target pastoralists specifically, but this project will target communities, not individuals. Figures 1 also shows the location of the MCC investments.

2.1.1 Beneficiary Targeting

MCC focuses on increasing macroeconomic growth through provision and improvement of public goods and does not exclusively target the poorest or most vulnerable. However, MCC investments are designed to be inclusive of most vulnerable populations and to focus on equitable access to the improved resources to the maximum extent practicable.

2.2 Maradi, Zinder, and southern Tillaberi

USAID food security programming in Niger operates in the regions of Maradi, Zinder, and southern Tillaberi within the broader Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) I program, which is a suite of projects all contributing to resilience goals. The initial concept of RISE included Food for Peace and Bureau for Food Security (BFS)-funded projects, and in the past several years the umbrella of resilience has expanded to include multilateral actors such as the World Food Project (WFP) an education project, a Global Development Alliance, and a Development Credit Authority award. The target populations for current resilience programming were determined during the vulnerability assessments conducted in 2012. All three zones still remain vulnerable and will remain part of the GFSS zone, allowing for a layered and integrated approach.

The three Food for Peace investments under RISE end August 2018. Three other current Feed the Future projects under RISE will end in 2019 and 2020. Additional Feed the Future programming under RISE II in Maradi and Zinder, expected to begin in 2019, will complement and build on Food for Peace activities, continuing the central idea of sequencing, layering, and integrating activities from the village to the commune, regional, and national levels. Other funding streams for RISE I/II that are not considered part of GFSS but will work in tandem with GFSS through the RISE program include maternal and child health, family planning, private sector competitiveness, peace and security, and governance funding.

The specific communes for Food for Peace and Feed the Future in RISE II are under procurement and therefore not yet identified. Feed the Future investments in the enabling environment, including those in policy, will not have a geographical restriction, but implementing activities and monitoring and evaluation will be concentrated in the ZOI.

2.2.1 Beneficiary Targeting

Within targeted villages, FFP will further target based on wealth. Some families are more vulnerable than others, including some female-headed households, socially excluded men, and the most poor. Social ties within and between villages have been identified as crucial for lean season survival. Food for Peace therefore will adopt a community-strengthening approach, ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable within a village are included in all activities, with special attention paid to ensure that they have access to common assets, including water and grazing land. RISE programming focuses on women of reproductive age and children under two for nutrition programming. RISE II programming under design includes a stronger focus on youth, as close to 50 percent of the population is under 15 years of age and 60 percent is under 20. The Niger national youth policy and the African Youth Charter (AYC) define youth as those between 15-35 years of age. However, since RISE II aims to address unhealthy gender and social norms such as early marriage/early pregnancy, the 10- to 14-year-old adolescent age range, which has historically not been targeted by USAID programming, will be intentionally targeted, in addition to those included in the AYC definition of youth.

2.3 Tillaberi

The security situation in northern Tillaberi has changed drastically in the past two years. The increasing number of attacks and growing influence of VEOs in northern Tillaberi have changed the operating context. The GFSS zone includes Tillaberi and future food security programming in this region will be

part of a new CVE program under the Sahel Development Partnership (SDP). The CVE program will include collaboration with the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which has operated in Tillabéri since 2017 focusing on community cohesion to reduce the susceptibility of Nigeriens to recruitment into violent extremist (VE) groups. OTI works through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in northern Tillabéri near the border with Mali. Several activities within OTI's programs have the potential for future collaboration with Feed the Future investments in Tillabéri. Should operating conditions in Tillabéri improve, it is possible that RISE II programming could expand to include Tillabéri.

2.3.1 Beneficiary Targeting

Food security programming in this CVE program will have different goals than under a resilience program, namely providing economic opportunities, and therefore livelihood alternatives, for the population most susceptible to recruitment by violent extremist organizations (VEOs). Targeting will therefore be different, and will focus on population subgroups susceptible to recruitment by VEOs. A larger proportion of funds may be allocated to short-term employment opportunities such as cash for work, targeted to reach this population. The CVE program will include a robust component on engaging youth in choosing their own livelihoods and will be complemented by a set of non-Feed the Future funded democracy, human rights, and governance interventions.

2.4 Targeted Value Chains

Niger's target value chains were chosen based on factors of competitiveness, inclusive growth potential, implementation feasibility, resilience potential, and nutritional potential. Based on lessons learned, small ruminants and poultry will remain target value chains. Work will also continue in cowpea as a sub-value chain as part of a larger focus on rural foods. MCC also has a focus on livestock and on rural foods. Within their irrigated perimeters, MCC will encourage farmers to choose their own crops based on market conditions.

2.4.1 Small Ruminants

Sheep and goats hold a competitive advantage for Niger's economy and climate. Niger has the second largest population of small ruminants in West Africa after Mali. Niger was estimated in 2014 to have 14.9 million goats and 11.9 million sheep. The RISE zone in Niger has 69 percent of Niger's sheep and 62 percent of its goats. The livestock value chain is well organized in Niger, with the representative associations for all segments of the value chain participating in the national-level body known as the *interprofession*, which in turn participates in the regional livestock body COFENABVI. Small ruminants are well integrated in the regional economy with substantial flows of sheep and goats moving within the country and with neighboring countries. Roughly 95 percent of Niger's small ruminant exports go to Nigeria. Niger has long had an international reputation for the high-value hides of the red goat or chèvre rousse with "intrinsically superior quality," which has been the subject of zoo-technical research since 1938 (PRODEX 2008). Value-added processing of small ruminants mainly occurs in the meat sector and in hides and skins; however, most are exported on the hoof due to the lack of cold chain and transport infrastructure.

The indigenous varieties of sheep and goats are well-adapted to the harsh Sahelian climate, can consume multiple sources of food, and can also be relocated in times of stress. The value chain is critical for nutrition in Niger as well. Goats and sheep are often the main assets for the poorest farmers and herders

and constitute an important source of cash. They are infrequently eaten, and usually slaughtered only for ceremonies or holidays. Goat and sheep milk is mainly used for home consumption among producing households, especially among the pastoralists, and for children. Livestock sales are the most widespread response to shock. Research in Ethiopia and preliminary results of similar research in Zinder indicates that building assets in the form of livestock is a key element of a pathway out of poverty. In Niger, livestock ownership also confers social prestige, and this applies to men and women. Women have repeatedly expressed appreciation for small ruminant interventions, and not only for economic benefits. The social advantages of livestock ownership are not completely understood, but are clearly a powerful motivation for women's participation. Mortality among small ruminants is also less widespread than with poultry, and preventative veterinary care is seen more frequently than with poultry.

Men and women raise small ruminants both for income and to build assets in times of shock. From a resilience perspective, *habbanaye*, an intervention based on traditional cultural practices where families receive a kit of livestock and pass on offspring to other people in the village, can build social capital as well as assets, both of which promote resilience to shocks and stresses. Results from RISE reporting also show that participating in small ruminant activities are roughly equally profitable for both men and women. Livestock rearing is an adaptation to an increasingly variable climate. Almost all households own some livestock; although purely agricultural households were once typical in Niger, this is no longer the case. Much of the farmland has been lost or divided into such small portions that livestock are a necessary diversification. Unfortunately, managing grazing remains a challenge, and many areas in Niger are seriously overgrazed. Restoration of degraded lands has created remarkably productive grasslands for fodder production; this intervention is the second priority of the GoN and a crucial element of restoring environmental and economic sustainability.

2.4.2 Poultry

Poultry is an established value chain in Niger with a 2011 survey of households by the National Statistics Institute (INS) indicating that there were at least 17.1 million poultry in the country. The level of egg production in Niger is far below demand, and Nigeriens rely on imports for consumption. One study estimates demand for poultry in Niger is growing at 7-10 percent per year (DANIDA 2013). Poultry as a value chain suits women, particularly those who spend most of their time near their house or family compound. Poultry raising in Niger is generally extensive, with little care given to providing supplemental shelter, water, food, and veterinary care. Mortality is very high, as women usually call veterinarians only after signs of disease are present, and rarely vaccinate preventatively. Although poultry are challenging to raise, REGIS AG has successfully promoted preventative veterinary care, usually in cases where it is the primary economic activity and includes outreach to men (USAID REGIS-AG 2015b). Women also participate in end markets as egg sellers and food vendors. The Lulun study in Ecuador showed that with consumption of one egg per day for children between 3 and 23 months, stunting was reduced by 47 percent and wasting was reduced by 74 percent (Ianotti et al 2017). Because the market price of eggs is 100 CFA, and eggs are sold in more easily affordable quantities than meat or milk, follow-on projects may choose to more actively promote egg consumption to reduce malnutrition among children.

Profitability for poultry raising is roughly equal for men and women, reinforcing the justification for maintaining poultry as a value chain in RISE II. Current research under the Livestock Systems Innovation Lab is investigating methods of raising guinea fowl, as adults are more resistant to disease. Unfortunately,

they do not reproduce as prolifically as chickens, and the research is addressing this difficulty. REGIS AG is in communication with the researchers, and is in a position to incorporate lessons learned from the research into operations in RISE I. These lessons will then be implemented in RISE II as well. The market demand for poultry consumption, including both chicken and guinea fowl, is well established. The markets and livelihood activity in RISE II will shift focus from extensive poultry producers to those with the time and energy to embrace poultry as a more intensive effort. Successful poultry producers in RISE I have been those with the freedom to allocate significant time resources to poultry raising, whereas those producers focusing on incremental gains have not seen as high a return on their investment.

2.4.3 Cowpea

Cowpea, or *nibe*, is a significant part of the diet in rural and urban Niger. Niger is a major cowpea producer, second only to Nigeria, which grows about 75 percent of the West African total production. A low water-use crop, cowpeas are suited to the variable Sahelian climate even in drier years. Fodder and mixed grain/fodder varieties of cowpea are increasingly popular depending on the market value for green fodder. Cowpeas are therefore a complementary crop to livestock.

Constraints to the cowpea value chain include the seasonality of prices that spike during the hungry season, a lack of quality inputs, and poor storage and post-harvest loss. Results from implementation in RISE I also showed that cowpea was much less lucrative a crop for women than it was for men. In general, women have access to much smaller plots of land and much less freedom over time allocation to spend on their plots. They spend time on their husband's plots, and the area of land allocated for their use is typically about 5 percent of the husband's land. As the allocation of land per household has decreased in the past few decades, this is naturally reflected in the very small areas of land currently under women's control. Cowpea therefore has less earning potential for women than originally thought. Cowpea production will not be discouraged, and its fodder potential will certainly be assessed, but it will not remain as an exclusive focus in the third value chain. Rural populations, women specifically, still purchase a large proportion of their food, so an exclusive focus on production and transformation was not serving the needs of the USAID beneficiaries. Production advice on cowpea will be balanced with advice on off-season horticulture and a new focus on using markets to meet nutritional needs in our populations.

2.4.4 Market System for Rural Foods

GFSS will retain the focus on small ruminants and poultry, but will shift away from a strict focus on just cowpea toward the overall market system of rural foods. The idea is to approach food provision from the point of view of a household with limited purchasing power, and to ensure that social behavior change on dietary consumption reflects the reality of food available to vulnerable women, whether locally grown or available in small, local rural markets. The RISE II markets and livelihoods activity will improve the availability of affordable, safe, and nutritious food in RISE II communities in support of the RISE II objective of improved nutrition outcomes through increased food access. Strengthened rural market systems will also help ensure the resilience of those areas by decreasing the potential for shocks and stresses to disrupt market functions. Although USAID will continue to address opportunities to enhance local production of nutritious plant and animal source foods, reduction of post-harvest loss, and food transformation, USAID also recognizes that most farmers purchase much of the household food in local markets. USAID and MCC will also improve access to a diverse set of nutritious and safe foods year round that are affordable and convenient for local consumers and reduce seasonal variations in food and nutrient availability. The market systems approach, which MCC and the World Bank will also use,

includes working with supportive sectors like finance, animal feed, veterinary services, and business development services.

When working with women's groups over the past several years, all implementing partners working with cowpea transformation noticed that their women's groups were also working with other crops and transformation of other foods. Rather than restrict partners to providing technical assistance in transformation of only one product, implementers have begun to encourage these groups to develop products in response to their own assessment of market demands. The market approach encourages rural women to participate as agents of change, not simply consumers. The food market work may indeed engage in national and even international trade facilitation, but with the focus of improving local access to nutritious food. With climate change and population growth the need for imported food will only grow.

Poverty and the inability to afford nutritious foods is not simply the absolute value of household income. Many other factors come into play, such as reliability and stability of income, cash flow, assets, savings, financial and risk management services, and the cycle of debt. USAID and MCC will support households to increase their purchasing power by helping develop tools and strategies to address cash flow constraints, encourage savings, and improve risk and asset management. For the poorest households, formal and informal networks of social protection are necessary to sustain access to food and avoid negative coping strategies that reinforce cycles of poverty. USAID will reinforce formal and informal social protection systems and safety nets within the zones of intervention to address the needs of the most vulnerable households. USAID will seek synergies between the household and enabling environment interventions to ensure that activities related to agricultural production, food processing, market access, and women's empowerment contribute to, rather than create unintended negative consequences on, nutritional outcomes.

As stated previously, USAID and MCC will target small ruminant, poultry, and rural food market systems to make them more efficient, safe, competitive, and profitably accessible to the poor. USAID and MCC will work at the policy level, seeking market-supportive reforms and improved institutional performance to implement those policies, including through partnership with regional institutions like the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF). System development will be catalytic, looking for nodes of leverage that have ripple effects, including working with key actors, such as financial institutions, that can facilitate profitable and reliable business transactions. By improving the structure and organization of the markets to increase redundancy, flexibility, and networks of business relationships, system resilience to external shocks will be enhanced. To support these transactions, USAID and MCC will also enhance access to and consumption of market and climate information by market actors, especially the rural poor, illiterate community members, and women. MCC and the World Bank intend to invest in market-related infrastructure, and USAID may do so to a limited extent, but USAID will primarily seek to partner with host governments and other donors to encourage infrastructure enhancement in the RISE II zone (Maradi and Zinder). Finally, USAID and MCC will support formation of producer and other economic groups (especially for women), help them formalize into legally recognized business entities, strengthen their management and business capacity, help them access financing, and facilitate their initial entry into market relationships. USAID and MCC will provide similar business development services, and catalytic investment funding, for entrepreneurs and established businesses that are committed to mutually beneficial commercial relationships with beneficiaries.

3.0 Results Framework

3.1 Problem Statement

The Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) program was conceived in 2012 as a response to a historical pattern of severe droughts, including the 2011-12 droughts in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. In 2011-2012 more than 18 million people across the Sahel were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 8.4 million in Niger and Burkina Faso alone. USAID and the wider development community recognized that the pattern of repeated crises over decades occurred because local populations lack the means to manage the risks they face and recover when a shock occurs. Their vulnerability is multidimensional, encompassing poor health and nutrition status, extreme poverty, illiteracy and innumeracy, extended annual lean seasons, indebtedness, gender inequality, degraded natural resources and low agricultural productivity, and governance failures. Recurring stresses and shocks include shared shocks (such as droughts, floods, animal and crop pests and diseases, price and market shocks), household-specific shocks (sickness, death, divorce), and ongoing stressors (such as limited and erratic rainfall, low soil fertility, rapid population growth) that continuously undermine development gains despite ongoing development assistance. Systemic constraints to macroeconomic growth due to poor policies, lack of access to basic services and public goods such as infrastructure and water, and in recent years the increase in violent conflict, have also had devastating consequences for households and communities.

Shocks and stressors in the Sahel will become even more severe in the future. They are already widespread; according to the RISE midline survey, 96 percent of households in the RISE zone experienced a shock in the past 12 months. Climate projections indicate that rainfall will become more intense, unpredictable, and less frequent, that changes to global weather patterns will have large impacts on the frequency and intensity of major droughts, and that average temperatures in the Sahel will increase. Added to this are rapid population growth, a youth bulge consisting primarily of the uneducated and unemployed, and increased conflict and instability.

3.2 GFSS Goal for Niger

In August 2017, USAID chose Niger as a new GFSS target country under the Global Food Security Act. The GFSS goal for Niger is to “Sustainably reduce global hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in Niger.” It is anticipated that the RISE II program will make a substantial contribution to this goal. The goal of RISE II is that “Chronically vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso and Niger, supported by resilient systems, effectively manage shocks and stresses and pursue sustainable pathways out of poverty.” In addition to RISE II, the primary programs that are or will soon be contributing to the GFSS goal are RISE I, MCC, and SDP/CVE.

3.3 Theory of Change

Based on the analysis of the Niger context, agriculture-led growth is a long-term vision and the Niger context necessitates a heavy focus on resilience in the short and medium term. Based on this understanding of the country context, lessons learned from previous programs, and in order to align with GoN priorities, the five components of the RISE II results framework are the organizing framework for the GFSS country plan. This is visualized in Figure 2. Figure 3 provides a mapping of intermediate results

from RISE II, SDP/CVE, and MCC programs to the corresponding GFSS components. The results framework for RISE II is included as Figure 4 to provide the details of each component. This section discusses the logical linkages among GFSS components and within each component.

3.3.1 Theory of Change at Goal level

The five GFSS components are designed based on the principle that vulnerable populations and individuals need to be the lead actors in their own development. Further, the framework recognizes that supportive social, ecological, economic, and government systems are essential building blocks, and shocks and stressors are central contextual factors that must be explicitly addressed. Resilience is a multi-sector concept, and thus the five components strategically combine and leverage interventions from many different disciplines. The five components are mutually reinforcing, for example, risk management activities under component 1 will safeguard economic outcomes achieved in component 2. Agricultural and economic activities in component 2 will support improved nutrition outcomes through increased food access under component 3. Components 4 (governance) and 5 (women and youth) are both stand-alone and cross-cutting. This is meant to reinforce the view that women and youth and governance are central to achieving the objectives of each component, while highlighting the need for intentional focus above and beyond the cross-cutting theme. Social behavior change is a fundamental theme across components, in areas such as women's empowerment, population growth, and sanitation.

3.3.2 Theories of Change at Component level

This section provides a brief description of the theory of change for each program component.

Component 1: Enhance social and ecological risk management systems

(GFSS Objective 2, Strengthened resilience among people and systems, and CC IR 2, Improved climate risk, land, marine, and other natural resource management)

The development hypothesis is that IF ecological systems are restored and sustainably managed and IF social support systems are enhanced and IF chronically vulnerable people participate in and benefit from enhanced risk management approaches, THEN chronically vulnerable people will be better able to manage risks and prepare for, respond to, and recover from shocks and stresses.

Water security³ and land management are the two highest priorities of the GoN, reflecting the fundamental and urgent need to restore degraded land and water sources for a land-dependent population with rapidly dwindling access to those resources. As such, both MCC and RISE II will prioritize improved water security and enhanced sustainable productive land use through commune-led approaches, recognizing that governance is essential to all aspects of risk management. To enhance social support systems, RISE II will strengthen household capacities and social capital, drawing on interventions under components 2 and 3. To strengthen risk management systems, RISE II will coordinate access to multi-hazard early warning and climate information services and enhance the functioning of national early warning systems, strengthening responsive linkages between national, subnational, and local levels.

Component 2: Increase and sustain economic well-being

(GFSS Objective 1, Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth)

³ Water security includes access to drinking water for human and animal use, as well as for productive use.

The development hypothesis is that IF human capacity, access to resources and supportive business relationships is increased, and IF markets are efficient, inclusive and resilient, and IF access to finance and business capacity is increased, and IF the poor, women, and youth are connected and supported to respond to market opportunities, THEN livelihoods of the poor will become more diversified and profitable and sustained economic well-being will increase.

In summary, the approach is to 1) enhance the capacities of the poor, especially women and youth, 2) expand the opportunities available to them to engage in markets, and 3) facilitate their entry into those markets. Building assets in the form of livestock is considered a key pathway out of poverty for Niger. As such, RISE II and MCC will strengthen value chains for small ruminants and poultry as well as supportive sectors such as finance, animal feed and veterinary services. Cash for work interventions will contribute to the reclamation of degraded land, which can eventually be used for fodder production resulting in increased income for farmers. Improved human capacity is recognized as a critical element of the theory of change, reflecting the reality that the vast illiteracy of the population is the single greatest constraint to human capacity. It is assumed that the government and other donors will invest in infrastructure enhancement in the RISE II zone.

The contribution of MCC toward this component is to increase rural incomes by improving the sustainable productive use of natural resources for agricultural and livestock production and improving trade and market access for agricultural products. The MCC Compact was designed under the theory of change that, investing in irrigation infrastructure (large- and small-scale) will result in increased water availability for project beneficiaries. Also, through technical training in water management, savings, improved production techniques, business development and marketing, and other complementary skills, women and men with new access to reliable water for crops and livestock will be able to utilize the water more productively. In addition, by investing in roads that are linked to productive areas, project beneficiaries will be able to more effectively access inputs, services, and markets and sell their increased production. These investments in infrastructure, human capacity, and market and performance-oriented management systems will enable Niger's farmers and livestock owners to move toward and participate in a more commercialized agriculture system as the foundation for sustained growth in rural incomes.

Under this component, SDP/CVE will deliver immediate and short-term economic stabilization, contributing to increased job creation and investment and increased medium-term economic resilience in affected communities.

Component 3: Improve health, family planning, and nutrition outcomes

(GFSS Objective 3, A well-nourished population, especially among women and children)

The development hypothesis is that IF key elements of the health systems are strengthened, and IF the supply of quality services is increased, and IF healthy behaviors are adopted, and IF access to safe, nutritious, affordable foods is increased, THEN health, nutrition, and family planning outcomes will improve.

Improved health, family planning, and nutrition outcomes are essential to reducing stressors, managing shocks, and enabling chronically vulnerable populations to pursue sustainable pathways out of poverty. Family planning is prominent in RISE II within the health and nutrition development objective. Funds for family planning will not come from Feed the Future, but the need for these services and their importance for improving lives in Niger are thoroughly understood. Nutrition-specific interventions and services

implemented through the health system will be well-aligned and coordinated with Feed the Future nutrition-sensitive interventions to ensure impact.

Given that most households depend on markets to supply a significant portion of their diet, investments under component 2 will intentionally program for nutrition objectives to ensure that improved market systems and increased income contributes to increased year-round access to and utilization of affordable, nutritious, and safe foods.

Increased agricultural productivity and trade and increased incomes under the MCC program will contribute to the availability of food for consumption and the purchasing power of beneficiaries, though it should be noted that there is not a focus on behavior change. MCC will provide education on nutrition and hygiene, however. The SDP/CVE project's contribution is expected to be improved government response and increased job creation and investment, ultimately leading to better health and nutrition outcomes.

Component 4: Enhance governance of institutions and organizations

(CC IR 5, More effective governance, policy, and institutions)

The development hypothesis is that IF subnational public institutions have improved capability and appropriate incentives, and IF civil society is strengthened in order to hold the state accountable, and IF national resilience institutions are better able to carry out key resilience functions and national policies are supportive, THEN, governance of institutions will be enhanced.

Strengthening governance is essential to the sustainability of development outcomes and enhanced community leadership of local development. Experiences in Niger with RISE I have demonstrated powerful positive results with improved public administration at the commune level through market reforms and natural resource management agreements. This component, in conjunction with component 1, will build on these successes and further develop the potential of commune-level governance. In addition, policy interventions will attempt to address some of the systemic constraints described earlier in this document. RISE II and MCC intend to promote approaches such as Participation, Inclusion, Transparency, and Accountability (PITA) and problem-driven iterative adaptation.

Component 5: Enhance social, economic, and political agency of women and youth

(CC IR 3, Increased gender equality and female empowerment, and CC IR 4, Increased youth empowerment and livelihoods)

The development hypothesis is that IF women and youth have access to high quality educational, health, and livelihood development opportunities and services that meet their needs, and IF they are empowered to engage meaningfully in civil society and with government institutions to have their needs addressed, THEN the social, economic, and political agency of women and youth will be enhanced and their vulnerability to shocks and stresses will be reduced.

Component 5 recognizes that the pervasive gender realities in Niger are a constraint to healthy and economically thriving communities. Experiences have shown that economic empowerment has been insufficient to improve women's participation in household decision-making. The emphasis on gender and youth agency is based on the idea that social norms should be addressed directly, rather than assuming that economic growth will address pervasive societal inequalities. All USG programming will

directly address social norms and gender dynamics to improve the ability of women and youth to make their own life decisions.

Figure 2. GFSS Niger Results Framework

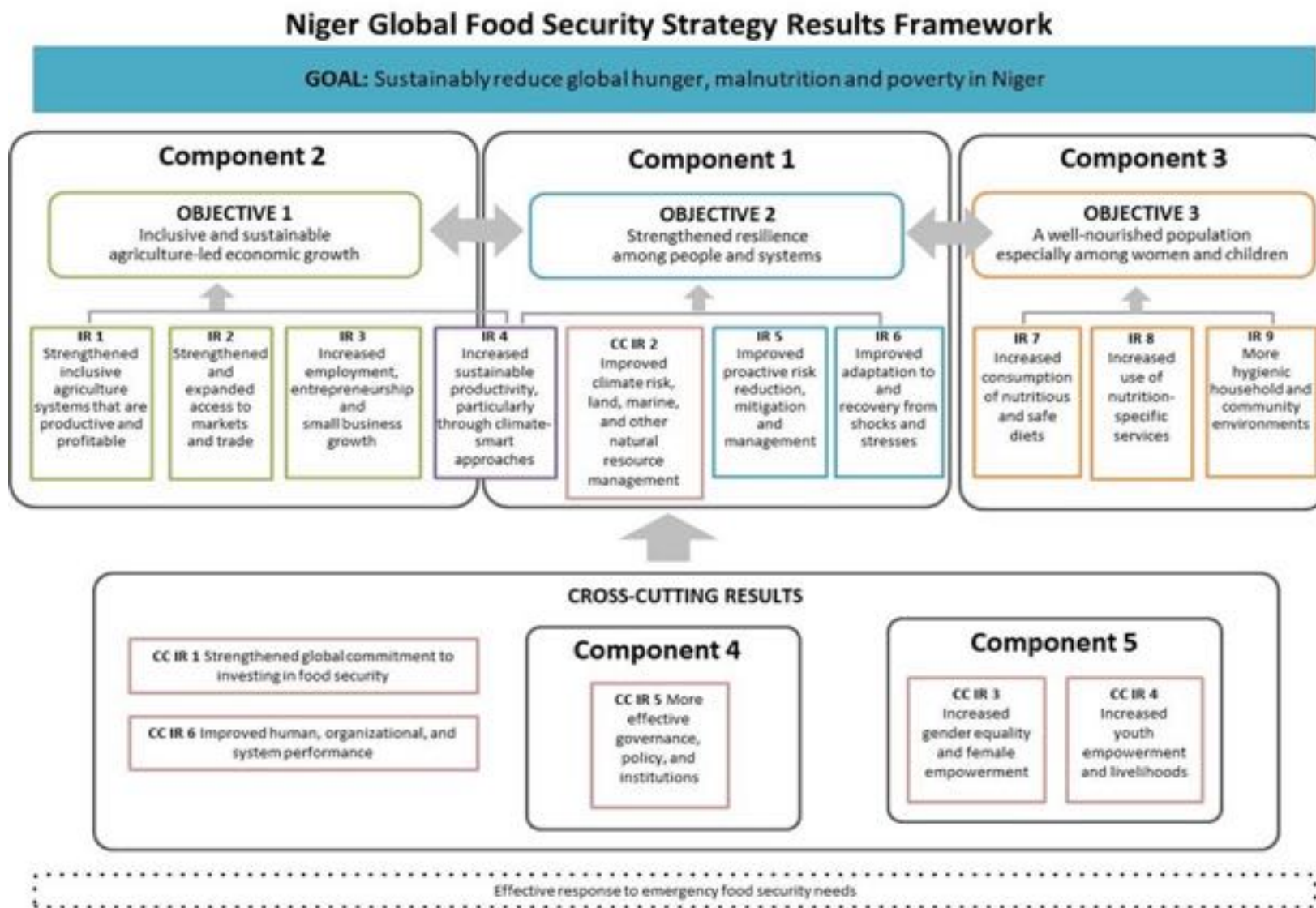


Figure 3. GFSS Components Mapping

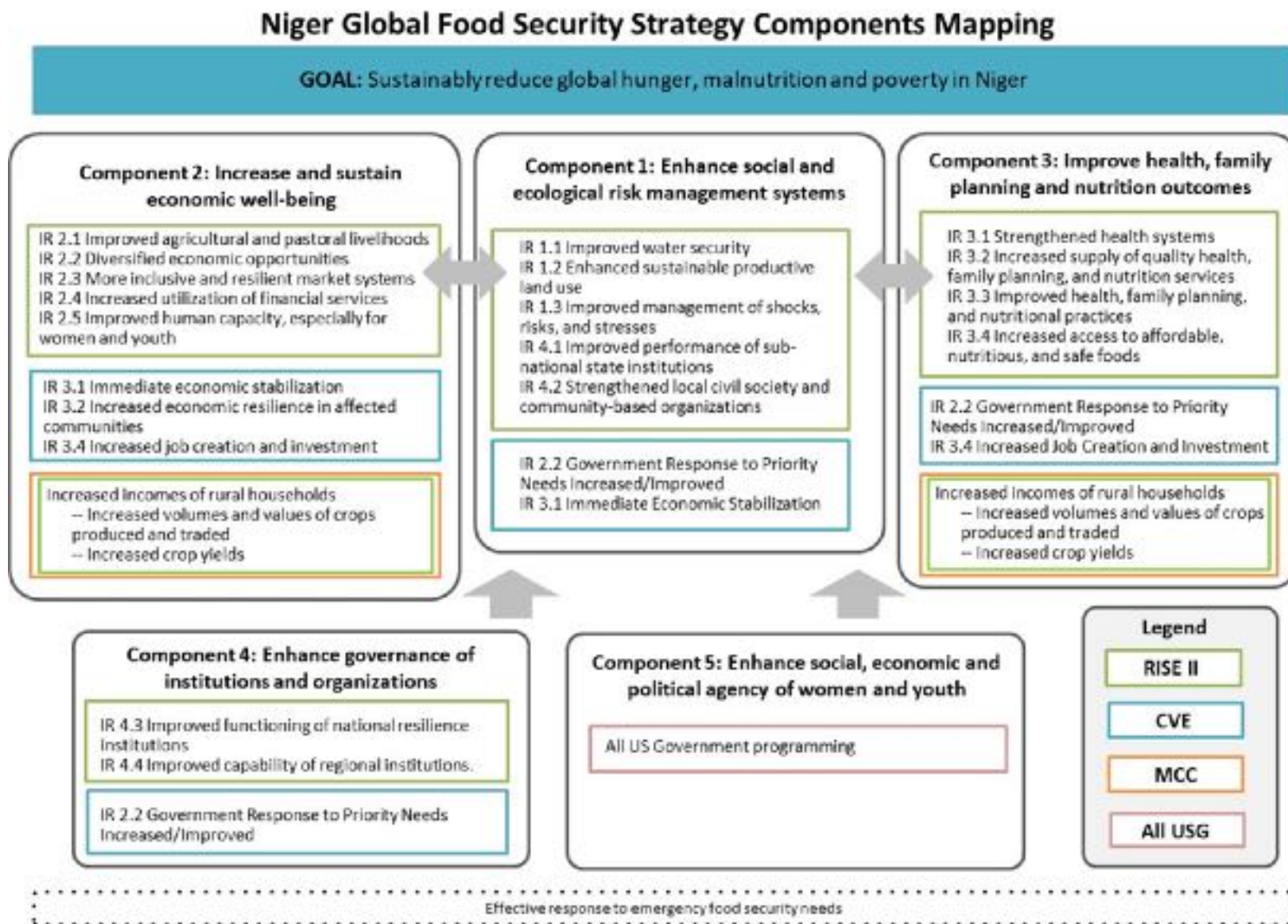
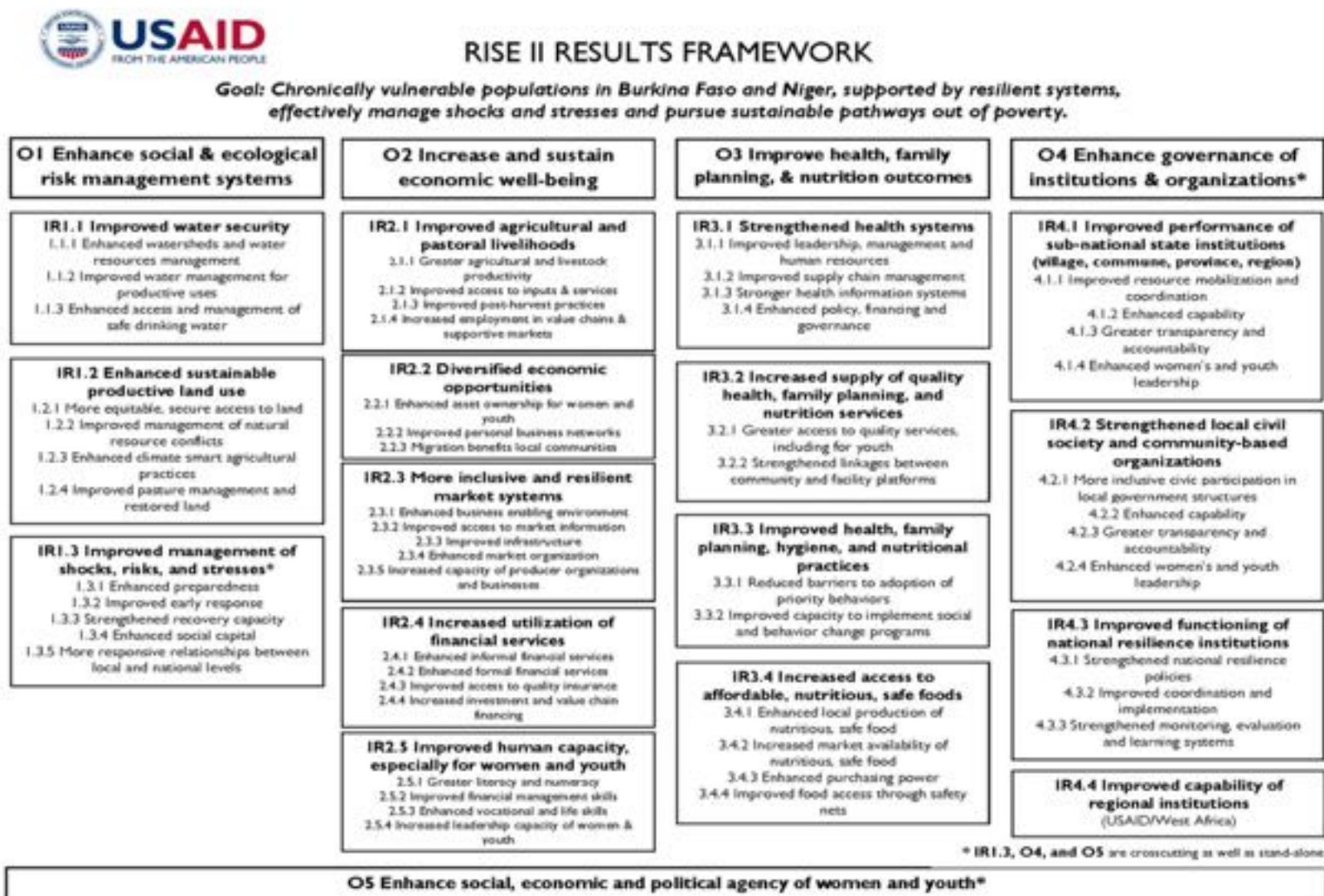


Figure 4. RISE II Results Framework



3.4 GFSS Country Plan Contribution to Niger's Agricultural Transformation and Strategic Transition

The GFSS goal is transformational, seeking to enhance individual, household, community, and institutional capacities to sustain and improve well-being in a dynamic environment of challenges and opportunities. Learning from research and experience on resilience capacities, Feed the Future programming will emphasize building transformative capacities such as:

- **Enhanced community leadership of local development**
- **Enhanced social capital through strengthened ties of mutual assistance among people**
- **Enhanced capacity to learn and adapt among beneficiaries, local partners, and partner governments**

Although the prevalence of extreme poverty and almost unbelievably difficult conditions are serious, transition away from reliance on aid is possible and is happening in some domains. Improvements in public administration at the commune level have already been seen, as locally elected and/or appointed officials tend to feel more accountable to the citizens of their communes. Local conventions, which are amendments to commune development plans focused on managing natural resources, have significantly reduced herder/farmer conflict in communes where they have been adopted. Some commune authorities are using increased revenue from market reforms to invest in public infrastructure. Accordingly, these improvements in public administration at the local level are a source of promise and hope for Niger's journey to self-reliance.

The USG will continue to focus on the areas where local sustainability and local agents of change are improving the lives of Nigeriens. USAID, MCC, and USADF investments are focused on the agro pastoralist and pastoralist populations. As the Government of Niger seeks to improve access to water for productive use and sustainable land management, USG investments will improve local government's ability to manage those improved resources. MCC and USAID investments will improve market management to increase revenue generation by local governments, and provide counsel on funding service improvements in response to citizen needs. NASA has an ongoing relationship with a regional institution to provide climate information services, and all USG investments include a significant capacity building component to ensure that sustainability is included throughout implementation. Feed the Future Innovation Labs work with national agricultural research institutions to build local capacity in agricultural research and development, to enable national systems to respond to emerging national and international agricultural market demands, changing climate, and threats from diseases and pests. The USDA's 2018 food safety assessment will enhance USG contributions to improving nutritional status in Niger.

MCC, the Government of Niger, and USAID resilience programming under RISE and RISE II realize the centrality of water security, livestock, and agricultural production systems to the village ecological and social systems. The USG recognizes the need to grow local and international markets, and ensure that beneficiaries have the access and capacity to fully engage in them. By enhancing both the functioning of markets at the community, regional, and international level, and participation in those markets by the targeted populations, GFSS programming will lead to sustainable and lasting economic growth, and a pathway out of poverty for millions of rural Nigeriens.

4.0 Components

The RISE II results framework is the product of a robust and extensive consultative process with internal and external stakeholders and represents a consensus on how best to program to achieve food security, nutrition, and related goals in Niger. Some elements of the program components are being undertaken using resources outside of those included in the GFSS.

4.1 Enhanced Social and Ecological Risk Management Systems

USAID (RISE and CVE) and MCC will contribute to this component. RISE II in particular will implement a shock-responsive approach that includes the use of early warning systems and contingency plans.

Primary elements of this component include the following:

- **Commune-led natural resource management.** The commune governments will identify and manage commune natural resources, with assistance in mapping to guide donor funds. Local conventions, agreements on natural resource management adopted as amendments to commune development plans, have already shown success in reducing herder/farmer conflict and in governing use and conservation of shared water points, grazing areas, transhumant corridors, and other natural resources. USAID and MCC with the World Bank in their CRA program will use this approach in their areas, and this activity may also contribute to CVE goals. Mapping, budgeting, and management activities will engage and reflect the priorities of women, youth, and other vulnerable persons.
- **Improved water management.** Commune-led water management for drinking water, livestock watering, and productive use will all be addressed. USAID, USADF, and MCC will all have interventions on water, and will address sustainable water management. The World Bank's PRAPS program will address this as well, allowing for leveraging of other donor assistance. MCC will identify subsurface water availability and this will complement NASA's work on surface and subsurface water resource in Niger through their SERVIR project. Implementing partners will not draw on water resources unsustainably. This component includes capacity building on water management at the local, regional, and national levels. These activities, if conducted in Tillabéri, will also contribute to CVE goals.
- **Reclamation of degraded lands.** Nearly all USAID partners use cash for work interventions in restoration of degraded lands. These restored grasslands then become a source for fodder as a cash crop. Since Niger has a pastoral lean season due to lack of fodder every year, grassland restoration provides ecosystem services as well as cash. Implementing partners will ensure that these restored communal assets remain accessible to the most vulnerable within communities. As cash for work provides short term employment, this activity may also contribute to CVE goals. MCC and the World Bank will promote this action as well.
- **Conservation farming.** Although working with farmers to improve agricultural practices will mostly fall under Objective 2, this work includes a strong emphasis on climate smart agriculture. USAID and MCC will maintain a strong focus on the sustainability and climate adaptation of agricultural practices in their program. The Livestock Systems Innovation Lab research will

contribute to a better understanding of land management possibilities for integrated crop and livestock systems.

- **Improved management of shocks, risks, and stresses.** Interventions under this activity will include supporting response of the commune government to village shocks, aiding communes in budgeting for shock response, and supporting the local government's relationships with the citizenry, contributing to both development and CVE goals.

4.2 Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being

USAID, MCC, USADF, and the small grants operations of the Department of State will contribute to this component. The SDP/CVE program focuses on the short-term employment aspects to reduce the incentive for recruitment into VEOs and medium-term economic resilience in vulnerable communities.

Primary elements of this component include the following:

- **Improved farming techniques** at the village level. Production and productivity need improving. USAID Agricultural and Food for Peace resources and MCC will work with farmers directly to promote conservation farming and intensification of small ruminant and poultry production. Building assets directly contributes to pathways out of poverty. The Sorghum-Millet Innovation Lab and the Livestock Systems Innovation Lab will contribute to advances in farming techniques through their research on improving production using improved seeds, proper use of fertilizer, low and reduced tillage farming, integrated pest management, mixed livestock and crop systems management, animal health, and food safety. USADF will support improvements in horticulture and livestock with their grants. Techniques to be promoted include the use of improved seeds, increased and appropriate use of fertilizer, intercropping with leguminous crops including cowpea, reduced and no tillage approaches, the use of composting, crop rotation, and small-scale irrigation where possible. If a USAID project includes technical assistance on the use and application of chemical inputs, including fertilizers and pesticides, training on accurately identifying, mixing, measuring, and applying chemical inputs will be included. In addition, to ensure proper incorporation of additional new and innovative approaches into the design, implementation, and learning of food security and nutrition programming, programs will leverage new and improved technologies from other Innovation Labs, centrally funded research programs, international, regional and national research organizations, agricultural universities, and other technology-scaling actors, which include private-sector firms and extension agencies.
- **Reduction of post-harvest loss.** Projects will promote warrantage and improved storage, including PICS bags. Agro-processing will also form a central approach to enhancing profitability of agriculture, including improving producers and processors' abilities to develop new products to satisfy or create market demands. Producer and processing groups currently supported include a majority of women's groups; youth groups will also be targeted.
- **Supporting the fertilizer and seed sector reforms** promoted by MCC and the World Bank. All USG projects will support the reforms and strengthen the enabling environment for private sector operators in the fertilizer and seed sectors. Rather than seed distribution, subsidies will focus on encouraging purchase of locally-produced quality seeds. As the GoN implements its fertilizer reform plan, more fertilizers should appear on the market.
- **Improved market information systems and business networks.** Projects will continue to connect producers and traders as well as producers and consumers. Projects have already

connected Nigerien producer groups with large buyers in Dakar and Abidjan; connections to the export markets will continue and expand. USAID has already done this; MCC will also contribute. Public private partnerships between USAID and mobile money firms such as Airtel and Orange could serve as a way to strengthen resilience and women's economic empowerment. Research elsewhere has shown the potential for mobile money to help build resilience against shocks, especially for women, by providing a quick way to access remittances and stored savings. It can also pave the way for other digitally-enabled financial services such as credit and insurance. Producer groups and business networks are currently targeted toward women and will expand to include youth and other vulnerable groups.

- **Improved infrastructure.** MCC will contribute significantly to transport, irrigation, and market infrastructure in Niger. Physical market improvements have already been implemented by market management committees at the commune level due to USAID intervention, and drinking water provision will also improve through installation of piped water systems feeding several villages at once, in accordance with GoN policy. Access to physical markets will be enhanced to ensure inclusion of women and youth.
- **Building capacity, including literacy and numeracy.** Literacy will enable individuals to engage the market system more effectively, and contribute to enhanced social position in the village, building confidence and contributing to developing agency. Life skills can better prepare youth for future employment. Capacity of producer organizations will also be targeted, and their ability to plan production, target buyers, and calculate profit and loss will improve. All development programming by USG and other donors contains elements of capacity building, and numerous implementing partners in the USAID and MCC zone of influence will be conducting literacy interventions. National level capacity enhancements are also planned, to enable the national government to plan development at a larger scale, and manage regional interactions more effectively.
- **Improved financial management and access to finance.** Projects will establish or support village savings and loans to build individual savings and capital. If possible, projects will foster these groups' entry into the market of formal finance, working with microfinance institutions. The central and regional Development Credit Authority facilities will contribute to this component. Financial literacy will be included in individual and group capacity building. Livestock insurance may be added to the activities. All USG programming will address access to finance and leverage other donor and GoN investments.
- **Strengthened private sector.** West Africa Regional Mission will focus on attracting and encouraging foreign direct investment. All USG investment will strive to support the development and growth of local businesses, connecting with larger and more developed entities when practical. Diplomatic engagement, by USAID, MCC, and the Department of State, will encourage practices that foster private sector development growth, particularly in the seed and fertilizer sectors. The Economic Section at U.S. Embassy Niamey has already worked with the GoN energy regulation body and Power Africa to support the growth of the private solar energy sector. The Economic Section has also engaged with the Ministry of Trade to promote the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to local businesses to foster increased trade with the United States, specifically on textiles and garments.
- **Livestock and poultry sector development.** MCC will partner with the World Bank to increase public investment in the livestock sector. USAID and MCC value chain activities in livestock and

poultry include expanding availability and increasing access and utilization of veterinary services. Literacy modules include instruction on animal care and feeding, as well as units on profit and loss around livestock and poultry raising. Value chain activities have thus far included local production of animal feed, local production of mineral blocks, improved housing for poultry, and training of veterinary auxiliaries connected into the national veterinary system. Projects will continue to promote vaccinations for all livestock, in compliance with national veterinary campaigns for Newcastle's disease and other animal diseases when appropriate. Local producers will be linked to larger buyers for the urban and peri-urban markets through livestock and poultry fairs and workshops for buyers and sellers, as a way for local producers to satisfy the increasing demand for meat in Niamey and in larger regional towns. USAID will continue to promote improved slaughtering practices and improved storage of cooked food as well as raw meat. Food safety improvements will focus, although not exclusively, on animal source foods. Projects will investigate the economy of consumption, encouraging the best use of animal source foods for nutrition based on the purchasing power of the population. Although women are prominent in home-raising of small ruminants and poultry, they typically are not permitted to sell their livestock in physical markets. Existing RISE programming has worked to change this, and future GFSS programming will continue these efforts and expand them to include youth.

- **Use of digital technologies.** Digital technologies in particular are becoming more readily available in Niger, with growth in unique mobile subscribership among the highest in West Africa. Digital tools and technologies will be utilized, where feasible and cost effective, to extend reach and impact, reduce transaction costs, and enhance the sharing of information, payments, products, and services between value chain actors.
- **Increased employment.** In Tillabéri, where the goals are designed to provide an alternative to VEO recruitment, short-term employment in the agriculture or livestock sector will contribute to economic well-being. Cash for work will be used by Food for Peace as a way to mitigate the shock of the annual lean season and reduce malnutrition. GFSS will investigate and capitalize on significant employment opportunities for youth in the regional labor market. Diversified livelihoods, including off-farm and non-farm employment, will be integrated into both the RISE II markets and livelihoods component and MCC activities.
- **Improved market management.** Reforms in market management have already drastically increased commune revenues, which the communes have then invested in infrastructure improvements. Both MCC and World Bank are interested in USAID's experiences with this and may adopt the REGIS AG mechanism's approach on local market management reform. This activity will be taken to scale and interventions in commune budget management will fall under Component 1.
- **Engagement in larger local, regional, and international markets.** As previously noted, USAID in Niger will work with the West Africa Mission to attract foreign investment in agricultural and livestock production, processing, and export. USAID, MCC, and the World Bank will support expansion and professionalization of the livestock market, and support policy changes to improve export potential of both live animals and processed meat. Producer groups will be encouraged and coached to engage in international livestock sales events.
- **Building social capital.** Research has indicated the social capital is the single greatest resource used by rural Nigeriens to survive a shock. Most interventions commonly practiced that work with groups, whether savings and loan groups, husband schools, mothers' groups, or producer

organizations, build social capital between the members. USAID will seek to better understand which interventions are most successful at building social capital and to expand those activities, particularly to focus on benefiting women, youth, and other vulnerable populations.

4.3 Improve Health, Family Planning, and Nutrition Outcomes

USAID, MCC, and USADF will all contribute to this component; for MCC and USADF, this will be directed toward the consumption of healthy foods and does not include activities with health centers or health systems. Agriculture and Nutrition funds will be used for elements of the framework directly related to nutrition. In particular, USAID will pilot an integrated, market-based and gender-sensitive approach to ensuring local access to nutritious, safe, and affordable foods. Other funds, including family planning and maternal and child health, will address the other intermediate results.

Primary elements of this component include the following:

- **Improved water, sanitation, and hygiene outcomes.** In Niger, poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions are a significant driver of malnutrition. Food for Peace interventions will include a significant WASH component at the village level to improve access to drinking water, increase the use of handwashing, reduce open defecation, and expand the use of latrines. These activities will include some WASH infrastructure as well as social behavior change. MCC will provide education on hygiene. Growing access to information and communication technologies (ICT) in Niger, including through mobile phones but also the ease of radio, can be utilized to reinforce messaging and behavior change related to nutrition and WASH.
- **Increased dietary diversity, including increased consumption of animal source foods.** USAID Agricultural and Food for Peace resources and MCC will use improved farming techniques to produce a greater variety of nutritious foods, and will use social behavior change and nutrition counseling to encourage consumption of those foods. The current tendency is to sell the more valuable fruits and vegetables to buy millet, as the primary goal is reducing hunger. Women prepare the food, but as women may not always travel to markets, social behavior change will also include men to encourage them to bring back nutritious foods from the market. Projects will also address the challenge of small quantities, as the limited purchasing power and large size of rural households makes buying sufficient quantities of diverse foods challenging. Results from other studies indicate the drastic improvements in school performance and nutritional status due to consumption of animal source foods, including meat, milk, and eggs, and projects may specifically promote consumption of these foods to target village malnutrition. Innovation Lab research will contribute to the contents of nutritional messaging. During the lean season, Food for Peace will provide food and nutrition assistance to the most vulnerable households.
- **Improved food safety and food hygiene.** Food safety is a nutrition-sensitive approach and critically important in preserving the nutritional gains of a diverse diet that includes animal-source food consumption. Under GFSS, it is important to mitigate potential negative externalities or unintended harm that can result when programs are designed and implemented without broader knowledge of the food safety risks. Ongoing collaboration with the national agricultural research laboratories will enable USAID and MCC to develop a more complete understanding of food safety conditions in Niger. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will engage on assessing food safety in Niger to guide implementing partners to improve food safety for local consumption.

Food hygiene improvements will be achieved through WASH interventions that include environmental hygiene and social behavior change communication.

- **Improved agricultural transformation and food storage.** Crop loss due to poor storage conditions has nutritional effects in addition to the loss of income. Projects will facilitate improved crop storage and provide information on identifying and reducing unsafe crop contaminants. Interventions in agricultural transformation and processing will be conducted with a view toward preserving the greatest nutritional value of the original food as possible. Processing will also include training on proper packaging, storage, and labeling to contribute to the preservation and consumption of higher quality foods.
- **Improved livestock management in the household compound.** Ingestion of animal feces due to the presence of animals in the household compound contributes to environmental enteropathy. Ruminants are frequently tethered, but poultry tend to be free-range. Interventions will include management of ruminant feces for use as compost, with a side effect of reducing the amount available for consumption near the household. For poultry, interventions include improved housing, with the primary intent to reduce the spread of poultry disease to reduce poultry mortality, but this management step may also reduce consumption of chicken feces.

Other interventions included in RISE I/II but not funded with GFSS resources include the following:

- **Strengthened health systems**
- **Improved access to health services**
- **Increased use of family planning**
- **Improved supply chain management**
- **Stronger health information systems**

Sustainable improvements in local service delivery requires engaging and supporting national health systems, which are currently unable to deliver quality health services in most areas of the GFSS zone. As a result, the populations in these regions continue to suffer from high rates of infectious diseases and preventable child and maternal deaths. High rates of population growth place additional strain on households in an increasingly fragile environment. While the use of modern contraceptives is low, there is a high unmet need for family planning, which presents an opportunity to address the high levels of fertility. In addition to improving household economic opportunities, programming will address the social norms favoring large family size and early marriage. USAID will enhance the linkages between community-based interventions and health systems strengthening to ensure close coordination and avoid both missed opportunities and duplication of efforts. Programming will support and align with the national health systems and avoid creating parallel structures that do not support long-term sustainability.

Although Niger is not currently part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) like some of the surrounding countries, there are existing programs that address health security issues, both within RISE and GFSS and through complementary funding streams in Niger, such as the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). These building blocks provide the ability to work on certain health security issues even without dedicated health security funding. As discussed earlier in this document, GFSS programming through RISE, BFS central mechanisms, and USDA, from the research angle, will include work on food safety. GFSS will include WASH programming, which is a key part of infection prevention and control. At the village level, FFP will work on drinking water access, increasing hand-washing, reducing open

defecation, and expanding use of latrines while MCC will provide education on hygiene in their areas. MCC and RISE's work on animal health will promote vaccination against animal diseases when appropriate. Finally, the new PMI program in Niger will work on enhanced surveillance capacity and improved laboratory systems. In addition, when the new PMI is online GFSS will look at ways to leverage and coordinate on malaria programming overall where possible.

4.4 Enhance Governance of Institutions and Organizations

USAID and MCC will contribute to this component, with support from Embassy Niamey. Although engagement with commune-level authorities will be integrated into activities in Components 1, 2, and 3, USG investments will strengthen the capacity of commune authorities to finance and manage their own development. This section also addresses the national and regional level engagement and outlines both program and policy components under the RISE governance objective and the GFSS mandate to advance country leadership through policy. MCC has significant ongoing collaboration and cooperation with the Government of Niger, and engages with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Hydrology, the Ministry of Equipment, and the Ministry of the Environment. USAID engages primarily with HC3N and the national level coordination of humanitarian assistance. U.S Embassy's Economic Section also engages with the Ministries of Planning, Trade, and Finance, with the National Assembly, and with the Chamber of Commerce, to encourage the GoN to adopt reforms promoted by MCC and USAID. There is also significant Department of Defense and the Ministry of National Defense engagement.

Primary elements of this component include the following:

- **Strengthened commune management systems.** Components 1, 2, and 3 seek to strengthen commune management of natural resources, markets and livelihoods, and health services. Efforts under this component will strengthen individual and organizational capacity of commune authorities and management teams. USAID and MCC will work with communes to enable them to improve human resources management, resource mobilization, service delivery planning, financial management, and direction and management of donor assistance.
- **Strengthened national resilience, agriculture and nutrition policies and policy-making systems.** Fertilizer sector and seed sector reforms are the top priority because they will significantly improve availability of key inputs for most Nigerien farmers. The reforms are intended to improve the regulatory capabilities of the GoN and enable the private sector to satisfy market demands. MCC is addressing land and natural resources tenure, rights, and policy, using local implementation as a national model; to secure land rights for MCC irrigation beneficiaries. USAID will chair the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) platform in Niger, to aid in national coordination on nutrition. USAID and MCC will address agricultural trade policy to reduce informal barriers to trade in livestock and food crops that significantly constrain the incomes of poor rural people to gain from trade. USAID and MCC will strengthen policy institutional architecture and mutual accountability with a focus on building data analysis and technical capabilities in monitoring groundwater, agricultural statistics, and stakeholder consultation at the community and commune level.
- **Improved coordination and implementation.** The Prime Minister's office has worked closely with OCHA to coordinate humanitarian assistance in the Diffa region. Very recently, HC3N has decided to take the lead in a similar coordination of development assistance in the rest of Niger.

The World Bank currently operates a safety net system, and HC3N will coordinate its agriculture sector ministries to provide a consistent way of administering safety nets that it will then expect donors to follow. Standardization will be applied to the minimum expenditure basket, for example, and the GoN will track locations of food disbursements to ensure equitable distribution.

- **Strengthened monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems.** HC3N has asked for coaching in training the regional ministry employees in reporting into the automated system currently used by the GoN. The collaboration and learning project that will be procured under RISE II will also work closely with 3N to ensure that the GoN benefits from promising practices and lessons learned in USAID and MCC communities.
- **Improved capability of regional institutions.** The West Africa Regional Mission in Accra has been building capacity of regional institutions for decades. In early 2018, Niger took the leadership role in the Permanent Committee to Combat Drought in the Sahel (CILSS), a rotating chairmanship that lasts for two years. With USAID support, CILSS will implement several reforms in its structure and operations that should improve transparency and enable it to more effectively provide advice and services to all of the member West African countries.

4.5 Enhance Social, Economic, and Political Agency of Women and Youth

USAID and MCC will contribute to this component. All USG programming will directly address social norms and gender dynamics to improve the ability of women and youth to make their own life decisions. USAID Food for Peace will address the norms and cultural practices that support or inhibit the adoption of healthy behaviors, including food taboos and issues pertaining to gender and social inclusion. Food for Peace will work with men's and women's groups and with couples to improve household communication around decision-making. As decision-making is central to men's identity, implementing partners will need to be culturally sensitive when encouraging couple's dialogues and promoting women's inclusion in household decision-making. Partners will also focus on girls' education, whether in formal or informal schools, to delay early marriage, reduce the birth rate, and improve their lifetime earning potential. Education is critical for Nigeriens to improve their social and economic opportunities.

Working with youth is a central tenet of the CVE program and of RISE, as young men are typically targeted by VEO recruiters, and because youth is 70 percent of Niger's population, with 50 percent of the population younger than 15. Projects in Tillabéri will work on community cohesion, encouraging youth to feel valued in their communities. Activities in all components will include youth and women as central but not exclusive targets. There is a significant human capacity component in Component 2, intended to prepare youth and women to improve their economic lives, whether through participation in agriculture and livestock activities on the farm, value chain participation off the farm, or non-agricultural pursuits altogether. This capacity building will also enable migrating youth and men to obtain more lucrative employment in their destination, and improve the lives of the families remaining behind.

4.6 Stakeholder Engagement Platforms

The Government of Niger has an extensive stakeholder engagement system, including cluster meetings and numerous other methods of collaboration and coordination. OCHA coordinates emergency response, and their meetings are consistently well attended. In general, donors meet among themselves, and see each other for sectoral meetings. The USG has participated in field visits with the Belgians, and that

collaboration will continue. USAID and MCC will continue to request 3N to create and facilitate a consultative framework to improve donor collaboration.

The USG also has regular meetings with GoN officials, and an ongoing strong relationship with HCI3N, the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, Hydraulique (irrigation), Environment, and Equipment (roads). These relationships will continue to be reinforced in the coming years. USG implementing partners tend to have strong relationships with GoN field agents as well.

US Government Interagency Partners



Additional Reference: MCC Program Logic Model

