

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Ouagadougou

Meeting in the Council for Development Policy 13 June 2017

Agenda item 3

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|---|---|
| 1. Overall purpose | For discussion and recommendation to the Minister |
| 2. Title: | Country Programme for Niger (2017-2022) |
| 3. Presentation for Programme Committee: | 13 October 2016 |

Denmark-Niger Country Programme 2017-2022

Key results:

- Enhanced national capacity and effectiveness in conflict prevention, peace building efforts and migration management.
- Increased access to drinking water in rural and semi-urban areas supported by the Joint Financial Mechanism (programme contribution: access for +40,000 households).
- Improved prevention and management of local water conflicts and improved access to water in pastoral areas.
- Enhanced opportunities for rights holders to voice their concerns and hold decision makers accountable with support from strengthened CSOs and independent state bodies.
- Increased contraceptive prevalence rate and reduction of teenage births.
- Improved agricultural production and job creation in agricultural sector.

Justification for support.

- Niger's security situation is under severe pressure from several sides: Boko Haram in the Diffa-region bordering Nigeria and terrorist incursions from Mali and Libya.
- Niger has become a major transit country for migration towards Europe, but has limited resources to address irregular migration.
- Niger has the world's highest population growth (3.9 pct.)
- Niger ranks 187 out of 188 on UNDP's Human Development Index.
- Only 50 pct. of Niger's rural population has access to drinking water, and only 14 pct. has access to a hygienic latrine.
- Very precarious situation of a fast-growing number of youths.
- Maintaining the legitimacy of the State through responsiveness to popular concerns and the provision of basic social services is a prerequisite for ensuring peace and stability.

How will we ensure results and monitor progress

- Ensure partners' ownership and strengthen their capacity to implement and monitor own development programmes.
- Focus on potential change agents e.g. youth, women, strategic partners and on building bridges between state and society.
- Extensive use of delegated cooperation through reliable partners with presence in Niger.
- TA to support embassy in compiling and analysing data collected by partners, regularly assessing if underlying assumptions hold and communicating stories of change.

Risk and challenges

- A further deterioration of the security situation and an increase in the already substantial security expenses will hamper the ability to finance national development plans and reforms.
- A degradation of the political situation could lead to paralysis of reform processes and a further increase in social tensions.
- Niger remains extremely vulnerable to external shocks that could affect the Government's ability to implement key reforms and on basic service delivery and thus weaken its legitimacy.

Strat. objective(s)

- Strengthen stability and peace
- Enhance access to basic rights for ordinary people
- Reduce extreme poverty with focus on resilience

Thematic Objectives

Contribute to lowering likelihood of conflict and to building a stable foundation for development

Contribute to ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all users in rural and semi-urban areas (ODD6)

Reduce extreme poverty with a focus on resilience

List of Engagement/Partners

- High Authority for Peace Consolidation through delegated partnership with UNDP
- Technical Support Unit managing grants to CSOs, National Human Rights Commission and High Council for Communication
- UNFPA
- Migration – to be defined

- Ministry of Water and Sanitation through a delegated partnership with Luxembourg

- High Commission for the 3N Initiative through delegated partnerships with the Swiss Development Cooperation and the World Bank respectively

File No.	2016-39330							
Country	Niger							
Responsible Unit	Embassy in Ouagadougou							
Sector								
	<i>Mill.</i>	2017	2018	2019	20	2021	22	Tot
Commitment		195	85	100				380
Projected ann. Disb.		12	70	68	88	84	58	380
Duration	2017-2022							
Finance Act code.	06.32.01.06 Niger							
Desk officer	Anne-Catherine Legendre							
Financial officer	Lars Kjær Knudsen							

SDGs relevant for Programme



Budget

1 – Democratic Governance, Stability and Migration Management	185
<i>Engagement 1: Enhancing Stability</i>	40
<i>Engagement 2: Strengthen Democratic Governance</i>	40
<i>Engagement 3: Manage Demographic Growth through Promotion of SRHR and Gender Equality</i>	50
<i>Unallocated - Migration</i>	32
<i>Programme Support incl. TA for Country Programme</i>	23
2 – Water and Sanitation	195
<i>Engagement 1: PROSEHA (national water strategy)</i>	195
3 – Economic Growth and Job Creation in agricultural Sector (on-going programme)	-
<i>Engagement 1: Support to Agricultural Value Chains</i>	
<i>Engagement 2: Improvement of Business Climate and Competitiveness of Value Chains</i>	
The on-going programme was approved in 2014 and runs until 2021	
Total	380

Denmark – Niger Partnership

Country Programme Document

2017-2022

Niger

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Abbreviations

3N Initiative	Initiative les Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens
AfDB	African Development Bank
CCM	Inter-ministerial Committee on Migration
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CNDH	Commission Nationale des Droits Humains
CSC	Conseil Supérieur de la Communication
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building Mission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HACP	Haute Autorité pour la Consolidation de la Paix
HCI3N	Haut-Commissariat à l'Initiative 3N
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASEHA	Programme d'Appui au Secteur de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement
PRACC	Projet d'Appui à la Croissance et à la Compétitivité
PROSEHA	Programme Sectoriel Eau, Hygiène et Assainissement. Ministère de l'Hydraulique et de l'Assainissement
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDDCI	Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDS	Security and Development Strategy
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
TA	Technical Assistance
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

1 INTRODUCTION

This Country Programme Document aims at operationalising the overall vision of the partnership between Denmark and Niger: *to support the Government and people of Niger in order to maintain peace and stability, re-enforce democratic values and provide the opportunity for the people to embark on a long term effort to improve living conditions.* This vision constitutes the strategic objectives of the Country Programme Document, and is based on the objectives and strategic considerations in the Country Policy Paper for the Danish partnership with Niger during the period 2016-2020 (Annex A).

The Country Programme is part of a wider strategic Danish engagement in the Sahel region and in Niger. Continued support to Niger is considered highly important strategically, as the country has a key role to play for the stability of the Sahel-Saharan region, a region of strategic importance to Denmark, and has developed into a hub for illegal migration towards the EU. Niger has only very limited domestic resources to adequately address security and migration challenges, and is already facing several other key challenges, such as endemic poverty, climate change and one of the highest population growth rates in the world.

The Country Programme will constitute a significant, targeted, and strategic contribution in order to help achieve its overall objectives at this particularly challenging time for Niger. The Danish engagement in the Sahel region also comprises instruments such as the Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Sahel Region, support to EU mechanisms such as the EUCAP Sahel Niger and the Valletta Emergency Trust Fund on migration, humanitarian aid, and civil society support provided through framework agreements with Danish civil society organisations and institutions, as well as support given through UN agencies - and other multilateral organisations.

In order to achieve the overarching objective, the Country Programme will strive to achieve the following strategic objectives of the Country Policy Paper: 1. Strengthen stability and peace; 2. Enhance access to basic rights for ordinary people; and 3. Reduce extreme poverty with a focus on resilience.

Given Niger's role as one of the major transit countries for irregular migration from West Africa to Europe, it has after the approval of the Country Policy Paper, been decided to give a specific priority in the Country Programme to interventions focusing on migration.

The Country Programme is aligned with Denmark's priorities for development assistance as outlined in the new Danish strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action - *The World 2030* - and, whenever possible, to national policies and strategies.

Niger is a fragile country, and therefore the design of the Country Programme is based on Denmark's approach for cooperation in fragile and conflict-affected areas. Furthermore, in the absence of a permanent Danish representation in Niger, the preparation of the programme has been guided by the following principles: 1. A limited number of manageable thematic programmes and Development Engagements; 2. A preference for delegated partnerships when possible; and 3. A focus on intervention areas constituting a political priority both for the government of Niger and the Danish government and in which Denmark has gained experience and leverage from previous cooperation.

The Finance Act for 2017 provides a grant of DKK 195 million towards the Niger Country Programme, and suggests grants of DKK 85 million in 2018 and of DKK 100 million in 2019, making a total of DKK 380 million for the Niger Country Programme, depending on approval of the suggested grants in the 2018 and 2019 finance bills.

2 THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

2.1 Context and Recent Developments

Even though improvements have been achieved during the last 10-15 years in access to social services (e.g. access to water where Denmark has been one of the main partners, and education), Niger had not achieved most of the MDGs by 2015 and **ranks 187 out of 188 countries on UNDP's Human Development Index 2016**. The number of people living in income-related poverty has decreased from 53.7% to 40.4% in 2014 but due to population growth the absolute number of people living in poverty has increased from 6.7 million (2005) to 8 million (2014)¹. Poverty affects all regions of the country but is most salient among the rural population constituting 80 % of the total population and whose livelihood depends mainly on rainfed subsistence agriculture. This part of the population is extremely vulnerable to erratic and declining rainfall and periodic droughts. Women are in particular affected by poverty, thus around 3 out of 4 poor in Niger are women.

Niger's security situation has deteriorated substantially since 2011, and the country is under pressure from several sides: There are incursions by Boko Haram in the South bordering Nigeria and Chad to the South-east, while at the same time, instability is on the rise in areas bordering Libya to the north, Mali to the west. Boko Haram activities have led to a large humanitarian crisis and Niger's authorities struggle to feed and shelter 184,000² internally displaced persons, as well as approximately the same total amount of refugees from Nigeria, Chad and Mali³.

With considerable support from its international partners, the **Government has given high priority to address security threats** related to terrorism and banditry through a strengthened presence of security forces throughout the national territory and initiation of peace consolidation activities in conflict prone areas, including socio-economic investments, local governance and income generating revenues for youth and vulnerable groups. At the regional level, Niger has been instrumental in the creation of the G5 Sahel in 2014 with a view to developing and implementing joint cross-border strategies. Niger has also played an active role in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) established by the Lake Chad Basin countries to combat Boko Haram, which has been credited for notable achievements. However, Boko Haram remains a threat and the state of emergency that has been in effect in the Diffa region since February 2015 has given a more permanent status to exceptional measures. These include wide ranging powers to the armed forces and measures leading to restrictions on livelihood activities to curtail the financing of Boko Haram who has been levying local taxes on agricultural products.

Western Africa has a **long tradition of migration**, using short-term and seasonal migration as a way to cope with seasonal changes, drought, desertification and subsequent food shortages. Niger is thus a country of both emigration and immigration. Although data on migration remains scarce, it is estimated that **80 % of emigration from Niger itself goes to North and West Africa** and 20 % to the rest of the world⁴. The number of Nigeriens living outside of Niger has increased during the last decades due to problems at home such as ethnical rivalries, conflicts related to the use of natural resources and climate changes adversely affecting in particular the livelihood of people dependant on agro-pastoral activities. Due to the unstable security situation in neighbouring countries and given its geographical position, Niger has become **a major transit country for irregular migrants**⁵ from among other countries Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal and Mali aiming for North Africa and Europe. In

¹ Niger 2035: Un pays et un peuple prospère. Tome I: Diagnostic, enjeux et défis. Stratégie de développement durable et de croissance inclusive. République du Niger. February 2017; and Trends in Poverty, Inequality and Growth 2005-2011. World Bank. 2014.

² Aperçu des besoins humanitaires. OCHA. November 2016.

³ According to UNHCR data from December 2016: data2.unhcr.org/fr/country/ner

⁴ Irregular Migration between East Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean. Atai Consulting for IOM, November 2015.

⁵The term "irregular migration" is used here as "movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries" (<http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>). Many migrants in Niger are authorised to enter Niger due to the principle of free movement of persons within ECOWAS. However, the irregularity is for example seen when persons cross borders without a valid travel document and when migrants leave Niger to their onward destination in the North without proper authorization. With reference to the IOM, the term "illegal migration" relates to cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

December 2016, IOM had registered more than 330,000 outgoing migrants transiting through Agadez since the beginning of the year. This trend illustrates that migration as well as broader trafficking and smuggling networks (including arms, drugs, human beings etc.) has become a **very lucrative criminal market** and developed into a major source of income for some local communities in a country with limited opportunities for income generation and which suffers from endemic corruption.

Although Niger has come a long way over the last decades in terms of democratic reform, the current **political situation remains fragile**. The president in-office was re-elected in March 2016 after a tumultuous election campaign and run-off elections that were boycotted by the opposition. The election results and thus the legitimacy of the new Government were contested by the opposition and have created an unstable political scene. One of the major opposition parties, MNSD, joined the Government in October 2016, which could in principle provide a somewhat more stable platform for the Government to implement reforms in critical areas. However, this has also fuelled new criticism that space for opposing views is shrinking. The political stability is increasingly threatened by rising popular discontent with the cost of living and the Government's difficulties in satisfying basic social needs in a situation of runaway security expenditure to finance counter-terrorism and migration management.

Some progress has been achieved in improving formal human rights protection in areas such as freedom of expression, women's representation in Government institutions and rule of law/access to justice. Denmark has made significant contributions in this field, including the long engagement of the Danish Institute for Human Rights and interventions supported by Danish CSOs. However, the fragile security and political situation has put human rights under pressure. Coupled with the rising discontentment in the population about slow social and economic growth, this could lead to a further deterioration of the confidence in the State and thus to a weakening of the social coherence at the expense of maintaining peace.

Women's rights remain a critical issue. **Niger ranks 154 out of 188 countries in the world on the 2014 UNDP gender inequality index** and the country has the highest prevalence of child marriages with 30 % of girls getting married before the age of 15 and 77% by the age of 18⁶. Women have little access to education and only 2.5 % of adult women in Niger have some form of secondary education. Despite some advances in improving the legal and institutional framework to protect and promote women's rights, the coexistence of three sources of law in Niger (modern, Muslim and customary) is highly complex. The growing rise of religious conservatism has contributed to hindering the adoption of important reform initiatives such as the lifting of reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a family law that would have provided enhanced protection of women's rights and a draft law on protection of young girls in school aiming to put an end to early marriages.

Historically, Nigerien civil society has demonstrated its capacity to voice demands from a wide range of groups in society and to mobilise citizens in support of democratic governance and human rights. However, in recent years **civil society has become increasingly politicised** with many NGOs affiliating themselves with one of the major political parties. The fracture within the associative movement has widened and its capacity to act autonomously and play its 'watchdog' role has suffered setbacks. As international assistance to Niger has become more oriented towards emergency aid, funding opportunities have also had a tendency to limit the role of national CSOs to short-term service delivery interventions. Religious associations stand out by having access to resources from other channels thus providing them with a still stronger platform to promote often very conservative interpretations of Islam, and without being subject to much criticism in the public debate.

⁶ This also implies that women's age at first childbirth is very low, age 16: 15%; age 19: 68%. Data from the last national survey on the demographic situation, which will be updated in 2017-2018. *Enquête Démographique de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples (EDSN-MICS IV) 2012*, Institut de Statistiques, Ministère des Finances, Niger, septembre 2013.

Media pluralism has progressed, but although official censorship generally doesn't take place, there has been a rise in incidents where journalists have been subject to legal action. In addition, unethical behaviour and lack of professionalism by journalists affect the quality and accuracy of reporting and topics of national importance are often not sufficiently covered.

The Government is in the process of **revising the current overall national development plan** (PDES⁷), which will cover the period 2017-2021. It is expected that the new plan and the corresponding action plan will be finalised by August 2017. It is expected that the plan will seek to operationalize the priorities of the President's electoral commitments, i.e. consolidation of democratic institutions, security, access to water for all, food security through the 3N Initiative ("Nigériens Nourish Nigériens"), and promotion of job opportunities for youth. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Government itself has identified demographic growth as one of the key development challenges. This is reflected in Niger's long-term Vision 2035 Strategy for Sustainable and Inclusive Development (SDDCI) in which the demographic transition is given a prominent position and defined as one of six strategic areas and this is also expected to be reflected in the new PDES. The Government has furthermore declared that a new population policy to reverse the demographic dividend will be developed in 2017.

The decentralisation process is moving ahead but is confronted with obstacles related mainly to poor financial and human resources at local government level. The transfer of the responsibility for basic social services (water, health, education and environment) to local governments in 2014 constitutes an important step but, to be successful, it will require substantial support from central government.

The economy is largely based on agriculture and livestock constituting the livelihood of 80% of the population and representing 44 % of GDP. Although primarily based on subsistence farming with low productivity and vulnerable to climate hazards, the agriculture sector provides approximately 30 % of export revenues. Extractive industries (uranium, oil and gold) provide the bulk of the country's export revenues.

The medium-term economic outlook for Niger remains positive and a 5.5 % economic growth rate is expected in 2017. However, this encouraging trend should be seen in light of the challenges related to a high population growth rate of 3.9 % and the endemic poverty affecting the majority of Niger's population. There is concern about the extent to which the Government is able to translate economic growth into pro-poor policies. Part of the economic growth is confined to sectors with no or very little impact on poverty reduction and the State has been unable to substantially capitalise on the boost in mining and other extractive activities. Budgetary allocations to social sectors have declined over the last decade, due to a large extent to increased security expenditure. Military expenses have more than tripled since 2009 and constitute 9-10% of national budget (2016) and all security expenses currently totals 6.3% of GDP (2016)⁸. **The economy remains very vulnerable** due to a deterioration of the security situation, commodity price shocks (oil and minerals), climate hazards and changes in Nigeria's economy.

Although productivity in agriculture has substantially improved over the last decades, it is estimated that 3.5 million people in Niger are **chronically food-insecure** and unable to meet their basic food requirements even during years of average agricultural production. The national development strategy thus gives a particular attention to food security and to the 3N Initiative.

Even though the Government created the High Authority to Combat Corruption in 2011, **corruption remains an endemic problem** in Niger. Public financial management reforms and the fight against corruption have so far not led to the anticipated results. Corruption affects all levels of society, including the police and the judiciary, and is weakening effectiveness of law enforcement in various areas, including border control. Observers have also raised concerns regarding transparency

⁷ Plan de Développement Economique et Social

⁸ Niger 2035: Un pays et un peuple prospère. Tome I: Diagnostic, enjeux et défis. Stratégie de développement durable et de croissance inclusive. République du Niger. January 2017.

in the use of state revisions from uranium-mining contracts. Niger ranks 101st out of 176 countries in terms of corruption⁹.

Population growth remains a key issue to be addressed with a view to ensuring economic and social growth. Niger's population will double by 2035 compared to 2016 from 20 million to 40 million inhabitants. With a fertility rate of 7.6 children per woman of childbearing age (2013), current economic growth rates are not sufficient to significantly reduce poverty in a medium term perspective. The population is extremely young as **two thirds is under 25 years of age**. According to the Government's 2035 vision, 265,000 young people enter the labour market every year and it is estimated that this number will increase to 650,000 by 2035.

The diversification and development of extractive activities constitute opportunities for the development of Niger but is also increasingly leading to **dissatisfaction with the lack of redistribution of state revenues generated from extractive industries to the local communities**. The National Assembly has passed laws in this respect in 2013, but implementation of this legislation is still not effective. Therefore, it remains an open question if the country will be able to use the benefits from the extractive industries to achieve major progress in reducing poverty. The country is also experiencing **an increase in conflicts** between local populations and mining companies related to the use of water and land.

Natural resources and in particular land and water resources are increasingly under pressure due to population growth, economic activities such as agriculture and mining, and the effects of climate change. This tendency could jeopardise economic growth and food security, and is to a large extent a main source of conflict between different user groups. So far, the Government response to these challenges has been weak due to, among other things, a weak public administration and lack of an adequate strategic and regulatory framework. Access to water coverage remains low, in particular for the rural population with only 50 % access to drinking water (2014) and 7 % access to hygienic toilets (2012). Despite the high priority given to water in current and past national development strategies and the substantial investments made in the sector, access is only improving slowly, mainly due to the population growth rate.

2.2 Strategic Considerations

The Country Programme will support the implementation of Niger's new development plan, the PDES. It will do so with a particular emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) prioritised by Denmark for interventions in fragile contexts and to which Denmark is well positioned to contribute to through its bilateral development cooperation. Moreover, in line with Danish and Nigerien policy priorities, the following general considerations have, in particular, been taken into account in the conceptualisation of the programme:

The relationship between stabilisation efforts, humanitarian aid and development assistance. Niger is subject to structural vulnerabilities that have made the country prone to conflicts, political instability and chronic food insecurity. Despite the dramatically aggravated security environment in its neighbouring countries, the Nigerien Government has so far been able to contain a further escalation of violent conflict within its own borders, but it is in a situation of latent and persistent crisis that calls for a more sustainable approach from the international community. During the last few years, external aid to Niger has become more oriented towards providing rapid responses to address immediate security threats, humanitarian needs and most recently increasing migration flows. This is an understandable development given the severity and acuteness of the challenges combined with the limited capacity of national institutions. However, there is limited clarity about how humanitarian, security and development actors operate alongside each other and to what extent this ultimately leads to developing more sustainable national capacity to cope with endemic development issues. In this regard, the Country Programme will seek to contribute to a better coordination, articulation and interaction between the different approaches of international assistance in Niger. It

⁹ Corruption Perceptions Index 2016. Transparency International.

will also further more cross-fertilization and flexible mechanisms in the provision of development aid, with respect for the fundamental differences in mandate.

Enhancement of women' and girls' rights. Niger's high population growth constitutes a critical challenge for the socio-economic development of the country and has to some extent neutralised the impact of investments made in social sectors. Although the high birth rate, linked to among other things the practice of early marriages, is considered a very sensitive issue in the public opinion with reference to religion and traditions, the current government recognises that it needs to be addressed. Experiences gained in previous Danish support indicate that interventions aiming at enhancing women's and girls' rights including access to family planning and sensitisation of men on these rights and on gender equality are relevant and effective ways of addressing population growth issues. In addition to these targeted interventions, a mainstreaming of gender considerations will be done in all programmes.

Migration management. Due to Niger's position as a main transit point for West African migrants heading to North Africa and to Europe, and the drastic increase in influx since the collapse of the Libyan state in 2011, migration is now on top of the agenda in the dialogue between Development Partners and the Nigerien Government. Since 2015, largely in response to European concerns, measures have been taken to enhance the Government's capacity to manage migration, notably through the establishment of an inter-ministerial Committee on Migration (CCM), which held its first meeting in October 2016. The legislative framework has also been adapted with a new law against smuggling of migrants adopted in May 2015 as the first of its kind within ECOWAS.¹⁰ This has been accompanied by the mobilisation of substantial international resources to co-fund migration-related initiatives. This includes the EU Emergency Trust Fund (the Valletta fund) under which nine large projects for Niger have been granted so far, amounting to approx. EUR 140 million, complemented by additional funding from a number of EU member states as well as non-EU Development Partners. Niger is among the priority countries with which the so-called "migration compacts" have been established by the EU as a new form of partnership framework to reduce flows of irregular migration by disrupting the business model of smugglers and opening legal channels of migration, increasing return rates to countries of origin and transit, and addressing root causes of irregular migration. However, given the quick acceleration of migration flows and despite the political willingness to address the challenges it causes, the process of launching activities on the ground, setting up appropriate coordination systems and a strategic framework for migration interventions in Niger has been lagging behind. Nevertheless, some initial measures have been undertaken to counter migrant smuggling in the Agadez region e.g. arresting smugglers and security officers involved as well as seizure of vehicles and other equipment. This may have contributed to the decrease in the number of outgoing migrants from over 70,000 in May 2016 to approximately 13,000 in December 2016¹¹, although seasonal fluctuations may also be part of the reason behind the decrease. As highlighted by the EU¹², it will be crucial to avoid the diversion of migration to other routes and also to provide alternative economic opportunities for local communities which some EU funds already aim at, but which require a continued and reinforced engagement from partners in the coming years.

The **precarious situation of youth** is an area that will require a particular attention in the perspective of ensuring a peaceful and socially coherent Niger in the future. The country is characterised by a strong gerontocratic governance tradition implying an exclusion of young people from participation in deliberation and decision-making at all levels of society. In addition, opportunities for employment, self-employment (limited access to land and credit) and access to basic social services remain scarce. As seen in neighbouring countries over the last years, the feeling

¹⁰ This law complements an ordinance from 2010 on combatting trafficking in persons. Two instruments have also been established to implement the legislation: the Agency for the fight against trafficking in persons (ANLPT), a permanent body under the Ministry of Justice in operation since 2014 and responsible for addressing trafficking and irregular migration; and the National Commission on the fight against trafficking in persons (CLCLPT) which is a coordinating body.

¹¹ IOM Statistical Report Overview - Niger Flow Monitoring Points, December 2016.

¹² European Commission. Second Progress Report: First Deliverables on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration. Brussels, 14.12.2016 COM (2016) 960 final.

of exclusion and limited opportunities to secure livelihoods could lead to frustrations and dissatisfaction among young people thus increasing the risk of radicalisation, violent extremism and even migration. A consideration in the design of the Country Programme will thus be, whenever feasible, to address youth as a particularly vulnerable group but also as a population segment with a huge potential as an agent of societal changes.

Ensuring peace and stability and **maintaining the legitimacy of the State** is closely linked to the ability of the State to be responsive to popular concerns through inclusive consultation and decision-making mechanisms engaging citizens or CSOs. Maintaining the legitimacy of the State is also dependent on its capacity to provide access to basic rights including social services for the population. The provision of basic social services remains a high priority for the Government, but the State has not been able to deliver in this respect as evidenced by the non-achievement of most MDGs by 2015. This is partly due to the dramatic population growth and to the high cost of security measures. The share of the national budget allocated to social services has diminished over the last years and remains very dependent on donor funding. However, it should be noted that the share of the national budget allocated for water and sanitation has remained unchanged (5% of the total budget) and reflects the high priority given to this sector in current and previous national development plans and the enormous needs remaining unsatisfied. Taking into account the increasing pressure on water resources constituting a strategic resource in relation to both economic growth and enhancement of livelihoods, Denmark proposes to continue the support to integrated water resources management, drinking water and sanitation. Enhancing an equitable access to water both for human and productive purposes is not only seen as an important precondition for reducing poverty in an arid Sub-Saharan country but also constitutes a means to enhance the protection of social and economic rights, and notably women's rights. Continued support to improving access to drinking water and sanitation also enhances the resilience of the rural population, and supports Government in providing the basic social services highly in demand by the population. The support will further consolidate the good results achieved in building national capacity to deliver these services both at national and local level.

The promotion of human rights, and the principles of non-discrimination, participation, transparency, and accountability as a basis for an inclusive and stable Nigerien society. The application of this set of principles, seen as the foundation for empowerment, recognises that better representation and inclusion will be needed to strengthen the relationship between the State and its citizens and to reduce Niger's vulnerability to future crises. It also implies the need to address societal and democratic principles at both duty bearer and rights-holders levels, and the need for a particular focus on women and youth as agents for change.

Lifting Niger out of poverty will depend on its ability to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth mainly through the agricultural sector and through the delivery of basic services such as water and sanitation. An important element in this process will be to ensure a sustainable use of natural resources, which are under pressure as a result of the high population growth, the effects of climate change and increased demand for especially land and water for various purposes (e.g. water for human consumption, irrigation and mining activities). A consideration behind the choice of interventions has thus been the need to build capacity to better manage natural resources with a view to enhance Niger's capacity to deal with local conflicts. Another important element in creating the basis for economic growth is to address bottlenecks in agricultural value chains and in private sector operators' capabilities to enhance productivity and diversify agricultural production.

Ensuring flexibility in the programme design. As highlighted in the three scenarios presented in the Policy Paper, the situation in Niger remains very volatile and the worst-case scenario suggests a possible reorientation of the programme portfolio and the modalities. This points to the need to ensure flexibility in the programme design with a view to enabling a readjustment of the programme to a deterioration of the security and political environment in Niger or providing responses to meet e.g. emergent humanitarian needs. The Country Programme will also seek an adequate mix of state

and non-state partners. The use of delegated partnerships with multilateral Development Partners implementing broad-scoped programmes in Niger also constitute an opportunity for ensuring flexibility in the Country Programme allowing for a reorienting of Danish funding to other relevant intervention areas if such a need arises.

Keeping a realistic approach to outcomes. In view of the high level of complexity of the Nigerien context and the resources available under the Danish Country Programme, it will be crucial to adopt a realistic approach to the level of ambition of the programme. Denmark has a comparative advantage in certain areas based on its long lasting engagement in Niger. Furthermore, with a six-year programme approach that enables support with a more sustainable perspective, Denmark will be in a favourable position to contribute to areas of strategic importance. Yet, the success of supported activities will to a large extent depend on the wider institutional environment in which they are implemented. Therefore, it will be important to set goals that are politically and technically feasible by identifying specific windows of opportunities for change taking into account previous Danish experiences, and setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which will provide a basis for continuously reassessing the validity of the assumptions. It should also be acknowledged that no longer having a representation office in Niger sets certain limitations on the depth of engagement that can be expected in terms of promoting specific Danish views and approaches.

2.3 The Aid Effectiveness Agenda

Niger remains highly dependent on external aid that amounts to around 40% of the national budget. Reliance on national public finance management procedures and systems is limited and project assistance remains widespread. **Niger is one of the countries monitored by OECD as being potentially under-aided** as aid levels are relatively low and needs are high. The number of bilateral Development Partners with presence in the country is also quite low. The EU member countries and Switzerland have embarked on a joint programming exercise for the period 2016-2020, which has contributed to give direction to the overall design of the Danish Programme. The EU joint programming process mainly serves as a way of coordinating efforts and having a joint basis for political dialogue.

EU is by far the largest donor followed by the United States, the World Bank and France. Other large bilateral donors include Japan, Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and Denmark.

Since 2014, a more structured Development Partner coordination framework has been established to enhance coordination among Development Partners and to promote a closer dialogue with the Government around the implementation of the national development plan PDES. Joint consultations between Development Partners and Government take place up to four times a year depending on the emerging issues. At the sector level, coordination is pursued in technical working groups and annual sector reviews are organized in several sectors, e.g. the water sector.

2.4 Theory of Change and Key Assumptions

On the basis of the conclusions of the preparatory analyses presented above and the two governments' political priorities, the Country Programme has the following overall theory of change:

If state institutions are capable of providing key services, including basic social services and security, and **if** an environment conducive to peace, democracy and economic development is promoted through enhanced legitimacy of the state based on constructive interaction with better capacitated non-state actors, **then** Niger is likely to become more resilient and better equipped to address poverty reduction and challenges related to migration, radicalisation and climate change and thereby become more stable.

This theory of change is based on the following key assumptions:

- The Government is committed to address security challenges through diversified means beyond security sector measures, including political, social and economic interventions.
- State and non-state actors are willing to respect each other's roles and to engage in dialogue on solutions to key challenges.

- In spite of the current multitude of short-term interventions, especially within certain areas, Development Partners will maintain a strong commitment to support long-term development interventions.
- The Government will continue to prioritise the creation of an enabling environment for private sector operators.

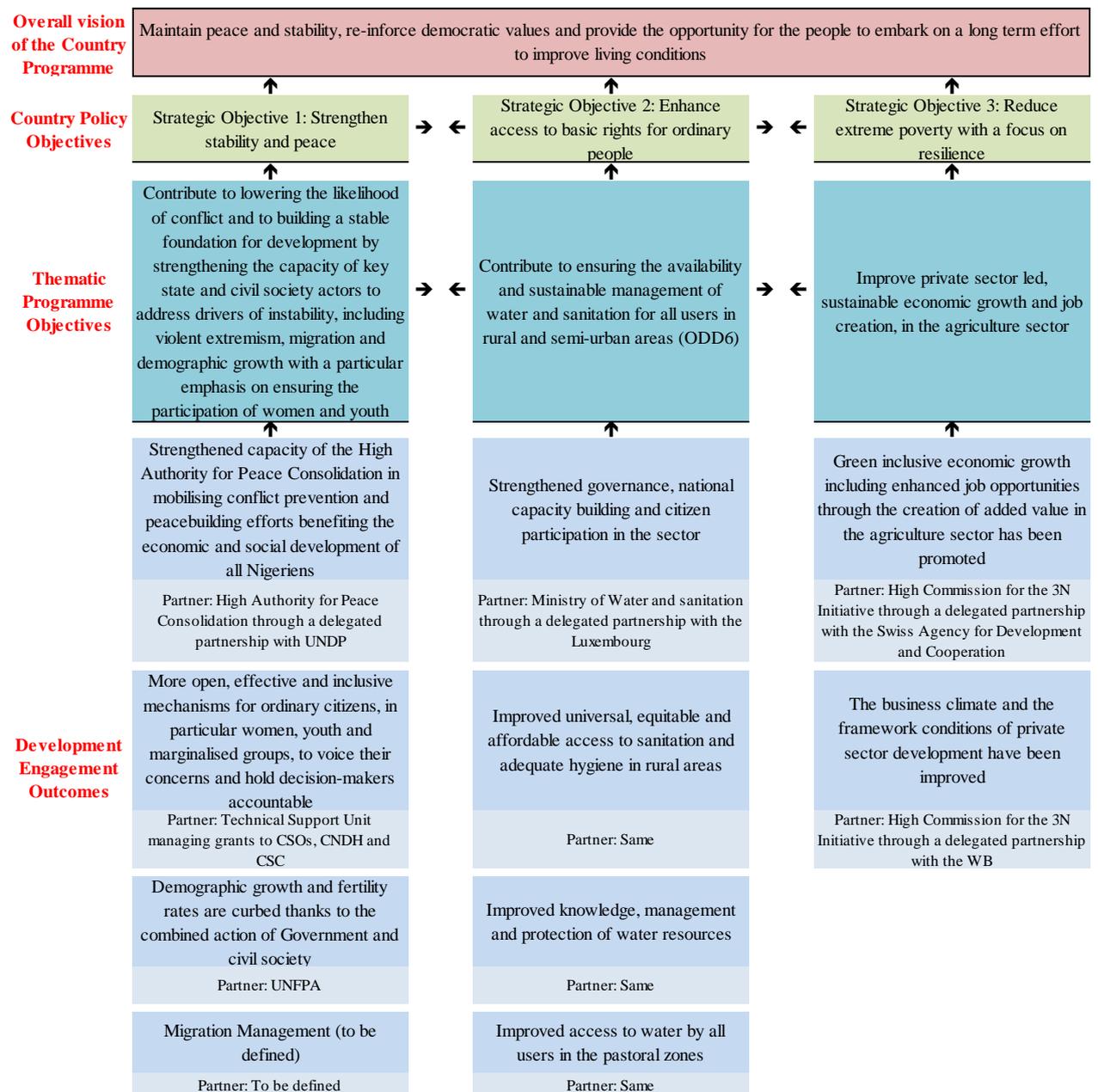
3 THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

3.1 Country Programme Overview

The Country Programme will contribute to achieving the three strategic objectives of the partnership between Niger and Denmark, set out in the Country Policy Paper, through the following three thematic programmes:

- Democratic governance, stability and migration management
- Water and sanitation, and
- Economic growth and job creation in the agricultural sector.

The Results Framework of the Country Programme is included as Annex C.



The programme aiming a support to economic growth and job creation in agriculture and linking up to the third strategic objective of the Country Policy Paper is an on-going programme that was approved and started in 2014. It is expected to end in 2019 (engagement 1) and in 2021 (engagement 2). Although considered as a part of the Country Programme, this programme does not have any budgetary implications for the new Country Programme.

3.2 Contextual Risks

Three scenarios for the development in Niger in the short and medium term (status quo, best case and worst case) were presented in the Country Policy Paper. Annex F provides an overview of envisaged scenarios and responses in line with the policy paper as well as their expected implications in terms of partner and modality choices.

Even though Niger is still challenged by substantial security threats affecting large parts of the country, a fragile political situation and sustained poverty levels, the status quo scenario stays valid and the Danish cooperation with Niger will follow the main thrust of the Country Policy Paper. The situation, however, remains fragile both from a security perspective and in terms of political stability to which adds growing discontentment in the population especially among the younger part of the population with little belief in the Government's ability to effectively address the need for provision of basic services and job opportunities.

In a medium-term perspective, it therefore seems unrealistic to envisage a development towards a best-case scenario and there is a risk that a deterioration of the situation could lead to a new social and political crisis and substantial reductions in political space. A deterioration of the situation could be amplified with a further deterioration of security. In this situation, a reorientation of the programme would be necessary and imply a reconsideration regarding the relevance and feasibility of continued support through state institutions and a refocusing on more extensive collaboration with civil society organisations and on providing support through multilateral organisations regarding development assistance and humanitarian aid.

In the Country Programme preparation process the following main contextual risks, which may adversely impact on the programme's ability to achieve its objectives, have been identified:

Degradation of the political situation

Since 2011, Niger has experienced a polarisation of the political scene that adds to the long history of political crises in Niger. Opposition to the ruling party is growing and political and social tensions are on the rise due to i.a. weak government control of corruption, growing influence of conservative religious groups, and growing security expenses leading to a decline of budget allocations to social sectors. Political and social tensions are also fuelled by repressive measures to respond to the security threats from Islamist terrorist groups which have led to an increased number of violations of human rights. This development has led to a situation where governability and political stability are continuously at stake and could lead to some paralysis in the reform processes, a decrease in the legitimacy of the State and a further increase of social tensions. The Government has to some extent sought to respond to criticism, e.g. through the initiation of an amnesty and reintegration programme of former Boko Haram fighters and a speeding up of the legal actions against captured Boko Haram fighters. It should finally be mentioned that the serving president that was secured a second term during the March 2016 elections, has announced that he will not seek re-election after the present term.

Deterioration of the security situation

The country faces terrorist threats from neighbouring countries (Libya, Mali, and Nigeria) and growing concern about the security situation has led the Government to extend the state of emergency that has been in effect in the Diffa region since February 2015 to include the regions of Tillaberi and Tahoua in the Western part of the country as of March 2017. Niger has made major investments in regional stabilisation efforts. The Government's offensive security strategy in the Sahel involving an active military engagement beyond Niger's borders has also exposed the country to more attacks within its own territory. Moreover, the stern military response and the increased

expenditure allocated by Government to the security sector at the expense of social sectors and interventions aiming at the reduction of social and economic inequalities, could exacerbate criticism of the human rights situation and foster growing support to radical groups and/or violent revolt by marginalised groups.

The fragile security situation affects measures to be taken to ensure the security of staff operating within the programme. Thus, it will not be possible to field a Danida adviser in Niger on a permanent basis and appropriate security measures in line with the security instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark (MFA) will be taken for short and long-term deployment of personnel under the duty of care of the MFA. The security situation also implies that fiduciary control will in some cases be difficult to undertake, as many activities under the three thematic programmes will be implemented at the local level and often in areas with low security. Although the programme has sought to put adequate procedures and tools in place to mitigate corruption and fiduciary mismanagement, it is recognised that certain risks remain.

Deteriorated economic situation

Although the overall economic forecast for the coming years is positive, Niger's economy remains fragile and highly vulnerable to external shocks such as lower agricultural yields as a result of climate changes, world market price fluctuations on the relatively small number of commodities for export, a slow-down in Nigeria's economy on which Niger highly depends, an increase of migration influx to Niger, cross-border instability leading to a spill-over of conflicts from neighbouring countries, and a worsening of the security situation to larger parts of the national territory. A deterioration of the economy could lead to a decrease in state revenues affecting the Government's ability to implement national development policies and strategies and thus weaken the legitimacy of the state due to its inability to deliver on key reforms and on services to enhance livelihoods.

The detailed Risk Management Matrix for the programme is included as Annex E.

3.3 Programme Budget

Democratic Governance, Stability and Migration Management	185.00
Water Supply and Sanitation	195.00
Economic Growth and Job Creation in the agricultural Sector ¹³	-
Total Country Programme 2017-2022 in million DKK	380.00

Programme budget details are included in Annex D.

4 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, STABILITY AND MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

The thematic programme will contribute to the first and second strategic objectives of the 2016-2020 Country Policy for Cooperation between Denmark and Niger: 1) Strengthen stability and peace; and 2) Enhance access to basic rights for ordinary people. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, the thematic programme will primarily contribute to Goal 16 'Peace, justice and strong institutions', and Goal 5 'Gender equality'. The programme is also fully consistent with Denmark's development policy and will contribute directly to three of its four strategic aims: 1) Invest in peace, stability, protection and increased resilience; 2) Contribute to countering irregular migration and to addressing the root causes of migration; 3) Invest in activities that promote human rights, democracy, rule of law and gender equality.¹⁴

In addition, the programme will strengthen the determination and capacity of the government of Niger to carry out its own policy priorities, spelled out in the President's Renaissance II programme endorsed by the National Assembly in June 2016, in the national priorities and strategies presented in the PDES, in the Government's long term vision (SDDCI 2035) as well as in sector and geographic-specific policies and strategies.

¹³ DKK 195 million have been committed for this programme in 2014.

¹⁴ The World 2030. Denmark's strategy for development and humanitarian action, January 2017.

4.1 Strategic Considerations and Justification

Niger is in many ways at a crossroads. Politically, it must consolidate the **democratic transition** initiated with the return to a constitutional order following the 2010 coup. Progress has been made towards this goal since 2012, which was to some extent confirmed by the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections. However, fragmentation within the political class remains deep, opportunities for dialogue are insufficiently nurtured, and the breadth of popular frustration on a large range of social and economic issues makes the country prone to violent protests. As demonstrated by various incidents during the 2016 election campaign and through interventions carried out by the Security and Defence Forces against Boko Haram in the south-eastern part of the country, the risk of a cycle of violence-repression bursting out is never far away. The achievements made by Niger in terms of respect and promotion of human rights, including broadening of the scope for democratic expression through the media, could therefore be put at stake. This could lead to weakening the already fragile legitimacy of the State.

Against this background, the precarious situation of youth is a particular concern. The feeling of exclusion and limited opportunities to secure livelihoods can lead to exasperation among young people, which increases the risk of radicalisation, violent extremism, criminal deviation and migration. Niger is, indeed, at the crossroads of a **critical demographic transition**. Population policies have been in place since 1992, however, traditional social attitudes characterised by a strong pro-natalist culture¹⁵ bolstered by the rise of religious conservatism under international influences continue to constitute serious obstacles to change. Such attitudes have hindered the adoption of important reform initiatives in the field of girls and women's rights, which apart from their intrinsic value, also constitute an important means to address the demographic challenge. Only determined action, combining the efforts of the Government, civil society, and international partners on a wide range of areas, including measures that contribute to changing men and women's attitudes on family planning, will provide the necessary prerequisites to address the magnitude of the problem.

Niger is finally at a crossroads due to its **geostrategic location** with strong implications for its own security and powerful ripple effects on Europe. Libya's collapse in the North and Mali's enduring instability in the West combined with Boko Haram incursions in the South have exposed the country to a continuous range of risks and challenges since 2011, including population displacements, increasing exposure to drug and arms trafficking, the extension of terrorist networks onto the national territory, and the threat of a reawakening of irredentist claims by disenfranchised border regions and communities. The collapse of security in parts of North Africa and the Sahel has furthermore made Niger the main transit point for West and Central African migrants heading to Europe.

The fight against irregular migration remains a contested issue domestically and Niger has limited domestic resources to adequately address both the development and security dimensions of migration. Substantial assistance from international partners will thus remain necessary over the long term, but should be provided with due attention to avoiding inflaming anti-Western sentiment by balancing enforcement and policing with investments addressing underlying causes of migration and insecurity through long term development and reform initiatives.

The thematic programme will help Niger address the many development and stability challenges outlined above through a series of strategically targeted Development Engagements carried out through selected actors identified as drivers of positive change. The Development Engagements will to a large extent build on previous Danish support, while also integrating lessons learned and recent contextual developments. The latter includes considerations about the current security situation, which have strongly influenced the design of the thematic programme and the proposed support modalities. In the area of stability, the programme will mainly strengthen the capacity of the High Authority for Peace Consolidation (HACP) to provide both short and long-term responses to

¹⁵ The desired family size is higher than the actual family size which means that the most immediate challenge as regards family planning is not related to the supply of services, but rather that the demand is insufficient.

communities at risk. The proposed support builds on previous Danish support to HACP provided through multi-donor interventions since 2012 (EU in particular), but with a stronger focus on developing HACP's institutional capacity. The consolidation and extension of the democratic space and of respect for human rights will be promoted by setting up a Support Facility to provide assistance to two independent State bodies, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) and the High Council for Communications (CSC), and to civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the field of human rights, conflict transformation and media development. This will be complementary to the long-standing Danish support in these areas, including support provided by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (since 1997) and by Danish NGOs. Support to address the demographic challenge through the enhancement of women's rights will build on Denmark's solid and long standing partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) globally and specifically in Niger where Danish support since 2008 has contributed to developing approaches that promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in a contextual and culturally sensitive manner. These approaches have shown promising results, but would need to be scaled up by supporting the implementation of more coherent and comprehensive policies to limit fertility rates with an emphasis on gender equality considerations.

In the field of migration, it is envisaged that a smaller Development Engagement will be initiated in the beginning of the programme, addressing immediate needs within a specific sub-area of the management of migration. However, with the increase of migrants transiting through Niger, Development Partners and the Government of Niger have developed an extensive number of initiatives recently, not least through the EU Trust Fund. Many of these initiatives are shorter-term interventions, and few of them have actually had time to show concrete results. The many new initiatives put pressure on the absorption capacity of national institutions, and to some extent on the implementation capacity of specialised agencies. At the same time, the process of setting up appropriate national mechanisms for handling migration issues is still not fully in place. Against this background, most of the Danish targeted support to migration management under the thematic programme will be formulated at a later stage, in order to allow for a more thorough analysis before entering into this new intervention area and to ensure a substantial engagement contributing to enhancing Niger's migration management capacity in the long-run. Moreover, the challenges posed by migration and population displacements, as well as the need to promote coordinated actions to develop alternative income opportunities to substitute the smuggling economy, will also be addressed from the perspective of securing stability through support to HACP. Other aspects related to migration such as the protection of migrants' rights could also be addressed by the support provided to the independent state bodies and CSOs.

Programme partners have been selected for their ability to carry out actions that are **relevant** to the stability, development and democratic transition challenges faced by Niger (as reflected in, inter alia, national policies and strategies), the repercussions of which are felt by Denmark and Europe as a whole (e.g. migration, high humanitarian aid burden). The programme will work both with state and non-state actors, and encourage synergies among them. It will also work at the national and regional/local levels by supporting the representation of national institutions in the regions (HACP, CNDH, CSC), which will contribute to enhancing the visibility and legitimacy of the state. Support to HACP's and CSO efforts to address conflict issues related to natural resource management will foster complementarities and synergies with the two other thematic programmes given the importance of access to water and land as causes of conflict in Niger. These multiple synergies will enhance the **impact** of the programme and contribute to the attainment of its overall objectives. Moreover, important capacity development elements have been built into each Development Engagement so as to enhance **sustainability**. Support to beneficiary institutions and organisations will consider all aspects necessary for them to perform key functions effectively over time at the strategic, technical, operational and financial/administrative management levels. Through this long-term institution-building perspective, the thematic programme will distinguish itself from other donor-supported programmes in Niger, which tend to support capacity building within more narrowly defined project scopes. Modalities and choices of implementing partners have been

carefully considered with a view to ensuring the **effectiveness** of the thematic programme. This notably includes ability to set up robust planning and monitoring systems and to provide technical assistance that responds to the needs of national partners. In terms of **efficiency**, the fact that the Embassy is not present in Niger and thus relies on implementing partners who are able to work in the Nigerien context has implications in terms of higher transaction costs. On the other hand, these costs are a way of mitigating the high risks of working in a fragile, conflict-prone context where the capacity of national partners are relatively low whereas the security challenges are high, making it more challenging to monitor activities.

Improving the realisation of human rights standards, including those of women, girls, youth and communities at risk of marginalisation or subject to discrimination, has inspired the selection of priorities of the thematic programme in line with Denmark's strategy for its development cooperation. **Inclusiveness** and **participation** are at the core of all Development Engagements. Both the UNFPA-led Development Engagement and the support provided to CSO's will focus on empowering and extending the participation of women, youth and marginalised groups' participation in decisions affecting their future, and are thereby expected to mitigate the **discriminations** they are exposed to. These principles are also at the heart of HACP's mandate to ensure that all Nigeriens, including in the most remote regions, feel that their basic security and social needs are attended to, either directly through decentralised state administrations, or through better-capacitated local and regional authorities. Training and awareness-raising interventions targeting various duty bearers such as public administrations and opinion makers will contribute to bringing the latter to recognise and assume their obligations. By bringing institutions closer to citizens at the local level, the thematic programme will provide a better basis for Government **accountability and transparency**. All Development Engagements include significant provisions to increase awareness on national legislation and international engagements in human rights, women's rights, the treatment of migrants, press freedom, etc. Support to CSOs will generally expand the scope for democratic expression and increase the capacity of rights holders to claim their rights and hold decision-makers to account for their actions. At the same time, support to key horizontal accountability institutions with particular oversight responsibilities in the fields of respectively human rights protection and media regulation will constitute an important contribution to deepen and consolidate democracy in Niger.

4.2 Theory of change

The thematic programme is based on the following theory of change: **If** the Government is able to provide a better articulation between rapid responses to emerging threats to the country's stability and long-term development policies addressing the underlying root causes, including various inequalities linked to age, gender, cultural/ethnic or social backgrounds that influence destabilising factors such as radicalisation, violent extremism, demographic growth and migration, **and if** the legitimacy of the State is enhanced through more inclusive governance mechanisms that hold formal and informal power holders accountable and promote respect for human rights, **then** Niger is likely to become better at preventing conflict and tackling major obstacles to its social and economic development and stability.

Despite the massive challenges that Niger is facing, including regular terrorist attacks, the Government has effectively managed to prevent a full-blown conflict to erupt on its territory and this has made it possible to secure some level of continued delivery of other basic services. However, the Government's firm approach to security has not been without cost and citizens' growing expectations for more social inclusiveness, economic equity and good governance could challenge the legitimacy of the State. If this situation is left unattended, it may render the situation in the country more unstable with citizens resorting to other coping strategies including violence, criminal activities and migration. The thematic programme will seek to target selected areas and actors that play a strategic role either as enablers or blockers of lasting change with due consideration to the complementary role of rights holders and duty bearers.

With its mandate to prevent violent conflict and facilitate peace building, HACP has the potential to promote more coherent national responses and institutionalised mechanisms to manage conflict and

strengthen the resilience within the Nigerien society. Its focus has so far largely been on providing rapid responses to cope with the consequences of crisis situations, while less attention has been given to prevention and long-term peace building. By enhancing HACP's strategic and operational role in developing a coordinated framework for sustainable peace and in promoting conflict sensitive approaches at the local, regional and national levels, it is expected that a more solid foundation for stability in the country will be developed and that stronger synergies between humanitarian and other emergency assistance and long-term development efforts will materialise.

However, it has to be recognised that a number of the underlying causes of conflict and tensions are linked to unequal access to resources, decision-making, services etc. and cannot be addressed effectively without engaging with civil society and stimulating change within civic life.

Marginalisation leads to frustration or apathy among some population groups, which makes them vulnerable to engage in destructive behaviour instead of contributing to meaningful social change. Providing channels through which excluded groups, notably youth and women, can voice their concerns and see their interests represented and promoted through strong and independent CSOs and accountability institutions like CNDH and CSC, is likely to contribute to these groups of rights holders and their representatives becoming key agents capable of delivering constructive change. Through appropriate support and guidance, CSOs can promote broader empowerment and, in collaboration with various stakeholders, raise awareness about structural problems that give rise to conflict, and they can generate support to peaceful ways of addressing them.

Media has a particular strategic role to play in providing a channel for civil society to voice its concerns and in promoting access to reliable and impartial information, and thus to foster a democratic dialogue that can contribute to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. In a context where media generally suffers from low levels of professional standards, there is also a need for an independent and professional media monitoring and regulation mechanism capable of managing the delicate balance of protecting press freedom against other important principles such as preventing messages that contain incitement to violence or call for discrimination.

Women constitute a tremendously underestimated resource in promoting social, economic and political change in Niger. Hence, it is critical to enhance women's empowerment through a wide range of efforts by emphasising the need for gender equality measures in all interventions, not least by promoting women's rights and voices through civil society and media. Moreover, it is essential to focus specifically on enhancing women's SRHR through a multi-pronged strategy that addresses various factors that hamper progress in this key area for women's empowerment and for the Niger's development in general. Indeed, demographic growth is a veritable ticking time bomb for the future stability of the country.

Management of irregular migration is another major challenge that Niger's government is bound to address in order to avoid the negative effects that irregular migration is likely to have on the internal stability of the country. Although there may be an oversaturation of limited absorption capacity in this field in the short term, it is expected that there will be a need to support Niger's authorities in implementing a more coherent strategic approach.

The theory of change is based on the following assumptions:

- Security risks of neighbouring countries, domestic threats and irregular migration are tackled in a manner which does not undermine the legitimacy of the State by ensuring that measures are proportionate to the threats and avoid unnecessary negative effects on the functioning of local communities;
- The Government maintains its commitment to promote principles of human rights and democracy by respecting and supporting the independence of oversight state bodies as well as by pursuing its efforts to enhance space for civil society and media;
- The Government is committed to investing in a multi-pronged approach to overcome conservative attitudes to the role and rights of women.

4.3 Thematic Programme Summary

The objective of the thematic programme is to *contribute to lowering the likelihood of conflict and to building a stable foundation for development by strengthening the capacity of key state and civil society actors to address drivers of instability, including violent extremism, irregular migration and demographic growth, with a particular emphasis on the participation of women and youth.*

Short Summary of the Development Engagements

The programme includes three formulated Development Engagements involving a combination of state and non-state actors as well as international organisations. The engagement targeting HACP will start in 2017 and the two others in 2018. In addition, unallocated funds have been set aside under the thematic programme for a limited number of engagements involving targeted migration related activities. It is expected that these new engagements will be identified in 2017-2018.

The **first engagement aims to support HACP** in the delivery of its mandate to nurture dialogue and tolerance among Niger's communities and to mobilise conflict prevention and peace building efforts effectively to address the special needs of communities at risk, including those affected by the destabilising impacts of irregular migration and population displacements caused by conflict. It will do so by enhancing HACP's capacity to provide short-term, quick impact 'soft security' responses to conflict risks (e.g. dialogue/joint activities between security forces and local communities; small scale socio-economic projects, especially targeting youth; peace fora or caravans; assistance to regional and local authorities in developing an appropriate response, etc.). The programme will also enhance HACP's capacity to steer Government action, both at strategic and technical level, and both at central and regional level (working with regional offices of the Ministry of regional planning and community development) to respond to the security and development needs of communities at risk. This will include a programme for young professionals whereby young people with technical skills (e.g. administrative, financial, IT, communications or related to peace building) will contribute to temporarily enhancing the resources available at HACP to fulfil its mandate, while at the same time helping these young professionals to acquire work experience that will help them integrate the job market. By delivering improved capacity to HACP to analyse situations, anticipate risks, design programmes and organise multi-stakeholder consultations, the programme is expected to enhance the quality of its interventions as well as their long-term structural impact. An important part of programme resources will be dedicated to boosting HACP's efforts to support the development of local and regional authorities' capacity for service delivery, as part of its mandate to support decentralisation. Two particular focus areas will be the development of municipal police units and regional/local Peace and Security Committees. It is anticipated that support to HACP will include targeted stabilising interventions to regions most affected by migration influx and human displacements with a view to preventing tensions, conflicts, propagation of illicit trafficking and/or infiltration by extremist groups.¹⁶ In this context, the Development Engagement will support HACP's relief activities, which involve local and regional institutions from the outset and thereby constitute a key contribution to the transition between humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction in the affected regions. Based on its unique mandate on peace building, the management of the support to HACP will be delegated to UNDP. UNDP will thus have the overall responsibility of monitoring implementation and will at the same time provide technical expertise and knowledge in selected areas as well as ensure coordination and synergies with other relevant interventions, notably within the UN system.

The **second Development Engagement** will support the promotion of accountable and inclusive governance with a focus on generating plural voices, dialogue and contributions to public debates and policies, with particular attention to ensuring that the rights of the most vulnerable groups (women, youth, marginalised groups) are heard and responded to. The engagement will target both right holders and their advocates, helping them to gain confidence and capacity in asserting their rights, and duty bearers, through awareness-raising and training activities. The engagement will

¹⁶ It is worth noting that HACP will be responsible for the implementation of a newly granted project under the EU Trust Fund focusing on rapid economic impact interventions in the Agadez region.

consist of a support facility managed by a technical support unit providing grants and capacity building to different types of independent stakeholders. The CNDH and the CSC will be directly supported as they have demonstrated their capacity for independent inquiry, reporting and awareness-raising in their respective fields of human rights and media independence, but need to be further consolidated in their efforts. Support to these two state bodies will particularly focus on: (i) developing their management capacity including their networks of regional offices, in order to increase their outreach outside the capital; (ii) enhancing their complaints handling capacity; (iii) enhancing their monitoring and reporting capacity with regard to respect of human rights and respect of media regulation with an emphasis on preventing discriminations; (iv) promoting a better understanding of international and national standards in their respective fields including advancing recommendations for reforms and sensitizing authorities and citizens on human rights and media ethics and regulation respectively. In terms of funding, support provided to CNDH and CSC will be relatively modest, but it is considered to have a strategic nature. The major part of the funding of the support facility will go to CSOs through calls for proposals focussing on human rights, conflict transformation and access to quality media and information. Different types of grants will be provided ranging from core support to more experienced CSOs with a broader scope of intervention to smaller and more targeted projects implemented by emerging or specialised CSOs. In addition, various types of capacity-building will be provided through the technical support unit. Besides support to promote and protect human rights as well as diverse and reliable media, conflict prevention initiatives aiming at promoting religious dialogue and/or stemming the spread of radical interpretation of religion, addressing land and natural resources-sharing issues, and enhancing the role of women and youth in conflict prevention and resolution, will be particularly targeted.

The **third Development Engagement** will contribute to managing demographic growth through the promotion of SRHR and gender equality. Experiences gained in previous Danish support indicate that interventions aiming at enhancing women's and girls' rights, including access to family planning and sensitisation of men on those rights and on gender equality, are relevant and effective ways of addressing population growth issues. In view of the results achieved, it has been agreed with UNFPA to pursue on-going efforts working both with State institutions and civil society. As in the previous programme period (2014-2017), the Danish support will consist of support to UNFPA's Country Programme for Niger with soft earmarking to selected intervention areas. The current UNFPA country programme will end by end of 2018 and a new five-year programme will be developed. However, UNFPA expects the main priorities and strategies to be similar to the on-going programme. From a Danish perspective, it will be important that the new programme places additional emphasis on generating institutional will and capacity to address population issues and women's and girls' SRHR in order to increase the impact of UNFPA's action and the sustainability of its effects. The priority areas that will be monitored through the engagement will focus on: (i) increasing the availability and use of integrated sexual and reproductive health services including family planning and maternal health; (ii) promoting a greater priority on adolescents, especially very young adolescent girls, in national development policies and programmes, with the aim of generalising access to sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services; (iii) advancing gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable and marginalised women and adolescents; (iv) strengthening relevant national policies and international development agendas through the integration of evidence-based analysis on population dynamics, SRHR, gender equality, and their links to sustainable development.

Additional **Development Engagements aiming at enhancing migration management** are foreseen. One Development Engagement will be initiated at the beginning of the programme period and is expected to support a specific intervention area relating to short-term needs. Based on the preparatory analysis that has been undertaken, such an engagement could for instance include the capacity building of migrants awaiting repatriation to their home countries with a view to enhancing their opportunities upon return and thus ease their return and reintegration/or providing them with skills to sensitise their home communities and warn would-be migrants of the dangers of irregular migration as part of the prevention actions undertaken in migrant-producing countries in the region.

Another identified need that could be addressed in the short term is to enhance the knowledge of key national stakeholders about the legal framework and other instruments related to the management of irregular migration in Niger. The latter could provide the basis for a more comprehensive and long-term engagement focusing on enhancing the relevant national institutions in relation to migration management, once the National Migration Policy has been endorsed by the inter-ministerial Committee on Migration CCM and a first experience has been gained of what can and cannot be achieved by the EU Trust Fund projects and other interventions.

Thematic programme objective, outcomes and impacts indicators

Thematic Programme		Democratic governance, stability, and migration management	
Thematic Programme Objective		Contribute to lowering the likelihood of conflict and to building a stable foundation for development by strengthening the capacity of key state and civil society actors to address drivers of instability, including violent extremism, irregular migration and demographic growth with a particular emphasis on ensuring the participation of women, youth and minority groups	
Impact Indicator		Improvement of Niger's score in Global Peace Index indicator (<i>Institute for Economics and Peace</i>)	
Baseline	Year	2016	Overall score 2.239 (rank 113 of 163)
Target	Year	2022	Overall score 2.190
Impact Indicator		Improvement in Niger's 'Participation and human rights' indicators in the African Governance Index (<i>Mo Ibrahim Foundation</i>)	
Baseline	Year	2016	55.2/100
Target	Year	2022	62.0/100
Engagement 1		Enhancing stability	
Outcome		Strengthened capacity of the High Authority for Peace Consolidation in mobilizing conflict prevention and peace building efforts benefiting the economic and social development of all Nigeriens.	
Outcome indicator		Number of inter-community conflicts recorded in municipalities targeted by HACP (Source: HACP)	
Baseline	Year	2017	Baseline to be established based on the data available in local/regional peace building plans
Target	Year	2022	40% reduction
Outcome indicator		Number of youth aged 15-25 engaged in an occupation (employment, studies, small jobs) for at least 50% of their time in municipalities targeted by HACP (Source: Ministry of local government and decentralisation)	
Baseline	Year	2017	Baseline to be informed by the Ministry of local government based on data collected from the targeted municipalities/regions
Target	Year	2022	30% increase
Engagement 2		Strengthening Democratic governance	
Outcome		More open, effective and inclusive mechanisms for ordinary citizens, in particular women, youth and marginalised groups, to voice their concerns and hold decision makers accountable	
Outcome indicator		Number of cases in which grantees have been engaged in influencing policies and decision-making in relation to promotion and protection of human rights, conflicts transformation, and access to quality media and information, including the voice of women and other socially excluded groups (Source: Technical support unit)	
Baseline	Year	2017	Baseline to be established
Target	Year	2022	Target to be established
Outcome indicator		Grant partners demonstrate capability to fulfil their mandates (Source:	

		Technical support unit)	
Baseline	Year	2017	Capability scores to be determined by the Technical support unit during inception
Target	Year	2022	80% of grantees have demonstrated improvements of at least 50% in score
Engagement 3		Managing demographic growth through promotion of SRHR and gender equality	
Outcome		Demographic growth and fertility rates are curbed thanks to the combined action of Government and civil society	
Outcome indicator		Contraceptive prevalence rate (Source: Ministry of Health)	
Baseline	Year	2015	13,4%
Target	Year	2022	50%
Outcome indicator		Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who started their reproductive life (Source: Enquête Démographique et de Santé du Niger)	
Baseline	Year	2017	35% (estimated)
Target	Year	2022	25 %

Choice of partners

HACP is an institution attached to the presidency with a mandate to prevent and manage internal conflicts and crisis situations. This also gives HACP an important role to play in relation to the destabilising effects of irregular migration and population displacements, which constitute a growing concern. Previous support have demonstrated the relevance of HACP's dual functions, meeting the needs for quick impact interventions in vulnerable and conflict prone areas on the one hand, while at the same time bridging the gap to more sustainable solutions through i.a. better coordination and conflict sensitive approaches to development among sector ministries, regional and local authorities and other relevant institutions. Although HACP has been involved in the implementation of various Development Partners' programmes for a number of years, these programmes seem to have given limited attention to building the internal capacity of the HACP, which influences its ability to play its role in an effective manner. With its institution-building approach, it is expected that the thematic programme will contribute to strengthening HACP in its strategic role of ensuring that a more coherent approach to building a stable foundation for peace and development is built.

As independent state bodies, the CSC and the CDNH both have a key role to play in terms of functioning as intermediaries between the State and civil society and/or local communities. By acting as channels and amplifiers of the needs, demands, complaints and hopes of citizens, these institutions are vital elements of social cohesion. Their capacity to collaborate with, and act as a link between duty bearers and right holders in their respective fields is an important element of their legitimacy, and therefore of their selection as partners. These institutions have also demonstrated their capacity to bring about positive results in relation with on-going Danish support (CSC under the bilateral media programme implemented by International Media support and CNDH as a strategic partner of the Danish Institute for Human Rights). However, these relatively young institutions are also particularly vulnerable to cuts in their already modest allocations on the national budget. Hence, more long-lasting support, even if it is relatively modest, will be a valuable contribution to increase their effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Despite challenges in the CSO and media environment, some CSOs and media organisations have proven their potential to engage constructively in areas of critical importance in the current context. They also have a crucial role to play in ensuring participation from a broader range of rights holders, notably women, youth and marginalised groups, who are often excluded from decision-making. Few funding mechanisms currently exist in Niger to support CSOs in promoting their own agendas and

strategic objectives and the thematic programme will therefore provide a combination of institutional and project grants to nurture the development of a stronger and more diversified civil society.¹⁷

Support to UNFPA is based on the relatively positive track record of the agency's past country programmes as well as on UNFPA's normative role, in view of its mandate, in addressing demographic growth and SRHR issues at the political level, engaging the authorities to ensure that relevant national and international commitments are acted upon, and that public institutions are sufficiently capacitated to this end.

Management Arrangements and Financial Modalities

Management of the support to HACP under the 'Enhanced Stability' engagement will be delegated to UNDP, a long-standing partner of Denmark with regard to the promotion of peace and democratic governance worldwide¹⁸ and one of HACP's traditional key partners as well. UNDP will not only guarantee the solid and transparent management of the engagement, but also ensure that activities carried out are aligned with broader international efforts to support stability and democratic transition. UNDP has a particular value added in interventions related to early recovery from crisis where it is well placed to ensure that long-term development views are reflected and that transition from humanitarian interventions to development efforts is strengthened. There will furthermore be synergies with Danish support to UNDP's thematic funding windows regarding *Emergency Development Response to Crisis and Recovery* under which Niger is among the targeted countries.

The 'Democratic Governance' Development Engagement will be implemented by a technical support unit selected through a tender process. The technical support unit will both bear responsibility for the efficient and transparent administration of the grant and build the capacity of beneficiaries (CSOs, CNDH, CSC).

The 'demographic growth management' engagement will be implemented as non-earmarked funding to UNFPA's Niger Country Programme as a continuation of Denmark's support to UNFPA's previous and current Country Programmes (2008-2012, 2014-2017). This engagement is part of a broader cooperation strategy between Denmark and UNFPA based on UNFPA's unique normative and advocacy role worldwide.¹⁹ Other donors funding the programme include Norway, Luxemburg and Belgium. A seconded Danish expert will be placed in UNFPA with a view to supporting the UNFPA Country Office's policy analysis, advocacy and programming, including by enhancing the capacity development strategies of national partner institutions in the field of SRHR and gender equality and contributing to refining the overall monitoring and evaluation framework of the UNFPA country programme.

A long-term Danish Senior Adviser will be recruited with a view to supporting the achievement of the thematic programme results. The function of the adviser will be threefold: i) Provide technical advice to HACP in relation to aspects related to strategic planning and management, organisational development as well as the application of relevant tools and approaches such as HRBA and engaging women and youth in peace building efforts; ii) Be responsible for the overall coordination of the thematic programme through regular dialogue with all implementing partners so as to promote complementarities and overall coherence, as well as dialogue at the technical level with Government, partners and other donors; iii) Monitor and provide analyses of contextual developments in Niger, including national policies, priorities, legislation and other issues of relevance in the field of democratic governance, stability and migration, in order to ensure context adjustments to the programme. In relation to the first function, the senior adviser will refer to the management of the HACP, while supervision of the adviser as regards the two other functions will be the responsibility

¹⁷ The EU will initiate a new civil 3.5 year programme to support civil society in Niger (PASOC III) with a budget of EU 8m, but this programme has a very broad scope with an emphasis on enhancing the CSO environment in general as well as on strengthening dialogue between CSOs and the government on public policies in a wide range of sectors with a particular focus on promoting gender equality. Although such efforts to enhance civil society are needed, it is expected that more concrete results can be achieved in relation to the objectives of the thematic programme through a more targeted approach with more flexible procedures.

¹⁸ Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2014-2018, May 2014.

¹⁹ Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2014-2018, May 2014; General Agreement between the Government of Denmark and United Nations Population Fund, 21/12/2006.

of the Embassy. Advisory services to HACP will be defined in annual work plans for the Danida adviser to be reviewed at steering committee meetings with the participation of HACP, UNDP and the Embassy. Due to the absence of a Danish security set-up in Niger, the senior adviser will be permanently based in Ouagadougou with an average of 10 working days in Niamey per month. When working in Ouagadougou, the senior adviser will have a workstation at the Danish Embassy. This is due to security and programme resource constraints. The adviser will not be part of the Embassy set-up and staff.

Budget at outcome level (millions DKK)

Democratic governance, stability and migration management	185.00
Enhancing stability - Support to the High Authority for Peace Consolidation (HACP)	40.00
Reinforcing national capacities for the increased regulation of demographic growth – Support to UNFPA’s Country Programme (including seconded expert)	50.00
Strengthening democratic governance – Support to CSOs and independent institutions	40.00
Unallocated funds (mainly for new migration engagement)	32.00
DANIDA Long Term Adviser	10.00
Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication Team (MEC- Team) – Country Programme	8.00 ²⁰
Reviews, studies	5.00

The additional Development Engagements aiming at enhancing migration management will absorb the bulk of the unallocated funds budget but smaller expansions of the three other engagements of this thematic programme may also be considered through the unallocated funds.

Monitoring

Strong monitoring provisions have been included in each Development Engagement, associated with adequate budgets for field monitoring when relevant. Technical assistance in the form of daily mentoring in the conduct of activities in the HACP and Democratic Governance support mechanism will also help maintain a close watch over progress and help anticipate potential challenges. The seconded expert in UNFPA as well as the Danida adviser will provide guidance and advice on enhancing overall M&E systems, but will not have any particular responsibilities with regard to specific monitoring and reporting on Development Engagements.

Risks and risk responses

The main risks are considered to be the following:

Risk Factor	Risk Response
Programmatic risks	
Overstretching of HACP’s capacity leading to difficulties related to absorption of support and responsiveness to the multiple expectations	The programme will provide support to formulate, manage and monitor a new five-year strategic plan for HACP. It is expected that this plan will provide a solid base on which the HACP can prioritise its annual activities. Furthermore, the Development Engagement targeting HACP comprises substantial support to strengthen the capacity of the institution (training, advisory services, recruitment of Young Professionals) and foresees close monitoring which should make it possible to detect capacity deficiencies in due time. Finally, the suggested actions comprise a re-dynamisation of the cooperation framework for HACP partners, which is likely to provide guidance on prioritisation of activities.
HACP weaknesses in implementation and	The support provided by the UNDP should enable a close monitoring both in terms of operational and financial management. While awaiting the

²⁰ The MEC-Team will provide assistance related to the entire Country Programme, but to ease the budget allocation and financial management it has been anchored in one thematic programme. A reallocation of DKK 5 million from the Water and Sanitation programme to the Governance, stability and Migration programme is required to cover the expenses of this country programme support mechanism and this reallocation is still pending approval.

financial management of a set of relatively complex interventions throughout the country	benefits of the capacity-strengthening package of the programme to materialise, the recruitment of Young Professionals as well as nationally recruited TA will mitigate certain capacity deficiencies of the HACP.
Institutional weakening of HACP as a result of changes in its management and/or key personnel leading to a reduced effectiveness and legitimacy	Continued dialogue in association with other Development Partners to ensure that adequate human resources are available at the HACP and to avoid that the institution is accused of being politicised. If the risks were to materialise, a suspension of the engagement or a redirection of funds towards other activities in the UNDP portfolio could be envisaged.
The space of free media and civil society is reduced by Government	The evolution of the context will be closely monitored by the Embassy to ensure that support to independent stakeholders is upheld. A reorientation of programme activities may be considered in favour of non-state actor depending on the gravity of the situation.
Institutional instability and lack of political leadership on issues related to population growth and empowerment of women	Through joint efforts with UNFPA and other Development Partners, the embassy's political dialogue will highlight the need to establish strong and reliable institutional mechanisms to manage the demographic challenge. At the same time, support provided to UNFPA will focus on enhancing national capacity in order to give a new dynamic that can contribute to bring to scale some of the experiences previously supported by Denmark that have demonstrated concrete results such as Husband Schools and the Adolescent Initiative.
Rising religious conservatism blocking progress in terms of promoting girls' and women's rights	The thematic programme will support the promotion of women's and girl's rights through different approaches targeting girls and women, but also young men as well as traditional and religious leaders. Furthermore, CSOs and media will be strengthened to promote a more diversified debate. Political backing behind intentions to address demographic growth will be critical and will be part of the political dialogue including an emphasis on the need for the Government to show its commitment through budget allocations.
Institutional risks	
Deterioration of the political situation in Niger and/or new management leading to a loss of credibility of independent state bodies (CSC and/or CNDH)	In the policy dialogue with the Government of Niger and in the dialogue with the two institutions, the Embassy will stress the importance of preserving the autonomy and the credibility of the CSC and the CNDH. If the risk were to materialise, support to the two institutions could be suspended.
High risk of fiduciary mismanagement in relation to the implementation of CSO activities in geographical areas where monitoring is hampered by security threats	Criteria for the selection of grants/projects will include an assessment of the financial management capacity of the project promoter. Furthermore, the Technical Support Unit will implement strict financial management procedures and tools for controlling and monitoring expenditure, including regular audits.

5 WATER AND SANITATION

The overall objective of this thematic programme is to *contribute to ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation services for all users in rural and semi-urban areas* in line with the Niger

Government's objective to ensure access for all to water and sanitation by 2030 and a sustainable management of water resources. The programme will contribute to the Strategic Objective 2 of the Denmark-Niger Country Policy, but also indirectly to the two other strategic objectives. The Programme will contribute to the SDG 6 aiming at ensuring access to water and sanitation for all, a more efficient and sustainable use of water resource and participation of local communities in managing the resources. The programme is aligned to the 2017-2020 priorities of the Danish development cooperation and relates especially to the inclusive, sustainable growth component and the provision of water for human and productive purposes. The programme is designed to support the implementation of the Government's new strategic sector programme for water, hygiene and sanitation (PROSEHA 2016-2030²¹) constituting the sector response to the objectives set out in the PDES and in the Government's 3N Initiative.

5.1 Strategic Considerations and Justification

Although substantial funding from both domestic and external sources has been allocated to enhancing access to drinking water and sanitation services in rural areas during the last decades, coverage remains low in rural areas mainly due to the high population growth: Only half of the rural dwellers have currently access to drinking water and barely one of ten had access to adequate sanitation facilities in 2015.

Groundwater resources are in principle abundant in Niger. However, Niger is confronted by a number of challenges adversely impacting the access to water both for productive use and human consumption. This has led to substantial disparities in water access rates across the regions. Therefore, the PROSEHA has put equity as a strategic objective for the programme and has developed a particular sub-programme for vulnerable groups in pastoral areas aiming at enhancing resilience of targeted population segments.

The pressure on water resources is mounting due to a fast growing population, and degradation of the water quality due to mining and agricultural activities. One result is an increase in water related conflicts in the country. The effects of climate change (e.g. reduced rainfall and longer dry periods) add to the pressure on the natural resources and it is expected that these effects will lead to increased vulnerability of the livelihood of the poorest segments of the population. An integrated water resources management (IWRM) system constitutes a tool not only for enabling a more equitable distribution of available resources, but also for providing adequate responses in terms of climate change adaptation based on a solid knowledge. A national action plan²² for IWRM constitutes a sub-programme of the PROSEHA.

Denmark has supported the water and sanitation sector in Niger for more than 40 years. Since 2007, this support has had as a main feature to support the development of a programmatic approach for the sector and an alignment to national planning and financial management systems and procedures. The process has been successful and key tools for programme results based planning and budgeting linking up to the medium-term expenditure framework have been developed and are in use. The planned support builds on previous experiences and achievements.

A further alignment to national planning and budgeting systems and procedures is deemed feasible if combined with institutional support to strengthen the ability of the Ministry of water and sanitation to manage and monitor implementation of the national programme (PROSEHA). As a consequence of furthering the programmatic approach in the water and sanitation sector, the previous geographical focus of Danish support will be abandoned.

A major challenge for the PROSEHA will be to effectively ensure a more equitable access to water and sanitation for all. In addition to the need for a substantial boost of investment volumes this will require a focused and transparent approach to annual planning and budgeting, and a monitoring

²¹ PROSEHA: Programme Sectoriel Eau, Hygiène et Assainissement 2016-2030. Ministère de l'Hydraulique et de l'Assainissement. Approved by the Niger Government on 9 May 2017.

²² Plan d'Action National de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau (PANGIRE). Approved by the Niger Government on 9 May 2017.

system that enables regular evaluation in this respect. Another major challenge in the years to come will be the operationalisation of the government decision from 2014 to decentralise the responsibility for basic social services delivery, including water supply and sanitation, to local governments. Due to weak capacity of the rural local governments, the PROSEHA has opted for a gradual transfer of responsibility. It is clear that it will be necessary to give particular attention to capacity strengthening of local government and to the setting up of adequate accountability measures at this level to ensure a successful transfer of responsibility.

The PROSEHA does not currently address the role of the sector in addressing humanitarian challenges in the country. Denmark will in the dialogue with the Government emphasise the need for sustainable planning of water resources and provision of drinking water and access to sanitation in areas with many refugees and internally displaced people both to ease livelihood of these groups and to limit potential social tensions.

There are strong synergies between the thematic programme and the other thematic programmes especially with regard to management of water resources. Support to CSOs addressing land and natural resources-sharing issues under the thematic programme on democratic governance is likely to provide a more evidenced-based argumentation in this respect and adequate water management models at local level may enhance a more equal distribution of available resources.

Promotion of the **non-discrimination** principle of the HRBA in the PROSEHA will mainly be sought through planning of public investments based on equity and with a particular focus on marginalised groups especially in pastoral areas. Application of planning procedures for investments based on clear criteria both at national and local government levels aims at ensuring **transparency** in allocation of funds with the national programme. Implication of user groups, and in particular women, and of elected members of local governments at the communal level in all stages of the project cycle for sector investments planning should ensure an adequate level of **participation** of beneficiaries. Implementation of adequate **accountability** measures both at national and local government level will be strengthened especially regarding measures targeting the local government level.

The programme is designed to take into account the OECD-DAC quality criteria. In an arid and regularly drought-affected environment as Niger, provision of water for both human and productive purposes remains a prerequisite and is thus highly relevant with a view to reduce poverty and secure livelihood in a broad sense. The approach adopted for the PROSEHA in terms of equity aims at ensuring that investments are distributed to the most needy communities thus insuring a gradual ironing out of disparities in coverage rates throughout the country and thus to the maximum **impact** of the investments. Alignment of external funding to national planning and implementation procedures combined with thorough monitoring is sought to reduce transaction costs and thus to enhance **efficiency**. The weaknesses in sector institutions' capacity to manage a national programme and to ensure adequate public finance management combined with the focus on gradually ensuring that local governments are able to handle water and sanitation affairs might adversely affect the effectiveness of the programme. Capacity development of main sector stakeholders and the provision of technical assistance to strengthen e.g. planning, monitoring, and procurement, are seen as paramount to ensure **effectiveness** in programme implementation. Functionality of rural water supply schemes in Niger is overall satisfactory, which to some extent is linked to involvement of private operators in the operation and maintenance of small and larger piped schemes. With a view to **sustaining** investments and to contribute to job creation, public-private partnerships will be maintained in the future and even developed through a concerted effort to attract private funding of piped water schemes.

5.2 Theory of Change

The thematic programme is based on the following theory of change: **If** the Ministry of Water and Sanitation is supported to conduct an equitable, efficient and sustainable coordination of the sector with Nigerien stakeholders and donors and is supported with funds for implementation, **then** a more efficient and equitable use of financial resources will lead to improvement in universal, equitable and

affordable access to water resources and sanitation in rural Niger, and thus to a reduction of rural poverty, an enhancement of women's rights and potential as drivers of growth, and a decrease in the destabilising effects resulting from pressure on water resources.

The Theory of Change is associated with a number of key assumptions:

- There is a strong political will in the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to undertake required organisational reforms and ensure an effective and sustainable sector leadership;
- The Ministry has the political will and capacity to further the decentralisation process within the sector and to ensure the transfer of necessary human resources and financial means to the regional level with a view to effectively support local governments;
- The Ministry has the institutional capacity and ability to create necessary framework conditions for increased engagement by the private sector;
- Efficient integrated water resource management will contribute to prevention and solution of local water conflicts and ensure better access to quality water both for human consumption and productive use.

5.3 Thematic Programme Summary

Short Summary of the Development Engagements

The thematic programme is designed to support the implementation of the national water and sanitation investment programme (PROSEHA) and its five sub-programmes: 1. Governance, 2. Drinking water, 3. Sanitation, 4. Integrated water resource management, and 5. Pastoral water supply. It will consist of one **Development Engagement, which supports the implementation of the PROSEHA** through the PASEHA Phase 3 programme²³. The PASEHA 3 will be funded by Luxembourg and Denmark. The programme has been formulated as a joint exercise between the two partners and programme activities started in October 2016 with Luxembourg funds.

Allocation of programme funds for the implementation of the PROSEHA will be based on the sector ministry's annual result based planning and coordinated with the allocation of domestic funds and funds provided by other Development Partners.

Thematic programme objective, outcomes and impact indicators²⁴

Thematic Programme Objective		Contribute to ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all users in rural and semi-urban areas (ODD 6)	
Impact Indicators		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equitable and universal access to affordable drinking water in rural areas is improved 2. Equitable, affordable universal access to adequate sanitation and hygiene services in rural areas is improved 	
Baseline	Year	2014 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of persons in households using basic drinking water services/ Total number of persons in rural households (in MCF regions): 17% 2. Number of households using basic sanitation services/ Total number of rural households surveyed (in MCF regions): 27%
Target	Year	2020 ²⁵	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to basic drinking water services: 55% 2. Access to basic sanitation services: 90% urban; 40% rural
Outcome 1		Strengthened governance, national capacity building and citizen participation	

²³ Programme d'Appui au Secteur de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement – PASEHA Phase 3. Document Technique et Financier 2016-2020. Dated 24.08.16

²⁴ Indicators below are preliminary indicators. Final indicators for the PASEHA are currently being developed as part of the inception phase of the PASEHA 3. All indicators in the results framework will be verified through the PROSEHA monitoring system or through specific PASEHA 3 monitoring.

²⁵ The target year is 2020 in line with the PASEHA2 programme, which runs from 2016 to 2020. Indicators and targets for the PASEHA 3 and thus for the Danish engagement in the sector for the period 2021-2022 will be identified during the mid-term review of the Country Programme.

		in the sector (OS no. 2.4 in PROSEHA)	
Outcome indicator		1. The sector policy of the Ministry of Water and Sanitation is updated and adopted at national level 2. The Bye-laws of the Water Code are developed and adopted	
Baseline	Year	2017	1. Not adopted 2. Not adopted
Target	Year	2020	1. Adopted 2. Adopted
Outcome 2		Improved universal, equitable and affordable access to sanitation and adequate hygiene in rural areas	
Outcome indicator		Reduction in the level of open air defecation	
Baseline	Year	2015	73%
Target	Year	2020	49% (to be verified)
Outcome 3		Improved knowledge, management and protection of water resources	
Outcome indicator		Improved local water management and prevention of conflicts	
Baseline	Year	2017	xx functional local water basin institutions
Target	Year	2020	xx functional local water basin institutions
Outcome 4		Improved access to water by all users in the pastoralist zones	
Outcome indicator		Improved access to water in pastoral areas and appropriate management mechanisms established for pastoral water facilities	
Baseline	Year	2017	1. Lack of baseline for pastoral water supply 2. Percentage of pastoral water schemes not functioning or with bad water quality
Target	Year	2020	1. Baseline for pastoral water supply completed 2. X % decrease of pastoral water schemes not functioning or with bad water quality

Choice of Partners

The Ministry of Water and Sanitation will be responsible for the implementation of the PASEHA 3 constituting a contribution to the implementation of the PROSEHA. Implementation will be done in close collaboration with the regional representations of the Ministry and with local governments.

Substantial results have been achieved by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation in collaboration with its Development Partners to develop credible tools and procedures for planning, budgeting, monitoring and coordination of sector activities based on the priorities made by the local government institutions. However, weaknesses remain with regard to the capacity to manage a national programme as shown by an organisational diagnostic of the ministry in 2016. This will be addressed as a main component of the PASEHA 3 together with capacity strengthening and setting up of accountability measures at local government level.

Management Arrangements and Financial Modalities

Since 2014, the on-going Danish support programme (PASEHA Phase 2) has been managed by Luxembourg through a delegated cooperation arrangement with the Government of Luxembourg. This modality will be pursued in the next phase of Danish support to the water and sanitation sector.

Luxembourg funding of the PASEHA 3 is coming to an end in 2020 whereas the Danish funds will be provided for the period 2017-2022. The delegated cooperation arrangement between Denmark and Luxembourg will also cover the programme period 2021-2022, also in the situation where Luxembourg decides not to continue the country's engagement in the water sector beyond 2020.,

Programme investments funds will be channelled through a new Joint Financing Mechanism²⁶ including both Government and Development Partners funds based on annual government investment plans and budgets. It is the objective of the Niger Government that all funding to the water sector shall be channelled through this mechanism. In May 2017, only the Governments of Niger, Denmark and Luxembourg have committed themselves to use this mechanism, however, other donors have expressed an interest. A manual describes the administrative and financial procedures for the joint financial mechanism.

The Danish Embassy will participate in the Steering Committee for the Joint Financial Mechanism and in the annual water sector reviews. Monitoring and supervision of progress will be carried out by Luxembourg based on agreed procedures for administrative, financial and technical reporting.

The programme will operate with long-term and short-term international and national technical assistance. The envisaged TA reflects Niger's development level and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation's current institutional capacities. Long-term technical advisers will be placed in the Ministry, but will also focus on strengthening capacities in the local governments. The programme also envisions targeted short-term TA for e.g. integrated water resource management, public finances, and procurement.

Budget

Water Supply and Sanitation – DKK in mill	195.00
National water and sanitation programme, PROSEHA 2016-2030 – Investments via Joint Financial Mechanism	107.00
National water and sanitation programme, PROSEHA 2016-2030 –Technical assistance	26.50
Contribution to programme implementation, incl. mid-term review and management fee to Luxembourg	21.50
Unallocated funds	40.00

The use of the unallocated funds will be decided before April 2019 with the aim to ensure the inscription of these funds in Niger's state budget in 2019.

Monitoring

The PASEHA 3 objectives, results and indicators are to the extent possible aligned to those of the national programme but the monitoring system of the PASEHA 3 will also comprise process and performance indicators of particular importance for the programme.

The administrative and financial manual of the joint funding mechanism specifies the format of the periodic progress reports to be submitted by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to facilitate a similar reporting format for all funding sources.

Furthermore, effectiveness and efficiency of the PASEHA 3 will also be measured through value for money audits.

Main Risks and Risk Responses

The main risks are considered to be the following:

Risk	Risk Response
Continued weak leadership and absorption capacity in the Ministry of Water and Sanitation	Support to the organisational reform of the Ministry. Technical assistance and capacity strengthening at central, regional and local level. Dialogue between Government and Development Partners on necessity to ensure adequate domestic funding levels.

²⁶ Approval of the Joint Financial Mechanism by the Ministry of Planning and Development has awaited the Government approval of PROSEHA (9 May 2017). Approval is expected in 3rd trimester 2017.

The new Joint Financing Mechanism will not work efficiently and according to plans during initial programme period	Technical assistance (TA) has been given to the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and the Ministry of Finance to develop the Mechanism, including a manual for administrative, financial and accounting procedures. Continued TA to the Water ministry to ensure equity based and realistic annual investment planning. Steering Committee Meetings to follow developments closely. Continuous dialogue between the Water ministry and Development Partners.
Continued weak capacity at local government to handle water and sanitation affairs	Strengthening of the regional level representation of the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to assist local governments in handling sector activities formally handed over to them. Direct capacity development in municipalities especially to enhance capabilities in terms of planning, accountability procedures and management of agreements on operation and maintenance with private operators. Technical assistance at central, regional and municipality level.
Continued weak capacity to ensure correct application of budgetary and accounting procedures as well as procedures for procurement and control	Institutional support to management of public finances at sector level and to monitoring and evaluation. Technical assistance to the application of control mechanisms and accounting and financial external audits, as well as “value for money” audits.
Operationalisation of the new integrated water resources management will face difficulties	Technical assistance support to the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and other key duty bearers in developing tools and procedures through the new national action plan for integrated water resources management. Sensitization at rights-holder level on management of water resources and sensitization and better dialogue between stakeholders both at national and local level.

6 ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

The objective of the on-going thematic programme is to *improve private sector led, sustainable economic growth and job creation in the agricultural sector*. The thematic programme was launched in June 2014. The programme is in line with Niger’s overall development strategy as it addresses two of the five overall national priorities: inclusive economic growth and rural development with a focus on food security. The thematic programme contributes towards Goal 1 (No poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and it will contribute to the Strategic Objective 3 of the Denmark-Niger Country Policy i.e. reduction of extreme poverty.

6.1 Strategic Considerations and Justification

Even though the sector is by far constituted by small family-run farms with low productivity and with traditional production methods, agriculture and livestock constitute a main driver of national economic growth and job creation in a medium and long-term perspective. Furthermore a harsh natural environment increasingly negatively impacted by the effects of climatic changes is a major barrier to ensuring food security in Niger. In 2015, the situation of rural populations vulnerable to food insecurity was estimated at 24.8% (approximately 4,235,026 persons). Only 61.8% of the rural population was estimated to be food secure in 2015²⁷. As agriculture and livestock secure the

²⁷ Plan de soutien aux populations vulnérables 2016. Cabinet du Premier Ministre. Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des catastrophes et Crises Alimentaires. March 2016.

livelihood of a large majority of the population, the rural sector constitutes a key entry point for reducing poverty and for enhancing resilience.

Based on the experiences gained in previous phases of support to the agricultural sector, which had its focus on subsistence farming, the programme is specifically targeted at private enterprises with a potential to grow and create jobs in selected value chains. With a view to the obstacles to which private enterprises are faced in growing their businesses, the strategic focus of the thematic programme has been put on both addressing challenges linked to production and access to markets with a strong focus on private sector as a key driver of change and improvement. However, the programme also recognises the need to contribute to the emergence of an enabling environment through the establishment of public facilities conducive to promote production, transformation, and commercialisation of agricultural products. National partners welcomed the introduction of a value chain approach, which is new in Niger. By enhancing value chains, the programme contributes to the development of local economies by generating more income for farmers and creating jobs.

Considering the large number of young people that enter the workforce every year in Niger, special attention is given to address this challenge through measures aiming at giving preference to projects favouring involvement of youth, the recruitment of young graduates to support the regional agricultural chambers, and the involvement of young people in the formulation of policies, strategies and reforms. The collaboration with the *Maison de l'Entreprise (ME)* in the programme is to be seen in this context. The ME, as a one-stop-shop for enterprises and start-ups, allocates 20% of its shared cost facility budget for business development services to young people and organises business plans competition with a prize for winning projects. With an overwhelmingly Muslim population threatened by regional violent extremism, it is of utmost importance that jobs are created and the livelihoods improved for young people.

6.2 Theory of Change

The thematic programme is based on the following theory of change: **If** a strong focus is put on the promotion of private sector activities (family, micro, small and medium sized enterprises) through highly profitable key value chains while at the same time strengthening the enabling environment (both private sector players and framework conditions), **then** productivity in key agricultural value chains will increase and lead to both economic growth and job creation and to enhancing the livelihood of the rural population, and a decrease in the destabilising effects resulting from unemployment and poverty.

The theory of change is based on the following main assumptions:

- If the security situation deteriorates and does no longer allow the smooth implementation of programme activities especially in Diffa, support can be redirected to other regions;
- The selected value chains are highly profitable and have strong market potential (national and regional);
- The political will of the Government and the private sector to improve the business climate is backed by the necessary reforms;
- More and more enterprises migrate from the informal to the formal sector as a means to create the necessary conditions for enterprises to grow;
- More young people benefit from services and advantages provided by *Maison de l'Entreprise* with a view to fostering development of start-ups and addressing youth unemployment;
- Stronger interest on the part of financial institutions to grant loans to small and medium size agricultural enterprises.

6.3 Thematic Programme Summary

Short Summary of the Development Engagements

The programme consists of two Development Engagements:

The **first Development Engagement** has the following objective: *To promote green inclusive economic growth including enhanced job opportunities through the creation of added value in the agriculture sector.* Five

agriculture value chains (pepper, cowpea, groundnut, poultry and livestock) have been selected based on their high profile, market potential, job creation opportunities and contribution to the national economy. Support is given to strengthen the capacity of value chain actors to identify and implement projects that create value-added jobs and improve the quality of agricultural produces and semi-processed products in the selected value chains.

It is expected that agriculture production in Zinder and Diffa, constituting the geographical focus of the engagement, will be increased and links to markets strengthened through the provision of support and advisory services, the provision of financial support and support to the coordination of farmers' organisations. The capacities of implementing bodies such as the Network of Agricultural Chambers and the Regional Agricultural Chambers have been deficient and will thus be enhanced to ensure successful implementation. Along the years, these organisations have become a key interface to enhance dialogue between the State and farmers. At the national level, the programme contributes to enhancing the capacities of the High Commissioner for the 3N Initiative, which ensures coordination and monitoring of rural development strategies and policies. With a view to addressing the substantial problems for private sector in accessing investment funds, the thematic programme also supports a cost shared facility aiming at supporting e.g. green projects involving an energy saving technology, recycling of materials, sanitation and preservation of natural resources.

The **second Development Engagement** aims to *improve the business climate and the framework conditions of private sector development*. This engagement is embedded in the World Bank's Competitiveness and Growth Support Project, which aims, among other things, at improving critical aspects of the business environment in Niger with a view to supporting the platform for Doing Business rating. The engagement focuses on processing and marketing the products at a higher level while improving the business environment to enable these businesses to thrive. Key support elements in building up competitiveness and in improving the business climate are the provision of advisory services to micro, small and medium sized enterprises, the support to green and innovative projects, enhancement of access to credit for investment projects, and the strengthening of the public/private dialogue. The start-up of the Development Engagement has suffered substantial delays due to World Bank administrative procedures and thus only started implementation in January 2016. It has been decided to prolong its implementation until 2021.

Thematic programme objective, outcomes and impacts indicators

Thematic Programme		Economic growth and job creation in the agricultural sector	
Thematic Programme Objective		Improve private sector led, sustainable economic growth and job creation, in the agriculture sector	
Impact Indicator		Incidence of poverty in rural areas reduced from 45.1% in 2014 to 40.85% in 2019. Source: <i>Institut National de la Statistique du Niger</i>	
Baseline	Year	2014	45.10%
Target	Year	2020	40.85%
Engagement Title		Support to agriculture value chains in the regions of Zinder and Diffa	
Outcome		Green inclusive economic growth including enhanced job opportunities through the creation of added value in the agriculture sector has been promoted	
Outcome indicator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The production of cash crops has increased - The contribution of the livestock value chain to the Agriculture GDP has increased 	
Baseline	Year	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Production of cash crops: 2,271,916 tons. Source: <i>Bilan consolidé 2012-2015 de la mise en œuvre de l'I3N</i> - The contribution of the livestock value chain to the Agriculture GDP is 25%. Source: <i>Institut National de la Statistique</i>
Target	Year	2020	- The production of cash crops has increased by 27.5%. Source:

			<i>I3N 2016-2020 Action Plan</i> - The contribution of the livestock value chain to the Agriculture GDP has reached 27%. Source: <i>I3N 2016-2020 Action Plan</i>
Engagement Title		Improvement of business climate and competitiveness of value chains	
Outcome		The business climate and the framework conditions of private sector development have been improved	
Outcome indicator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct compliance cost savings - Increase of sales revenue of beneficiary firms (US\$) - Direct project beneficiaries, of which female (20%) - Improvement in Niger's Doing Business ranking: 176th place out of 185 	
Baseline	Year	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0 (Direct compliance cost savings). Source: <i>Annual Report PRACC</i> - 0 (Increase of sales revenue of beneficiary firms (US\$) Source: <i>same</i> - 0 (Direct project beneficiaries, of which female (20%)) Source: <i>same</i> - 176th place doing business. Source: <i>Annual Doing Business report</i>
Target	Year	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 million FCFA (Direct compliance cost savings). Source: <i>Annual Report PRACC</i> - 10% (Increase of sales revenue of beneficiary firms (US\$). Source: <i>same</i> - 2,300 (Direct project beneficiaries, of which female (20%)) Source: <i>same</i> - 145 place out of 185. Source: <i>Doing Business</i>

Choice of Partners

With a view to ensuring long-term institutional sustainability, the thematic programme is anchored at the President's High Commission on 3N Initiative ("Nigériens Nourish Nigériens") for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture Development. The High Commission ensures the coordination of the programme. Key private sector organisations such as the Regional Agricultural Chambers and its representation at the national level are important partners in the programme as representatives of the farmers. Finally the *Maison de l'Entreprise du Niger*, which is an entity under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Niger, is a key player in terms of creating favourable conditions for new businesses to register and of providing business development services.

Management Arrangements and Financial Modalities

Following the closure of the Danish Representation office in Niger in June 2014 it was decided to delegate the management of the first engagement to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Niger is a priority country for SDC, which has been working in the Sahel region since 1977. The SDC's aim in Niger is to contribute to improving food security for the population by targeting the mechanisms that generate poverty. The SDC focuses on supporting local development and agricultural sector stakeholders, including professional organisations targeted by the present programme. It should be noted that the SDC has long been contributing to improving food security and that it also provides support to the national system for prevention and management of disasters and food crises set up by the Nigerien Government in 1989 to mitigate the impact of recurrent food crises. This offers, should the need arise, the possibility to redirect Danish funds towards more humanitarian action.

Given the weaknesses of the national institutions and organisations involved in the programme combined with the introduction into the programme of innovative concepts (value chain, green growth, etc.), expertise is required to build capacities in these institutions. This expertise focuses on

knowledge transfer, providing monitoring and evaluation support and improving the quality of reporting. It is provided by international and national expertise.

The activities included in the second engagement are consistent with those being implemented as part of the World Bank's Competitiveness and Growth Support project (PRACC²⁸). In 2014, implementation of the second engagement has therefore been delegated to the World Bank PRACC programme through a trust fund arrangement. Technical assistance that focuses on technical support, knowledge transfer and "on the job training" is provided to the *Maison de l'Entreprise* to fulfil its role effectively.

A challenge of the program is to ensure that the linkages between the two components are maintained, i.e. that interaction between the actors throughout the agricultural value chains supported is effective. It is also necessary to ensure the organic link between institutional implementing actors of the thematic programme at both central and operational levels (regional). Strengthening of synergies between the two engagements constitutes a main task for the national institutional adviser anchored in the HCI3N in addition to assisting it in coordinating the programme activities.

Budget at Outcome Level

A budget of DKK 195 million has been committed for this programme in 2014 of which DKK 75 million for the first engagement and DKK 113 million for the second engagement.

Monitoring

The programme is aligned with the monitoring and evaluation systems of the delegated partners in accordance with the cooperation agreements. Annual progress reports, studies and surveys are produced. Furthermore, an annual report is consolidated by the HC3N as the national entity in charge of programme coordination. The programme is part of the monitoring and evaluation system of HCI3N approved in 2014; this allows for the regular monitoring as regards execution of strategic programmes of I3N and evaluation of results.

Main Risks and Risk Responses

The main risks are considered to be the following:

Worsening of security situation in Diffa	The programme is envisaging a reorientation of activities to other regions and has taken steps to ensure adequate supervision and monitoring of those activities still being carried out.
Declining ability to run farmer's organisations in accordance to principles for good governance	The programme provides capacity building for the organisations, including technical assistance. The management and administrative staff are encouraged to participate in trainings on good governance practices. Annual audits are conducted. Members are sensitised on the approach based on human rights.
Insufficient capacity to ensure continued coordination and coherence between the two Development Engagements at both central and local level	The programme has recruited technical assistance with knowledge of structures implementation and program design. The programme has taken steps to place the TA with Danida experience at the central level to ensure coherence and assist in coordination. Capacity building is emphasised. An annual coordinating steering committee has been instituted under the leadership of HC3N. HC3N has taken the lead in coordinating workshops and management meeting with the two Development Engagements of the programme.

²⁸ Projet d'Appui à la Croissance et à la Compétitivité.

7 MONITORING MECHANISMS

With a view to ensuring a lean and effective monitoring of the Country Programme and since the implementation of most of the Development Engagements of the programme will be done through delegated partnerships, monitoring will be based on the systems, procedures and indicators developed by these partners. The thematic programme aiming at enhancing economic growth and job creation in agriculture, which has been delegated to the Swiss Cooperation and the World Bank, will be monitored on the basis of indicators developed in the framework of the sector programme in 2013.

With no permanent representation in Niger and thus relying on delegated partnerships to ensure the implementation and the day-to-day monitoring of the country programme, the Embassy will recruit a Monitoring, Evaluation & Communication Team (MEC team) to assist it in ensuring adequate monitoring and reporting of the Country Programme. The MEC will also provide the analytical foundation for a continued assessment of the links and assumptions in the theory of changes of the programme.

The tasks of the MEC team are threefold (the terms of reference for the MEC team are included as Annex H).

Firstly, the team will be responsible for compiling, aggregating and analysing progress and financial reports provided by the implementing partners in order to facilitate the Embassy's reporting on the results matrix of the Country Programme.

Secondly, the team will on an annual basis carry out analyses of changes in the identified risk factors and assumptions associated with the underlying theory of change for the engagements and for the country programme as such. This work could include on-the-ground monitoring activities and consultations with implementing partners. In the light of the fragile situation in Niger, these analyses are considered paramount to enable the Embassy to readjust the programme on an informed basis, should the need arise, and as an input to the high-level consultations between the two governments.

Thirdly, the MEC team will be charged with developing and implementing a strategy for communication and storytelling on achieved results and outcomes of the supported activities both to stakeholders in Niger and in Denmark. All communication activities targeted at national stakeholders and the general public in Niger will be agreed upon with the implementing partners of each Development Engagement.

8 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Country Programme will be managed by the Danish Embassy in Ouagadougou. In appreciation of the importance of close monitoring, dialogue with partners and not least local knowledge, implementation will, to a large extent, be carried out through delegated cooperation and support channelled through multilateral partners or other intermediaries. The experiences gained in existing partnerships with Switzerland, Luxembourg, World Bank and UNFPA have overall proven positive.

The Embassy will, when possible, participate in annual joint donor reviews of the PDES and, to the extent possible, in relevant technical reviews. In order to facilitate the overall political dialogue with Niger, the Embassy will also hold high-level annual bilateral consultations with the Government of Niger to discuss current political affairs, such as the challenges relating to migration and stability, and with a view to raise any issues emanating from the implementation of the Danish Country Programme in Niger with the relevant partners. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Niger will chair the consultations and both national partners and delegated partners under the thematic programmes will participate when relevant to particular sessions. Minutes of the proceedings will be drawn up and signed by the two parties.

The Embassy will participate in steering committees under each thematic programme/Development Engagement in the agriculture and the democratic governance, stability and migration management

thematic programmes and as an observer in the steering committee meetings of the water and sanitation programme.

As indicated under the programme description, a long-term Danida adviser will be recruited under the Democratic Governance, Stability and Migration Management thematic programme (See terms of reference in Annex G). One of the functions of the adviser will also relate to the overall coordination between the Development Engagements of the thematic programme. This includes coordinating with implementing partners, contributing to ensuring the coherence between the development engagements, and technical dialogue with Government and Development Partners when relevant. The adviser will not be responsible for assessing partners' performances or maintaining dialogue with partner institutions, and the adviser will not represent the Embassy in policy dialogue with national authorities or with partners.