PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NIGER

Community Action Program and Community-Based Integrated Ecosystem Management Project

Phase I and II

Report No. 155367

DECEMBER 31, 2020

IEG INDEPENDENT EVALUATION GROUP | WORLD BANK GROUP World Bank • IFC • MIGA

WHAT WORKS

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COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (CAP-1) AND COMMUNITY-BASED INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT (IDA-H3460, IDA-H0250, TF-52053) AND COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (CAP-2) AND COMMUNITY-BASED INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT (APL PHASE II) (IDA-H4230, TF-92411)

December 31, 2020

Financial, Private Sector, and Sustainable Development

Independent Evaluation Group

Abbreviations

AIP	annual investment plan
CAP	Community Action Program
CDD	community-driven development
CDP	communal development plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results Report
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
LDP	local development plan
LIF	local investment fund
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PDO	project development objective
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPAR	Project Performance Assessment Report

All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

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This report was prepared by Lauren Kelly and Christian Freymeyer who assessed the project in July 2019 and prepared this report, with the support of Joy Butscher, Omar Moumouni, Oumou Moumouni, and Aminou Rio Rio. The report was peer reviewed by Matt Turner and panel reviewed by Jack van Holst Pellekaan. Vibhuti Khanna and Viktoriya Yevsyeyeva provided administrative support.

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This is a Project Performance Assessment Report by the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group on the Niger Community Action Program Phase 1 (CAP-1; P065991) and the Community-Based Integrated Ecosystem Management Project (P073011), and the Community Action Program Phase 2 (CAP-2; P102354) and the Integrated Ecosystems Management Project (Adaptable Program Loan Phase 2; P107841). This instrument and the methodology for this evaluation are discussed in appendix C. Following standard Independent Evaluation Group procedure, copies of the draft Project Performance Assessment Report were shared with relevant government officials for their review and comment. Borrower comments are included in appendix E. World Bank comments are included in appendix F.

First Phase of the Community Action Program and the Community-Based Integrated Ecosystem Management Project (P065991, P073011)

Basic Data

Country	Niger	World Bank financing commitment	
Global Practice	Social Development	Actual project cost	$52.41 million
Project name	Community Action Program	Expected project total cost	$43.83 million
Project ID	P065991, P073011	Actual International Development Association amount disbursed	$39.35 million
Financing instrument	Adaptable Program Loan	Environmental assessment category	F, B
Financing source	International Development Association, Global Environment Facility		

Dates

Event	Original Date	Actual Date
Concept review	01/06/2000	01/06/2000
Negotiations	04/04/2002	04/04/2002
Board approval	03/20/2003	03/20/2003
Effectiveness	06/30/2003	12/11/2003
Closing date	6/30/2007	12/31/2010

Key Staff Responsible

Management	Appraisal	Completion
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Second Phase of the Community Action Program (CAP-2) (P102354) and the Integrated Ecosystems Management (APL) (P107841)

Basic Data

Country	Niger	World Bank financing commitment	
Global Practice	Agriculture and Rural Development	Actual project cost	$39.42 million
Project name	Community Action Program	Expected project total cost	$44.97 million
Project ID	P102354, P107841	Actual amount disbursed	$33.51 million
Financing instrument	International Development Association, Global Environment Facility	Environmental assessment category	B, B
Financing source	International Development Association, Global Environment Facility		

Dates

Event	Original	Actual
Concept review	02/28/2008	02/28/2008
Negotiations	05/06/2008	05/06/2008
Board approval	08/29/2008	08/29/2008
Effectiveness	12/24/2008	12/24/2008
Closing date	04/30/2013	04/30/2013

Key Staff Responsible

Management	Appraisal	Completion
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Country Director	Madani M. Tall	Ousmane Diagana

Summary

Niger has made positive incremental progress toward its decentralization and rural development goals over the past two decades. Institutional decentralization efforts have been under way in Niger since its independence in 1960, but it was not until the early 1990s that the country began to meaningfully extend these efforts to rural areas. In 1993, Niger enacted a rural code that amended its land use laws to require consultation with communities for the use and management of natural resources. In 2004, Niger held its first nationwide municipal elections, a process that ushered in mechanisms for implementing decentralized government by electing 3,700 local officials to guide local decision-making across 265 newly formed communes. Despite these advances, significant challenges remain relating to sustainable financing, efficient and transparent management of resources at all levels, and the availability of qualified technical agencies and personnel throughout Niger's vast rural areas.

The World Bank has played a key role in helping Niger to further its rural decentralization aims. The World Bank has supported the implementation of the rural code throughout its history. It approved the Natural Resource Management Project (1995–2003) to help Niger jump-start the code implementation and followed it with the Community Action Program (2004–20), a three-phase adjustable program loan designed to empower local governments and communities to progressively achieve their collective local development aims in a participatory and sustainable way.

This Project Performance Assessment Report assesses the first and second phases of the Community Action Program (CAP-1 and CAP-2). CAP-3 was under implementation at the time of this assessment. The first phase of the program (2003–10) was designed to support learning by doing. It helped to establish local planning and financing mechanisms in 54 communes with instruments and processes designed to foster participation and transparency and build trust in the new electoral system. Progress was interrupted in 2010 after a coup d'état delayed municipal elections for a year. The second phase of the program, which began just as the dust from the coup was settling, extended the local planning and financing mechanisms to 164 communes, or 65 percent of all communes in the country. The program mainly financed community development plans; a local investment fund (LIF) that included support for economic, social, and environmental subprojects; and technical assistance for institutional strengthening at the community, commune, and national levels.

What Worked

The World Bank's support for decentralization in Niger has substantially and positively influenced the way its communes assess and address local development needs. CAP-1

and CAP-2 facilitated a participatory approach to commune planning by supplying training and support for creating local development plans, which later became commune development plans. Launched along with the introduction of local elections, the participatory planning mechanisms supported by CAP were relevantly designed to foster inclusion and accountability between citizens—including the most vulnerable—and their elected officials. In addition to developing planning tools, the CAP also effectively used a LIF to build commune capacity for inclusive, participatory development planning. Efforts were also made to integrate women into commune-level decision-making roles. Although quotas were not set, by 2019, women constituted 15 percent of the elected village bodies (and regional representation was 13 percent).

The LIF helped to strengthen the credibility and service delivery capacity of Niger's rural communes, in line with its decentralization strategy. The LIF, supported by the CAP, made financing available for more than 3,000 economic, social, and environmental microprojects, most of which functioned well and were profitable. The participatory process that the CAP supported helped to ensure an even distribution of these services throughout Niger's villages. By using geospatial analysis and by geotagging CAP subprojects to village locations, this assessment found that 72 percent of the LIF was directed to villages outside of the main commune seats of power. An exception was the high share of funding that went to the Niamey region in peri-urban areas that were more rural when the project started. Additionally, a disproportionate amount of financing was directed to the Tahoua region commune seat, which is also the home of the president.

Land regeneration projects enabled many short-term, vulnerability-reducing benefits. The CAP supported dryland management practices capable of boosting land productivity and food security. It financed the construction of rainwater-harvesting microcatchments, such as zaï/tassa (soil pits), demi-lunes (half-moons) and banquettes, that collect water runoff and increase soil moisture content. To support their construction, the CAP financed broad-based cash-for-work programs. The total area of reclaimed land is uncertain. IEG used satellite and drone imagery and site visits to verify the greening (increased ligneous cover) effects of the water-harvesting technologies in the CAP sites, and interviews revealed many short-term, vulnerability-reducing outcomes. For example, the reduced erosion and increased moisture content facilitated increased garden and millet output; the cash received for work was used for a variety of planting and household needs. A caveat: increases in vegetative cover since the early 2000s in the Sahel (called "the greening of the Sahel") have been shaped largely by increased rainfall, so the CAP effects need to be attributed to both rainfall and water harvesting management practices.

What Didn't Work

Central government funding is unreliable, enhancing the fragility of Niger's still nascent decentralization process. Obtainable data show that although CAP helped communes to articulate priority needs and receive a portion of their requested commune budgets from the state, the average per capita transfer declined from $3.72 to $1.83 between 2014 and 2017 (the years when data were available). Declining fiscal support from the central government coincided with an increase in national security spending because of continued threats to political stability from extremist groups. The precarious nature of funding from the central government could put local development projects at risk in the medium-term without additional support from other development partners or revenue sources.

Participatory planning processes, such as those enshrined in the community development plans, were a critical CAP contribution to Niger's decentralization aims, but the quality of participation waned when communes updated the plans without large amounts of donor support. The participatory process used to develop the CAP-supported community development plans was a strong departure from the way planning had been conducted historically. The consultative processes, supported by NGOs, increased communities' expectations about their role in identifying investment priorities. However, the quality of participation declined when communes updated these plans in the second updating round, especially without additional support from the World Bank and other bilateral donors. Commune officials point to the perceived high costs of consultations, including the need for skilled facilitation, feedback loops, and finance to facilitate transport and other meeting and report production costs.

The program did not include provisions for land maintenance after project close. The broad-based cash-for-work programs that CAP supported had positive, short-term environmental and social effects, but support for maintenance is inadequate. The project fully financed the works programs. Site visits revealed the deleterious effects of flooding, for example, in some of the project areas, where there was also a lack of funding for maintenance.

A lack of attention to overlapping legal and traditional land and resource use rights undermined the distributional outcomes envisioned from the land regeneration activities. When some open-access degraded land was regenerated, either farmers encroached on it or it was sold to private buyers. Similarly, the program lacked guidance on which villagers would obtain commercial rights to extract and sell gum Arabic on traditionally public land. The system for distributing carbon payments, however, was clearer because it was guided by protocols developed by the Biocarbon Fund (which provide cofinancing as part of the project).

The program neglected pastoral issues and lacked culturally sensitive approaches for women, despite the prominence that Project Appraisal Documents gave to these issues. Just 2.5 percent of all projects analyzed across CAP's two phases targeted pastoral activities, even though indigenous transhumant pastoralists make up nearly 18.3 percent of the Nigerien population. In more conservative parts of the country, cultural norms excluded women—especially married Hausa women—from the cash-for-work activities. Sheep fattening activities were promising, but they did not provide women's groups with enough group facilitation or skills to help them save and invest in such enterprises. Projects also missed opportunities to support market development for industrious Fulani women, who produce dairy products and an array of artisanal goods.

Risks to the Sustainability of Development Outcomes

Overall, the CAP has effectively supported Niger in establishing institutions and processes integral to achieving its decentralization aims, but institutional fragility, increasing incidents of conflict, and the country's high population growth rate **threaten these gains.** A coup d'état in 2009–10 (after a year-long political crisis) interrupted the program. Since then, Niger has been confronting several extremist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa—a conflict that has disrupted the country's development, including by distorting the national allocation of public expenditures. At the same time, Niger's annual population growth rate, which has remained above 3.5 percent for the past 25 years, grew by 3.8 percent in 2019, a factor that further threatens the sustainability of development gains

Appendix A describes Independent Evaluation Group project ratings. Appendix C describes the evaluation methodology and evidence sources.

Lessons

- **Land and resource restoration projects should support—and make evident how they are supporting—existing customary flexible tenure arrangements to ensure distributional benefits among resource users and to mitigate conflict risks.** Traditional land use arrangements in Niger between farmers, agropastoral, and transhumant populations are negotiated in ways that provided mutual land use benefits. However, as the CAP shows, increasing the value of open- or pooled-access degraded land without clear, enforceable land use agreements can lead to predation by elites and farmer encroachment. This occurred in the first CAP-supported site, where restored parcels were sold outside of the community. It also occurred in areas that supported intercropping (crop agriculture alongside tree planting): Although land restoration activities took place on communal land, the introduction of intercropping facilitated individualized claims on community

land. Such projects should be designed with an understanding of the customary flexible tenure arrangements and the coping strategies of vulnerable resource users who access communal lands as a social safety net. The composition of land management committees also requires attention to ensure that they represent different resource user rights and to mitigate the risks of predation.

- **The success of natural resource restoration depends on the extent to which private or communal resource users are compensated over reasonable, short-term time frames for abstaining from using those resources until the long-term public benefits of resource restoration are achieved.** The assessment of CAP-1 and CAP-2 found that when compensation is too small or takes too long to materialize, it discourages resource users from abstaining from using the resources, which undermines restoration of the resource base. For example, carbon credits were distributed to CAP beneficiaries eventually, but after the sequestration of 152,583 tons CO_2 equivalent was verified, the process was severely delayed and caused a significant level of consternation.

- **Projects that support land and resource restoration can ensure that women benefit by addressing participation barriers linked to social and cultural norms.** In CAP-1 and CAP-2, women benefited less from project activities for multiple reasons. The cash-for-work programs did not include female-only tasks in geographic areas where women could be separated from men. Additionally, these programs did not provide women with alternate options for childcare and other domestic responsibilities during the hours and in the areas where these programs were implemented. Women did benefit from specific natural resource management programs, especially from banquettes that protected their vegetable gardens from soil erosion and flooding. However, wider extension services provided to male farmers (that included the distribution of advice, fertilizer, seed, and tools) were not provided systematically to women, who often farm less-lucrative crops (for example, peanuts) in plots next to their husbands' land.

- **Socioeconomic and anthropological analyses, conducted before project elaboration, can support the gender aspects of production and marketing better.** In Niger, a very large number of women must fend for themselves and their families because their husbands migrated to other West African countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Senegal, to look for work. However, compared with other Sahelian countries, there were few socioeconomic and anthropological studies conducted during the CAP period that focused on gender issues. The evaluation and research show that direct involvement of women in selling livestock in markets is generally frowned upon in Nigerien

society, and though it may differ among the Hausa, women-owned livestock receive lower prices than those owned by men do.

José C. Carbajo
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Résumé

Au cours des deux dernières décennies, le Niger a fait des progrès progressifs vers ses objectifs de décentralisation et de développement rural. Si des efforts de décentralisation institutionnelle ont été entrepris au Niger depuis son indépendance en 1960, ce n'est qu'au début des années 90 qu'il a commencé à étendre ces efforts de manière significative aux zones rurales. En 1993, le Niger a promulgué un Code rural qui a modifié ses lois sur l'utilisation des terres afin d'exiger la consultation des communautés pour l'utilisation et la gestion des ressources naturelles. En 2004, le Niger a tenu ses premières élections municipales à l'échelle nationale, un processus qui a inauguré les mécanismes de mise en œuvre du gouvernement décentralisé en élisant 3,700 fonctionnaires locaux pour guider la prise de décision locale dans les 265 communes nouvellement créées. Malgré ces progrès, des défis importants restent à relever en ce qui concerne le financement durable, la gestion efficace et transparente des ressources à tous les niveaux, et la disponibilité d'agences et de personnel technique qualifié dans les vastes zones rurales du Niger.

La Banque mondiale a joué un rôle clé en aidant le Niger à poursuivre ses objectifs de décentralisation rurale. La Banque mondiale a soutenu la mise en œuvre du Code rural tout au long de son histoire. Elle a approuvé le Projet de gestion des ressources naturelles (1995-2003) pour aider le Niger à démarrer la mise en œuvre du Code, suivi par le Programme d'action communautaire (2004-2020), un Prêt programme adaptable en trois phases, conçu pour donner aux gouvernements locaux et aux communautés les moyens d'atteindre progressivement leurs objectifs collectifs de développement local de manière participative et durable.

Ce rapport est une Évaluation de la performance des projets des première et deuxième phases du Programme d'action communautaire (PAC-1 et PAC-2), tout en notant que le PAC-3 était en cours de mise en œuvre au moment de cette évaluation. La première phase du programme (2003-2010) a été conçue pour soutenir "l'apprentissage par la pratique". Elle a contribué à la mise en place de mécanismes de planification et de financement locaux dans 54 communes, avec des instruments et des processus conçus pour favoriser la participation, la transparence et la confiance dans le nouveau système électoral. Les progrès ont été interrompus en 2010 à la suite d'un coup d'État qui a retardé d'un an les élections municipales. La deuxième phase du programme, qui a commencé juste au moment où la poussière du coup d'État se dissipait, a étendu les mécanismes de planification et de financement locaux à 164 communes, soit 65 % de toutes les communes du pays. Le programme a principalement financé des plans de développement communautaire, un Fonds d'investissement local qui comprenait un soutien aux sous-projets économiques, sociaux et environnementaux, et une assistance

technique pour le renforcement institutionnel au niveau des communautés, des communes et du pays.

Ce qui a fonctionné

Le soutien de la Banque mondiale à la décentralisation au Niger a influencé de manière substantielle et positive la manière dont ses communes évaluent et répondent aux besoins de développement local. Les programmes PAC-1 et PAC-2 ont facilité une approche participative de la planification communale en fournissant des formations et soutien pour l'élaboration de plans de développement local, qui sont devenus par la suite des plans de développement communaux. Lancés parallèlement à l'introduction des élections locales, les mécanismes de planification participative soutenus par le PAC ont été conçus de manière pertinente pour favoriser l'inclusion et la responsabilisation des citoyens - y compris les plus vulnérables - et de leurs élus. Outre le développement d'outils de planification, le programme PAC a également utilisé efficacement un Fonds d'investissement local pour renforcer les capacités des communes en matière de planification du développement participatif et inclusif. Des efforts ont également été déployés pour intégrer les femmes dans les rôles décisionnels au niveau des communes. Bien que des quotas n'aient pas été fixés, en 2019, les femmes représentaient 15 % des organes élus des villages (et la représentation régionale était de 13 %).

Le Fonds d'investissement local a contribué à renforcer la crédibilité et la capacité de prestation de services de la commune rurale du Niger, conformément à sa stratégie de décentralisation. Le Fonds d'investissement local, soutenu par le programme PAC, a permis de financer plus de 3,000 microprojets économiques, sociaux et environnementaux, dont la majorité a bien fonctionné et a été rentable. Le processus participatif soutenu par le programme PAC a permis d'assurer une répartition équilibrée de ces services dans les villages du Niger. En utilisant l'analyse géospatiale et en géolocalisant les sous-projets du programme PAC dans les villages, cette évaluation a permis de constater que 72 % du Fonds d'investissement local était destiné aux villages situés en dehors des principaux sièges du pouvoir communal. Une exception est la part élevée du financement qui est allée à la région de Niamey, dans les zones périurbaines qui étaient plus "rurales" au moment du démarrage du projet. En outre, un montant disproportionné de financement a été dirigé vers le siège communal de la région de Tahoua, qui est également la résidence du président.

Les projets de régénération des terres ont permis de nombreux avantages à court terme en termes de réduction de la vulnérabilité. Le programme de la PAC a soutenu des pratiques de gestion des terres arides capables de stimuler la productivité des terres et la sécurité alimentaire. Il a financé la construction de micro-capteurs de collecte des eaux de pluie, tels que des zaï/tassa (fosses pédologiques), des demi-lunes et des banquettes,

qui recueillent les eaux de ruissellement et augmentent la teneur en humidité du sol. Pour soutenir leur construction, le programme PAC a financé des programmes de travail contre rémunération à grande échelle. Bien que la superficie totale des terres récupérées soit incertaine, des images satellites, des images de drones et des visites de sites ont été utilisées pour vérifier les effets verdoyants des technologies de collecte de l'eau sur les sites du programme PAC, et des entretiens ont révélé de nombreux résultats de réduction de la vulnérabilité à court terme (par exemple, la réduction de l'érosion et l'augmentation de la teneur en humidité ont facilité l'augmentation de la production de jardins et de millet; l'argent reçu pour le travail a été utilisé pour divers besoins de plantation et de ménage). Une mise en garde: l'augmentation du couvert végétal depuis le début des années 2000 dans le Sahel - appelée "verdissement du Sahel" - a été largement déterminée par l'augmentation des précipitations, de sorte que les effets de la PAC doivent être attribués à la fois aux pratiques de gestion de la collecte de l'eau et aux précipitations.

Ce qui n'a pas fonctionné

Le financement du gouvernement central n'est pas fiable, ce qui renforce la fragilité du processus de décentralisation encore naissant au Niger. Les données disponibles montrent que si la PAC a aidé les communes à définir leurs besoins prioritaires et à recevoir de l'État une partie des budgets communaux demandés, le transfert moyen par habitant est passé de 3,72 à 1,83 dollars US entre 2014 et 2017 (années pour lesquelles les données étaient disponibles). La baisse du soutien budgétaire du gouvernement central a coïncidé avec une augmentation des dépenses de sécurité nationale, en raison des menaces constantes que les groupes extrémistes font peser sur la stabilité politique. La nature précaire du financement du gouvernement central pourrait mettre en péril les projets de développement local à moyen terme sans soutien supplémentaire d'autres partenaires de développement ou sources de revenus.

Si les processus de planification participative, tels que ceux inscrits dans les plans de développement communautaire, ont constitué une contribution essentielle de la PAC aux objectifs de décentralisation du Niger, la qualité de la participation s'est toutefois détériorée lorsque les communes ont actualisé les plans, en l'absence d'un soutien important des donateurs. Les plans de développement communautaire soutenus par le PAC ont été élaborés de manière participative, ce qui représente un changement radical par rapport à la manière dont la planification a été menée par le passé. Cependant, la qualité de la participation a diminué lorsque les communes ont mis à jour ces plans, en particulier en l'absence d'un soutien supplémentaire de la Banque mondiale et d'autres donateurs bilatéraux. Les processus consultatifs, mis en œuvre par les ONG, ont accru les attentes des communautés quant à leur rôle dans l'identification des priorités d'investissement, puisque des financements suffisants étaient disponibles lors du

premier, mais pas du second, cycle de mise à jour. Les responsables des communes soulignent les coûts élevés perçus des consultations, notamment la nécessité d'une facilitation qualifiée, de boucles de rétroaction et de financement pour faciliter le transport et les autres coûts de production des réunions et des rapports.

Le programme ne prévoyait pas de dispositions pour l'entretien des terres après la clôture du projet. Si les programmes de travail contre rémunération soutenus par le programme PAC ont eu des effets positifs à court terme sur l'environnement et la société, le soutien à l'entretien est insuffisant. Les programmes de travaux ont été entièrement financés par les projets. Par exemple, les visites sur place ont révélé les effets délétères des inondations dans certaines des zones des projets, où le financement de l'entretien était également insuffisant.

Les résultats distributifs attendus des activités de régénération des terres ont été compromis par le manque d'attention portée au chevauchement des droits légaux et traditionnels d'utilisation des terres et des ressources. Lorsque certaines terres dégradées à accès libre ont été régénérées, les agriculteurs ont empiété sur ces terres ou les ont vendues à des acheteurs privés. De même, le programme manquait de directives concernant les villageois qui obtiendraient des droits commerciaux pour extraire et vendre de la gomme arabique sur des terres publiques traditionnelles. Le système de distribution des paiements pour le carbone, en revanche, était plus clair puisqu'il était guidé par les protocoles développés par le Fonds Biocarbone (qui fournit un cofinancement dans le cadre du projet).

Le programme a négligé les questions pastorales et a manqué d'approches culturellement sensibles pour les femmes, malgré l'importance que les documents d'évaluation du projet ont accordée à ces questions. Seuls 2,5 % de tous les projets analysés au cours des deux phases du PAC ont ciblé les activités pastorales, alors que les pasteurs autochtones transhumants représentent près de 18,3 % de la population nigérienne. Dans les régions les plus conservatrices du pays, les femmes - en particulier les femmes haoussas mariées - étaient exclues des activités de travail contre rémunération en raison de normes culturelles. Les activités d'engraissement des moutons étaient prometteuses, mais les groupes de femmes ne bénéficiaient pas suffisamment de facilitation ou de compétences pour les aider à épargner et à investir dans ces entreprises. Des opportunités ont également été manquées pour soutenir le développement du marché pour les femmes peules travailleuses qui produisent des produits laitiers et toute une gamme de produits artisanaux.

Risques pour la durabilité des résultats du développement

Dans l'ensemble, le programme PAC a efficacement aidé le Niger à mettre en place des institutions et des processus essentiels à la réalisation de ses objectifs de décentralisation, mais ces gains sont menacés par la fragilité institutionnelle, l'augmentation des conflits et le taux élevé de croissance démographique du pays. Le programme a été interrompu en 2009-2010, en raison d'un coup d'État, qui a suivi une crise politique d'une année. Depuis lors, le Niger est confronté à plusieurs groupes extrémistes, dont Boko Haram et l'État islamique d'Afrique de l'Ouest - un conflit qui a perturbé le développement du pays, notamment en faussant l'allocation nationale des dépenses publiques. Dans le même temps, le taux de croissance annuel de la population du Niger, qui est resté supérieur à 3,5 % au cours des 25 dernières années, a augmenté de 3,8 % en 2019, un facteur qui menace encore davantage la durabilité des acquis du développement.

Les notes des évaluations des projets de la GIE sont décrites dans l'annexe A. La méthodologie d'évaluation et les sources de données sont décrites à l'annexe C.

Leçons

- **Afin de garantir la répartition des bénéfices entre les utilisateurs des ressources et d'atténuer les risques de conflit, les projets de restauration des terres et des ressources devraient soutenir - et montrer clairement -comment ils soutiennent - les régimes fonciers flexibles coutumiers existants.** Les accords traditionnels d'utilisation des terres au Niger - entre les agriculteurs, les populations agro-pastorales et les populations transhumantes - sont négociés de manière à fournir des avantages mutuels en matière d'utilisation des terres. Toutefois, comme le montre le programme de la PAC, l'augmentation de la valeur des terres dégradées à accès libre ou en commun sans accords clairs et exécutoires sur l'utilisation des terres peut entraîner la prédation des élites et l'empiètement des agriculteurs. Cela s'est produit sur le premier site soutenu par le programme PAC, où les parcelles restaurées ont été vendues à l'extérieur de la communauté. Elle s'est également produite dans les zones qui soutenaient les «cultures intercalaires»: alors que les activités de restauration des terres se déroulaient sur les terres communales, l'introduction de la «culture intercalaire» (cultures agricoles parallèlement à la plantation d'arbres) a facilité les revendications individuelles sur les terres communautaires.De tels projets doivent être conçus en tenant compte des régimes fonciers flexibles coutumiers et des stratégies d'adaptation des utilisateurs de ressources vulnérables qui accèdent à ces terres comme un filet de sécurité sociale. Il convient également de prêter attention à la composition des comités de gestion des terres, afin de

s'assurer qu'ils représentent les différents droits des utilisateurs de ressources et d'atténuer les risques de prédation.

- **Le succès de la restauration des ressources naturelles dépend du montant du soutien à court terme aux utilisateurs des terres en attendant que les avantages publics à long terme soient atteints.** L'évaluation de PAC1 et PAC 2 a révélé que si la compensation est trop faible ou si l'attente est trop longue, les utilisateurs des terres sont plus susceptibles de pas respecter la réglementation sur les terres nouvellement restaurées. Cela peut endommager aux objectifs de restauration des terres à long terme. Par exemple, après la vérification de 152 583 tonnes d'équivalent CO2, des crédits de carbone ont été accordés aux bénéficiaires du projet, mais le processus a été sérieusement retardé et a créé le mécontentement.

- **Le succès de la restauration des ressources naturelles dépend de la mesure dans laquelle les utilisateurs privés ou communautaires des ressources sont indemnisés dans des délais raisonnables à court terme pour s'être abstenus d'utiliser ces ressources jusqu'à ce que des avantages publics à long terme de la restauration des ressources soient obtenus.** L'évaluation des PAC 1 et 2 a montré que lorsque la compensation est trop faible ou prend trop de temps à se concrétiser, les utilisateurs de ressources sont dissuadés de s'abstenir d'utiliser les ressources, ce qui compromet la restauration de la base de ressources. Par exemple, il a été demandé aux utilisateurs des terres participant au volet du programme PAC financé par le Fonds Biocarbone de planter des plants d'acacias du Sénégal sur leurs terres et de s'abstenir d'utiliser les zones plantées pendant environ cinq ans jusqu'à ce que les acacias soient arrivés à maturité, ce qui a entraîné une perte immédiate de l'accès aux pâturages. D'autre part, les paiements du Fonds ont été considérablement retardés, ce qui a entraîné des difficultés considérables. Si les paiements pour l'abstention de pâturage sur les plantations d'acacias ne sont pas effectués en temps utile, les petits exploitants de la région du Sahel n'auront aucune raison de soutenir la restauration des terres et des ressources.

- **Les projets qui soutiennent la restauration des terres et des ressources peuvent garantir que les femmes en bénéficient en s'attaquant aux obstacles à la participation, liés aux normes sociales et culturelles, dans la conception du projet. Dans les programmes** PAC-1 et PAC-2, les femmes ont moins bénéficié des activités des projets pour de multiples raisons. Tout d'abord, les programmes de rémunération contre travail n'incluaient pas les tâches "réservées aux femmes" dans les zones géographiques où les femmes pouvaient également être séparées des hommes. Deuxièmement, ces programmes n'offraient pas aux femmes d'autres options pour la garde des enfants et d'autres responsabilités

domestiques, pendant les heures de travail et dans les zones où les programmes de rémunération en espèces étaient mis en œuvre. Les femmes ont cependant bénéficié de programmes spécifiques de gestion des ressources naturelles, notamment de banquettes qui protégeaient leurs potagers de l'érosion des sols et des inondations. D'autre part, les services de vulgarisation plus larges fournis aux hommes agriculteurs (qui comprenaient la distribution de conseils, d'engrais, de semences et d'outils) n'ont pas été systématiquement offerts aux femmes, qui pratiquent souvent des cultures moins lucratives (par exemple les arachides) sur des parcelles adjacentes aux terres de leurs maris.

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1. Background, Context, and Design

1.1 Support for wide-scale decentralization gained significant momentum in parallel with the country's path toward democratization in the early 1990s, though some decision-making had been localized since Niger's independence. By 1991, decentralization was brought to the forefront at the National Sovereign Conference, and a high commission on the issue launched in 1995 brought further legitimacy to these efforts. A rural code implemented in 1993 enshrined decentralization into land use laws by requiring consultation with local communities for the use and management of natural resources. The World Bank supported the operationalization of the rural code through activities in the Natural Resource Management Project (1995–2003), which provided technical and financial support for the permanent secretariat of the rural code and Land Tenure District Commissions. Afterward, parliamentary acts created local governments at the region, department, arrondissement, and commune levels (Tidjani 1997; World Bank 2003).

1.2 A presidential decree in November 2001 created the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, which was in the process of operationalizing decentralization policies across the country just before the implementation of Niger's Phase I Community Action Program. Niger held nationwide municipal elections in 2004 to further institutionalize decentralization, creating 3,700 newly elected officials to oversee the country's local governance structures across 265 communes. Before that, hereditary leaders were the major authorities on tenure disputes. However, despite these efforts, the central government still largely controlled resource allocation to local governments. Furthermore, significant capacity building was needed at the local level to ensure that fiscal and administrative decentralization was possible (Idrissa 2020).

1.3 The World Bank's support has been integral to Niger's process of decentralization. The Natural Resource Management Project helped operationalize land tenure commissions and the Niger rural code, the country's first established regulations on public natural resources and the rights of local communities. This project was one of several agricultural and rural development projects that the World Bank implemented in the 1990s to aid Niger in its path toward decentralization.

1.4 The World Bank identified decentralization as a key way to empower communities to exert influence over local governance and services and has anchored this effort in a community-driven development (CDD) approach. In doing so, the theory was that empowering local decision-making by local leadership chosen through elections would increase economic efficiency, inclusivity, and public accountability. CDD projects

can also create strong bonds and trust between the state and civil society by involving local communities and local governance structures in project decision-making.

1.5 As such, the Community Action Program (CAP) phases 1–3 were designed as an adjustable program loan that used a phased CDD approach, whose design evolved over the program period. Previous World Bank support in rural areas had focused mainly on agriculture, but the CDD approach was designed to offer services across sectors, based on a poverty assessment conducted in the Tilaberi region in 1999 and consultations with local administrations, traditional authorities, and communities. The design of CAP-1 preceded the 2004 local elections (the first of its kind in Niger) and focused strongly on building community capacity for decentralized and inclusive decision-making and planning, and in using a subproject approach to incentivize and shape this process. CAP-1 targeted 20 percent of all communes in Niger (54 communes). CAP-2 increased this work to 164 communes (65 percent of the country's communes), while also increasing the capacity of local governance structures to design and implement development plans and projects. After the local elections and during the design of CAP-2, the program shifted to supporting commune councils and the communities they were designed to serve. As a CDD program with extensive geographic and community reach, the CAP has also been used to deliver emergency financing during crisis periods (including a regional avian flu epidemic and in response to the 2008 and 2010 food crises).

1.6 The CAP also has a strong ecological focus because of the constraints posed to rural productivity—both crop agriculture and livestock husbandry—because of the degraded state of the land, inherently infertile soils, erratic rainfall, and droughts. The world's highest fertility rate, a lack of nonagriculture economic opportunities, and an already limited amount of arable land compounded these challenges. The World Bank has supported the CAP with funding from the International Development Association (IDA), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Biocarbon Fund. IDA has provided critical financing to help create the structures for local governance and associated services, and the GEF and the Biocarbon Fund have provided complementary financing activities integral to the project, such as land and resource restoration and for capturing carbon credits.

1.7 These investments were made in parallel with other environmental investments across the Sahel that formed part of what is referred to as the Great Green Wall (box 1.1). Ecological investments, including investments in dryland technologies such as rainwater harvesting, were seen as critical to commune development because the increased productivity of agriculture and livestock was necessary for raising farm incomes, domestic resource mobilization, and local service delivery.

Box 1.1. The Great Green Wall

Land degradation and desertification of the Sahel has grown in importance as climate change accelerates. However, Burkina Faso's president, Thomas Sankara, first pushed the idea of a Great Green Wall to combat the region's arid soil more than three decades ago. However, concrete action was not taken until the 2000s, when several African heads of state lent their support to the initiative, which would create a large belt of trees, reclaimed fertile land, and natural ecosystems across the continent, from Senegal to Djibouti (Turner and Williams 2019). Currently, 21 African countries have signed on to the initiative, along with at least 11 international partners, including the African Union, the European Union, and the World Bank. The Great Green Wall initiative has focused on improving dryland management and restoring degraded lands, through which the initiative aims to improve environmental conditions, increase economic opportunity, and reduce the vulnerability of poor rural populations to climate change impacts. The World Bank has played a contributing role through the Sahel and West Africa Program in Support of the Great Green Wall Initiative and through the program assessed in this Project Performance Assessment Report, which the initiative partly financed.

Sources: Independent Evaluation Group.

1.8 The CAP evolved and adapted to many exogenous factors, including the avian flu, two food crises, local conflict, and delays caused by elections, among other factors. CAP-3 was closing when the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) conducted the mission for this Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR), and the program was contending with the coronavirus pandemic as this report was being written. The three-phase program, as this report shows, is anchored in a national, CDD approach and has shown an incredible amount of flexibility during crises, yielding lessons for CDD more broadly.

1.9 This project performance assessment reviews the progress made under CAP-1 and CAP-2, implemented between 2003 and 2013. It assesses progress made and its sustainability. It considers this progress amid the continuing finance that has been made available through the third phase, but it is not included in this PPAR because that project was not yet closed and self-evaluated at the time of this assessment.

2. Objective, Design, and Financing

2.1 CAP-1. The project development objective (PDO) of CAP-1 (implemented between 2003 and 2010) was to establish and operationalize decentralized, participatory, and transparent financing mechanisms that empower poor communities and local governments to take charge of their own development. Most project activities for CAP-1 closed in 2008, but the project was kept open until 2010 because of implementation of the emergency avian flu component. Original financing was expected to be $43.8 million, including a $35 million IDA grant, a $2.83 million borrower contribution, and a $4

million GEF grant, but actual program costs were $52.41 million. An additional IDA grant of $4.15 million was used because of the inclusion of the avian flu program.

2.2 CAP-2. The PDO of CAP-2 (implemented between 2008 and 2013) was to improve rural communes' capacity to design and implement in a participatory manner communal development plans (CDPs) and annual investment plans (AIP) and therefore contributing to enhance rural livelihoods. Some delays within the government of Niger caused a six-month gap between the conclusion of CAP-1 activities and the start of CAP-2. Original financing was anticipated to be $45 million, though actual costs came in below estimates at $39.4 million, partly because of decreased contributions from the borrower and cash and in-kind contributions from local communities.

Theory of Change

2.3 The theory of change for the CAP is tightly woven around the state's decentralization narrative. The CAP was designed to help the state create the structures and processes necessary for effective decentralization of resources and services. Figure 1.1 illustrates the derived theory of change for the CAP that this PPAR constructed. is an illustration of how outcomes and impacts are achieved from specific interventions at project entry when followed by a combination of institutional arrangements that are put in place to use the project's resources with different levels of authority, but with considerable interdependence and delegation of authority between those different levels of authority or power.

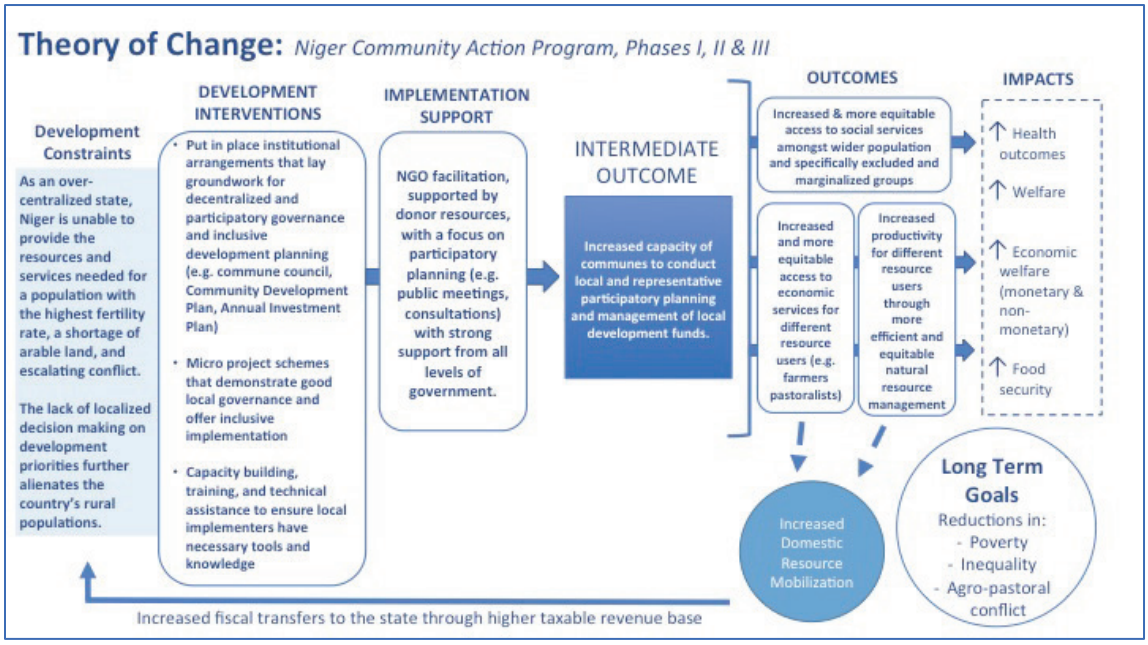
2.4 Specifically, the theory of change presents the pathways that the CAP pursued. It points to the main constraint associated with the overcentralization of decision-making and resource allocation in Niger, and the challenges that the state is encountering in delivering those services because of a lack of domestic resource mobilization, the remoteness of its rural population, a degraded resource base, and a burgeoning population (for example, Niger has the highest population growth rate in the world), among many other factors.

2.5 The CAP seeks to address the development constraints caused by an overcentralized state by helping to establish institutions and processes for decentralized local development planning. It did this by helping to develop local community development plans, participatory planning processes, and local annual investment plans—all of which were aided through nongovernmental organization (NGO) facilitation with guidance from World Bank program supervision—and by financing a local investment fund (LIF). The fund played a similar role as other CDD arrangements in low-capacity states: it helped show how local development planning and decision-making could translate program funds into social services and local economic opportunities. Thus, the fund, while providing financing for critical community

investments, was also used to incentivize and create demand for participatory and accountable local governance processes.

2.6 The outcomes envisioned by CAP—mainly increased access to productive investments and social services—required community development planning and the effective implementation of microproject programs. Both mechanisms were important. Without community-led planning, financial transfers may have been forthcoming but probably would not have been used for the communities' most relevant, pressing needs. Because of the paucity of finance available at the commune level during the early stages of decentralization, the subproject mechanism was also critical for stimulating investment. Social and productive investments were needed to address the basic needs of a growing population, but they were also needed as a "lubricant" to help the commune develop sound financial management, accounting, and procurement skills and to promote transparency. Income-generating activities that could be sustained after the project's close would also help to support desperately needed domestic resource mobilization goals. Ultimately, these activities, if well implemented, would contribute to increased human health and welfare, but this long-term goal was outside the scope of the programs being assessed.

Figure 2.1. Community Action Program Theory of Change



Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.
Note: NGO = nongovernmental organization.

CAP Design

2.7 The Niger CAP, implemented through a CDD mechanism, is the World Bank's key instrument for supporting the government's decentralization efforts (mainly in rural areas), which are designed to contribute to a broader goal of poverty reduction. Designed as a three-phase program to invest in long-term solutions, CAP-1 was developed at a time when Niger was going through significant governance transitions and embarking on large-scale decentralization efforts.

2.8 CAP-1 was designed with implementation responsibilities assigned at both the national and regional levels. The Ministry of Agricultural Development implemented the program at the national level, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and Economy (which oversaw the Central Coordination Unit) and the Ministry of Planning, which prepared quarterly and annual program reports. CAP-1 included a central Project Coordination Unit (PCU; Cellule de Coordination National) staffed with a coordinator, administrative and financial specialists, accountants, and technical staff. CAP-1 also created regional coordination units, which facilitated outreach and financing to project communities. For example, they were the initial conduit for financing from the LIF and were responsible for verifying and collating programmatic work, including validating local development plans (LDPs) created and finalized at the commune level. The program also included a national-level steering committee made up of representatives from eight ministries, NGOs, and donors who were also supporting other rural development initiatives.

2.9 CAP-2 followed a similar implementation design. Overall supervision of CAP-2 continued to fall under the purview of the CAP's steering committee, which the Ministry of Agricultural Development headed in CAP-2. The steering committee's mandate was reviewing proposals, work programs, and budgets; reviewing progress toward program objectives; and coordinating project activities with various actors. In a departure from the CAP-1 design, the number of staff within the PCU was reduced, and the PCU focused more narrowly on issues of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and financial management. Regional coordination units, which dealt directly with commune-level stakeholders on fiscal transfers and other commune-level issues, continued to support the PMU.

CAP-1 Project Components

2.10 CAP-1 was designed as a CDD program involving a wide range of activities, including capacity building, transfer of financial resources to communes and communities, financial management systems, policies and regulations on natural resource management, and natural resource and agricultural extension work. Its five

specific components, with planned and actual financing amounts by funding source (IDA and GEF), are as follows:

- **Component 1: Community support** (IDA planned: $3.1 million, actual: $0.98 million; GEF planned: $0.50 million, actual: $0.29 million). This component introduced decentralized and participatory planning procedures and improved implementation competence by developing the capacity of community-based organizations to design, carry out, and manage microprojects.

- **Component 2: Local governance support** (IDA planned: $3.15 million, actual: $3.46 million; GEF planned: $0.40 million, actual: $0.22 million). Component 2 strengthened administrative and fiscal aspects of local development. It was intended to be modest and experimental and scaled in CAP-2, if successful. It included support for the participatory preparation of plans and their administrative, fiscal, and technical managements. The component aimed to support policy and institutional reforms at the national level to accelerate the decentralization process, including by providing funding to the secretariat of the rural code to develop national and local environmental governance policies.

- **Component 3: LIF** (IDA planned: $24.6 million, actual: $19.55 million; GEF planned: $2.10 million, actual: $1.99 million). This component channeled small capital grants to communities and local government for microprojects in line with the needs identified in the local integrated development plan. These projects varied in scope and sector, from natural resource management to livestock production to domestic water supply, irrigation, and sanitation. The grant amounts were relatively small, ranging between $2.00 and $2.80 per community inhabitant.

- **Component 4: Poverty and environmental monitoring** (IDA planned: $3.44 million, actual: $2.83 million; GEF planned: $ 0.50 million, actual: $0.60 million) This unique component was financed to support the project M&E by measuring poverty levels and trends of Niger's ecosystems and management of natural resources. The project M&E was designed to integrate several different socioeconomic and environmental data sets into a spatial geographic information system. Additionally, the M&E structure monitored CAP to provide feedback to both communities and program management teams.

- **Component 5: Support to project management** (IDA planned: $4.21 million, actual: $9.59 million; GEF planned: $0.50 million, actual: $0.90 million) CAP-1 was, in essence, laying the groundwork for decentralized decision-making and local governance capacity, with an eye toward long-term projects emanating

from CAP-2 and CAP-3. Project management incurred significant cost overruns, caused by lack of knowledge about the complexities and high costs of rural local development, and the introduction of new and unanticipated activities.

- **Additional emergency project: Avian flu component** (planned: $4.5 million, actual: $4.15 million). This component strengthened veterinary and public health diagnostics, surveillance, control, and outbreak containment capabilities. This emergency project targeted an outbreak of the avian flu in northern Nigeria, which made Niger susceptible to infection. The avian flu component added seven new performance indicators but did not change the CAP-1 PDO.

CAP-2 Project Components

2.11 CAP-2 was designed to build on the decentralization and local capacity fostered by CAP-1. CAP-2 focused on three key components. The planned and actual financing totals encompass both IDA- and GEF-financed aspects of the program, but program documents did not differentiate the two sources of financing. The three components are as follows:

- **Component 1: Capacity building** (planned: $7.63 million, actual: $6.44 million). This component supported capacity building for communes and communities, which financed strategic activities to strengthen administrative, technical, and fiscal capacity; and capacity building for institutional and legal activities on community development, which financed studies, trainings, and workshops, including the finalization of legal text for the Ministry of Interior, Security, and Decentralization; updates to communal planning guides; and the creation of an effective M&E system for the Ministry of Agriculture.

- **Component 2: LIF** (planned: $31.80 million, actual: $23.92 million). Like the design of the LIF in CAP-1, CAP-2 LIF channeled grants to communes and grassroots communities to support socioeconomic microprojects, income-generating activities, and land and natural resource management.

- **Component 3: Project coordination, management, and M&E** (planned: $4.87 million, actual: $8.46 million). The general structure of component 3 resembled that of CAP-1, but one significant shift in financial resource management was enacted for the LIF. In CAP-2, the program took advantage of the fact that the government of Niger had created a decentralized "basket" mechanism to fund local and community development. CAP-2 planned to transfer LIF funds directly into the commune's budgets to be managed using public accounting principles; however, IEG did not find evidence of this implementation shift. Large-scale project components were not adjusted, but when Niger encountered several

disasters (including droughts and floods) during CAP-2 implementation, the government requested that the project support several relief interventions. It also supported implementation of the government's relief provision agreements with the World Food Programme, including building more than 150 cereal banks. The CAP-2 budget for project coordination incurred a significant cost overrun, attributed by project documents to increased M&E, additional project activities (such as the relief efforts described), and an increase in the number of communes the project targeted.

3. What Worked, What Didn't Work, and Why?

3.1 This section has three parts. The first assesses the intended and achieved results as articulated in the results frameworks for CAP-1 and CAP-2. The second explains what worked in CAP-1 and CAP-2 and why results were achieved. The third part explains what did not work in CAP-1 and CAP-2 and why results were not achieved. To do this, IEG conducted a desk analysis of project documentation, convened two workshops with the Project Management Unit (PMU) at IEG PPAR mission entry and exit, and conducted extensive field visits and analysis at the CAP sites (appendix C).

Results

CAP-1 Results

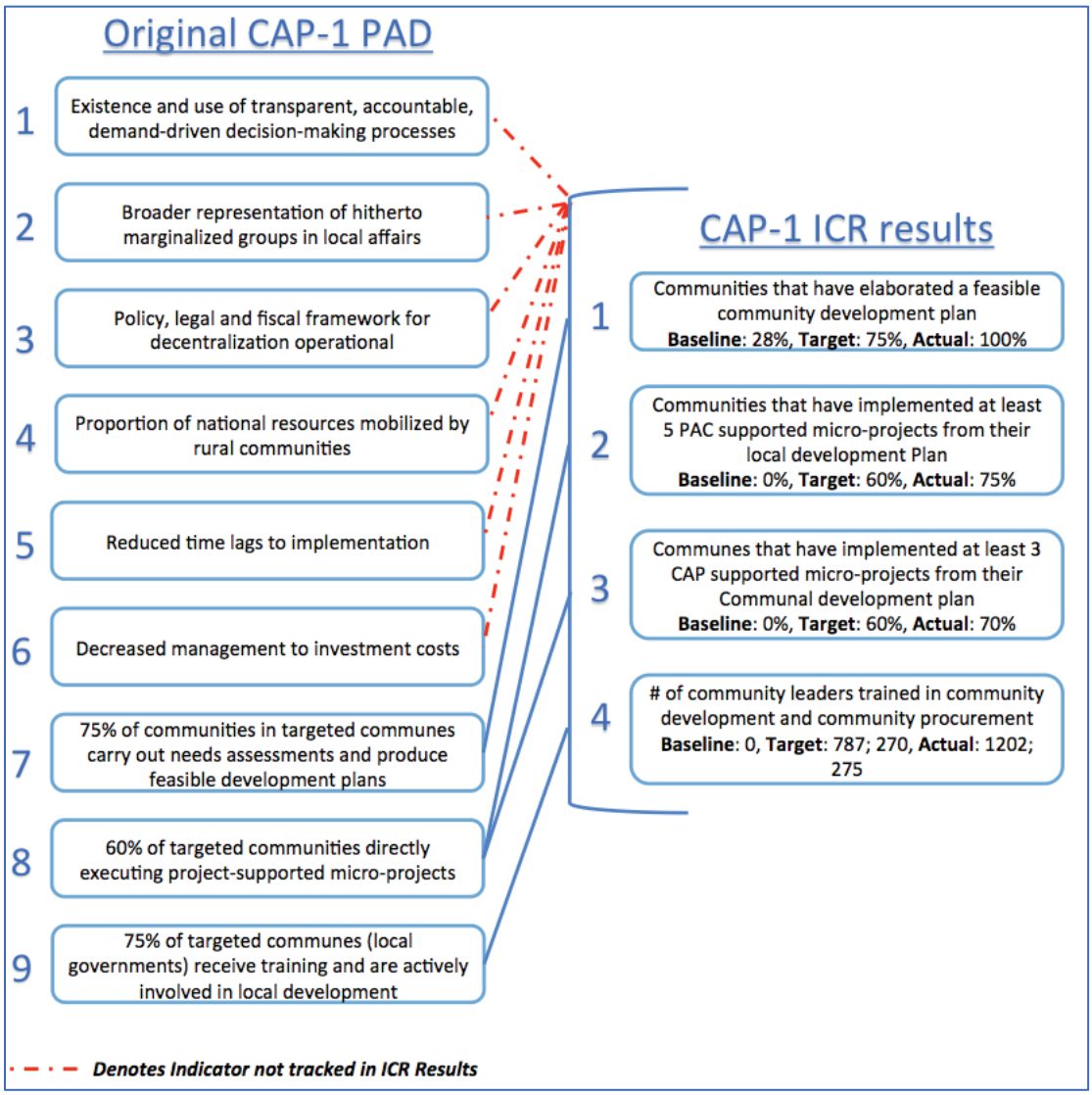
3.2 The CAP-1 Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) uses indicators that report on physical outputs but not the qualitative process achievements related to the quality of decentralization that the PDO envisioned. CAP-1 was designed to establish and operationalize decentralized, participatory, and transparent financing mechanisms that empower poor communities and local governments to take charge of their own development. The original Project Appraisal Document (PAD) indicators were designed thoroughly to measure the totality of this objective. The CAP-1 results frameworks and indicators were simplified and streamlined during implementation, which enhanced project measurability but limited the means by which the ICR and this assessment could validate the full objective statement. For example, figure 3.1 shows how the original results framework intended to measure aspects of inclusion, accountability, and transparency, but it also shows, through the red broken lines, how these were dropped between the PAD and ICR.

3.3 Overall, the project exceeded its aim of supporting communes to develop feasible community development plans. CAP-1 worked in 54 communes, which is 20 percent of all communes in the nation. Its goal was for 75 percent of these communes to develop a

feasible community development plan. The project achieved 100 percent of its targeted communes percent (figure 3.1).

3.4 CAP-1 also achieved its target of supporting at least 60 percent of targeted communities in implementing microprojects. The PAD's goal was to support 60 percent of targeted communities in executing project microprojects. The revised indicators refined this goal by clarifying that these communities would need to implement at least five microprojects to achieve the intended result. The actual achievement was 75 percent of targeted communities executed at least five microprojects.

Figure 3.1. CAP-1 Intended Objectives and Actual Decentralization-Related Results



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; PAD = Project Appraisal Document.

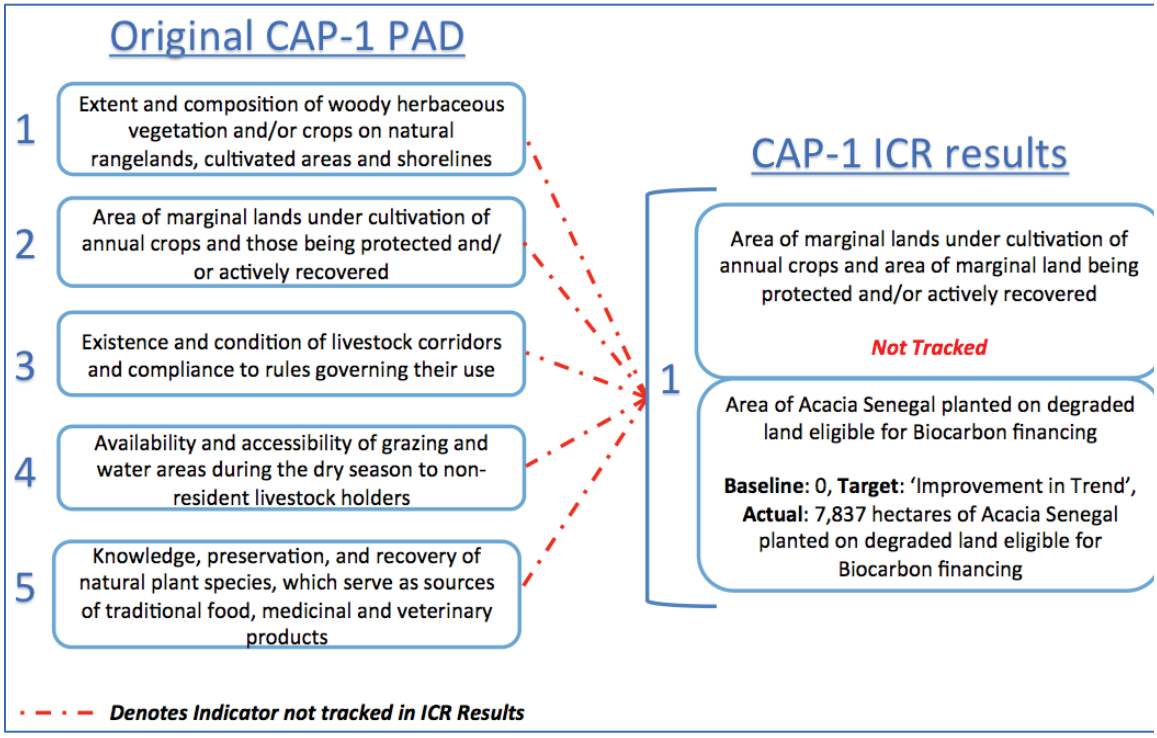
3.5 None of the meaningful environmental indicators introduced at program design was carried over to project close. This evaluation does not assess the global environmental objective of CAP-1, but it considers the relative achievement of the environmental subprojects that were designed to support local investment to address environmental issues at the commune level. The original indicators concerning the environment intended to track the improvement of vegetative cover across different land use systems (for example, natural rangelands *and* cultivated areas; figure 3.2). The project targeted both farmers and nonresident herders. For farmers, the project sought to achieve and measure the area of marginal land put under cultivation of annual crops and the area of marginal land being protected, actively recovered, or both. For herders, the project sought to achieve and measure the existence and condition of livestock corridors, availability of grazing area, and water, especially during the dry season. By project close, only one indicator was retained—the area of marginal land under cultivation of annual crops—and even then, the project did not report on it. The only environmental output that the project reported was the area of Acacia Senegal planted, though neither the PAD nor the ICR provided a target (Table 3.1). The ICR indicated that 7,837 hectares (ha) of Acacia Senegal were planted, but the only areas that could be verified were those reported by the Biocarbon Fund. Reporting obtained through the Clean Development Mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change shows that 3,121 hectares could be verified as eligible for Biocarbon Fund finance (compared with a planned 3,597 hectares by 2008, when the GEF finance closed). Other IDA funds may have been used to finance planting in non-Biocarbon Fund areas. The ICR also reports for the 2004–10 period, during which CAP-2 overlapped (2008–10). The reporting on the number of acacia trees planted could also be a product of this overlap. Survival rates outside of the Clean Development Mechanism monitoring that occurs throughout the project life cycle were not clear.

Table 3.1. Planned and Actual Area Planted with Acacia Senegal in Niger

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Planted area (hectares)	1,842	779	401	443	1,157	4,721
Expected in Clean Development Mechanism project design document *(hectares)*	1,300	1,992	305	456	1,204	5,257
Difference *(percent)*	49	−61	31	−3	−4	−10

Source: UNFCC 2018.

Figure 3.2. CAP-1 Intended and Actual Land- and Resource-Related Results



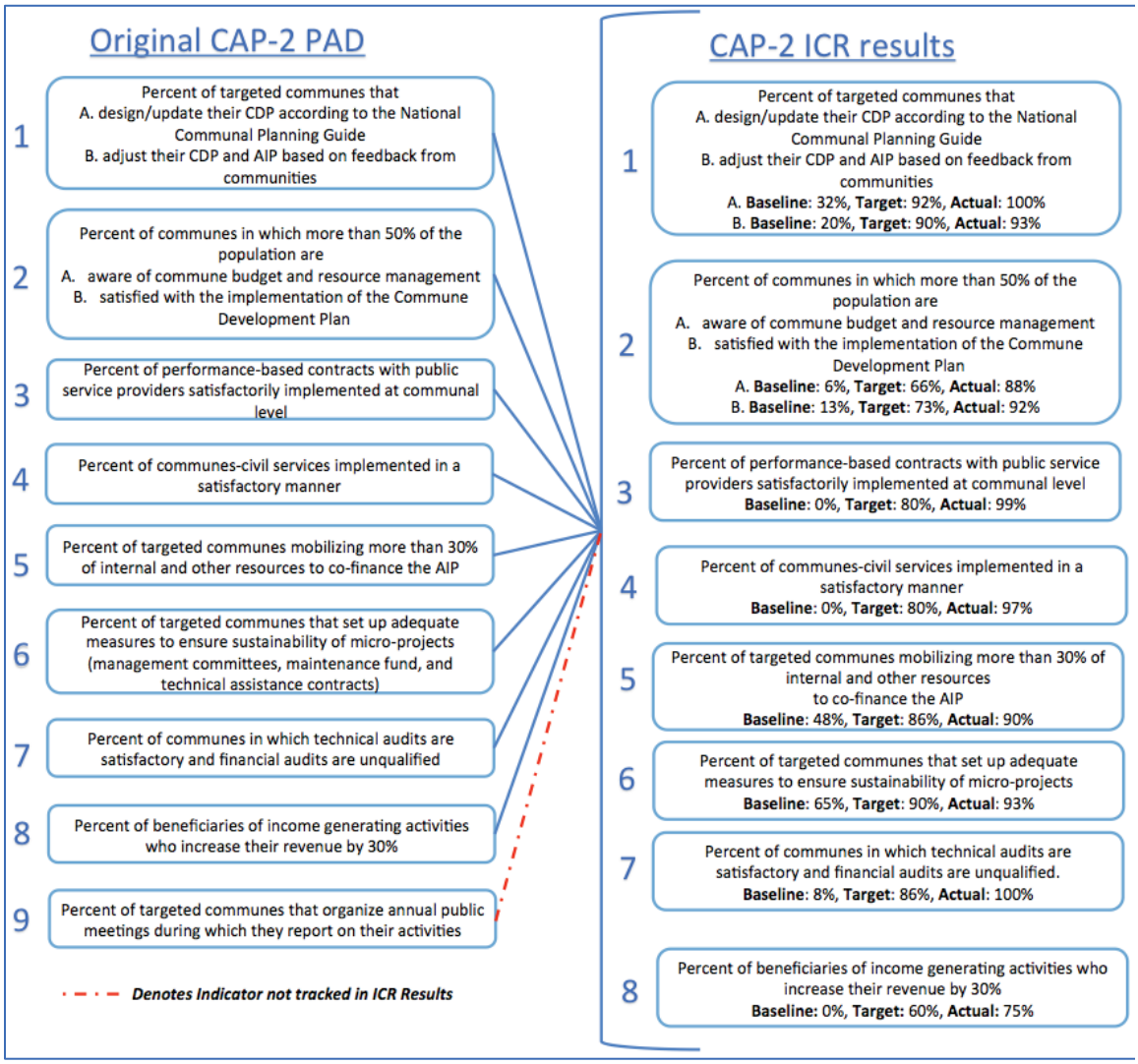
Source: Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; PAD = Project Appraisal Document.

CAP-2 Results

3.6 The CAP-2 results framework was more measurable than CAP-1, but there were weaknesses in how the project measured its social and environmental–related activities. The results framework and indicators designed to assess progress toward decentralization and resource mobilization were sound. The project met or exceeded its targets for the conduct or updating of the CDPs and AIPs (figure 3.3). Because the project objective also included the intent for the process to be participatory, the project also measured how often the CDPs and AIPs were adjusted based on community feedback and community satisfaction. However, the original indicator, percent of communes that organize annual public meetings during which they report on activities, was dropped and not measured. If measured, this indicator could have shed light on how CDPs and AIPs were adjusted in line with community feedback. A second relevant feature and notable accomplishment was the almost perfect implementation of the performance-based contracts and the high level of satisfaction with these activities. This is rare for CDD, especially in countries where contractor capacity is low and community knowledge about how to hold contractors accountable is just emerging. These issues

were not the focus of the PPAR, so more research would be useful in the Nigerien context to learn lessons about this highly positive experience.

Figure 3.3. CAP-2 Intended Objectives and Actual Decentralization and Resource Mobilization–Related Results

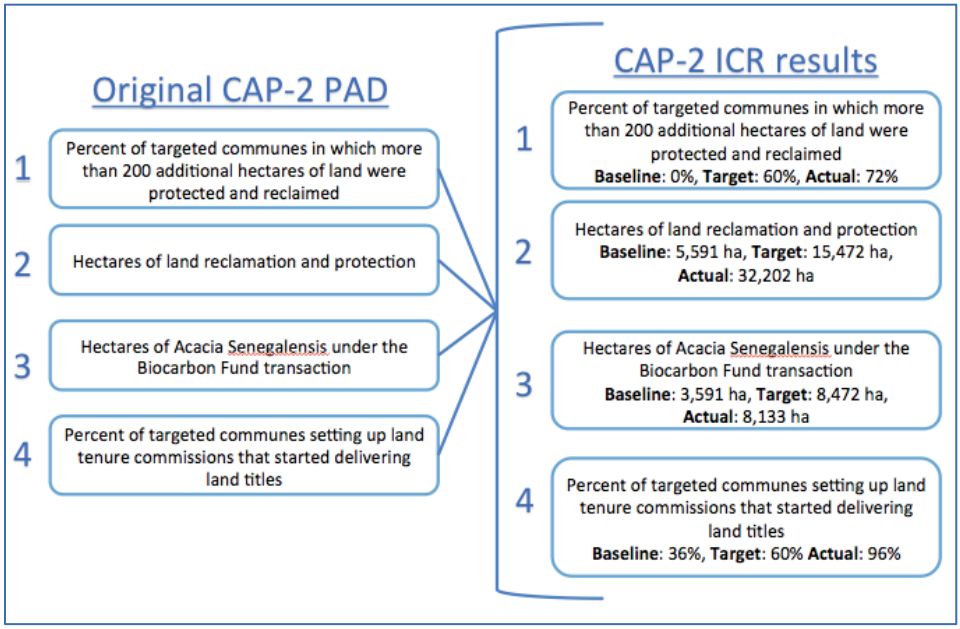


Source: Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: AIP = annual investment plan; CAP = Community Action Program; CDP = communal development plan; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; PAD = Project Appraisal Document.

3.7 CAP-2 also included an indicator to measure access to social services, but the indicator was meaningless because it anticipated paltry results, and it was not worth validating because it was not directly tied to the PDO. A CAP-2 original indicator was the number of communes that increased the rate of coverage of social services by more than 2 percent in education, health, and potable water. This quantitative target was extremely small for ill-defined service improvements.

3.8 CAP-2 clarified the land and resource restoration aims (the number of communes and hectares of land protected and reclaimed) and measured them more accurately. For example, 72 percent of all communes reclaimed more than 200 hectares of additional land equaling about 32,202 hectares (Figure 3.4). Compared with a baseline of 3,951 hectares of land planted with acacia, CAP-2 achieved 8,133 hectares of land planted with acacia against the target of 8,472 hectares (of which 7,226 hectares were verified through United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change data). However, a more meaningful set of metrics related to land and resource restoration would have focused on the quality and sustainability of the restoration and the way that multiple resource users were benefiting in the longer run, including farmers and nonresident herders. A notable addition to CAP-2 was the focus on land tenure, measured by the number of communes that were setting up land tenure commissions and starting to deliver land titles (see figure 3.5). No information was provided on the actual number of land titles delivered. Attention to customary flexible tenure arrangements was needed to ensure effective and sustainable land restoration and the fair distribution of subsequent productivity gains, which this report will discuss.

Figure 3.4. CAP-2 Intended and Actual Land- and Resource-Related Results



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program; ha = hectare; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; PAD = Project Appraisal Document.

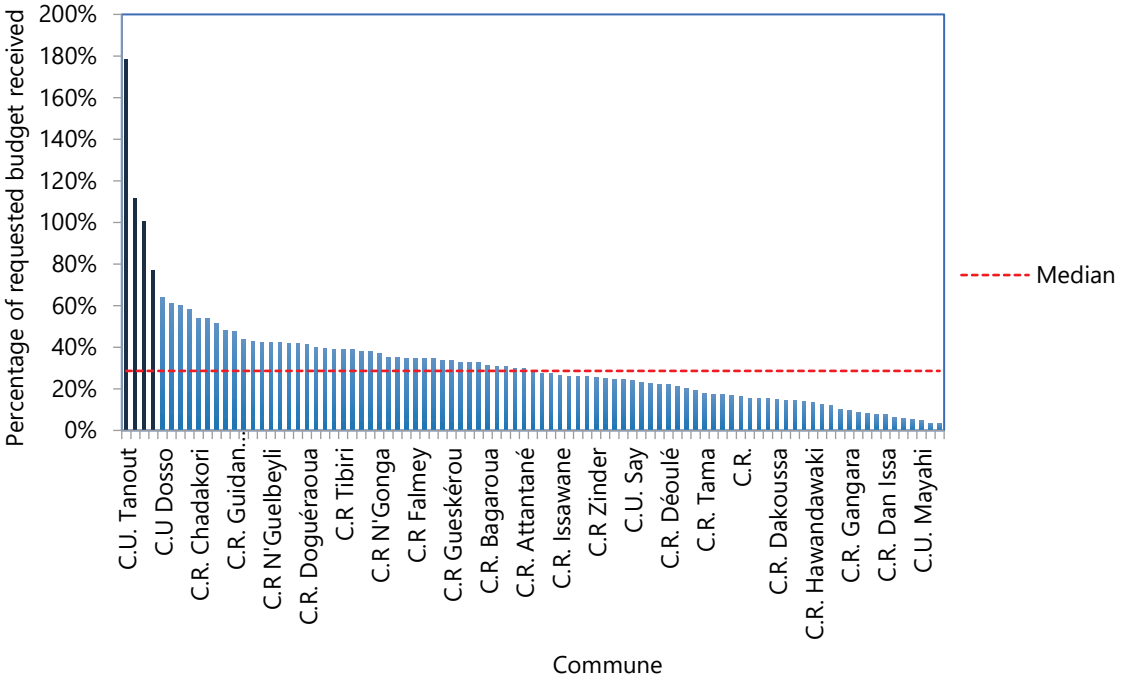
What Worked

Support for Niger's Decentralization Process

3.9 This assessment applied various data collection and analysis methods to evaluate the CAPs' contribution to Niger's decentralization aims. It collected data on public fiscal transfers from the National Finance Agency for Territories and Communes to the communes, and then it collected data on population to assess distributional effects. To assess gender integration, it assessed commune committee membership from the National Statistics Institute, which was verified through follow-up interviews and phone calls with commune mayors, deputy mayors, and members of the commune councils (see the Methodology section). Furthermore, the IEG assessment mission conducted workshops with six commune committees, which included town hall–style meetings attended by CAP beneficiaries from all villages within each commune (IEG paid for the villagers' transportation to ensure wide participation).

3.10 The CAPs strengthened the decentralization process and consequently enabled a certain level of fiscal transfer to the communes through the implementation of CDPs and AIPs. One of CAP's key outcomes was to help devolve decision-making and financing for local development from the central state to the communes. There is proof that the CAP communes received, on average, 32 percent of the commune budget they requested, based on their annual investment plans from the central government (for 2014–17, when centrally collected data were first made available, see figure 3.6). An examination of the CDPs and AIPs revealed that they tend to be extremely comprehensive, so receiving 32 percent of a requested budget is considered a substantial, incremental step to helping communes bridge their financing gaps. This equaled about $191,348 per commune (figure 3.6). Rural communes in Niger are very dependent on financial transfers from the central government and on donor finance. Data on domestic resource mobilization and the contribution of local domestic funds to the commune budgets were not available, though it is said to be small in comparison. Figure 3.6 also shows that several communes in Zinder (denoted by dark blue shading) received more than the average, though the reason for this was not explicit from the interviews and deserves more research as part of ongoing decentralization assessments and studies.

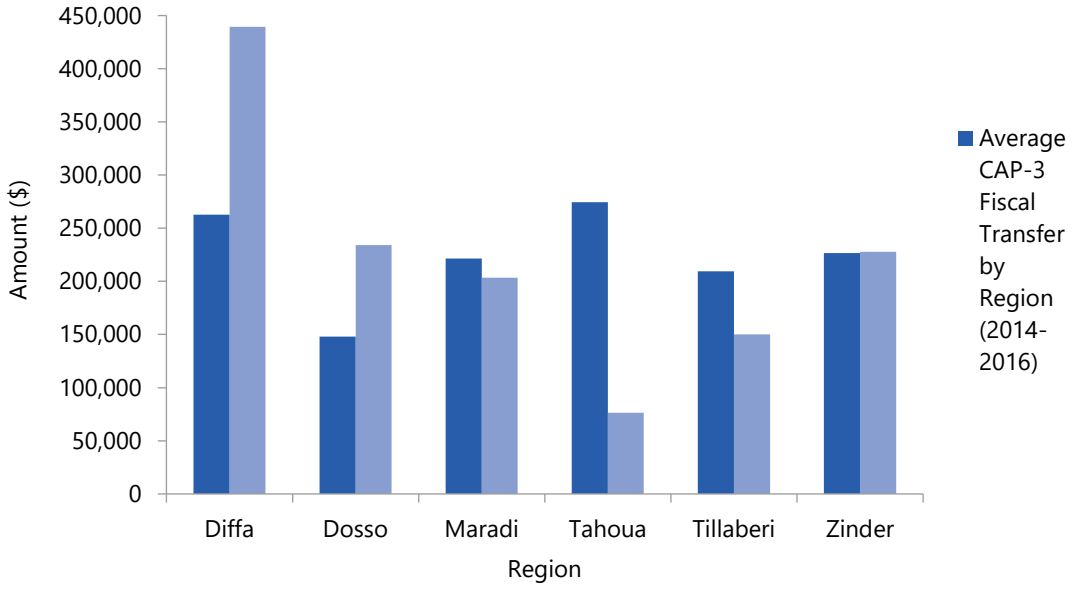
Figure 3.5. Actual Annual Public Budget Transfers as Percentage of Requested Budgets (Annual Average 2014–17), by Commune



Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.
Note: All communes in the data set are charted, but not all could be labeled because of the size restrictions of the x-axis; the full data set is available on request. Dark blue shading denotes Zinder outlier communes.

3.11 In addition to facilitating the fiscal decentralization process, the CAP also helped to bridge commune financing needs through a local development fund. For 2014–16 (the period during which both commune budget and CAP commune financing was available), there is evidence that the CAP LIF helped to bridge gaps in local financing for service delivery significantly. Although the estimation is incomplete (data could not be obtained for Agadez), the analysis suggests that CAP transfers—especially to Tahoua but also to Maradi and Tillaberi—were higher than the funds received at the same time from the national coiffures as part of the communes' annual investment planning (figure 3.7).

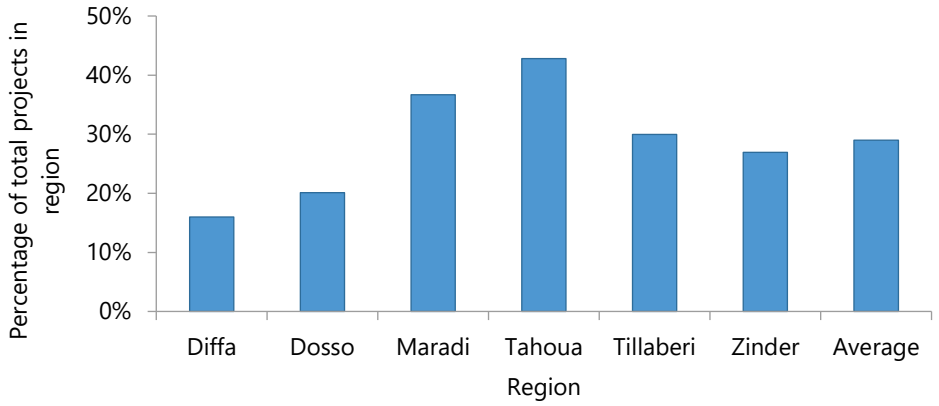
Figure 3.6. Average Annual Commune Public Budget (2014–16) for Six Regions Analyzed Compared with CAP-3 Financing (2014–16)



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program.

3.12 On average, CAP investments were distributed to both the Chef Lieu (commune seat), around which a large percentage of the commune population resides, and to more remote villages. Based on geotagged references that IEG developed, this assessment determined that an average of 28 percent of the 3,713 activities from CAP-1 and CAP-2 were implemented in the Chefs Lieux across all regions (figure 3.8), except for Tahoua, with 43 percent of all project activities on average. The IEG assessment notes that a large amount of CAP spending went to Illéla commune in Tahoua, the president's home region. Illéla also received 60 percent of its annual investment plan requests between 2014 and 2017, which was nearly double the average percentage that communes across the Tahoua region received.

Figure 3.7. CAP-1 and CAP-2 Projects Located in the Chef Lieux, by Region



Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program.

The Contribution of Microprojects to Participatory Local Planning and Development

Assessment Methodology

3.13 This assessment used a variety of data collection, geospatial, and qualitative tools to assess the contribution of CAP microprojects to the program's aims. To assess the CAP microprojects, IEG worked with the PMU to obtain data on 3,069 projects across CAP-1 and CAP-2. The activities IEG analyzed included microprojects implemented through the LIF, investments provided by the Biocarbon Fund, and the additional financing made available for improving food security and addressing the avian flu. After obtaining the data, IEG used geospatial analysis to map the projects to their respective villages and communes. The activities were analyzed further in a workshop with the PMU. Regarding field validation, this assessment focused primarily on land regeneration sites, food security initiatives like cereal banks, and Biocarbon Fund initiatives, which made up most of the total investments for CAP-1 and CAP-2. This analysis did not systematically assess the LIF-financed social microprojects because the indicators the project provided were not evaluable (see the "Results" section).

3.14 Most communes the program reached engaged effectively in local development planning, as evidenced by their creation of an LDP and the implementation of microprojects. CAP-1 was a pilot that targeted 178 communities within what would later become 54 communes as decentralization became institutionalized, representing 20 percent of all communes in the country. All targeted communities produced an LDP. The development of the LDP itself should be considered an accomplishment because this was the first time that Niger had supported participatory local development

planning. Additionally, a high proportion of these communities—75 percent (or 134 communities)—implemented five or more microprojects that were in their LDP. The 25 percent gap between those that created LDPs and implemented at least five microprojects and those that did not was probably due to weak facilitation in some geographic areas. Interviews by the IEG team indicated that this could have resulted from the weak capacity of NGOs hired to conduct outreach, training and facilitation, and remoteness. CAP-2 expanded to work in 164 communes, or 62 percent of the country. The second phase adjusted the format of the local development planning instruments by converting the LDP to a CDP, in line with decentralization processes , and by introducing an AIP to elucidate estimated costs for implementing the CDP. These adjustments were made to improve links to the local process of budgetary considerations at the national level. By the end of CAP-2, all targeted communes had produced a CDP and an AIP. Of these, 163 implemented at least one microproject. Although this assessment finds this indicator to be inadequate (for example, one microproject is not enough to establish CDP and AIP decision-making processes and to ensure distributional benefits), the continued development of the planning instruments is noteworthy.

3.15 CAP made strong efforts to assess satisfaction and engage citizens through data surveys and beneficiary opinion polls. Enumerators recruited and trained by the PMU administered an opinion poll at the local level, sampling 17 of the CAP-2 target communes across all eight regions. They targeted 10 villages within each commune and chose 30 families using random sampling techniques. The poll found that 92 percent of communes reportedly had a CDP and AIP satisfaction rate of at least 50 percent. Further satisfaction is based on a survey finding that 93 percent of communes adjusted their CDPs and AIPs based on community feedback. Achieving this level of data collection in many rural communes in a dispersed country such as Niger is an achievement. However, more could be done to ensure that findings were triangulated. For example, there was no measurement for whether public CDP and AIP meetings were held. Without this information, it is difficult to know whether the findings on adjusting these plans based on community feedback were truly validated. Furthermore, the number of communes sampled could have been increased to gain a more comprehensive picture of outliers—those that overperformed and those that underachieved.

3.16 However, little is known about the quality of participation in the CDP planning process, except that participatory processes are expensive to implement and unlikely to be replicated without project financing. Because the quality of participation was not measured (these indicators were dropped through phase 1), it was not possible to assess issues of inclusion and representation. CAP-2 added an indicator about the conduct of public meetings at appraisal, a proxy that could have shed some light on participation,

but this indicator was not measured throughout the project period. It is known that CDP and AIP development is costly: in CAP-1, the project spent $3.81 million on community and commune support components, or about $76,140 per commune to facilitate the process. Interviews revealed that communes could achieve a large level of participation, consultation, and feedback for the CDPs only with the support of project financing that also provided NGO facilitation. All communes interviewed indicated that the CDP update was not conducted in as a participatory manner, except for when another donor financed the process (the Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation).

Photo 3.1. IEG Focus Group with Traditional Leaders Near Madarounfa, Maradi Region

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Note: IEG = Independent Evaluation Group.

Microprojects Were Profitable, and Environmental Projects Were the Best Performers.

3.17 Most microprojects launched during CAP-1 achieved some level of profitability, with environmental protection projects reaching the highest levels of financial viability. At the end of CAP-1, 1,546 microprojects were completed. Of these, 60 percent achieved profitability, according to an economic analysis conducted by the PMU. The project analysis used net present value and internal rate of return as key metrics to assess a project's profitability. According to this analysis, the most profitable category reported was environmental protection microprojects, including tree planting, Biocarbon Fund sites, stocking fishponds, and providing equipment for fishermen. The increased wood

and animal fodder that resulted from the reclaimed land also bolstered the financial viability of environmental protection projects. However, this assessment determined that even these projects were not without their own implementation challenges (see What Didn't Work). The project analysis found that capital-intensive agropastoral projects was the least profitable category, which includes raising animals, processing animal products, and commune-level investments in cereal banks, animal feed storage, and farm input stores. Some of the profitability findings run counter to the literature, which has shown that animal fattening projects (particularly those involving women) are often highly profitable. Additionally, cereal banks—another unprofitable category, according to the ICR—were designed to be breakeven, by definition; therefore, their perceived financial underperformance should be qualified. IEG interviews with recipients of commune-level investments revealed challenges associated with the need for group-level decision-making and maintenance. Equally, beneficiaries felt many commune-level investments lacked transparency, and the benefits of such projects were not always distributed evenly (see What Didn't Work). Additionally, commune-level projects often involved a high level of capital costs, usually $10,000 to $15,000, which is a substantial amount for a commune to oversee and maintain. With such significant investments, greater business acumen (for example, financial literacy and accounting skills) is needed to track the financial transfer.

3.18 The reporting on the outcomes of microprojects in CAP-2, including their profitability, was dubious compared with CAP-1. For CAP-2, the ICR reports that nearly all the income-generating microprojects were profitable, but in CAP-1, only 60 percent of the microprojects achieved profitability. The CAP-2 ICR does not explain the difference in the success rate between CAP-1 and CAP-2. For example, capital-intensive agropastoral projects—including raising animals, processing animal products, and commune-level investments in cereal banks, animal feed storage, and farm input stores—were unprofitable. However, the CAP-2 ICR does not explain how microproject design or implementation was adjusted to achieve success for those activities after their failure in CAP-1. Additionally, the CAP-2 ICR indicates that village grain mills were unprofitable (as in CAP-1), though it does not provide a reason. The current literature points to the reason for grain milling unprofitability as social pressure to keep milling charges low, because women (who benefit from grain milling) typically have limited disposable income (Turner and Williams 2020). Furthermore, the small number of microprojects in the different subcategories assessed and the lack of representativeness across regions does not allow for an assessment of either internal (to the microproject subset) or external (to the project as a whole) validity. For example, most cost-benefit assessments looked at fewer than five microprojects per category. Moreover, IEG analysis of similar CDD projects in West Africa have shown that profitable income-generating microprojects are hard to sustain. Although the ICR for CAP-2 notes that a

high level of nonmonetary benefits (for example, food security) for such projects is likely, many of these will require additional support, including for maintenance.

3.19 Women-led microprojects were the most profitable during CAP-1, and although CAP-2 may have replicated this finding, there is no available evidence of their performance in the project's second phase. According to the CAP-1 ICR, microprojects managed by women or women's groups were the m@ost profitable, even when the project's sector was in the least profitable category. Of 143 projects sampled for the ICR economic analysis, 45 of 58 women-led agropastoral microprojects were profitable, and 8 of 9 women's artisanal or small business projects sampled also achieved profitability. These rates of profitability were significantly higher than those of projects run by men's groups or traditional male leadership, such as village chiefs. By creating a microproject program available to women's groups, CAP also offered women access to finance and assets that might not have been available previously because of cultural norms or a general inaccessibility to credit.

Photo 3.2. Tuareg Woman in Zongo Kawassa, Tahoua Region and Her Crafts

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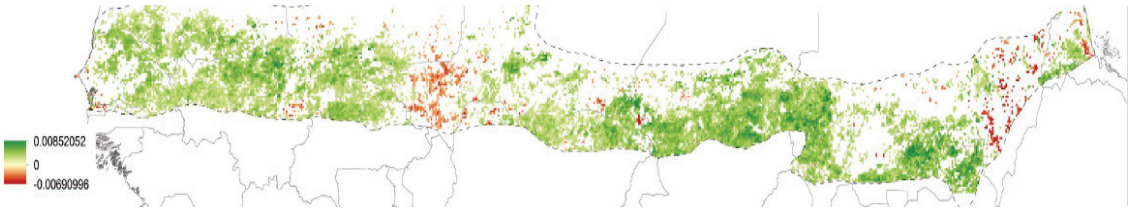
Land Regeneration Projects Enabled Many Short-Term, Vulnerability-Reducing Benefits.

3.20 The CAP helped many rural poor Nigeriens to put in place dryland management regimes capable of augmenting land productivity and enhancing food security. The

program provided financing and technical assistance to land users to put in place rainwater harvesting, microcatchments (small soil structures designed to collect soil runoff and increase soil moisture), and revegetation projects. Project documentation is unclear regarding the total amount of land that targeted communes reclaimed. It indicates that 118 of the 164 communes participating in the programs effectively reclaimed land, but the total number of hectares is uncertain because of varying indicators (see the "Results" section). The IEG assessment confirmed that these dryland technologies were implemented across several CAP project areas by using satellite imagery from the Global Land Analysis and Discovery laboratory at the University of Maryland and drone footage captured during fieldwork. These sites were purposively selected based on the amount of land investments made. Site visits and interviews with land users provided plausible evidence that the desired soil erosion reduction and moisture retention effects were obtained through these program-financed technologies.

3.21 However, regional increases in vegetative cover since the early 2000s in the Sahel (called "the greening of the Sahel") has been shaped largely by increasing rainfall (figure 3.8). Still, promotional statements (and various World Bank sustainable land management ICRs) attribute Sahelian greening (increased ligneous cover) to farmers' actions (GEF 2019; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, n.d.), even though greening has occurred widely on sandy soils *whether managed or not* (Dardel et al. 2014; Ouedraogo et al. 2014; Herrmann et al. 2005). The dryland technologies enable the rainfall to be more productive in a particular location, but a lack of measurement at the project level prevented a rigorous analysis of lost moisture outside of the intervention zone or the precise contribution of these technologies versus the rainfall effects (figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8. The Greening of the Sahel (1981–2014)



Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.
Note: This image shows the analysis of earth observation data over the entire Sahel area, depicting positive trends in vegetation greenness and rainfall (obtained by using Normalized Difference Vegetation Index time series). The green dots denote increases in vegetation greenness, and the red dots denote decreases in vegetation greenness.

3.22 The CAP helped finance the planting of Acacia Senegal that helped to facilitate land restoration and short-term vulnerability reduction in designated parts of the program area.The program helped to facilitate the planting of between 7,000–8,000

hectares of Acacia Senegal. The Biocarbon Fund–financed plantations included as part of this project were managed by 26 rural communities and spread across six separate administrative regions in Niger. In total, Nigerien communes received $346,650 in Biocarbon Fund payments during the CAP. The Diffa region received the highest amount of biocarbon funding, totaling $134,037 (figure 3.9). However, most regions received relatively similar levels of payments, with Dosso, Tillabéri, and Zinder regions all receiving between $43,000 and $69,000. Niamey, which had just one biocarbon site, received $3,602. The carbon payment program had problems, such as extreme delays in payments to communities that resulted in some level of incredulity and intracommunal frustration. Furthermore, as the CAP-2 ICR notes, the payment delays created some project risk because of growing mistrust that could potentially manifest as a decline in motivation to adopt sustainable natural resources management behaviors.

3.23 Specifically, smallholders participating in the Biocarbon Fund–financed program were asked to plant Acacia Senegal seedlings on their landholdings and then withhold any use of the areas planted for about five years until the acacia trees are mature, resulting in an immediate five-year loss of income. However, payments from the fund were delayed considerably, causing substantial hardship. Unless payments from the fund are made when trees have been planted, smallholders in the Sahel region will have no incentive to make the program sustainable.

Photo 3.3. Acacia Trees Planted using Demi-Lune Technology

*@Nicky Parisse/*Dawning, LLC. "Used with the permission of Nicky Parisse/Dawning, LLC. Further permission required for reuse.
Note: These acacia trees were planted at the Lido biocarbon site, 200 kilometers from Niamey.

CAP Investments in Human Capital Effectively Supported Sustainable Land Management Practices, but Support Has Waned since the Project Closed.

3.24 The local land management institutions (land management committees) the project supported were resilient well after the project closed, but they lacked sustained influence and government support. Land management committees formed by the CAP projects were still visibly intact at the CAP sites the IEG assessment team visited. Access and use rights over the land were often a source of contention, but interviews with land management committee members revealed that they continued to advocate for the goals of land restoration. However, without project supervision and financing, this assessment confirmed that committees are struggling to maintain vigilance and authority over land use. Additionally, at the sites visited, there was no finance available for physically maintaining the land after a project's close (as discussed in the following section, "What Didn't Work"). IEG conducted interviews with land committee members who had not received funding for more than a decade yet were still actively advocating for the sites to be maintained for land restoration activities.

3.25 There was broad and uniform satisfaction with CAP's cash-for-work aspect across sites the IEG assessment visited because it supplied income to many poor families. The cash-for-work program provided temporary work opportunities for rural land users—often from towns and villages next to the CAP sites—for land restoration and tree planting. Payment data were not available in project documents, but IEG ascertained through interviews that participants, on average, received $0.57 per demi-lune (a type of land regeneration technology used to preserve groundwater). On average, a worker completed three demi-lunes a day for a daily wage of $1.73. Additionally, groups of eight workers received $34.32 ($4.30 per person per day) to build a single banquette (another type of land regeneration and water capture technology). The response to IEG's group interview questions about the benefits of this program were overwhelmingly positive: all former participants who attended IEG meetings attested to the critical support that the cash-for-work income provided to their seasonal planting and household needs. In fact, in every instance when IEG convened a meeting at a CAP project site that had cash-for-work, former participants literally ran from miles away with their tools in tow. There was a strong desire from all interviewed to take part in another cash-for-work program. The program also provided some financial reprieve for youths—nearly 60 percent of the country's population—who often have no land of their own because of large families, gerontocracy, and decreasing amounts of unused arable land (box 3.1).

Box 3.1. Migrating Youths Earn Meager Living Abroad

The Independent Evaluation Group conducted youth group interviews in Gamji, Niger, and learned that nearly all of the village's male youth population (18 to 30 years of age) took part in seasonal migration to Nigeria because of a lack of available and arable land (their fathers or older brothers often controlled the family land). Jobs they held in Nigeria varied but included selling newspapers and office supplies, and delivering water. Migrant youths saved relatively small sums ($35–$80) at the end of their four-to-eight-month stays. and some said they sent remittance payments to the village during this time. One youth estimated earning $3.87 weekly, far below what could have been earned in the cash-for-work program. A key finding from these interviews is the importance of timing cash-for-work programs to enable participation when youths are not abroad for work and when it does not inhibit their ability to contribute to the planting season on their family lands.

Photo B3.1.1. Youths in Gamji, Niger, Ages 18–35

©*Raul Roman*/Dawning, LLC.

3.26 The CAP supported women's participation in representative decision-making, but there is vast room for improvement. Gender integration is an important aim of World Bank support for decentralized, participatory development, especially to ensure more diverse programming at the local level. Data gathered by IEG from the National Electoral Commission, confirmed by the IEG local team through phone interviews and follow-up calls, found that as of July 2019, CAP achieved a certain level of gender integration. By 2011, 16 percent of village councilors in Niger were women. At the commune level, women represented 15 percent of the elected body, and regional representation was 13 percent (figure 3.10). IEG does not have data for years before the creation of local elected bodies in 2004, but most decision-making would have been reserved for the male, traditional canton chief (a canton, or a district, includes many villages). The relative increase in women's representation in decision-making bodies is a positive development in comparison; however, women still lacks a significant voice at the local level.

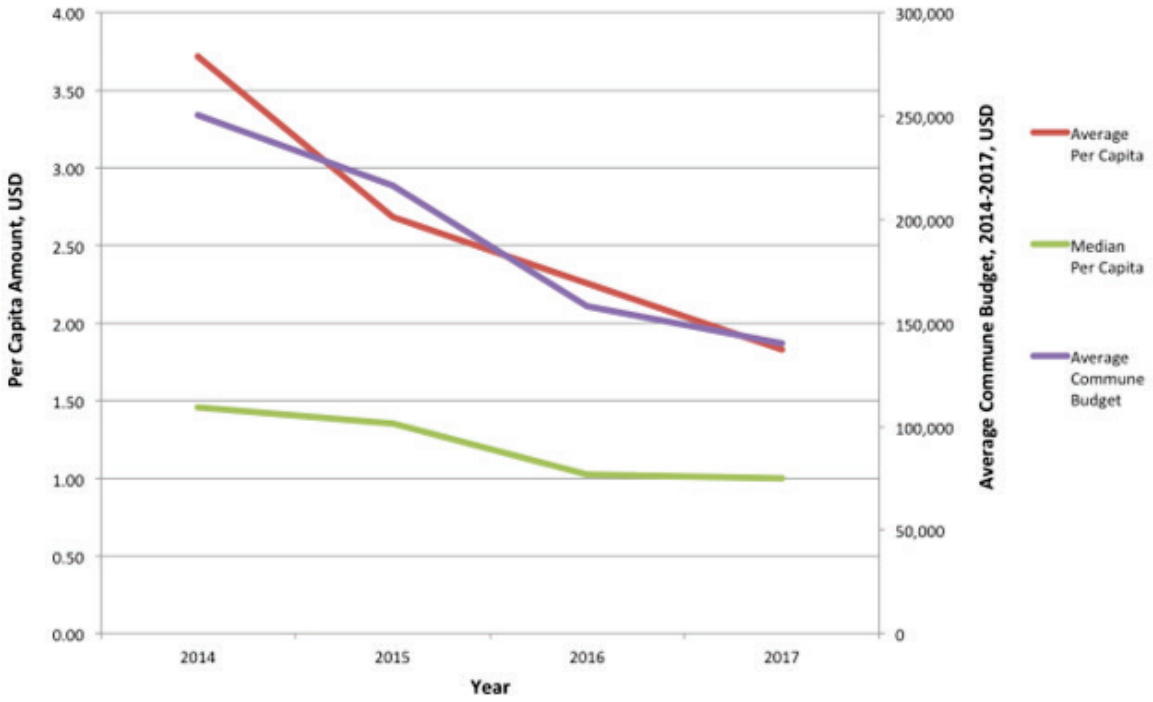
What Didn't Work

Niger's Decentralization Process Is Ongoing but Fragile.

3.27 CAP supported a system for requesting and receiving national financing for commune priorities, but the amount of financing transferred from the central government to communes declined during the period when data were available (2014–17). The IEG assessment mission obtained complete budget data for 93 of the 265 communes across Niger. The data showed an average yearly commune budget of $250,544 in 2014, which was the first year for which IEG could obtain commune-level data that corresponded with CAP investment sites. However, as of 2017, the yearly commune budget was $140,242, a 44 percent decrease (figure 3.11). Although population data are imperfect, the average annual per capita budget declined from $3.72 to $1.83. This is likely an overestimation because the population data often does not account for many vulnerable groups, including migrant and transhumant populations. Either way, both amounts are very small and insufficient for Niger's service delivery goals.

3.28 The program did not offer estimates on the level of per capita expenditures needed to support adequate levels of social welfare, but the small amounts transferred to Niger's communes appear woefully inadequate. For example, a World Health Organization high-level task force on innovative international financing for health systems estimated that by 2009, a low-income country needed to spend, on average, $44 per capita to strengthen its health system and provide an essential package of health services (WHO 2014, 5). Programs such as CAP could benefit from setting and seeking to achieve standards in line with these types of international standards, rather than setting arbitrary targets.

Figure 3.9. Average Commune Budget, Average per Capita Budget, and Median per Capita Budget, by Year, 2014–17

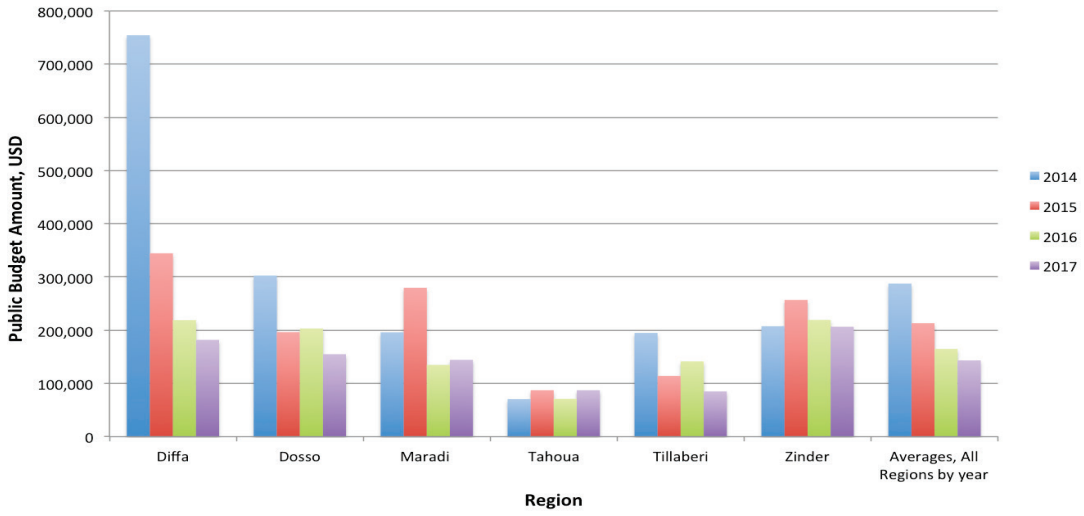


Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

3.29 The most pronounced decline in spending for administrative, social, and economic services was in Diffa, where there was a parallel increase in security spending and a focus on fighting extremist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, including Boko Haram (box 3.2). Other regions also saw a steady decline in budget amounts. The regions of Dosso, Maradi, and Tillabéri all saw significantly smaller public budgets in 2017 compared with what they received in 2014. For example, in Dosso, the average commune-level budget was just 51 percent of what communes received three years before (figure 3.12). It is unclear whether the infusion of resources from CAP-2 and CAP-3 played a role in the decline of official public budgets.

3.30 As Diffa saw a decline in public budgets and a rise in violence, it is noteworthy that it was implementing an outsized number of microprojects under CAP-2. Despite having one of the lowest per-commune populations in the country, Diffa implemented an average of 18 microprojects per commune, just three fewer than Niamey, where the commune-level population is more than five times larger (see para. 3.28 for more on this topic). Project documents do not discuss the reasons for such a high level of implementation.

Figure 3.10. Average Commune Budget by Region, 2014–17



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

3.31 Without adequate and sustained fiscal support, however, communes will encounter difficulties in producing CDPs that are participatory and democratic. IEG analysis found that project finance (whether CAP or otherwise) was instrumental to achieving participation in the CDP process and fostering communication about CDP goals and priorities. However, IEG also found that the CDPs were written only in French, even though the French literacy rate is 20 percent across the country, with far lower rates in more remote communes. This differs from other World Bank-GEF financed instruments, such as the technical manuals produced for the Biocarbon Fund. These manuals detailing the distribution of carbon benefits were written in local languages, including Hausa and Zarma. Moreover, with an overall literacy rate of 30 percent, written documents alone are insufficient. To foster broader participation and knowledge of CDP planning and updates, communes would need sustained finance and support for feedback and dialogue facilitation.

Despite CAP's Rural Decentralization Goals, A High Share of Microprojects Went to Urban Areas Near the Capital.

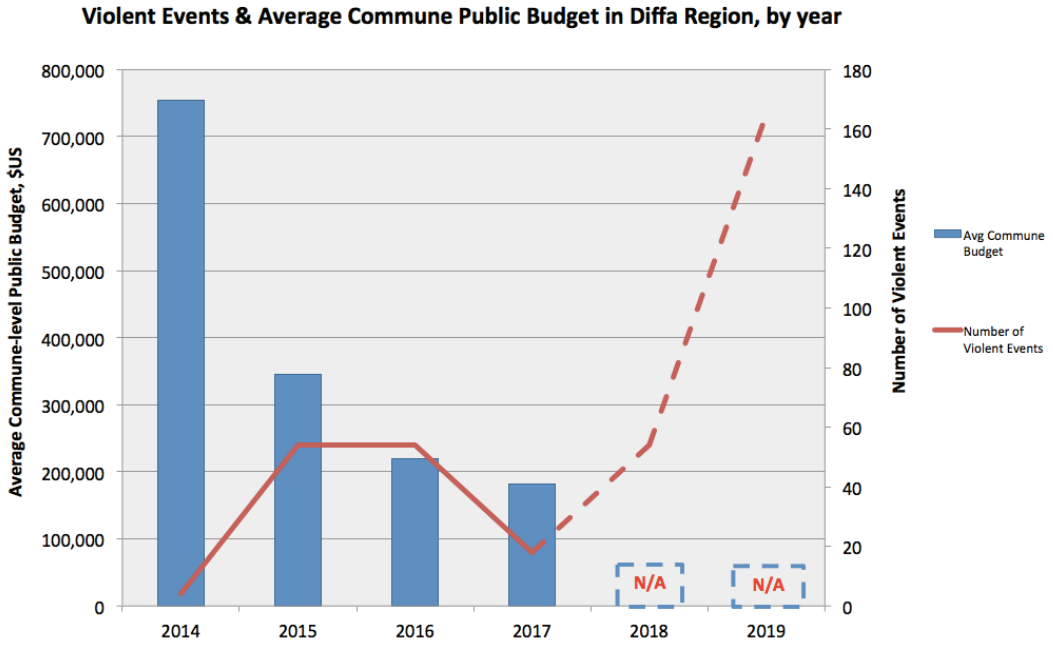
3.32 Microproject adoption in most regions was distributed evenly, but an extremely high share of funding went to the Niamey region. The average number of microprojects per commune was relatively uniform across most regions (between 7 and 11 microprojects per commune), but in the Niamey region, communes received 21 microprojects on average (figure 3.13). The population exists to support such a high level of microproject allocation, but such a significant number of projects focused on the capital region undercuts CAP's goals of achieving rural poverty reduction, especially in its more remote areas. Niamey's standard of living and access to international funding is

already significantly higher than the rest of the country. Interviews revealed that the reasons for the high number of microprojects implemented in the Niamey region were mainly associated with the population levels and the fact that many of the areas that are peri-urban today were rural when the project started.

Box 3.2. Budgets for Social Services Decline in Diffa as National Security Spending Grows

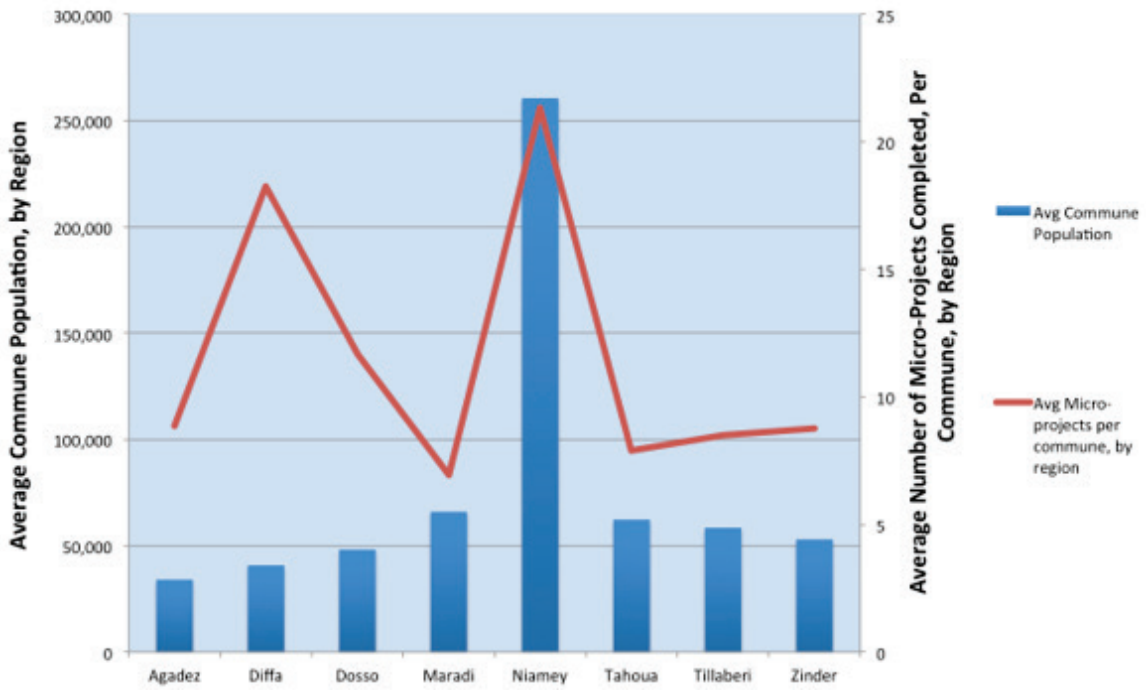
The public budget decline was most exaggerated in Diffa, which also saw a parallel increase in security spending, much of which was targeting extremists. Beginning in 2014, there was a significant increase in the number of violent events in the region, far surpassing those in any other part of the country. Because of the security situation, the region relies heavily on humanitarian assistance and has some of the greatest needs for social spending in the country. Though national budget data tends to be opaque (Niger received a budget transparency score of 0 out of 100 in the 2017 Open Budget Survey), there is evidence of a significant increase in security spending during this period. Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute show a 78 percent increase in military spending as a percentage of gross domestic product between 2013 and 2018 (SIPRI 2018). More recent estimates show the increase continuing in 2019, with military spending now equaling 17 percent of the country's total national budget (Mahanty and Meeker 2019). With a population growth rate of 3.82 percent and an already low level of social service financing per capita, increased military spending is worrisome and could negatively affect social service delivery.

Figure B3.2.1. Violent Events and Average Commune Public Budget in Diffa Region, by Year



Sources: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (database), http://www.acleddata.com; Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: Budget data available only from 2014–17.

Figure 3.11. Average Commune Population and Number of Microprojects Completed Per Commune in CAP-2, by Region

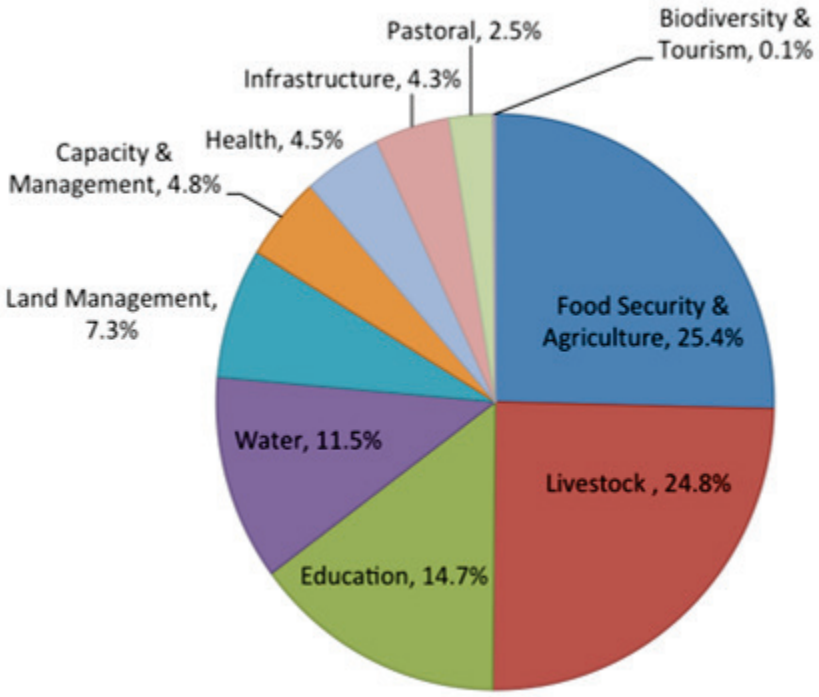


Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program.

3.33 Evidence is lacking that women took part in microproject decision-making, which may be associated with the low level of spending on health and social services. IEG analysis of CAP-1 and CAP-2 microprojects reveal that there were few microprojects for health and social services compared with other sectors. A significant need exists for social service delivery, but only 590 of 3,069 CAP-1 and CAP-2 microprojects that IEG analyzed were in the two main social service categories (education and health), which is 19 percent of all CAP activities (figure 3.14). Niger has the highest fertility rate in the world and a maternal mortality ratio that is more than double the global average, so it is extremely surprising to see health microprojects account for just 4.5 percent of the total across CAP-1 and CAP-2 (WHO 2017). Furthermore, the fact that environmental rehabilitation projects were so heavily prioritized raises questions about the primary driving force in choosing which projects to implement. In many CDD evaluations, IEG has found that when women have strong participation at the village level, they tend to choose health and education initiatives. Niger's CAP implementation is in stark contrast to Burkina Faso, where local populations predominantly chose social service projects when creating LDPs. The lack of these types of projects may not be a direct result of the exclusion of female voices from the planning process, but the link between the dearth of

information on female participation and the low overall number of social projects deserves further consideration. The project's M&E indicators provide further evidence of the insufficient level of prominence given to social services. CAP-1 had no social measurements, despite the PADs highlighting social benefits. In CAP-2, the primary social indicator focused on increasing services by 2 percent, a metric that IEG finds problematic (discussed in the "Results" section).

Figure 3.12. CAP-1 and CAP-2 Microprojects by Sector



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program.

3.34 The CAP targeted women specifically for livestock breeding and sheep fattening programs, but the IEG assessment found that these programs were insufficiently institutionalized to ensure their sustainability. The livestock breeding and fattening program was designed to provide a means to achieving short-term vulnerability reduction and supplemental seasonal income, often redeemed through the sale of an animal just before Ramadan. An analysis of data compiled by IEG showed that the CAP's first two phases supported at least 269 microprojects. Although there were some data inconsistency issues, at least 31 of these projects could be attributed directly to women's groups. The actual share that supported women is likely higher. IEG site visits included interviews with groups of women that received livestock, but this evaluation

did not conduct an analysis of a representative sample. However, a series of rich discussions provided four lessons that are potentially generalizable for the program and provide good insights for future programs:

- How women or women's groups were targeted was not evident, either in program documentation or during field visits. Who received the livestock and why was not readily understood.
- The programs were not institutionalized sufficiently. They were designed to work as a rotating program in which one woman would help a second woman buy livestock after raising and selling her own. This program failed to work sustainably because what happened after the first beneficiaries received their animals was unclear.
- The feed requirements to fatten goats were substantial. No cost-benefit analysis was conducted on the cost to fatten versus the eventual sale price to ensure that the net cash flow was positive. These programs usually assume that grain bran produced through pounding and winnowing household grain is sufficient to feed several goats or sheep. However, in an area with widespread mechanical milling, a woman's control over bran and the price to obtain it may become compromised.
- Women cannot sell goats inside formal marketplaces because of cultural barriers. To do so, they must coordinate with a male seller—quite literally feet from the market—who receives a portion of the profit for an extremely minimal amount of work. There is evidence in development literature that women who depend on male sellers also receive less money for comparably similar livestock (Turner and Williams 2002).

3.35 Cereal banks, which represented a significant portion of all microprojects funded by CAP-1 and CAP-2, were vital instruments to support food security, but collective action problems challenged implementation. The CAP included highly capital-intensive support to build large, modern collective grain banks. These villagewide grain banks were designed so that multiple farmers would collect and store bags of grain. At times when the price of seeds rose, the intent was for farmers to sell them countercyclically, receiving a better price to use when negotiating their village-level purchase of fertilizer. Cereal banks accounted for nearly one-half of all revenue-generating microprojects and were relatively profitable in CAP-2, with a financial rate of return of 31 percent. However, IEG focus groups of modern grain bank beneficiaries revealed that procurement issues and collective action problems undermined these large infrastructure projects. Rural farmers are often in debt, so the means to take collective

action in grain storage is difficult because they must pass on a portion of their grain to their lenders. Future assessments would benefit from greater attention to levels of indebtedness among farmer populations when trying to establish grain banks.

Many Land Restoration Aims Were Achieved, but There Was a Lack of Adequate Finance to Oversee and Maintain the Land-Related Benefits.

3.36 The CAP provided a significant amount of technical assistance for land restoration, but it did not provide an equivalent amount of support for long-term maintenance. Supporting land restoration at a scale that will achieve the desired ecosystem and economic benefits requires a significant level of technical assistance and physical labor. The CAP adequately financed these efforts by supplementing the cost of technical assistance and paying for cash-for-work, but it did not build systems that would support sustainable institutions to repair and maintain restored land for continued benefits after project close. IEG fieldwork documented many CAP land restoration sites that were unable to continue maintenance at similar levels after World Bank funding ceased, likely because it did not make economic sense to residents unless the activities were being subsidized. The commitment of local leaders was resolute in many cases, but the lack of additional cash-for-work programs, funding for site guards, or resources for maintenance made it difficult to preserve sites effectively. Drone footage revealed that many older sites that had implemented dryland management techniques had deteriorated considerably.

3.37 The rapid expansion but limited longevity of land regeneration sites across the country also hindered maintenance efforts. In several beneficiary villages that IEG visited, a degraded area targeted for restoration was supported by only a single project in a single phase of CAP. Maintenance funds were not provided to continue activities after the project period. In several sites, members of the community had targeted and detailed questions about soil conditions, dryland technologies, and other aspects of site maintenance, but these questions were often unanswered because there was no financing. It was evident that landowners needed and wanted access to more assistance, yet limited resources made that difficult.

3.38 The long-term technical assistance that is instrumental in preserving gains was lacking because much of the secondary support for sites was contingent on project financing. IEG interviews found that the resources of environmental extension agents were often stretched extremely thin. In Loga department (with a population of nearly 200,000), the Forestry and Water Agency has just 10 staff members, and only five are devoted to surveying Biocarbon Fund sites, which must be done on foot. The entire department team had one truck at its disposal and often had to rent motorcycles to travel from village to village. Furthermore, none of the technical agents interviewed had

access to technology for monitoring CAP sites. For example, IEG spent a considerable amount of time working with technical agents in Loga to capture drone footage. The agents wanted access to such technology because it would make it easier to monitor and report on land restoration and management. However, they were unable to receive funding to buy this type of equipment. The lack of both human and material resources and weak public institutions charged with sustaining common property resources such as acacia forests constrain the effective maintenance and achievement of associated productivity gains.

Customary Land Tenure Arrangements at Regeneration Sites Lacked Clarity, which Undermined the Potential for Wider Distributional Outcomes.

3.39 The World Bank–supported dryland technologies were largely successful in catching windblown silt and surface water in a way that allowed the revegetation of patches of hardpan, but the unenforceable nature of land use agreements limited the potential for achieving distributional benefits associated with land improvement. Most land used was common property controlled by the chieftaincy, and in theory, the benefits of this should be distributed to all village members equitably. However, without careful attention, these projects' success may result in common property transferring to informal control by powerful individuals within the chieftaincy and village. Interviews conducted with landowners and land users across all CAP sites revealed that the land user agreements issued under CAP did not account for the increase in land value and the distribution of benefits sufficiently, that is, who would benefit from increased productivity. Furthermore, it was unclear how these agreements would be enforced. Land use agreements were enacted when the land targeted had low value, for example, poor-quality land had value for pasture and wild plant collecting but was degraded otherwise. However, as vegetative cover increased in all the CAP sites visited, interviews revealed that stakeholders' perceptions about the land value shifted, and they began to see the benefits of restoration. IEG interviews at CAP sites revealed that this often resulted in recalculation or informal renegotiation of land contracts. This was especially the case in sites that were negotiated with private landowners. An expanded analysis of the first Biocarbon Fund site ever developed as part of the Great Green Wall also revealed that elite predation can occur when chieftaincies are involved (see para. 3.37).

3.40 IEG found that CAP beneficiaries in restored peri-urban areas experienced difficulties in retaining access to the restored land. This was because urban and peri-urban land prices increased over time since the beginning of CAP, largely caused by the growing demand of Niamey-based investors speculating in peri-urban land because of urban growth. These elements were not factored into the project design sufficiently. An IEG site visit to Commune V, just outside of Niamey, revealed the potential for elite

capture of CAP project sites. Interest in the land skyrocketed after CAP funding had ceased and the land had been restored to a relatively habitable state. Village chiefs with ownership over the land sold several parcels of the former community land to private buyers, some of whom had political connections to the ruling political party. This purchase occurred after the project closed. IEG triangulated this claim with local CAP coordinators and in interviews with the village chiefs whose signatures were necessary to "legalize" the sale of the land.

Photo 3.4. A Demarcation Stone Indicating the Boundaries of Former Community Land That Has Since Been Sold to Private Buyers

Source: Dawning, LLC.

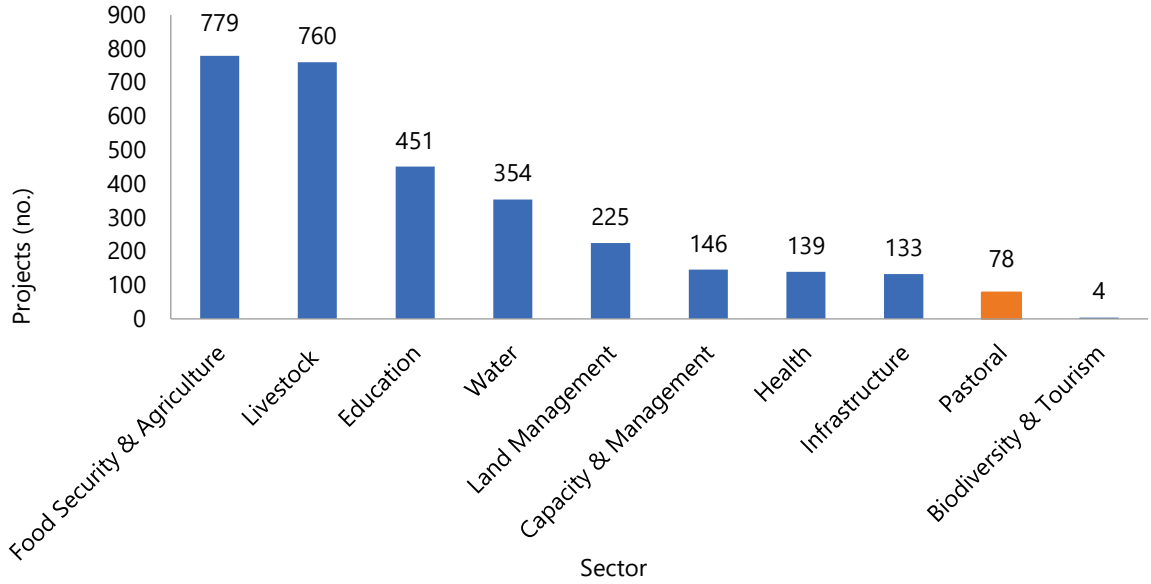
3.41 Further inequities between landowners and nonlandowners are problematic because legal and traditional land use rights are still extremely tenuous in Niger. **A**doption of the Niger rural code in 1993 augmented customary land laws, which state that the "first comer" to land receives the rights to that land. Nevertheless, customary practices still dominate most decision-making regarding rural agricultural land (Hughes 2014). The CAP-2 project included support for and tracked the number of communes that had set up land commissions delivering land titles. It reported that 96 percent of all target communes had set up a land commission, but there is no specific reporting on the number land titles delivered. This is important because in rural Niger, those outside of the community generally obtain land titles. Members of the chieftaincy sell the land to them, which can further exacerbate inequality. Though not evaluated, it is noteworthy that CAP-3 drops any reference to land titling in its results frameworks.

3.42 Other aspects of land regeneration projects, specifically the cash-for-work program, lacked a means to ensure the participation of a community's most vulnerable. IEG field assessments found that village leaders often excluded women from participating in the lucrative, if temporary, employment. Evidence gathered showed that the approach to exclusion varied from village to village. Visits to the Illéla Commune revealed that leaders often excluded married women, but in Takassaba, a village in the Dosso region, the village chief and other interviewees admitted that widowed or abandoned women were not allowed to take part. In this village, where women without partners made up 10 percent of total female population, their exclusion exacerbated inequality and financial vulnerability for a significant portion of the population.[1] A woman excluded from the cash-for-work program in Takassaba, Dosso region is an example of the disappointed women. She stated, "Because my husband isn't here, I wasn't able to participate in the cash-for-work program. None of us without husbands could." The cash-for-work modality also created a level of dependency, thus leaving a financial void on its completion. When land committees were probed during IEG fieldwork on what level of maintenance was taking place on previously regenerated sites, many cited the need for sustained cash-for-work to keep them from falling into disarray. Given that many project sites involve a mixture of customary owned and community-held land, nonlandowners see less incentive to perform more restoration and upkeep work without a cash payment.

Neglected Pastoral Issues

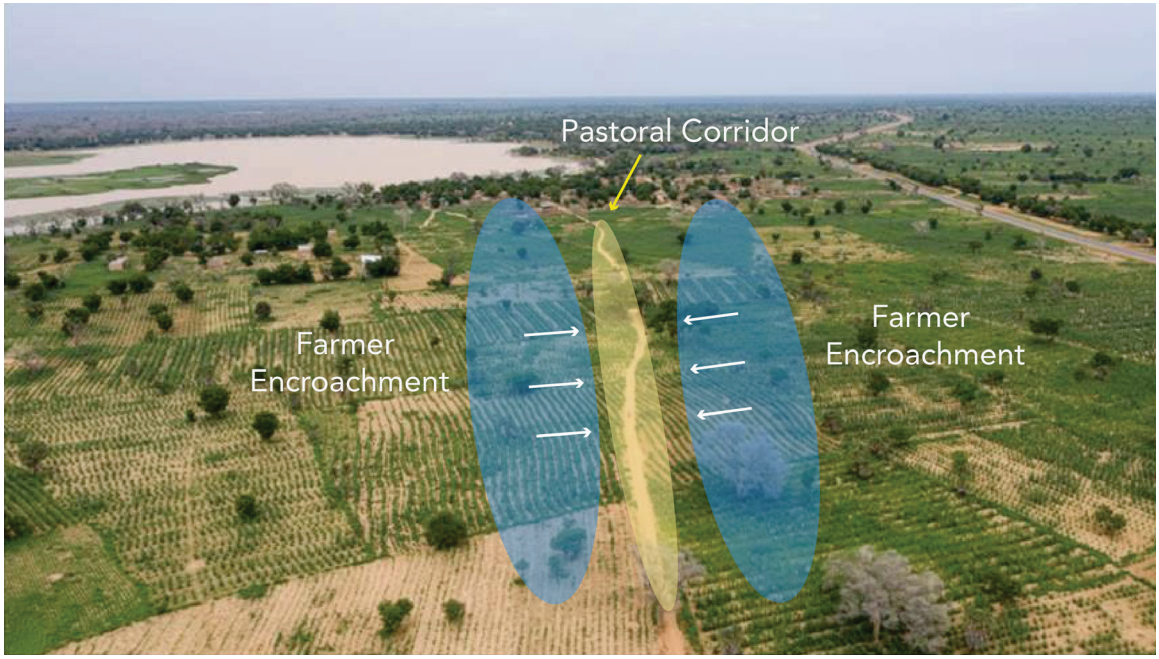
3.43 Inadequate attention to pastoralism was a project shortcoming. Indigenous transhumant pastoralists make up nearly 18.3 percent of Niger's population: 8.5 percent Fulani, 8.3 percent Tuareg, and 1.5 percent Toubou (Bachir and Kulesza 2019). Pastoral groups often manage livestock owned by others and use common lands, which were a major focus of CAP's restoration efforts. However, pastoral projects accounted for 78 of the 3,069 analyzed, or 2.5 percent of the total number of projects in CAP-1 and CAP-2 combined (figure 3.16). IEG drone evidence and focus group interviews with both transhumant and farming communities confirmed that the area demarcated for herding and transhumant groups has been narrowed significantly (figure 3.13). Furthermore, much of the pastoral infrastructure was observed to be deteriorating significantly. Many corridors lacked demarcation, and in other areas, encroaching crops had overtaken demarcation barriers entirely. In the Results section of this report, IEG also points to the fact that the original CAP indicators related to pastoral corridors and accessibility of grazing and water points were removed as the project evolved.

Figure 3.13. Activities and Projects by Sector, CAP-1 and CAP-2



Independent Evaluation Group 2020.
Note: CAP = Community Action Program.

Photo 3.5. IEG Drone Footage of Crop Encroachment on Pastoral Corridor



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

4. Lessons

4.1 **Land and resource restoration projects should support—and make evident how they are supporting—existing customary flexible tenure arrangements to ensure distributional benefits among resource users and to mitigate conflict risks.** Traditional land use arrangements in Niger between farmers, agropastoral, and transhumant populations are negotiated in ways that provided mutual land use benefits. However, as the CAP shows, increasing the value of open- or pooled-access degraded land without clear, enforceable land use agreements can lead to predation by elites and farmer encroachment. This occurred in the first CAP-supported site, where restored parcels were sold outside of the community. It also occurred in areas that supported intercropping (crop agriculture alongside tree planting): Although land restoration activities took place on communal land, the introduction of intercropping facilitated individualized claims on community land. Such projects should be designed with an understanding of the customary flexible tenure arrangements and the coping strategies of vulnerable resource users who access communal lands as a social safety net. The composition of land management committees also requires attention to ensure that they represent different resource user rights and to mitigate the risks of predation.

4.2 **The success of natural resource restoration depends on the extent to which private or communal resource users are compensated over reasonable, short-term time frames for abstaining from using those resources until the long-term public benefits of resource restoration are achieved.** The assessment of CAP-1 and CAP-2 found that when compensation is too small or takes too long to materialize, it discourages resource users from abstaining from using the resources, which undermines restoration of the resource base. For example, carbon credits were distributed to CAP beneficiaries eventually, but after the sequestration of 152,583 tons CO_2 equivalent was verified, the process was severely delayed and caused a significant level of consternation.

4.3 **Projects that support land and resource restoration can ensure that women benefit by addressing participation barriers linked to social and cultural norms**. In CAP-1 and CAP-2, women benefited less from project activities for multiple reasons. The cash-for-work programs did not include female-only tasks in geographic areas where women could be separated from men. Additionally, these programs did not provide women with alternate options for childcare and other domestic responsibilities during the hours and in the areas where these programs were implemented. Women did benefit from specific natural resource management programs, especially from banquettes that protected their vegetable gardens from soil erosion and flooding. However, wider extension services provided to male farmers (that included the distribution of advice, fertilizer, seed, and tools) were not provided systematically to

women, who often farm less-lucrative crops (for example, peanuts) in plots next to their husbands' land.

4.4 **Socioeconomic and anthropological analyses, conducted before project elaboration, can support the gender aspects of production and marketing better**. In Niger, a very large number of women must fend for themselves and their families because their husbands migrated to other West African countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Senegal, to look for work. However, compared with other Sahelian countries, there were few socioeconomic and anthropological studies conducted during the CAP period that focused on gender issues. The evaluation and research show that direct involvement of women in selling livestock in markets is generally frowned upon in Nigerien society, and though it may differ among the Hausa, women-owned livestock receive lower prices than those owned by men do.

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[1] The estimate of abandoned women is based on an informal survey conducted during the Independent Evaluation Group site visit to Takassaba. To reach the 10 percent estimate, the team surveyed all women living in the village during the initial meeting and identified those with husbands who had left the village and had been gone for one year or more. The team also confirmed the total population of the village to triangulate the estimate and ensure that there a significant number of women was not missing from the initial survey (for example, out to farm, doing household chores, and so on).

Appendix A. Ratings

First Phase of the Community Action Program (P065991, P073011)

Table A.1. Community Action Program

Indicator	ICR	ICR Review	PPAR
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
Overall efficacy	Does not provide an overall rating, see efficacy description below	The ICR Review does not provide an overall efficacy rating, it rates each major aspect of project	Substantial
Bank performance	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Satisfactory
Borrower performance	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of monitoring and evaluation	Does not provide an monitoring and evaluation rating	Modest	Modest

Note: The Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) is a self-evaluation by the responsible Global Practice. The ICR Review is an intermediate Independent Evaluation Group product that seeks to independently validate the findings of the ICR. PPAR = Project Performance Assessment Report.

Table A.2. Project Performance Assessment Ratings Table

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
Relevance of Objectives		
This Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) rates the relevance at the time of appraisal and closing as high. According to the Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR), the project development objective (PDO) of establishing and operationalizing decentralized, participatory, and transparent financing mechanisms that empower poor communities and local governments to take charge of their own development was in line with the government's Strategy to Accelerate Growth and Poverty Reduction (2008–12). It also confirms that the global environmental objective of promoting community-based integrated management of ecosystems and natural resources to reduce vulnerability to desertification was and remained in line with its growth and poverty	The Implementation Completion and Results Report Review (ICRR) indicates that the PDO was highly relevant at appraisal and at the time of the ICRR. It cites the relevance of focusing on decentralization as a tool for poverty reduction (because more than 80 percent of Niger's population is rural) as made a priority in Niger's poverty reduction strategies (2003, 2012–15). The PDO responds to the overconcentration of powers, staff, and financial resources at the center (for example, at appraisal, three-quarters of recurrent expenditure in line ministries was devoted to personnel salaries and allowances, with much of the rest to utility costs, leaving very little for recurrent expenditures). Its instructional focus was in line with the 2002 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper's fourth pillar,	This PPAR rates the relevance of objective for the first phase of the Community Action Program (CAP-1) as **high.** Its theme relevantly confronts a critical development challenge— decentralizing decision-making for resources and services to reduce poverty—and has remained relevant over time. The need to support decentralization to achieve poverty reduction is first articulated in Niger's 2002 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, its Strategy to Accelerate Growth and Poverty Reduction between 2008 and 2012, an updated Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (the Plan for Economic and Social Development from 2012–15), and in the current Country Partnership Framework (FY18–22). There are fewer references to decentralization as a tool for rural poverty reduction in the latest Systematic Country

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
reduction strategy aims. At the time of the ICR (2011), these aims were also in line with the Country Assistance Strategy's rural development goals, both in relationship to promoting decentralization and to spur growth in the agriculture sector through land restoration. It should be noted that although the PDO did not change, the project flexibly responded to the avian flu by adding a new component, but it did not amend the results framework. During implementation, the project adapted to changed circumstances as much as possible within its resources and framework; for example, the main environmental focus became carbon sequestration (growing Acacia Senegal and other indigenous trees) and a completely new component, preparations to fight against the avian flu, was added.	"strengthening institutional and individual capacity with and outside government, at the central and local level." The objective was as in line with the country strategy at appraisal and at close (fiscal years [FY]03–05 and FY08–11), especially related to pillar 2 of the FY03–05 Country Assistance Strategy, "developing human capital through equal access to quality social services and improving preparedness to deal with natural disasters." Population growth and governance were cross-cutting issues affecting all pillars. Food security is another theme not explicitly mentioned in the PDO that emerges in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Country Strategies. Decentralization of services and better environmental management was and remains critical to achieving the country's food security aims. The ICRR refers to references in the ICR about low and declining yields and livestock productivity (because of droughts and reduced accessibility of grazing and water areas during the dry season). This focus came about midway through the project because of the food crises (2008 and 2010).	Diagnostic, and this is likely because of an intense focus on securitization of the state (for example, massive border conflicts threatened state stability). In this sense, there are observations collected from the Systematic Country Diagnostic consultations about the purpose of decentralization being seen as a way to lessen the power of traditional chiefs while recognizing that its potential for poverty reduction has yet to be realized. The objective statement itself was very specific: it set out to establish "decentralized, participatory, and transparent financing mechanisms."
Relevance of Design		
The ICR combines its analysis and rating of the relevance of objectives and design, which is rated high by the ICR. Design features mentioned include the high relevance of institutional development through local investments and infrastructure, which was indicated, was necessary to reduce poverty. The ICR indicates that the addition of an avian component was highly relevant because while there were no outbreaks, crisis preparedness	The ICRR downgraded the relevance of design to substantial. It did this on the following basis: (i) the environmental microprojects were not incentivized since they were designed to compete with water, education, and health projects and revenue-generating projects—all of which are direly needed by communities or presented a shorter timeline to income generation; (ii) the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was overambitious (including for	This PPAR rates the relevance of design **substantial.** This project was adequately designed to introduce and support participatory local development plans (LDPs), which were essential to supporting an inclusive decentralization process. There was a high level of design and implementation focus on local participation and transparency. This was achieved by securing partnerships with local NGOs, who facilitated the participatory

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
was warranted, and because the investments made are useful to support health care–related epidemic diseases, and veterinary services, more broadly.	the environment), and indicators were hard to measure; (iii) the lack of ex ante analysis of how to mobilize nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) within remote rural areas.	process. It also effectively designed a microproject program to demonstrate the development of decentralized decision-making, planning, and local project financing. The project's monitoring system was overambitious, but too much focus was placed on environmental monitoring and environmental indicators that could not be measured and, therefore, had to be eventually dropped. At the same time, key concepts concerning participatory and transparent local decision-making that were embedded in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) as indicators were not carried through and reported in the ICR. This was partly because of the expectations of different financing instruments. For example, the financing provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Biocarbon Fund necessitated the collection of specific data that were important but not central to the International Development Association's (IDA) project structure.
Efficacy		
The ICR does not provide a rating for efficacy. It does indicate that the PDO was "successfully achieved" and that most targets were met or succeeded. It measures success against three key indicators, not the PDO. These included (i) the percent of communities that elaborated a local development plan, (ii) that implemented at least five microprojects, and (iii) the percent of communes that implemented at least three microprojects. The argument made is that "without successfully setting up decentralized, participatory, and transparent financing (resource transfer) mechanisms—as required by the PDO—it would have not	The ICRR does not provide a single efficacy rating; rather, it splits the efficacy analysis into three parts. It analyzes and rates separately the level of decentralization, participation, and transparency associated with these financing mechanisms. It does not provide an overall efficacy rating; rather, it rates these three in the following ways. It rates the nature of decentralization and the participation associated with these financing mechanisms as substantial, but it rates transparency as modest, primarily because of the lack of information. The evidence that was validated to assign a substantial rating for decentralization are (i) exceeding	This PPAR rates efficacy as **substantial** but marginally so because of the dearth of evidence. The World Bank helped to put in place the policy and legal frameworks for decentralization of rural development, a process that started before and continued throughout the program. CAP-1 helped to lay the groundwork for a participatory and transparent decentralization process. It did this by facilitating the creation of, among other things, LDPs. This assessment confirmed that the first phase was very effective at putting these plans in place. Site visits confirmed that the first phase was highly participatory. Based on

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
been possible to have community and commune development plans and to implement the expected number of microprojects." The ICR also indicates that the successful achievement of the PDO stemmed largely from the success of activities in the various components of the project. Most targets set for these were attained or exceeded.	targets of LDPs and (ii) the effective implementation of microprojects as planned. Participation was rated substantial on the basis of (i) commune and community contributions to the microproject fund, (ii) the amount of productive microprojects that reach women, and (iii) information that was validated on the large number of persons trained and participated in village-level groups. However, the ICRR falls short of questioning the nature of this participation in regards to representativeness in local development planning around local priorities. The ICRR rated the aspect of transparency as modest because the ICR does not provide information about transparency. The ICRR interview with the task team reported that procedures were in place, but the ICRR was not able to validate these assertions.	interviews conducted by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), the role of NGOs was noteworthy. However, the dropping of indicators pertaining to transparency and accountability undermined the ability to evaluate these parts of the PDO. Second, the project also supported an effective microproject mechanism, with adequate rates of uptake, and an adequate level of profitability, considering the operating environment. The ICR was honest about what worked and did not work; it provided differentiated evidence on the success of different microproject themes, which was essential for learning. Although profitability of the microproject programs was measured by a secondary analysis, all income-related indicators were dropped, due to the difficulty measuring them in the first phase of a community-driven development (CDD) project. Income takes time to generate, and the capacity of the communes was in an extremely nascent stage. Although this PPAR does not assess the global environmental objective, CAP-1 dropped many relevant indicators related to the environmental interventions that were integral to supporting inclusive decentralization and facilitating increased revenue from land based activities over time. These indicators were especially important to ensure there was representation and consideration of the multiple and competing land use needs in relation to the project financed land restoration programs. For example, the original indicators included both metrics on the area of marginal lands under cultivation of annual crops and area of marginal land

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		being protected and/or actively recovered, and the condition of livestock corridors and availability of grazing and water points for nonresident livestock holders. However, the final and only environmental indicators in the ICR was condensed to focus in singular fashion on the area of marginal lands under cultivation of annual crops and area of marginal land being protected and/or actively recovered. This kind of narrowing can be precarious. It can mean that not enough attention was paid to pastoral issues in a country where high rates of growth and the need for food security are putting pressure on scarce marginal and arable land. The evaluation shows that over time, there were very few pastoral projects financed, that is, the kind of projects that would have achieved the livestock and pastoral aims articulated in the original results framework. IEG site visits and ethnographic interviews revealed that the competition for resources between farmers and herders, particularly transhumant, is one of the most significant challenges in rural Niger. Solving this challenge is an integral part of achieving sustainable decentralization. Even so, although the final environmental indicator was narrowed, what was measured was even more myopic: the only measurement provided against the land restoration indicators in phase 1 was the number of acacia planted. As stated in the relevance of design, this was likely because of the outsized role of the Biocarbon Fund and the fund's measurement requirements.
Efficiency		
Appraisal: There was no economic rate of return or financial rate of	The ICRR rates efficiency as modest. It does this because the	The PPAR rates efficiency as **substantial.** Despite well-known

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
return conducted at appraisal. The reason provided was that the return on capacity building and social development objectives could not be easily calculated. A cost-benefit analysis (using cash flow, net present value [NPV], and internal rate of return [IRR]) was conducted for a sample of anticipated investments that would be funded by the local investment fund (LIF). Anticipated cost-benefit analysis for small animal husbandry, petty trade, peanut oil extraction, flour milling, animal carts, and irrigated agriculture was conducted. The analysis predicted that all such investment would be profitable except for growing niébe and rice, which would need technical assistance and other agriculture implements and support to reach profitability. Mid-Term Review/close: Before the anticipated closing date (2007), the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and the Ministry of Agriculture undertook an analysis of a sample of revenue generating microprojects across all eight regions. The profitability of environmental projects was later confirmed through a second study, conducted in 2008. The PCU study used cash flow, NPV and IRR as the principal tools. No cost analysis was done in the microproject study, and even for the LIF component, no cost-efficiency analysis was done of microprojects or areas to be covered by GEF activities except for NPV and IRR calculations. However, in general terms the ICR mission noted that the projected cost of project management exceeded the budget by more than 120 percent.	FRR analysis for the PAD and ICR are not compatible. The ICRR is also critical of the 60 percent microproject profitability, but it is not clear why the ICRR concluded that this was not a substantial outcome. The ICRR only reports on the fully profitable, downplaying the marginally profitable outcomes, which, together with the fully profitable activities, represented relatively good results. For agropastoral activities, 54 percent were fully or marginally profitable; for artisanal activities and small-scale trading, 83 percent were fully or marginally profitable. The ICRR also cites a lack of analysis of the cost-effectiveness of these activities and cost issues related to delays.	inherent difficulties in conducting economic analysis in CDD projects, the Project Management Unit (PMU) made significant efforts to establish some level of understanding in this regard. To learn more about what worked and what needed improvement, the PMU conducted an in-depth review of the microproject program, which found that 60 percent of all projects were profitable in the short term. The evidence is credible because detailed analysis also provided which types of projects were more or less profitable, and information on the best performing beneficiary groups. The PCU and the Ministry of Agriculture conducted the analysis, completed in 2007, just before the original closing date. This assessment sampled 145 of the 631 revenue-generating microprojects across 61 village clusters (34 percent of all village clusters) in all eight regions. Ultimately, 118 were selected, because of difficulties in reaching the remaining 27. The study used cash flow, NPV, and IRR as the principal tools, but it also explored nonmonetary benefits and effects. It evaluated agropastoral projects for raising lambs and sheep, milk goats, and cattle, and processing products based on them; artisan work and small-scale trading (batik coloring, leather treatment, basketwork, sale of wood, and embroidery); environmental protection microprojects (collecting household refuse, planting trees, setting up biocarbon sites, stocking fish in ponds, and providing equipment for fishermen). Overall, environmental protection microprojects were the most profitable at the time of assessment, though it should be noted that the analysis only

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		reviewed 9 of the 104 agropastoral projects and 23 projects involving artisan work and small-scale trading activities. The analysis found that 60 percent of microproject investments listed were profitable. The remaining 40 percent would have required improvements in their design and implementation to be profitable. There were wide variations in the level of profitability depending on the purpose of microproject, and their management group (women's groups appeared to perform best). The cost-effectiveness of the microprojects, especially those for social purposes, also needs further exploring. The microproject study did not analyze these costs, but the estimates of the ICR team show that the average cost of a microproject was equivalent to those in the paper titled "Evaluation de la rentabilité économique et financière des microprojets générateurs de revenus" by CAP-1 consultants Yeve Hassane, Doga Garbo, et Siddo Mahamadou, Septembre 2007. Second, this assessment has highlighted that participation in local development planning is costly. This project was able to facilitate a highly participatory process to demonstrate how to conduct consultations and gain broader community input. It would have been useful for the CAP-1 ICR to address the cost of participation. This was, however, a discussion that was held with commune mayors and councils during the many IEG commune visits. Across all communes, the high cost of achieving CAP-like expectations related to participation were found to be unaffordable because of the time

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		and travel it required, the cost of facilitation to run the consultations, and the supported needed to integrate demands into the planning provide, and to provide feedback. However, the project also showed a high level of agility, especially for a pilot, in responding to crises. An emergency avian flu component was added to the project, and the PMU implemented that unexpected component successfully. There were some challenges to financial management, especially with regard to the disbursement of the GEF. The funding from GEF was designed to be disbursed in parallel to IDA funds, but there was slow uptake, and only $1million of the GEF financing had been disbursed by first quarter of 2007, representing just 25 percent of the total amount of financing originally planned to have been distributed by that date. The low level of GEF spending was associated with two factors: Communities preferred to invest in local economic and social services (which is a finding across many CDD projects with land environment and social options), and the GEF also had to compete with the Biocarbon Fund.
Outcome		
The ICR rated the overall outcome to be satisfactory. Niger's path to development continues to rest heavily on effective implementation of decentralization, and the ICR found that the project objectives remained relevant throughout the project lifecycle. It also notes that most performance indicators were achieved, and even were exceeded in some cases. This PPAR is not directly evaluating the global environmental objective, but note that the ICR found that significant	The ICRR rates overall outcome as moderately satisfactory. The relevance of objectives was noted to be high, but the design of objectives was rated as substantial. The ICRR concludes that CAP achieved the objective's targets of decentralization and participation at a substantial level. However, it raises some concern about the project's transparency, rating the efficacy of that part of the objective as modest. The moderately satisfactory rating is	The PPAR rates overall outcome as **moderately satisfactory.** The relevance of objective is rated **high,** and the relevance of design is rated **substantial.** Both efficacy and efficiency are rated as **substantial.** Efficacy is rated **substantial** but marginally so because even though there is evidence that CAP-1 effectively supported the government of Niger's decentralization efforts as planned, there is less evidence that this process was fully transparent and accountable because the

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
results were achieved, even though the GEO objectives were not fully met. The ICR does not provide an efficiency rating, but it does note that the less than highly satisfactory rating is because of uncertainty about how to measure and assess efficiency. The ICR also states that the avian flu component had a satisfactory outcome.	also because of o an efficiency rating of modest.	project did not adequately report on these aspects as planned.
Risk to Development Outcome		
The ICR rated risk to development outcome as moderate. Risks were associated (i) with the capacity of the state to continue to decentralize and to transfer funds to the communes, (ii) profitability and maintenance of microprojects, and (iii) limited financial capacity of the communes to continue services established under CAP I. These risks were all rated moderate because government is committed to decentralization efforts, and some communes were already seeing monetary benefits because of increased tax collection. However, the ICR does not adequately explain how the microproject risks will be managed after CAP, noting that 40 percent of microprojects were not profitable, and many microprojects risk needing additional financing subsidies to continue operations. The ICR rates the capacity to deal with avian flu outbreaks as significant. This is attributable to limited government resources after the emergency project's close. For example, the ICR highlights the lack of funding for a local network of committees and field agents that were central to the original emergency project. However, it was estimated that the network could operate with minimal funding for one or two years, as long as the government continued	The ICRR rates risks to development outcome as significant. The primary risk pertains to the uncertain nature of decentralization efforts and the need for the government and donor community to continue supporting the underlying goals of the project. It also notes lack of profitability of microprojects as an important risk. There are also concerns about the maintenance of facilities that were constructed and the ability of local communities to manage and finance them. The ICRR noted that the avian flu project would not be able to continue without sustained donor funding from other external sources.	This PPAR rates risks to development outcome as **significant.** This assessment was only able to obtain data on fiscal transfers for certain years, but the data that were collected for CAP-3 communes show that for FY14–17, fiscal transfers were declining both in absolute and per capita terms. Across all CAP project phases, the project has substantially supported commune-level mechanisms needed to ensure inclusive and sustainable decentralization over time of project financing, including local development planning to stimulate local investment. Many communes will be hard pressed to replicate the results achieved under CAPs 1–3 without additional financing. Land restorations were successful in reducing short-term vulnerability through cash-for-work programs and the more productive use of rainfall for cultivation. However, this assessment shows that neither of these processes has been sufficiency institutionalized. There are also significant issues that remain between commune-level and village-level governance mechanisms (elected officials and traditional rulers) that will determine the representativeness and fairness regarding using local development finance. Many issues related to conflict management

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
paying staff salaries for the coordination efforts.		and land tenure continue to rest at the local level, but the significant overlapping of authorities (legal pluralism) may also increase risks.
Bank Performance		
Quality at Entry		
The ICR rated quality at entry as satisfactory. The ICR rated quality at entry as satisfactory. Quality at entry is rated satisfactory because the project addressed, through design, many of the country and institutional constraints that would otherwise have undermined this ambitious effort that sought to support many facets of decentralization in its primacy. The project used a multicomponent and multi-agency approach, and used a project preparation facility (and supported key personnel) to conduct analytical work to situate the project within Nigerien conditions. The project design also adequately integrated natural resource degradation considerations into its microproject programs, given the importance of natural resources to local economic development. The project also was relevantly designed as a CDD mechanism, which was appropriate given the aim of achieving inclusive planning and transparent decision-making and financing. The ICR notes that there were shortcomings however regarding the project's M&E preparations, which necessitated changes at midterm.	The ICRR rated quality at entry as moderately satisfactory. Ample preparatory work was conducted for three years leading up to CAP-1, including extensive analytical work and a project preparation facility to bolster the government's decentralization initiatives. The World Bank also targeted collaboration, engaging with other donors to ensure symmetry with other rural development projects. However, the project was overambitious, given the status of decentralization in Niger at the time, low local capacity, and scant public resources. The ICRR notes that these constraints contributed to several shortcomings, including the delay of several preparatory tasks (for example, creating guidelines and manuals). The avian flu emergency project was identified as having similar issues of overambition, particularly in regards to project duration. The ICRR rated M&E at entry as modest.	This PPAR rates the quality at entry as **satisfactory.** CAP-1 built on previous rural development initiatives in Niger that helped to support the legal and policy framework that is the backbone of Niger's decentralization process. The CAP-1 design was firmly based in long-term engagement between the World Bank and the government of Niger. The quality at entry aptly recognized the need to support institutional capacity building, given the nascent stage of commune development in Niger. As such, quality at entry supported a focus on both local communities and the communes. To achieve effective implementation, it pursued an integrated approach using NGOs. Quality at entry regarding the definition of the PDO also reflected a high level of awareness about competing resources and the need to achieve fairness related to traditional and customary land arrangements in the microproject programs. The indicators chosen reflected a high level of awareness of the multitude of uses of land—grazing, cultivation, and water access—and the project was originally designed to reflect these, though measurability was a challenge. Quality at entry was also strong by realizing that the microproject programs acted as the fuel to make the engine of decentralization function. Quality at entry paid adequate attention to supporting PMU capacity, a focus on procurement, management, and other training needs. These were essential given the novelty of

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		the decentralization concept for the national ministries. There was also collaboration between the World Bank and other donors. For example, site visits revealed that posters created by other rural development donors showing the decentralization process from phase 1 were still visible on the walls of commune buildings.
Quality of Supervision		
The ICR rated quality of supervision as satisfactory. The World Bank conducted nine supervisory missions during the project period, each of which were adequately staffed with appropriate technical experts, according to the ICR. There were some region-level capacity issues identified at the start of the project, given that the World Bank's own decentralization strategy was still to be implemented. The ICR notes that documentation of supervisory work was accurate and thorough, including aide-mémoire and Implementation Status and Results Reports Implementation Support that were candid with useful and actionable information.	The ICRR downgrades quality of supervision from satisfactory to moderately satisfactory. The ICRR recognizes the adaptive and responsive support of World Bank staff during such instances as a military coup, a locust invasion, and a two-year drought. The ICRR also notes that M&E issues were fixed at the Mid-Term Review. The project responded to the emergency avian flu project, which had little to do with creating strong decentralized local governance and development. The downgrade is mainly related to issues of safeguard compliance. The ICRR notes that there is a lack of reporting on compliance in the ICR regarding environmental issues. The ICR also points to some challenges to involuntary settlement (OP4.12), but the information was also not provided in the ICR.	The PPAR rates quality of supervision as **moderately satisfactory.** Like the ICRR, this assessment recognizes the adaptive and responsive support of World Bank staff during such instances as a military coup, a locust invasion, and a two-year drought, and that the PMU addressed M&E issues competently at midterm. However, although the consolidation of indicators was needed because of the capacity of the PMU and difficulty in data collection, the consolidation left out important measurable aspects about the quality of the decentralization process that the project aimed to put in place, in line with the PDO. Most notable was the intent at entry to track and measure transparency and accountability. These elements were dropped at midterm, and no proxies were used to report on these elements at project close. The project did display flexibility in responding to the emergency avian flu project. This PPAR could not address the issue with inadequate safeguard compliance highlighted in the ICR because too much time had elapsed for any action to have an effect.

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
Overall Bank Performance		
The ICR rates Bank performance as satisfactory, which is justified by the satisfactory Bank performance at entry and satisfactory performance during supervision. Had Bank performance for the avian flu component been better, overall Bank performance might have justified a highly satisfactory rating.	The ICRR rates Bank performance as moderately satisfactory; however, it did not provide any additional explanation for the rating.	The PPAR rates Bank performance as **moderately satisfactory.** Both quality at entry and quality of supervision were rated **moderately satisfactory.**
Borrower performance		
Government		
The ICR rated government performance as moderately satisfactory**.** Although there was active involvement (including from a cross-agency team that aided project design, ensured staff retention, and supported the decentralization reforms within the legislature), there was indecision about which ministry should lead CAP efforts, which resulted in delays and delays in paying the counterpart funding. Despite this, the ICR notes that government actors remained committed to the project throughout and even continued paying counterpart funds after the project ended to keep project staff in the interim period before the start of CAP-2. In relation to the avian flu project, the ICR rated the government's performance as satisfactory. This was due to several factors, including quick action by the government to delegate responsibilities to key ministries, collaborative work with the World Bank supervisory missions, and prompt endorsement of their recommendations. However, the ICR noted that there was a relatively slow procurement process.	The ICRR rated the government's performance as moderately satisfactory. Similar to the ICR, it highlights the government's proactive nature in the planning and design process and its promotion of policies and legislation that helped further the project objectives. The government also retained key staff from other World Bank–funded projects to implement CAP so that there was already a significant level of institutional knowledge. There were some shortcomings to the government's approach, including an inability to decide which ministry should lead CAP. The government was also routinely late in paying counterpart funds, which negatively affected the ability to implement project components and activities. Despite delays in its project payments, the government continued to complete counterpart payments for the first phase of the adaptable program loan after the project's close, which enabled the CAP-1 staff to be retained in the transition period before the start of CAP-2 implementation.	This PPAR rates the government performance as **moderately satisfactory.** The PPAR concurs with the ICR and ICRR, including about the proactive nature of the government in the planning and design process, its promotion of policies and legislation that helped further the project objectives, and keeping key staff from other World Bank–funded projects to implement CAP so that there was already a significant level of institutional knowledge. However, this review also notes the negative effects that delays in counterpart payments had on the project.

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
Implementing agency		
The ICR rated the implementing agency performance as satisfactory. The ICR attributes this rating to the work of the PCU and the Ministry of Decentralization. PCU performance was especially noteworthy in the area of public sector governance in how it supported the CAP-1 communes, despite minimal lead time and the fact that there was no such precedent in the country. The ICR also notes the PCU's ability to organize and recruit service providers. It was also proactive: it supplemented the M&E system with studies to provide data insights to project performance. The PCU also adequately planned for the transition to CAP-2. However, the PCU oversaw an inadequate monitoring system and did not exercise adequate budget controls for microprojects. There were also delays in payments to contractors.	The ICRR downgraded the implementing agency performance to moderately satisfactory. The ICRR notes similar strengths within the PCU, including strong collaboration between various implementing ministries and adherence to the vision of decentralization. The PCU received further positive feedback in a stakeholder and beneficiary survey, which found the unit was inclusive, participatory, and consultative. The ICRR downgraded the rating because of a perceived lack of budget controls, as evidenced by unreliable cost figures for microproject activities. However, it also notes that this could have been caused by a lack of feedback from village clusters and communes, given the nascent stage of decentralization and the capacity constraints that would have been present in these structures at that time.	This PPAR rates the implementing agency as **satisfactory.** There is ample evidence that the PMU was able to embrace the challenges of supporting a decentralized and participatory development process in a country where this had never been tried before. The fact that this assessment confirms that the project completed all required actions to lay the groundwork points to the effective management of the PMU. As noted in the ICR, the World Bank task managers were mainly based in Washington, DC. The day-to-day management was strongly supported by the PCU, which included members of the World Bank's prior team, which also had familiarity with working in local communities on aspects of rural development and environmental management. Throughout the life of the project, the PMU engaged in multiple analyses to try to supplement the M&E system. As noted in the ICR, there were problems with the budgetary controls and contractors; however, this assessment sees these as teething problems often experienced by a PMU in a first-phase CDD project.
Overall borrower performance		
The ICR rated the overall borrower performance as satisfactory. Although there were some shortcomings, including a moderately satisfactory rating for the government performance, this was offset by positive performance in project implementation. The ICR also notes that the disbursement lag that was seen during the project period was eliminated, and the PDOs were met. The ICR attributes this success in largely to the PCU's effective operations and	The ICRR downgraded the overall rating to moderately satisfactory, but it did not provide any additional explanation for the rating. Both the government and implementing agency ratings were downgraded in the ICRR, which led to the downgrading of the overall rating.	The PPAR rates the overall borrower performance as **satisfactory.** The government performance is rated as **moderately satisfactory,** and the implementing agency performance was rated as **satisfactory.** Overall outcome was rated as **satisfactory.**

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
support given by several government agencies.		
Quality of M&E		
	The ICRR rated the project's M&E as modest. Regarding design, although M&E was funded at a sufficient level ($3.9 million, or 7.4 percent of project costs) and was the subject of a full stand-alone component designed to support a poverty and environmental monitoring system (along with training), the system was ultimately too complicated and unable to be fully implemented. The ICRR points to challenges with the indicator design. M&E implementation, according to the ICRR, suffered shortcomings, including those caused by the inexperience of staff. However, the M&E coordinator was replaced two years into the project. Under new leadership, significant changes were made to project indicators, including environmental indicators. The ICRR notes that during this time, data collection increased, and by the end of the project, 90 percent of communes and 75 percent of village clusters were reporting project data. However, the national-level poverty monitoring system was unable to be fully implemented. Regarding M&E use, the M&E system became a useful project management tool and aided World Bank supervisory missions. Results garnered from M&E also helped the project reassess implementation guidelines, including the reframing of rules regarding microprojects to ensure that a wider variety of activities were eligible. The system also helped the project team to know that finance was no longer needed to build NGO capacity because through reporting, there was clarity that enough "know-	Quality of M&E is rated **modest.** M&E design was substantial, but many of the indicators were dropped or streamlined in ways that did not align with the qualitative intents of the PDO. M&E design is rated **substantial.** The indicators were designed to measure the quality of implementation, not just the outputs achieved. Many indicators at the PAD were highly relevant to measuring decentralization and the associated project interventions. M&E implementation is rated **modest.** The project took a pragmatic approach to tracking the data that could be collected and monitored, but too many indicators were condensed in an oversimplistic way. Many sections of the M&E results framework were significantly narrowed, leaving behind important metrics to evaluate CDD projects. This was, in part, a function of the constraints of conducting M&E in remote parts of Niger, but the limitation hindered the ability to fully assess project impact. M&E use is rated as **modest.** The ICR highlights the ways in which the PMU used the M&E process to assess and understand the way that learning has occurred across the project period. For example, lessons on the need to incentivize and create mechanisms to reach remote places was acknowledged and adopted at the Mid-term Review. This type of learning also occurred across subsequent CAP phases. The indicators in phase 2 were developed in a way that

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
	how" was evident across communes and village clusters.	understood that phase 1 indicators, though relevant, could not be measured effectively. This adaptation put CAP-2 in a more advantageous position. Interviews with the PMU staff evidenced a high level of learning across the three phases. For example, the former CAP PMU manager took part in IEG's June 2019 PMU PPAR launch consultation meeting in a way that showed the collaborative and sustained knowledge sharing that occurred across phases. However, one of the main drawbacks of the M&E system was the lack of collection of details and technical data on what worked to drive productive land restoration programs. Little is known about what dryland technologies are best placed in different agro-ecological contexts to derive optimal outcomes on land uses. For a program that had so much financing to report on tree planting and restoration, there is a dearth of information in the ICR across phases on the way M&E uses specific technical lessons.

Second Phase of the Community Action Program (P102354, P107841)

Table A.3. Community Action Program

Indicator	ICR	ICR Review	PPAR
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
Overall efficacy	Does not provide topline efficacy rating; see efficacy description	Modest	Substantial
Bank performance	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
Borrower performance	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of monitoring and evaluation	No monitoring and evaluation ranking is given	Substantial	Substantial

Note: The Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) is a self-evaluation by the responsible Global Practice. The ICR Review is an intermediate Independent Evaluation Group product that seeks to independently validate the findings of the ICR. PPAR = Project Performance Assessment Report.

Table A.4. Project Performance Assessment Ratings Table

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
Relevance of Objective		
According to the ICR, the project development objective (PDO) had high relevance at appraisal and closing. The PDO was to improve rural communes' capacity to design and implement commune development plans (CDPs) and annual investment plans (AIPs) in a participatory manner, and therefore to contribute to enhancing rural livelihoods. The PDO was found to be complementary to the government's Strategy to Accelerate Growth and Poverty Reduction for 2008–12, and was particularly relevant to five specific pillars that emphasized CAP-2 as a way to catalyze equitable and sustainable growth. This synergy resulted in CAP-2 accounting for a significant part of the World Bank's $154 million rural development portfolio in Niger. Furthermore, CAP-2's objectives were deemed highly relevant to the priorities from Niger's latest policy document, the Economic and Social Development Plan of 2012–15. The relevance of CAP objectives	The Implementation Completion and Results Report Review (ICRR) rates the project objectives as highly relevant at both appraisal and project completion. The ICRR also noted relevance to current World Bank priorities, including the Country Assistance Strategy FY08–11, which highlights sustainable growth, macroeconomic stability, sustainable resource management, and human capital development through better access to social services. These priorities are embedded throughout CAP-2's objectives and activities.	This Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) rates the relevance of the project objective both at appraisal and completion as **high.** The goal of CAP-2 (to improve rural communes' capacity to design and implement CDPs and AIPs in a participatory manner, and therefore to contribute to enhancing rural livelihoods) was and remains relevant. It was in line with the Country Assistance Strategy FY08–11, which focused on sustainable resource management and human capital development by increasing access to social services. The project's goal is also in line with the Systematic Country Diagnostic, which emphasizes human capital and natural resource management. These objectives are also relevant to the Country Partnership Framework, which emphasized the need to strengthen human capital, agricultural productivity, and good governance. The PDO was also relevant to the government's Strategy to Accelerate Growth and

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
continues to influence current development priorities (with CAP-3 noted as central to the World Bank's overall assistance strategy in Niger) and collaborative efforts with other bilateral and multilateral donors.		Poverty Reduction for 2008–12. The objective statement relevantly bridged the aim of the adaptable program loan from CAP-1 to CAP-2, while maintaining a focus on participation and a focus on livelihoods per the project's theory of change.
Relevance of design		
The ICR uses a single combined rating for relevance of objectives, design, and implementation, and rates this as high. The ICR highlights CAP's design focus on governance and natural resource management through increased capacity and decentralization as key design elements that remain relevant to the government's policy objectives. The broader design of the three-phase CAP initiative is also relevant, given the government's embedding of the impending CAP-3 as the main instrument for implementing the 3N initiative (a large-scale, cross-sectoral initiative to increase livestock, agricultural, and forest productivity) and the resilience of farmers and herders to climate change and food insecurity.	The ICRR downgraded relevance of design to substantial. It notes that the project was designed in a way that drew clear lines from project inputs and outputs to the expected outcomes. The capacity-building initiatives built into CAP were also of high relevance to the government's decentralization efforts. The local investment funds (LIFs) were well designed, and the infusion of financing for microprojects helped catalyze local investment in communities that would have otherwise had difficulty raising funds locally because of high levels of poverty. However, there were several other areas in which the ICR found shortcomings, which led to the overall downgrade to substantial. The ICR notes that M&E design could have been stronger, especially through increased guidance and knowledge sharing on best practices of development prioritization and sustainability of activities. There were also questions about whether the project overestimated the baseline knowledge and capacity of regional, departmental, and local administrators implementing the program. The ICR also questions the decision to place project supervision under the Ministry of Agriculture.	This PPAR rates the relevance of design as **substantial.** CAP-2 was well designed as part of a three-phaseadaptable program loan in that it built on the capacity building and aspects of institutional development that were started in the first phase. It relevantly shifted toward strengthening commune capacity once commune members were elected and communes were put in place. It also maintained a consistent focus on developing community development plans by working with the commune and traditional authorities in a participatory way. However, to engender a greater degree of representation and participation in this process, the second phase should have required mechanisms for stronger facilitation, outreach, and reporting, including through mechanisms that engaged illiterate or non-French-speaking members of communities. The LIF remained relevant as a design feature in the second phase as a mechanism to facilitate participatory development planning and to help mobilize local resources. At the same time, some critical microproject areas were neglected, including support for pastoral livelihoods, which over time have shown to be an area of tension and a constraint to sustainable land management. It is still not clear, for example, how nonresident herders

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		were included in the CDP and AIP processes. There was attention paid to gender issues, but given the low level of representation of women in decision-making, project design could have done more to facilitate this aim. Regional facilitation teams varied in the quality of technical assistance provided, and not enough attention was paid to local governance either at the commune or the village level. An understanding and assessment of local governance was vital to ensuring that the CDP process was participatory and representative of multiple resource users' needs. That said, CAP-2 design showed an ability to be flexible, particularly in shifting some resources to ensure food security, including through the land restoration activities.
Efficacy		
The ICR did not provide an overall efficacy rating, but it concludes that CAP-2 succeeded in achieving its three key performance indicators, thus meeting the PDO. The ICR views this success as evidence that CAP-2 aided capacity building and strengthening rural institutions and increased the knowledge needed to plan, implement, and monitor CDPs and AIPs. The microproject initiative was also seen as an important metric for rating CAP-2's efficacy. The ICR found the microprojects were extremely successful in improving rural access to social services, including schools and health centers, while also providing rural poor populations with access to microfinancing of income-generating activities. The ICR also notes that the causal links between the objectives and project components are logical. Stakeholder assessments conducted at the regional,	The ICRR rates efficacy as modest. The ICRR first points to positive effects of the environmental microprojects that provided cash-for-work that enhanced resilience, especially in years when Niger experienced food crises. The ICRR also highlights the reported success of income-generating microprojects. However, the ICRR downgrades efficacy of the project because of the lack of substantiating information regarding increased livelihoods. The ICR provides information on the percentage of microproject beneficiaries that have seen their income increase by 30 percent or more, but as the ICRR notes, there is no additional evidence on the source of this income increase, so it is difficult to fully attribute it to CAP-2. Similarly, the ICRR notes the lack of quantifiable evidence for an ICR assertion that the income-generating microprojects created additional employment	This PPAR rates the efficacy of CAP-2 as **substantial.** CAP-2 substantially improved the capacity of rural communes to design and implement CDPs and AIPs. All 164 communes targeted updated their CDPs based on the National Communal Planning Guide. However, this assessment found that in many ways, engendering participation in the process was difficult. As discussed in the main report, engendering participation in rural regions where decentralization was novel could be time consuming and expensive. There is evidence that there was a certain level of participation that influenced the decision-making, including through feedback and changes in the CDP. However, this assessment was not able to validate the importance, frequency, or quality of community participation that was supported by CAP-2 in the CDP and AIP processes. Site visits revealed that

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
departmental, communal, and beneficiary levels concurred with the ICR's findings.	and revenue. Given the high rate of profitability of these microprojects, it's plausible that they did increase rural employment and revenue, but detailed evidence of such was not included in the ICR. CAP-2 also reported meeting targets for improvement of access to social services by rural poor people by 2 percent in at least 50 percent of all project communes. Although the ICR concludes that this target was met (65 percent for education, 55 percent for health, and 83 percent for drinking water), the ICRR highlights the fact that there is no detailed information on how these social services improved or enhanced rural livelihoods.	village representation in the CDP and AIP processes was mostly based on the adherence of village leaders and commune officials to good governance practices. IEG observed the differences in communes and villages where villagers expressed trust and appreciation for the CDP and the investments that were derived from it. In other cases, villagers expressed the view that they were neither represented in the process nor represented by their local leaders and pointed to patronage and waste in a few cases. Even so, the project effectively implemented the LIF in a way that significantly supplemented the average commune budget. The project introduced the concept of performance-based contracts, satisfaction surveys, and audits, all of which were new to Niger and helped citizens to understand and become aware of their rights and responsibilities in this new democratic system. Such expectations were either met or exceeded, depending on the community. IEG's own analysis of the subprojects shows that there was adequate targeting: subprojects were both distributed to the Chef Lieu, the mayoral town and most populous area, and more rural towns and villages. One weakness, however, was a preponderance of lending to the Niamey region, which was antithetical to the project's goal of rural development. The evaluation also conducted extensive analysis of the land resource and land restoration activities and found, through a variety of earth observation methods, that CAP has supported large-scale land and resource restoration.

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		The Biocarbon Fund reporting also describes the number of acacia trees planted, but no targets were set, and there was no reporting on the outcome of this planting except for their ability to contribute to carbon capture. Field visits to land restoration sites confirmed that these plantings, along with other dryland management investments, contributed to increased food security and temporary jobs, as indicated in interviews. However, an expanded focus on rural livelihoods would have included more activities dedicated to productive land-based investments. Moreover, as discussed in the relevance and design section, not enough investment was made in pastoral livelihoods or stock routes.
Efficiency		
At project appraisal, there was no economic analysis or financial rate of return (FRR) conducted for the project as a whole. The ICR states that this decision was made because the most project funding went to supporting capacity development, local governance, and social microprojects, activities that are not conducive to economic analysis. The appraisal mission also decided against conducting an economic assessment based on potential types of microprojects funded, primarily because microprojects were demand driven, therefore knowing which types of projects would actually be chosen was not possible. Instead, the appraisal mission analyzed previous profitability assessments, particularly one included in the action plan of Niger's Rural Development Strategy, which	The ICRR rated project efficiency as substantial. The ICRR notes that although no economic analysis was conducted for the entirety of the project, there were targeted studies done to estimate the FRR of income-generating microprojects. The ICRR then triangulates the ICR's findings to a study conducted by the government of Niger on investments made under a separate government-financed program, which found an IRR of between 22 percent and 46 percent for irrigated microprojects. Although this is not directly comparable, it does seem to suggest that the studies done for CAP-2 were in line with broader profitability margins. The ICRR notes that there are some shortcomings with the CAP-2 economic analysis conducted at project completion. The study	This PPAR rates project efficiency as **modest.** There was no economic analysis or FRR conducted at appraisal. At close, a cost-benefit analysis was conducted of 8 percent of the revenue-generating projects (compared with 19 percent, as part of the first phase). This small sample led to an inevitably small number of projects on a per sector basis. For example, for most categories of investment, less than five microprojects were assessed. The lack of representativeness, including across regions, does not allow for either internal (to the microproject subset) or external (to the project as a whole) validity. As a second phase of three projects that were part of an adaptable program loan, this review would have anticipated that the methods to conduct cost-benefit analysis would have been strengthened

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
modeled profitability of five-hectare farms across various regions of the country. In addition, the appraisal team evaluated a 2007 study coordinated by the PCU to assess profitability of projects financed through the LIF. With these two studies as a basis, the appraisal mission estimated an internal rate of return (IRR) of between 25 and 27 percent for agriculture and livestock investments. For similar reasons to those given at appraisal, there were no economic or financial analyses conducted across the entire project at completion. Rather, at the request of the ICR mission, the PCU conducted a financial assessment of revenue-generating microprojects. This assessment was based on actual outcomes from the financed projects. The PCU worked on the study in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Institute of Statistics. The findings corroborated the appraisal estimates. At closing, all microproject types (excluding village grain mills) were found to be sufficiently or highly profitable, with an FRR of between 23 percent and 61 percent. Cereal banks represented almost half (285 of 627 total microprojects) of all revenue-generating microprojects, and those sampled in the study had an FRR of 31 percent. When excluding this large sector of investments, the rest of projects had an FRR of above 30 percent. The analysis did not include in-kind contributions, but even if included in the financial analysis, the ultimate FRR would decrease only slightly, still showing high profitability.	sampled just 52 microprojects across five of the 10 regions. This amounted to an 8 percent sample of revenue-generating projects and a 4 percent sample of total projects. The ICRR also questions the study's use of a relatively low discount rate of 4 percent, though it does not provide additional rationale for why this rate is not appropriate. Furthermore, the ICRR highlights the wide variations in microproject costs, as computed in the study by average cost per family, which was earmarked to be investigated further in CAP-3. The CAP-3 team reported average costs per family that ranged between $2.80 per household to $3.50 per household. IGRs appeared to be the most costly on an average cost per family basis. The institutional and administrative efficiency were also evaluated by the ICRR. Costs related to project coordination and management were found to have overrun initial budget estimates by 174 percent. This increase is substantial, but the ICRR concludes that project increases were not attributable to administrative inefficiency but rather project changes. The two most important factors were the expansion of communes targeted by CAP-2 (from 108 to 164) and changes to local elected leadership after the 2010 coup d'état. In the wake of the governmental changes, the project was required to spend additional resources on reinforcing capacity related to commune-level M&E.	from the first to the second phase so they could be further honed to assess overall value when the program closed (after 20 years). Findings of the ICR Cost-Benefit Analysis and IEG Field Analysis At project close, the ICR conducted an analysis of the IRR of a small sample of the microprojects. At closing, all revenue-generating microprojects except for village grain mills were found to be profitable, with an FRR of between 23 percent and 61 percent. Cereal banks, which were nearly half of all projects, featured heavily in this assessment. The study at close found that cereal banks had an FRR of about 31 percent. This assessment reviewed the efficiency of cereal banks, given their predominance in the microproject portfolio. It is likely that the cereal banks yielded a high rate of FRR when they were implemented in response to the food security crisis. However, it is not clear that the rules governing their use were conceived in a manner that could have sustained high returns in the long run. This assessment did not conduct a systematic review of the financial return of cereal banks. However, it did conduct several qualitative assessments at cereal bank sites. As stated in the What Didn't Work section of the main report, the site visits revealed challenges associated with free-rider problems and the collective action needed to make the cereal banks work effectively. More research is required on the efficiency of capital-intensive cereal banks in the Nigerien context. Other examples of microprojects that would have yielded a high rate

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		of return during project supervision include sheep fattening and garden sites. As this assessment shows, the FRR envisioned for sheep fattening was focused on a sustained rotational practice, in which the FRRs would be compounded. However, as this assessment found, the enabling environment for the sheep-fattening program was weak after project close. Additionally, interviews with women who took part in garden sites revealed anecdotally a very high rate of return for the production and sale of surplus vegetables. However, these same women beneficiaries also pointed to a challenge in maintaining access to the land. For women's gardens, land was often leased from the village chief or prominent landowners. Once the land was reclaimed and gained value, some women participants indicated that they had to give the farming land back. A second challenge was that these same participants had to give a portion of their harvest to the landowner in exchange for the land. Unfortunately, no analysis was conducted of the profound investments in land restoration or reclamation. IEG site assessments found that in the areas where the Biocarbon Fund operated, which included investment in dryland technologies, there was a significant increase in productive capacity of that land, especially for staple food crops. However, this was not quantified.
Outcome		
The ICR rated the overall outcome of CAP-2 as satisfactory. This rating is attributed to the high relevance of project design, achievement of project objectives, and the level of efficiency associated with the project. Specifically, the ICR	The ICRR downgraded the overall outcome rating to moderately satisfactory. The ICRR downgraded several aspects of outcome, which ultimately contributed to the overall outcome downgrade to moderately satisfactory. The	This assessment rates the overall outcome as **moderately satisfactory.** The relevance of design and efficacy were both rated **substantial;** however, the project's efficiency is rated as **modest.**

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
highlighted the continued and current high relevance of objectives, strong implementation support from the World Bank that allowed for changes to the project, and positive financial analysis for revenue-generating microprojects as key reasons for the overall outcome rating of satisfactory. The ICR also highlights the high level of efficiency and operating within budget as important.	relevance of objectives remained high; however, the relevance of design was downgraded to substantial. Efficacy was no ratd by the ICR. though not rated by the ICR, was rated modest by the ICRR because of gaps in corroborating evidence on enhancement of rural livelihood. The ICRR rated efficiency as substantial.	
Risk to development outcome		
The ICR rated the risk to development outcome as moderate. The risks to development outcome included (i) capacity to continue decentralization and to finance targeted communes, and (ii) the profitability and maintenance of microprojects. These risks are each rated moderate. The ICR notes that there is little risk of the government ending the decentralization agenda, but it highlights concerns about the ability of local communes to raise the funding necessary to continue services that began under CAP-1 and CAP-2. The frequency of changes to local elected councils compounds this issue and the capacity of local governance structures to deal with potential revenue shortfalls. The profitability and maintenance of microprojects was also rated as a moderate risk. Projects must provide a financial modeling before receiving investments, but there is concern that less profitable or marginally profitable projects may have trouble staying financially viable in the medium and long term without additional subsidies.	The ICRR highlights similar risks as the ICR does, especially concerning the funding needs of local communes to sustain activities. However, it raises the risk to development outcome rating to significant. It notes that communes have already seen increases in resource generation, but the increase is moderate. The need for additional financing is further highlighted in the ICRR by high risks of natural disaster, including droughts and locust invasions. These climatic threats could require even more financing at the local level and could also hinder the sustainability of microprojects.	This PPAR rates risks to development outcome as **significant.** This assessment was only able to obtain data on fiscal transfers for certain years, but the data that was collected for CAP-3 communes shows that between FY14–17, fiscal transfers were declining both in absolute and per capita terms. Across all CAP project phases, the project has substantially supported commune-level mechanisms needed to ensure inclusive and sustainable decentralization over the time of project financing, including local development planning to stimulate local investment. Many communes will be hard pressed to replicate the results achieved under CAP without additional financing. As discussed in this PPAR, land restorations were successful in reducing short-term vulnerability through cash-for-work programs and the more productive use of rainfall for cultivation. However, this assessment shows that neither of these processes has been sufficiently institutionalized. There are also significant issues that remain between commune-level and village-level governance mechanisms (elected officials and traditional rulers) that will determine the representativeness and fairness involved in using local

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
		development finance. Many issues related to conflict management and land tenure continue to rest at the local level, but the significant overlapping of authorities (legal pluralism) may also increase risks.
Bank performance		
Quality at entry		
The ICR rates quality at entry as moderately satisfactory. The ICR concludes that the project preparation and appraisal teams used recommendations and lessons from both previous projects in Niger and other Sahelian zone projects to inform CAP-2. However, the World Bank did not deem a quality at entry review of the project as necessary. The ICR attributes this to the successful first phase of the project. The ICR deemed risk assessments to have covered most significant elements of concern, but the project fell short in providing sufficient staffing to support the expanded mandate of CAP-2 in support of the overall decentralization aims of the government. The ICR concluded that this unidentified risk was because of the World Bank's policy regarding mainstreaming project activities and relying increasingly on borrower staffing resources, especially in a country like Niger, where local governance structures were still in a nascent stage. The lack of public sector capacity and field operations required creation of a separate management and coordination unit for CAP-2.	The ICRR also rated quality at entry as moderately satisfactory. The ICRR concurs with the ICR on all of the project's quality at entry characteristics. Most notably, it highlights the unidentified risk involving staffing levels necessary for decentralization work and some results targets that proved to be overambitious, including the target for the amount of land recovered.	The PPAR rates the quality at entry as **moderately satisfactory.** This assessment concurs with the ICR and ICRR. Project preparation and appraisal teams used recommendations and lessons from previous projects in Niger and other Sahelian zone projects to inform CAP-2. However, the project fell short in providing sufficient staffing to support the expanded mandate of CAP-2 in support of the overall decentralization aims of the government. The PPAR also found that some results targets proved to be overambitious, including the target for the amount of land recovered.
Quality of supervision		
The ICR rates quality of supervision as satisfactory. The World Bank conducted seven missions and a midterm mission,	The ICRR also rated quality of supervision as satisfactory. Missions were conducted often and with a wide variety of mission	The PPAR concurs with the ICR and ICRR and rates quality of supervision as **satisfactory.** As noted in the ICR, the World Bank

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
which included a wide variety of technical specialists, World Bank staff, and consultants. These missions also included other stakeholders, including government ministries and other donors. The ICR notes that aide-mémoire were thorough and provided strong recommendations for the PCU on necessary project changes. The ICR notes that the Mid-Term Review led to important staffing corrections, including understaffing of the PCU and the M&E system. The ICR also found ISRs to be transparent and candid in nature. The project preparation for CAP-3 also started early to allow for project continuity between CAP-2 and CAP-3.	staff with technical and specialized skills. The supervision documents, including aide-mémoire, were found to contain useful data and surveys that informed the PCU to take corrective actions. However, the ICR notes that weaknesses related to safeguard compliance should have been rectified earlier.	conducted seven missions and a midterm mission, which included a wide variety of technical specialists, World Bank staff, and consultants. These missions resulted in strong and detailed aide-mémoire and other project documents. Both the ICR and ICRR highlight weaknesses regarding safeguard compliance (but this was outside the scope of this assessment).
Overall Bank performance		
The ICR rates overall Bank performance as satisfactory. The project's objective was sound and clearly focused on activities aligned with the government's agenda for decentralization and management of environmental quality. The World Bank was assiduous in supervising implementation and offering appropriate guidance for improvement.	The ICRR also rates overall Bank performance as moderately satisfactory. It rates quality at entry as moderately satisfactory and quality of supervision as satisfactory.	The PPAR rates overall Bank performance as **moderately satisfactory.** The quality at entry was rated as **moderately satisfactory,** and the quality of supervision was rated as **satisfactory.**
Borrower Performance		
Government		
The ICR rated government performance as moderately satisfactory. It attributes this to government commitment and use of CAP as a conduit to its overall poverty reduction strategy. The government's support was also evident through the management of a steering committee of eight ministries to oversee CAP coordination. Another sign of	The ICRR rates government performance as moderately satisfactory because of overall borrower commitment and support of policies and legislation that were necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of CAP. The ICRR also points to similar shortcomings as the ICR does, including political interference, a lack of counterpart funding, delays, and staffing issues.	This assessment agrees with the overall government performance rating of moderately satisfactory in the ICRR. It notes the full commitment of government to the decentralization process and therefore the project aims. There was a plethora of ministries involved, given the need to coordinate activities. It continued to support wider legislative aims

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
the government's commitment was the support of policies and legislation that aided CAPs implementation. The ICR points to three reasons why the rating is moderately satisfactory and not satisfactory for (i) interference that delayed recruitment of staff to the CCN and CCR, ICR notes that the government failed to contribute nearly 50 percent of the counterpart funds, which made it difficult to implement the disbursement category cofinanced by the government and (iii) the National Agency for Local Government Financing was slow to hire personnel and recruit staff.		that were necessary to the success of CAP. However, there was delayed recruitment of staff, and the government failed to contribute nearly 50 percent of the counterpart funds, which made it difficult to implement the disbursement category cofinanced by the government. Additionally, the National Agency for Local Government Financing was slow to hire personnel and recruit staff.
Implementing agency/agencies		
The ICR rated implementing agency performance as satisfactory, mainly on the basis of the effective work of the National Program Coordination Unit and the work of the regional coordinators. The Ministries of Decentralization and Agriculture supported these actors. The notable accomplishments by the PCU include (i) full recruitment of staff across eight regions, (ii) expedited implementation despite delays, (iii) effective rollout of the CDPs, and (iv) exceptional flexibility in the face of crises (food crises and locust invasions). Another noteworthy accomplishment of the PCU was its strong support for local participation and consultation, especially with vulnerable populations. The ICR notes that the PCU adequately managed implementation challenges along the way, including those related to M&E and reporting. However, the ICR indicates that they managed issues related to	The ICRR also rates the performance of the implementing agency as satisfactory. The main reason for this was the ability of the implementing agency to correct operational problems along the way (for example, M&E, procurement, and safeguards). Again, the ICR does not provide evidence that safeguards were adequately managed, aside from the reference in the ICR. Credit is also given to the speed of implementation and timeliness of reporting, and that annual audits were unqualified.	The implementing agency performance is rated **satisfactory.** The full implementation of the CDPs and AIPs and efficient rollout of LIFs point to the effective performance of the implementing agency in CAP-2. M&E was conducted adequately by the PMU, including in remote regions, where data were adequately collected. This assessment did not follow up on safeguard issues that were raised in the ICR (it was outside the scope of this assessment). Erroneous procurement issues, as noted by the ICR, were managed effectively by the PMU, including with the help of World Bank staff on supervision. All of the annual audits, however, were qualified.

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
inadequate safeguard planning, but it does not provide evidence to validate this. The ICR also notes some erroneous procurement issues that were adequately managed by the PCU during supervisory missions.		
Overall borrower performance		
The ICR rates overall borrower performance as satisfactory based on a moderately satisfactory rating for government performance and a fully satisfactory rating for implementing agency performance. The satisfactory rating is provided because the implementing agency performance is weighted more significant because of the achievement of development outcome objectives, in large part because of performance of the PCU and other government agencies.	The ICRR downgrades the rating to moderately satisfactory but provides no additional details.	The PPAR rates overall borrower performance as **satisfactory.** The government performance was rated as **moderately satisfactory,** and the implementing agency rating was **satisfactory.**
Quality of M&E		
Not rated	Overall M&E was rated substantial by the ICRR, but the ICRR did not individually rate design, implementation, and utilization. M&E design included a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators that captured project outcomes. It also called for creating a National M&E team to aid in evaluation, including data collection at regional and local levels. Relatedly, the responsibility for data collection was designed for all levels, from local to regional, to update key performance indicators. However, as shown through the implementation experience, though relevant, many of these design features were too complex, including because they involved many actors. This design helped to aid local participation, but it also creates reporting difficulties. One notable weakness	Overall M&E is rated **substantial** by this assessment. M&E design is rated **substantial.** The project team corrected several measurement challenges that were evident in CAP-1. The indicators covered economic, decentralization, social, and environmental elements as part of what was an inherently broad decentralization project. The revised indicators were measurable and in line with the capacity of the PMU to conduct and analyze data across almost 164 communes. That said, the metrics designed to measure social services were very weak and unevaluable. It is noteworthy that the project improved its environmental indicators, though these could be improved to capture relevant

ICR	ICRR	PPAR
	is the data on incomes, which was hard to measure. The ICRR notes a need for increased capacity to monitor and collect data across the 164 communes in eight regions. Additional staff were hired at midterm to aid in the increased need of data collection. Also worth noting is that a detailed and rigorous impact evaluation was not completed. The project management, the steering committee, and supervision missions successfully used M&E data. The M&E system provided empirical data and analyses to improve decision-making by the implementation support missions and project management (ICR, page 8). After the Mid-Term Review, the quarterly and annual reports were supported with adequate data and produced on time.	environment, economic, and social benefits. M&E is **substantial.** CAP-2 was able to collect and report on almost all of the results indicators. Other qualitative and financial studies were also conducted, including satisfaction and beneficiary surveys and profitability analyses. M&E use is rated **substantial.** Results from CAP-1 were used effectively to inform the design of CAP-2. However, the weakness of the social indicators should have been identified and amended, and data should have been used differently in the second half of the project period. In a project that considers wide-scale land reclamation, it would have been useful to use redress mechanisms as a tool to mitigate risks associated with elite capture and other land-related governance challenges.

Appendix B. Fiduciary, Environmental, and Social Aspects

Financial Management

Community Action Program Phase 1

The project Implementation Completion and Results Report deemed financial management risks as overestimated, especially given that the component was a part of the Community Action Program (CAP) that already had good financial management. The project benefited from a committed staff and access to the experienced management team of CAP-1 and later CAP-2 in financial management. Financial management and reporting were good throughout the implementation period, and all audit reports were unqualified.

Community Action Program Phase 2

The third component (project coordination, management, monitoring, and evaluation) included the project's financial management plan. A report-based financial management system allowed quarterly disbursement of funds from the World Bank, which enabled implementation to continue, despite political instability. This would not have been an option in the invoice-based system formerly in place. The financial management team maintained up-to-date financial accounts and provided financial monitoring information to management quarterly and annually.

The project's more recent annual audit reports were all submitted on the due dates, had unqualified audit opinions, and were acceptable to the International Development Association. The government and donors have recognized the quality of CAP-2's financial management system to the extent that they placed the financial management of other projects under the same financial management group (with additional accounting staff). A novelty during the project period was adoption of the World Bank's new report-based disbursement system, which allowed project operations to continue even during periods when the World Bank suspended assistance to Niger.

The expanded area and number of communes covered under CAP-2 required extensive training in financial management and procurement for CAP-2 staff working in communes and for community committee members. The frequent change of local governments considerably exacerbated procurement problems in the field, resulting in a midterm rating of moderately satisfactory. The problems were overcome gradually, and the last implementation support mission rated procurement performance as satisfactory. Throughout implementation, CAP-2 received such high marks for financial management

that its financial management unit has been asked (and has agreed) to manage the financial books of other projects. All audits during the past three years were unqualified.

Procurement

CAP-1

The first phase's design included capacity building for procurement systems, but throughout the project, there was a lack of funds for procurement of goods and consultant services, especially because of delays or failure of the provision of counterpart funds. Two procurement reviews were carried out during the project period. In addition, the World Bank's procurement specialists regularly took part in supervision missions. Apart from some advisory notes, the reviewers made no major comments on CAP's procurement activities. The procurement activities were considered moderately risky in the procurement reviews and satisfactory in most Implementation Support Reports. The government's good performance was tarnished somewhat by the slow procurement process, for which it had review and approval obligations.

CAP-2

CAP-2 expanded the number of communes and the area the project covered, so extensive training in procurement was required for both CAP-2 staff working in new areas and for community committee members. The frequent change of local governments exacerbated procurement problems in the field considerably, resulting in a midterm rating of moderately satisfactory. The problems were overcome gradually, and the last implementation support mission rated procurement performance as satisfactory. Village and commune committees also gained experience in procurement and supervision of microprojects and in following environmental regulations.

The personnel and committees in the new departments and communes were unfamiliar with the project's procedures, especially those relating to procurement. The terms of reference, technical specifications, approval of contracts, and filing procedures were often inadequate, though they improved toward the end of the project because of extensive field training by the project procurement staff. The mayors at the communes changed three times and were unaware of the decision process regarding procurement.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

CAP-1

The project organized a workshop to train CAP agents and service providers in environmental and social safeguards.

CAP-2

The second phase aimed to increase the amount of environmental and social safeguards, including the inclusion of three indicators specifically related to this (table B.1). During the first two years of the project, the requirements and forms for environmental safeguards were not understood well in many microprojects, and the supervising agency of the Ministry of Environment had too few staff in the field. After midterm, the recruitment of a project safeguards specialist allowed more training and verification of the environmental forms; as a result, the regulations were followed during the last part of the project. Some stakeholders expressed concern that payment to communities for their efforts under the carbon sequestration program had not yet started. The Mid-Term Review in the project's third year judged performance to be moderately satisfactory, an assessment that reflected reservations related to environmental and social safeguards for microprojects and the monitoring and evaluation system.

Table B.1. Environmental and Social Sustainability and Safeguard Indicators in CAP-2

Indicator	Baselines and Tagets (%; date)
Percent of targeted communes that set up adequate measures to ensure sustainability of microprojects (management committees, maintenance fund, and technical assistance contracts)	Baseline: 65 (12/24/2008) Target: 90 (04/30/2013) Actual: 93 (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes where 100 percent of microprojects are in compliance with environmental and social safeguards	Baseline: 15 (12/24/2008) Target: 75 (04/30/2013) Actual: 100 (04/30/2013)
Percent of communes in which technical audits are satisfactory and financial audits are unqualified	Baseline: 6 (12/24/2008) Target: 86 (04/30/2013) Actual: 100 (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes where 100 percent of microprojects include environmental and social safeguards	Baseline: 15 (12/24/2008) Target: 75 (04/30/2013) Actual: 100 (04/30/2013)

Source:Independent Evaluation Group

Appendix C. Methods

This report is a Project Performance Assessment Report. This instrument and its ratings methodology are described at https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/methodology/PPAR.

Evaluation Methodology

This assessment builds on the project documentation, including Project Appraisal Documents, Implementation Completion and Results Reports, and Implementation Completion and Results Report Reviews. This initial document review identified evidence gaps, which were filled through a multidisciplinary approach and combined layered data collection methods. Alongside literature review, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) used earth observation technology and geographic information systems (GIS) to map land use changes over time and layer project intervention locations in relation to political boundaries. IEG augmented this geolocating work with field-based, real-time data captured using drones. The fieldwork phase, conducted during a field mission to Niger between July 10 and July 29, 2019, included structured individual and group interviews with key stakeholders, including federal and municipal authorities, technical agents, and project staff to gather technical data and feedback. These interviews were supplemented by deep dive ethnographic interviews of a stratified sample of land users. These interviews allowed IEG to test assumptions and report on distributional benefits between several groups of people (landowners and nonlandowners, men and women, elders and youths, and ethnic groups and migrants) and explore the extent of localization of governance and decision-making, which are key objectives of both Community Action Program (CAP) phases 1 and 2.

The IEG work was used as part of a wider natural resource evaluation, and as such, IEG partnered with Dawning, LLC, a research and journalism organization. Dawning's inclusion in the project allowed for an increased focus on deep dive ethnographic interviews, storytelling and evidence-oriented photography, and increased drone footage to verify and document specific evidence gathered during the interview process in relation to land management and land regeneration. The Dawning team also compiled a long-form photographic and interview-based article to widen exposure to the World Bank's activities.

Fiscal Transfer Data Analysis

IEG compiled fiscal data collected during the July 2019 field mission, including commune-level public budgets and CAP-3 disbursements to supplement qualitative field evidence and inform Project Performance Assessment Report conclusions. Commune-level budget data spanned from 2014 to 2017 and included 253 communes

across all eight regions. However, because of data gaps, this Project Performance Assessment Report uses data from 93 communes across six regions: Diffa, Dosso, Maraid, Tahoua, Tillaberi, and Zinder. Data from the remaining communes did not include complete budget amounts across all four years, making its inclusion in the analysis of trends over time difficult. It's important to note that commune-level CAP-3 budget transfers should not be compared directly with commune-level public budget amounts in a single year because CAP-3 transfers encompass a commune's entire disbursement for the project period. However, it is appropriate to look at the relative differences in size of CAP-3 disbursements and public budgets regionally, as this report does. The most recent year for which nationwide population data exists is 2012. To calculate per capita spending in future years (2014–17), the report used yearly growth rates to estimate population projections for each of the years analyzed.

CAP Activity Analysis

To identify a stratified sample of municipalities in Niger, team members undertook the following steps to construct a geodatabase and series of maps that were used in the planning and execution of the evaluation: (i) data collection, (ii) data processing, and (iii) data analysis.

The following data sources were acquired and processed for use in the CAP evaluation:

- GIS files for collectivities (villages and cities), municipalities, districts, and regions were acquired from the Niger Cartographic Institute.
- A road network GIS layer was acquired from OpenStreetMap, and agricultural land cover data were acquired from the US Geological Survey Eros Research Center (https://eros.usgs.gov/westafrica/data-downloads).
- Non-GIS data that were used include municipality-level population data acquired from the Niger Statistics Agency (INS: http://www.stat-niger.org/statistique/index.php).
- World Bank project data were acquired from various sources within the institution, including the World Bank country office in Niger.

Data processing steps involved cleaning the data and joining the GIS and non-GIS data together using a unique key field. Because most of the World Bank project data lacked numerical unique ID codes, the text character-based *name* fields were used. Because of spelling and data formatting discrepancies in text-based fields, the Reclink tool in the Stata statistical software program (V14) was used successfully. The resulting Excel spreadsheets were then imported into ArcGIS Pro (ESRI, V2), where they were joined

with the municipality GIS layer using a shared unique ID. A comparable process was carried out to join the population data to the GIS layers.

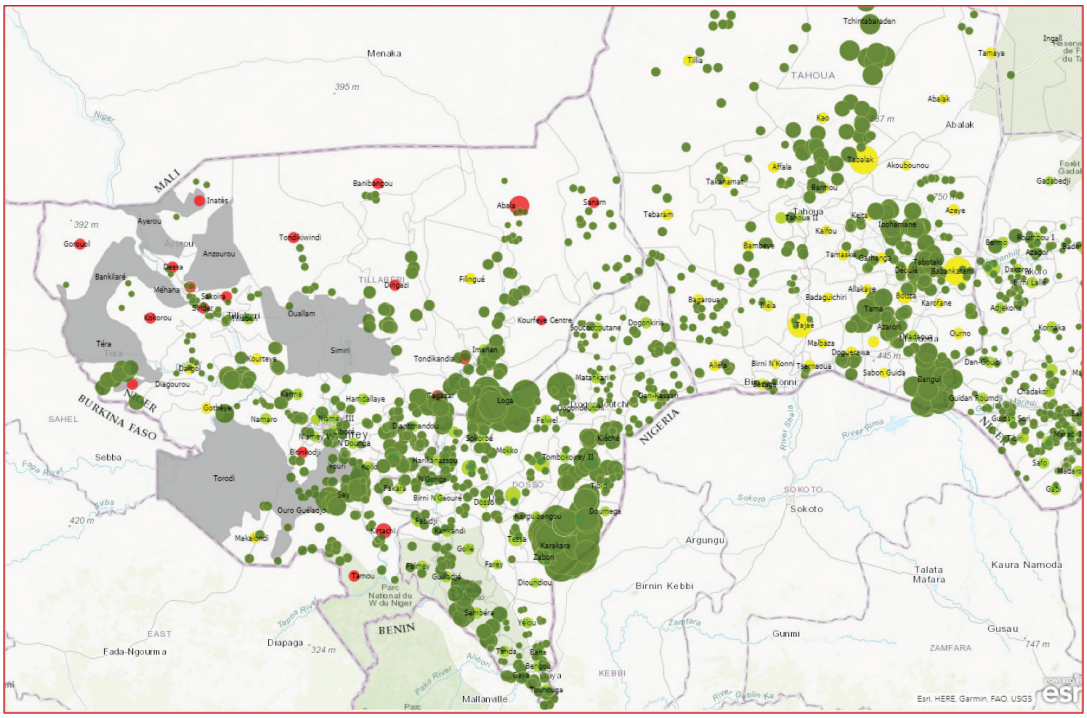
US Geological Survey land cover data are in the raster grid format, with pixels representing classified land cover (woodland, grassland, agriculture, and so on). These data were reclassified into a binary agriculture-nonagriculture grid, which was joined with the municipality GIS layer by calculating the total area of the municipality, and the total area and percentage of agriculture *within* each municipality. The calculation of municipality area also enabled the calculation of population density.

Project data acquired from the World Bank were then tallied by municipality so that each municipality had an attribute for the total number of projects involving each of the three CAP phases and social protection, land management, pastoralism, and Acacia plantations. These data were then combined with US State Department security assessment rankings (1 = safe, 2 = moderately safe, and 3 = dangerous) to screen out municipalities where few or no projects were carried out, and those that are too dangerous for a field time to visit. A second screening involving classifying municipalities according to whether they had been targeted by one, two, or three phases in the CAP. These operations were all carried out using the GIS attribute table tools and functions.

The GIS data product that resulted from this processing is a feature class with all the Nigerien municipalities as geographical entities that have administrative, demographic, land cover, and project information included in their data structure. This enabled the production of a series of maps that visualize the locations of municipalities with any number of projects or combinations of project types. These maps and their underlying geographic data were used to create a stratified random sample of municipalities based on their levels of treatment (CAP phases, specific project types, and inclusion in the Social Projection Program). These municipality profiles were combined with security clearance and logistical feasibility (distance from capital city and road access) to create an itinerary for the IEG field mission in July 2019.

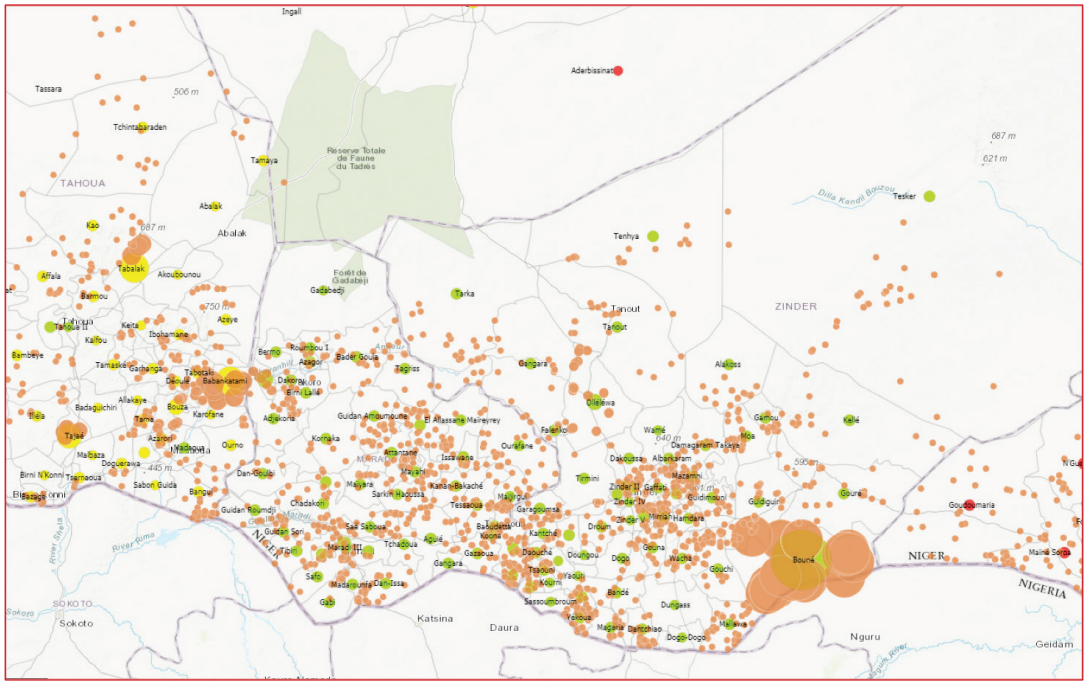
All maps are available on http://www.arcgis.com, and data are available on request from Leif Brottem (consultant to IEG, brotteml@grinnell.edu). Map C.1 is an example of mapping resulting from the GIS analysis.

Map C.1. Mapping of Land-Based Interventions across CAP-1 and CAP-2



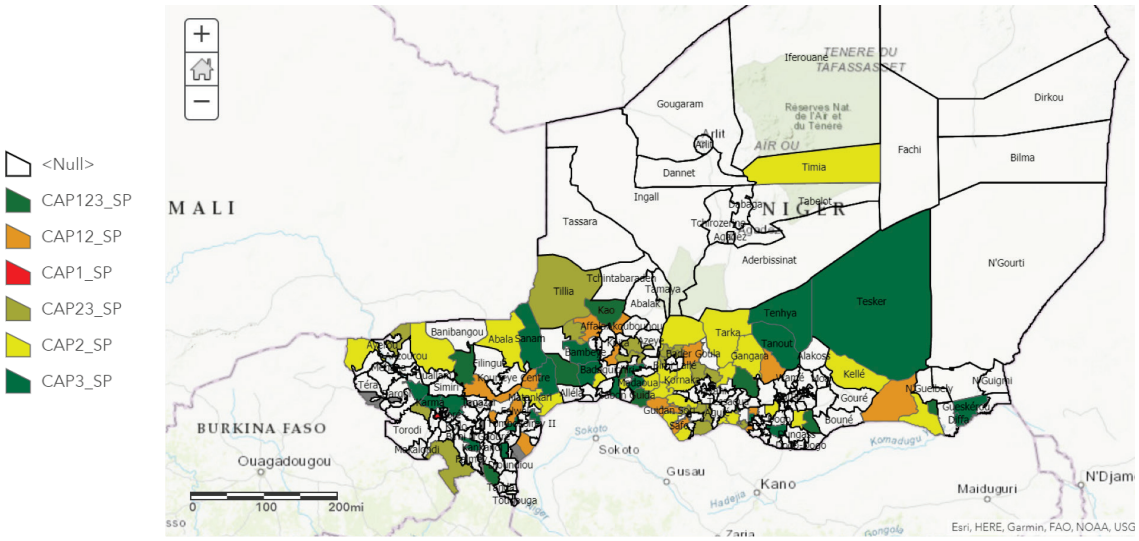
Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.

Map C.2. Mapping Acacia Interventions across CAP-1 and CAP-2



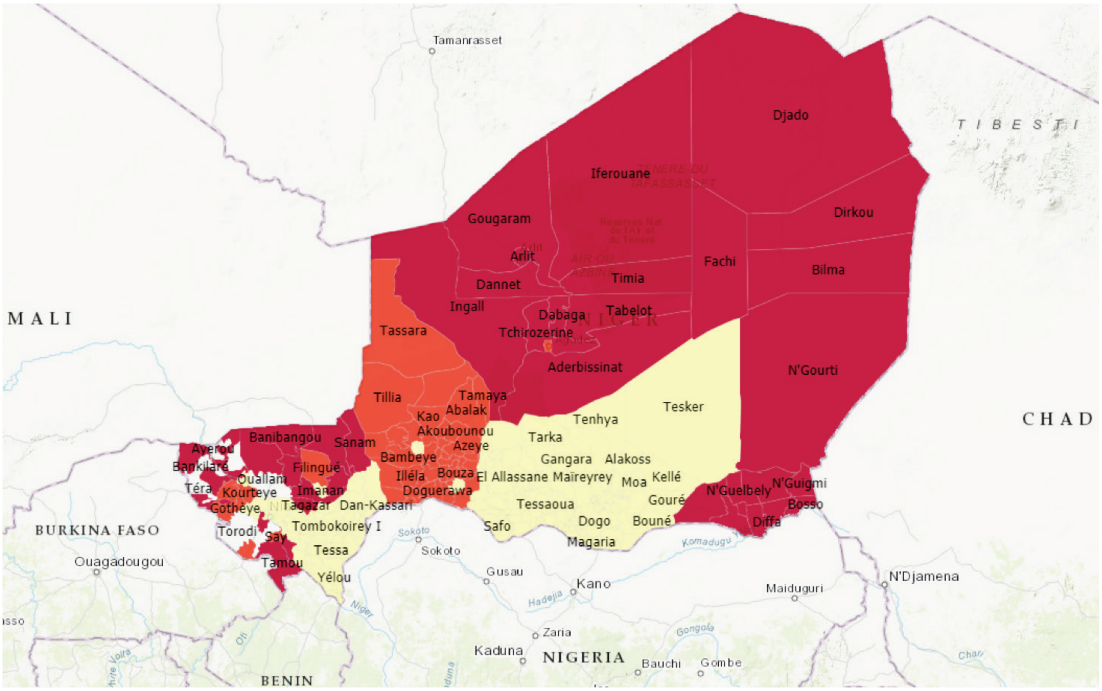
Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.

Map C.3. Mapping CAPs 1, 2, and 3 Activity Locations Using GIS



Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.

Map C.4. Mapping Security Risks over Project Areas



Source: Independent Evaluation Group 2020.

Appendix D. Results Gap Analysis

Community Action Program Phases 1, 2, and 3: Results Framework Analysis

The evaluation used indicators from all three phases to inform its discussion of outcome and sustainability with the project team, including in a launch workshop. Phase 3 was almost closed at the time of the Independent Evaluation Group mission to assess phases 1 and 2, and there was geographic overlap.

Table D.1. Community Action Program Inidicators and Results In Phases 1, 2, and 3

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
Environment Indicators		
Phase 1		
Condition of natural resources and ecosystems as a whole in their multiple functions seen from a local, national, and global environmental perspective as indicated by the improvement of trends in: Extent and composition of woody herbaceous vegetation and/or crops on natural rangelands, cultivated areas, and shorelines Area of marginal lands under cultivation of annual crops and those being protected and/or actively recovered Existence and condition of livestock corridors and compliance to rules governing their use Availability and accessibility of grazing and water areas during the dry season to nonresident livestock holders Knowledge, preservation, and recovery of natural plant species that are sources of traditional food and medicinal and veterinary products	Area of marginal lands under cultivation of annual crops and area of marginal land being protected and/or actively recovered	Baseline: 0% (02/01/2004) Target: Improvement in trend (06/30/2007) Actual: 7,837 hectares of Acacia Senegal planted on degraded land (reforestation) eligible for Biocarbon Finance (06/30/2008)
Phase 2		

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
Percent of targeted communes in which more than 200 additional hectares of land were protected and reclaimed	Percent of targeted communes in which more than 200 additional hectares of land were protected and reclaimed	Baseline: 0 (12/24/2008) Target: 60% (04/30/2013) Actual: 72% (118)
Hectares of land reclamation and protection	Hectares of land reclamation and protection	Baseline: 5,591 hectares (12/24/2008) Target: 15,472 hectares (04/30/2013) Actual: 32,202 hectares (04/30/2013)
Hectares of Acacia Senegalensis under the Biocarbon Fund transaction	Hectares of Acacia Senegalensis under the Biocarbon Fund transaction	Baseline: 3,591 hectares (12/24/2008) Target: 8,472 hectares (04/30/2013) Actual: 8,133 hectares (04/30/2013) *This area is related to the achievement of the CAP-1. The target value has been revised down from 2,200 hectares. Target not achieved.
Phase 3		
Additional land area under sustainable land and water management and sustainable forest management practices (hectares; Global Environment Facility indicator)	Not in Implementation Supervision Report (ISR)	Baseline: 0 Target: 60,000 (year 4) Current: not in ISR No. 12
Percent of newly targeted farming households that adopted sustainable agrosylvopastoral practices and technology promoted by the project (International Development Association core indicator)	Not in ISR	Baseline: 0% Target: 90% (year 4) Current: not in ISR No. 12
Percent of targeted communes that have protected and/or restored at least 200 hectares of land	ISR: percent of targeted communes that have protected and/or restored at least 200 hectares of land	Baseline: 0% Target: 70% (year 4); 90% (end) Current: 90% (ISR No. 12)
Land Tenure		
Phase 1		
No indicator	No indicator	No results
Phase 2		

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
Percent of targeted communes setting up land tenure commissions that started delivering land titles	Percent of targeted communes setting up land tenure commissions that started delivering land titles	Baseline: 36% (12/24/2008) Target: 60% (04/30/2013) Actual: 96% (04/30/2013)
Phase 3		
No indicator	No indicator	No results
Governance and Institutions		
Phase 1		
Capable and accountable local governance: Existence and use of transparent, accountable, demand-driven decision-making processes	Communities that have elaborated a feasible community development plan	Baseline: 28% (50 communities) (02/01/2004) Target: 75% (133 communities) (06/30/2007) Actual: 100% (178 communities) (06/30/2008)
Broader representation of hitherto marginalized groups in local affairs Policy, legal, and fiscal framework for decentralization operational	Communities that have implemented at least five CAP-supported microprojects from their local development plan	Baseline: 0 (02/01/2004) Target: 60% (106 communities) (06/30/2007) Actual: 75% (134 communities) (06/30/2008)
Proportion of national resources mobilized by rural communities Reduced time lags to implementation Decreased management to investment costs	Communes that have implemented at least three CAP-supported microprojects from their CDP (among the 54 communities reached by the project)	Baseline: 0 (02/01/2004) Target: 60% (32 communes) (06/30/2007) Actual: 70% (06/30/2008)
Seventy-five percent of communities in targeted communes carry out needs assessments and produce feasible development plans Sixty percent of targeted communities directly executing project-supported microprojects Seventy-five percent of targeted communes (local governments) receive training and are actively involved in local development	Number of community leaders trained in community development in community procurement	Baseline: 0; 0 (02/01/2004) Target: 787; 270 0(6/30/2007) Actual: 1202; 275 (06/30/2008)
Phase 2		
Percent of communes in which more than 50 percent of the population was satisfied with	percent of communes in which more than 50 percent of the	Baseline: 13% (12/24/2008)

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
the implementation of the commune development plan (CDP) through the annual investment plan (AIP).	population was satisfied with the implementation of the CDP.	Target: 73% (04/30/2013) Actual: 92% (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes that design/update their CDPs according to the National Communal Planning Guide	Percent of targeted communes that design/update their CDPs according to the National Communal Planning Guide	Baseline: 32% (12/24/2008) Target: 100% (4/30/2013); 92% (05/09/2011) Actual: 100% (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes using the RDS methodological guide to plan sustainable land management activities	percent of targeted communes using the RDS methodological guide to plan sustainable land management activities.	Baseline: 2% (12/24/2008) Target: 62% (04/30/2013) Achieved: 100% (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes that organize annual public meetings during which they report on their activities.	No indicator	No results
Percent of targeted communes that adjust their CDPs and AIP based on feedback from communities	Percent of targeted communes that adjust their CDPs and AIP based on feedback from communities	Baseline: 30% (12/24/2008) Target: 90% (04/30/2013) Actual: 93% (04/30/2013)
Percent of performance-based contracts with public service providers satisfactorily implemented at communal level	Percent of performance-based contracts with public service providers satisfactorily implemented at the communal level	Baseline: 0% (12/24/2008) Target: 80% (04/30/2013) Actual: 99% (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes that set up adequate measures to ensure sustainability of microprojects (management committees, maintenance fund, and technical assistance contracts)	Percent of targeted communes that set up adequate measures to ensure sustainability of microprojects (management committees, maintenance fund, and technical assistance contracts)	Baseline: 65% (12/24/2008) Target: 90% (04/30/2013) Actual: 93% (04/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes where 100 percent of microprojects are in compliance with environmental and social safeguards	Percent of targeted communes where 100 percent of microprojects include environmental and social safeguards	Baseline: 15% (12/24/2008) Target: 75% (04/30/2013)

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
		Actual: 100% (04/30/2013)
Percent of communes in which more than 50 percent of the population are aware of the communes' priority activities, budget, and resource management	Percent of communes in which more than 50 percent of the population are aware of commune budget and resource management	Baseline: 6% (12/24/2008) Target: 66% (04/30/2013) Actual: 88% (04/30/2013)
Percent of communes in which technical audits are satisfactory and financial audits are unqualified	Percent of communes in which technical audits are satisfactory and financial audits are unqualified	Baseline: 6% (12/24/2008) Target: 86% (04/30/2013) Actual: 100% (04/30/2013)
	Percent of targeted communes mobilizing more than 30 percent of internal and other resources to cofinance the AIP	Baseline: 48% (12/24/2008) Target: 88% (04/30/2013); 86% (05/09/2011) Actual: 90% (04/30/2013)
Percent of communes that submit quarterly monitoring and evaluation reports on time	Percent of communes that submit quarterly monitoring and evaluation reports on time	Baseline: 20% (12/24/2008) Target: 80% (04/30/2013) Actual: 81.25% (04/30/2013)
Project biannual implementation progress reports are disseminated to public services donors and other relevant stakeholders	Project biannual implementation progress reports are disseminated to public services donors and other relevant stakeholders	Baseline: 0 (12/24/2008) Target: S (04/30/2013) Actual: S (04/30/2013)
Annual audit opinion has been unqualified	Project annual audit opinion has been unqualified	Baseline: S (12/24/2008) Target: S (04/30/2013) Actual: S (04/30/2013)
Number of collaboration agreements signed with other projects at the regional level that are satisfactorily implemented	No indicator	No results

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
	Percent of communes-civil services implemented in a satisfactory manner	Baseline: 0% (12/24/2008) Target: 80% (04/30/2013) Actual: 97% (04/30/2013)
Phase 3		
Percent of newly targeted communes that have defined and put in place governance practices (participation, financial accountability, and equity)	ISR: percent of targeted communes that have defined and implemented good governance practices in the areas of participation, financial accountability, and social equity	Baseline: 0% Target: 85% (year 4); 98% (end) Current: 98% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of targeted communes that are enabled to sustain proper operation and maintenance of local development investments	ISR: percent of targeted communes that are enabled to sustain proper operation and maintenance of local development investments	Baseline: 9%. Target: 100% (end) Current: 100% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of targeted communes whose planning and AIP sessions are public	ISR: percent of targeted communes whose planning and AIP sessions are public (ISR)	Baseline: 0% Target: 60% (year 4/end) Current: 100% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of targeted communes that timely prepare annual financial reports (within legal delays)	ISR: percent of targeted communes that timely prepare annual financial reports (within legal delays)	Baseline: 0% Target: 75% (year 4); 76% (end) Current: 96% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of commune whose approved microprojects integrate gender equity	ISR: percent of communes whose approved microprojects integrate gender equity	Baseline: 0% Target: 90% (year 4); 98% (end) Current: 98% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of communes whose grievance mechanisms have been created and are operational	ISR: percent of communes whose grievance mechanisms have been created and are operational	Baseline: 0% Target: 65% (year 4); 100% (end) Current: 100% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of targeted communes effectively interested in *intercommunalité*	ISR: percent of targeted communes that effectively practice *intercommunalité*	Baseline: 0% Target: 60% (year 4/end) Current: 34% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of representatives of key regional agencies whose planning capacities have been strengthened	ISR: percent of representatives of key regional agencies whose planning capacities have been strengthened	Baseline: 0% Target: 60% (year 4); 85% (end) Actual: 87% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of representatives of deconcentrated line departments whose local development-related capacities have been strengthened	ISR: percent of representatives of deconcentrated line departments whose local development-related capacities have been strengthened	Baseline: 0% Target: 90% (year 4); 96% (end) Current: 99% (ISR No. 12)

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
Percent of targeted communes using at least 80 percent of their investment allocations	ISR: percent of targeted communes using at least 80 percent of their investment allocations	Baseline: 0% Target: 80% (year 4); 86% (end) Current: 94% (ISR No. 12)
Percent of targeted intergovernmental initiatives that have been implemented	ISR: percent of targeted intercommunal initiatives that have been implemented	Baseline: 0% Target: 50% (year 4) Current: 38% (ISR No. 12)
Economic		
Phase 1		
National coverage of the Community Action Program regarding access to the financial intermediary loan, and consequent percent increases in: Farm and nonfarm incomes Individuals employed via microprojects Those with access to basic social and economic services Percent with timely access to adequate food Communities active in the management and conservation of natural resources	No indicator	No results
Phase 2		
Percent of beneficiaries of income-generating activities who increase their revenue by 30 percent	Percent of beneficiaries of income-generating activities who increase their incomes by 30 percent	Baseline: 0% (12/24/2008) Target: 60% (04/30/2013) Actual: 75% (04/30/2013)
Phase 3		
Percent of beneficiaries whose income increased by 30 percent because of farm and off-farm jobs created by approved microprojects	ISR: percent of beneficiaries whose income increased by 30 percent because of farm and off-farm jobs created by approved microprojects	Baseline: 0% Target: 80% (year 4); 90% (end) Current: 88%
	ISR: Increase in agricultural productivity of major crops (tomato, cassava, onions, and pepper; metric ton)	Breakdown of baseline and target by crop
	ISR: number of storage and processing facilities built	Baseline: 0% Target: 65% (end) Current: 63% (ISR No. 12)

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
Social		
Phase 1		
No indicator	No indicator	No results
Phase 2		
N/A	Percent of target communes for which more than 50 percent of the population are satisfied with the implementation of the CDP through the AIP	Baseline: 13 (12/24/2008) Target: 63% (04/30/2013) Actual: 92% (4/30/2013)
Percent of targeted communes that increase the rate of coverage of social services by more than 2 percent in one of the following three sectors: education, health, and potable water	Percent of targeted communes that increase the rate of coverage of social services by more than 2 percent in one of the following three sectors: education, health, potable water	Baseline: 25% (12/24/2008) Target: 50% (04/30/2013) Actual: 65.60% (04/30/2013)
	Percent of targeted communes that increase the rate of coverage of education services by more than 2 percent	Baseline: 25% (12/24/2008) Target: 50% (04/30/2013) Actual: 65.6% (04/30/2013)
	Percent of targeted communes that increase rate of coverage of health services by more than 2 percent	Baseline: 20% (12/24/2008) Target: 50% (04/30/2013) Actual: 55.55% (04/30/2013)
	Percent of targeted communes that increase rate of coverage of potable water services by more than 2 percent	Baseline: 41% (12/24/2008) Target: 50% (04/30/2013) Actual: 83% (04/30/2013)
	Improved community water points constructed or rehabilitated under the project	Baseline: 0 (12/24/2008) Target: 300 (04/30/2013) Actual: 72 (04/30/2013)

Indicators	ICR	ICR Results
Phase 3		
Percent of populations (disaggregated by gender) of newly targeted communes whose access to health and nutrition services improved	percent of populations (disaggregated by gender) of newly targeted Communes whose access to nutrition services improved	Baseline: 0% Target: 90% (year 4); 50% (end) Current: 50% (ISR No. 12, but health services were dropped)
Percent of populations of newly targeted communes whose access to education improved	percent of populations of newly targeted Communes whose access to education improved	Baseline: 0% Target: 90% (year 4/end) Current: 28% (ISR No. 12)
	Number of beneficiaries that have increased consumption of fruits and vegetables	Baseline: 0 Target: 240,000 (end) Current: 50,000 (ISR No. 12)

Appendix E. Borrower Comments

Observations sur Le Rapport IEG Relatif Aux Deux (2) Premieres Phases du Programme D'actions Communautaires (Pac1 Et Pac2)

En l'absence de la version traduite du document complet en français, les observations ci-dessous ont été formulées sur la base du résumé du rapport en suivant l'ordre des chapitres de ce résumé :

- Les 3 700 ne sont pas des fonctionnaires mais des élus locaux au niveau des communes;
- La Première phase du PAC a duré de 2003 à 2007, le coup d'état évoqué est intervenu en 2010 ce qui correspond à la deuxième phase de 2008 à 2012;
- La zone d'intervention du PAC1 couvre 54 communes et 178 grappes de villages ou de Communautés;
- Le nombre important de réalisations constaté dans la région de Tahoua est lié à la DIF (Dotation Indicative financière) de la Région d'une part et d'autre part au dynamisme des populations bénéficiaires concernées;
- Le financement du Gouvernement central : Au cours de 2 premières phases du projet, l'Etat du Niger a honoré ses engagements mais la baisse de ce financement est intervenue surtout vers la fin de la 3ième phase avec la situation d'insécurité au sahel et à la frontière avec le Nigéria;
- Les dispositions pour l'entretien de terres : Par rapport à la durabilité des résultats, le projet a prévu le dispositif de gestion communautaire (COGES) avec l'encadrement des autorités coutumières et administratives même si ce mécanisme n'a pas toujours bien fonctionné;
- Approches culturellement sensibles aux femmes : Sur les sites de récupération des terres, 75% des bénéficiaires des microprojets avec ''cash for Work'' sont constitués des femmes;
- Questions pastorales : 80% des terres récupérées sont en faveur de l'élevage pour le compte, notamment de la production fourragère;
- Utilisation des terres et des ressources : Le PAC a soutenu la mise en place, la formation et l'accompagnement des commissions foncières à tous les niveaux ce qui a, en retour, facilité la mise en œuvre du Projet à travers la gestion foncière des sites aménagés;

- Dans la plupart des cas, les terres récupérées par le PAC étaient des terres communautaires économiquement et écologiquement improductives. Une fois restauré, l'utilisation des ressources foncière est soumise à une règlementation (accès aux ressources fourragères, pratique des cultures intercalaires et la transhumance);

- Les normes sociales et culturelles : Le contexte culturel du Niger n'a pas constitué véritablement un frein à la participation et à l'accès des femmes aux bénéfices du Projet. Cela s'est traduit par leur participation aux travaux de ''cash for work'', au service de vulgarisation, au service de communication, d'encadrement, aux activités de transformation des produits agro sylvo pastorales.

Appendix F. World Bank Comments

The Niger Country Management Unit would like to thank the Independent Evaluation Group for the opportunity to provide comments on the review of the Community Action Program (CAP) 1 and 2. The review is well documented and comprehensive with a detailed analysis of the cornerstone of the CAP (economic, social, and environmental microprojects) and a particular attention to gender issues in all program aspects. The Project Performance Assessment Report also provides some useful lessons learned for the World Bank to consider as it seeks to further enhance its support to Niger to reduce poverty and promote shared prosperity, and as community-driven development (CDD) approaches continue to play an important role in International Development Association support.

We concur with the review that the program played an important role in supporting the decentralized and participatory approach in Niger. The CAP sought to strengthen the decentralization agenda by empowering and building the capacity of communes and grassroots communities to improve the management of local governments (including administrative, budgetary, and fiscal management and participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluation), to invest in income-generating activities, and to scale up sustainable land and natural resource management activities.

With regard to gender aspects, the report clearly indicates the areas in which the program benefited women participants as well as the areas that required strengthening. In particular, we take note of shortcomings raised on the issue of women's participation *in decision-making,* even though the underlying reasons why this was the case seem to be missing from the review.

Regarding the issue of land user agreements after project closing, the Country Management Unit would thank the Independent Evaluation Group for raising the question of ensuring clarity of land user agreements and enforcement of agreements on restored lands with improved value as an aspect we can look at strengthening in future similar operations.

Overall, the lessons learned brought out by the Project Performance Assessment Report are extremely helpful for our engagement in Niger as we continue exploring more sustainable approaches to CDD operations. Nonetheless, some of the statements in the review may need to be further qualified. As such, we would like to offer the following detailed comments prepared by Agriculture Global Practice colleagues that could help further clarify and strengthen the review. We are also attaching the comments of the government of Niger for your consideration.

Comments on the Portfolio of Microprojects

The PPAR provides a detailed description of the microproject portfolio. This is useful as the microprojects are very diverse. The PPAR also performs very detailed analyses such as the one based on geospatial spread of microprojects supplemented by field-based ground truthing. It reports on surveys conducted by the PMU regarding the profitability of microprojects. Even though the data are not available to pass a precise judgment on income generating (IG) projects, the results reported for CAP-2 that all IG microprojects were profitable does not seem to be credible (as opposed to CAP-1 for which positive results were achieved by 60 percent of microprojects). In addition, the evaluation is often contrary to conventional wisdom. It would have been useful to have a summary table presenting the microproject typology with indication of their performance based on net present value and internal rate of return, as opposed to a detailed narrative and anecdotal evidence which is often difficult to comprehend. The microproject assessment may have failed to tell the differential impact of the CAP itself versus other programs or external events. For example, one important note was made that the positive outcome of microprojects geared to increasing vegetative cover was due mainly to the favorable state of nature (good rains) prevailing in the Sahel since the early 2000s. It would have been useful to factor out this effect and present the residual program impact. Given all the above shortcomings, it is surprising that the quality of the M&E process would have been rated as substantial.

Risks to sustainability. It is clear that the current security situation, if it continues to deteriorate, will be a negative factor in sustaining development outcomes to the extent that the central government will have to divert resources to maintain security to the detriment of resources destined to local government. The argument related to the population growth as a negative factor is well taken as more resources will be needed to cater to the need of the fast-expanding population and sustain development gains per capita. But there is another argument which is that achieving local development outcomes will be a factor for diminishing population growth. Hence, responding to development needs at the decentralized level is bound to have a positive downward impact on population trends.

Comments on Lessons Learned

Benefits to be taken into consideration are benefits attributable to the program, and not benefits attributable to other interventions. The PPAR underscores that this is not always easy as, more often than not, CAP interventions have combined with interventions from other projects to affect outcomes in the program areas. In the case of agriculture and environment another major external factor has to do with weather events. The probability of rainfall being higher than normal for instance, as mentioned in the PPAR,

should have been factored in assessing program results on the vegetative cover of both on the negative (flooding and drainage) and positive (better yields) sides.

The funding of commune budgets is a perennial problem in Niger as it is in many other Sub-Saharan countries. The PPAR rightly argues that the level of funding of communes is woefully inadequate. It seems that during CAP implementation there was no progress on that front. The average commune budget overall and per capita fell during that period (see figure 3.9, page 28). Beyond the meager transfers from the central level, communes find it difficult to collect fiscal revenues at local level since they do not produce an optimal level of services to constituents that would give the latter incentives to pay their local taxes and dues. The budget shortfall is evidenced by the fact that fiscal resources mobilized by communes locally are a minute fraction compared to needs. Since communes need investment budget and technical assistance to develop their services, project funding at the beginning of the investment cycle is certainly required to undertake the required investments. However, once project investment funding is over, communes are confronted with a dearth of resources to take care of investment maintenance. Nevertheless, under the fragility situation of the country although it is not only the decentralization budget that was affected but budgets of other sectoral ministries were also reduced to face the insecurity threats. Hence the need to provide funding also for maintenance and ensure that this funding is sustained after project completion. This can be done by finding ways to increase commune budget from external resources in a sustainable way. One way is tying commune resources to perennial sources of funding such as mining resources, in addition to annual resources from the central budget which can be erratic. Indeed, the government of Niger enforced a mining law in 2006 and decided that 15 percent of the mining resources be allocated to the communes where resources are exploited. Although, this law needs to be fully implemented and mining resource extended to all communes, it shows central government efforts to provide commune with more stable resources (Cf. Mining law attached). The question is whether this was considered in CAP-1 and CAP-2 as part of prior lending conditions.

The PPAR emphasizes the necessity to have a CDD approach to achieve ownership among the population and avoid elite capture; it also underlines the cost of this approach. CAP-1 and CAP-2 implementation is testimony that the CDD approach has been a positive factor in pursuing local development efforts. It has also been useful as an instrument to identify needs and conduct emergency operations. CAP-1 and CAP-2 implementation, however, also testifies that this approach has a high cost in terms of establishing the required participatory modalities (consultations through local nongovernmental organizations, skilled facilitation to elicit appropriate response, protracted feedback loops, and so on). The PPAR reports that this view is held not only

by development experts but also by commune officials in charge of such arrangements at the grassroots level

Comments on Gender Issues

The authors of the PPAR should be commended on their systematic attention to gender issues in all aspects of the project. This includes project design and project implementation, including participation, access to training and access to productive assets including land. The report clearly indicates the areas in which the project has benefited women participants and the areas which require strengthening. Efforts were made to integrate women in commune level decision-making roles. As a result, there was a notable increase in the percentage of women in elected village bodies. In contrast, the report indicates a number of areas important areas in which the project failed to meet expectations.

General observations. Although the report clearly indicates important problems and inconsistencies in the project's ability to adequately distribute benefits to women participants, it fails to indicate the underlying reasons why this was the case. The project appears to lack information that is usually provided by a social analysis of the communities. Although the report emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive approaches, it does not show how these have been integrated or ignored in the project design and implementation strategies. For example, the report rightfully encourages support to existing, customary tenure agreements. However, it does not indicate what these customary tenure agreements are, and how they affect women's access to land for project implementation. Some women reported that, when land leased from the village gained value, it was subsequently reclaimed by the village chief. Moreover, they had to "pay" for access to the land by giving up a portion of their harvest. This appears to conflict with traditional norms. The importance of the role of "legal and traditional land and resource use rights" is emphasized, but there are few data on what these are in the project communities.

Women participation in microproject decision-making. Women generally played minor roles in microproject decision-making. Consequently, fewer resources were allocated to health and social services. This is exemplified as follows as part of the different microproject types: (i) Cash-for-work: In some areas, women were excluded from cash for work microprojects; (ii) Sheep fattening: Women's groups were not given adequate resources in training and organizational guidance; as a consequence, they gained little profit; (iii) lack of sufficient institutionalization of livestock breeding and sheep-fattening programs threatened the sustainability of the activities; (iv) poor market development assistance for Fulani producers of dairy products and artisanal goods; and (iv) women farmers received inadequate extension services.

Gender dimensions of key activities. The report indicates that women's *animal fattening microprojects* were among the least profitable; whereas in CAP-1 they were the most profitable. There was little exploration of why this was the case (the report acknowledges this lacuna). An unintended consequence of *grain milling microprojects* was that, they were not profitable because charges had to be kept low to allow women to purchase the services. It is difficult to understand why this was not known prior to the design of the microproject. The report also says little about *women's traditional roles in the market* and how they have evolved. It notes that selling cattle in formal markets is left to men, and, therefore, women get less value for their product because the men take a profit. However, this appears to be a rather simplistic response. Women know the value of their cattle and have the capacity to negotiate with the seller. It is also unclear why *partner-less women* were prohibited from participating in the cash-for-work microprojects. This requires social analysis and redesign of the microproject. In Niger, women who have no partners, such as widows, are expected to work and provide for themselves and their families. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a very large number of women in CAP intervention areas used to take care of their families because almost all their husbands had migrated to other West African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal to look for work.

Conclusion. The gender aspects of social relations of production and marketing could have been better supported under the CAP by adequate qualitative and quantitative studies prior to project elaboration. All of the above problems can be anticipated by socioeconomic and anthropological studies, specifically targeted to project design and implementation strategies. In comparison to other Sahelian countries, there were few such studies available in Niger years back. Consequently, it is important to ensure that adequate studies are made prior to project formulation and during implementation.

Comments on Natural Resources Management under the Project

The report highlighted a fundamental question of natural resource management approach where investments are expected to produce short-term incentives for beneficiaries before gaining the long-term benefits. This is always a trade-off as seen in many natural resource management projects. However, the authors argued that land users participating in the Biocarbon Fund–financed component of the CAP were asked to plant Acacia Senegal seedlings on their landholdings and then withhold use of the areas planted for about five years until the acacia trees were mature, resulting in an immediate loss of grazing access. This statement is not accurate, as food crops were planted as intercrops to meet the short-term needs of beneficiaries. As a result, the implementation of the agrosylvopastoral production was estimated to 2,400 tons for food crops and more than 200,000 tons of dry matter of forage species. Furthermore, the carbon sequestered is estimated to 152,583 tons CO_2 equivalent and carbon credits have

been officially distributed to beneficiaries (compare with article published in Agriculture Newsletter). Where other natural resource management projects failed to conciliate short-term and long-term benefits, CAP succeeded in combining cash-for work, food crops as intercrops, regeneration of arid lands and designing a carbon credits program for beneficiaries.