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Direction de la coopération  
au développement



# JOINT EVALUATION OF THE COOPERATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, BELGIUM, DENMARK, FRANCE AND LUXEMBOURG WITH NIGER BETWEEN 2000 - 2008



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# JOINT EVALUATION OF THE COOPERATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, BELGIUM, DENMARK, FRANCE AND LUXEMBOURG WITH NIGER BETWEEN 2000 - 2008

**Final report**

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## List of acronyms

A&A	Aide et Action	CAP	Community Action Plan
AAP	Annual Action Plan	CAPED	Pedagogical outreach unit
AB	Auxiliary breeding	CARE	Cooperative Assistance and Relief Everywhere
ABEDA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa - BADEA	CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
ACAM	Académie des Arts Martiaux	CB	Cereal bank
ACER	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel	CBA	Competency-based approach
ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development	CC / CCS	Control and consulting / Cereal community shops
ACP	Africa Carribean Pacific	CCA	Food crisis cell
ADDR	Danish Support to Rural Development	CCD	Development Commissionership
ADF	America's Development Foundation	CCE	Economy commissionership
AES	Australian Evaluation Society	CCFN	France-Niger cultural centre
AFD	French Development Agency	CCOG	Oumarou Ganda cultural centre
AfDB	African Development Bank	CCPF	Municipal committee for the promotion of women
AFOP	Support to continuous training in Niger	CCS-HIPC	Advisory and monitoring committee for the HIPC initiative (PPTE = HIPC: Heavily Indebted Poor Countries)
AFRISTAT	Economic and Statistical Observatory for sub-Saharan Africa	CECI	Centre for International Studies and Cooperation
AFVP	French Association of Volunteers of Progress	CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
AGCD	General Agency for Development Cooperation	CEFOC	Centre for continuous training
AGRHYMETT	Agro-hydrometeorology	CELTEL	Telecommunications company
AID	International development aid	CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Committee
AIDCO	EuropeAid Co-operation Office	CENSAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	CEPEC	Pedagogical Studies Center for experimentation and council
ALG	Liptako-Gourma Authority	CESOC	Economic and Social Council
AME	Association of mother educators	CF	Counterpart fund
AMIS	Agricultural Market Information System	CFA	CFA zone
ANDDH	Nigerien human rights association	CFDC	Community Development Training Center
ANIP MF	Nigerien association of microfinance professionals	CFPM	Centre for training and promotion of music
APE	Parents' association	CIC	Information and communication centre
ARM	Multi-sector regulatory agency	CICID	Inter-ministerial committee for international co-operation and development
ARMFD	Increase in Financial Income of Women in the Region of Dosso	CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ASAPI	Food security support through small-scale irrigation	CIJF	International Francophonie Games Committee
ASF/FSF	African Solidarity Fund / Food Security Fund	CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
AU	African Union	CIP	Country intervention framework
AUF	Francophone university agency	CLAC	Centre for reading and cultural activities
AWP	Autonomous water point	CLD	Local development committee
AYEROU	Nigerien multi-sector macroeconomic model	CMC	Joint donor committee
BAB	Cattle food banks	CMCAN	Centre for leather art and crafts of Niger
BCC	Behaviour change communication	CMNN	Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation
BCEAO	Central Bank of West African States	CNDHLF	National Commission for Human Rights and Freedom
BCS	Budget and Consumption Survey	CNEA	National commission for water and sanitation
BE	Belgium	CNJF	National Committee for Francophonie Games
BE	Bureau d'Etude	CNODC	China National Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Corporation
BEAC	Bank of Central African States	CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
BEN	Basic education in Niger	CNRBLP	National library and public reading centre
BPW	Buildings and Public Work	CNRLP	National public reading centre
BS	Budget Support	CNS	National Health Committee
BSF	Belgian Survival Fund	CNTS	National blood transfusion centre
BTC	Belgian Technical Cooperation	COCAC	Cultural cooperation council
BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions		
CAFER	Road maintenance fund		

COFO	Land commission	ECC	European Code of Conduct
COGE	Commissionership charged with the organising of large events	ECD	European Commission Delegation
COGES	School management committee	ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
CRC	Select consultation committee	EDF	European Development Funds
CREA	Regional water and sanitation commission	EFA	Education for All
CREPA	Regional centre for low cost water supply and sanitation	EFA-FTI	The Education for All - Fast-track Initiative (FTI)
CRTS	Regional centre for blood transfusion	EIG	Economic Interest Group
CSAO	Compagnie du Sénégal et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest	EMSG	Economic Management Support Group
CSC	Superior Communication Council	ENI	National School of Teachers
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	ENSP	National School of Public Health
CSSFD	Watchdog of decentralised financing structures	EPA	Economic partnership agreement
CTNS	National technical health committee	EQ	Evaluation Question
DAC/OECD	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD	ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation
DANI	Development of craft in Niger	EU	European Union
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency	EUR	Euro
DATC	Directorate of external audiovisual communication technology of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs	EWS	Early warning system
DC	Delegated Contracting	EWS/CC	Early warning system coordination cell
DCIP	Directorate of curricula and pedagogical innovations	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
DCP	Directorate of conjuncture and economic forecasts	FCFA	CFA franc
DCP	Partnership framework document (France)	FEWS-NET	Famine Early Warning System Network
DdP	Paris Declaration	FIMA	International Festival of African Fashion
DED	Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst	FL	Finance law
DEP	Directorate for studies and programming/planning	FNAN	National Federation of Craftsmen of Niger
DES	Post graduate degree	FO	Farmers' organisation
DFIC	Directorate for initial and continuous training	FR	France
DFS	Decentralised financing system	FSP	Priority Solidarity Fund
DG	Directorate General	FTI	Fast Track Initiative
DG BUDG	Directorate General of Budget	FWC	Framework Contract
DG DEV	Directorate General for Development	FWUA	Federation of water users association
DGCID	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development	GAR	Gross Admission Rate
DGD	Directorate General of Customs	GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation
DGDC	Directorate General for Development Cooperation	GBS	General Budget Support
DGE	Directorate General for Economic Affairs	GDP	Gross domestic product
DGEP	Directorate General for Economic Affairs and Planning	GIS	Geographic information system
DGI	Directorate General for Taxation	GSR	Gross Schooling Rate
DGTCP	Directorate General of the Treasury and of Public Accounting	GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit - German technical cooperation
DGTP	Directorate General for Public Work	GWP-AO	Global Water Partnership West Africa
DGTP	Directorate General of the Treasury	HCAVN	High Commission for Niger Valley
DH	District hospital	HCCT	High council for territorial communities
DHPES	Directorate for hygiene promotion and health education	HD	Health district
DHS/MICS	Demographic and Health Surveys / Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys	HDI	Human Development Index
DK	Denmark	HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
DKK	Danish Krone	HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
DMN	Directorate of National Meteorology	HNN	National Hospital of Niamey
DNPGCA	National food crisis prevention and management mechanism	IBE	Inspection of basic education
DPA	Crafts promotion directorate	ICP	Indicative cooperation programme
DPE	Donor taking part to evaluation	ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
DPV	Directorate of plant protection	ICT	Information and communication technologies
DREBA	Regional directorate for basic education and literacy	IDB	Islamic Development Bank
DREN	Regional directorate for national education	IDWSS	International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade
DRES	Regional directorate for secondary education	IEC	Information, education and communication
DRH	Regional directorate of hydraulic works	IEZ	Innovative Education Zone
DSP	Country strategy document (France)	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
DTPP	Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis) and polio	IFI	International Financial Institutions
DTS	Deconcentrated technical services	IFTIC	Information and communication technologies Training Institute
DWA	Drinking water adduction	IGA	Income generating activities
EC	European Commission	IHC	Integrated health centre
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa	IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
		IL	Intervention logic

ILO	International Labour Organization	MUH/C	Ministry of Urban Development, Housing Policy and Cadastre
IMF	International Monetary Fund	MV	Measles Vaccine
INJS	National Institute for Youth and Sports	MWF	Modern water point
INS	National Institute for statistics	NAO	National Authorising Officer
IRAM	Bureau d'Etudes International	NBA	Niger Basin Authority
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement	NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
IRSH	Human sciences research institute	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization	NHBCS	Nigerien household budget and consumption survey
IWRM	Integrated water resources management	NIGETECH	Technical Niger NGO
JC	Judgment criteria	NIP	Indicative national programme
KAP	Knowledge Attitude Practice	NOC	Non objection certificate
LASDEL	Laboratory for the Study and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development	NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
LB	Labour intensive	NRM	Natural resources management
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission	NSR	Net schooling rate
LDC	Least developed countries	ODA	Official Development Assistance
LDF	Local development fund	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
LF	Logical framework	OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
LMIS	Livestock Market Information System	OIF	International Organisation of the Francophonie
LOUAF	Urban and land development law	ONAFOP	National Office for Professional Training
LuxDev	Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation	ONAHA	National Office for Waterworks
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	OPVN	The Office of Food Production of Niger
MAE	Ministry for Foreign Affairs	OSH	Office of school health
MAEE	Ministry for European and Foreign Affairs	OSHE	Ongoing survey of harvest estimates
MAT/DC	Ministry of planning and community development	OT	Orthopedic Traumatology
MC	Management committee	OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
MCJ/A/L/EA	Ministry of culture, arts, leisure, entrepreneurship and crafts	PA	Producers' association
MCJ/I/N	Ministry of trade, industry and standards	PADD	The Niger Basin Authority Action Plan
MCPEC	People Saving & Credit Funds Movement	PADEN	Distance learning for non-French speaking students
MDA	Ministry of Agricultural Development	PADEN	Accelerated Procedure for Education for All Support Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals	PAE	Improved environmental plan
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative	Pafriz	Support Rice development Programme
MDS/P/PF/PE	Ministry of Social Development	PAGCRSP	Support to natural resources management and administration in Mainé Soroa
ME/F	Ministry of Economy and Finance	PAGRN	Financial support to rural financing systems in Manga region
ME/LCD	Ministry of Environment and Desertification Control	PAMED	Support programme for the establishment of decentralised bodies in the region of Dosso
MEBA	Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy	PAP	Priority Action Plan
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance	PAPAK	Support to civil society organisations in Zinder
MEN	Ministry of National Education	PAPDS	Support for the Health Development Plan Programme
MESSRT	Ministry of Secondary and Tertiary Education, of Research and Technology	PAP-PEMFAR	PEMFAR Priority Action Plan
MFI	Microfinance institution	PAR-GIRE/AO	West African States' regional action plan for integrated water resources management
MFPT	Ministry of Professional and Technical Training	PARPEBA	Improve and reinforce water points in the Groundnut Basin
MH	Ministry of Hydrology	PASAM	Project to improve household food security
MH/E	Ministry of Hydrology and Environment	PASEHA	Water sector sanitation support programme
MICS	End of decade multi indicators cluster survey	PASEP	Support to the pastoral economy programme
MINEPEC	Conference and Exposition on Niger's mining and drilling potential	PASFR	Financial support to rural financing systems in Manga region project
MIS	Market Information System	PAST	Support to transfusion security project
MJENR	Ministry of Youth, National Education and Research	PBC	Pre-birth consultation
MMD	Mata Masu Dubara "ingenious women"	PBC	Post-birth consultation
MNJ	Nigerien movement for justice	PCIME	Integrated support to childhood illnesses
MP	Manual pump	PCLCP	Poverty eradication framework programme
MPF/PE	Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection	PCT	Technical cooperation programme
MPRS	Ministry of Population and Social Reforms	PDC	Local development plan
MRA	Ministry of Animal Resources	PDDE	Ten-Year Programme for the Development of Education
MS	Ministry of Health	PDDS	Ten-Year Programme for the Development of Health
MSCE	Small craft and micro-enterprises	PDF	Public drinking fountain
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises	PDS	Sanitary development plan
MSP/LCE	Ministry of Public Health and Endemic Diseases Control	PDSa	School sanitation development plan
MTBF	Medium-term budget framework	PDSFR	Financial support to rural financing systems programme
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework		



PE	Programme Estimate	SEEN	Development company of Water of Niger
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability	SFCPTL	Support funds to continuous professional training and learning
PEMFAR	Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Review	SFD	Social Fund for Development
PF	Pool funds	SFFP	Strategic framework for poverty alleviation
PFLE	Population and family life education	SIAO	International fair of West Africa
PFM	Public Finance Management	SICEAS	Support to municipal initiatives for school water and sanitation
PHAS	School Hygiene and Sanitation Education	SIP	State investment programme
PHN	National hydraulic programme	SMCL	Joint local consultation structure
PIP	Private Irrigation Programme	SME	Small and medium enterprises
PLNS	National AIDS eradication programme	SMPD-Ner 053	Project to improve the socio-economic conditions of rural households of Diffa
PMU	Project / Programme Management Unit	SNE	National Water Society
PNAEP	National Water Supply Programme	SNS	National Security Stock
PNAEPA	National Water Supply and Sanitation Programme	SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
PNDA	National craft development policy	SO	Specific object
PNDS	Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism	SOUTÉBA	Support to Basic Education Programme
PNEDD	National Programme for Environment and Sustainable Development	SP	Schooling project
PNG	National gender policy	SP/SRP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Permanent Secretariat
PNM	National STD / AIDS eradication programme	SPEN	Société de Patrimoine des Eaux du Niger
POLSECAL	Support to food security project	SRP	Nigerien Poverty Reduction Strategy
PPARP	Pluri-annual Programme to poverty reduction	STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
PPFME	Promotion and financing of microfinance project	STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
PPVS	Proximity Private Vet Service	SWrap	Sector Wide Approach
PRADEB	Support to Basic Education Regional Programme	SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
PREGEC	Food Crisis Prevention	SYRENE	Systems and handicraft micro-enterprises
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility	SYSMIN	System for Safeguarding and Developing Mineral Production
PRODEM	Multi-Sector Demographic Project	TA	Technical assistance
PROXEL	Animal health and livestock husbandry advice	TFP	Technical and financial proposal
PRSSN	Statistical capacity building project for the follow-up of the Niger Poverty Reduction Strategy	TFP	Technical and financial partner
PSEAU	Securing livestock and urban agriculture project	TOFE	Table of Government Financial Operations
PTET	Professional and technical education and training	ToR	Terms of Reference
PTQ	Five-year work plan	TSAA	Treasury's special allocation account
PTT	Professional and technical training	UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
QUIBB	Survey of Well Being Baseline Indicators	UN	United Nations
RD	Rural development	UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
RESEDA	Enterprises network for the development of craft	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
RGAC	Agriculture and livestock census	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
RGPH	General Population and Housing Census	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
RHC	Regional hospital centre	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
RIP	Regional indicative programme	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
RO	Rural organisations	USD	United States Dollar
ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring System	VSF	Veterinarians Without Borders
RPCA	Food Crisis Prevention Network	WADB	West African Development Bank
SAFEM	International Exhibition of crafts for women	WB	World Bank
SAS	Structural Adjustment Subvention	WG	Women's groups
SBS	Sector Budget Support	WHO	World Health Organization
SCAC	Cooperation and Cultural Action Office	WMU	Water Management Unit
SCVM	Household livelihood security	WPMC	Water point management committee
SDR	Rural Development Strategy	WR	Work relief
SDRP	Nigerien Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy	WRCU	Water Resources Coordination Unit
SE/SDR	Permanent secretariat of the SDRP	WRI	Water Resources Inventory
SEE	Société d'Etudes et d'Evaluation	WUA	Water users association

# Summary

## Mandate

In 2007, five donors (European Commission, Belgium, Denmark, France and Luxembourg) decided to work together to evaluate their cooperation with Niger over the 2000-2008 period. Together, the five Donors taking part in the evaluation (DPE) accounted for more than half the Official Development Assistance (ODA) delivered to Niger over the period.

Because it is a joint evaluation, specific aspects had to be taken into account: the aim was not to assess the individual performance of each DPE but to analyse the conception, implementation and effects of their joint action. Two analytical frameworks have been used to achieve this:

- An analysis of the implementation of the Paris Declaration Commitments, focusing on the cooperation process, and the relationship between the aid partners in particular (DPE-Government on the one hand, between DPEs on the other).
- The evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which help assess the collective performance of DPEs by analysing their aims, resources, achievements, results and impacts.

The evaluation is structured on the basis of these two analysis frameworks. It deals with the strategic cooperation frameworks between each DPE and the Government of Niger, as well as their priorities and interventions in a selection of sectors (rural development, water and sanitation, transport, culture, craft industry, health, education and training, macroeconomic support), taking into account cross-cutting issues (regional development, environment, gender issues, demographics and youth issues). The evaluation is also based on an extensive document review, field visits to selected sites in Niger, and on a survey about the perception of development aid in Niger, led concomitantly by the Laboratory for the Study and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development (LASDEL).

## Context

With an annual average growth of per capita income of only 1% per year, Niger is not only one of the poorest countries in the world, it is also one of the countries for which the challenges to achieve long-term growth seem hardest to overcome. Niger is burdened with the four “traps” which Paul Collier<sup>1</sup> writes about to explain the lack of economic growth and why it is one of the countries living in increasingly extreme poverty and worsening conditions (internal conflicts; land-locked country which has poor economic interaction with its neighbouring countries, especially Nigeria; poor use and management of natural resources; bad governance). Over the 2000-2008 period, Niger’s demographic growth was one of the highest in the world (3,3%/year) and economic growth per capita remained weak and instable. The number of poor people in Niger thus continued to rise, individual access to natural resources diminished and individual risks increased. Income instability remained high, and tended to develop even further. Economic activity and political decisions were hindered by an internal conflict, which was a cause of physical and economic risk for everyone.

## Strategies and intervention means of the DPEs

In 2002, Niger adopted an updated Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (SRP) for the 2008-2012 period in the shape of an Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (SDRP) aimed at initiating strong economic growth, favouring the poor and fostering sustainable human development. Compared to the 2002 SRP, the 2007 SDRP focused even more on economic growth drivers. To meet its targets, the SDRP had to achieve ambitious economic growth rates and gather many external resources required.

The aid delivered by the five DPEs between 2000 and 2008 totalled EUR 1,071 billion, i.e. EUR 85 per inhabitant of Niger (European Commission: EUR 484 million; France: EUR 322 million; Denmark: EUR 117 million; Belgium: EUR 109 million; Luxembourg: EUR 38 million). Over the period, France and the EC favoured countrywide support dedicated to several areas. Belgium and Luxembourg focused on the Dosso area, whereas Denmark was particularly active in Diffa and neighbouring areas. France and Belgium worked in the widest range of sectors, whereas the three other DPEs focused their resources on 2 or 3 priority sectors.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bottom Billion, why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it, Oxford University press, 2007.

Projects were the main instrument used by the DPEs over the period. The EC committed itself furthest in General Budget Support (GBS). France used different instruments, from extra budgetary sector funds to targeted budget support to health, education and food security. Belgium also contributed to some of the aforementioned support, as did Denmark, in a more limited manner (health and hygiene). Luxembourg always operated with projects.

### Implementation of the Paris Declaration commitments

Applying the concepts of cooperation area and of cooperation cycle facilitates the analysis of the implementation of the five Paris Declaration commitments. This analysis includes: checking the assumption of ownership by Niger of the policies and procedures supported by the DPEs; assessing DPEs' level of alignment with national policies and procedures; assessing the level of harmonisation of procedures between donors, as well as the implementation of results-based management and of mutual accountability.

- Not all the values promoted by the DPEs are necessarily shared by the Niger partner. The level of **ownership** of values and priorities suggested by the DPEs varies quite substantially, depending on topics and local partners, which has consequences for the ownership and therefore the sustainability the interventions aiming at promoting these values. SRP/SDRP have many goals, which are not prioritised. The choice of these goals is mainly inspired by the aims of the donors.
- Both national strategies and donors' strategies remain vague with respect to priorities. Objectives are numerous and not prioritised which makes **alignment** easier for the DPE but reduces the effectiveness of their contribution in achieving the general objectives of the national strategies. As a matter of fact, the absence of priorities (or the high number of them) prevents the optimisation of resources allocation and, instead, leads to the dispersion of resources. The authors of the SDRP rightly consider that the only way for Niger to hoist itself out of poverty and to reach the MDGs in particular is with economic growth of 7% per year. The policies and practises of DPEs do not seem to have taken this important condition into account. The DPEs insist more on values and priorities such as poverty reduction, gender issues, human rights and the environment, without explicitly considering rapid economic growth as a necessary condition for their interventions to be sustainable.
- **Alignment** to national procedures and management systems is rather poor because opinions of national abilities are not all positive. The EC (except on GBS), Luxembourg and Denmark exclusively use their own procedures; France and Belgium are more aligned but still maintain rather strict control procedures.
- Even though the DPEs have improved their approaches to make them converge, they have made little effort to **harmonise** their procedures, even in areas where they cooperate for sectoral support. The effectiveness of sectoral dialogue varies quite a lot and coordination of common funds is still relatively rare (health, food security, education); the health sector is the most advanced in terms of sectoral dialogue and common support. There are also well coordinated local partnerships (Belgium and Luxembourg in Dosso). But the government of Niger is not very proactive when it comes to coordinating donors. DPEs consider sectoral budget support and extra budget basket funds as a great way forward to improve sectoral coordination.
- **Results-based management** and **mutual accountability** are hampered because there is no clear definition of the expected results and a general lack of monitoring. Joint management structures remain very much focused on resource management rather than on performance analysis.

### The DAC evaluation criteria

Analysing the Paris Declaration Commitments helps understand a large number of opinions given in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency.

- To guarantee sectoral, topical and geographical continuity, DPEs focus on specific actions, and justify the **relevance** of their actions by showing that they are aligned with government strategies. This does not mean that priorities are all positioned on the same level (particular stress on accelerated growth). The lack of hierarchy of priorities implies that there is no budget arbitration, meaning that anything which is relevant might be financed. But cooperating towards development, or trying to mitigate the effects of a general trend of living conditions degradation, which one feel unable to reverse, are two very different things. Strategic papers published by the DPEs tend to show that they have not grasped just how huge the challenge is.
- DPE strategies are generally **coherent**, insofar as they do not contradict each other; but this does not eliminate possible discrepancies in the use of resources. Because several DPEs chose to focus on specific geographical areas, they had not to coordinate their interventions. Therefore, while there are few issues relating to incoherence of interventions, there is also little synergy, except between Luxembourg and Belgium in Dosso.
- The ratio of implementation of interventions was generally high between 2000 and 2008, except in those areas where dialogue was blocked (education). Nevertheless, the results of the interventions are not very clear, since most often these were not defined at the start of the projects and programmes and not measured, which makes it difficult to assess the **effectiveness** of the aid. Because there are no thorough and reliable figures, observations of the effects on beneficiaries are based on the analysis of a small number of representative projects. The most

visible results are the institutional results; management bodies facilitate discussions between the government and the DPEs and make it easier to adapt to situational events (food security). The set-up of procedures to manage land disputes are also important results that DPEs have achieved. In the field of infrastructure (transport, water and sanitation), implementation rates are high but levels of effectiveness are not clear since the use of the infrastructure is poorly measured. In the field of education, pressure to reach the MDG affected the quality of education and the promotion of secondary and tertiary education. In the field of budget support and public finance management, DPEs adopted open strategies and took risks. There is considerable room for progress in terms of institutional support.

- The global **impact** of the DPE interventions, which account for more than 50% of total ODA in Niger over the period, proved to be insufficient to reverse the trends which are dragging the country into extreme poverty and increasing vulnerability. Few results have been recorded regarding the development of productive sectors; agricultural yields are down and the growth of production is not greater than the growth of population. Access to basic social services has improved (health, education, access to drinking water and, to a lesser extent, sanitation). Human and institutional capacities have clearly developed, but still remain quite insufficient, especially for decentralized bodies.
- In Niger, the five DPEs like other donors have offered aid without development, and did not draw all the conclusions stemming from this situation. Unless trends change drastically in terms of economic growth per capita, the situation for the people of Niger will worsen further still, especially for the poorest part of the population. The effects of the DPE interventions are therefore far from being **sustainable**.
- Aid to Niger has developed considerably during the period under consideration, both in terms of general approach to aid (Paris Declaration, European Code of Conduct) and DPE structure (internal institutional reforms). The purpose of the reforms was to improve the **efficiency** of aid. Projects were by far the main instrument used by the DPEs over the period; it is undeniable that DPEs wished to move towards more permanent aid instruments, but the increased use of this kind of instrument was reversed at the end of the period under review, mainly due to the breach of trust between the donors and the Government. Projects generally yielded the expected outputs, but often over longer periods than planned. *Ad hoc* management units were still frequently used. Technical Assistance (TA) is criticised because of its cost but still remains important because of the lack of human resources.

## Conclusions

Over the 2000-2008 period, the people of Niger remained extremely poor. Income per capita barely increased and Niger has one of the highest levels of population growth in the world. As the people of Niger are very dependent on extremely unstable natural conditions, and more and more of them are trying to survive on depleting natural resources, their means of subsistence are decreasing and their vulnerability is increasing.

Aware of the situation, and of the fact that the trend cannot be reversed without a major acceleration of the rate of economic growth per capita, the Government came up with an ambitious strategy in 2007 based on a 3% target rate of economic growth per capita per year, which involved considerably stepping up foreign aid. This target is presented as the only realistic option to reduce poverty in Niger in the long run.

The documents produced by DPEs and the data collected about the results and impact of their interventions during the period under consideration do not say if they anticipated or even shared this point of view. They conceived their interventions to bring relevant solutions to an array of unquestionable needs, in the form of development projects. Budget support was offered despite a difficult context of policy dialogue. Institutional reforms, trends in certain values, technological progress, achievements in terms of education and health as well as water supply, were not enough to reverse the general depletion trend. It is therefore unlikely that these efforts will be sustainable.

The MDGs, the commitments of the Paris Declaration and the European Code of conduct provided benchmarks which the DPEs tried to take into account. But it seems as if the DPEs did not consider the need to **increase** and **focus** the means needed to reverse the impoverishment trend in Niger when considering their approach. This is the main focus of the recommendations of the report.

## Recommendations

The main recommendation of the report is that the DPE should pursue in Niger two separate, parallel and complementary policies, with two different aims:

1. A policy entirely dedicated to **supporting economic growth per capita**, the effectiveness of which can only be measured on the basis of the GDP per capita indicator. This policy should aim at guaranteeing an economic basis which could support social solidarity with a view to reduce poverty. The aim is to reach and maintain a level of annual economic growth of at least 3% per capita.
2. A policy of **long term international social solidarity**, which will need to be supported by the DPEs for decades. This policy should target the poorest tier of the population as well as certain global public challenges. The performance of this policy should be measured based on the monitoring of a limited number of indicators of subsistence means which are characteristic of the poorest quintile of the population in Niger.

Naturally, each policy has effects on the other policy: economic growth creates jobs and can help reduce poverty and ease the land-locked situation. Conversely, educating the poorest may foster growth. The two policies are also closely linked because they depend on the same national budget supported by the donors. However, priorities are not the same, and neither are the ways to measure performance. It is more likely that the government will adopt the first policy than the second.

It is very important to note that the sustainability of the second policy depends on the success of the first one (reaching and maintaining annual growth at a rate over 3% per year).

The first policy will focus on:

- The promotion of peace and security in the country, which is essential to foster growth;
- The development of an institutional framework amenable to investments;
- The promotion of the country's exported goods (mining products, tourism, farming products to Nigeria, remittances). Purchasing power in the country is very limited, which means that growth can only come from an increase in export, including export of manpower;
- The development of economic public services and infrastructure in the various areas and for people with a high economic potential;
- The development of human resources to maximise growth (technical, secondary and tertiary training and education, in Niger and abroad).

The second policy will focus on:

- Health;
- Basic education;
- Access to social services;
- Food security;
- The diversification of subsistence means.

The choice of instruments will have to take into account the essential need for short-term effectiveness to reverse the observed trend on the one hand, and the prospect of having to support Niger for several decades on the other hand, even if the growth policy is a success. To do so, the following measures will be necessary:

- Collective and continuous analytical work by the DPEs, if possible with other donors, to **focus** means on a limited number of goals which are most likely to foster growth.
- Choosing instruments which will guarantee continuous but flexible support as part of an ongoing policy dialogue which DPEs might truly influence. When selecting their aid instruments and procedures, DPEs should not place too much emphasis on sustainability to the detriment of immediate effectiveness.

# 1. MANDATE OF THE EVALUATION

## 1.1. A joint evaluation

The terms of reference define the mandate of the evaluation as follows:

*“The joint evaluation of cooperation with Niger will analyse the chains of cause and effect to assess the **global impact** of strategies implemented by Belgium, Denmark, the European Commission, France and Luxembourg, called Donors taking part in the evaluation (DPE); the evaluation will study which results can be obtained **beyond the results obtained by each one of the donors individually**. By covering the essential part of ODA delivered to Niger, the evaluation will examine the results and impact of the aid on poverty alleviation.”*

The mandate of the evaluation is therefore rather unusual insofar as it does not assess the individual performance of each of the five DPEs in Niger. Its aim is more to measure how much the partners worked in a coordinated, complementary and coherent manner to reach the cooperation targets they set themselves.

This specificity is reflected in the terms of reference with evaluation questions based on the Paris Declaration<sup>2</sup>, the European Code of Conduct<sup>3</sup> and the 3Cs<sup>4</sup>.

- There should be a “traditional” evaluation of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability of the strategies and modes of intervention of DPEs, as well as of the efficiency of Niger institutions.
- There should also be an evaluation of the implementation of the five commitments of the Paris Declaration.
- This shall be completed with an evaluation of the implementation of the European Code of Conduct and its results. The European Code of Conduct is part of the wider Paris Declaration, and suggests division of labour between European donors so as to reduce transaction costs and offer more effective aid.
- Finally, assessing coordination, complementarity and coherence (the 3Cs) of DPE interventions should make it possible to assess the added value of coordination and the cost Niger would have to bear if DPEs did not coordinate their interventions.

Each one of these perspectives should help improve mutual understanding between DPEs and with the Niger authorities.

This evaluation should also be a chance to assess **the contribution of Official Development Assistance on poverty alleviation in Niger**. The terms of reference state that the aid granted by the five DPEs made up almost 55% of ODA received by Niger between 2000 and 2006.

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<sup>2</sup> Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed on 2 March 2005.

<sup>3</sup> European code of conduct adopted on 15 May 2007 by the “General Affairs and External Relations Council” and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council.

<sup>4</sup> Coordination, complementarity and coherence principles promoted by the Maastricht Treaty for development cooperation in the European Union.

## 1.2. Scope of evaluation

The object of the evaluation is the intervention of the five DPEs (European Commission, Belgium, Denmark, France, and Luxembourg) in Niger over the 2000-2008 period, and more particularly:

- The **strategic frameworks** for cooperation between each DPE and the Niger government.
- The priorities and interventions of the DPEs in each of the following **sectors**: water and sanitation, transport, rural development and food security, health, education and training, culture, craft industry, macroeconomic support.
- The inclusion of **cross-cutting issues** in the strategies and interventions of the DPEs: regional development, gender issues, environment, demographics and youth issues.

## 1.3. Evaluation monitoring

The evaluation was carried out jointly by the evaluation units of the European Commission (Joint Evaluation Unit based at EuropeAid), the Belgian cooperation authorities (Special Evaluation Unit for Belgian development cooperation and Internal evaluation unit of the DGDC), the Luxembourg cooperation authorities (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), the Danish cooperation authorities (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and the French cooperation authorities (Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and French Development Agency). The Special Evaluation Unit (Belgium) is in charge of administration and coordination matters.

The five DPEs have formed a **Steering committee**, the composition of which is specified in annex A11.2. The committee is in charge of validating the content of each step of the evaluation. The DPEs have also set up **Reference groups** within their services, both at headquarters and at their representation offices in Niger.

A **local consultation group** has also been formed in Niger. It is made up of representatives of the Nigerien authorities (two per ministry), members of civil society, research centres in Niger and two representatives per DPE (local agencies). The local consultation group gives an opinion on the documentary phase and on the draft final report; it also met at the beginning and the end of the field work. The Group is convened and hosted by the representative of the Belgian cooperation authorities in Niamey.

Each step of the process could have been commented on by six different committees, coordinated by the Steering committee.

## 1.4. Parallel perception survey by LASDEL

In parallel to the evaluation, the Steering committee of the evaluation asked the LASDEL (Laboratory for the Study and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development) to run a survey on the perception of development aid by a number of decision makers and observers (both people from Niger and foreigners living in Niger). The scope of the survey is wider than that of the evaluation as the perception of aid by “aid users” is not limited to the aid delivered by the DPEs. The survey sheds a different light to that of the evaluation, in particular on the relevance of interventions and instruments, on the perception of impacts (desired or not), on the expectations of stakeholders, on the effectiveness of various forms of partnership, and more generally on the image of donors and aid partners.

The LASDEL team was able to comment on the different versions of this report.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was carried out in **four successive steps**, summed up below. Part of the elements developed during the first steps of the evaluation is presented in this report (see right column).

*Table 1: the 4 phases of the evaluation*

Phases of the evaluation	Product	Elements presented in this report
<b>1/ Structuration phase</b>		
▪ Reconstruction of the intervention logics	<i>Note on method</i>	Annex 3 (A3)
▪ Defining the evaluation questions		Introduction to A8
▪ Identifying sources of information		A10 (bibliography) A7 (people met) A2.4.5 & A2.4.66 (availability & reliability)
▪ Defining tools for gathering information		A2.1 (choice of tools) A2.3 (methodological strengths) A2.4 (weaknesses of the approach)
<b>2/ Documentary phase</b>		
▪ Interviews at DPE headquarters	<i>Documentary phase report</i>	A11
▪ Gathering documentary data		A10 (bibliography) A2.2.3 (data sharing tool)
▪ SWOT-based analysis of Niger context		Section 3 and A4
▪ Analysis and cartography of the intervention portfolio in Niger		Section 4.2 and A5
▪ Selection of case studies		A2.1.2 (selection) A2.3.3 (representativeness)
<b>3/ Field work phase</b>		
▪ Use of case studies	<i>Mission report</i>	A7 & A8
▪ Use of secondary data		A7 & A8
▪ Interviews		A7 & A8
▪ Project visits		A7
▪ Focus groups		A9
▪ Interaction with LASDEL		Section 5 and A.2.3.7
<b>4/ Summarization phase</b>		
▪ Sector analyses	<i>Draft report</i> => <i>Draft of final report</i> => <i>Final report</i>	A7
▪ Answers to the evaluation questions		A8
▪ Cross-analysis		Section 5
▪ Conclusions and recommendations		Section 6

Annex 2 provides a detailed rundown of the content and the approach used for each of the four phases. This section shall deal with the main strengths and weaknesses of such a wide-scale joint evaluation.



## 2.1. Strengths of the evaluation

### *Two analysis frameworks to meet the Terms of Reference*

The answers to the evaluation questions make it possible to analyse the action of the DPEs in Niger according to two complementary frameworks – the DAC criteria and the implementation of the Paris Declaration:

- The **DAC criteria** help assess aid performance by analysing aims, resources, achievements, results and impacts.
- Analysing the implementation **of the Paris Declaration Commitments** helps analyse the cooperation process, and the relationship between the aid partners in particular: the donors and the Government on the one hand and the donors amongst themselves on the other. Analysing the implementation of the Paris Declaration can be considered as a useful way to reflect on the DAC efficiency criterion.

The two frameworks provide different perspectives on the DPE interventions.

### *Solid knowledge of the Niger context*

Making up teams of two (international expert & expert from Niger) helped mix technical skills, local information networks and knowledge of the Niger context. Some experts and partner companies working in the consortium gave very important information thanks to their in-depth knowledge of Niger and the fact that they had been present in the country for a long time, which helped put the facts into perspective.

### *A strong multidisciplinary team and good coordination*

The team of evaluators was made up of 20 experts, with a coordination cell and eight topical or sectoral teams<sup>5</sup>. The internal coordination team played a key part in steering the different sectoral contributions and making them coherent. Such a huge task could not have been carried out by a single team leader.

### *Triangulation of data*

An analytical framework (evaluation questions, judgment criteria, indicators) was used as the road map for the consultants working on the project. Each indicator was based on one or more sources of information. The sources were gathered and processed in a rigorous manner, which vouches for the credibility of the evaluation. This was done using tools to triangulate the information in an explicit manner.

In practical terms, the logical chain which links the information, answers to evaluation questions, analyses, conclusions and recommendations is as follows:

- Annex 3 describes the intervention logics for the Niger government and DPEs' strategies on poverty alleviation.
- Annex 4 explains the challenges and trends which are characteristic of Niger's socioeconomic development.
- Annex 7 deals with the sectoral analyses, which are all structured in the same way: each sectoral team puts forward an answer to the evaluation questions. Each answer is based on judgment criteria which are adapted to the sectors in question. Each judgment criterion is justified on the basis of indicators for which sources are systematically identified.
- Annex 8 gives a collated answer to the evaluation questions, after a cross-review of the sectoral reports. The arguments developed by the sectoral experts are checked as often as necessary.
- Section 3 of the report outlines the economic challenges Niger has to face, and is based on annex 4.

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<sup>5</sup> There were eight teams to evaluate seven sectors and four cross-cutting issues identified by the DPEs: water and sanitation (2 experts); transport (2); rural development, environment, food security (3); health (2); education and training (2); craft industry and culture (2); macroeconomic support; gender issues, demographics and youth issues (1) and coordination (3).

- Section 4 describes the articulation between national strategies and those of the DPEs.
- Section 5 presents an analysis structured according to two perspectives: the DAC criteria and the Paris Declaration Commitments. The analysis is based on the elements developed in Sections 3 and 4 and on the annexes of the report (especially annex 8 and the sectoral reports of annex 7). Section 5 systematically refers to useful sources of information in the rest of the document, or uses footnotes to give sources of information of justifications if necessary.
- The conclusions and recommendations of the main report are based on Section 5. Again, footnotes are used to identify elements which might justify the conclusions and recommendations.

#### *Analysis of cross-cutting issues*

The analysis focused on seven specific sectors (water and sanitation, transport, rural development and food security, health, education, training and culture, craft industry, macroeconomic support) and four cross-cutting issues (gender issues, environment, regional development, demographics, and youth issues).

For cross-cutting issues, a specific topical analysis for the gender, demographics and youth issues was carried out during the documentary and field work phases (see annex 7). The other topics were dealt with in a transversal manner (see annex 4 for the specific analysis). During the summarization phase, all the cross-cutting issues were dealt with in a transversal manner. Thanks to this approach, it was possible to focus on two particular topics in the conclusions and recommendations: (i) environmental fragility in rural areas and (ii) Niger's regional integration with countries bordering, including Nigeria.

#### *Appropriate representativeness of case studies*

During the case study selection process, which was very iterative, 77 interventions were identified which illustrated the diversity of approaches and topics supported by the DPEs. Case studies represented 66% of the intervention portfolio of Belgium and Niger between 2000 and 2008, 60% of the EC portfolio, 49% of the French portfolio, 40% of the Luxembourg portfolio and 36% of the Danish portfolio. Note that the denominator is made up of all the DPE portfolios; representativeness would be further improved if the denominator was only made up of the 7 specific sectors of the evaluation.

#### *Converging assessments by the sectoral teams*

The coordination team noted little discord between the main conclusions of the sectoral/topical teams (level of effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, quality of the monitoring of results and impacts, etc.). It was decided to focus on a limited number of conclusions so as to avoid having conclusions based on too little information.

#### *Good interaction with LASDEL*

In parallel to the evaluation, the Steering committee of the evaluation asked LASDEL to run a survey on the perception of development aid by a number of decision makers and observers (both people from Niger and foreigners living in Niger). The team met with LASDEL on three occasions during the mission. These discussions and the LASDEL report were an opportunity to compare the information gathered during each process. LASDEL also commented on the draft versions of this report. The evaluation is also based on the work carried out by LASDEL, several elements of which were used in the analysis.

## **2.2. Weaknesses of the evaluation**

#### *A poorly defined scope of evaluation: extremely broad expectations given the means*

The Steering committee of the evaluation did not differentiate, neither in the Terms of Reference, the report on the meeting of 9/9/08 nor in the process implementation, between:

- a “general evaluation” of aid by the 5 DPEs in Niger, focusing on what the joint nature of the evaluation might contribute ;

- and expectations more likely to be found in country-evaluations or sectoral programmes for each DPE.

A joint evaluation cannot replace this kind of approach for five donors, unless a lot of spare means are available, but it should be able to contribute another kind of information. The evaluators did not follow the approach mentioned in the Terms of Reference and at the meeting on 9/9/08, which suggested that the consultants should focus on a limited number of field observations (2 or 3 case studies based on a local approach), in just three sectors, instead of a more transversal approach based on the analysis of strategies and project portfolios for a rather broad number of interventions. In practice, the Terms of Reference required both approaches, which was incompatible with the budget available for the evaluation.

#### *Difficulties choosing the approach: pressure to overestimate case studies (i.e. field work) in the analysis*

Both the Terms of Reference and the report of the meeting on 9/9/08 seemed to hesitate between:

- an overall analytical approach based on a general analysis of stakes, strategies and interventions of the DPEs over the nine years covered by the study;
- and an analysis based on a thorough observation of a small number of interventions carried out in a limited geographical area.

In practice, the Steering committee expected both a thorough analysis of a limited number of interventions and an overall analysis of the DPEs' strategies and interventions.

These expectations were very hard to meet for the evaluators, given the means at their disposal for the evaluation. The sample selection process was long. To get a good balance between sectors, between DPEs, between the beginning and the end of the period, too many projects were selected for the sample (77), which meant that efforts could not be focused.

Because the sample was too broad and the DPEs placed emphasis on case studies, there was a lot of pressure as to how to distribute resources during the field work. The evaluators allocated more resources than requested to the field work. But an evaluation of this kind should mainly rest on secondary data (monitoring data and evaluating existing projects) and missions should not focus on a handful of field observations which are difficult to extrapolate from, to cover such a broad time, space and sectoral scope, but on discussing observations, hypotheses and preliminary conclusions with the authorities, the donors and "privileged witnesses" from civil society. Unfortunately the resources were insufficient to make contact with all the appropriate people at the DPE headquarters, which weakened the quality of discussions and made it difficult for the first versions of the report to be accepted.

Because the means available were used in such a dispersed manner, would a more focused approach have been more acceptable? It should be reminded that the Steering committee favoured dispersion (visits to Diffa, inclusion of the Danish projects in the water and sanitation sample), and that there were extra requests for information (regionalisation of data, more thorough diagnosis for Niger, sectoral recommendations).

#### *No specific evaluation of indirect aid (non programmable, indirect or decentralised aid)*

The case studies included projects carried out by the DPEs, by contractors, by the administration and by NGOs, but the sample did not include a specific analysis of "indirect aid" or aid from non governmental organisations. It would have been possible to include them, but this would have required extra processes and would have increased the number of projects to be analysed, thus reducing the average time spent on each one. Each DPE has a specific relation with a network of decentralised or non governmental partners. The partners for these instruments are so varied that the number of observations necessary would have been far greater.

This is clearly one of the limits of the evaluation. But it must be said that thoroughly analysing the instruments and partners for five donors over a period of nine years in such complex sectors as rural

development, health and even water & sanitation would have taken up a lot of already limited resources needed for the other missions of the study.

#### *Underestimation of the cost of gathering secondary data*

Collecting and analysing information was a challenge, especially since the space and time scope was so broad, there were so many secondary sources, the team was rather small and each DPE had specific administrative approaches. The cost of access to the data was underestimated.

Over 1,600 documents were made available to the evaluators and stocked on a computer platform which was always accessible to the team members. The coordination team played an essential part in helping avoid lose time by reading several times the same document and forgetting important documents. It was necessary to avoid separating information, without giving each expert too many unnecessary documents to read.

#### *Availability and reliability of information*

The data passed on by the DPEs was reliable, but sometimes difficult to obtain. This was particularly true for the beginning of the period of evaluation, the information for which was sometimes fragmented. Furthermore, the way information was made available varied greatly depending on the DPE. It was relatively easy to get information from Luxembourg and Belgium. Information took longer and was harder to get from the other DPEs and from the Niger institutions. After the mission, further meetings at the DPE headquarters helped correct some factual errors, to complete information and to analyse observations more easily.

The availability and reliability of data from the Niger institutions posed a problem. The scope of some of the sectors was extremely broad, and involved several ministries, which made it difficult to identify the right people to provide information in the Niger institutions. The Niger evaluators played a decisive part, since they knew the national institutions and stakeholders well. Finally, there was little recent and reliable data for demographic indicators, and this posed a problem for infranational trends in particular, since it is not clear what demographical consequences internal migration (which are probably higher than when the last census was carried out) might have.

#### *Problems working with the Niger Ministry of Finance*

Due to Niger's political context at the beginning of 2009, the Steering committee of the evaluation was not able to work with the Ministry of Finance, which is the National Authorising Officer (NAO) of the EDF. Because of this, the evaluators found it hard to obtain information from the Ministry of Finance, which hindered the mission of the macroeconomics experts. It also meant that the opinion of the Ministry of Finance was only partially heard by the evaluators.

#### *Difficulty assessing the sectoral effects of General Budget Support*

The EC's intervention through general budget support is based in particular on social indicators (health and education). It was therefore expected that the evaluation would assess the effects of this approach on the performance of social sectors. It was therefore necessary to cross-analyse the support to public finance and the effects on social sectors. But it was difficult for the sectoral teams to work together, especially since the causal link between budget aid (and in some case extrabudget funds) and sectoral performance was hard to establish.

Furthermore, the Steering committee was expecting an assessment of the impact of general budget support on the development of social sectors. This was impossible to achieve because it was hard to establish a link between budget support and the development of social indicators chosen by the EC.

#### *Difficulty assessing the impact, despite the size of the ODA under study*

This evaluation was supposed to be a unique chance to assess the contribution of Official Development Assistance to poverty alleviation in Niger. The terms of reference state that the aid granted by the five DPEs made up almost 55% of ODA received by Niger between 2000 and 2006.

Comparing the targets of the DPEs with the global performance of Niger was an opportunity to make a strong statement, strengthened by a joint evaluation for five donors which make up nearly half the aid delivered to the country.

*A wide assessment margin, due to the fact that the aims of the interventions were not clearly defined*

For each individual intervention, the evaluation team often noticed that the logical frameworks were based on concepts which were not harmonised for all the DPEs. Furthermore, many interventions did not have objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) and/or did not have baseline situations to assess effectiveness and impact. Most of the final evaluations (quite rare) only give qualitative assessments of the impact of the interventions. This is often due to a limited time perspective or to the fact that there are many factors which may have a direct or indirect effect (difficulty finding causes for the effects).

The assessment margin of the evaluators was therefore very broad. The evaluation is mainly based on qualitative assessments (standards defined by the evaluators themselves) and/or fragmented assessments (based on a few case studies, due to the lack of systematic information from the monitoring system). Because the data is not always reliable and comprehensive, the conclusions of the analysis have to be seen as cautious and limited to general cross-sector conclusions based mainly on recurring observations of sectoral and topical teams.

*Sectoral recommendations requested very late on during the process*

Each sectoral team had to answer 11 evaluation questions (the answers are given in annex 7), which were then cross-analysed (annex 8). The mandate of the sectoral experts was not to give conclusions and recommendations on a sectoral level; the sectoral studies were aimed at providing a basis for a general analysis. When the Steering committee requested sectoral recommendations, the consultants had to move away from this principle.

## 3. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN NIGER

The main ecological, sociological, economic and political characteristics of Niger presented in this section are developed in annex 4.

At the end of this section, a SWOT matrix summarizes the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the country for the period under review.

### 3.1. Geography and climate

#### 3.1.1. A vast, land-locked country bordered by Nigeria

The fact that Niger is so vast is both a strength and a weakness. Some of the resources of the country remain unknown still. The geographic area itself is a strength, especially if the rapid growth of population is taken into account. Niger is located between coastal Africa and Northern Africa, at the crossroads of trade routes which helped towns such as Agadez, Zinder and Maradi develop. Niger can only access to the sea via Nigeria, Benin, Togo or the Ivory Coast, which means that it depends on uncertain economic and political situation of those countries. Imports and exports are burdened with formal and informal taxes to be paid at borders and when goods are transported across the countries.

The size of the country is also a handicap, since the population is sometimes scattered around as the distances between population centres are important. Access to the market and to public services is made even more difficult by the fact that the population has traditionally used the land for nomadic pastoral activities and, despite sedentation programmes, has to remain relatively mobile because of the climatic conditions.

A large part of the Niger population is therefore doubly enclaved:

- Niger has difficulty accessing the global market because of the cost of access to the sea;
- A large part of the population has difficulty accessing national, and even local, markets and public services, because of the distances, the lack of infrastructure and transport, and their own mobility.

In a context of climatic and economic instability and insecurity for goods and people, such a situation is particularly incapacitating.

Trade between the North and the South of Niger remains strong, but poorly assessed since it is often “informal”, especially because of the mistrust between the North of Niger and the Central State, due to the Tuareg conflict.

Most of the people of Niger live close to the border with Nigeria, the main economic and political power of the region. They share the same Haoussa-Kanouri culture as the population of North Nigeria, which facilitates trade, family links, temporary or permanent migration, and creates strong economic, cultural, and even political dependence on the great neighbour in the South. The fact that Nigeria is so close is a major strength, as it facilitates vital, spontaneous regional integration for a large part of the Niger

population. But the population is also very sensitive to the political and economic instability which is characteristic of North Nigeria, as shown in the analysis of the food crisis in 2005<sup>6</sup>.

### 3.1.2. A harsh, instable and deteriorating agro-climatic context

Two thirds of Niger is desertic and only 11% of land is farmable. The soil is generally poor and depleting because of water and wind erosion, human and animal strain, rapid desertification (75% of the land) and climatic aridity (89% of the land)<sup>7</sup>. Natural resources (vegetation, water, soil) are harshly hit by the negative effects of repeated drought, desertification and demographic strain. The agricultural economy of Niger is mainly based on extensive production systems which are heavily influenced by climatic instability. In Niger, as in other Sahel countries, the environment is characterised by the influence of desertification on ecological systems, socio-economics and land utilisation systems.

Recurring drought, the population explosion and urbanisation have increased the fragility of living conditions, exposure to illnesses and the depletion of animal and vegetable resources. Desertification has led to the formation of gullies and glacis, water erosion and the deposition of sands in fertile lands (basins, agglomerations, roads). The other obvious sign of desertification is the recession of vegetable cover at an estimated rate of 80,000 to 100,000 hectares per year, whereas the afforestation rate is only around 5,000 hectares per year. The balance between human beings and their environment is uneven across the whole country.

Strong population growth, extreme poverty and unfavourable climatic conditions have led to depletion and increased strain on arable lands. The arable lands/ farming labour force ratio dropped from 11.8 ha in 1980 to 5.1 ha in 2005<sup>8</sup>. If the current population growth rates and land utilisation trends continue in the long run, the number of lands available for farming will run out soon and lands will reach an irreversible level of depletion.

But despite all the alarming observations, Niger still has assets. The country still has relatively significant natural resources (water, land, vegetation, fauna). Its water potential is estimated to be around 32 billion m<sup>3</sup> of surface water, 2.5 billion m<sup>3</sup> of subsurface run-off water and 2,000 billion m<sup>3</sup> of connate water. It is estimated that there are over 18 million ha of cultivable land, including 219,000 ha which are irrigable. The irrigable potential is far from being fully exploited. The significant investments made by the main donors in the 1970s, 1980s and to a lesser extent in the 1990s in the Niger valley did not prove to be sustainable. Institutional issues and the great instability of cereal prices due to the instability of the climate and the lack of integration of markets made irrigated farming a very unstable business. Only a very small share of irrigable lands is exploited each year<sup>9</sup>.

The cost of developing hydro-agricultural land is high, between USD 8,700 and 14,000 per hectare. In out-of-season areas, the cost varies greatly, depending on the system (use of water, water pumping and

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<sup>6</sup> The production deficit in North Nigeria led to an influx of cereals from Niger for instance, which had great consequences during the 2004/05 food crisis. Source: IRAM, Denis Michiels and Johny Egg (2007). *Les politiques de prévention et gestion des crises alimentaires : Enseignements de la crise du Niger de 2005*, for the Directorate general for international cooperation and development of the French Ministry for foreign and European affairs.

<sup>7</sup> Niger has a Sahelian climate. Taking into account rainfall or the main rural activity, the following subdivisions may be made:

- the Sahara zone, which makes up 65% of the country, is desertic;
- the Sahara-Sahel zone; 12.2% of the country, which has rainfall of 200-300 mm, is the pasture zone;
- the Sahel zone makes up 12.1% of the country. This is the zone of transhumance and unpredictable cereal production;
- The Sahel-Sudanian zone (400-600 mm) makes up 9.8% of the country. This is where cereal (millet, sorghum), dolichos beans and peanuts are produced;
- the Sudanian zone only makes up 0.9% of the country. Rainfall is over 600mm. This is the best zone for food-producing.

<sup>8</sup> See annex A4.1.2.

<sup>9</sup> The potential of irrigable land, generally estimated to be 270,000 ha, is concentrated in the valley of the river. Developed potential is estimated at 100,000 ha, including 14,000 ha of large-scale hydroagricultural developments which are collective sectors with total water management located in the valley of the river which are managed by producers who work in cooperatives under the supervision of the National office for waterworks – ONAHA; 68,000 ha are used for flood plain and out-of-season cultivation (generally sectors with partial water management, irrigated through communal management of water points, under the supervision of the agricultural authorities); 18,000 ha are used as private individual sectors with total water management for rice cultivation, arboriculture and market gardening. Source: FAO.

distribution), between USD 1,300 and 3,000. By contrast, the cost per unit of developing private irrigation is relatively low, between USD 700 and 2,000 depending on the system. This is highlighted in the projects undertaken and the (prevailing) trend towards market gardening and fruit growing, which makes investments a lot more profitable.

Forestry resources are estimated at 5.7 million ha. There are still relatively plenty of faunistic resources, including 150 mammal species and 312 bird species, and there is an estimated potential of 10,000 tons of fish per year.

At the same time, a revegetation process has been initiated in the following areas<sup>10</sup>:

- In the Tahoua region, trees have been planted as part of land rehabilitation projects and the field regeneration of fields and land by farmers and breeders is protected;
- In the Maradi region, regeneration protection was promoted by several projects in the 1980s and more recently by a project funded by IFAD in the Aguié district;
- In the Zinder region, the protection and management of natural regeneration by farmers has taken on exceptional proportions.

The scale of regeneration is estimated at 5 million ha<sup>11</sup>. It is the largest environmental transformation in the Sahel, and maybe even in Africa.

Rain water is the main source of water. Rainfall varies greatly, depending on the area and the season. Most run-off water derives from the river Niger (90% of surface water available) and its right-bank tributaries. In the rest of the country, run-off water is very low and varies tremendously from one year to the next. There are quite a lot of permanent or temporary pools across the country. These pools are a source of water for drinking water for cattle, small-scale irrigation and they are also used for fish-farming. Renewable subsurface run-offs amount to 2.5 billion m<sup>3</sup> per year. They are the main source of drinking water for people who have access to them.

## 3.2. Population and poverty

### 3.2.1. One of the highest population growth rates in the world<sup>12</sup>

The population of Niger increased from around 1 million to 10 million between the beginning and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Growth speeded up in the second half of the century when infant mortality dropped and fertility rates reached nearly 8 children per woman.

Because of the population growth, there is permanent pressure on natural resources and on the supply of social services and infrastructure. The Niger authorities adopted a Declaration on demographic policy (DGPP) in 2007 to define a strategy to slow down population growth.

### 3.2.2. Chronic food insecurity

The agricultural production of Niger is characterised by a chronic cereal deficit. Yields from the main types of crops are low and decreasing in the long run. The main source of production growth is the increasing area of cultivated land, to the detriment of sylvo-pastoral and forestry land. The trend is made even stronger by the population growth and the lack of modernisation investments in the agricultural sector. Climate change has also had an effect on agriculture: for instance, isohyetal patterns<sup>13</sup> shifted 100 to 150 km between 1960 and 1990.

<sup>10</sup> Source: USAID, *Study on Assisted natural regeneration in the Zinder region*, July 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Source: Edwige Botoni (CILSS), "La transformation silencieuse de l'environnement et des systèmes" 2009.

<sup>12</sup> See Annex A4.3.3.

<sup>13</sup> A line drawn through geographical points recording equal amounts of precipitation during a specific period.



The extension of the surface of cultivated land and the increase in production have not been sufficient to reverse the food production deficit trend. Agricultural production remains structurally inferior to national demand<sup>14</sup>. The deficit is made up for with imports, which accounted for up to 40% of national requirements. Imports are mainly from Nigeria, UEMOA countries and, since the 1990s, from Mali, the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.

Despite the instability and worsening of production conditions, farming and breeding are the main sources of income. Income from emigration plays an increasing part in household economy. Other sources of income are limited. Mines play a key role in the national budget and trade balance but only offer a limited number of jobs, as will show the analysis of national finance (section 3.3.3.)

### 3.2.3. One of the poorest populations in the world, facing a worsening situation

With a per capita gross domestic product estimated at around EUR 210 in 2006, Niger was 174<sup>th</sup> out of 177 in the UNDP HDI ranking for 2007/2008. In 2009, Niger was 182<sup>nd</sup> and last in the ranking. Between the 1990s and 2005, poverty incidence remained stable, at nearly 63% in 2005<sup>15</sup>. Rural areas are particularly vulnerable, and all the regions of Niger are hit to some extent. Over the past few years, so-called production zones have had the highest number of vulnerable people.

#### Factors of poverty in Niger

Poverty incidence in Niger is mainly due to the following factors:

- Place of residence: there are 63.9% of poor families in rural areas, as opposed to 36.7% in urban areas. From a regional point of view, the rural areas of Agadez, the urban community of Niamey and the Diffa region are zones where incidence is lowest. Maradi, Tillaberi and Dosso are the areas where poverty incidence is highest. Finally, living conditions for households have worsened significantly in the Tahoua and Tillaberi regions.
- Level of education of the head of household: heads of household who had no education (primary or secondary) or only a Koranic education make up most of the poor households.
- Size of the households: households which are most exposed to poverty are made up of 6 people and more.
- Sector of activity of the head of household: poverty rates are higher for agricultural independent workers (63.8%) and non-agricultural independent workers (58%).
- Gender: vulnerability is higher for younger women who are excluded from the dynamics of development and made to reproduce the vulnerability sociocultural factors they have to face<sup>16</sup>.

In addition to alarming structural malnutrition, the 2004/2005 crisis revealed a slow, continuous deterioration of living conditions, which led to the pauperisation of vulnerable rural households. It also showed how little living systems could absorb shocks from the outside.

In terms of sanitation, infant mortality rates and child mortality rates are decreasing rapidly but remain high (respectively 123.1 and 273.8 ‰ in 1998; 81 and 198‰ in 2006<sup>17</sup>).

<sup>14</sup> CILSS/CSAO, Food safety profile: Niger, Gret-Iram-ICI, April 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Source: National report on progress reaching the Millennium Development Goals, National Institute for Statistics, Niamey, 2007.

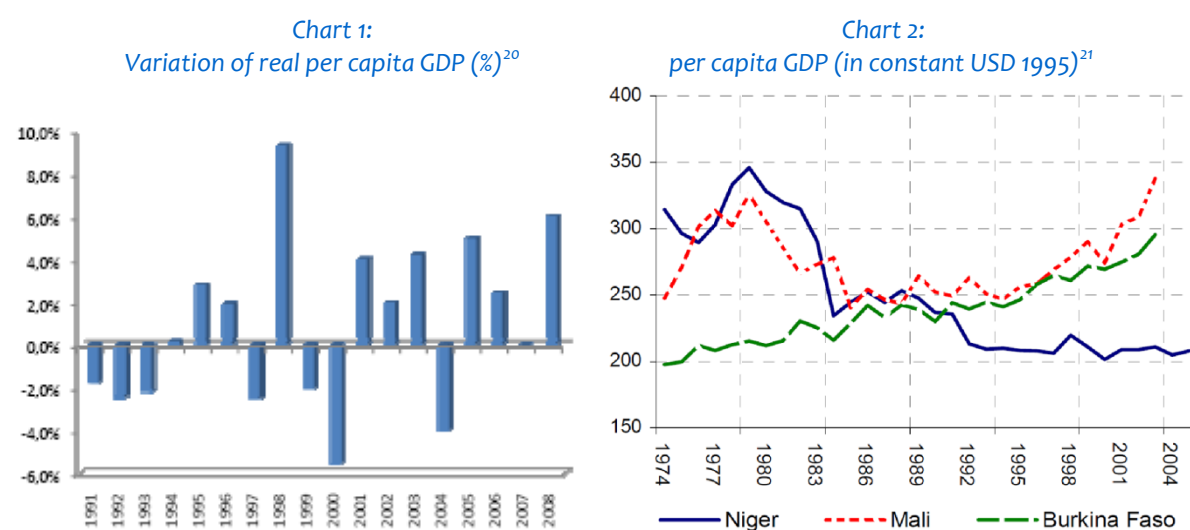
<sup>16</sup> Male-female differences dealt with in the community diagnosis in the Maradi region are developed in Annex 7, in the component about gender-demographics-youth.

<sup>17</sup> Source: National report on progress reaching the Millennium Development Goals, National Institute for Statistics, Niamey, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Source: National report on progress reaching the Millennium Development Goals, National Institute for Statistics, Niamey, 2007.

The extreme poverty of a mainly rural population which depends on a very unstable Sahelian environment is Niger's main weakness, especially as the population often tends to compensate for their vulnerability with strong birth rates. Even though health remains generally poor, the drop in infant mortality rates has induced strong population growth of over 3% per year<sup>18</sup>, which is a major challenge for development. Such population growth means that the population pyramid is characterised by a large proportion of young people, and therefore a strong need for adapted public services, especially in terms of education. It also means that pressure on natural resources is increasing too rapidly for more intensive techniques to be used or for institutional structures to adapt to the intensification.

Average economic growth was 2.9% between 1990 and 2005<sup>19</sup>, far below the average population growth, which means that there was a **general impoverishment of the population**. Economic growth was unstable because it was closely linked to agricultural production, which is very dependent on the climate. Regarding the extremely low level of average income, each agricultural crisis leads to real physical insecurity for part of the population, and the country does not have the resources needed to solve the problem.



The situation slightly improved between 2000 and 2007, when economic growth was over 4%, which represented a per capita growth rate of around 1%. But such a level of per capita economic growth offers few prospects for a population whose average income was 210 EUR/capita in 2006<sup>22</sup>.

30-year projections of the current trends offer no hope that the situation of the Niger people will change in a positive way, on the contrary: the 13 million Nigeriens, who are growing at an annual rate of 3.3% will have reached 34.5 million in 2036. If the annual average growth of per capita income<sup>23</sup> is only 1% per year, then

<sup>18</sup> Average annual natural population growth over the past few years stabilised at a high level (3.3%) compared to 1988, according to the general population and housing censuses (RGPH) for 1988, 2001 and estimates for 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Source: National report on progress reaching the Millennium Development Goals, National Institute for Statistics, Niamey, 2007. The economic growth rate improved slightly over the period 2000-2006, and slightly exceeded the population growth rate.

<sup>20</sup> Source: 1990-2006 INS directory, Niger et Comptes rapides 2008, published in February 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Source: World Bank, Niger, "Country Economic Memorandum - Accelerating Growth and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Diagnosis and the Policy Agenda", September, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> The World Bank estimates that though the negative trend was reversed over the period 1995-2005, it was insufficient to improve living conditions in Niger. Source: World Bank, Niger, "Country Economic Memorandum - Accelerating Growth and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Diagnosis and the Policy Agenda", September, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> GDP/capita is less and less considered to be an appropriate instrument to measure the "wellbeing" of populations. The French government commissioned a study on this issue from three well-known figures: Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, with a large academic team. The report ([http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport\\_anglais.pdf](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf)) recommends integrating other indicators to measure economic progress, such as indicators to measure patrimony (environmental patrimony in particular), wealth distribution, the development of "capacities" of individual people and societies, "subjective" wellbeing, which includes prospects for households, trust in the future, social solidarity, security, etc... In the light of such a complex indicator, Niger's performance over the past few decades would probably be seen as even more negative and that developments "ceteris paribus" would be clearly negative: qualitative and quantitative deterioration of the natural resource patrimony accessible to each inhabitant,

annual GDP will only increase from 210 EUR/capita in 2006 to 283 EUR/capita in 2036, which means that living conditions will hardly improve, and that Nigeriens will have a feeling of stagnation, which will probably be marked by periods of painful crises.

The consequences of 30-year projections of annual per capita economic growth observed over the 2000-2008 period are the following:

- There is little chance that with a comparable standard of living there will be a big change in attitudes regarding birth rates;
- The State's ability to finance public services will be proportionally the same at the very best, but probably weaker, unless income from mining increases greatly and sustainably ;
- In 2036, dependence on aid will remain the same, which means that to deliver the same support as today, donors will have to triple their aid to Niger.
- The aid will only help protect some groups from the worst effects of general destitution, with no scope for progress, as is the case today.

This is an optimistic hypothesis, as it presupposes that the supply of natural resources will give three times more subsistence means in 30 years' time to three times as many people, with the same technical means to use the resources. It also presupposes that there will not be any major famine, but climatic instability is increasing and the population is more and more sensitive. Finally, it also presupposes that the Niger people will not have been driven to political chaos, mass emigration or more authoritarian political regimes.

Niger has regularly been losing places in the HDI system, and is now bottom in the ranking. At the end of the period under review, Niger was considered as the poorest country in the world, and it seems as if the situation will only worsen.

### **3.2.4. Rural economy in permanent crisis**

Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, demographic growth combined with changing pluviometric conditions (isohyetal shifts) led to "levels of density of space use which are not compatible with extensive agriculture and breeding"<sup>24</sup>. Under the demographic, climatic and environmental strain, production methods have changed<sup>25</sup>, leading to the privatisation of production factors and increased monetarisation of trade. One particular example is the sale of farming land<sup>26</sup>.

For the rural population, the decrease in self-sufficiency<sup>27</sup> has forced an increasing number of households to buy resources from external sources and to depend on the market for supplies. Because cereal prices have tended to rise<sup>28</sup>, vulnerable households have had to find more and more adaptation strategies by developing secondary sources of income (temporary wage earning elsewhere, fruit and vegetable picking), using various forms of migration (seasonal and permanent migration, mainly to Nigeria and other coastal countries in West Africa) and changing their eating habits (by reducing the quantity and quality of their

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increasing insecurity linked to the political context but also to the deterioration of social solidarity, crisis of traditional values, total dependence of the economy on external factors such as the climate, the price of raw materials, the economic situation in Nigeria, etc... In terms of distribution, it is quite probable that society will become more and more unequal as sources of income become more and more diverse.

<sup>24</sup> Feeding, educating and caring for all the people of Niger – Demography in Perspective, J. May, S. Harouna and J-P Guengant, World Bank, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Changes include an increase in farmed land, which means that pastoralism is pushed back to marginal lands, that the agricultural front has reached lands which were previously dedicated to pasture, fallowing has almost stopped and lands are less and less fertile, which means that yields have decreased, land owners keep agricultural residues and straw exclusively for themselves, and export them to towns and cities, pastoral wells (formerly public wells) are taken over, breeders increasingly want to work on fixed lands.

<sup>26</sup> Analysis of the management of land in the process of vulnerabilisation of households in the Aguié area, A.Amoukou, FAO, 2005.

<sup>27</sup> The joint study on the vulnerability of households in Niger 2008/2009 (INS-SAP) shows that despite good production conditions, stocks are only sufficient to cover 5 months of food needs (less than 4 months in 2006 and 2007). Only 14% of households say that their stocks are sufficient to last until the next harvests.

<sup>28</sup> Food safety profile: Niger, Gret-Iram-ICI, CILSS/CSAOn April 2008. And Niger: food safety and safety nets, World Bank, report 44072-NE, 18 February 2009.

food). These trends occurred at the same time as mutual aid and social redistribution declined<sup>29</sup>. The marginalisation of the underprivileged (women<sup>30</sup>, young people and poor households) shows that traditional systems have changed: large families are fragmented into small units and there is unequal access to production resources, which means that there are more landless farmers, more wage-earning shepherds and more beggars in urban areas.

These features are the result of long-term trends rather than the sudden effects of repeated economic crises which are characteristic of Sahelian countries<sup>31</sup>. But the survival behaviour developed during the sudden crises has accelerated the vulnerability of Nigerien households<sup>32</sup>.

### **3.2.5. Mining products, an asset which is still not used to its full potential**

The mining sector is the second largest contributor to GDP: uranium totalled nearly 30% of total exports in 2006. In a context of renewed interest for nuclear energy at the end of the period under consideration (still uncertain in some European countries, but very obvious in other regions of the world), competition for Nigerien uranium increased, in particular from China. This helped the country renegotiate better terms for its mining operation agreement with France. The resource is clearly an asset: its contribution to tax revenue increased and is likely to keep on doing so.

The situation was the same for other mining resources, when competition increased through pressure from China in particular and opportunities were exploited to their full potential<sup>33</sup>.

### **3.2.6. A very low level of education**

The gross enrolment ratio is progressing (42% in 2002, 57% in 2007<sup>34</sup>) but the level remains low. Niger is still one of the African countries with the lowest schooling rates, and has one of the worst levels of illiteracy in the world (74.9%<sup>35</sup>).

As a consequence of low budget resources, the quality of education has become poorer. Some observers, such as those interviewed by LASDEL, think that *“the impact on education has been disastrous”*<sup>36</sup>.

Secondary and university education also show very poor levels, which means that there is a huge shortage of qualified people for the public and private sector.

### **3.2.7. Less developed migration trends than in some other Sahelian countries**

National and international migration have for a long time played a vital part in terms of adjustment and regulation for Niger. International migration acts as a regulator for the employment market for two reasons. Firstly, migration has an immediate effect on the employment market because host countries employ part of the labour force which would not have found a job in their country of origin. The second, more indirect impact is the result of migration in terms of financial flows, transfer of skills and cultural influence. The direct and indirect effects of intra- and extra-regional migration depend greatly on the causes of migration

<sup>29</sup> Evaluation du Dispositif de prévention et de gestion des crises alimentaires du Niger durant la crise de 2004-2005, J.Egg, D. Michiels, R. Blein, V. Alby Flores, Rep. of Niger, MAEE, IRAM, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Pression foncière et nouvelles formes d'accès à la terre : vers une déféminisation de l'agriculture au sud Niger ?, M. Doka and M. Monimart, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Analyse rétrospective de la crise alimentaire au Niger, by Sardan et al, working document No.45, AFD, August 2007.

<sup>32</sup> “60% of households in the survey on national poverty were still in debt after the 2005 food crisis; average debt was worth 427 kg of cereals”, Marinho and Gerard (2008) in Niger: food safety and safety nets, World Bank.

<sup>33</sup> Source: MINEPEC Niger 2010 - Conference and Exposition on Niger's mining and drilling potential (10 to 12 May 2010, Niamey, Niger) <http://www.minepec.com/html/fourpagesix.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Source: Trends, profile and factors of poverty in Niger 2005-2008, INS, Niger.

<sup>35</sup> Source CIA World Fact Book, version of 1 January 2008.

<sup>36</sup> LASDEL, A cheval donné on ne regarde pas les dents - Les mécanismes de l'aide vus par les acteurs nigériens ... [Gifhorse...] Draft version of Final Report, p.48.

(migration of despair, to find work or refugee flows), on the kind of mobility (permanent, temporary or circular migrations), but also on the migration policies in the home and host country. Globally, contrary to some preconceived which might exist (dependency, disinvestment, disparities), these kinds of mobility help reduce poverty effectively. The jobs of those who left may be taken over by other people, and there are also opportunities to stimulate trade between the home and host country, thanks to diaspora networks. Migration is a factor for cultural openness, which is shown in the fertility index of households. Households tend to copy the behaviour of the country where the husband works. African women whose husband lives in an OECD country have fewer children than other women<sup>37</sup>.

Electronic remittances made by Nigerien migrants were estimated to be around EUR 38 million in 2004, according to fast money transfer companies<sup>38</sup>. This figure should be completed by the cash transfers, mainly favoured by temporary migrants, who are settled in neighbouring countries such as Nigeria. The Nigerien diaspora is considered to be proportionally smaller than that of other Sahelian countries, such as Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso. According to some observers<sup>39</sup>, for historical reasons, migration, especially permanent migration, is more recent and less developed in Niger than in those countries. Therefore, Niger cannot count on the support of such a large diaspora as its neighbours.

### **3.2.8. Niger belongs to a solid monetary area... Is it too solid?**

Niger belongs to the UEMOA, and therefore to the CFA zone, which can be seen as an asset and a weakness at the same time. While belonging to a “strong” monetary area may help secure potential investors and favour trade with neighbours belonging to the same zone, it might also mean that Niger is less competitive compared to Nigeria, its main economic partner. It would be necessary to carry out a more detailed analysis to compare the advantages and drawbacks of belonging to such a monetary area.

### **3.2.9. Close economic integration with Nigeria and other coastal countries<sup>40</sup>**

The crucial interaction between the Nigerien and the Nigerian economies is not taken into consideration very much by Niger and the DPEs. While regional integration is only progressing slowly, it is a key opportunity for land-locked countries such as Niger.

The Nigerien population, which is 80% rural, is mainly concentrated in the South, along the border with Nigeria. Every year, during the hunger gap season, the Nigerien cereal market is resupplied with cereals from Nigeria, bought from Nigerien producers during the slump period (harvest season<sup>41</sup>). Despite Niger diversifying its sources of supply since the mid-1990s, Nigeria is still its main partner. Niger buys dry cereals (corn, millet, sorghum) from Nigeria to make up for a large part of its structural or seasonal production shortages. The level of harvests in Nigeria therefore plays a key part in price formation on Nigerien markets.

Conversely, nearly all of Niger’s cattle exports go to Nigeria. Similarly, most commercial products (millet, dolichos beans, earth almond, and sesame) are exported to Nigeria. Nigeria is the largest outlet for animal products in West Africa. The main reason why the demand for animal proteins has increased in Nigeria is not only the size of the country (more than 60% of consumers in the region) or its high level of urbanisation (60% of Nigerians live in towns or cities), but also the increased purchasing power of consumers in the country. Niger’s food safety depends greatly on cross-border trade with Nigeria. The production deficit in North Niger led to an influx of cereals from Nigeria, which had significant consequences during the food crisis in 2005. The level of cereal stocks in Nigeria plays an important part in price-making on Nigerien markets.

<sup>37</sup> Ozden, C. and M. Schiff (dir.) (2007), *International Migration, Economic Development and Policy*, World Bank. Putnam R. (2001), *Social capital: Measurement and consequences*, ISUMA, Canadian journal of policy research, volume 2.

<sup>38</sup> Sources: World Bank: *Global Development Finance 2005* and BCEAO: 2004 report on remittances.

<sup>39</sup> This issue was dealt with by the focus group on rural development during the mission (see annex 9).

<sup>40</sup> See annex A4.5.

<sup>41</sup> The sale of crops at low costs by Nigerien producers is described in the article by de Perthuis de Laillevault François-Xavier, Zinder, illustration of the food crisis in Niger in 2005 – Part I., *The Panoptique*, January 2008. <http://www.lepanoptique.com/sections/politique-economie/zinder-illustration-de-la-crise-alimentaire-au-niger-en-2005-partie-i/>

Cross-border trade helps Niger integrate into its sub-region and is a great opportunity for development. The Agadez region absorbs most of the trade between Niger and North Africa (Algeria-Libya), on the Agadez-Assamaka and the Agadez-Bilma-Madam corridors. The Agadez international airport helps consolidate trade. In addition to Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast are also key trade partners. Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement, which was designed to set up a zone of free trade between the EU and West Africa from 2008, should also provide a framework for trade with the other countries of the sub-region.

Niger does not only depend on Nigeria for food: 85% of Niger's electricity is currently imported from Nigeria. The economic potential of Nigeria, a major oil power, was poorly exploited during the period under review because of public policies which were not in the public interest. The increase in petrol prices at the end of the period seemed to indicate that the situation in Nigeria might get better. If Nigeria's public governance was to improve, income might increase rapidly, which would have significant consequences, in particular in terms of migration opportunities and exports of breeding products for Niger. The development of the Nigerian economy is therefore an opportunity for Niger. But the 2005 food crisis in Niger and political instability in Nigeria over the 2000-2008 period, and the sudden deportation of migrants over the past few decades mean that possible crises in Nigeria are a threat to Niger.

### **3.2.10. Economic integration hindered by an insufficient transport network**

To promote its foreign trade, land-locked Niger has to depend on countries in the sub-region which have access to the sea. The country has been using the port of Lomé for its supplies through maritime channels since 2002<sup>42</sup>. Niger's traffic via the port amounted to 174,986 tons in 2003 and 151,278 tons in 2006, far less than Burkina Faso. In 2006, freight to Niger via Abidjan only amounted to 102 tons. Imports and exports are burdened with formal and informal taxes to be paid at borders and when goods are transported across the countries.

Niger does not have access to the rail network which links the other countries of the sub-region. Its road network is still insufficient. 90% of internal and external transportation of people and goods is via the road network. Roads are in very bad condition and poorly connected to Niger's main neighbours, with the exception of Benin<sup>43</sup>. Building good-quality and usable roads, reducing delays and improving customs checks are some of the challenges Niger will have to face to reach good regional integration.

## **3.3. The Nigerien State**

### **3.3.1. The political stability experienced during the period of evaluation has recently been undermined**

As an independent State since 1960, Niger experienced quite strong political instability over the decade 1990-1999. There were also two army rebellions (Tuareg and Toubou) in the Air, Azawak, Kawar and Manga regions over the period.

The adoption of a semi-presidential Constitution and the presidential and general elections in 1999 seemed to suggest that democratic processes were stabilising in Niger. The 2004 elections reinforced democracy, institutional stability and the decentralisation process; municipalities were set up and the first municipal elections were held.

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<sup>42</sup> Because of the 2002 food crisis, which divided the Ivory Coast in two, operators from Niger, Burkina and Mali, three neighbouring States stopped most of their activities in the port of Abidjan, the largest French-speaking port in Western Africa. But the current situation may change significantly: in the case of Niger, since 2008, the Autonomous port of Abidjan wishes to recover part of the 1,300,000 tons of maritime freight which passes through the Port of Lomé, part of which is to reach Niamey.

<sup>43</sup> Connection via the Malanville bridge.

Since 2007, democracy has been jeopardized by armed conflicts linked to the Tuareg rebellion in the North<sup>44</sup>, violence in the North and North-east of Nigeria, disagreements within the presidential party and attacks on the freedom of speech (press in particular). Despite recent attempts to settle the Tuareg conflict<sup>45</sup>, the crisis seems to have reached a stalemate. Furthermore, the electoral context in 2009 and the question of the renewal of the presidential mandate affected the quality of cooperation between the DPEs and Niger. The plan to extend the mandate of President Mamadou Tandja, which expired officially at the end of 2009, was strongly contested by opposition: the Nigerien party for democracy and socialism (PNDS) accused the President of wanting to “suspend the Nigerien Constitution”<sup>46</sup>. This led to demonstrations in the capital city. The military coup on 18 February 2010 ended Mamadou Tandja’s presidency. The consequences of these events on the relationship between the DPEs and the new Nigerien authorities cannot yet be assessed.

### **3.3.2. A decentralisation process which is still in its early stages and not very advanced<sup>47</sup>**

Decentralisation, which goes hand in hand with deconcentration, is a recent topic in Niger. Decentralisation is based on three levels:

- Regions (7 in total), which are territorial entities and deconcentrated divisions of the State.
- Districts (“départements” - 36 in total) are also administrative units and deconcentrated divisions of the State.
- The 265 municipalities (213 rural municipalities and 52 urban municipalities) are based on customary divisions (counties and groups). The first municipal elections in the country took place on 24 July 2004.

These are the main obstacles to decentralisation in Niger:

- Problems linked to analphabetism and the lack of information given to citizens.
- Complex municipality structures, which combine decentralisation, deconcentration and traditional divisions.
- A shortage of human resources, particularly competent managers willing to live in outlying areas.

### **3.3.3. A better controlled State budget, but which still depends a lot on foreign aid**

Between 1999 and 2008, the Nigerien government implemented an economic policy based on a return to budgetary orthodoxy, regular payment of civil servants’ salaries and debt write-off. Efforts to restore economic and financial balance were supported by significant budget aid from several donors, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the European Commission. Belgium also contributed with support of around EUR 12.5 million to pay overdue salaries.

Niger signed an agreement with the IMF for two economic and financial recovery programmes for the 2000-2003 and 2005-2007 periods. On these grounds, Niger was granted credit by the World Bank, the IMF, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other partners. Niger also benefited from the HIPC initiative from the end of 2001 (decision point) and reached the completion point in April 2004 (3.3 years between decision and completion is a long time compared to other countries). Niger also benefited from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

<sup>44</sup> The rebellion started again in February 2007, when the Iferouane military base was attacked, West of the Aïr.

<sup>45</sup> On 6 April 2009, the Niger government and the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MNJ) met in Libya. The talks, which aimed at finding a common ground for mediation, failed.

<sup>46</sup> AFP NIAMEY on 12 April 2009.

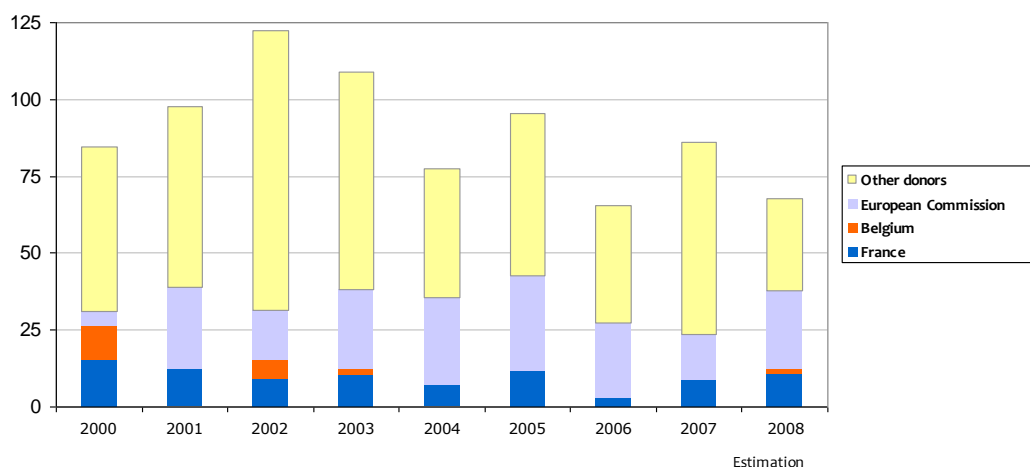
<sup>47</sup> See annex A4.4.3.

Debt relief helped improve the macroeconomic context: the ratio between debt and exports went down significantly, public spending increased and the basic deficit was reduced. Tax revenue doubled because significant revenue was recorded from transactions carried out in the mining sector.

Because the Nigerien State's own resources increased, the share of aid in public resources dropped considerably over the period, from 100% in 2000 to 40% in 2008 (excluding HIPC – see details in Annex 7, macroeconomic report). It should be noted however that 2008 is probably not a representative year given the exceptionally high non-tax revenue, mainly due to an exceptional premium paid when a production-sharing contract was signed with the China National Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Corporation (CNODC), a subsidiary of the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). In 2007, non-tax revenue was also high, after a telecommunication license was assigned.

Project-based aid is increasing, whereas budget support is stagnating, and decreasing in absolute terms. It must be pointed out however that HIPC aid was included in budget support. Before 2006, HIPC aid (around EUR 27.4 million in 2005) was registered as TOFE because it hadn't been achieved yet. After 2008, HIPC aid was no longer recorded because the debt had been written off permanently.

Figure 3: Budget support granted by TFPs in Niger (in EUR millions)



Source: Estimates based on IMF and SP/SRP reports, information obtained from the TFPs, and from the OECD/DAC group database.

### 3.3.4. More formal policies

Over the period under review, the government's policies became progressively clearer, and this helped create more systematic modes of communication with the donors. Whilst this was a positive development, it was but one step towards dialogue, as shall be mentioned below.



### 3.4. SWOT analysis

The main ecological, sociological, economic and political characteristics of Niger presented above can be presented in the shape of a SWOT matrix (S-Strengths, W-Weaknesses, O-Opportunities, T-Threats).



This tool helps break down Niger's specific assets and weaknesses, with a view to reduce poverty sustainably.

Niger is in a context which offers opportunities, but also presents threats which might influence the results of its policies.

Some of Niger's characteristics are ambivalent, insofar as they may be considered as an asset and a hurdle, and may offer opportunities and carry risks at the same time. These characteristics may be presented in several categories.

Table 2: SWOT analysis of Niger

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
INTERNAL ORIGIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vast country, historical transit area between coastal Africa and Northern Africa.</li> <li>Mining resources.</li> <li>Cultural resources.</li> <li>Tourism potential.</li> <li>Pastoral potential.</li> <li>Irrigable potential.</li> <li>Geographical and cultural ties with the north of Nigeria, which helps build economic links.</li> <li>Formal policies.</li> <li>Member of UEMOA, a factor of integration with partner countries, of stability and trust for investors.</li> <li>Political stability during the period of evaluation.</li> <li>Urbanisation, demographic growth and changes in eating habits opening up opportunities for breeding and farming.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land-locked country and population.</li> <li>Climate: differences between seasons and poor predictability.</li> <li>Depletion of natural resources (fertility, tree cover).</li> <li>Very high population growth.</li> <li>Population lives in extreme poverty.</li> <li>Strong disparities between men and women.</li> <li>Low level of education at all levels, in particular at university level.</li> <li>Very poor nutrition and health.</li> <li>Diaspora not very spread out.</li> <li>Internal conflicts.</li> <li>Political division within the government.</li> <li>Bad governance.</li> <li>Fragile administration; lack of competent and motivated human resources, both at central and local levels.</li> <li>Poor network of companies.</li> <li>Society built around conservative authorities.</li> <li>Member of UEMOA, potential handicap for competitiveness for Nigeria.</li> <li>Fragile budget and dependence on international aid.</li> <li>Water resources cost a lot in terms of effort and money.</li> <li>A complex institutional context; financial markets are not functional.</li> </ul>
	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
EXTERNAL ORIGIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nigeria's economic growth.</li> <li>Competition for access to mining resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpredictability of the climate.</li> <li>Political and/or economic crisis in Nigeria.</li> <li>Development of fundamentalism in the north of Nigeria.</li> <li>Political crises in the area<sup>48</sup>.</li> <li>Price instability of food products in Nigeria.</li> </ul>

Sources: SDRP, DSP France 2002, work of the evaluators.

<sup>48</sup> The crisis in Ivory Coast had a strong impact on the Air region (exports of market products, especially onions).

It is interesting to compare this matrix with the Paul Collier's study<sup>49</sup> which describes several "traps" to explain why around 50 countries, home to over a billion people living in extreme and worsening conditions, have experienced no economic growth and are cut off. The "poverty traps" described by Collier are the following:

1. Internal **conflicts** and risk of conflicts, which considerably increase uncertainty for economic stakeholders, bias political decisions and weigh down public budgets.
2. **Land-locked** countries with bad economic coordination with **neighbouring countries** and/or poor economic growth of the neighbouring countries.
3. Situations in which **natural resources** (mining resources in particular) are managed in an opaque way by a small number of people, and profits not shared out, thus proving to be negative (Dutch disease).
4. Bad **governance**.

According to Collier, whose work is based on a number of statistical analyses, countries facing one or more of these traps do not develop. Quite on the contrary, living conditions are worsening, and aid has proven to be unable to reverse the trend.

Niger has to face all four of the "traps", and is therefore "at the bottom of the bottom billion"<sup>50</sup>. The situation is the following:

1. The Tuareg conflict has isolated a significant part of the population, threatened political stability and upset trade and tourism across the country.
2. The land-lock situation and dependency (on Nigeria in particular) has already been mentioned above. Acceleration of growth in Nigeria would be a sign of hope for Niger.
3. The redistribution of profit from mining resources, particularly uranium, would need to be investigated in further detail. The situation improved recently<sup>51</sup>, but this does not mean that Niger will not have to face the risks described by Collier regarding countries with many mining resources. Furthermore, the quality of governance of the country means that mining resources are perhaps managed in quite a risky way (see next point).
4. Governance: the LASDEL report contains a chapter entitled "*falsification of aid: a culture of corruption*"<sup>52</sup> in which Nigerien and foreign stakeholders describe a situation which does not seem better in Niger than in many other neighbouring countries. This is verified by Niger's position in Transparency International's ranking<sup>53</sup>.

Observations on the field and Paul Collier's approach tally and show that not only is Niger one of the poorest countries in the world, the situation is worsening. Niger is also one of the countries for which the challenges to achieve long-term growth seem hardest to overcome.

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<sup>49</sup> The Bottom Billion, why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it, Oxford University press, New York, 2007

<sup>50</sup> Which is confirmed by the fact that it ranks bottom in the HDI ranking.

<sup>51</sup> See annex A4.4.1.

<sup>52</sup> LASDEL, *Gifthouse...* P. 37 and following.

<sup>53</sup> Niger ranks 108<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in the 2009 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index.

## 4. GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND DPE RESPONSES

### 4.1. Niger's Poverty Reduction Strategy, a framework to adapt to development challenges

In January 2002, Niger adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy (SRP) for the 2002-2015 period, which was based on “*the conviction that poverty reduction needs to be fuelled by sustained growth to generate jobs and income, especially for the poor*”. The SRP, which can be found in the intervention logic in annex A3.6a.1, divides the aim into strategic components:

- Supporting growth whilst guaranteeing economic and financial stability;
- Developing productive sectors, mainly through the rural sector and the private sector in general;
- Taking direct measures to poverty alleviation by giving the poor access to basic social services;
- Guaranteeing proper development management by promoting good governance, developing human and institutional capacities and decentralisation;
- Transversal component: smoothing over male/female inequalities regarding access to resources, basic social services and economic opportunities.

In 2007, the aims of the SRP seemed unreachable. This was partly due to the lack of economic growth, the impact of strong population growth on the action taken, the particularly low level of many indicators to start with, the lack of infrastructure and heavy investments which could help stimulate growth, poor interaction between sectors, and the poor ability of human capacities in administrations to implement and monitor development policies<sup>54</sup>.

Niger adopted an updated SRP for the 2008-2012 period in the shape of an Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (SDRP) aimed at initiating strong economic growth, favouring the poor and fostering sustainable human development. Even more than the 2002 SRP, the 2007 SDRP focused on catalysts of economic growth to “*properly start building a New Economy for Niger and promote strong economic growth (7% at least, on annual average) [...] which is fundamental to be able to meet the poverty reduction target; the rhythm and methods of growth will give opportunities and sufficient capacities to the poor to take part in economic activities and benefit from them*”<sup>55</sup>.

The 2008-2012 SDRP, the intervention logic of which may be found in annex A3.6b.1, defines the seven strategic pillars needed to reach the MDGs by 2015.

It also defines the convergence criteria adopted at a continental (African Union and NEPAD) and regional level (ECOWAS, CEBSAD, UEMOA).

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<sup>54</sup> Source: SDRP 2007, p.13.

<sup>55</sup> Source: SDRP 2007, p.81.



The SDRP is based on ambitious growth rates: 7% economic growth in average over the 2008-2012 period (privileged accelerated growth scenario); 8.7% growth in average for agricultural production; 4.2% in the breeding sector; 4.5% in the forestry and fishing sector; 8.9% in the modern mining sector; 6.8% in trade and the hotel industry; 6.9% in the manufacturing sector.

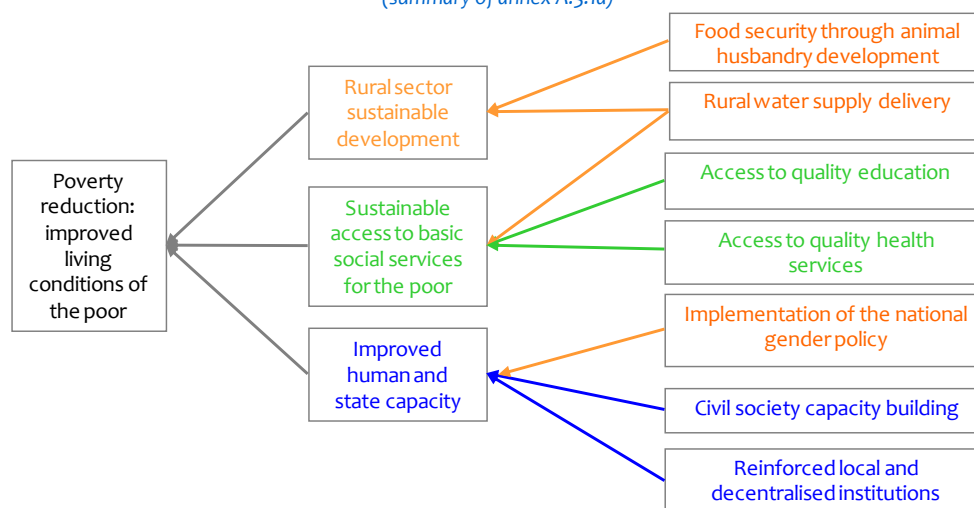
According to macroeconomic and budgetary planning studies, EUR 11.6 billion in total will be needed to implement the SDRP over the 2008-2012 period<sup>56</sup>. 28% will be financed internally and 72% externally<sup>57</sup>. These are enormous amounts of money and exceed Niger's resource mobilisation capacity over the period.

## 4.2. General strategies of the DPEs with Niger

### 4.2.1. Belgium



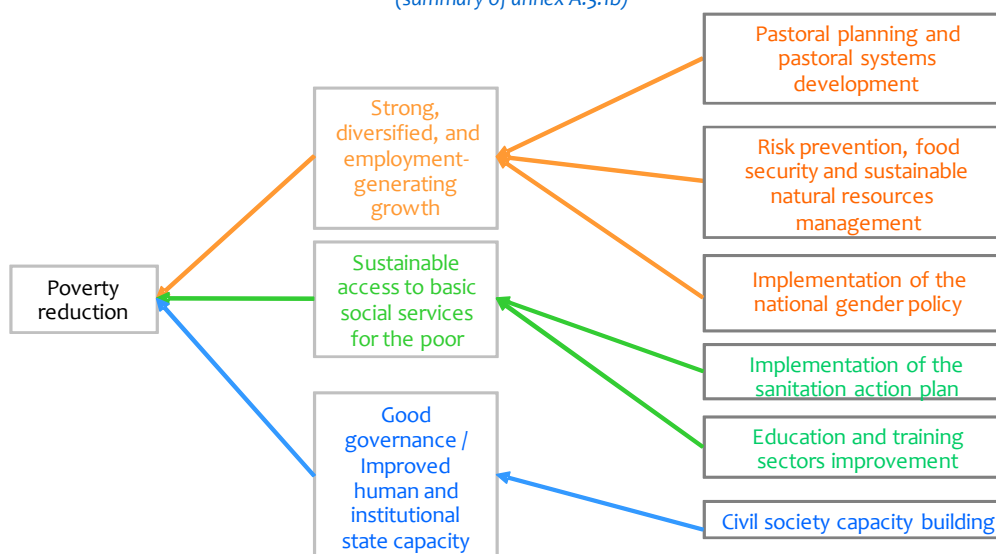
Figure 1. Belgian cooperation: Indicative cooperation programme 2004-2008  
(summary of annex A.3.1a)



<sup>56</sup> I.e. FCFA 7,601.5 billion (the Euro being linked to the FCFA with a fixed parity of FCFA 655.957).

<sup>57</sup> Source: SDRP 2007.

Figure 2. Belgian cooperation: Indicative cooperation programme 2009-2012  
(summary of annex A.3.1b)



Belgium's strategy in Niger over the period under consideration was defined by the Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) for 2004-2008, which was adopted by the Joint commission for the two countries. The main aim of the cooperation between Belgium and Niger is to reduce the impact of poverty, which means that investments are needed to improve living conditions for the poorest part of the population, and that action is needed in targeted sectors to guarantee sustainable development. It also means that support is needed to increase the human resources of the State, both centrally and locally, hence the particular focus on the development of institutions involved directly or indirectly in the functioning of the rule of law.

EUR 42.3 million in total were invested in the ICP (EUR 34.5 million plus 7.8 million for the ongoing programme), which includes technical assistance. Priority sectors are the following:

- Basic health, including the reduction of HIV-AIDS epidemic (EUR 11 million). Belgium, which is the only DPE working in this sector along with France, was designated *chef de file* for donor coordination;
- Basic education (EUR 8 million);
- Rural development, in particular breeding, hydraulics and gender issues (EUR 13.5 million). Particular attention is given to breeding because Belgian has experience in this kind of cooperation in the sub-region. Gender issues are dealt with in a transversal manner (equal involvement in the conception and implementation of projects, decision-making and fair distribution of the added value of interventions) but also directly, by supporting the MPF/PE for instance.

Belgium supports cross-cutting issues linked to gender, the environment and governance (democratic life, good governance, decentralisation and citizenship) through grants, micro-interventions and a Belgian/Nigerien study and expertise fund.

Belgium's strategy in Niger was renewed when an IPC for 2009-2012 was signed in 2008 for two sectors, provisionally for EUR 52 million: health (EUR 19 million) and rural development - breeding, gender issues, food security (EUR 14 million).

The new IPC brought in a strategic change. Compared to the previous strategy, only the intermediate target related to the accessibility of social services was kept; sustainable development goals were broadened and now extend to growth, which should be strong, diversified and create jobs. Furthermore, the issue of hydraulics in villages is no longer covered, so as to focus more on the three topics related to rural development mentioned above. Finally, Belgium's strategy regarding good governance now extends to the reinforcement of civil society. Despite these changes, the fact that two main sectors were chosen means that many of the interventions are in line with the previous IPC.

#### 4.2.2. European Commission



Figure 3. EC : Cooperation framework between the Republic of Niger and the EC, 8<sup>th</sup> EDF, 1995-2000 (summary of annex A.3.2a)

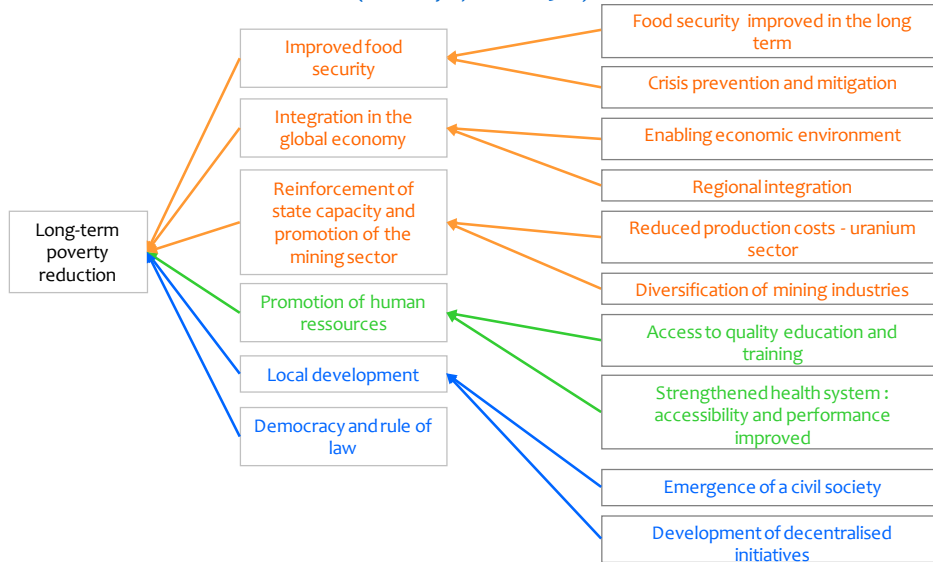
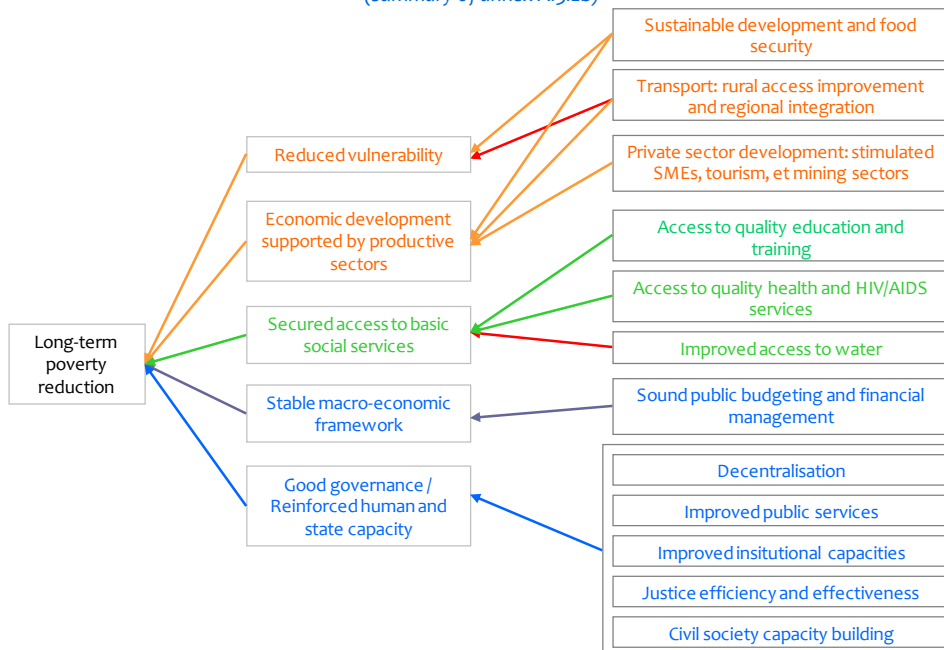


Figure 4. EC : Cooperation strategy and indicative programme, 9<sup>th</sup> EDF, 2001-2007 (summary of annex A.3.2b)



The EC is Niger's main donor. Since Niger's independence, the European Union has invested nearly EUR 1 billion in the country in total. As part of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> EDF (see annex A.3.2.a), aid from the EU has mainly been linked to rural development, macro-economic support and the transport sector. At the beginning of 2001, the EC audited<sup>58</sup> budget support granted between 1996 and 2001; following the findings of the audit, aid from the EU was suspended for a year until 2002, but the development projects financed by the EDF continued all the same. Delays in the preparation of the 8<sup>th</sup> EDF meant that the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> EDF were run at the same time.

<sup>58</sup> The documents do not specify which kind of budget support was audited.

As part of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF, the National Indicative Programme (NIP) between the EC and Niger for 2002-2007 amounted to EUR 402 million – EUR 333 million for programmed aid (budget allowance A) and 69 for the reserve (budget allowance B, which includes EUR 55 million for SYSMIN, to even out fluctuations in the mining sector). The sub-sectors of the strategy of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF (annex A.3.2.b) are in line with previous programmes. The strategy is based on four elements, including two focal sectors:

- First focal sector (12 to 15% of EU aid over the period): sustainable development and food safety (food crisis prevention, diversification and increase of income for rural populations, agricultural production, securing agro-pastoral systems and constructing hydraulic infrastructure). Because of the food crisis, funds allocated to this sector were increased and the programme focused more on improving the nutritional situation than on research.
- Second focal sector (30 to 40% of aid): transport (road infrastructure, easing the land-lock situation, road improvement, rural roads). The EC's strategy does not specify how the targets relating to transport will be met (land-lock situation and regional integration).

The two focal sectors will have to support sustainable economic development.

- Macro-economic support to reduce poverty (global budget support and equal access to education and health care, in the shape of sectoral budget support) – 35 to 45% of the aid.
- Good governance and reinforcement of civil society. The strategic document does specify what means are used.

The non-focal sectors, which deal mainly with institutional support (legal system, local development, education, training, decentralisation, reinforcement of civil society, support to analyse/monitor poverty, regional integration), represent 10 to 15% of the budget allowance.

Lastly, water and gender issues are dealt with transversally. The water issue is linked to the promotion of hygiene and water sanitation, access to water, the strengthening of institutional capacities and sustainable development of natural resources. The gender issue is linked to food security, support for education and the targeting of the most vulnerable people.

The cooperation strategy adopted by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF (2008-2013) has been granted EUR 458 million. Its targets are the following:

- Improving growth in rural areas and improving regional integration (helping implement the Rural Development Strategy, helping develop infrastructure to foster regional integration and institutional support).
- Supporting good governance, economic and institutional reforms (effectiveness and efficiency of public spending, helping the national statistics system, reform and modernisation of the administration, justice for all, contributing to voting processes and the quality of information).
- General, non-targeted and multiannual budget support<sup>59</sup>.
- Non-focal interventions to help Niger fully benefit from the Economic partnership agreement (EPA) and help implement cooperation.

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<sup>59</sup> CSP NIP Niger – Final version (2) P 10.





France also promotes cultural diversity as part of its policy to develop “Francophonie”. France plays a major part in the sector because it is culturally and institutionally close to Niger. The 2002 DSP also focused on the role played by Francophonie in France’s policy of influence in Niger. But no references to the highly political intervention of France in terms of culture were included in the French/Nigerien Partnership Framework Document (DCP) for 2006-2010<sup>60</sup>.

The 2006-2010 DCP is based on three focal sectors and three transversal sectors. The three focal sectors are:

- Education: French cooperation has developed a programme-based approach to support the Ten-Year Programme for Development of Education (PPDE);
- Health, the second experimental sector for programme-aid in Niger: sectoral aid complemented by technical assistance for institutional support aiming mainly at promoting human resources and improving access to a package of basic care and medicinal drugs;
- Water-sanitation: helping people gain access to drinking water and sanitation, in rural and urban areas.

The three transversal sectors are:

- Strengthening the State and decentralisation: developing financial management, security and justice, support decentralisation, military cooperation and defence;
- Higher education and research: including elites in international knowledge flows;
- Promotion of cultural diversity as part of the policy to develop “Francophonie”.

Furthermore, French cooperation is strongly involved in the support of regional integration through support to political and economic institutions (UEMAO, ECOWAS) and to specialised institutions such as the Niger basin authority (ABN) and the Lake Chad basin Commission. One of the consequences is that support to manage natural resources is not in line with the poverty reduction policy but with Niger’s regional integration.

In 2004 and 2005, the French Development Agency took over several topics which were previously dealt with by the Cooperation and Cultural Action Offices (SCAC) as part of the Priority Solidarity Fund (FSP). Infrastructure in the sector of education and health was passed on to the AFD. From 2006 onwards, the AFD got involved in policies vis-à-vis NGOs and its interventions can now be developed in crisis situations and as part of support to projects for migrants. The reform therefore had an impact of French cooperation in Niger from 2006 onwards, when the reform became effective<sup>61</sup>.

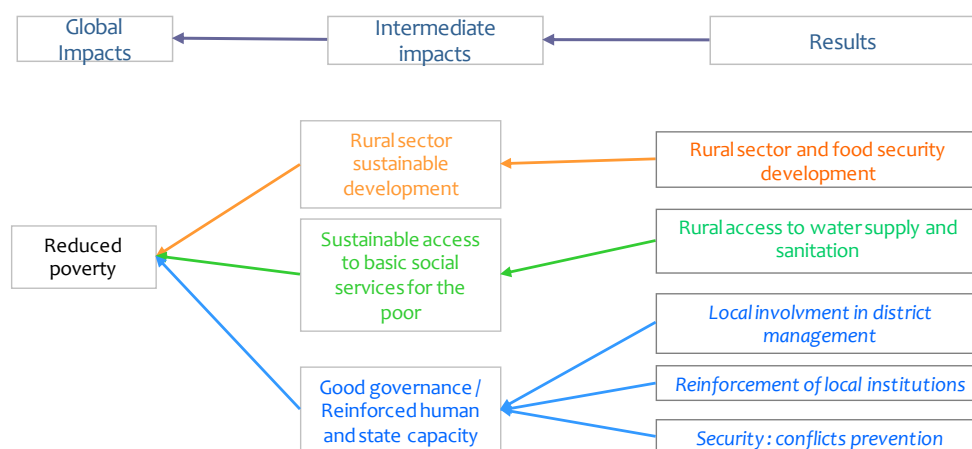
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<sup>60</sup> Source: DCP France-Niger 2006-2010, section 4.4.6 “Promotion of cultural diversity as part of the policy to develop Francophonie”.

<sup>61</sup> Out of 480 FSP projects, 55 were transferred to the AFD in 2005 and 2006, in two stages: 26 dealt with social sectors, 18 with rural development and the environment, 6 with infrastructure and urban development, and 5 with other sectors.

#### 4.2.4. Denmark

Figure 7. Denmark: Note on Danish cooperation with Niger 2006-2010  
(summary of annex A.3.3)



Based on a “learning-by-doing” approach, Danish interventions draw on 35 years of cooperation with Niger.

In 1994, Niger was chosen to be one of the recipients of a Danish country programme. Assistance was put on hold between 1996 and 2000, then resumed in 2000.

Two programming phases cover the period under evaluation. Over the period from **2001 to 2006**, Danish support was DKK 30 to 50 M per year (i.e. EUR<sup>62</sup> 4 to 6.7 M). For the **2006-2011 period**, support amounted to DKK 450 M, i.e. approximately 9.4 M EUR per year. The main difference of the new programme is that it is no longer based on the former project-based approach but on a sector-wide approach (SWAp). To implement the sector wide approach, a new “institutional support” element was included in the Danish strategy for the 2006-2011 period. This change is the result of lessons learnt by Denmark in other country programmes (in particular Burkina Faso, Benin and Mali).

All throughout the period, Denmark supported the SRP/SDRP. Its 2006-2011 programme helped more particularly to meet the targets defined by the SDR. Over the period under consideration, Danish assistance focused on two sectors: water and sanitation, and agriculture and management of natural resources. These two sectors were completed by a topical programme entitled “good governance and decentralisation” from 2006 onwards.

Cooperation in the sector of **water and sanitation** aims at improving access to drinking water and basic sanitary facilities and contributing to better hygiene in rural and semi-urban settings.

- Over the 1974-2006 period, Denmark helped the Nigerien government keep up its efforts in providing water in villages and basic sanitary facilities, with several successive projects. This assistance mainly focused on the Zinder and Diffa regions (drinking water in rural areas, latrines, community management, awareness rising, regional institutional capacities).
- A new three-year programme was set up at the beginning of 2007. The 2007-2009 assistance was a transition phase aimed at helping the Ministry of Hydraulics set up a programme-based approach in the sector (SWAp). This was completed by the renewal of aid to the Zinder and Diffa regions.

Denmark’s aims in the sector of **agriculture and the management of natural resources** are identical to those defined in the SDRP: improvement of food security, improvement of agricultural and animal production, sustainable management of natural resources.

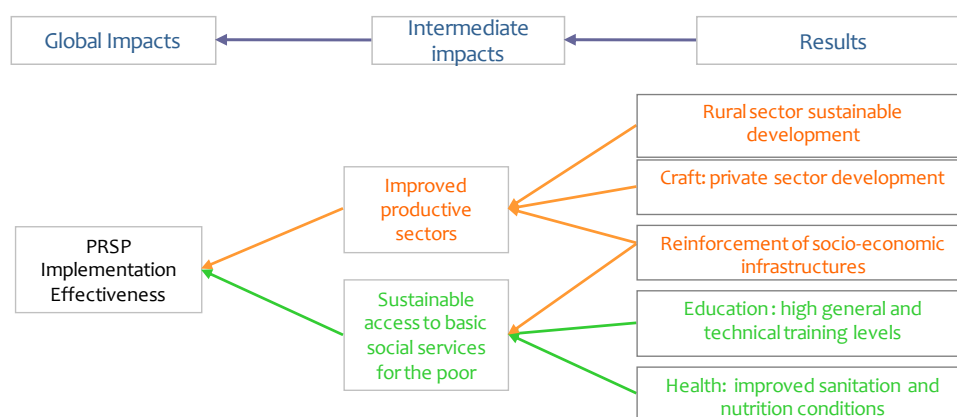
<sup>62</sup> Average parity: EUR 1 = DKK 7.45.

- Since 1999, Denmark has been helping develop rural areas in Zinder and Diffa. Aid focused on creating groups of women (savings and credit programmes) and helped stabilise dunes and intensify agriculture in the basins surrounding the largest river in the Diffa region. It also helped coordinate natural resource management, restructure the physical environment and also helped rural producers to get organised (farmers, breeders, etc.).
- During the 2006-2011 programme, Denmark plans to bring its sectoral support in line with the SDR (programme-based approach). One sectoral programme in the agricultural sector focuses on improving farming and breeding production through intensification (small-scale irrigation activities), diversification, transformation and sales of agricultural products, as well as through natural resource management. Involving women in activities is at the heart of the programme, which aims at improving the status of women in rural areas.

In addition to the two sectoral support programmes, Danish cooperation promotes good governance, democracy, the rule of law, the rights of women and minors, as well as conflict prevention through continuous discussions and contacts with local and religious leaders. Danish cooperation also provides institutional support for decentralisation, based on local development. This new topical programme aims at strengthening institutional capacities on every level, favouring democratic processes, as well as human rights and youth support.

#### 4.2.5. Luxembourg

Figure 8. Luxembourg: Indicative cooperation programme 2003-2007  
(summary of annex A.3.5)



Development cooperation between Niger and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg began in 1989 and has since been strengthened, thanks to a Framework cooperation agreement signed in 2002, after a first agreement was signed in 1995. Niger is one of the ten privileged partners for Luxembourgish cooperation. In 2005, Niger ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of Luxembourg ODA disbursements. Over the 2003-2007 period, Luxembourg's ODA amounted to 20 million EUR (EUR 26 million in terms of real disbursements).

Luxembourg's cooperation strategy with Niger is specified in the Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP), which defines a multi-annual programme-based approach. The first ICP was for the years 2003-2007 and supported the development of productive sectors and guaranteed access to basic social services for the poor. Priority was given to the following sectors:

- Education/Training/Socio-professional integration;
- Health / Infrastructure / IEC Health / AIDS to improve health and nutrition;
- Integrated rural development / Food security / Protection of plant species;
- Handicraft for the development of the private sector;
- Socio-economic infrastructure.

The 2003-2007 ICP was financed with a 20 million EUR package over five years, including the bilateral and multilateral elements. Real disbursements exceeded this indicative figure however, and reached over 27 million EUR.

A new ICP was defined for the 2008-2012 period. At EUR 60 million, the indicative budget is far higher. The global aim is to help strengthen capacities with a view to foster viable economic development and reduce poverty. The specific aims are to:

- help reduce poverty in rural areas through support to strengthen the capacities of territorial units and the implementation of the SDR;
- help foster viable economic development by improving technical and vocational training and vocational integration of young people.

The 2008-2012 ICP focused on three sectors of intervention:

- Help implementing the SDR, including the “Drinking water and sanitation” programme;
- Technical and vocational training and vocational integration of young people ;
- Help implementing the national policy in the field of health, with a particular focus on reproductive health.

### 4.3. Financial commitments of the DPEs in Niger

The financial data presented in the following pages is based on the information given by the DPEs. Sources, as well as detailed maps, can be found in annex 5.

During the period of evaluation, the financial commitments of the five DPEs were as follows:

- EC: the primary commitment as part of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF (2002-2007) amounted to EUR 402 million. After an initial allocation of EUR 212 million for budget allowance A and EUR 128.8 million for budget allowance B (SYMIN and other contingencies), the amounts were increased to EUR 343.8 million and EUR 76.2 million respectively after the mid-term review (after inclusion of previous EDFs, budget reallocations and an increase in the global allowance). Readjustments also occurred at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF, when real disbursements reached EUR 354 million and 20.1 million EUR respectively. EUR 458 million were committed for the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF (2008-2013).
- France: over the 2000-2008 period, commitments for French cooperation reached EUR 322.6 million.
- Luxembourg: EUR 20 million were committed to the 2003-2007 ICP. The provisional commitment for the 2008-2012 ICP is EUR 60 million.
- Belgium: the commitment for the 2004-2008 ICP was EUR 42.3 million, including 7.8 for ongoing programmes and 34.5 for the new programme. EUR 52 million were committed for the 2009-2012 ICP.
- Denmark: assistance was put on hold between 1996 and 2000, then resumed in 2000. Denmark’s financial commitment over the 2001-2006 period was DKK 30 to 50 million per year (EUR<sup>63</sup> 4 to 6.7 million). For the 2006-2011 period, the commitment amounted to DKK 450 M, i.e approximately EUR 9.4 M per year.

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<sup>63</sup> Average parity: € 1 = DKK 7.45.

### 4.3.1. Weight of aid granted by DPEs in Niger

Over the period under consideration (2000-2008) and over the period of implementation of the SDRP (2008-2012), the budget of Niger has been significantly insufficient to meet the needs of the country. For example, according to macro-economic and budgetary planning studies, 11.6 billion EUR in total will be needed to implement the SDRP over the 2008-2012 period. 27.9% will be financed internally and 72.1% externally.

The level of State revenue over the period of evaluation is summed up below. National revenue, which grew considerably over the 2000-2008 period, reached an average of EUR 324 million.

Table 3: Niger's national revenue over the 2000-2008 period (TOFE)

Total revenue (million EUR). <sup>64</sup>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 provisional	Average period
	167.7	202.6	245.1	238.7	264.8	287.9	376.9	470.8	662.3	324.2

Source: Ayérou, MEF/CCE/DGEP/DCP, Macro-economic study, May 2009

Not all the ODA received by Niger is recorded in the national budget. Nevertheless, the table gives an idea of aid granted by the DPEs to Niger: in average, the ODA granted by the five DPEs each year between 2000 and 2008 amounted to more than a third of national revenue (EUR 119 million committed each year by the DPEs whilst average national revenue was EUR 324 million).

Table 4: Financial commitments of the five DPEs in Niger. Total annualised budget (2000-2008)

	TOTAL 5 DEPS	European Commission	Denmark	Belgium	France	Luxembourg
Total commitment	1 071.8	484.0	117.2	109.7	322.6	38.3
Average annual commitment	119.1	53.8	13.0	12.2	35.8	4.3

Sources: Information given by the DPEs, detailed in annex 5

It should be noted that the following elements were not counted:

- Multilateral cooperation. The DPEs are financially involved in the activities of international institutions; this mode of intervention is not included in the evaluation scope.
- Decentralised cooperation<sup>65</sup>. French local authorities are particularly present in Niger; the combined level of their financial commitments in Niger has not been counted. Such a count would not have been possible with the means made available for this evaluation.
- Indirect bilateral cooperation, with NGOs or other partners. Nevertheless, the financial data made available by Belgium make it possible to take this mode of intervention into account. It should also be noted that NGO financing was also taken into account when the body was a part of the intervention programme of the DPE (e.g.: Denmark used NGOs to carry out its gender issues strategy; the French FSP also paid NGOs carrying out activities initiated by the French Ministry for foreign affairs).
- The budget lines financed by the general budget of the European Union. Budget allowances which were not part of an EDF were not included in the evaluation.

<sup>64</sup> FCFA 1 = EUR 0.0015.

<sup>65</sup> A definition of decentralised cooperation was adopted by the Commission on decentralised cooperation of the UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments): "Decentralised cooperation is a solid partnership between foreign local communities. [...] Decentralised cooperation enters the field of public development aid. It is defined by State legislation. Actions cut across local authorities' field of expertise: urban development, water, drainage, civil status, green spaces, services managements. Various implementation methods are adopted from one country to the next: through financial aid and/or an exchange of expertise, directly by the regional authority and/or an outside operator, bilaterally and/or through networks of authorities."

#### 4.3.2. Regional distribution of aid by the DPEs in Niger

ODA granted to Niger by each DPE between 2000 and 2008 by region (see table below) shows that geographical support was relatively complementary. Average distribution of support per region by the five DPEs was relatively balanced. Over the period, support tended to be more nationally oriented than regionally oriented; budget support by the European Commission played a significant part in the trend. The geographical approach of the four other DPEs did not show a major inflexion over the 2000-2008 period.

Table 5: Financial commitments of the five DPEs in Niger. Regional distribution (2000-2008)

Regional distribution of secondary commitments	TOTAL 5 DPEs	European Commission	Denmark	Belgium	France	Luxembourg
National: ODA not committed regionally	40.3%	41.4%	55.5%	6.8%	46.3%	26.7%
Multi-regional: ODA committed to more than one region	37.2%	45.7%	39.4%	40.0%	26.1%	8.1%
Agadez	2.0%	3.7%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dosso	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	26.4%	0.0%	64.4%
Diffa	1.4%	0.0%	0.4%	1.8%	4.0%	0.0%
Maradi	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	13.4%	2.3%	0.0%
Niamey	6.4%	6.1%	1.3%	2.7%	10.6%	0.0%
Tahoua	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%
Tillaberi	3.3%	3.2%	0.0%	3.6%	4.8%	0.9%
Zinder	1.2%	0.0%	0.3%	5.2%	2.2%	0.0%
<b>TOTAL (%)</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>TOTAL (million EUR)</b>	<b>1 071.8 M€</b>	<b>484.0 M€</b>	<b>117.2 M€</b>	<b>109.7 M€</b>	<b>322.6 M€</b>	<b>38.3 M€</b>

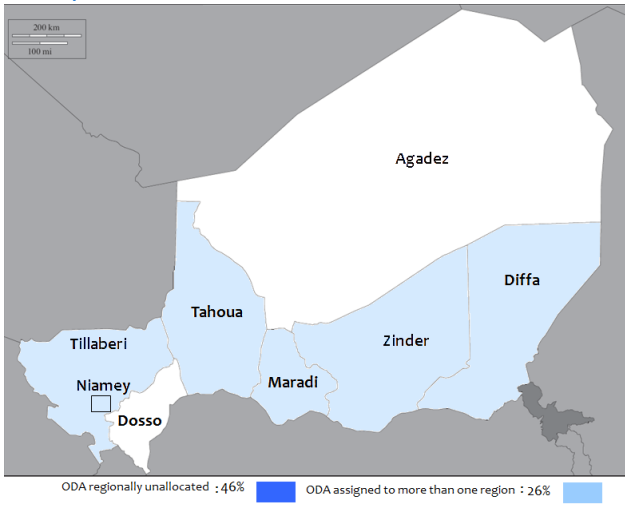
\*National: ODA not committed regionally \*\*Multi-regional: ODA committed to more than one region

Average regional distribution of aid indicates that each DPE has a different approach:

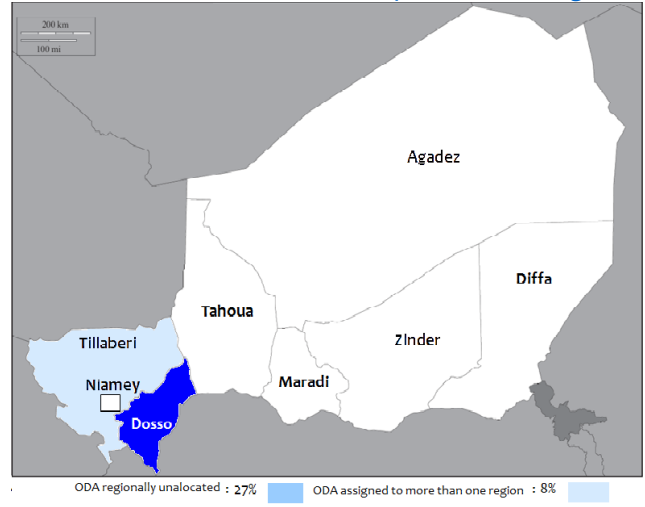
- France, Denmark and the European Commission favour **national or multi-regional support** (i.e. interventions in more than one region). Denmark traditionally supports Zinder and Diffa, through combined interventions in both regions (counted as “multi-regional” support) or interventions in each individual region.
- Belgium and Luxembourg **focus their support on one single region**. For both countries, Dosso is the privileged region of support. Luxembourg’s support is particularly focused on the area (64% of Luxembourgish commitments over the period). Belgian support also targets regions around Dosso. It should be noted that the approach is undergoing changes: as part of its new ICP for 2009-2012, Belgium chose to reduce geographical focus in its aid. This is because it was noted that there was a risk that Belgium might take the place of Niger in the region, which is detrimental to the ownership of interventions by the Nigerien authorities. As for Luxembourg, the country is considering maintaining its aid in Dosso, whilst improving coherence with national strategies.

Map of aid granted by the DPEs to each region (2000-2008)

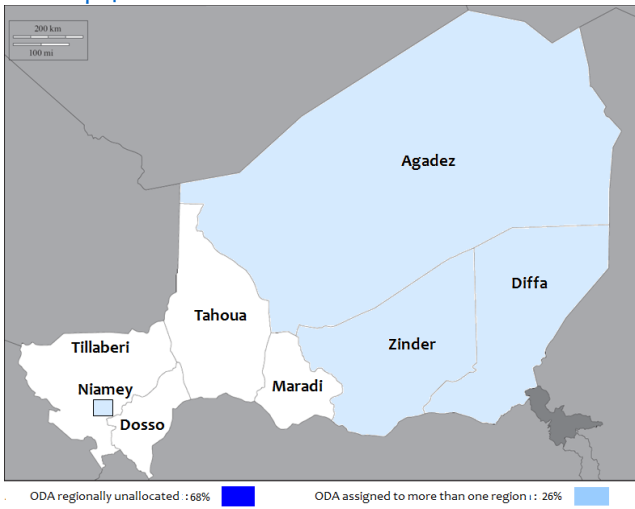
Map 2. France



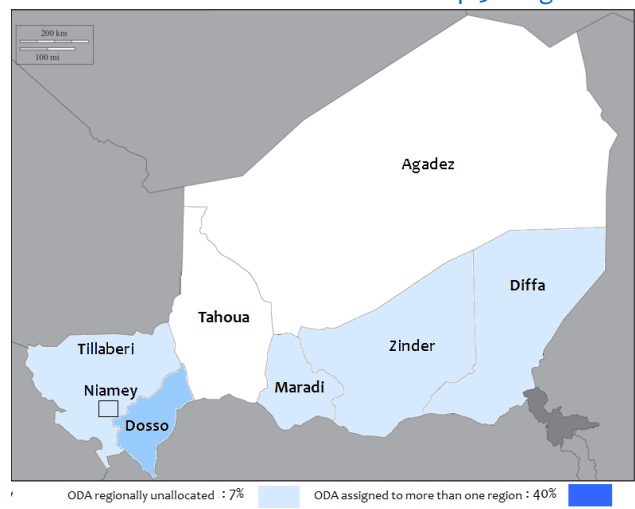
Map 3. Luxembourg



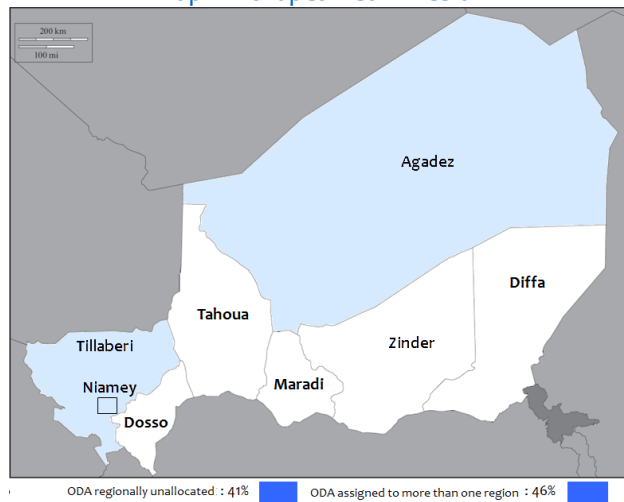
Map 4. Denmark



Map 5. Belgium



Map 6. European Commission



### 4.3.3. Sectoral distribution of aid by the DPEs in Niger

Table 5: Financial commitments of the five DPEs in Niger. Regional distribution (2000-2008)

Sectoral distribution of secondary commitments	TOTAL 5 DPEs	European Commission	Denmark	Belgium	France	Luxembourg
Macro-economic support (primary commitment)	24.0%	34.4%	2.7%	12.5%	23.0%	0.0%
Rural development, food security	19.0%	17.3%	28.1%	12.1%	20.2%	23.8%
Infrastructure	15.5%	28.0%	4.1%	0.0%	7.9%	0.0%
Water & sanitation	10.0%	0.8%	34.2%	10.4%	15.0%	8.6%
Education & Training	7.4%	3.2%	0.9%	8.3%	12.0%	39.8%
Health	5.0%	0.6%	2.6%	18.9%	6.6%	14.5%
Emergency aid	1.6%	1.3%	4.0%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	17.4%	14.5%	23.3%	32.2%	15.3%	13.3%
<b>TOTAL (%)</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>TOTAL (million EUR)</b>	<b>1 071.8 M€</b>	<b>484.0 M€</b>	<b>117.2 M€</b>	<b>109.7 M€</b>	<b>322.6 M€</b>	<b>38.3 M€</b>

The figures next page illustrate the level of sectoral focus or dispersal for the DPEs in Niger over the period<sup>66</sup>. The line represents the average concentration of allocations for the five DPEs. Each shaded part represents the specific concentration of one DPE.

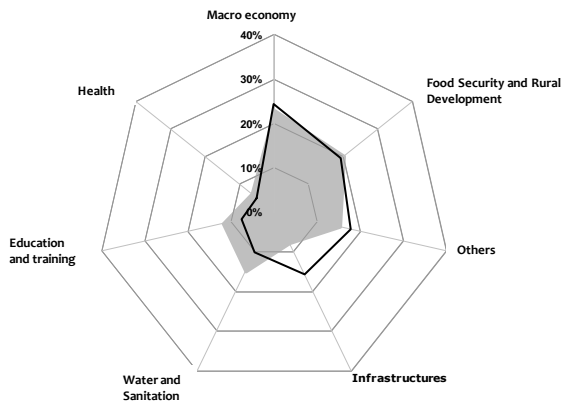
- Significant sectoral dispersion of aid would be represented by a full octagonal surface, where each of the identified sectors has the same share of the budget allocation.
  - Though the dispersal is not really strong, French aid is where sectoral distribution is most balanced. France's sectoral profile is closest to the average of the five DPEs (line): its two main sectors of intervention (macro-economic support and rural development) only total 43% of its commitment over the period.
  - Belgium's aid is also balanced, insofar as its two main sectors of intervention (health and "other sectors") represent 51% of its portfolio.
- Strong concentration of aid would mean that it focuses on a small number of sectors. Sectors are listed by order of allocation in the total portfolio of the DPEs.
  - If the combined weight of the first two main sectors of intervention were to be measured, Luxembourg, the European Commission and Denmark have the strongest sectoral concentration (their first two main sectors of intervention total respectively 63.6%, 62.4% and 62.3% of their portfolios).

<sup>66</sup> It should be reminded that financial commitments featured in annex 5 and presented here only apply to direct aid by the five DPEs. This means that multi-lateral cooperation, decentralised cooperation, indirect bilateral cooperation (except indirect bilateral cooperation by Belgium and by NGOs as operators of programmes supporting the DPEs) and the budget lines financed by the general budget of the European Union are not included.

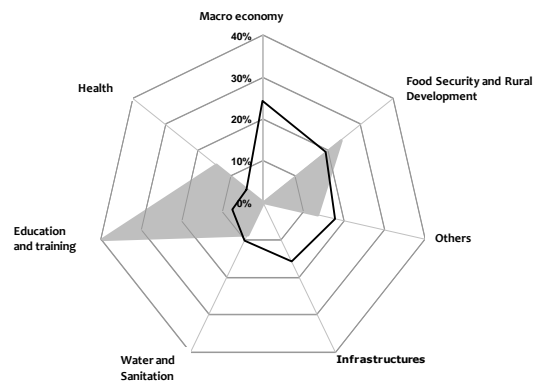


Illustration of sectoral concentration of DPE aid (2000-2008)

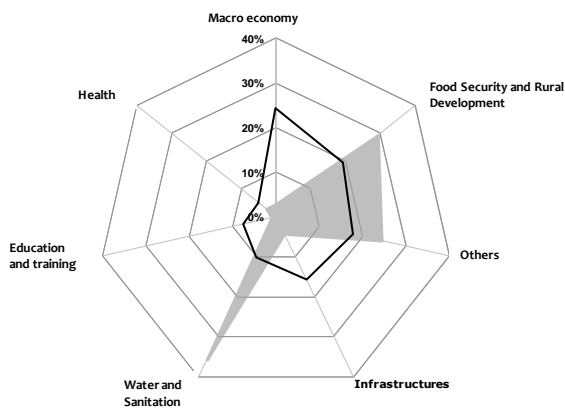
Graph 4 - France



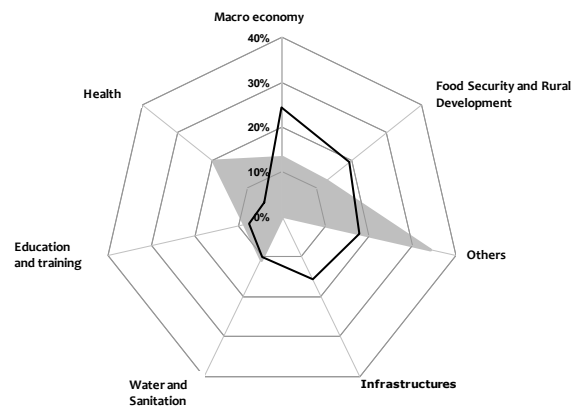
Graph 5 - Luxembourg



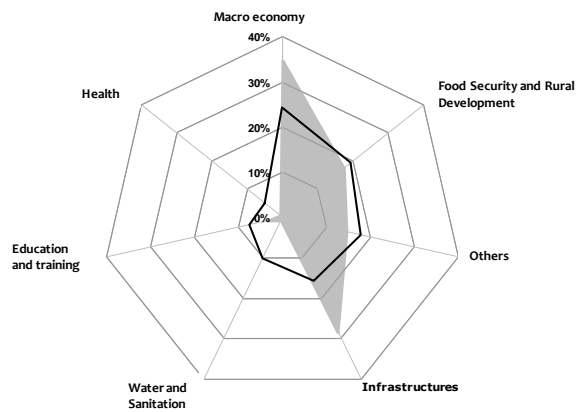
Graph 6 - Denmark



Graph 7 - Belgium



Graph 8 - European Commission



## 5. ANALYSIS

### 5.1. An approach based on 11 evaluation questions

The evaluation was conducted using 11 evaluation questions. These provided a logical chain between the various sectoral and topical analyses. The 11 questions were broken down into judgment criteria and indicators (see annex 7 and annex 8 – introduction) and applied to the topics and sectors studied by specialised sectoral teams.

**The 11 evaluation questions**  
*(Full document included in annex 8 – introduction)*

**Relevance and coherence**

Q1. To what extent are the strategies of the DPEs based on evaluations of people's needs, taking into account completed/undertaken interventions?

Q2. To what extent are the policy priorities identified in the DPEs' strategic papers aligned with the policy priorities of Niger?

Q3. To what extent are DPE strategies in Niger coherent with their own overall strategies in the sectors concerned?

Q4. To what extent are DPE policy priorities harmonised?

Q5. Relevance of budget aid

**Effectiveness**

Q6. To what extent have expected sector-level results been achieved?

**Impact**

Q7. To what extent have the results achieved through the interventions contributed to sector policy objectives?

Q8. To what extent have the expected results of budget aid been achieved?

**Efficiency**

Q9. To what extent have resources been used efficiently to achieve these results?

**Sustainability**

Q10. To what extent are the effects of interventions likely to be sustainable?

**The Paris Declaration Commitments**

Q11. To what extent do strategy and intervention practices incorporate the principles of results-based management and mutual accountability?

Annex 7 examines the sectoral analyses, which are all structured in the same way: each sectoral team puts forward an answer to the evaluation questions. Annex 8 gives a collated answer to the evaluation questions, after a cross-review of the sectoral reports. This section refers to information presented in annexes 7 and 8.

In the interest of brevity and to limit the number of unavoidable repetitions inherent in this type of analysis, the summaries of answers to questions – the first level of analysis – are not repeated here. The conclusions upon which the following analyses are based can be found in annex 8 and if necessary the topical and

sectoral studies presented in annex 7. References to relevant information in these annexes are included wherever possible.

## 5.2. Two complementary analysis frameworks

The answers to the evaluation questions make it possible to analyse the action of the DPEs in Niger according to two complementary frameworks: the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the DAC criteria:

- Analysing the implementation of the Paris Declaration Commitments helps analyse the **cooperation process**, and **the relationship between the aid partners** in particular: the DPEs and the Government on the one hand and the DPEs amongst themselves on the other. Analysing the implementation of the Paris Declaration can be considered as a useful way to reflect on the DAC criteria and the efficiency criterion in particular.
- The DAC criteria help assess **aid performance** by analysing aims, resources, achievements, results and impacts.

Conclusions and recommendations are based on the complementary perspectives offered by both analysis frameworks.

### *First analysis framework: the commitments made by partners to the Paris Declaration<sup>67</sup> and the Accra Agenda for Action<sup>68</sup>*

From the perspective of DPEs, the Paris Declaration is based on four commitments (alignment, harmonisation, results-based management and mutual accountability) and a hypothesis (ownership by national public authorities of the governance policies and practices endorsed by donors). Ownership is a central aim of the Accra Agenda for Action.

Two concepts must be clarified prior to analysing this framework:

- a) the notion of cooperation area;
  - b) the notion of cooperation cycle.
- a) The notion of **cooperation area**: the development cooperation process is carried out by partners who each pursue their own objectives. Only a fraction of these objectives are shared by all the partners and represent what can be referred to as the cooperation area. Analysis of the application of this concept to cooperation between DPEs and Niger is based on the answers to questions concerning ownership (questions Q2 and Q10)<sup>69</sup>, alignment, policy coherence and the harmonisation of procedures (questions Q2, Q4, Q9 and Q10).
- b) the notion of **cooperation cycle** is used to identify stages in the cooperation process based on the answers to the following questions:
- The *formulation* by DPEs of their policies is addressed in question Q3.
  - Question Q1 examines efforts made to improve *mutual understanding* between partners.
  - The way in which *cooperation area* is defined is analysed based on answers provided for question Q2.
  - Intervention *implementation methodologies* are examined in question Q9.
  - Question Q11 makes it possible to analyse *monitoring and evaluation* practices and the ability of each partner to draw from the experience.

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/63/43911948.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/4700790-1217425866038/AAA-4-SEPTEMBER-FINAL-16h00.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> See annex 8: answers to evaluation questions.

These two notions make it possible to analyse the implementation of the five commitments of the Paris Declaration:

- The level of **ownership** by Niger of policies and procedures funded by the DPEs, which is a prerequisite to the sustainability of aid.
- The **alignment** of donor interventions with national policies and procedures is covered by questions Q2 and Q9. Question Q5 is used here to highlight the role played by budget aid as an instrument to facilitate alignment.
- The **harmonisation** of procedures is analysed using question Q9.
- Question Q11 focuses exclusively on the fourth and fifth commitments of the Paris Declaration: **results-based management** and **mutual accountability**.

#### *Second analysis framework: the DAC evaluation criteria*

- Two questions make it possible to more or less directly address the issue of **relevance** (whether DPE strategies or intervention methods respond to the problems faced by Niger): question Q1 examines analyses conducted by DPEs to define their strategies, while Q2 looks at the alignment of DPE interventions with national policies<sup>70</sup>.
- Three questions make it possible to analyse the **coherence** of these approaches with government strategies (Q2) and with general strategies developed by each DPE to intervene in different sectors (Q3). Analysis of Q2 requires a reconstruction of the **intervention logics** underlying national strategy documents and the intervention strategies of DPEs, as well as an analysis of how these logics are connected. Coherence among DPE strategies is also tested (harmonisation of strategies, Q4).
- The **effectiveness** of actions funded by DPEs is analysed by way of question Q6. This question implies several others, as evaluating effectiveness is a complex task which requires differentiated approaches for each cooperation sector.
- The **impact** of cooperation interventions funded by DPEs is analysed by looking at the main sectors studied (Q7 and Q8) but also – and primarily – by looking at the overall impact of ODA in Niger, half of which is funded by the DPEs.
- Issues of **efficiency** are analysed using Q9. Debate surrounding the choice of instruments is also examined (Q9 and Q5). Analysis of efficiency is also based on the cooperation cycle analysis provided above.
- Question Q10 evaluates the extent to which the effects of interventions are **sustainable**.

The following chart summarises how these aspects are addressed in the evaluation questions.

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<sup>70</sup> To strictly apply DAC criteria, the notions of relevance and coherence as they are defined here must be combined. The EC, however, makes a distinction between them and deals with them separately. A balanced evaluation of the “commitment to relevance” of DPEs nevertheless calls for the recognition of efforts towards alignment with national policy as proof of the donor’s commitment to ensuring the relevance of its interventions. This evaluation does not provide for an analysis of the relevance of Niger’s policies. However, the extent to which policies are appropriated by the Nigerien authorities at various levels cannot be ignored and are examined below.

Table 7: Analysis frameworks and evaluation questions

Conceptual frameworks	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
<b>1. Paris Declaration</b>											
Harmonisation				X					X		
Alignment		X							X		
Ownership	X	X								X	
Mutual accountability and results-based management											X
<b>1a. Cooperation area</b>											
Ownership		X								X	
Alignment and harmonisation of policies and procedures		X		X					X	X	
<b>1b. Cooperation cycle</b>											
Formulation			X								
Mutual understanding	X										
Scope of the cooperation area		X									
Implementation modalities									X		
Monitoring and evaluation											X
<b>2. DAC evaluation criteria</b>											
Relevance	X				X						
Coherence		X	X	X							
Effectiveness						X					
Impact							X	X			
Efficiency									X		
Sustainability										X	

### 5.3. First analysis framework: Implementation of the Paris Declaration Commitments

Analysing the implementation of the five Commitments of the Paris Declaration helps analyse the **relationship between the aid partners**: the donors and the Government on the one hand and the donors amongst themselves on the other. An analysis of the implementation of the Paris Declaration is therefore an analysis of the aid process which involves several steps:

- Identification of the underlying hypotheses behind the Paris Declaration Commitments;
- Introduction of working hypotheses and concepts to steer the analysis;
- Identification of elements in evaluation conclusions which reflect how true these hypotheses are;
- Conclusion by evaluating the level of implementation of the five commitments of the Paris Declaration and the consequences on certain DAC criteria (relevance, sustainability).

### 5.3.1. Paris Declaration: implied hypotheses

Donors who endorsed the Paris Declaration take the following approach:

1. **They assume** that their values<sup>71</sup> and objectives are those of the Government in the partner country.
2. **They offer** technical solutions to move forward in line with these values (socio-economic policies on one hand and institutional support on the other) as well as the human and financial means needed to demonstrate the relevance of these proposals and to implement them.
3. **They assume** that with sufficient “capacity building”, the authorities present in the partner country (government and other important political stakeholders) can gradually “own” these policies and procedures.
4. **They align** their strategies and procedures with those “of the government” as the ownership process progresses.
5. **They encourage** results-based management and mutual accountability to ensure that these aligned interventions do in fact promote their values and objectives and to convey this to their citizens.

This approach can in fact contribute to the considerable improvement of aid effectiveness provided that hypotheses 1 and 3 listed above are confirmed and provided that these values and objectives are shared and that the means (policies, procedures) used to achieve them are effectively appropriated.

Since 2000, the common core of values endorsed by the DPEs and a number of other donors<sup>72</sup> is reflected in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDG are not the only targets sought by each DPE in Niger but they represent a politically powerful common core of targets which are endorsed by a significant number of donors. The MDG are influential because they have attracted a very wide consensus<sup>73</sup> and above all because precise targets are given for each goal<sup>74</sup>. Progress made towards these targets is “enlightened” by indicators, trends in which are regularly monitored and published.

Successive poverty reduction strategies, including the latest one in 2007, explicitly aim to achieve the MDG and the sectoral strategies of the government. Developed at the request and with the support of donors, they are the signals which donors look to for confirmation of hypotheses 1 and 3. These documents are also the primary base upon which donors “align” their intervention strategies.

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<sup>71</sup> “Values” here refers to the “cultural values” of a society. These determine how that society’s members should behave and what behaviour is encouraged or shunned in domains that are crucial to development such as birth rates, the status and social role of women, child protection, people’s relationship to the land, herds and to natural resources, the exercise of power, accountability practices with all or a certain segment of citizens. The concept of citizenship itself and the feeling of belonging, the notion of private property and public interest, the definition of individual freedoms, human rights, intra-/inter-clan and inter-generational solidarity (environment), etc. are shaped by these value systems.

These values are not shared by all Nigeriens, as evidenced, for example, by the difficulties in land negotiation between animal breeders and farmers, or the cultural differences which separate town and country. Migrants show that value systems can evolve: a good example is different generations within practically every urban society, where children do not have exactly the same value system as their parents. Where cooperation between institutions and individuals from different continents is concerned especially, it is essential to know to what extent the values underlying the actions of each party and which motivate them to cooperate are shared or at least compatible and allow them to set common goals and agree on the scaling of priorities. Recognising the diversity of value systems does not necessarily mean accepting them as they are. In fact, some recent development strategies, such as that of Denmark (March 2010) express a clear commitment to using aid to promote values that appear important to the donor.

In the Paris Declaration, however, no allusion whatsoever is made to the specificity of value systems. Instead, this Declaration seems based on the idea that donors and recipients of ODA share the same value systems; it infers that ownership and alignment are key factors in aid effectiveness.

<http://www.um.dk/en/menu/DevelopmentPolicy/DanishDevelopmentPolicy/Partnership2000/InConsultationNewDanishStrategyForDevelopmentCooperation/>

[http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme\\_d/mod20/uncom20to3.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme_d/mod20/uncom20to3.htm)

<sup>72</sup> Not all of them, however, and the relative impact of those who do adhere to this approach is diminishing.

<sup>73</sup> The MDG were adopted by the United Nations in September 2000 at the Millennium Summit by an assembly of 192 countries and 23 international organisations. However this does not mean that all the countries (be they donors or aid recipients) who pursue them do so with the same level of commitment.

<sup>74</sup> These goals are established at the world level. Not all countries are starting off from the same point. Despite starting off at a particularly low level for most of the goals, Niger has designated them as national targets. The SDRP is very clear on this point.

Many countries have poverty reduction strategies, but the actual influence these strategies wield in decision making at various levels of government remains a source of concern and risk for the process – hence the importance attributed to this point in the Accra Agenda for Action.

**Strengthening Country Ownership over Development**

*“12. Developing countries determine and implement their development policies to achieve their own economic, social and environmental goals. We agreed in the Paris Declaration that this would be our first priority.”*

Accra Agenda for Action, 4 September 2008.

Analysing levels of ownership and alignment and identifying explanatory factors is particularly difficult and politically sensitive. A general approach is adopted in this report and applied insofar as possible to the relationship between DPEs and Niger.

Several **working assumptions** underlie the analysis. A presentation of the primary assumptions is needed before judging the specific case of Niger:

- Cooperation between two partners (or several in a multi-donor context) involves participants who have different:
  - cultures and value systems;
  - strategic frameworks;
  - administrative practices;
  - monitoring systems;
  - accountability systems (they are accountable to different groups).
- Development aid involves a broad range of interventions in which the meaning of ownership and sustainability sometimes differs<sup>75</sup>. This may affect what is expected of the partnership. Therefore, an evaluation of the partnership should probably be moderated depending on the nature of the intervention.
- The Government of Niger expresses its own political choices and governance practices. It would like to reform, but not necessarily in the way or at the pace suggested by donors.
- DPEs adhere to the Paris Declaration Commitments but are accountable to their own citizens (via Member States in the case of the European Commission) regarding their use of public funds and how effective this use is in relation to their priorities. Alignment is therefore only possible in areas in which the priorities and practices of both parties are compatible. Not all areas covered by DPE-Niger cooperation necessarily meet these conditions.
- Cooperation involves other donors with whom DPEs try to harmonise their ODA priorities and practices.

<sup>75</sup> The Evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration by France (SEE, January 2008) draws attention to the fact that aid is driven by a diverse range of objectives:

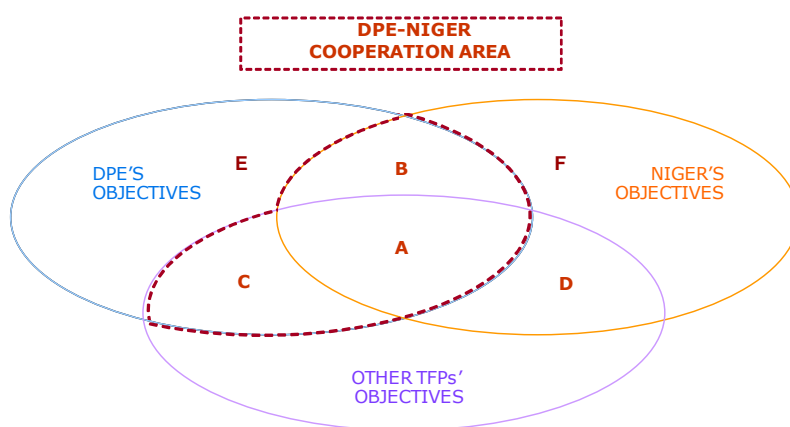
- To reinforce public action in a country lacking sufficient financial resources and/or technical capacities to fully manage itself,
- To help tackle global public issues,
- To promote the values, interests or priorities of the donor,
- To respond to urgent humanitarian needs.

Stakeholders must take these different reasons into account, particularly in order to adapt their ownership, alignment and sustainability.

### 5.3.2. The concept of cooperation area

Excepting a situation in which all stakeholders completely submit to one stakeholder in particular, this diversity of characteristics, interests and values of the partners implies that cooperation between DPEs and Niger is only possible within a defined “field” that covers only a fraction of the values and priorities of the Nigerien government, a fraction of those of the DPE in question and a fraction of those of other donors present in the country. This field can be referred to as the **cooperation area** between each DPE and the government of Niger<sup>76</sup>. Below is a schematic representation:

Figure 9. DPE-Niger Cooperation area



- The three ellipses represent the different objectives and values of Niger’s different cooperation partners. The DPE on the one hand, and “other Technical and Financial Partners (TFP)<sup>77</sup>” on the other, are represented as separate participants to simplify the figure. This does not mean they are considered as such in the analysis, as evidenced by the intervention logics behind each of them presented in annex 3. Because DPEs have up until now operated on the basis of bilateral agreements rather than collectively, each form of DPE/Niger cooperation should be illustrated by a different figure. The cooperation area between each DPE and Niger is defined by zones A, B and C:
  - a. The three partners (DPE, the Nigerien Government and other TFPs) cooperate in ideal conditions in **zone A**, a space for objectives shared by all. In theory, the role of a SRP and SDRP is to define this zone insofar as the document is comprehensive, fully appropriated by Niger and shared by the principle donors. This zone is the ideal area in which to apply the five commitments of the Paris Declaration.
  - b. **Zone B** depicts the objectives shared by the DPE and Niger but for which the involvement of other donors is limited. This can imply ownership and alignment, but not necessarily political coherence with the other donors.
  - c. **Zone C** depicts the priorities shared by the DPE and other donors in which the Nigerien Government could invest itself less, i.e. authorise the implementation of aid programme without providing support.
  - d. Similarly, the existence of a **zone D** should be noted, which involves cooperation between Niger and other donors rather than a cooperation area with the DPE. This zone is expanding, particularly as a result of “new donors” who rather than act in line with the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, pursue other priorities.
  - e. Lastly, it should be noted that the left-hand ellipse, which depicts all the reasons for which a DPE cooperates with Niger, includes a certain number of objectives of its own which it

<sup>76</sup> Government here refers to representatives working with donors. “Niger” here refers to the government. Any initiative supported by DPEs and included in the country’s budget is considered at least authorised, if not requested and supported, by the government, even if the initiative is implemented by different services (administration support services) or on a decentralised basis (stakeholders independent of the central administration).

<sup>77</sup> In this case, this category also includes other DPEs.



shares with none of its partners and which are therefore not part of the cooperation area (**zone E**). Cooperation is one dimension of foreign policy, and by nature, foreign policy is never completely transparent.

- f. The right-hand ellipse shows that the Nigerien Government also pursues a number of political objectives which are not shared by donors (**zone F**): cooperation with donors is but one dimension of national policy and involves only a fraction of Niger's goals.

Strictly speaking, in the case of the SRP and the government's main sectoral strategies where all the components of these strategies receive the same political support (ownership) from the government, zone A can be considered as relatively important<sup>78</sup>. In other words, levels of alignment are relatively good; this can be considered as beneficial for cooperation between Niger and the DPEs.

In practice, however, the apparent importance of zone A actually stems from an absence of strategic priorities both on the part of the government and of donors. The SDRP is a typical example: it presents a structured and quite detailed analysis resulting in a fairly realistic SWOT analysis<sup>79</sup> and followed by economic growth scenarios, the most ambitious of which is defined as the goal to attain (and probably rightly so given the existing challenges). To implement this strategy, one would have expected action plans which would define critical priorities and methods. Instead, however, reference is made to existing sectoral strategies, with the unfortunate result that the endeavour leads to excessively long lists of intervention areas without any real priorities and to which DPEs have committed with little need to focus their interventions<sup>80</sup>.

The strategies of the Government and of DPEs are so broad that it is hard to find any significant alignment problems with them. There is, however, a difference in emphasis between:

- the line taken in government strategies which, since the development of the SDRP, has placed rapid economic growth at the heart of its objectives and presented them as a necessary condition for poverty reduction (and achieving the MDGs in particular); and
- the allocation of DPE resources aimed more directly at reducing poverty in line with MDG priorities and focused on basic health, primary education, access to water, rural development and food security in the poorest regions. Within this rather broad cluster of actions aimed at contributing to the MDG, the allocation of resources is guided by certain DPE-specific choices which stem from their cooperation track record with Niger.

While these two approaches are not, strictly speaking, contradictory, it should be recognised that DPEs and government strategies have never been fully aligned in the period under review. The authors of France's country strategy paper (DSP) pinpointed this risk as early as 2002.

**The risks of concentrating resources too exclusively on poverty, identified as early as 2002**

*"Overall, external partners operate in nearly every sector. Their action however is increasingly concentrated on social issues (education, health, food security) and institutional issues (capacity building) and less so in more economic issues (infrastructure, mining, SME, tourism, irrigation).*

*[...] By the same token, like other major, non-specialised donors, France is of course concerned by the risk that external partners will lose interest in lower-priority realms which are nevertheless essential for Niger's balanced development (secondary and higher education, hospitals, culture, support to SMEs, urban infrastructure, development of production capacity)."*

French Embassy in Niger (February 2002). France-Niger Country Strategy Paper, pp. 14-15.

<sup>78</sup> See chapter 4 and annex 3 which compare the intervention logics of national strategies and those of DPEs.

<sup>79</sup> SDRP, pp 76 and 77.

<sup>80</sup> Developing structured operational programmes in conjunction with strategies is one of the commitments of the Paris Declaration: "Translate these national development strategies into prioritised results-oriented operational programmes as expressed in medium-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets (indicator 1)".

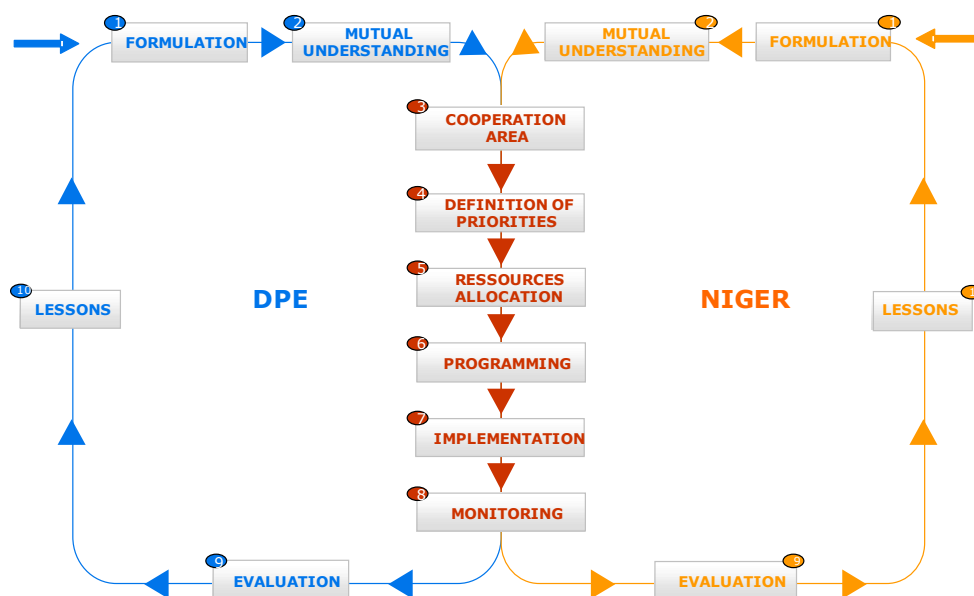
The risks identified by the French Embassy in 2002 have been confirmed and even worsened during the period under review. The concentration of priorities and resources on direct aid to the poor increased during this period while the government's focus on growth intensified between the 2002 SRP and the 2007 SDRP. Despite the indications of the French Embassy in 2002, even France's 2006-2010 Partnership Framework Document (DCP) followed the general tendency of DPEs to concentrate resources in "three sectors directly linked to poverty reduction": basic education, health and water-sanitation "to help Niger achieve the MDGs<sup>81</sup>".

The DPEs have their own objectives, which are partially included in the MDG. The Government's own objectives are sometimes developed under the guidance of other donors such as the World Bank and appear in the SRP/SDRP. Still others are of a more strictly political nature, as is the case for every government. Analysis of the cooperation cycle provides a step-by-step look at how the DPEs and the government articulated their respective priorities for the development and implementation of their cooperation programmes.

### 5.3.3. The cooperation cycle

Like a project cycle, a **cooperation cycle** can be depicted as a circular succession of stages. In the interest of effectiveness, some of these stages must be carried out together with the partner. In the interest of accountability, however, other stages must be carried out separately by each participant. This cycle is represented in the figure below.

Figure 10. The cooperation cycle – conceptual representation



Theoretically each DPE develops a support policy for Niger: reasons, goals, approach, resources (1); tries to understand the priorities and limitations of its Nigerien partner (2) to facilitate negotiation; identifies with that partner all of the development goals it is ready to support (3 – cooperation area); cooperates with the government to prioritise these goals (4), select them according to available resources (5 and 6) and implement them (7). The DPE also cooperates with the government to design and implement a monitoring system for the defined priorities (8). Each partner then evaluates the results in relation to its own priorities

<sup>81</sup> It should be noted, however, that France's programme also covers other domains, including support for higher education and research, although outside its concentration sectors.

(9), draws from the experience (10), adapts its policy (1) and begins a new round of negotiation to adapt the cooperation area, priorities and implementation methods in light of what has been learned.

The following paragraphs describe how this cycle has been applied in practice.

### 1. Policy development

France's 2002 DSP did provide explicit reasons why France's "presence" in Niger via active cooperation was important<sup>82</sup>. This type of document reflects all of the objectives which justify French cooperation with Niger, only a fraction of which can be included in a common cooperation area with Niger (zones A and B) and/or converge with those of other donors (zones A and C). As a strategy document, the DSP is clearly incorporated into French foreign policy priorities in Niger. It should be noted, however, that it does not contain the references to uranium which are expected. The 2002 DSP is not signed by the Nigerien partner. The 2007 DCP which followed was signed by both parties, even if the nature of the partnership involved in its design is sometimes contested, as happened with the first generation of DSPs in several countries<sup>83</sup>.

The European Commission establishes its strategy in two stages: it develops its own Country Strategy Paper (CSP). This document serves as a basis for the National Indicative Programme (NIP) signed by both parties. These two documents resemble each other very closely however, and the EC is not very clear on the "reasons for Europe's presence in Niger". Nevertheless, given that Europe does not have a common foreign policy, the country programme can be said to reflect a significant portion of the Commission's actual priorities.

Denmark has produced a strategy paper on its cooperation with Niger between 2006 and 2010 which insists on Denmark's commitment to contribute to the effective implementation of the SRP via the Rural Development Strategy (SDR). Denmark's strategic paper has not been countersigned by the Nigerien Government.

Belgium and Luxembourg develop indicative cooperation programmes (ICP) which are signed by both parties and act as "country strategies" for these DPEs.

The Nigerien Government, at the request of donors, has made great progress in the development of its policies. These policies, though significantly aligned with the priorities of donors, offer only a partial view of the real priorities of Nigerien decision makers.

The fact that stakeholders' objectives are only partially identifiable in the official strategic document is also visible at the project level.

*"We say that aid is intended to improve well-being. This is the alibi given, but as someone once said, in a project there are several projects. Several projects that are there at every level. Yes, we say in inspiring messages that aid is to improve the living conditions of targeted groups. But donors have their own project in aid, and the government has its own project as well."*

LASDEL, Gift horse..., Draft version of Final Report, p.20.

From this stems the importance of greater awareness on the part of each party with regard to the objectives of the other – or others in cases of multi-donor initiatives.

<sup>82</sup> French 2002 CSP, pp. 2 and 3: France's presence in Niger: what is at stake?

<sup>83</sup> This issue was addressed systematically in the evaluation of the implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration by France, SEE, January 2008.

## 2. Mutual understanding

To negotiate a cooperation area (that is, the set of goals that will be pursued in the cooperation) in a sound manner, it is important for each partner to express its wants and understand the priorities and constraints faced by their counterparts as much as is possible. This was clearly stated in the LASDEL study and confirmed by comparable studies in other countries<sup>84</sup>: The Nigeriens do not expect aid to be purely altruistic; they understand (and perhaps caricature) France's motivations but remain sceptical of those of the other DPEs. They correctly hypothesise that all aid is self-serving because of the need to justify its existence to taxpayers. That said, the donor's "benefit" or motivation for providing aid is far from being solely financial or commercial. There is also a political (promotion of values such as those expressed in the MDGs) as well as geopolitical (security, sourcing of uranium and other minerals, "management" of migrations, support for Francophonie, Europe's positioning in Africa, anti-terrorist drives, etc.) dimension. In recent years, it has also been driven by a certain vision of promoting the general interest through the protection of global public goods: biodiversity, climate change, major epidemics, etc.

As previously stated, the 2002 French DSP was the clearest in this respect. The others are less clear, and the Nigeriens seem to be mindful of it. It is worth highlighting Danish cooperation's particularly explicit statement in terms of promoting gender equality, human rights, and democracy. Denmark's strategic document on cooperation in Niger for the 2006-2010 period is especially critical and explicit on the gender situation in Niger: *"The essential problem for women is still poverty, but also extreme vulnerability in a social context where the weight of traditions and religion hampers all discussion of women's rights. The improvement of conditions for women is the keystone of Danish development cooperation."*

DPEs rely mainly on the strategy preparation work conducted by the government to identify the constraints and priorities of the latter. It is difficult to tell how useful it is in explaining the day-to-day policy behaviour of Nigerien decision-makers, whether at the central or the local level. The sections on "poor governance" or "limits on human resources" may hide complex issues that DPEs do not grasp adequately. The traditional answer to problems observed - qualified as institutional aid and capacity development - do not always seem to be based on sufficient political and institutional analyses. The analysis of causes behind apparent deficiencies in capacity is particularly lacking. Perhaps such deficiencies may stem from an unwillingness to implement proposed programmes, and therefore a lack of ownership of the goals by the beneficiaries.

Political, sociological and anthropological analyses are available, although recent political dynamics could be better covered. The Sahel zone has been the subject of numerous studies<sup>85</sup>. To what extent does this body of knowledge influence decisions in the area of cooperation? The idea of involving LASDEL in this evaluation is an interesting foray into this question. Norwegian gender studies<sup>86</sup> are another positive example of improvements in mutual understanding. The promotion of DPE values in this area, as in others, often occurs via an attempt to modify the partner's value system before any attempt to understand it.

In general, the level of mutual understanding, and even the importance given to this aspect, appears to be limited. DPEs could be more explicit about their intentions and invest more in analysing the values, priorities, and constraints faced by their partners so that dialogue on cooperation will run more smoothly.

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<sup>84</sup> A top Cameroonian official expressed this in very direct terms: "At least we know what the Chinese are after. But we understand the French less and less, and we get the impression that they might abandon us." Several high-level Cameroonian officials have made it clear that understanding their partner's interests is necessary to inspire trust in the stability of the relationship. Source: SEE, Evaluation of the French Cooperation with Cameroon from 2001 to 2007, for the Directorate General for international co-operation and development (DGCID) and the French Development Agency (AFD) (January 2009).

<sup>85</sup> France was a major contributor, as illustrated by the bibliographies of LASDEL, the IRD, and many other research bodies.

<sup>86</sup> Study on the vulnerability of women, Marthe Doka, Care, Norad, June 2002.

### 3. Definition of the cooperation area

This phase describes the **negotiation** of the set of goals towards which the donor and the Government are ready to cooperate. According to the proposed diagram above, this area is bilaterally negotiated between each DPE and the government. Theoretically, it has three zones:

- Zone A represents the goals common to the DPE in question, the Government, and the other donors;
- Zone B represents essentially bilateral goals (DPE -Government);
- Zone C represents goals pursued by the donors, including the DPE in question, but which receive scant support from the Government. The Government accepts that donors shall pursue type C goals in the country but give them low priority and do not truly "own" these goals.

This negotiation was greatly facilitated and clarified between 2000 and 2008, thanks to efforts made by partners in formulating their strategies. However, what each of the three zones contains is another question.

We could expect the pursuit of the MDGs, clearly identified as a general objective in both the SRP and the strategies of the DPEs, to be at the core of zone A. In the SDRP, the Government clearly underscores the central issue of per capita economic growth as a necessary condition for achieving the MDGs, and builds its strategy upon this main goal. Meanwhile, DPEs refer much less to this concern in their strategic documents. They focus more directly on support for the poorest. Although such sharing is arbitrary, it is realistic to deduce that the goals directly tied to economic growth are shared to a greater extent with other donors - who were the impetus for producing the SDRP - than with the DPEs. These goals are therefore only partially found in zone A but are most likely to be in zone D, shared in particular with the World Bank and perhaps even China and Middle Eastern donors, to the extent that major infrastructure projects such as the Kandadji dam may have an impact on growth.

Meanwhile, sectoral reports indicate<sup>87</sup> that the government does not seem to be ready to take a leading role in supporting certain DPE initiatives, despite having accepted their execution. Initiatives that come to mind include gender initiatives, hygiene in schools, decentralisation, improvement in financial governance, and certain initiatives in support of the poorest groups, especially NGO-backed actions. The weak sustainability of these initiatives is telling<sup>88</sup>. Such goals can be found in zone C, a significant zone within the group of DPEs. MDGs provide such a strong political signal that donors, especially DPEs, are induced to make rapid progress in pursuing goals and work more and more closely to ensure the coherence of their intervention strategies.

The zone A area of goals for which the Paris Declaration Commitments (ownership, alignment, and harmonisation in particular) are applicable is thus rather restricted. Zone A may not even include basic needs; for instance, the Government-DPE interaction in reacting to food crises or for developing capabilities in responding to such crises has not been without flaws<sup>89</sup>.

France, moreover, shares a relatively significant zone B with Niger; it includes cultural cooperation (although a number of joint initiatives with other donors can also be found there). It also contains some military cooperation goals as well as agreements in the field of mining.

However, some problems that are in fact a great hindrance to the country's development, such as the Tuareg conflict, remain outside the cooperation area (zone F) for the most part.

<sup>87</sup> See in particular sectoral reports on health, education, rural development, food security and the environment.

<sup>88</sup> Conclusions on the sustainability of initiatives are summarized in annex 8, Question 10 (A8.10.1).

<sup>89</sup> See annex A8.2.1, rural development section, where we highlight the difficulties of aligning the interventions of donors amongst themselves and with the government, even in an area as sensitive as the management of food crises. This analysis is detailed in the IRAM study: *Les politiques de prevention et gestion des crises alimentaires: Enseignements de la crise du Niger de 2005*, for the Directorate general for international cooperation and development of the French Ministry for foreign and European affairs, IRAM, Denis Michiels and Johny Egg (2007).

#### 4. Definition of priorities

In principle, the goals recognised by the parties as forming part of the cooperation area ought to be ranked. Targets should be set, and the means by which to achieve them prioritised<sup>90</sup>. This step is missing in the cooperation between Niger and the DPEs. While some targets are set in the SRP/SDRP and in several sectors, the overall strategy for achieving them is not. The two successive SRP/SDRP and the sectoral strategies work as a supporting frame onto which each donor hangs its approach, with the mindset that if a given approach does not contradict the general tone of these strategies, it is therefore relevant and aligned.

The Sanitary Development Programme (PDS), which is being executed in the framework of an active, constructive dialogue overseen by a proactive minister, can be considered an exception to this picture<sup>91</sup>. Even in this sector, there is much room for optimising the allocation of resources based on clearly-ranked goals. Not all of the sector's players necessarily have the will to be part of a common approach.

The meaning of the LASDEL study's title becomes clear here: "Don't look a gift horse *in the mouth*." Aware that aid has an important political and economic impact regardless of its efficiency, the Government tends to accept cooperation offers, adopting a "non-objection" rationale with regard to proposed initiatives. It makes no attempt to impose some manner of optimising the allocation of aid resources to achieve its strategic goals, probably because this would require it to carry out the politically fraught task of ranking them strictly, and because such an approach may slow down the flow of aid. DPEs seem to be content with this freedom. While they agree to concentrate their means progressively on a more limited number of areas, this is more in response to external pressure brought on by the quest for efficiency<sup>92</sup> than by a desire to optimise resource allocation within a framework guided by the Government.

#### 5 and 6. Resource allocation and programming

In light of what has just been stated, we can conclude that **the allocation of resources** and programming their mobilisation is still mainly a task of the DPEs rather than the Government. At this level, the lack of an overall MTEF<sup>93</sup> is symptomatic of the lack of reconciliation between budgets and strategies. In most cases, the DPEs suggest – or impose? – the choice of financial instruments and the timeframe for disbursement to the Government. In several cases – for example, for France – the annual nature of the DCP's national budget implies that multi-year disbursement schedules are only indicative and not fully predictable<sup>94</sup>. Meanwhile, the EDF uses indicative five-year programmes that give European aid a certain predictability<sup>95</sup>.

The **choice of instruments** for funding is also made by the DPEs. Joint extrabudgetary funds are slow to develop, with difficulties resulting from the donors' possibilities for coordination but also from difficult relations with certain ministries. Targeted budget aid, practised primarily by France among the DPEs, is also a continuous support instrument whose use has dwindled since the start of the period. Non-targeted budget aid has been favoured by the EC for an amount of some 25 million EUR since 2001<sup>96</sup>.

#### 7. Implementation

Relations with the Government and central or local authorities are often difficult, either for ethical differences or for technical reasons. The lack of competent managers is often brought up. The partnership on implementation operates with difficulty.

Project implementation requires imported resources: technical assistance, management units, study missions, supervisory missions, negotiating missions, etc. which are costly<sup>97</sup>. There have been few changes

<sup>90</sup> Indicator 1 of the Paris Declaration.

<sup>91</sup> See annex A8.2.1, social sectors.

<sup>92</sup> This brings to mind the European Code of Conduct or certain indicators associated with the Paris Declaration.

<sup>93</sup> See annex A8.7.2.

<sup>94</sup> According to statements made during the evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, this is the main reason why the table of the DCP's financial pledges is not officially published. Note that the AFD can mobilise its own funds over several years.

<sup>95</sup> This predictability is sometimes lost, however, as the red tape involved in certain procedures may lead to delays in disbursements.

<sup>96</sup> See annex 7, macroeconomics section, tables 1 and 2.

<sup>97</sup> See annex A8.9.4.

at this level for the period under review. Attempts to make use of targeted or non-targeted sectoral support instruments have only been fruitful in two areas: health and the prevention of food crises<sup>98</sup>. In a general climate perceived as high-risk, DPEs adopt poorly harmonised attitudes. While all of them announce their desire to shift gradually to programmed aid instruments, only the EC and - with greater prudence - France have made a clear commitment to do so. Belgium is somewhere in between. The workshop that brought together four of the five DPEs, as well as more specific interviews with Denmark, brought to light a great hesitation to proceed in this manner in Niger, even though all the DPEs reported their progress towards budget aid in certain neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso. The reference to Burkina Faso shows that DPEs are ready to use this type of instrument if the conditions for doing so are met. Conditions for dialogue and for the partnership itself, both at the macroeconomic level and in the handling of public funds are, in effect, quite different in Burkina Faso, as shown by a recent evaluation of French budget aid in the country<sup>99</sup>.

The lack of harmonised procedures did not prevent a great openness in discussions and the sharing of perceptions on the situation in Niger and the risks tied to different options. The general conclusion was that DPE headquarters encountered difficulties in tailoring their aid governance procedures and principles in a way that would reconcile the internal coherence of procedures and the alignment of procedures with local partners, or that would at least achieve harmonisation between them in each country of intervention. This internal coherence, unique to each institution, is indispensable for adhering to prudential banking rules and/or the principles of accountability inherent in the management of public funds. The EC resolves this problem by using two contrasting instruments in a complementary manner: first, the project which is managed strictly according to the procedures of the EDF (or of the EC budget, depending on the case), and second, general budget aid. Luxembourg limits itself to the project, which is managed by its LuxDev agency, but is considering the diversification of its instruments. The other DPEs have intermediate attitudes. All of them state a desire to shift to a programme-based approach.

## 8. Monitoring

In Niger, monitoring was put in place during the execution of the SRP<sup>100</sup> with major difficulties<sup>101</sup> that have some consequences on the availability, quality, access, and sharing of information with the DPEs. The analysis conducted for the sectors covered in the SDRP remarked in particular on the sectoral availability of monitoring data (details given in annex 7).

- In the field of **statistics**, support for the INS was given and significant advances were seen in the production of socio-economic statistics thanks to the Statistical capacity building project for the monitoring of the Niger Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSSN/SP), funded as part of the 9th EDF. The Government and the TFPs henceforth regularly receive information on recent changes in the Nigerien economy, and the country's accounts (*Comptes de la Nation*) are rapidly audited. The project contributed significantly to reinforcing the INS's capacities by providing tools and creating working conditions that motivated essential workers.

<sup>98</sup> See annex A8.9.1.2

<sup>99</sup> SEE, *Ex-post evaluation of the French General Budget Support (GBS) to Burkina Faso*, Final report for the Development Activities Evaluation Unit of the Directorate General for Treasury and Economic Policy, French Ministry for the Economy, Industry and Employment (29 January 2009).

<sup>100</sup> Decree No. 2005-255/PM dated 4 October 2005 provides for a tool including a national committee for concertation and dialogue, a Government/TFP committee, and regional and sub-regional committees for concertation and dialogue. The technical follow-up-evaluation tool of the SRP is coordinated by the Permanent Secretariat of the SRP (SP/SRP). The reliability and availability of data are tightly linked to the capacities of the INS and State services for the sectors in question. Decentralised State services handle collection; ministries handle the coordination of data collection; the INS handles their prospective consolidation.

<sup>101</sup> Difficulties encountered by the SRP follow-up-evaluation tool, as identified during SDRP elaboration:

- Absence of a favourable legal framework allowing the definition of missions and tasks for the players involved at the level of formulating sectoral statistics.
- Quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in human resources.
- Insufficient material and financial resources.
- Poor coordination and harmonisation of methodologies used.
- Difficulties in data collection, processing, and analysis.
- Absence of harmonised techniques in statistical data projection and estimation.
- Delays in the publication of reports and yearbooks.

- Information and data on **rural development** are relatively weak, incomplete, unreliable, or even false or unstable. The known and expected results from the survey of agriculture and livestock diverge significantly from the image reflected by the statistics available up to this point; this will overhaul the knowledge of the rural sector as a result. These are important data used in many indicators for results-based SDR.
- Progress was noted in terms of **water resources**. The end of the Niger-Switzerland Hydraulics programme in 2000 marked the end of funding for Niger's data collection system in this area. Since the mid-2000s, Belgium, Denmark, and the EC have been launching projects<sup>102</sup> to update the current database of the Water Resources Inventory (WRI) in their respective zones of intervention. Moreover, since 2004, France has been funding a project supporting the integrated management of water resources for the Niger river basin, by proceeding with the collection of related data.
- In terms of **transportation**, there are recognised gaps in the availability of information, but this did not lead to a reorientation in the nature of interventions during the period being analysed. At the Ministry of Equipment, the Transportation Observatory can be thought of as an embryonic structure tasked with data collection. At the same Ministry, the monitoring of results from interventions by TFPs and their analysis are among the tasks of the Directorate for Studies and Planning, but the performance of the service is poor. Overall, information on the activities carried out is transparent, but there are holes in the information on goals achieved and impact. This is essentially due to the lack of harmonised performance indicators.
- An analysis of the evolution of **health** indicators appears to point to positive conclusions in terms of achieving goals. This situation is however partly misleading, as the reliability of certain data is disputed. A major problem lies in the handling of the demographic denominator; the ministry uses its own demographic data rather than that of the INS. The PDS monitoring system enjoys its own evaluation-monitoring guide, which nonetheless suffers from shortcomings in the National Health Information System (SNIS), its basis for data collection.
- The INS occupies an increasingly important place in the management of national data on **education**. The evaluation mission was able to obtain the statistical yearbooks for education from the INS rather than the Ministry of Education. The data gathered during the review of a sample of DPE projects confirm that the analyses of intervention results were integrated in policy drafting and resource allocation for the education sector.
- The set of monitoring indicators laid out for the 2008-2012 SDRP shows that **sex-specific indicators** remain rare. When they do exist, they remain partial because they are focused on access to education and political life. Reproductive health indicators do not allow for the specific inclusion of the topic of gender. The lack of indicators and suitable tools and Niger's insufficient capacities limit the potential of Nigerien stakeholders in this area. Moreover, most of the information continues to be collected by the DPEs, which increases the role of the latter in monitoring activities.

We can conclude from this that the stance on monitoring has shifted over the 2000-2008 period; there is a greater emphasis on following up results and on impact to a lesser extent. The importance of monitoring to assess aid performance is increasingly recognised. There is also awareness that a joint approach is needed<sup>103</sup>, as shown by the SDRP evaluation-monitoring guide published in 2007. Both authorities (national or local, depending on the case) and donors should be interested in this information so they can make better decisions, account for them, and enrich dialogue over the period.

Nonetheless, the monitoring of results remains a weak link in the partnership. This fact has been noted for nearly 20 years by some DPEs<sup>104</sup>. We can conclude that there is little demand from both the DPEs and the Nigerien authorities for this type of information. Case in point: Belgo-Nigerian Joint Local Consultation Structures (SMCLs), recognised as being among the oldest venues for dialogue and partnership

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<sup>102</sup> PHVP, PASEHA and PMAEPS projects, described in annex 7, Water and Sanitation section.

<sup>103</sup> See annex A.8.11.3.

<sup>104</sup> DG VIII of the European Commission developed monitoring methods in the early 1990s. The first monitoring tables from this period actually focused on data collected at different levels of the project cycle. It was not implemented systematically. The system that followed it (ROM) lost some of the discipline in terms of data gathering, but includes assessments structured according to DAC criteria. The AFD has just launched an analysis of its practices in monitoring the achievement of its projects' goals.



management, focus on resources, activities, and implementation, but devote little time to the analysis of results. They therefore exert little pressure on project stakeholders to provide this type of data. This remark was also made regarding concertation structures established to support the health sector.

In terms of the general parameters characterising Niger's society (economic, social, agricultural, etc. data), great strides have been made owing to the support given to the INS. At the level of sectoral programmes within which there is active dialogue, as in the health sector, data quality remains uneven but we observe significant progress<sup>105</sup>. Meanwhile, with regard to projects, while there are real efforts to improve evaluations, the effects of interventions are generally difficult to assess owing to the lack of monitoring data. Most of the sectoral teams participating in this evaluation have confirmed this when answering questions regarding efficiency and impact. The problem often arises as early as the project design stage, particularly at the start of the 2000-2008 period; it is characterised by a lack of discipline in the logical framework, imprecise goals, or associated indicators that do not always have targets. There are few baseline studies. When these conditions are met, procedures for collecting information and the consequences for not providing such information are not detailed. Finally, there is no procedure requiring the different management or concertation committees to take such information into account before making decisions. Despite the intentions declared within the framework of SRP/SDRP, all progress made in terms of monitoring stemmed from initiatives by DPEs or other donors. One of the missions of the Directorates for Studies and Planning (DSPs) found within several ministries is to manage flows of this type of information, but they have very scant means and few incentives to do so.

## 9. Evaluations

While the information derived from monitoring ought to be shared by the DPEs and the Nigerien partner, the hypothesis described above of an only partial convergence of goals implies that each party makes an independent judgement of activities and their effects. In practice, only the DPEs carry this out, more and more frequently. Some, like Belgium, attempt partnership evaluations<sup>106</sup> in other countries. However, the idea of giving partners in Niger the means of carrying out evaluations that are wholly under their control does not seem to have been explored.

Among the DPEs, the practice of conducting evaluations (mid-term and at the end of the project) has developed considerably over the period, particularly for Belgium and the AFD<sup>107</sup>. As we have seen, these evaluations suffer from holes in the monitoring of results. Nonetheless, the value of their input is increasingly recognised by the players, at least on the side of the DPEs, even though there are complaints about their cost and time-consuming nature. In addition to project evaluations, thematic and country-programme evaluations are also becoming more widespread, ensuring a connection between project evaluations and the formulation of new strategies. However, DPEs have not favoured Niger in this area. Thematic evaluations in Niger are still rare.

## 10. Lessons learned

The evaluation process, which particularly flourished at the end of the period under review, is likely to provide more systematic input for the formulation of new strategies. The tendency of some DPEs to favour continuity via a succession of projects centred on the same themes and/or the same zones has allowed them to make use of lessons learned from evaluations. At the level of the management of public funds and macroeconomic stakes, results from PEMFAR I and PEFA helped define the PEMFAR II programme.

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<sup>105</sup> Annex 7, health section. The strategy for preventing food crises also relies on a fairly elaborate monitoring tool. While it should be logically determined by its goal, the tool is nonetheless designed from a foresight (ability to anticipate crises) rather than hindsight (analysis of the results of interventions) outlook.

<sup>106</sup> The partnership evaluation is conducted jointly with the local partner (beneficiary). The joint evaluation brings together several donors, but does not necessarily involve the local partner. Source: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs – DGCID – Evaluation Office, *Evaluation guide – File 16 – Co-evaluations: partnership, joint, parallel and mutual*, New expanded and revised edition, June 2005.

<sup>107</sup> Since 2008, the AFD has kickstarted a process for systematic ex-post evaluations of all the projects it is funding.

### 5.3.4. What deductions can be made regarding the Paris Declaration Commitments?

#### Ownership

The wide chasm dividing the Government and the DPEs in terms of values, interests, and priorities is not sufficiently recognised. The level of ownership of the values and priorities proposed by the DPEs is highly variable, not only according to the nature of these proposals, but also the identity (or function) of the Nigerien persons and institutions involved. A rural NGO will not necessarily mobilise its resources for the same priorities as the central government. The fact that this or that value does not appear to be shared by the Nigerien partner indicates that Niger will not be ready to promote it and therefore own the policies and projects implemented to that end. However, in a context where aid will remain necessary for a long time to come, this does not mean that DPEs cannot promote such values on Niger's territory. Alongside the goals that are truly shared by the Government and the DPEs (zone A), there is therefore a zone C of goals pursued by the DPEs with the Government's approval, but without the latter's involvement in the associated activities. Despite the major consequences this can have on the forms of co-operation, the distinction is not currently made, as demonstrated by the analysis of stage 3 of the co-operation cycle described earlier.

According to monitoring studies of the implementation of the Paris Declaration<sup>108</sup>, Niger obtained a score of C in 2005 in terms of ownership (on a scale of A to E, with A being the best score). 62% of the assessed partner countries received this score. In 2007, Niger obtained the same score, along with 64% of the partner countries. According to the OECD report, the new Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (SDRP) places Niger on the right track for obtaining an A or B in 2010. To receive such scores, however, accelerated growth strategies must be defined more explicitly so they can be integrated into an overall programme approach in the form of Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF). This is not yet the case with Niger.

The analysis of the co-operation area presented above confirms this conclusion: goals spelled out in poverty reduction strategies are numerous and not ranked by importance. The link between possible jobs and resource allocation is not made, which makes alignment easier but lessens its effects on efficiency.

#### Alignment

Formally, the alignment of DPE strategies with Nigerien ones is made easier by the fact that the strategies declared by the Government are largely designed according to the values and priorities of donors - particularly the DPEs - and that they have numerous unranked "priorities" under which the DPEs can introduce their programmes. The World Bank and, to a certain extent, the UNDP, played a decisive role in obtaining Niger's production of national reference strategies as well as influencing the content of these strategies. The level of ownership for these policies by the government nonetheless leaves many Nigerien and international observers sceptical<sup>109</sup>.

The desire to align themselves with national policies does not prevent certain political choices - both explicit and non-explicit - from being made by the DPEs. Niger's Government formulated two successive poverty reduction strategies, in 2002 and 2007. In both cases, economic growth was deemed a necessary condition for poverty reduction and was the first priority. This priority is strongly reinforced in the SDRP compared with the SRP. DPEs, however, rarely make explicit reference to growth as a central goal to justify their choices in resource allocation<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>108</sup> Source: OECD, "2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration: Making aid more effective by 2010. Actions to take, volume 2 chapter by country.", p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> See in particular the interviews conducted by LASDEL with Nigerien officials involved in aid negotiations "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth", final report, draft version, pp. 76 to 78. Also worth noting is the pithy and explicit line from a former minister quoted by LASDEL: "to get hay, be a donkey", whose brutal honesty deserves attention, respect, and analyses that may call into question the very basis of the current approach to development assistance.

<sup>110</sup> See the intervention logics presented in annex 3.

**SDRP: an ambitious growth target presented as a necessary condition for reducing poverty**

*"The strategic diagnosis of Niger reveals a trend-based scenario marked by the pursuit of average economic growth, but which is vulnerable to climate shocks and to the terms of trade, in a context where the demographic dynamic is unlikely to change."*

*The major risk of this rather unambitious and unsustainable scenario is that it can be a threat to social cohesion, because it would mean that many of the people of Niger would continue to remain poor and vulnerable, have no access to good social services, and be excluded from the services of ongoing globalisation. It is thus important to identify the levers that could change Niger's future and make it part of the range of countries that enjoy rapid growth and a decrease in poverty. »*

SDRP, p.77

The main thrust of the SDRP is the goal of bringing the country to an annual growth rate of 7%. The target may seem high given the country's past performance, but it remains modest in terms of prospects for per capita income growth once population growth of more than 3% per year is taken into account.<sup>111</sup>

The level of alignment with national systems is rather poor, given the diversity of assessments of the country's capacities in terms of the management of public finances, the procurement of government contracts, internal and external audits. In this area, some DPEs are more aligned (AFD, BTC) but maintain fairly strict audit procedures (notice of non-objection). Others strictly use their own procedures (EC, Luxembourg, Denmark).

The OECD has drawn comparable conclusions from very indirect indicators monitoring the implementation of the Paris Declaration, that is, alignment with national strategies is not mirrored in the alignment with national systems. Moreover, the indicators for the Paris Declaration suggest some deterioration of the situation at this level between 2000 and 2005.

**Stability of indicator 2A** (partner countries have a reliable public financial management – PFM – system). Indicator 2A evaluates the quality of budget and public financial management on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 indicating very good quality management. For this indicator, the Paris Declaration's target is for half of partner countries to move up at least 0.5 points in 2010. In 2005 and 2007, Niger received a **score of 3.5**, characterising a "moderately strong system" that is slightly above the average (3.2) for countries borrowing from the International Development Association of the World Bank. The OECD report explains that many reforms were undertaken in 2008 in order to improve the PFM. These include the creation of a consultation framework in order to facilitate PEMFAR implementation, and there are plans to make the Audit Office operational in order to reinforce financial audits<sup>112</sup>. There is however an "absence of institutional reinforcement", as institutional support for budget aid is largely inferior to the actions programmed in PEMFAR. This is illustrated in the recent PEFA report (not yet validated by the government) which reveals major weaknesses in public financial management, which PEMFAR is in fact meant to correct. Meanwhile, the Audit Office is not yet operational.

**First (good) score for indicator 2B in 2007** (partner countries have a reform programme in place to improve procurement systems). The Paris Declaration's target for this indicator is for one-third of partner countries to move up at least one measure (from D to C for example) on the four-point scale (A to D) used to assess performance according to OECD/DAC methodology<sup>113</sup>. In 2005, it was impossible to give Niger a score for this indicator. In 2007, Niger was classified in **category B** of the scale following reforms introduced by the Public Procurement Regulatory Agency (ARMP) starting in 2006. This relatively good score must be compared with the actual use of the system by the DPEs (indicator 5B).

<sup>111</sup> An average growth of 7% over the 2008-2012 period would imply a per capita average growth of 3 to 4%, depending on the evolution of demographic trends. This figure should be compared with the 1%, average per capita growth observed over the 2000-2007 period, which can at best be lifted to 1.6% for the 2000-2008 period if higher growth in 2008 is confirmed (calculated using the figures presented in annex 7 – macroeconomic report).

<sup>112</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 5.

**Substantial increase in indicator 3** (aid flows reported by donors are reported on partners' national budgets). Indicator 3 is an indicator of aid visibility. It indicates the percentage of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on national budgets for the same budget year<sup>114</sup>. The Paris Declaration's target for 2010 is to halve the proportion of aid flows to the government sector not reported on the government's budget (with at least 85% of aid reported on the budget of partner countries). In 2005 and 2007, Niger was well above the 85% target defined in the Paris Declaration. 99% and 91% of the aid provided for in Niger's budget was actually issued. This good overall performance masks uneven performances when each donor is taken separately. On average, the DPEs performed better than the average for all donors (DPE average: 57% in 2005 and 74% in 2007; average for all donors: 55% in 2005 and 57% in 2007). The increase of the DPE average is largely due to Belgium's improved performance in its notifications to Niger.

*Table 8: ratio of budget estimates for aid as established by authorities vs. aid announced by donors to the public sector over the same period<sup>115</sup>*

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	29%	73%	50%	76%	57%	55%
2007	96%	73%	53%	75%	74%	57%

**Strong increase in indicator 4** (50% of technical co-operation flows are implemented through co-ordinated programmes coherent with national development strategies). According to the OECD study, the percentage of technical co-operation coordinated with national programmes<sup>116</sup> has changed significantly, moving for donors as a whole from 15 to 50%. Results for the DPEs are more limited. In 2005, only France had a relatively low, though not zero, percentage of 21%. In 2007, 100% of Belgian technical co-operation and 14% of Danish technical co-operation were coordinated with national programmes, but France's share fell to zero. This trend is in step with the changes in the share of coordinated technical assistance for all donors, which rose from 15 to 50% in the time between the two surveys.

**Strong decrease in indicators 5A and 5B** (use of country PFM and procurement systems). Indicator 5A measures the use made by donors of the three components of the national PFM system, to wit: the budget execution system, the accounting system, and financial audits. Indicator 5B measures the use of country procurement systems by donors<sup>117</sup>. Compared with 2005, Niger's donors did not use the national PFM system more in 2007 (unchanged average of 26%). The trend was even reversed for procurement (drop from 49 to 37% on average). At the DPE level, this turnaround in the trend is even more pronounced, as the MEBA affair worsened the lack of trust between Niger's government and the donors.

*Table 9: Percentage of Official Development Assistance using the PFM system<sup>118</sup>*

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	12%	21%	1%	32%	17%	27%
2007	0%	22%	0%	0%	6%	26%

*Table 10: Use of the country procurement system<sup>119</sup>*

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	46%	62%	100%	82%	73%	49%
2007	47%	22%	31%	52%	38%	37%

**Stability of indicator 6** (reduction in the number of parallel project implementation units in addition to a country's existing structures). The term "parallel" refers to any unit created outside of existing national institutional structures tasked with the daily management and implementation of aid-funded projects and

<sup>114</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 1.

<sup>116</sup> OECD includes in this category the TA identified as participating in institutional reform programmes carried out at the initiative of Nigerien authorities whose goals are precise and in which donor-funded TA can be integrated.

<sup>117</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 8.

<sup>118</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 3.

<sup>119</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 3.

programmes. The Paris Declaration's target for 2010 is to reduce by two-thirds the stock of parallel units. For Niger, the target is to bring the number down to 17<sup>120</sup>. There is a relative stability in the number of parallel management units since 2005. The number of management units used by the DPEs reflects their tendency to have recourse to more or less integrated PFM systems.

Table 11: Number of parallel project implementation units outside of existing structures in Niger (unit)<sup>121</sup>

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	5	13	2	4	24	52
2007	nd <sup>122</sup>	0	13	7	nd	47

**First (good) full DPE score for indicator 7 in 2007** (aid is more predictable). This results indicator compares the disbursements recorded by the partner country's administration with disbursements scheduled by donors for the country. The Paris Declaration's objective for 2010 is to halve the proportion of aid not disbursed within the fiscal year for which it was scheduled. For Niger, the target was set at 87%<sup>123</sup>. In total 78% of budget aid to Niger was planned in 2007, compared with 73% in 2005. But this good result hides significant disparities depending on the source of aid, as the average for all donors was only 58% in 2007 (see table below). In practice, DPEs differ from other donors, with all ratios well above the average, except for France.

Table 12: Ratio of scheduled disbursements and disbursements accounted for by Nigerien authorities.<sup>124</sup>

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	nd	98%	--	74%	nd	72%
2007	93%	98%	79%	43%	78%	58%

The alignment observed at strategy level is not reproduced at the level of procedures and means of funding. Surveys on the implementation of the Paris Declaration reveal that the percentage of aid flows to the public sector using national public financial management and procurement systems went down sharply between 2005 and 2007. This trend was observed for the DPEs as a whole (see table below). According to the same source, only Belgium increased the percentage of its aid flow using country procurement procedures by one point, while the EC increased the percentage of its aid flow using national PFM systems by one point.

Table 13: Percentage of Official Development Assistance flows using national systems<sup>125</sup>

		BE	EC	DK	FR	DPEs	Donors
Use of national systems	2005	12%	21%	1%	32%	23%	27%
	2007	0%	22%	0%	0%	14%	26%
Procurement via national systems	2005	46%	62%	100%	82%	67%	49%
	2007	47%	22%	31%	52%	30%	37%

In the framework of the project approach, the administrative and financial methods used by the DPEs generally adopt rules that are specific to each of the donors (EDF, FSP, national procedures of other DPEs). Consequently, Niger's ministries develop teams specialising in the procedures of their main donors (notably the World Bank and the EC). Some interventions depart from this principle (generally limited to specific aid segments):

- by adopting common methods (e.g. coordination structures and extrabudgetary joint funds for health and for the DNP-GCA, targeted sectoral budget aid for education);
- by delegating funding to permanent structures (e.g. PAMED to communes, AFD to technical services);

<sup>120</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 3.

<sup>122</sup> No data on the number of management units for Belgium (but this does not mean there are none).

<sup>123</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 10.

<sup>124</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 5.

<sup>125</sup> Source: 2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration, table 40.3

- by opting for national procedures, e.g. for calls for tender (AFD);
- by using a single management unit to handle several projects (LuxDev).

### *Harmonisation of procedures and coordination of interventions*

As we have seen in the analysis of the 7<sup>th</sup> stage of the co-operation cycle, the DPEs have made little effort to harmonise their procedures, even in areas where they cooperate for sectoral support. While their viewpoints converged to some extent during crises, they reacted in a scattered manner.

The evolution of the project approach towards budget or at least sectoral aid lends growing importance to political dialogue with the Government and between donors. Translating this approach into the harmonisation of procedures between donors and the coordination of implementation still lags behind, compared with the improvement in the convergence of the stances and strategic commitments of the DPEs.

While the reference strategies (SDRP, SDR, PDS, PPDE) define the general framework within which DPE interventions are introduced, their coordination is generally poor at the central and regional levels. The efficiency of sectoral dialogues is highly variable. Health is one of the areas where such dialogue is most institutionalised and constructive. Extrabudgetary common funds are seen by DPEs as an important track to be developed in order to improve coordination between donors at the sector level. Denmark and Luxembourg, who are hardly – if at all – involved in this approach, have announced their intention to "develop the programme approach" for their future programmes.

There is relatively little coordination around common funds (health, food security, education) and such coordination is unwieldy to manage. Some coordination structures (DNGCA) are opening up to a growing number of stakeholders and run the risk of seeing their capacity for decision-making and taking action bog down. These structures work better when there is a true delegation of authority to the participants; in other words, when the institution they belong to decentralises the decision-making power to their level. This is a problem for both the Nigerien administration and for the DPEs.

We also observe well-coordinated local partnerships. The joint actions of Belgium and Luxembourg in the Dosso region are often given as an example.

Niger's government is hardly proactive in the area of donor coordination. As far as **rural development** is concerned, the SDR defined a general framework within which DPE interventions are carried out. Their coordination, however, is poor overall at the central and regional levels. Harmonisation of administrative and financial (and even technical) methods remains very limited<sup>126</sup>. The absence of a functional programme approach for the SDR explains the behaviour of the DPEs<sup>127</sup>. These conditions do not encourage the optimal use of resources. Among the interventions assessed, the prevention and management of food crises is the most developed SDR area in terms of coordination and harmonisation. Coordination of agents at the regional or local scale remains poor and rarely harmonised. Most often, partnerships are limited in time and space, with a few exceptions: LuxDev with a single management unit for several projects in Dosso; high-capacity NGOs (Care or Karkara) can also create synergies and set up harmonised procedures for the interventions they coordinate.

In the **water and sanitation sector**, all DPEs involved are inclined towards a form of programme approach that must address the priorities of the SRP<sup>128</sup>. This approach goes hand in hand with the acceptance of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (PNAEPA).

For **transportation**, DPE interventions are coordinated but not harmonised. The EC, France (AFD) and Luxembourg thus present different approaches for the maintenance of rural roads.

<sup>126</sup> Coordination is more marked during the definition of strategic co-operation priorities when DPEs study the interventions of other FTPs in order to avoid thematic or geographic overlaps.

<sup>127</sup> With the exception of funding for DNGCA and some AFD support (and PAMED for the Local Development Fund).

<sup>128</sup> See in particular the Note on Danish Co-operation in Niger for the 2006-2010 period: "For the five years to come, emphasis will be placed on the transition from the current project-based approach to the sectoral approach (SWAp) in the sectors [of water, hygiene and sanitation, as well as in the agricultural and human resource management sectors]."

The **cultural sector** has no institutional dialogue structure between donors and Niger. Co-operation is based on the distribution of tasks that is very specific to the theme (France supports key institutions such as the CCFN, IFTIC and CNRLP, while the other DPEs conduct one-off interventions that are sometimes propped up by these institutions).

Nor is there a sectoral coordination structure for the **crafts industry**. As early as 1991, such a coordination structure was wanted so that the National Policy for Crafts Development could be implemented; it was never created. Meanwhile, the UNDP threw its support behind a Private Sector Framework Programme, hosted by the Ministry of Trade. Persons interviewed at the Ministry of Tourism and Crafts said that this Framework Programme does not offer the expected interface between the ministries involved, nor between Niger and the TFPs on the cross-cutting issues for crafts industry (taxes, trade barriers, etc.).

The coordination of donors for **education** occurred primarily through the monitoring of evaluation structures that were introduced by the PDDE. At the level of targeted budget aid, monitoring structures were found to be incapable of preventing the misuse of funds, which led to the interruption of this mechanism between 2006 and 2008. While the projects have continued to operate by themselves during the period, no dialogue and consultation framework was established to foster aid harmonisation and synergy between the projects' human resources.

If we take the example of interventions around the ARMFD project in Dosso for the period under consideration, it should be noted that three DPEs (Belgium, Denmark and Luxembourg) working in **gender** support converged at the level of project co-financing (between Belgium and Denmark), at the technical level and investments (Belgium and Luxembourg), and at the level of consultation to take stock of the project's progress, approve its activity plans and the proposals from the project management team, and to resolve any management problem expressed by them. For the coming period, Belgium and Denmark are planning a programme approach<sup>129</sup>.

Finally, the situation observed with regard to **budget aid** is very different from the one seen in countries where the instrument is monitored by well-coordinated TFPs in a climate of trust. When there is a donor steering committee, it systematically records disbursements. In Niger, however, TFPs and the Government are still far from the goal pursued by the Paris Declaration to have a reliable, regularly updated database on projected and completed disbursements of budget aid<sup>130</sup>.

Changes in the areas of **competence for Ministries** in Niger complicates coordination. To give an example, France's support for the 5<sup>th</sup> *Jeux de la Francophonie* was given for the purpose of finding synergies between culture, sport, youth, and media development. The aid provided in this context relied on one ministry<sup>131</sup> as the single point of contact. In recent years, this ministry's competencies have been split up into at least three distinct, poorly-coordinated structures (Ministry of Communication; Ministry of Youth and Sport; Ministry of Culture, Arts, Leisure, and Crafts). This progressive institutional walling-off has affected the capacity to generate the expected synergies from French aid.

The set-up of **targeted budget aid and common fund programmes** in the areas of education and health do not mean that these sectors enjoy true harmonisation of procedures. Each contributor to the health programme remains free to mobilise funds according to its methods, and thus does not use the Nigerien

<sup>129</sup> For Belgium, and for the next phase of the ARMFD project (2009-2014), there are plans to adopt a programme approach by mobilising agents of the Regional Directorate for rural development instead of a project team. The approach will also have a training aspect in order to help government agents carry out their new role in a decentralised context, which remains a major challenge. For Denmark, a rapid transition to the programme approach is planned, so difficulties are foreseen (change in positioning and strategies that need to be developed by operators and NGOs through which Danida implemented its projects).

<sup>130</sup> The OECD/DAC group only recently began the creation of a matrix database on aid flows. The data series collected begins in 2006 and lists funding from the EC and other European countries (Denmark, Luxembourg, Germany, EC, Italy, Spain, France), as well as funding from the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, and several other TFPs (Canada, United States, Japan, Switzerland). The absence of information on funding from banks and regional funds, the Arab countries, and China is particularly striking. At the time of the mission in early June 2009, data on 2008 disbursements were still incomplete. The TFP consultation framework on the database is presided by the World Bank and the UNDP. The fact that the World Bank uses a classification of sectors that is different from the SDRP's considerably complicates data analysis in the framework of programme monitoring.

<sup>131</sup> Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture.

procedures. To contribute to the creation of a true sectoral financing tool, the Ministry of Public Health believes that the international agencies of the United Nations as well as the Global Fund ought to join the common basket fund. The feasibility of this option remains very uncertain for multiple reasons tied to the budget planning cycles of agencies as well as to international policies and priorities drawn up outside the specific framework of Niger.

Alongside more traditional aid in the form of projects or programmes implemented as part of aid to the national health system, there is significant aid provided by the DPEs to major **global programmes and international activities** in support of achieving MDGs, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and GAVI (vaccination). These programmes are executed within a framework that is part of the national health system, except for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, whose programme is implemented by intersectoral coordination. Meanwhile, national stakeholders do not present a common vision for the integration of World Bank funds into the extrabudgetary common fund of the PDS, especially in the fight against STIs/HIV/AIDS (multisectoral framework). In the health sector, this debate is tied in part to one that has been ongoing for several years, on vertical approaches (actions targeting a specific endemic) versus integrated approaches (such as horizontal or systemic). The major global programmes and international initiatives to promote the achievement of the MDGs (Global Fund and GAVI) have and continue to show their potential, especially in the fight against malaria, but they have also shown their shortcomings because of the weight they add to the health system.

OECD indicators confirm this assessment.

**Stability of indicator 8** (continued progress in untied aid). The target of the Paris Declaration is to continue progress on untying development assistance to the least advanced countries. In 2007 as in 2005, 84% of aid to Niger was untied. According to the OECD report, the target is to identify partners that still practice tied aid in Niger and negotiate progressive untying of aid<sup>132</sup>.

**Stability of indicator 9** (the target that 66% of aid flows are provided in the context of programme-based approaches)<sup>133</sup>. In contrast to the general trend of an increase in the percentage of aid provided in the framework of a programme approach (with the ratio climbing from 31% in 2005 to 49% in 2007 for Niger's donors as a whole), that of DPEs remained nearly constant (20% in 2005, 21% in 2007). This is due to the sharp increase in the volume of EU aid disbursed in the framework of the programme approach, offset by a reduction in the amount of budget aid given by Belgium and France, both of whom removed this type of support, and by the fact that the amount of programme aid given by Belgium went down by half (6 million EUR in 2005 versus 3 in 2007), budget aid excluded.

Table 14: Percentage of aid disbursed within a programme approach<sup>134</sup>

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	51%	6%	4%	31%	20%	31%
2007	13%	25%	0%	20%	21%	49%

**Slight increase in indicator 10A** (40% of donor missions to the field are joint)<sup>135</sup>. The percentage of DPE missions coordinated with all donors increased between 2005 and 2007, going from 11% to 15.5% even though the general trend was towards a decrease (21% of missions coordinated for all donors in 2005, 18% in 2007). Nonetheless, only France saw its percentage of coordinated missions increase (3% in 2005, 20% in 2007) due to the reduction in the total number of missions conducted (29 in 2005, 10 in 2007). The percentage of coordinated missions for the three other DPEs went down by more than half.

Table 15: Percentage of coordinated missions

Year	Belgium	EC	Denmark	France	DPEs	Donors
2005	100%	15%	33%	3%	11%	21%
2007	25%	8%	10%	20%	15.5%	18%

<sup>132</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>133</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 6.

<sup>134</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 6.

<sup>135</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. table 7.



**Sharp drop in indicator 10B** (66% of country analytic work is joint). Finally, as is the case for donors as a whole, the percentage of coordinated analyses sharply decreased, from 100% to 44% between 2005 and 2007. Belgium and Denmark increased the total number of analytic work without increasing the number of coordinated work. This indicator applies to a fairly limited number of studies, however.

In the field, we find:

- that complementarity is not a deciding criterion in the choice of interventions.
- an increase in the number of instances of sectoral coordination for strategic frameworks defined by the government of Niger. The PDS, PDE, DNPGA and the framework for consultation created by the Ministry of Hydrology especially come to mind. These coordination frameworks cannot be found in the sectors of culture and the craft industry.

### *Managing for results*

While dialogue at the level of drafting strategies has intensified, the precise definition of expected results and, in particular, their monitoring, continues to be of very uneven quality<sup>136</sup> and insufficient overall to allow a general assessment. Monitoring and evaluation efforts are generally controlled by the DPEs, even in cases where evaluations are conducted in partnership with the government. The practice of evaluation is spreading<sup>137</sup> but the quality of these evaluations suffers from the poor monitoring. The health sector boasts the best knowledge of results and the most active strategic dialogue, but even in this area, the quality of available information can be improved<sup>138</sup>. This conclusion matches the one made by the OECD based on the indicators of progress of the Paris Declaration.

**Stability of indicator 11** (Results-oriented frameworks). Indicator 11 evaluates the existence of performance assessment frameworks in partner countries according to three criteria: the quality of development information; access of stakeholders to this information; and the existence of a coordinated monitoring and evaluation tool<sup>139</sup>. The target of the Paris Declaration is to reduce the proportion of countries without such frameworks by one-third. In both 2005 and 2007, Niger received a **score of D** (with A representing the best score and E the worst). Niger's evaluation framework includes aspects of good practice, particularly for the education (decisions on questions of efficiency, primarily<sup>140</sup>) and health (not yet widely used except for reinforcing institutional capacities<sup>141</sup>) sectors. In practice, the monitoring system for all sectors as a whole suffers from major difficulties that hamper the sharing of information: lack of a favourable legislative framework, inadequate human, material and financial resources; poor coordination and harmonisation of methodologies used, difficulties in data collection and analysis, and delays in the publication of reports and yearbooks<sup>142</sup>.

### *Mutual accountability*

Joint management structures have proliferated over the period, at both central and local levels. The sectors of health and the prevention of food crises, as well as the management structures for certain projects particularly at the level of decentralised powers, bear witness to this. Frameworks for dialogue on sectoral strategies and projects are still tightly focused on the management of resources. The overall dialogue on the evolution of the Nigerien economy's performance and the role of aid remains mostly undeveloped.

For this aspect, OECD monitoring takes a slightly different angle of observation, as it is interested in the mutual assessment of progress in **aid effectiveness**, whereas the evaluation assesses accountability in terms of performance of sectoral programmes. The associated indicator (**indicator 12 – mutual accountability**) looks into the question of the existence, in the countries studied, of a mechanism of mutual

<sup>136</sup> As demonstrated in the analysis of stage 8 (monitoring) of the co-operation cycle presented earlier. All sectoral analyses also confirm the poor follow-up of results and impacts (see annex 7, answers to questions 6, 7 and 8).

<sup>137</sup> See stage 10 of the cycle above.

<sup>138</sup> See annex 7, Health, answers to Q6 and Q11.

<sup>139</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 14.

<sup>140</sup> See education sectoral report, annex 7 pp. 338-346.

<sup>141</sup> See health sectoral report, annex 7, p. 267.

<sup>142</sup> Complementary elements in annex A.2.4.5.

assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness including those in the Paris Declaration<sup>143</sup>. According to the OECD, no such mutual assessment mechanisms existed in Niger in either 2005 or 2007.

## 5.4. Second analysis framework: the DAC evaluation criteria

### 5.4.1. Relevance

In principle, assessing the relevance of DPE interventions in Niger would imply asking the following question: "to what extent was the action of DPEs suited to the 'problems' faced by the people of Niger between 2000 and 2008?" The evaluation mission has neither the mandate nor the means to determine the needs of different categories of Niger's population during this period. Consequently, the relevance of the DPEs' action can only be tackled indirectly.

By formulating an increasingly explicit strategic position over the period, the government translated the needs of the population (as it wished donors to see them) into general and sectoral strategies. These strategies form the framework within which donors must work, by virtue of the principle of alignment of the Paris Declaration.

The question of relevance is thus studied using two complementary viewpoints:

- What investments have the DPEs made to analyse the political, economic, social, and ecological dynamics in which they intervened? To what extent did they make use of existing studies to fuel their reflections? Evaluation question Q1, discussed in annex 8, investigates this.
- In areas where the government's strategic position took shape, to what extent did the DPEs adhere to this position? This works on two levels: collaborating to its design and "aligning" their interventions on the strategic priorities spelled out in the government's position. Question Q2 studies this. Here we shall take a few elements of the analysis of alignment presented in section 5.3.4.

The answer to question Q1 tells us the following:

- *The analysis of poverty issues contained in DPE strategies remains at a very general level<sup>144</sup>.*
- *Strategies make little explicit reference to analyses carried out by other national and international players, except those conducted by Niger<sup>145</sup>.*
- *The desire for continuity influences the DPEs' choice of area of concentration: sectoral or thematic continuity<sup>146</sup>, geographic continuity<sup>147</sup>.*

The answer to question Q2 also teaches us that:

- *DPEs justify the relevance of their interventions by showing that they are aligned with the government's strategies. In some cases, DPEs contributed to the formulation of these policies<sup>148</sup>.*

There are good arguments justifying the **continuity** of interventions as a criterion for choice. In many cases, DPEs have noted the lack of sustainable effects from the interventions they undertook<sup>149</sup>. Moreover, the succession of projects in the same sector (or the same zone) allowed certain DPEs to accumulate

<sup>143</sup> Source: OECD op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>144</sup> See annex A8.2. Denmark, and to a certain extent France and Belgium, have funded certain studies, identified in annex 7, Rural Development section, criterion J1.3 and the youth demographic section, Q1. Some of them had a significant influence, but this attempt at analysis nonetheless remains limited given the sheer volumes of invested aid.

<sup>145</sup> See annex A8.1. This affirmation has very few exceptions. The collective management of knowledge by certain DPEs based on the analytical work of other donors was hardly ever practiced for the 2000-2008 period.

<sup>146</sup> Luxembourg in the crafts industry, Belgium in livestock farming, for example.

<sup>147</sup> Concentration in Dosso (Luxembourg, Belgium), in the southeast (Denmark), in the north (EC).

<sup>148</sup> See annex A8.2.

<sup>149</sup> See the processing of the evaluation question on sustainability (annex A8.10).

knowledge of the field and thereby improve the relevance of their interventions in that zone. In some cases, however, we observed a deliberate decision to discontinue interventions. For example, after a long, well-appreciated support period for the crafts industry, Luxembourg decided to pull out of the sector to concentrate its activities geographically and invest in professional training. Meanwhile, due to a desire for concentration, and by virtue of the European Code of Conduct, Belgium will leave the education sector in the framework of its next ICP.

Analysis of alignment<sup>150</sup> has made it possible to underscore the widening gap between the importance given to **economic growth**, particularly explicit in the SDRP, and the priorities of the DPEs, which refer instead to values and priorities such as poverty reduction, gender, human rights, and the environment. This orientation of DPEs, which match the current trend in reflections on aid effectiveness, can explain why some crucial issues such as the interlinkage of Niger's economy with that of **Nigeria** seem to have been explored less<sup>151</sup> than one might expect. There is little data on possible internal and external factors for growth: source of non-agricultural income, migrations, competitiveness in the export of some sectors such as livestock farming, etc.

**Strategic dialogue** frameworks are especially useful in ensuring both the relevance and coherence of interventions. But they only work regularly in a few sectors, such as health or food security<sup>152</sup>. Moreover, there is no regularly functional framework for dialogue on general policy that would make it possible to link sectoral policies with each other and achieve true dovetailing between the definition of strategic priorities and the allocation of resources (budget management)<sup>153</sup>.

The role of **studies** in ensuring the relevance of the goals of their interventions is of greater importance to DPEs which, like Denmark, Belgium, and Luxembourg, have essentially used the project as an intervention tool. This is especially the case for Denmark, to which we owe original studies conducted in partnership with other Scandinavian lenders. Moreover, the practice of project **evaluation** is spreading among the DPEs. Luxembourg, Belgium and Denmark are more systematic in this area. However, the potential contribution of conclusions from these evaluations in enhancing the relevance of new interventions does not seem to be fully utilised.

Decentralised co-operation, EC Facilities (ACP-EU Facilities for Water or Energy) and some "NGO" lines of the other DPEs respond to occasional demands for players in the field. The relevance of these interventions is difficult to assess. In principle, they can respond to needs that are very real but cannot be expressed in official channels. In practice, local DPE representatives often have very little involvement in the decisions regarding fund allocation for this type of instrument, with the exception of France which has instruments managed exclusively by the Embassy, such as the Social Development Fund (FSP).

The means mobilised by the DPEs to improve the **relevance** of their interventions as well as respond to other criteria of aid quality thus appear reasonable, at least for the principal instruments, given the political context in Niger and the state of political dialogue at central and sectoral level. Nonetheless, the people of Niger have enormous needs, and resources are scarce. It is therefore easy for a donor to meet a need and therefore justify the relevance of its intervention. However, the size of the gap between the extent of needs and the resources available would imply going beyond the notion of relevance and introducing the concept of **optimising** the allocation of resources. Are means always invested with a view to having an impact that exceeds the opportunity cost in terms of contributing to growth and/or reducing poverty in

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<sup>150</sup> See section 5.3.4.

<sup>151</sup> The French DSP of 2002 and the NIP of the 9<sup>th</sup> FED of the EC calls attention to the importance of Nigeria, but only draws a few strategic conclusions. Curiously, their successors (the DCP and the NIP from the 10<sup>th</sup> FED) hardly ever make mention of Nigeria in their presentation of Niger's economic context, and do not include this dimension in their intervention strategy. Denmark, which concentrates its interventions on the Zinder-Diffa border zone, also lends little importance in its strategic documents to the fundamental economic, political and cultural influence of Nigeria in the region; it only makes mention, very implicitly, of "natural" openings for agricultural and livestock products in that zone. Even at this level, strategies and projects do not seem to rely on a systematic study of the potential of these markets, and the risks they entail, nor on the economic importance of migrations in the region.

<sup>152</sup> The SDR is an example of a strategic framework that was studied in many consultations and which the DPEs joined, but whose implementation is time-consuming. See annex 7, rural development section, Q2.

<sup>153</sup> The answer to criterion J8.2 of the macroeconomic report (annex 7) describes the status of the application of MTEFs and the absence of an overall MTEF up to 2009.

Niger? In other words, do the DPEs content themselves with contributing to Niger's development, or do they seek to make the *most useful contribution possible* towards this goal?

The answer is very clear: nothing indicates an effort to optimise the allocation of resources with regard to one or several specific objectives, on either the Nigerien side or the DPE side. The concept of **ranking priorities** is practically absent in national strategy documents as well as documents produced by the DPEs. These texts speak of concentration, balance between regions and sectors, complementarity between donors, and distribution of work, but make no mention of priorities. The concept of concentration is generally understood to be in the spirit of the European Code of Conduct, which tells European donors that they ought to concentrate their resources on a limited number of sectors, in a bid to avoid the dispersion of each donor's efforts and the multiplicity of players in each sector. The Code of Conduct aims to improve efficiency (reduce transaction costs) but says nothing about how to rank national policy objectives in order to concentrate resources in a manner that would optimise resource allocation for these objectives. Similarly, the way of translating strategies into structured action plans is generally not described.

*"In a context of scarce arable land, runaway demography, outdated cultural practices and unpredictable climate, Niger is hostage to chronic food and nutritional insecurity that is worsening, even during average economic conditions<sup>154</sup>."* Such a conclusion, confirmed by this evaluation<sup>155</sup>, may have very significant consequences on the relevance of donor interventions in general and DPEs in particular. **Cooperating towards development or trying to reduce the effects of an irreversible degradation process require two very different approaches.** If it is confirmed that, despite aid, Niger's prospects can be described as finding that tomorrow will probably be worse than yesterday in terms of food security, the state of natural resources, and general living conditions, most of the ongoing interventions will not be sustainable ones. While it is known that *per capita* economic growth in a country is not sufficient in itself to reduce poverty, it remains an absolutely essential condition. The ranking of priorities in order to focus resources on goals that are most likely to reverse destructive trends becomes the priority. If the resources mobilised do not permit a reversal of these trends, even when they are focused on a limited number of priorities, only two options are left: a) increase the means, or b) adopt a defensive strategy of protecting the weakest, in which the only perspective will be increasing aid dependency.

While the strategic documents often make mention of the tendency of the situation to degrade, the consequences on the relevance of ongoing interventions and, in particular, the need to focus allocations, are not spelled out. DPEs do not seem to have taken the full measure of the challenge.

#### 5.4.2. Coherence

Assessment of the coherence of DPE actions is based on three evaluation questions:

- Are the strategies of the DPEs coherent with those of the government? This raises the question of policy alignment. (Q2)
- Are DPE strategies coherent with each other? (Q4)
- Are DPE strategies coherent with their general approach in the corresponding sectors? (Q3)

However, due to the number of DPEs involved and the multiple policies to be analysed, the question of coherence between aid strategies for Niger and the internal policies of the DPEs was not systematically analysed. It is highly probable that some DPE policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, national policies in terms of migration, and certain non-tariff barriers to European imports include dimensions that do not contribute to the goal of reducing poverty in Niger and which are therefore not coherent with this goal. West Africa is a very integrated labour market<sup>156</sup>, while the Sahel is a manpower reservoir for the region. Any increase in the export of products such as agricultural or livestock products, or of labour to Europe or the coastal zones of West Africa, has an impact on Niger's revenues. Any European or individual

<sup>154</sup> Belgian Co-operation Office in Niamey, 2007-2008 Annual Report.

<sup>155</sup> See chapter 2 above and annex 7 (particularly the sectoral report on rural development, the environment, and food security).

<sup>156</sup> See annex A4.5.

DPE policy that leads to competition with Nigerien products, limit their export, or limit emigration may have a negative impact on Niger's revenues and thus be incoherent with the goals of development assistance. These possible inconsistencies could not, however, be systematically studied in this evaluation.

#### *Are the strategies of the DPEs coherent with those of the government?*

Although we consider DPE strategies to be in line with those of the government, the absence of explicit priorities on both sides of the partnership makes it difficult to judge the extent to which DPEs optimise the allocation of their resources with a view to implementing government priorities. Alignment is easy to achieve but does not prevent **dispersion**. The application of resource concentration strategies to a limited number of priorities is far from being the case.

The same finding can be made in sectors enjoying clear national strategies such as rural development, health, or education. The rural development strategy, spelled out in 23 functional programmes and sub-programmes, is so broad that alignment is easy. In fact, many of the donors integrate their interventions in the SDR. However, they define intervention zones and funding methods themselves and at their convenience. Only Denmark has made great strides in the programme approach, with targeted budget aid. Moreover, certain initiatives have their own rationale for intervention, such as the Special Programme of the President, or, on the side of the donors, framework agreements with NGOs that are not necessarily in line with the SDR or the DNP-GCA<sup>157</sup>. In such a context, defining priorities remains especially difficult.

The Ten-Year Programme for the Development of Education for the 2003-2012 period was the most complete sectoral strategy in Niger. Nonetheless, donors were given great leeway in their operational strategies. There was a juxtaposition of individual strategies rather than a true common strategy. With only one exception, all sub-sectors of education are covered but their degree of coverage (including geographic zones) by DPE interventions is largely uneven. Consequently, despite remarkably converging positions on the PDDE, few synergies exist. At present, the contribution of DPEs is not enough to form a critical mass that can lead to significant changes in the system<sup>158</sup>.

These findings must be compared with advances in the health sector and, to a lesser extent, the water and sanitation sector. Since the development of the 2005-2009 Sanitary Development Plan, the dialogue between donors and the Ministry of Health is active. There is thus a shift from interventions that were centred on a sanitation problem in a specific geographic zone to a true programme approach at national level, focusing on priorities defined by the government, including the decentralised levels<sup>159</sup>. For water and sanitation, the harmonisation of DPE initiatives has been reinforced since July 2007 with the organisation of consultation meetings every two months. Aside from a few contradictory signs, there is good coherence between initiatives, which seem to adapt to the evolving national sectoral strategy.

#### *Are donor (particularly DPE) strategies coherent among themselves?*

The size of the country and the decision of several DPEs to focus on specific, sometimes highly peripheral geographical areas have limited the **interactions** between their interventions. Therefore, not only are there few issues relating to incoherence of interventions, there is also little synergy, except between Luxembourg and Belgium in Dosso.

If the DPEs align their strategies with the government's, they would find it easier to ensure coherence between them<sup>160</sup>. However, a potential contradiction may arise between the desire to align strategies with local policies in each country of intervention and the internal coherence of a given donor's action in a specific sector. Annex 8 (question Q3) tests this coherence for each DPE and for each of their sectors of intervention. In each case, it refers to the DPE's general strategy if one exists for that sector. For each sector, the activities of a DPE in Niger are compared with its general strategic position for that sector or

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<sup>157</sup> See annex 7, p. 25.

<sup>158</sup> See annex 7, p. 331.

<sup>159</sup> See annex 7, p. 227.

<sup>160</sup> The reverse is not true. The fact that donors harmonise their policies amongst themselves does not necessarily imply that they are aligned with the Government.

topic. The EC and France formulate their aid policies explicitly for different areas. This is also true but less systematic for Denmark. In practice, these policy positions are relatively general and influenced by common general objectives such as the MDGs, and contain few defined priorities. These general frameworks thus make it possible to reconcile the desire to align intervention strategies for Niger with the donor's own strategic position without too much conflict.

### 5.4.3. Effectiveness

The concept of effectiveness is taken here in the strict sense: to what extent do DPE interventions achieve their *specific goals*? The analysis makes use of details developed in the sectoral annexes (annex 7) as well as in annex 8. Next, impact analysis will introduce a broader concept of effectiveness, and study to what extent DPE actions contribute to achieving the *general objectives* that justify their intervention in Niger.

The implementation rate of interventions was generally high between 2000 and 2008, except in those areas where discussions reached a stalemate (education). However, their results are generally not well-known. Nearly all of the sectoral teams involved in this evaluation regretted the poor monitoring of results<sup>161</sup>. Because there are no thorough and reliable figures, comments regarding the effects on beneficiaries are based on the analysis of a small number of representative projects. They must remain conservative and limited.

#### Rural development

##### **Advances in sector structuring, partially hampered by limited local capacities**

Institutional assistance to rural development encouraged the drafting of rural development strategies and the stimulation of consultation (SDR) and coordination (DNP-GCA) frameworks. This is limited, however, by the slow development of capacities within the services assisted.

Institutional assistance corresponds to 5 focal points for intervention listed in the SDR which, by virtue of their alignment policy, can be considered the specific objectives of DPE interventions in the area:

1. Reinforcement of producers' associations (PA);
2. Access of rural stakeholders to information and training;
3. Reinforcement of information systems on the rural sector;
4. Reinforcement of participation and institutional coordination between all stakeholders;
5. Improvement of the capacities of the administrations involved.

The effectiveness of these activities is quite variable. It is limited in the rice farming sector<sup>162</sup> but is better in other areas. By supporting national policy through the **rural code and decentralised structures** (land commissions), DPEs participated in the prevention of conflicts between users. In effect, Niger needs to manage growing pressure on land, which increases the frequency and gravity of conflicts between farmers and breeders. DPEs contributed to reducing this pressure in their intervention zones, and in restoring land for agro-sylvo-pastoral production<sup>163</sup>.

The DNP-GCA, designed to anticipate and address localised and endogenous **food crises**, had been criticised for its management of the 2004/05 nutrition and food crisis. The extent of this crisis had been largely

<sup>161</sup> Note, in response to a comment on a draft version of the report, that OECD surveys on aid effectiveness (2005 and 2007) provide no information that could allow an appreciation of aid effectiveness, that is, the extent to which specific aid targets were reached. These surveys measure the evolution of 12 specific efficiency indicators, thought to allow an assessment of the extent to which donors apply the principles of the Paris Declaration.

<sup>162</sup> The Nigerien rice-farming sector has structural weaknesses that do not allow the country's production (42,000 tonnes of rice per year) to compete with commercial imports (203,000 tonnes in 2002, 150,000 tonnes in 2003 and 2004, 300,000 tonnes in 2005 and 162,500 tonnes in 2006). The goal of the PAFRIZ programme was to increase the profitability of rice-farming and ensure the sustainability of improvements by field testing new methods for supporting and managing perimeters. Five years from initial implementation, the sustainable impacts of PAFRIZ are still hardly visible. The poor performance of the private sector (operators for rice processing, decentralised financial structures) that was to have supported the sector was factor that limited the former's viability. PAFRIZ did not succeed in becoming an indispensable partner for the rice-farming industry.

<sup>163</sup> In doing so, contributing to the "regreening" process mentioned in section 3.2

conditioned by market effects induced by the economic situation in Nigeria. Questioning the DNPCCA turned out to be beneficial, given the subsequent boost to reinforcing information systems (both national and regional) and crisis management (increase in the means of intervention and steering and monitoring capacities), and to the coordination between all stakeholders (definition of a contingency plan, increase in the number of partners of the framework agreement, more regular consultation meetings). The DNPCCA is considered one of the most functional bodies in the sub-region and has gathered a good number of partners since 2005. It has strengthened its means of action as well as its steering and implementation capacities. However, there has been a proliferation in the number of participants (sometimes with specific procedures or methodologies), strategic initiatives, or funding involved, which are all factors that may undermine the effectiveness of the DNPCCA.

DPEs have successfully supported the development of **microfinance institutions**, but their professionalism is at times still inadequate<sup>164</sup>. Nonetheless, there has been net progress at the institutional level, for consultation frameworks, national strategy, and diagnostics<sup>165</sup>. Moreover, in most rural areas, where the grand majority of Nigeriens live, financial services are rare and often poorly suited to the needs of the population. Serious management and organisational problems, combined with very different and scattered configurations (geographically and thematically) have inevitably led to poor effectiveness. Only a small set of goals were achieved. The microfinance sector still remains very self-contained. Even though the Nigerien association of microfinance professionals (ANIP-MF) is making efforts to promote communication between member institutions, they have few contacts amongst themselves and with the commercial banking sector.

#### **Poor effectiveness largely explained by the country's fragile situation**

The DPE projects and programmes in support of rural development are often involved in several topics at a time: assistance for plant or animal production; management of natural resources; improved incomes through better access to financial services; prevention and management of food crises; and institutional aid. The rate of concrete fulfilment varies from one project to another or even from one DPE to another. Based on the selected sample, projects financed by Belgium, Denmark and Luxembourg have the best implementation rates.

DPEs have sought to shore up the ability of households to face crises through NGOs or development funds handled by the communes. Interventions such as labour-intensive works, vegetable-production programmes, and support for inputs, enjoyed short-term effectiveness. However, the implementation methods and the delayed availability of funding considerably reduced the effectiveness of some of them. In Sahel conditions, the opportunity cost of work and the importance of having cash incomes vary enormously by season. Payment delays in certain labour-intensive activities can, for instance, have very serious human consequences that wipe out the effectiveness of such courses of action, and call their relevance into question if the risks of such delays are not perfectly controlled. Such delays have been observed for certain projects<sup>166</sup>.

In the context of a constantly-shifting agro-pasture system, the **livestock** sector has been financed by numerous TFPs. Their interventions help in securing pasture systems by acting on access to production factors, the reinforcement of capacities, and the structuring of operators, by developing complementary economic activities and in facilitating the accessibility of communities to grains. The effectiveness of interventions is limited in particular by the economic uncertainties of extensive production and, in some cases, by the difficulties in carrying out projects.

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<sup>164</sup> There is still no general auditing tool for the sector that would rely in internal control, and external audit, and the supervision of the Watchdog of decentralised financing structures (CSSFD). The creation of the regulatory agency intended for this has yet to take shape.

<sup>165</sup> Certain projects have achieved their goals:

- ADDR (MMD, PPFME and PASFR projects): The MMD women's groups for savings and credit, inspired by the traditional tontine, is functional and effective.
- The PASFR met all its operational goals and achieved the results expected for its implementation period (July 2003 to June 2006).
- An endowment fund for the PPFME made it possible to reach expected results very rapidly, in the first year of implementation, and to create the conditions for institutional, economic and financial, and social viability.

<sup>166</sup> See annex 7 – Rural development report, indicator 6.2.3.

According to assessments of projects and supporting programmes for **plant production**, the majority of them received positive results in the improvement of rain-fed and irrigated plant production. All of the projects analysed have a protection and/or recovery component for production sites, encourage the improvement of agricultural technologies (commercial vegetable farming, improved seeds, inputs), and support the creation and structuring of PAs. Marketing support is rare. Available data is often limited to project implementation and provide little information on results (e.g. adoption of agricultural technologies). The few available national indicators, such as yields, remain at best stagnant for rain-fed crops. The instability of yields is tied to a great extent to external factors that cannot be controlled by producers (drought, large-scale parasite attacks, etc.). For irrigated crops, including primarily rice, yields are increasing, even though some drops were observed in certain years. The sale of agricultural products remains a major difficulty for producers in Niger. The coverage of producers' associations as well as the quality and quantity of services provided to members of such organisations remain insufficient in relation to needs.

### *Water and sanitation*

#### ***Support for the decentralisation process and a shift to the programme approach***

The Ministry of Hydrology and the TFPs meet regularly at the national level. DPEs join the national strategy and tend to lean towards the programme approach. At regional level, all of the examined projects support decentralisation. With the exception of urban hydrology, the projects count the reinforcement of capacities and skills of national, regional, communal, and even community workers among their goals. In this respect, projects have given rise to numerous training and capacity-building activities. Such efforts ought to reinforce other efforts made to ensure the renovation of existing water points, in light of the challenge represented by the high number of defective or non-working installations.

#### ***Effectiveness conditioned by local ownership, which is not always present***

Some completed projects have gone beyond stated goals (more infrastructure and training). However, the ownership of projects by the local population is uneven, despite the fact that ambitions were quite explicit about this. This affects sustainability at the end of the programmes.

In the case of ongoing programmes, some projects face delays and will not be completed according to schedule. Despite these difficulties, programmes clearly contribute to improving access to water and sanitation in rural, periurban and urban areas. They also contribute to the institutional strengthening of participants at different levels, sometimes to the level of communes. Skills development needs to be pursued, however, in order to tackle the problem posed by defective installations currently found in the field.

### *Transport*

#### ***Extension of the road network offset by its degradation resulting from chronic lack of funding for maintenance***

During the 2000-2008 period, the length of Niger's road network increased by nearly 20% overall. This increase was more marked in rural roads, with an increase of nearly 28% and more specifically rough roads, which formed 38% of the network during that period.

General cooperation goals for the transport sector were only partially met, mainly in the improvement of access to poor areas, areas of strong agricultural and mining potential, and the creation of a sustained funding mechanism for road maintenance. For projections of some FCFA 8 billion deemed necessary for annual road maintenance, 4 billion on average are allocated every year, representing an average budget allocation rate of nearly 52%. Despite a growth in revenue for the Road Maintenance Fund (CAFER), maintenance efforts still fall below actual needs. Moreover, the support provided to the management capacities of the Equipment Ministry did not fully compensate for the needs.



Despite the support from technical assistance, much needs to be done to create an efficient programming and budgeting system for road maintenance work, as well as the improvement of conditions and methods for such maintenance work. Road safety is also a challenge.

### Culture and media

The French FSP supporting the **Jeux de la Francophonie** directly contributed to upgrading the infrastructure and equipment used in hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> games. It also allowed the transfer of technology and expertise in sports, youth, and culture sectors. Consolidation of cultural industries in Niger remains limited.

Assistance provided as part of **IFTIC** support led to the direct training of Nigerien professionals and reinforcement of the Institute's capacities. It is not possible to compare these results with the intervention's initial goals, as no quantitative targets were set at its launch.

### Crafts industry

#### **Support for national policy structuring, but no visibility regarding available resources for its implementation**

LuxDev (DANI project), the EC (SYRENE project) and Germany (DED intervention at the National Federation of Craftsmen of Niger - FNAN) contributed financially to the conduct of studies on the strengths, weaknesses, and structuring of the sector. The sustained support from DANI in particular led to greater visibility for the profession, hitherto undervalued in Niger. More directly, DANI supported the training of officers of the Crafts Promotion Directorate (DPA) in human resources management and planning. The DPA is currently working on a Programme for the development of micro- and small crafts enterprises, aimed at mobilising donor funding<sup>167</sup>.

The DANI 3 project ended nearly a decade of Luxemburgish support for the crafts sector. Its specific goal fell under the strategy of disengagement, where it sought a transition to Nigerien autonomy in providing support services for craftsmen. This goal was broken down into four targets.

- To date, the contribution of DANI 3 to *autonomous marketing schemes* is positive at the scale of the DANI national and export marketing scheme<sup>168</sup>.
- With regard to *boutiques* run by regional cooperatives, management difficulties remain significant.
- *Credit autonomy* is attained in the sense that microfinance institutions exist and fund craftsmen in an individual manner.
- *Improvement in the performance of institutional support structures and the identification of project relay structures* were made to the best of its abilities, given the limited resources available to the relay structures.

The specific goal of the EC's SYRENE project was measured using three indicators that were not initially quantified<sup>169</sup>. These indicators have for the most part achieved their target, but they do not reflect SYRENE's ambition to structure the country's service craft micro-enterprises and become an incubator for Niger's service craft enterprises. No indicator targets the development of the RESEDA (Enterprises network for the development of craft) association, which should have been the system's keystone. Other than this grouping, no other private structure to network Niger's service craftsmen was ever created. This is a major

<sup>167</sup> This programme is aimed at facilitating the transition of current micro- and small crafts enterprises to a formal enterprise, via the different components of the PNDA: taxation, training and technology, funding, sourcing and marketing, institutional mechanisms.

<sup>168</sup> The DANI GIE is now supported by a Canadian NGO (Center for International Studies and Cooperation – CECI), as well as a Québécois school of jewellery, a trainer in Montréal, and hopes to obtain additional support from America's Development Foundation, an American NGO.

<sup>169</sup> The three OVIs for SYRENE and the level of attainment by the end of the project:

- Network of independent micro-enterprises and subcontractor of actions with the projects: some contributions in this direction with a group of micro-enterprises gathered around RESEDA, but the objective was not reached in a significant manner.
- Improvement of performances and employment: same finding.
- Improvement of impact on the environment. Same finding. Little or no replication of technologies developed.

failure of the SYRENE project, which did not succeed in introducing the habit of using technologies developed by the structures it supported.

## Health

### **Ministry's management capacity hampered by the lack of consensus regarding the use of extrabudgetary Common Funds**

The interest of TFPs in general - and DPEs in particular – in the PDS provides a good opportunity for reinforcing the Ministry of Public Health's central capacity to oversee its implementation. The Plan relies on areas of consultation such as the Partnership Framework<sup>170</sup>. All TFPs, with Belgium as the lead agency, participate in it. The Institutional Support Unit of the Ministry is an important bridge between the lead agency and the ministry. However, dialogue revolves around the management of resources rather than sectoral strategies, which most TFPs would prefer. In addition, regional partnership frameworks are progressively being rolled out more or less quickly depending on the region. Finally, DPEs helped the Ministry in drafting sub-sectoral policies (e.g. contractualisation framework, national reproductive health strategy, ongoing formulation of the health system reinforcement strategy). This is a developing process that has not yet lived up to all its potential and mainly comes up against the TFPs' internal rationales. This, for instance, is the case with agencies of the United Nations. The Ministry regrets its non-alignment with the PDS funding instrument, the extrabudgetary basket fund. This factor considerably limits the Ministry's steering capacity.

### **Good proportion of services performed, but little information on results achieved**

Physical investments and investments for training generally achieved a good level of execution, palpably contributing to meeting the goals set for the interventions. The evolution of PDS indicators appears to point to positive conclusions in terms of achieving goals. This situation is however partly misleading, as the reliability of certain data is disputed. A major problem lies in the handling of the demographic denominator; the Ministry uses its own demographic data rather than that of the INS. For example, the reported rates of vaccination coverage are especially problematic. The proposed results claim that 2010 goals were reached in 2008. Moreover, there may be justification for disaggregating data, at least at the regional level. The EC had planned to fund studies to make estimates of a certain number of basic data for the new budget support programme, but had to scrap it due to a lack of budget.

It is also difficult to assess the extent to which non-physical goals were met, because these are often geared to processes for the improvement of public system management capacities. Such processes have often been hampered by heavy rotation of local personnel (including personnel who were trained then moved elsewhere at the end of training). In general, there is no investment in the detailed assessment of these processes, nor during interventions, nor after they are concluded. Moreover, the poor quality of certain logical frameworks for interventions, especially but not limited to the level of objectively verifiable indicators, renders the task even more complicated.

## Education

### **A great increase in access but a decrease in quality**

To the extent that all projects were directly aimed at supporting the PDDE's goals, it is possible to judge their overall effectiveness based on PDDE performance indicators between 2002 (baseline data) and 2008 (end of the evaluation period):

- In terms of access, new primary school students increased by more than 7% between 2002 and 2008, and admission rates to the first year rose by nearly 9%. Although there was a slight decrease in the number of students and the crude school enrolment rate (less than 0.5%), the number of places rose sharply. An analysis of projects in the sample shows, moreover, that the infrastructure and school construction components are the ones that performed best.

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<sup>170</sup> Including a National Health Committee (CNS, decision-making structure) and a National Technical Health Committee (CTNS, technical structure).

- In terms of quality, primary school completion rates rose from 25.6% in 2002 to 41.7% in 2008, which shows a good increase in the capacity of students to meet the system's requirements in terms of knowledge acquired by the end of the cycle. However, completion rates fell by more than 13% between 2006 and 2007. Over the 2002-2008 period, the percentage of students achieving the desired level of French went from 42% to 35% (in the Soutéba zone) and from 55% to 5% for mathematics (Soutéba zone). This is also reflected at the level of case studies, where DPEs made much less effort for quality than they did for access, where the rate of carrying out activities is lowest, and where most of the methods directly targeting learning methods and programmes were conducted on an experimental basis.
- In terms of equity, there is a strong disparity depending on gender and place of residence. In 2000, schooling rates for girls were at 27% compared with a national average of 34%, with a huge disparity between urban (52%) and rural (28%) areas. 83% of adults are illiterate, and women are twice more likely than men to be illiterate. Finally, urban populations are 6 times as literate as rural populations. In all communities, and regardless of the household's level of vulnerability, education, information, training and technical assistance are unevenly shared by men and women, to the detriment of the latter. Moreover, access to education and professional and technical training is limited and does not keep up with population growth or the needs of a fast-growing young population.

#### ***Institutional Development component of the PDDE is underfunded***

Annual reviews of the PDDE from 2003 to 2008 make no mention of any monitoring indicator for its "Institutional Development" component and evade this component. The MEN report on the execution of the first phase of the PDDE (2003-2007, report dated June 2007) states that *"the analysis of the programme's actual expenditure over the 2004-2006 period reveals that the Access component is overfunded (85.3%) to the detriment of the Quality and Institutional Development components, which represent 11.7% and 3% of overall spending respectively"*.

As with the interventions on quality, certain PDDE activities involving institutional development and conducted by the DPEs (overall system management – school map – local management – support for school management committees/COGES) had low fulfilment rates. To date, the MEN still has no school map, no human resources at the central level, or inspections capable of ensuring implementation.

#### ***Gender, demography, youth***

Projects and programmes that explicitly include a gender aspect in their goals, activities and monitoring methods obtained good results.

- For Denmark: interventions supporting the MMD system, based on a high-quality analytical work, formed a model that expanded to neighbouring countries.
- For the EC, the logical framework of the ASAPI programme includes the consideration of sex-specific indicators that gave rise to performance indicators from a gender perspective.
- For BTC, ARMGD performance indicators revealed that a significant number of women were affected by the project, organised, and trained. Women indicated during evaluations that their living conditions had improved.

#### ***Budget support***

By setting disbursement criteria in terms of increased spending and performance in social sectors<sup>171</sup>, budget support only modestly contributed to reorienting public spending towards these sectors<sup>172</sup>. While we

<sup>171</sup> Source: Funding agreement between the European Commission and the Republic of Niger: *Pluriannual Program for Poverty Reduction 2006-2008* (PPARP 2006-2008, NIR/002/05), 9<sup>th</sup> EDF, Brussels, 21 November 2005;

<sup>172</sup> Annex 8, Question 7 and sectoral annex 7 – report on macroeconomic support: spending for education and health increase in absolute value (FCFA constraints) but not relative to other items of expenditure.

cannot formally establish this, it is likely that these budget increases contributed to the impact described lower in terms of meeting MDGs. The causal link between these two events remains difficult to establish.

Budget support also made it possible to pay a large number of late salaries. This made it possible to partially limit the handicaps stemming from the weakness of Niger in the context of programme implementation. Moreover, institutional support for budget aid, and the pressure of conditions for mobilising it, contributed to improving the technical and financial capabilities of the State. There is true improvement in public financial management (up-to-date national economic accounts; progress in terms of statistics, etc.) but it remains far below expectations, due mostly to difficulties in establishing institutional support for the Ministry of Finance.

### Summary

The most observable results are institutional in nature. In most of the sectors, but especially in the areas of health and the management of food crises, management structures are recognised as representing significant progress from the past. This makes it possible to have better dialogue between the government and the TFPs (especially the DPEs involved) as well as better coping skills when faced with short-term events (food security). There is still much to do in terms of harmonising funding methods.

At the decentralised level, support for local structures and NGOs is also appreciated and often mentioned as having contributed to the development of beneficiary municipal institutions.

The set-up of procedures to manage land disputes and the development of tontines for women (MMD) are also important results that DPEs have achieved.

In the field of infrastructure (transport, water and sanitation), implementation rates are high but the degree of effectiveness is unclear. The follow-up of results identified at the outset was not carried out regularly. In village hydraulics for example, a simple extrapolation based on the number of water points installed would make it possible to announce significant progress in terms of water access. These figures are contested by some DPEs who were the main players in this area, probably rightly so. These DPEs point out the uncertainty surrounding the number of effectively functional water points that were truly accessible to all, located at a sufficient distance from pre-existing points so that beneficiaries would be truly new and could be added to populations that already had access<sup>173</sup>.

Some activities such as the rehabilitation of degraded zones or the distribution of improvements in plant or animal genetics probably had a significant effect on rural incomes, but these effects remain unquantified.

In the field of education, the pressure to achieve the MDGs led to modified priorities whose negative consequences on the quality of teaching appear to be serious. Moreover, there is relatively little investment from DPEs in secondary and higher education, both of which are hardly mentioned in MDG indicators. These findings reveal an important phenomenon: in a relatively "dark" (for lack of data) universe of development aid, "spotlights" represented by MDG indicators attract the attention of the players. We can observe changes in the latter's behaviour, probably influenced by the light of regularly monitored indicators. This form of "institutional phototropism" by the donors does not imply that one should "turn off the light" by removing the most "powerful" indicators, but rather signals - in the case of education, for example - that there is a need to compensate for the MDG's quantitative indicators by using qualitative indicators that are likely to draw out more balanced behaviour on the part of the actors, and in keeping with the general goals pursued.

In the field of budget support and public finance management, DPEs adopted open strategies and took risks. There is considerable room for progress in terms of institutional support.

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<sup>173</sup> Danida (2 May 2008). Final Aide memoir of the midterm review of PASEHA (Water sector sanitation support programme), Niger, 8-24 April 2008.

#### 5.4.4. Impact

As we have seen, information for assessing the effectiveness of DPE aid is both rare and unreliable. We can therefore expect the assessment of impact to be even harder, especially if we attempt to attribute the observed impact.

##### *Hard-to-appreciate sectoral impacts*

At the sectoral scale, impacts can be summed up as follows<sup>174</sup>:

- **Rural development and environment:** on the basis of assessments of available projects and direct interviews, project impact is viewed as being generally positive<sup>175</sup>. Nonetheless, general trends observed at the level of rural living conditions are described as negative by the majority of available studies<sup>176</sup>. Although it performs well in many cases, DPE action in terms of rural development did not really manage to reverse general trends, but acted as a factor, attenuating for certain groups the general degradation in living conditions.
- **Water and sanitation:** access to water improved in occasionally significant proportions<sup>177</sup>. The impact was hardly measured, except in Maradi where a survey revealed a very sharp decrease in water-borne diseases.
- **Transport:** progress was made in giving access to poor areas, but the problem of road maintenance is not yet under control. The absence of impact statistics is surprising and will probably be made up for by a World Bank project launched in 2008.
- **Health:** despite the true dynamism in this sector, PDS goals, which are more realistic than those of SDRP or MDGs, will probably not be achieved. Progress of the very rare impact indicators measured during the period stopped short of the goals. Infant and child mortalities are an exception, even though they are among the highest in the world.
- **Education:** monitoring of MDG indicators suggests that a strong impact was made for primary school. However, the PPDE's focus on the qualitative indicators of MDGs pushed to the back burner institutional support, the quality of teaching, and support for secondary and higher levels. This finding should be compared with the lack of well-trained human resources at the level of officers and technicians, a finding confirmed by the majority of sectoral reports (annex 7).
- **Gender:** the supported projects had a significant effect in terms of female "empowerment" (claim to land, savings and loan, and participation in local decisions), but effects on income were disappointing, and the share of labour for women has probably increased due to these new responsibilities as well as the rise in male emigration rates. Given the lack of direct indicators for female empowerment in Niger, we can make use of the stability of fertility rates at an extremely high figure of 7.1 children per woman since 1960<sup>178</sup> to suggest that the general aid impact on female empowerment remains very limited. Indeed, one can expect the reinforcement of female authority within the society to lead to the adoption of less natalist attitudes.

##### *Insufficient overall impact for reversing the trends that are dragging the country to extreme poverty and increased vulnerability*

DPEs represent half of ODA given to Niger over the 2000-2008 period. If their actions can be considered as relatively aligned with the goals of the SRP, then the analysis of programmes completed during the implementation of the SRP - and to a lesser degree, of the SDRP<sup>179</sup> - would make it possible to study which trend the DPEs' action contributed.

<sup>174</sup> Sectoral impacts are described in greater detail in the sectoral reports (annex 7, Q8) and briefly in annex 8, Q8.

<sup>175</sup> But not necessarily sustainable, as we shall see later.

<sup>176</sup> Recall that the main finding of the SWOT analysis is that the surface of arable pastureland is shrinking and their productivity is falling, despite successful attempts at "regreening".

<sup>177</sup> See annex A5.3 for data by region

<sup>178</sup> Demographic and health survey EDSN/MICS III, 2006.

<sup>179</sup> These objectives are recapitulated in annex A3 (A3.6.a.1. and A.3.6.b.1 respectively).

The general objective of the SRP was "to improve the population's standard of living". The available information suggests that the incidence of poverty only went down marginally<sup>180</sup>, and that the total number of poor people increased palpably during the period under review. This means in effect that with population growth of 3.3% per year and an incidence of poverty considered as constant, the number of poor individuals increased by around 30% between 2000 and 2008<sup>181</sup>, or more than 2 million additional people exposed to extreme poverty, despite the aid of DPEs and other donors. This assessment of general trends is reinforced by findings in the field. In rural areas in particular, we do not find improvements in living conditions but on the contrary degradation, sometimes very marked, of these conditions and of the "assets" that people could rely upon to ensure their survival. Among these assets, natural resources, but also the safety of goods and persons, are the most affected. We can conclude from this that the cooperation between the government and the donors did not lead to progress towards the general goal of the SRP.

If we step down one level in the hierarchy of goals for the SRP, we find four intermediate goals:

1. Rapid and sustainable economic growth;
  2. Development of productive sectors;
  3. Guaranteed access of the poor to basic social services;
  4. Good governance and reinforced human and institutional capacities.
1. While it is known that positive *per capita* **economic growth** is not sufficient in itself to sustainably reduce poverty, it remains an absolutely essential condition. At the *per capita* income level at which Niger finds itself, the lack of *per capita* growth condemns all chances of sustainability for initiatives taken as part of the cooperation between the government and the donors. With an average net *per capita* GDP growth of 1% per year, the 2000-2006 period was indisputably better than the previous decade (during which the *per capita* growth in GDP was negative 1.4%<sup>182</sup>). This low and extremely unstable<sup>183</sup> growth rate is accompanied by an improvement in parameters of indebtedness stemming from a significant decrease in the debt burden, but also by a palpable reduction of the assets available per inhabitant in terms of natural resources. This low and fragile growth per inhabitant corresponds to the modest expectations of the SRP<sup>184</sup>; it is much lower than the growth needed to meet the MDGs and thus the goals of the SDRP.
  2. **Development of productive sectors:** few results were recorded for this area. Agricultural yields are going down, and production growth is not, on average, higher than that of the population. The mining sector is more profitable, but this results less from efficient cooperation than from a generalised increase in the cost of raw materials that was belatedly passed on to the price of uranium, thanks to renegotiated contracts with France. Other mining activities, as well as tourism, which has high potential for Niger, did not develop much owing to the insecurity tied to internal conflicts. Note that the DPEs appear to have put up with this conflict which constitutes a major handicap in the country's development, and made little attempt to resolve it.

Surprisingly, questions on trade were hardly tackled in this landlocked country, with no internal buying power, for which sustainable production means exporting (either regional or more distant exports). Being a competitive exporter is a true challenge that would have deserved more support. Given the lack of competitive productive activities, Niger increasingly exports labour in the region and further afield, although to a much lesser extent than its neighbours Mali and Burkina Faso. This important source of income will probably be on the rise. But there are very few analyses and no support from the DPEs. We cannot therefore attribute any impact from DPEs in this crucial area.

3. **Access to basic social services** has improved, especially in the areas of health, education, access to drinking water and, to a lesser extent, sanitation. The quality of these services has not always been adequate (education). The monitoring of MDG fulfilment indicators carried out by the IMF and cited in annex 7 (macroeconomics report) allows us to appreciate the impact of access to social

<sup>180</sup> The decrease was only observed in the last two years of the period.

<sup>181</sup>  $1.033^8 = 1.297$  Note that this population growth rate implies doubling of the population in 22 years.

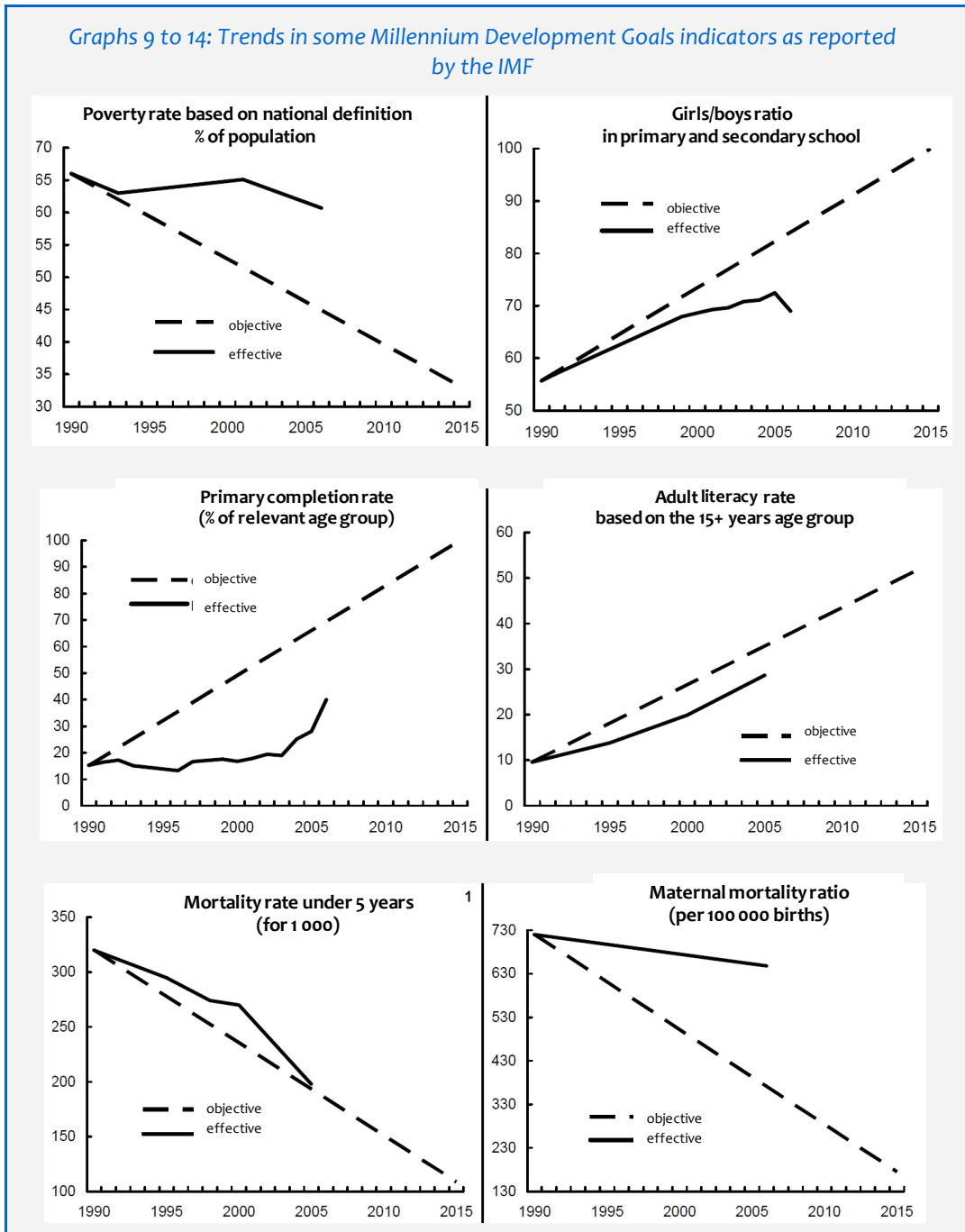
<sup>182</sup> Joint consultative note on the second poverty reduction strategy, IMF and AID, 18 March 2008, p. 4.

<sup>183</sup> See annex 4: growth of GDP per inhabitant, annual figures 1991-2008, calculations of the evaluation mission.

<sup>184</sup> The SRP predicted an average growth in GDP/inh of 1%..

services. The contribution of DPEs to these changes cannot be shown, but is probably significant given their weight in the budgets of these services.

According to the data presented in the following graphs (taken from the second IMF report on monitoring the third Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility - PRGF), the improvement of indicators reflecting the MDGs is not enough to allow the goals to be met in 2015, except for infant mortality. Nonetheless, most of the indicators are on the right track, but progress is not as rapid as desired<sup>185</sup>. For the rates of completion of primary education, growth is recent (2003) but very rapid; a catch-up period seems to be ongoing. The main point of concern is the girl/boy ratio, the progression of which recently reversed. The most marked progress was observed in primary education (at least in quantitative terms) and for infant mortality.



<sup>185</sup> Note however that the "goal" set for 2015 corresponds to global goals whereas Niger's starting point is less favourable than average for LDCs and moreover, the reference itinerary for meeting this goal is presented as linear for all indicators, which is not very realistic.

4. The quality of **governance** has changed in contrasting ways. Support of the decentralisation process allowed the installation of decentralised structures in centres supported by the DPEs. These structures nonetheless remain fragile and encounter great difficulties in mobilising and keeping the human resources they need. At the sectoral level, the clearest progress was seen in the health sector. Meanwhile, in education, the deadlocks that came about due to misappropriation could not be fully surmounted during the period. At the level of general financial governance, the evolutions recorded are deemed insufficient to allow an increase in budget assistance. The **development of human and institutional capacities** is an area where indisputable results were obtained in the health sector or at the level of decentralised authorities, at Diffa or Zinder for instance, but these results are very far below the actual needs. The image of technical assistance is fairly negative in Niger. Certain ministries such as the Ministry of Finance are little inclined to it. Certain projects, such as the MMD, gave rise to a real savings and loan dynamic within groups of women, and the model is spreading spontaneously, with incontrovertible effects in terms of openness to institutional innovation, reduction of the economic vulnerability of the women involved, as well as new risks such as excessive debt. Efforts to promote values in the areas of gender, land management, hygiene, and maternal and child health, particularly in areas with strong DPE presence (Dosso, Zinder, Diffa), had an impact on changes in mentality. The extent and practical consequences of this evolution remain difficult to assess.

Finally, the **flow of aid resources** also had a considerable impact on budget, on certain local authorities, on a number of so-called civil society institutions, companies and formal players or not, which offer services that are directly or indirectly tied to aid. Whatever its effectiveness (the measure by which it allows goals to be met, thereby justifying its existence), aid flow plays an important role in an economy as fragile as Niger's; this explains why the "benefit of aid" and the damage caused by its possible interruption are only partially related to its effectiveness. Moreover, the people involved in aid implementation (international civil servants, technical assistants, consultants, NGO staff, etc.) communicate values, behaviour, and images whose local impact is probably important and seen in different ways by Nigeriens depending on their attitudes to these values. There is a fierce debate in Niger between promoters of "Western values" and those who are less inclined. The presence of aid stakeholders plays an important role there. European agents also serve as witnesses of what happens in the field, with consequences that are more or less appreciated, as we were able to observe at the time of the food crises. Interviews conducted by LASDEL on aid perception suggest that these aspects weigh heavily on the image of development aid in Niger.

The impact of aid is only very partially determined by its effectiveness. This is also true for its image. This explains why ODA can be viewed simultaneously as ineffective and indispensable, or on the contrary harmful to development, depending on the viewpoint.

#### **Aid seen as indispensable, even when its effectiveness is questioned**

*For women in rural areas who have access to water points, for households with a health centre in the vicinity, for households that were able to recultivate degraded zones, the benefits of aid are beyond doubt. This contribution is also evident in terms of equipment for hospitals and research centres. Nonetheless, we cannot say that aid has changed people's lives, or at least their standard of living. It only plays at the margins, on some equipment and services. "In 20 years, only two things have changed in the villages. These are the carts, and most especially, the mobile phone." Even during the 2005 food crisis, LASDEL's studies suggest that cash remittances from migrants were more important for households than the massive distribution of aid. There is therefore low or no economic impact for the large majority of the population.*

*Aid is also a training opportunity for a certain number of workers. Several workers from NGOs or bilateral projects have said just how much they had learned in the teams employing them (or that had employed them, for those who already left their position). Many civil society organisations and national NGOs could not survive without aid funding, and the development of the collective associations sector, thanks to aid, opens opportunities for workers with an entrepreneurial profile, who want to devote themselves and create, and who could not do so in public services.*

*Aid is also vital for that class of urban Nigeriens living on aid, through salary bonuses or per diems in the administration, the wages and advantages of managers or project employees, the small or major advantages from these positions. "if a project manager doesn't build his house during the duration of the project, we say that he didn't know how to take advantage of things." Aid also has obvious effects on urban economy (construction, vehicles, services, etc.).*

LASDEL, Gift horse..., Draft report, Niamey (July 2009).



In terms of contribution to the SRP's goals, impact is therefore mitigated. It should be recognised that Niger has several handicaps but possesses few assets upon which it could build growth. The challenge is thus particularly difficult to meet. Nonetheless, we wonder if, guided by an overly literal interpretation of the priority goal of reducing poverty (expressed using the MDGs) which dominated the early 2000s, DPEs ended up scattering their means rather than focusing them on the systematic quest for *per capita* GDP growth factors, a condition required for initiating sustainable poverty reduction<sup>186</sup>. The SDRP has taken stock of the primordial importance that must be given to increasing *per capita* GDP growth. This priority is expressed with more forcefulness here than in the SRP. The short period of time since this 2007 document was produced does not allow to assess the extent to which DPEs are currently refocusing their support in this direction.

#### 5.4.5. Sustainability

The reference to the challenge of economic growth allows us to make the immediate link to the question of sustainability. Analysis of the sustainability of the effects of DPE interventions studies:

1. the political, macroeconomic and budgetary framework conditioning the sustainability of most initiatives taken.
  2. effects whose sustainability implies the pursuit of a public action conducted directly by public servants or by civil society stakeholders who are subsidised for playing this role.
1. The ownership of DPE-supported development policies by the government and by decentralised authorities is a critical condition for sustainability. Nigerien decision-makers must **want** to implement these policies and they must **be able to** do so, and this depends primarily on the financial and human resources they have.

The lack of ownership is rarely explicitly mentioned as the reason for abandoning a programme. We nonetheless cite an obvious case such as the promotion of hygienic practices in schools supported by Denmark. Its relevance to needs was not contested, but it had to be abandoned because partners would not own it. In addition to this case, many programmes or policies suffer from a low level of ownership. This problem, although well-known to those directly involved, is not specifically identified before the end of the intervention.

Although the quality of dialogue during the period under review made great progress at the level of policy design, the relationship remains more difficult at the level of their implementation. Budget aid has not really made headway and its relative weight in total aid has even gone down<sup>187</sup>. Although efforts were made to integrate it in coherent policies, and although the sectoral approach using extrabudgetary funds is trying to gain ground in several sectors, projects remain the instrument of choice. The discontinuous nature of DPE contributions thus remains the rule. The health sector and the crisis prevention system are two areas for which the partnership was established on a more continuous basis, thanks to the use by some DPEs of extrabudgetary common funds in support of a true sectoral or thematic policy. Education was also on the same track but the dialogue broke off suddenly when fraud was discovered. Nonetheless, in these three areas, the continuity of interventions does not lead to sustainable effects as they are understood here, because dependence on aid remains huge, both at the financial and the technical level.

The near-systematic absence of exit strategies for projects is a signal that the question of the post-project phase is not considered. Donors, particularly the DPEs, are still very much at the initiative of the programmes they are financing, and are directly or indirectly overseeing them. They do not really expect the Nigerien partners to have the institutional, human and financial means to take over before a long time. The fact that DPEs have no illusions about the sustainability of their projects does not prevent them from withdrawing at the end of the scheduled funding period, and from doing so rather brutally, often simultaneously interrupting technical assistance, funding, and thus also bonuses and advantages for local staff. This triggers the exodus not only of technical assistants but also the most dynamic local managers.

<sup>186</sup> « Growth is not a cure-all, but the lack of growth is a kill-all » Paul Collier 2007 op. cit p. 190.

<sup>187</sup> Annex 7, macroeconomics section, Table 1.

Moreover, the extreme level of poverty of the populations, the low and unstable economic growth of the country, the huge dependence on aid<sup>188</sup>, and an unbroken experience of development aid, if not humanitarian aid, since Niger's independence, has the effect of making all parties involved live with the notion that development aid will continue to be a political, economic, and even cultural dimension of Niger for a long time to come.

**Aid: a dimension of Niger's economy seen as structural**

*The structural character of aid is thus internalised. Aid is integrated into the economic and social strategies of many stakeholders, "local development brokers" that act in villages and neighbourhoods as the interface with the aid system up to the highest state authorities. This fact is qualified as "aid dependency" in recent studies, which wonder about the consequences of such dependency on the social and political dynamics of the country.*

LASDEL, Gift horse..., Draft report, Niamey (July 2009).

This perception can explain why the post-project phase is often viewed as the takeover of project functions by another programme supported by another donor. In many cases, however, this takeover is not organised systematically and the sustainability of the project's effects is not guaranteed<sup>189</sup>.

2. To be sustainable, all the initiatives supported by the DPEs do not imply the pursuit of public intervention. The network of women created in the framework of the MMD savings/loan programme is one such success story. Crafts cooperatives are also somewhat independent.

**Changes in values** and behaviour induced by DPE aid leave a long-lasting imprint, even though they are not irreversible. The perception of the status of women, the relationship with the environment, the perception of the importance of hygiene, the relationship with land in nomadic areas and its consequences on the perception of land issues, reflect changes in values, at times limited to the level of opportunistic attitudes, at times deeper. The stability of these changes in the absence of external support is difficult to assess. Other factors come into play, such as emigration to cities, which modifies the values of the migrants themselves but also of their native milieu, with which they generally maintain a link.

Changes in agricultural practices also form another example of behavioural change. However, many of the changes in this area are threatened by factors such as extreme price instability and insecurity regarding the availability of inputs if the sector has to do without external support. Despite the progress brought about notably by the intervention of DPEs, the general tendency to increase pressure on land and the uncertainties regarding the institutional framework of land management constitute major stumbling blocks for sustainability.

The few sustainable traces of DPE cooperation identified by the study cannot conceal the fact that in the absence of significant per capita economic growth, interruption of aid would lead to the rapid disappearance of most of its contributions. Despite the positive signals from 2006 to 2008, the **sine qua non condition for sustainability of DPE interventions was not met**: economic growth per inhabitant that is sufficient enough to lead to the positive evolution of living conditions, even in rural areas.

The *per capita* GDP growth of 1% per year targeted by the SRP and reached during the 2000-2007 period is insufficient and does not offer any hope of sustaining the results of aid<sup>190</sup>. However, a *per capita* GDP

<sup>188</sup> In addition to very significant debt forgiveness, the ODA represented on average 68.4% of revenue recorded at TOFE for the 2000-2008 period. The downward trend of this proportion, recorded between 2005 and 2008, is probably just temporary because own revenue probably fell victim to the economic crisis of 2008-2009.

<sup>189</sup> Sectoral reports tackle this point under evaluation question Q10 on sustainability (see annex 7).

<sup>190</sup> For this critical issue, Section 3 states: the 30-year projection of current trends leaves no hope for the sustainability of interventions, but the contrary: in 2036 the 13 million Nigeriens whose population is growing at the annual rate of 3.3% will be 34.5 million. If the annual growth of their income is only 1% per year, as it was between 2000 and 2007, the annual GDP will move from 210 EUR/inh in 2006 to 283€/inh in 2036, which indicates hardly any change in living conditions and, for the majority of Nigeriens, a sense of stagnation, probably interspersed with socially painful crises. This gives rise to the following:

growth of 4%, as proposed by the SDRP, would triple the average income per inhabitant in 2036, bringing it to 681 EUR which is still very low. However, such a shift could lead to different reproductive behaviour, more resources for the State, a certain evolution in agricultural techniques, and open more perspectives for everyone, including progressive independence from aid.

In Niger, during the 2000-2008 period and probably in previous decades, DPEs like other donors have offered **aid without development**, and did not draw all the conclusions of this situation. Among these, the following are important:

- Aid can be made up of relevant and effective interventions and still be incapable of inducing *per capita* economic growth that could offer the potential for sustainability. This can result from several non-exclusive factors:
  - a. Insufficient aid volume: this is suggested by the SDRP, which recognises that the scenario of an annual growth rate of 7% (4% per year per inhabitant) implies a considerable increase in aid volumes.
  - b. Aid resource allocation may be relevant, but their distribution is not optimised from the viewpoint of supporting this growth. The enormous needs of Niger and the scarcity of resources needed to address them, the very broad and open character of general and sectoral strategies, have the effect that all or nearly all is relevant, so nothing prevents the dispersion of resources. However, there is little reflection in terms of critical and **optimal** paths of resource allocation<sup>191</sup>. This would imply a consensus on a more limited number of priorities, and thus more detailed and partner-based analytical work, and politically difficult choices both within the government but also in discussions with other donors.
  - c. The recourse to instruments of limited duration such as projects, in a context that offers no perspectives of sustainability, gives rise to a certain waste of resources. We build without ensuring maintenance, we train without enhancing the status of the persons trained, we create institutions without committing to supporting their operations, we introduce new agricultural techniques without guaranteeing technical assistance or long-term access to inputs, etc. The loss of assets is considerable in a country where investment capacities are very limited.
  - d. A government policy that does not encourage growth and difficult collaborations with other donors can also explain this poor performance. The lack of trust between the government and the donors is a hindrance to effectiveness and may even limit the possibility of calling upon certain instruments that may provide more continuous support (extrabudgetary funds, budget aid).
  - e. Finally, the assets upon which the country can base economic growth are so limited that aid cannot act as catalyst, as is generally expected. In this case, aid becomes a source of revenue

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- there are few chances that, at a comparable standard of living, we can hope for a significant change in behaviour in terms of birth;
  - that the State's capacity to fund public services will, at best, be proportionally unchanged but probably weaker, except if there is strong and sustained growth in income from mining;
  - that in 2036, 27 years from now, aid dependency will be at best the same for each inhabitant, that is, to provide the same assistance as now, without any other prospects of sustainability, donors will have had tripled their aid to Niger.
  - that this aid will, as is currently the case, only protect a few groups from the worst effects of general misery with no prospects for progress.

Note also that this hypothesis is optimistic because it presumes that the natural resource base will provide thrice as many means of subsistence to a population that has trebled, but will have more or less the same means for enhancing these resources. It also assumes that the absence of perspectives offered by such a scenario will not have pushed the country to political chaos or authoritarian regimes.

<sup>191</sup> It is interesting to note that both the Paris Declaration and the European Code of Conduct encourage the concentration of donor resources on a limited number of sectors. This approach is nonetheless designed from a perspective of efficiency rather than effectiveness. The arguments used make mention of transaction costs, both for the government who must deal with an excessive number of donors in each sector, as for the donors themselves, who must manage resources that are too scattered. On the other hand, there are no arguments aimed directly at aid effectiveness, that is, its capacity to contribute to a sustainable change in the society being helped. One that, for example, would imply recommending a more precise definition of changes desired in the SRP, more focused and better-monitored action plans, aimed at sustainable changes to be obtained, that take into account the available resources, in which donors participate in a negotiated approach of optimising the allocation of resources.

in itself, with no other perspective. This explains the occasional emphasis on aid volume rather than effectiveness.

- If we are unable to get out of a perspective of low *per capita* growth, we must expect growing vulnerability of the agricultural and pasture-based economy, and an increased risk of food crises. DPEs are very present in this area. The latest mobilisation experiment in case of crises was also rather disappointing in terms of collaboration between the State and the donors, or even between the donors themselves. Some lessons have been learned<sup>192</sup>. There are reasons to believe, however, that the next crises will remain difficult to predict and handle given the vulnerability of the population but also the complexity of the Nigerien political and economic context.

For Niger, barring a fundamental change in the trend in terms of *per capita* economic growth, the prospect of sustainability is very far off. This means that DPEs should therefore not place too much emphasis on sustainability, and not sacrifice immediate effectiveness at the altar of sustainability for the upcoming decade. This type of consideration has consequences on the judgement made over the choice of cooperation instruments (criterion of efficiency).

#### 5.4.6. Efficiency

##### *A changing context during the period under review, both in terms of the general approach to aid and the level of structuration of the main DPEs*

Between 2000 and 2008, the general view of ODA changed considerably. Between 1970 and 2000, the DAC indicator which recommended a minimum effort of 0.7% of the GDP, which was never reached except by Luxembourg, was the only leading light for aid; donors compared efforts but not effects. In 2000, the MDGs were a chance to define a series of indicators on the expected results of aid; the MDGs shed a new light which has a strong influence on the behaviour of donors. In 2005, the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness – and, to a lesser extent, the European Code of Conduct – brought in a new perspective on aid with a series of new indicators articulated around the efficiency of the process.

In addition, institutional reforms in each DPE also had a strong impact. During or just before the period under evaluation, four of the five DPEs split their institution in charge of development aid into two, with strategic conception and discussions about strategies on the one hand and the management of interventions on the other hand:

- In some cases, the cooperation cycle was divided into a political phase and a management phase, whatever the sector (DG DEV/AIDCO for the EC, DGCD/BTC for Belgium, MAE/LuxDev for Luxembourg).
- In France, the choice of SCAC or AFD is made on the basis of the sector or topic, and not on the stage of the intervention cycle.
- Denmark did not make any such divisions.

These changes occurred at least partially during the period under review; the reason was often to increase the efficiency of interventions.

Over the same period, discussions about the deconcentration of decisions at the level of local representations of some DPEs became more and more important. Adjustments were necessary to differentiate between a structure in charge of *conceiving policies* (DG DEV, DGCD) and *implementing policies* (AIDCO, CTB) on the one hand and *headquarter work* and *field work* on the other. From this perspective, the AFD is a relatively centralised institution, even if efforts were made to improve discussions between the headquarters and the field offices by making schedules for steering committees and supervision missions from the headquarters. The French SCAC and the other DPEs are generally more deconcentrated. DPE human resources in Niger vary tremendously: the EC has quite a strong team in Niamey; France has an

<sup>192</sup> See annex 7 : rural development and food security report. This question has also been studied in detail by IRAM: Denis Michiels et Johnny Egg (2007). *Les politiques de prevention et gestion des crises alimentaires: Enseignements de la crise du Niger de 2007*, for the Directorate general for international cooperation and development of the French Ministry for Foreign and European affairs.

embassy and an AFD agency; the other DPEs are represented by lighter structures which report to embassies based in other countries of the area.

Internal transitions were sometimes hard for the DPEs and were generally poorly communicated to partners. These issues were not talked about very much by the Nigerien managers (less than in other countries). They were talked about more by the DPE representatives, especially France. These internal changes within the DPEs might have had an impact on the choice of instruments and discussions with partners.

*Projects were still mainly used, but other instruments were used*

The DPEs, who underwent the changes described above, all tend to evolve from project-based approaches to general or sectoral programme-based approaches. For Denmark, Luxembourg and to a lesser extent Belgium, this was particularly visible after 2008. For the EC and France, the changes could already be observed during the period under review.

Table 16: Aid instruments used by the DPEs in Niger (excluding project-based aid)

Sectors with a programme-based approach	Aid instruments	DPEs concerned during the 2000-2008 period
Rural development, food security	<b>Extrabudget sectoral aid</b> The extrabudget basket funds of the Food Security Fund and the Donors' Pool Fund are placed on double-signature (Head of cabinet of the Prime minister and donors' <i>chef de file</i> , namely the EU Delegation) accounts with a commercial bank.	Total 2001 to 2009 <b>Belgium:</b> € 0.85M (DPF) <b>Luxembourg:</b> €0.65M (DPF) <b>France:</b> €11.9M (DPF)+ € 5M (FSF) <b>EC:</b> €12.2M (DPF)+ €12.2M (FSF)
Health	<b>Extrabudget sectoral aid</b> Funding through a non-budget Common Fund with a commercial bank for expenditure from an annual action plan.	<b>France:</b> AFD : €15M
Education	<b>Targeted Sectoral Budget Support, funded by DPEs</b> Treasury account for budget lines of the Ministry of Education <sup>193</sup> .	<b>Belgium (2005-2008):</b> Support to the PDDE 2005: €2M Dec 2008: €1M <b>Denmark(2004-2007):</b> Section 2 of the PHAS (support to the PDDE): no disbursement <b>France:</b> SCAC (2004-2005): through PADEN €248M (spread out between programme-based aid and project-based aid, but no breakdown) AFD (2005-2008): through PADEN, €1.0M paid in December 2008
Macro-economic support to reduce poverty.	<b>General budget support<sup>194</sup></b> Multi-annual non-targeted GBS through (i) a fixed tranche paid if the EC considers that the macro-economic stabilisation process, the implementation of the poverty alleviation approach and the improvement of the management of public finance is satisfying; and (ii) a variable tranche based on the achievement of targets based on the SRDP and sectoral programmes for education and health.	<b>EC:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> FED (2001-2007): €185M after midterm review 10 <sup>th</sup> FED (2008-2013): €180M

<sup>193</sup> Common fund which is not managed by the national treasury but by independent mechanisms agreed upon jointly by Niger and the DPE. It is therefore different from budget support in the strict meaning of the term because it is a form of financing which is part of a consensual programme approach set up by Niger and the Technical and Financial partners in the sector of education.

<sup>194</sup> The forms of budget aid and extrabudget sectoral aid are defined in annex A2.5.2.

### *Instruments for France's official aid in Niger*

Instruments of French cooperation in Niger are extremely varied and in constant evolution, in a context of internal reform of French cooperation (decisions of the Inter-ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development - CICID - in 2005-2006 and general revision of public policies - RGPP - today). The respective mandates of the AFD and the SCAC changed over the period. The Embassy maintains a project-based aid, whereas the widening mandate of the AFD is leading to the development of budget aid and programme aid. Technical assistance (TA) has been modified by the successive reforms to change the approach: the AFD's TA is part of a move to help manage projects, whereas the TA of the SCAC aims at assisting, being present and having an influence, often under the supervision of political or administrative authorities; the targets of its mandate are less precisely defined.

The ability of managers to steer complex instruments determines the level of sophistication of the tools used. Alignment on the Paris Declaration therefore depends on the estimation of local abilities. In some sectors, modes of support are also a response to particular events (MEBA affair in education). Human resource constraints in Niger limit what is possible. Faced with increasingly complex aid instruments, France insists on the need to develop local ability to play a part at each stage of the cooperation process (defining targets, implementation, control).

Between the SCAC and the AFD, there is quite a strong difference in tools:

- The project-based approach implemented by the SCAC follows the procedures defined by the headquarters. Grants are managed jointly. The involvement of the Nigerien authorities is particularly strong in the France-Niger cultural centre (CCFN), which is original in that it has a bipartite board of directors and Niger contributes financially.
- The AFD uses a variety of instruments:
  - The traditional approach, with steering committees involving the Ministry of Finance (signature), the technical ministries and sometimes deconcentrated services and civil society. Project-based aid funded by the AFD combines Nigerien procedures and Non-objection certificates. The AFD insists on the strategic nature of its steering committees, which can organise discussions on the distribution of roles between the central government and the local authorities.
  - Programme-based aid is favoured since 2004-2005, in three sectors:
    - Water and sanitation: the AFD wishes to introduce a new programme approach in this sector (disbursement by tranches on an annual basis, budget delegated to the Société des Eaux). The approach is not yet in place.
    - Health: extrabudget sectoral aid (extrabudget basket funds with a commercial bank). The AFD's initial assessment of funding for health was stricter than for education, which led to this kind of instrument.
    - Education: programme-based approach in the shape of targeted sectoral budget aid. Funds were frozen for 2.5 years because of the MEBA affair. Funding started again when the first tranche was disbursed in 2009.
  - In addition to the education sector, the AFD uses targeted budget support to reduce poverty and for the finance sector. Conditions for the implementation of General Budget Support (GBS) do not meet the French requirements laid down in "the doctrine of use of GBS"<sup>195</sup>. Therefore, France does not use non-targeted GBS.

### *Instruments for Belgium's direct aid in Niger*

Direct bilateral aid provided by Belgium emphasizes co-management (creation of an on-the-ground coordination unit supported by an international technical assistant and a Nigerien manager). Co-management applies Nigerien procedures together with the notice of non-objection. For each intervention there is a technical committee responsible for decisions related to the implementation and provision of

<sup>195</sup> Co-secretariat of the CICID, doctrine of use of general budget support in foreign States. Paris (13 February 2007)

information to the joint local consultation structure (SMCL). If necessary, the latter takes decisions regarding budgetary reallocation. According to the Belgian cooperation authorities, this co-management scheme is appreciated on the ground because it upholds the autonomy of local structures with respect to central authorities. This is also the view of certain technical ministries in relation to the Ministry of Finance. Co-management, as practiced by Belgium, also faces several limitations:

- Dialogue is too often focused on resource management rather than strategic concerns. This is linked to a lack of transmission of information on results and impacts. If dialogue and decision-making structures focus essentially on resources, they do not ask for this information, which in turn is not produced.
- Consultation structures can more or less directly replace national or local decision-making structures, which do not take over after the external intervention. This impacts on ownership and sustainability.
- Consultation takes time and involves people with high-level skills and responsibilities, both in terms of partners and DPEs.

Belgium provides targeted sectoral budget aid for education – the only aid of this type it provides in Niger. In the framework of the 2009-2012 ICP, it would like to develop this approach in the health sector, through a shift from extrabudgetary basket funds to sectoral budget aid. However Belgium is basing this shift on improved harmonisation between contributing donors and on the possibility of aligning methods of mobilising these funds with the procedures of Niger.

#### *Instruments for Luxembourg's direct aid in Niger*

The Grand Duchy and Niger cooperate through the following channels:

- Bilateral cooperation via LuxDev.
- Multilateral cooperation (15% of ICP resources are earmarked for cooperation implemented by multilateral agencies and United Nations agencies in particular).
- Indirect cooperation via NGOs (non-ICP). This method is relatively underdeveloped in Niger compared to other countries (in Burkina Faso it represents 30% of the ICP in value).

Luxembourg takes a co-management approach. However, unlike the BTC and AFD, partner authorities do not share responsibilities – these fall entirely to LuxDev (direct management). Co-management is therefore limited to a consultative partnership.

Generally speaking, Luxembourg is cautious with budgetary aid due to limitations in terms of size and management capacities. Nevertheless the country would like to test General Budget Support (GBS), possibly in Burkina Faso. For Luxembourg, conditions in Niger have yet to be fully met, be it in terms of GBS or sectoral budget aid.

A recent peer review of Luxembourg by the DAC revealed that interventions were not sufficiently based on partners' strategies. The new Niger-Luxembourg ICP for 2008-2012 reflects a commitment to a shift:

- from a project-based approach disconnected from local policy (due to scarce available resources on the ground) to a programme-based approach. The transition will be gradual, with responsibilities for the 2008-2012 ICP progressively delegated in view of the programme-based approach in the next ICP.
- towards greater alignment with sectoral strategies.
- towards a sectoral focus on rural development and technical and professional training, and a geographical focus on Dosso (basic education; effort will be made to align this project with PDDE strategic goals). The ICP is thus aimed at abandoning an overly local approach which is considered unfair.

### *Instruments for the European Commission's aid in Niger*

The European Development Fund (EDF) represents 90% of the Community resources which go to Niger. The remaining 10% comes from EC budget resources. Similar application principles apply to both of these funding envelopes, with one exception: the EC budget is annualised, while EDF is determined on a five-year basis.

The EDF funds three aid instruments in Niger:

- Budgetary aid – this is non-targeted, be it global or sectoral. The application of a variable tranche based on results in certain sectors (public finance, health, education) does, however, reflect a desire to use this instrument to achieve goals in certain specific sectors<sup>196</sup>.
- Extrabudgetary common funds, which generally precede budget aid when certain conditions are not met. This practice is new – it was not allowed prior to the 10th EDF. In this case, procedures are similar to national ones with a few differences, in terms of auditing in particular.
- Traditional projects, for which EDF procedures apply.

Ensuring coherence between budget interventions and EDF interventions can sometimes be difficult. Certain initiatives funded through the EC budget are managed in Brussels (the ACP-EU Water and Energy Facilities<sup>197</sup>, for example). Here, the Delegation plays a consultative role. As mentioned in the focus group on DPE aid instruments (annex 9), headquarters initiatives can extend the scope of EC sectoral intervention beyond the concentration areas defined by the CSP. This could potentially affect the coherence of Community strategy in the country.

The implementation of EDF procedures systematically involves a National Authorising Officer (NAO, Ministry of Finance) which acts as manager for all operations carried out using these funds. The EC Delegation (“subdelegate” authorising officer) endorses the technical proposals submitted by the NAO. Steering committees are systematically established for projects and programmes. While these committees are mandated to pilot these interventions, the EC and the NAO retain veto power.

Internally, the EC distinguishes between the policy programming and dialogue handled by the Directorate General for Development (DG DEV) on the one hand, and the other project cycle phases steered by AIDCO on the other. This distinction can cause problems in terms of aligning DG DEV and AIDCO priorities: the DG DEV defends a policy position favourable to budgetary aid (policy objective of 60% budgetary aid in the 10th EDF), while AIDCO is more sensitive to financial risk.

### *Instruments for Denmark's aid in Niger*

Danish interventions during the period were in line with experience acquired by the donor over nearly 30 years of cooperation with Niger in the areas of water, hygiene and sanitation, as well as in the agriculture and natural resource management sectors. Danish planning in Niger for 2007-2011 does, however, reflect an important change, with the commitment to a gradual transition from a project-based approach to a sectoral approach (SWAP) in the above-mentioned sectors. This transition is in the interest of effectiveness and ownership. During this period, Denmark will prepare its administration for budget-based aid to sectors.

With regard to agriculture and natural resources management, for example, since 1999 Denmark has helped finance the development of rural areas in the regions of Zinder and Diffa in the easternmost part of Niger (project-based aid). In the long term, Denmark plans to support the agriculture and natural resources management sectors in conjunction with the implementation of the SDR.

With regard to water, hygiene and sanitation, Denmark provided project-based aid between 1974 and 2006. The 2007-2009 period was a transition phase primarily aimed at helping the Ministry of Hydraulics set up a programme-based approach.

<sup>196</sup> Source: Delegation of the European Commission, focus group held 1 June 2009 (summary of focus group in annex 9).

<sup>197</sup> For more information on ACP-EU Water and Energy Facilities: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm)



Denmark was involved in financing the Fund for sectoral budget support for education (2005). Notwithstanding certain issues concerning this Fund ("MEBA affair"), the country gained certain insight from the experience: a minority stake in this type of instrument entails significant management costs without compensatory negotiating power.

With regard to good governance and support for decentralisation, 2007-2011 planning focuses on support channelled through public, national, regional and local bodies, or through civil society or other players. Danish aid strongly encourages decentralisation in its activities by involving local authorities in management and in decision-making processes.

#### *Instruments which are not directly controlled by local representatives of DPEs*

Some instruments are directly controlled by the donors' headquarters: the sectoral Facilities of the EC, Belgian and Luxembourg NGO funds (indirect cooperation) in particular. These forms of funding are often paid out on the basis of calls for proposals which are not very well integrated into the strategic discussions between Niger and the local representatives of the donors. Funds from some of the DPEs to United Nations agencies are quite similar from this point of view. The French FSD is also based on calls for proposals but is managed locally by the SCAC.

In France, decentralised cooperation has established direct links between Nigerien towns and French towns or NGOs. These initiatives are not integrated into existing strategic frameworks either, even though some progress has been observed regarding historical partners (twinning of Région Cotes d'Armor-Agadez and Ville de Juvisy-Tillabéri).

This kind of instrument is sometimes considered to compensate for strict application of the Paris Declaration Commitments, which results in concentrated means and therefore concentrated power within the hands of central ministries (Prime minister, Finance), to the detriment of local powers and nongovernmental structures. Nevertheless, keeping local DPE representatives out of the loop for this kind of aid reduces coherence, and can give a fuzzy image of the DPE in question.

#### *Implementation is generally in line with forecasts, but with extended deadlines*

Whatever the sector, most of the interventions implemented within the framework of a project-based approach reach correct disbursement rates, but over a longer period than initially planned (rural development, education, health, culture in particular). The technical implementation and use of funds of Luxembourg interventions are most in line with forecasts<sup>198</sup>.

All the DPEs accept periods of extension, except the EDF, which limits the operational phase (since the 9th EDF). Projects last between 2 and 4 years for France and the EC and 4 and 6 years for the other DPEs. Belgium, Denmark and Luxembourg generally show strong temporal and geographical continuity for supported activities; these are generally set on a timeline of more than 10 years<sup>199</sup>.

In the sector of education, sample projects in basic education are funded with a total budget of EUR 52.3 million. The budget is divided between targeted budget aid for education (EUR 16.9 million– 32% of the total budget) and projects (EUR 35.4 million– 68% of the total budget). The "MEBA affair" had a strong impact on disbursements from the budget support funds for the sector. Around 10% of the budget for targeted aid was disbursed, whereas the level of disbursement for projects varies between 10% for technical assistance projects linked to the programme and nearly 100% for Luxembourg and EC cooperation projects. The project-based approach was more widely used by the DPEs over the period.

The quality of intervention formulation led to (sometimes significant) difficulties implementing the interventions. Logical frameworks are rarely reviewed when the interventions start, which led to problems

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<sup>198</sup> Sectoral reports discuss this point in evaluation question Q9 on efficiency (see annex 7).

<sup>199</sup> Temporal continuity also applies to some French interventions, in cultural affairs in particular (FSP Book network, support to the CCFN), and some EC interventions (crafts, with the SYRENE project which follows up on the PROFORMAR I and II interventions). But these are exceptions; support is usually limited to five years.

implementing the interventions, especially when these were defined several years earlier and/or “too far away from the field”.

Administrative procedures seem to be more demanding for the efficiency of the interventions of the DPEs with the highest level of financial commitment (France and EC in particular). They need more involvement from staff working on the projects. Nonetheless, the AFD made significant efforts over the past few years to increase its level of disbursement. In contrast, Belgian, Luxembourgish and Danish cooperation are characterised by the length and continuity of funding on the one hand and more flexible management procedures on the other hand.

There is no agreement on the reason why there is no institutional strengthening at the Ministry of Finance, the limited governance capacities of which limit the possibility to develop budget support in Niger. The DPEs highlight the lack of enthusiasm of their Nigerien partners (few requests, slowness). The Nigeriens on the other hand list the following reasons:

- the cost and weaknesses of traditional TA, considered to be poorly performing, with no precise targets nor deadlines in terms of communication of know-how;
- the synchronisation between the start of the TA and the end of funding of the projects, which does not help trained Nigerien managers replace the TA in good conditions at the end of the project;
- long recruitment delays; and
- the impossibility to select CVs of people who cannot be assessed.

Delays in recruiting and replacing TA are often given as a reason why the implementation of DPE interventions is slow or hampered.

When reflecting on TA, one must bear in mind the fact that human resource constraints are particularly severe in Niger, in central and local administrations (especially in poorly accessible zones), but also at the level of DPE representation. TA does indeed play a part in Niger but TA management can certainly be improved. Several local DPE representatives stress the need to redefine the role of international TA, so that it is less implementing and plays more a role of definition and monitoring of sectoral policies. This needs to go hand in hand with complexification of aid instruments and a progressive movement towards strategic sectoral dialogue. The lack of continuity of technical assistance (long interruptions and lack of communication of knowledge from one TA to another especially) is often identified as a problem.

#### *Choosing the right instrument: a complex theoretical debate, and little coordination between DPEs*

With regard to the choice of instruments, coherence poses a significant problem. It is difficult for an evaluator to take a stand. It is generally accepted that projects used as a main tool of cooperation have limitations. But alternatives (budget aid or basket funds), often presented as complementary, might be considered as contradictory by some (sometimes very radical) positions<sup>200</sup>. All the DPEs fund projects. Furthermore, the EC is clearly in favour of budget aid; France and Belgium are in favour of common funds rather. For its two focal sectors (agriculture and rural hydraulics), Denmark has planned to move towards sectoral budget support. The positions of the DPEs vary considerably, and are influenced by experiences or incidents with the government, from which the DPEs draw lessons, sometimes in a disorderly manner. There is clearly some incoherence at this level, but it is true that choice is difficult to make and that the attitude of the government has not always made things easy<sup>201</sup>.

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<sup>200</sup> “In effect, budget support turns aid into oil : money for the governments of the bottom billion without restriction on its use [...] Getting rid of all this [projects, procedures and conditions] and just sending the money is more likely to make aid less effective than to make it more so” Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, op. cit. p. 102.

ODI on the other hand, is in favour of budget aid and harshly criticizes projects and even more so basket funds: “*Basket Funds can serve to undermine sector service delivery systems more than traditional projects and distract coordination mechanisms away from core policies and systems, owing to their scale and the involvement of multiple donors*” *Building Blocks or Stumbling Blocks? The Effectiveness of New Approaches to Aid Delivery at Sector level*, Research Project on Good Governance, Aid Modalities and Poverty Reduction, Working Paper 6, ODI and ESRF, London, January 2008.

<sup>201</sup> See annex 7, macro-economic report.

Combination of instruments and optimisation of results: between 2000 and 2008, not many actions were conceived with a view of coordination between DPEs, and there were even fewer strategies to make the different instruments complementary. There seemed to be no desire to “combine instruments” to optimise results in Niger over the period under review. The focus group (annex 9), interviews and sectoral studies (annex 7) showed that instruments were chosen according to the strategies of the donors. For the 2000-2008 period, on one extreme was the EC, which developed as much as possible budget support, and on the other, Luxembourg, who favoured projects managed by LuxDev. France had different approaches, depending on if the SCAC or the AFD were involved. The other decisive factor for choosing instruments was the level of trust between the DPE and the Government. The example of Niger’s neighbouring countries shows that the same donors use different instruments when the climate of trust and the quality of political discussions seem better.

When the Nigerien government is involved in discussions about which instrument to choose (which is exceptional, as the instrument to be used for a particular activity is generally imposed on them by the DPE), the possibility of combining several complementary instruments is never discussed. Even in the health sector, where strategies are more advanced and there are many instruments, diversity is seen not as an optimised combination in any way but as a source of complexity and lack of harmonisation.

There are very few signs of leadership by the Government when it comes to making these choices. In the context of poor per capita growth, which Niger experienced during the period under review, criticism of sectoral basket funds or targeted aid instruments – especially extrabudgetary ones<sup>202</sup> – have to be compared to the advantages of these instruments with regard to projects, which are characterised by discontinuity and the relative inefficiency of a specific administration<sup>203</sup>.

The fact that several DPEs compensated for the lack of sustainability of their projects with a string of interventions on the same site or topic shows that they are pragmatic. But it does not mean to say that projects are a relevant instrument in a context where there is no prospect for sustainability<sup>204</sup>, except in cases where interventions are occasional by nature: infrastructure, awareness campaigns, occasional support for restructuring, support for a specific kind of technological progress, etc. None of the sample projects were conceived as a project spanning over several decades. Very few pursued an explicit exit strategy. Very few had sustainable effects, even when they were described as effective, meaning that they reached their targets<sup>205</sup>. The LASDEL is also very critical of the use of projects as an aid instrument<sup>206</sup>. Financing instruments such as budget aid, targeted or non targeted, or extrabudgetary funds, are designed to allow for more continuous interventions. But they are not protected from breakdowns, as show the turnaround of the World Bank in the health sector or blockades by most donors in the education sector when “the MEBA affair” came to light.

Coordination efforts have been significant though and some DPEs committed themselves a lot. It often emerged that it was hard to play the leading part. In addition to specificities of the relation between donors and the government (quite contrasted depending on the sector – health, food crisis management,

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<sup>202</sup> It should be reminded that the main criticism against sectoral common funds is the fact that they create parallel administrative and financial circuits, which go against the principle of single treasury of State funds and which are hard to reintegrate into public management. The criticism is all the more legitimate as the prospect of the State taking over the functions supported by the common funds seems near and realistic.

<sup>203</sup> Annex A8.9.3 develops the question of management units.

<sup>204</sup> See annex A8.9.2 about the way DPEs tried to guarantee some kind of continuity by lining up successive projects.

<sup>205</sup> Jean David Naudet wrote about the advantages and weaknesses at projects as a tool of cooperation in 1999 in his book entitled “Finding problems to fit the solutions: twenty years of aid t the Sahel”, Sahel Club, Paris, 1999, p. 162, suggesting that projects might be so conceptually rigid that they can lead to biased analysis according the answers it might provide:

“The project is a useful instrument, but a highly dangerous one, in establishing this link between analysis and action. Useful, because it provides an institutional framework for conducting and discussing problem analysis and facilitating processes of internal change. It can also introduce change from outside into situations that are making no headway. But highly dangerous, as experience shows, because it can short-circuit the change internalization process, which is long, uncertain and often disappointing. The project is self-sufficient, since it can itself implement the recommendations that result from the analysis. In this way the project binds together external analysis and recommendations, problems and solutions, so tightly that it may well adapt the analysis to the solutions it has to offer. The project and the expert then behave like any other actors. As solution-providers they no longer stand outside the issues, and cannot even claim to make better analyses.”

<sup>206</sup> See chapter 1 of the LASDEL report entitled “Le meilleur projet qu’on ait eu c’est CELTEL: une aide indispensable mais peu efficiente”, p 14.

education for instance), the main problem is the articulation of the groups of donors: the Europeans, the United Nations and the World Bank are actually less inclined to work together than their general discourse might imply. Furthermore, these groups are under growing pressure (especially in the sector of infrastructure) from donors who do not play the game of coordination (Arab countries, China, etc.).

#### *Examples of synergy between interventions*

On gender issues, the two DPEs working complementarily in Dosso gave each other mutual support, even if each DPE kept their own mode of funding, especially for the Local Development Fund.

In the field of transport, the synergy of DPE interventions materialised with coordinated initiatives. For instance, the AFD is funding the rehabilitation of the onion road to allow the Nigerien State to invest massively in the development of the branch, so as to improve living conditions for people living in the Galmi area.

Forms of synergy were seen in the field of support to the Nigerien cultural sector. Spain should take over from France for support to the Elhadj Taya Centre for musical training and promotion in Niamey. France had already taken over this Centre from the European Commission. The support of the USA to buy equipment for the IFTIC made this structure, initiated and supported by France, even more credible. Finally, the CCFN organises many events for other cooperations (Spain and Germany especially).

Several examples of synergy have been observed in the craft industry. This materialised with the financing of complementary interventions with the same institutional partners (Ministry, FNAN in particular). Synergy was also observed in the field of support to vocational training (ex: AFOP project funded by France).

#### *Summary*

As shown in the answer to question Q9 in annex 8, projects remained by far the main instrument used by DPEs over the period. The European Commission committed itself furthest to non-targeted budget aid. France used different instruments, from extra budget sectoral aid to targeted budget aid to support health, education and food safety. Belgium also contributed to some of the funds. Denmark too, but to a lesser extent, only to support the PDDE on the very specific topic of hygiene. Luxembourg always operated with projects.

The wish of DPEs to move from projects towards more sustainable aid instruments is undeniable, but the increased proportion of use of this kind of instrument was reversed, as shown by the OECD figures. The MEBA affair also blocked the sectoral approach in one of the sectors where it was most advanced: education.

Denmark, Belgium and Luxembourg tried to compensate for the discontinuous nature of projects by trying to introduce more continuous interventions by lining up successive projects in the same fields of intervention.

Though there was a clear effort to increase the coherence of policies and alignment with national strategies in sectors such as health, education and food security, the harmonisation process of procedures and choice of instruments has only just begun<sup>207</sup>. The health sector is symbolic in this respect. Discussions on policies in this sector are very active and constructive, but financing means are very diverse, both between DPEs and compared to other donors. The choice of instruments for funding and associated procedures is made solely by the DPEs. The Government has very little influence on these issues.

Projects, managed directly or via local institutions, generally achieved the outputs which were expected, but often over longer periods than planned. Ad hoc management units are still frequently used. The cost of TA is criticised; TA has not always been managed strictly enough. Delays in replacing experts and the fact that national partners have very little influence on the choice of technical assistants confer a rather negative image of TA in Niger.

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<sup>207</sup> See section 5.3.4.f

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Between 2000 and 2008, governmental policy, supported by donors, of which the DPE represented almost half the total aid, enabled Niger to reach an annual average per capita economic growth rate of 1%. This performance is better than the negative per capita growth that characterised the previous decade, but insufficient to give Nigeriens born today better opportunities than those of their parents. The percentage of Nigeriens living in poverty (one of the highest rates in the world) has decreased slightly, but their number has continued to increase during the period<sup>208</sup>. Niger's main economic growth factor is its demographic growth, which explains  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 4% annual GDP growth rate measured during the period under review.

Access to natural resources has declined and individual risks have increased. Income instability has remained very high and has shown a tendency to increase over the period. Economic activity and political decisions have been hindered by an internal conflict that represents a physical and economic risk factor for all.

The projection of trends observed during the period under review implies that, all other things being equal, Niger's need for aid will triple over the next 30 years in order to ensure the same support as today to a population that will be, according to these observations, as poor and even more vulnerable in 2036 than in 2006<sup>209</sup>. This projection implies, in particular, that Niger's natural resources can support a demographic burden three times what it is today without any major technological advances, which is quite unlikely. Without an increase in per capita economic growth, the tripling in 30 years of aid needs in order to maintain the same level of poverty<sup>210</sup> should therefore be considered as a minimum.

The economic advances that Niger has seen during the period fit the objectives of the 2002 SRP but cannot be sustained for reasons clearly explained in the 2007 SDRP: *"This scenario, which is unambitious and unsustainable in the long term, carries a major risk of threatening social cohesion as it means that the majority of Nigeriens would remain poor and vulnerable, have limited access to high quality social services, and be excluded from the globalisation services being established. It is therefore important to identify levers that could quickly change Niger's future and put it on to the platform of countries with rapid growth and reduced poverty<sup>211</sup>".* This diagnosis has led the SDRP for the 2008-2012 period to use a much quicker economic growth scenario: 7% per year, i.e. 3.9% per year per capita. This viewpoint is largely supported by this evaluation, which also concludes that the projection of current trends leads to a dead end and that the DPEs should focus their analytic efforts and their human and financial resources on coordinated support for a faster economic growth rate, i.e. an annual economic growth rate of at least 3 or 4% per year more than demographic growth. The analysis has been carried out using two frameworks:

1. The DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, efficiency). These criteria report on the effects and costs of DPEs interventions.

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<sup>208</sup> See section 3.2.3.

<sup>209</sup> See section 3.2.3.

<sup>210</sup> In proportional terms, this represents three times the number of people living in poverty compared to today.

<sup>211</sup> SDRP, p77. It should be acknowledged that, as stated in section 5.4.4 of the report, the conditions for the SDRP's scenario of rapid growth to be realised are very different from the conditions observed between 2000 and 2008, both in terms of hypotheses for the growth of certain sectors such as agriculture and mines, and in terms of government capacity to raise the expected internal and external revenue.

2. The 10 steps of the cooperation cycle. These steps describe the manner in which interventions have been carried out. Analysis of the cooperation cycle contains elements that explain the assessments made in the first part. DPEs are responsible for these 10 steps.

The conclusions and recommendations have adopted a comparable structure. The conclusions based on effectiveness, impact, and sustainability do not come with specific recommendations. It is indeed by changing the way they approach certain steps of the cooperation cycle that DPEs can improve their performance according to these criteria.

## Effectiveness of DPE aid

### *C1. Little-assessed results, new institutions especially in rural settings, uneven sectoral results.*

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The monitoring of DPE intervention results was generally not systematic<sup>212</sup>.

#### **The most visible results were institutional.**

- In most sectors, but particularly in the fields of health and food crisis management, the sector management structures have been recognized as marking significant progress compared to the past, allowing both improved dialogue between the government and the TFPs (especially the DPEs involved) and a better capacity to adapt to current events (food security).
- On a decentralised level, the institutional support given to public structures and local NGOs such as tontines managed by women (MMD) is also appreciated and often mentioned as having effectively contributed to the development of the institutions that have benefited from them.
- In the context of increasing pressure on land, the support provided to draw up a rural code and put in place land commissions has been a major step in limiting conflict.
- In education however, institutional support was proportionally weaker and had limited results, particularly because of lack of cooperation. This also applies to public finance management.

Other than the institutional aspects, **direct benefits to the population** are more difficult to evaluate.

- In infrastructure (transportation, water, and sanitation), the implementation rate of expected outputs is high, but the effectiveness is not well known because the results identified at the start were not regularly followed. The opening up of rural areas has improved, but road maintenance is still only partially undertaken.
- In village water supply, a simple extrapolation based on the number of water supply points installed shows significant progress in terms of water access. These numbers must, however, be adjusted based on the rate of actually functional water supply points, which is not precisely known.
- According to available evaluations, certain projects such as the rehabilitation of eroded land or the distribution of information concerning improvements in animal and plant genetics as well as improved phytocultural practices have had a significant effect on some rural income, although these effects remain to be quantified. In most cases, these new techniques are developed with an objective of more sustainable resource management. The marketing aspect, on the other hand, has not received much support.
- Agriculture and food crisis management are programmes for which time management is important. Delays in implementation have taken a toll on the effectiveness of certain initiatives. Access to financial services has been improved, but unevenly in rural areas. Despite a complex food crisis management mechanism and the strong involvement of donors, the management of the 2005 crisis turned out to be difficult and uncoordinated, partly because of the imported origin of

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<sup>212</sup> Project completion is followed but the results are much less systematically followed. The sector reports produced by 7 different teams (annex 7) have unanimously made this point.

the crisis, and partly because of difficult relations between the government and donors on this subject.

- In the education sector, pressure on reaching the MDGs has produced significant quantitative results in terms of access to primary education, but has led to priorities being changed, the consequences of which, in terms of the quality of teaching and of a lack of attention to other levels of education, seem serious.
- As for the crafts industry, the support of DPEs has allowed for real structuring, although it remains fragile without the prospect of national policy financing.
- In the area of budgetary support and public finance management, DPEs have shown themselves to be open and have taken some risks. Certain constraints have been lifted due to payment of overdue wages and the availability of liquid assets, making it possible to carry out certain public service assignments. Conditions for mobilisation have required progress in public finance management. The potential for progress in institutional support at the Ministry of Finance remains vast.

## Impact

### *C2. DPE action has had an impact on the development of Niger, but not enough to reverse the worsening situation for Nigeriens.*

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As for effectiveness, the impact of DPE intervention has not been carefully followed and can only be assessed indirectly. DPEs represent more than half of aid to Niger during the period under review; the impact of their intervention can therefore be assessed by analysing general trends observed in the country. As seen above, per capita economic growth was coherent with the 2002 SRP objectives but not enough to put the country on a trend of poverty reduction. The poverty ratio in Niger has decreased marginally. Rural living conditions have on a whole deteriorated despite a considerable effort to protect resources and improve infrastructure and services.

Among SRP objectives, access to basic social services is the area where the most improvement has been observed, as MDG monitoring indicators have shown. The development of human capacity and institutional reform efforts, especially in a rural environment, are noticeable and contribute to the DPEs' reputation for action in these areas. The values promoted by DPEs, particularly concerning gender, but also the environment and conflict management, constitute assets that need to be maintained.

Finally, in an economy as fragile as in Niger, the aid flow has a considerable economic impact, no matter how effective it has been, which explains both the importance it is given by Nigerien authorities and their relative indifference towards the results, which national administrations usually don't even take the time to assess<sup>213</sup>.

## Sustainability

### *C3. In Niger, the effects of DPE intervention are generally not sustainable.*

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Certain values and institutional reforms may be maintained after DPE intervention has ended, but analysis by sector shows that apart from a few exceptions, the sustainability of the effects of DPE intervention is weak, which creates the obligation for them to renew their projects year after year without much potential for local players, public or not, to take them on. The sustainability of the effects of DPE intervention

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<sup>213</sup> The DEPs of the different ministries have very little means and incentive for providing this follow-up.

depends less on the nature of the intervention and more on the general context (lack of significant per capita economic growth, decrease and degradation of natural resources available to each individual, weak tax basis of a state essentially dependent on aid for its revenue). This lack of prospects is amplified by the scarcity of professionals able to ensure the continuation of activities supported by the DPEs, particularly in isolated areas. Projections indicate that besides the strong acceleration of per capita economic growth, Niger will remain largely dependent on foreign aid for several decades<sup>214</sup>.

The diagnosis given for these first three criteria does not call for direct recommendations since, in order to improve the impact or effectiveness, other criteria discussed below need to be taken into account. Recommendations correspond as much as possible to the steps of the cooperation cycle presented in section 5.3.2.

## Relevance

### *C4. Insufficient research of the optimisation of the allocation of resources.*

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The choices made by DPEs for the allocation of resources are for the most part justified by (i) a desire for the **continuity** of actions already under way, (ii) through the pursuit of priorities, especially those determined by their international involvement, such as MDGs, and (iii) through a concern for **alignment** on the country's general and sectoral strategic documents. These documents are very open. Many non-prioritised goals are made known, which enables DPEs to easily align their programmes on the national strategies.

The needs of populations are such that initiatives considered by evaluators as irrelevant are rare. However, the most important message to be taken from this evaluation is that, despite the claim of the SDRP, DPEs do not seem to have understood that the economic trends they were supporting, though they seemed positive, do not make it possible for the government of Niger to pull the population out of the extreme conditions of poverty and vulnerability it is burying itself deeper and deeper into.

To reverse this trend, Niger needs quicker per capita economic growth, which is a real challenge considering the country's ecological, socio-cultural, and economic characteristics. To effectively help Niger face this challenge, DPEs need to invest more by **analysing** the constraints and potentialities of the country, accepting to concentrate their resources on a limited number of objectives in order to **optimise** their intervention for these objectives. This could involve complete revision of stated priorities.

To discover their leeway and adapt their allocation of resources to a restricted number of strategic priorities, DPEs must:

- Understand and as much as possible reveal the reasons for which they are intervening in Niger in order to define the perimeter of what they are prepared to do there as clearly as possible.
- Have as clear and constant as possible understanding of the socio-economic and especially political issues and priorities that guide Nigerien decision makers on all levels, as well as other donors.
- Look for a set of common objectives between the Government and other donors.
- Define priorities for this set in order to optimise the allocation of resources.

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<sup>214</sup> "Therefore, international support should not be considered as transitory simply to help finance temporary imbalances or to create a boost for growth. International support should be conceived as structural and not only concentrated on capital expenditure but also partially financing current expenditure and maintenance expenditure" World Bank, Niger Country Economic Memorandum Accelerating Growth and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Diagnosis and the Policy Agenda, September, 2007, section. 2.74.



## 1. Formulating DPE objectives

### *C4-1. DPEs do not define their strategies clearly enough.*

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With the exception of France in 2002 and Denmark, particularly in the area of gender, the DPEs do not define their strategies clearly enough. There is little evidence of reflection about “why we are in Niger and what we are prepared to do here”. As the framework is not explicit enough, the strategies adopted are quite conventional. Some new initiatives have been observed in the areas of land ownership, gender, hygiene, and the development of local authorities, but how do these fit into a general strategic framework?

### *R4.1. Formulating country-specific strategies to enable DPEs to declare their priorities and therefore to establish guidelines for negotiating with the government.*

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DPEs would increase their adaptation capacity if they could formulate specific strategies for which, after analysis and exchanges with the government and the other TFPs, each DPE would explain:

1. the dynamic diagnosis: identification of critical trends, including scenarios for economic demographic growth, urbanisation, degradation of natural resources, migratory flows, etc. and their implications. It is important to avoid static diagnoses but instead make projections about the future. Aid does not operate in static conditions; it attempts to change trends. The production of this dynamic diagnosis could be usefully shared between donors<sup>215</sup>. Only a few joint analyses can be found for the 2000-2008 period;
2. the actions of other TFPs;
3. the lessons learned from the cooperation experience with Niger;
4. its general objectives for development aid;
5. its general objectives (purpose) for aid in Niger, accounting for:
  - a. its own interests;
  - b. the values it supports;
  - c. global public issues the DPE considers priorities;
  - d. conclusions from points 1-4 above;
6. its available means;
7. the possibilities, constraints, and strategic choices in terms of instruments and cooperation procedures;
8. leeway, taking into account activities being undertaken and commitments made.

This document should be intended for self-reflection by the DPE who defines the framework in which it is prepared to negotiate, all the objectives it is prepared to pursue in Niger<sup>216</sup> and the means it is prepared to devote to them. It defines the basis of its accountability to its own citizens/taxpayers. This document does not need to be signed by the Nigerien government. Ideally, it should be made public, if not internal; it should be designed for a 3-5 year period but is likely to be reviewed annually based on new experiences and initially unpredicted events.

Among the documents produced by DPEs between 2000 and 2008, the French 2002 DSP most closely resembles this model, although it has never been updated. Denmark is the only other DPE with its own

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<sup>215</sup> This diagnosis can also be completed in partnership with the Government as long as it does not interfere with the independence of decisions.

<sup>216</sup> Represented by the left ellipse (zones E, B, A, C) of the diagram presented in section 5.3.2.

strategy, for its 2006-2010 cooperation with Niger. The other DPEs do not produce this type of document but rather negotiated strategy documents (ICP, CSP, DCP), which are mentioned below.

This analysis and clarification of each DPE's strategy will allow the negotiators who represent it and those in charge of the aid it provides to best know and use the leeway they have. It may be only partially public, but it must set up a framework known by those responsible for the action of each DPE in Niger.

## 2. Mutual understanding

### *C4-2. Analysis of the partner's real constraints and priorities is not always sufficient, even though it is a prerequisite for constructive dialogue.*

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The DPEs have relied on Government's poverty reduction to interpret Niger's development objectives. They collaborated to develop some of the strategies. The hypothesis that the Government owns these strategies is implied, but how realistic is this? How well do the strategies drawn up at the request and with the help of the donors reflect the real constraints, assets, and political objectives of Nigerien partners?

The SDRP's message that supporting accelerated growth is vitally important does not seem to have really been heard during the period. This can be explained by its late appearance (2007) during the period covered by the evaluation (2000-2008). This issue, however, does not seem to have been identified by the DPEs before appearing in the SDRP, which suggests a lack of perspective in the DPE approach.

Awareness of issues and catalysts for growth in Niger seems unequal. Paths for growth are rare and difficult to develop. It seems that they have not been systematically investigated. Much has been done to study the natural environment, territory, pastoral and agricultural practices, certain institutional aspects, and access to public services. However, potentials and risks seem less known in some fundamental areas. Among these areas are:

- the Niger-Nigeria border economy;
- the economic base for the relative wealth of the North;
- political issues surrounding conflict(s) and their socio-economic consequences;
- the economic importance of temporary or permanent migration and related trends;
- the economic and fiscal potential of the mining sector.

If there are existing studies of these questions, they have had little influence on the decisions concerning the allocation of resources.

### *R4.2. Understanding the issue of per capita growth and supporting it.*

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DPEs should acknowledge the need for accelerated growth, understand the reasons for it, and clearly choose their stance. They should not limit themselves to a more or less outright dismissal of this approach, considering it unrealistic. The SRP, which was satisfied with a 1% per capita annual growth rate, is not being realistic either, as this growth leads nowhere<sup>217</sup>. It is true that the SDRP's accelerated growth scenario implies unprecedented sectoral growth and ODA support. The challenge is therefore enormous, but unavoidable. DPEs should integrate this reflection into the first point of their strategy (dynamic diagnosis). They should demonstrate that they have understood the issue and accordingly position themselves clearly.

DPEs that consider they cannot adhere to a policy in support of the "accelerated" growth proposed by the SDRP should develop a credible alternative scenario for medium and long term. If, on the other hand, they are prepared to support and spend time on this approach for accelerated growth, as this evaluation

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<sup>217</sup> As indicated by the projection in section 3.2.3.

suggests, they will have to adopt an analytical approach to the political and economic realities of Niger and markets it could have access to in order to identify a restricted number of objectives to pursue and negotiate them with the Government, making up the basis for cooperation.

From this angle, DPEs should carry out more systematic identification of sources of growth. There are not very many: mines, trade, tourism, emigration revenue, irrigation, livestock farming for export, etc. Nigeriens should aim to use these resources to the greatest potential. Options are few and the research effort required to identify the Nigerien economy's factors for competition is significant. Responses certainly cannot be brought into the framework of this evaluation, but require as much team work as possible between donors, and particularly DPEs, who must see beyond the borders of Niger. This analysis must allow for the examination of neighbouring countries as well as more remote markets for the prospects and emigration that they could eventually offer. The growing climatic instability of the Sahel, the decrease in volume of natural resources available per capita, the tightness of national markets and the limited results from nearly 40 years of cooperation (a large part of which was focussed on an unsuccessful attempt at self-sufficiency) suggest that innovative approaches are required and should aim explicitly to integrate Niger in the global economy.

Economic liberalisation has scarcely enabled Niger to integrate itself in the global economy, partly because of the high cost of transport and the country's low production capacity, and partly because the only products exported from Niger are uranium and agricultural foodstuffs (even though these products represent significant sources of revenue). The majority of exports destined for Niger's rich neighbour Nigeria are in the informal sector. Very few goods that can be produced in Niger have a comparative advantage, especially considering that the country is subject to many more constraints than its near neighbours. The chronic deficit of Niger's balance of trade<sup>218</sup> is proof of the lack of opportunities offered to the country by the world economy.

The integration of Niger in the global economy requires a significant effort of analysis in poorly investigated areas, a drastic reduction in the number of objectives to pursue, strategic work that goes beyond the list of objectives and defines actual priorities and programmes, successive implementation steps for assessing the performance of the chosen policy and methods for adjustments based on established results.

Internal demand is limited but has not necessarily been completely exploited. Urban food needs are, for example, covered by imports in proportions that could partly be covered by local production. The analysis of trade networks may allow the margins of progress to be identified in this area.

### 3. Definition of the area of cooperation

### 4. Definition of priorities

#### *C4-3. National strategies include too many non-prioritised objectives and result in the dispersion of resources.*

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National and sectoral strategies are too vast and too open. They include too many non-prioritised objectives<sup>219</sup>. Even the SDRP, which insists on the need to set Niger on a path of accelerated growth, includes so many non-prioritised objectives that it promotes the dispersion of resources<sup>220</sup>. DPEs have inserted their intervention in these strategies<sup>221</sup>, but the fact that these interventions can be considered aligned does not prevent the dispersion and therefore waste of means. On the other hand, certain areas more likely to promote growth might lack resources.

<sup>218</sup> The deficit of the balance of trade was (in % of GDP) 3% in 1998; 5.3% in 2003; 5.5% in 2004; 8% in 2005; 6.4% in 2006; 4.9% (forecast) in 2007 and 4.3% (forecast) in 2008. Source: World Bank.

<sup>219</sup> Note that these objectives are presented in annex 3.

<sup>220</sup> See annex 3 A.3.6b.1

<sup>221</sup> Annex 3 analyses the strategies announced by DPEs in comparison with SRP (A.3.6a.1) and SDRP (A.3.6b.1).

### ***R4.3. Choose common objectives, in view of economic growth on the one hand, and in view of long-term solidarity with the most vulnerable on the other.***

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On the basis of the analyses mentioned above, DPEs could assist the Government in relation to other donors on a very limited number of general objectives of the SDRP likely to contribute to the acceleration of per capita growth and to be monitored by verifiable indicators. MDGs do not directly fulfil these criteria. It may be true that progress with MDGs can contribute to economic growth, but it is a very indirect approach that in the short term can contribute to increasing public expenditure without an immediate effect on economic growth. In terms of contribution to growth, it can, for example, be more urgent to invest in professional training<sup>222</sup>, intermediate or higher education (including through scholarships for studying abroad) than in primary education.

This restricted number of objectives, centred on the acceleration of growth, ideally shared between the government and the largest possible number of donors, could make up zone “A” of the cooperation area, a zone of objectives shared between DPEs, the Niger government, and other TFPs.

Furthermore, direct support to the poorest, the capacity to prevent risk in terms of food security, and protection of the most vulnerable during a crisis remain necessary.

DPE intervention can therefore be devised as two complementary approaches:

1. **Support for growth, which is a priority**, a prerequisite condition for the sustainability of all intervention. For this type of activity, the level of government ownership can be quite high (zone A of the cooperation area). This first approach consists of identifying and promoting the strong points and potential of Niger<sup>223</sup> as fast as possible and without taboo.
2. **Support to the poorest, which is necessary**. However, it must be considered likely that this type of aid will not be sustainable before at least 30 years. Moreover, this area must be considered as unlikely to be incorporated into the government’s priorities, even if the government accepts and encourages the fact that the donors are taking charge of it (zone “C” of the cooperation area). This second approach consists of protecting the poorest for as long as necessary while hoping that the success of the first approach will slow down the increase of the number of poor and eventually bring it back down. This type of support favours continuous support instruments and effectiveness on the issue of sustainability, which remains a distant prospect. It is hoped that in the long term the increase in revenue as a result of the success of the first policy leads to the development of a middle class which progressively expresses the political desire to support the poorest through public services and fiscal instruments or more independent social solidarity, and raises through taxes the necessary resources to do it. There is no indication that such an improvement will be possible for several decades.

These two policies of course have effects on each other: economic growth creates employment and can help reduce poverty and contribute to opening up the country. Conversely, educating the poorest people can contribute to growth. They are also closely linked because they rely on the same budget. But the priorities are not the same, nor is the manner in which their respective performance is assessed. The government is more likely to appropriate the first policy than the second.

Splitting the cooperation area into two zones with two complementary rationales may seem arbitrary, but it has the merit of imposing all concerned parties to remain focused on the issue of per capita growth, to measure performance compared to this crucial objective, and make the necessary adjustments in reasonable time. The suggested strategy also enforces constant awareness by all players since the sustainability of the initiatives taken within the second approach is reliant on the success of the first.

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<sup>222</sup> Luxembourg has made this a priority in its new programme.

<sup>223</sup> Elements of the SWOT analysis can be found in section 3.4 of this report. The strengths and weaknesses identified here compared to an objective of per capita economic growth must of course be analysed in more detail before being considered as the basis of strategic choices.

The DPEs' strategies mentioned in the first step of the cooperation cycle (formulation) will make it easy to read the objectives of the different parties and to negotiate **cooperation agreements**<sup>224</sup> that are more systematically incorporated into the narrow range of common objectives.

The method proposed involves a prerequisite analysis of growth factors based on the dynamic diagnosis common to all DPEs, as mentioned above (R4.1), which open into the identification of principal economic growth factors and constraints that limit their development. The conclusion is to have the most restricted number of objectives possible for intervention and action plans in order to concentrate available resources and achieve goals. Such analytic and strategic methods could be shared among DPEs and negotiated with the Government as much as possible.

This implies that these analyses will be carried out before the establishment of new lists of objectives, which might be relevant but not necessarily likely to lead to the best allocation of resources based on these two complementary objectives.

As requested by the Management Committee, a few paths likely to be explored in the context of optimising the allocation of resources are mentioned below.

#### 1. OBJECTIVE TO ACCELERATE PER CAPITA ECONOMIC GROWTH:

**The general objective of this part of the strategy is very clear: to increase and maintain per capita economic growth at a rate above 3% per year for all of Niger. If this rate is maintained on average for 30 years, average revenue would be multiplied by 2.35, which would still be under the very low amount of EUR 500 per year. This growth rate should be considered as a minimum if the deadlocks mentioned in the analysis are to be avoided.**

Subject to additional studies, a few considerations can direct the thought process:

- A country engulfed in conflict and suffering a lack of safety for people and goods has few prospects for development. Corruption and a lack of transparency by decision-makers and public bodies is another factor that discourages investment, as it affects the predictability of action. This lack of transparency promotes, among other things, predatory behaviour and the ineffectiveness of public actions, discouraging investment.
- The country's extreme poverty implies limited internal demand (low purchasing power). The priority is therefore to promote exports, both regionally and internationally.
- Climatic and economic instability regularly cause crises that are destructive to the economic and social fabric and further weaken natural, physical, and financial assets, as well as social solidarity networks that people can count on, increasing their vulnerability for the next crisis.

Again subject to additional studies, with a view to accelerating per capita growth, three priority focal points follow from this reasoning:

- a) Peace and transparent and predictable public action;
- b) Economic growth based on exports;
- c) More stable economic growth based on more diversified sources of revenue.

##### 1.1 The pacification of a country is a fundamental condition for growth.

It is necessary for stimulating national and foreign investment that is essential for starting up sectors, especially mining and tourism. DPEs will focus their means on this issue.

##### 1.2 The improvement of public management centrally is fundamental.

To implement the accelerated growth scenario, the SDRP is based on the hypothesis that donors will multiply their aid by 4.2 compared to the financial volumes they are assumed to give according to the underlying scenario for slow growth. The SDRP was based on the 2008-2012 period. It seems clear in 2010 that donors are not prepared to follow the government's proposal in this path. It is therefore crucial to concentrate available resources on a limited number of priorities. The quality of central management of the economy is therefore vital. Progress in this area will have effects such as immediate leveraging to boost donors' confidence and increase their rate of disbursement through instruments more aligned to national strategies and procedures to the benefit of more integrated management of available resources. The promotion of an institutional framework and administrative practices favouring the development of businesses is a prerequisite for the development of investments favourable to economic growth.

<sup>224</sup> DCP, ICP, or other country programmes depending on the case. These cooperation agreements define the area of cooperation. They must logically be compatible with the DPE country strategies mentioned above, but are not the exact copy. Differences between the two documents have resulted from negotiation with the Government and concern about the complementary nature of action with other donors.

**1.3 Economic infrastructure** and in particular transport will be considered a priority. The main goal will be to avoid dispersion and favour economic profitability. A very focused programme based on criteria for economic profitability will be encouraged. The subject of CAFER and road maintenance is important. The State does not have the means to provide this maintenance. Donors will have to continue to support Niger in the long term; the CAFER is probably a way to materialise this support, enabling DPEs in particular to intervene in the maintenance of vital infrastructure. The rate of connection to electricity remains low and unreliable in certain urban centres. Access to energy is a priority for the development of businesses.

**1.4 The mining and oil sector:** In terms of diversification of sources of growth, the mining sector seems to have strong potential<sup>225</sup>. In the current context of international competition for access to natural resources, the Nigerien government is probably in a better position for negotiation than in the past and will better be able to develop the country's resources.

As long as the transactions in this area are made with transparency and good governance from all parties in mind, the economic potential and budgetary impact of this sector can be significant. It would be helpful for DPEs to be present at the right time to guarantee that the State has the technical and financial means required for the development of the sector and carries it out in accordance with governing practices in the general interest of the Nigerien population. Some initiatives could be taken in the mining sector:

- 1.4.1 Sectoral study: survey of economical potential and conceivable fiscal revenue. Identification of constraints (institutional framework, remoteness, human resources, infrastructure, energy sources, water, etc.).
- 1.4.2 Priority action plan in the mining sector counting as much as possible on public-private partnerships to maximise contribution to growth: promotion of foreign investments, development of small-scale mining operations, etc.
- 1.4.3 Support to the Ministry of Finance to ensure the design and effective application of the fiscal policy concerning mines, and the sound management of funds collected.
- 1.4.4 Support in terms of governance, with the transparent management of mining activity contracts and revenue.

**1.5 Tourism:**

Tourism is a way for the country to build on and at the same time protect its rich cultural and natural heritage, its transport infrastructure, and certain urban services, especially in secondary centres with a high tourism potential. This sector could also contribute to opening Niger to the world and giving a better image to the country and its potential exports, particularly for the craft industry. The political climate and general safety are important aspects in the appeal of tourism in Niger.

**1.6 Emigration and the financial transfers of migrants<sup>226</sup>:**

DPEs will realise the importance of the potential contribution of migrants to growth through the financial transfers they make but also through the network they might represent in foreign countries, particularly in trade.

**1.7 Exported agriculture and livestock:**

1.7.1 Nigeria is Niger's main trade partner for agricultural and livestock products. In these two sectors, this evaluation has shown the weak investment of DPEs in commercial aspects. Improving the efficiency of trade routes to Nigeria and other nearby countries as well as the marketing of Nigerien products within these countries could have a significant impact on growth. From this angle, increased collaboration between DPE representatives in Niger and their representatives in neighbouring countries would be necessary. The change in demand of consumers in cities has begun offering prospects for the development of industries with higher added value (in Nigeria with fast food chains and in certain cities within the country). This last point could affect women as well. Tradesmen of plant and animal products are particularly affected by all forms of predation from official and unofficial services along the roads they travel on, especially those that cross borders. This sort of behaviour increases the costs and uncertainty related to economic exchanges and significantly contributes to the isolation of rural producers. The monitoring of illegal collection of money could be the subject of a study and become part of cross-border trade support programmes.

1.7.2 Agriculture and livestock farming for the national market: current urbanisation, demographic growth and dietary changes provide more and more opportunities for livestock farming and agriculture, particularly the promotion of food artisans who would be able to process basic products and turn them into consumer goods, adapted to the lifestyle of the consumers. Women are very active in this field. Providing food for cities with local products could also encourage contracts between private producers and traders (shopkeepers, butchers, etc.), enabling the development of small industries in direct contact with consumers.

Irrigated farming: the development of irrigation has advantage of promoting an activity less dependent on climatic uncertainties than rain-fed agriculture or even livestock farming. However, past

<sup>225</sup> The mining sector was not covered by this evaluation, but it was identified as one of the main export sectors in the SDRP and the World Bank's Country Economic Memorandum of September 2007.

<sup>226</sup> The World Bank has given considerable importance to the economic impact of emigration as a factor for growth. This issue, for which the economic importance for Niger is relatively unknown by DPEs, should be a priority in order to develop its potential. "The focus should be on boosting exports and favouring worker remittances to reduce the heavy dependence on aid flows" (WB economic memorandum, op. cit) section 5.6.

failures encourage caution and preliminary analysis of lessons learned from past experience. The generalisation of private irrigation and the professionalisation of players should continue to form guiding principles for the development of irrigation. When examining performance shows low yield, low levels of development, and a relatively undeveloped sense of business, it can be concluded that a great deal of effort is still needed. Intervention could still be developed to help secure access to land and water, especially for women, and give technical, institutional and financial support.

1.7.3 The problem with supporting rural financing has certainly improved these past few decades, but financial instruments adapted to rural living remain nevertheless rare and inefficient.

1.7.4 The development of market and storage infrastructures to support local community and private initiatives (but also public-private partnerships in the construction of shops) associated with the establishment of a legal framework that is favourable to warranty and has clear and applicable standards for registered warehouses and basic products received<sup>227</sup>.

#### 1.8 Human resources:

Both public action capacity and the development of private businesses are strongly hindered by the rarity of available skilled workers, particularly for technical and management work. The development of skills represents an urgency that needs to be addressed by investing in secondary, professional, technical, and higher education training accompanied by programmes for scholarships abroad. With the aim of targeting investments, priorities are strictly guided by analysing the needs of the labour market.

#### 1.9 Slower birth rate:

All approaches mentioned above aim to accelerate per capita economic growth. It is obvious that a slower birth rate will also help contribute to this objective, and will lower the pressure on public services. Since February 2007, the Government of Niger has drawn up a Population Policy Declaration. The strategy aims to implement a population policy across all sectors and also relies on the help of civil society organisations. It is recommended that DPEs support this policy, as some already do, as part of the Multi-Sector Demographic Project (PRODEM), which focuses partly on gender, education, information, and communication about early marriage, and partly on reproductive health, with 70% of the budget allotted to the PDS in order to support regional structures, districts, and health care centres in partnership with universities, midwife associations and doctors.

The approaches presented here are strictly exploratory at the moment. The identification of priorities requires a significant effort of analysis in relatively uninvestigated areas, a drastic reduction in the number of objectives to pursue, and strategic work that goes beyond the list of objectives and defines real priorities and programmes.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND PROTECTION OF THE WEAKEST:

Only a high rate of per capita economic growth offers the possibility of reducing the number of poor people and victims of extreme poverty. In any case, the number of people in this situation will remain very high for several more decades. Long-term DPE intervention, which focuses directly on these categories, remains necessary. Public policies will pay particular attention to this significant section of the population. DPEs will give long-term support. The performance of social solidarity policy could be assessed based on the change in certain indicators for the means of subsistence of groups belonging to the quintile with the lowest income of the population<sup>228</sup>. They can be used to evaluate the impact (positive or negative) of the effort made to increase the growth rate of average income for the poorest and the effects of policies that are specifically dedicated to them. Poverty affects more than 20% of the population, but monitoring the means of subsistence of the poorest 20% will allow focussing this second dimension of the aid policy on the reduction of extreme poverty. This fraction of the population could benefit from genuine forms of “North-South” social solidarity which could replace for several decades a form of national social solidarity that Niger will not have the means to support for a long time. This does not mean that the country’s tax burden should not be increased, but these taxes could first be used in an attempt to establish conditions for economic growth.

The social solidarity objective might include the following activities.

#### 1.10 Health:

In this sector, it is possible to suggest potential areas of future cooperation, which could contribute to the selection of a limited and clearly formulated number of priorities for action and allocation of ODA resources in Niger. Assuming PDS and SDRP strategies in the health category remain valid for the years to come, some overlapping will occur, including the potential reduction of the dispersion of support efforts in Niger. The recommendations presented here aim to simplify ODA in the health sector.

National strategies can be presented according to the areas of cooperation. Only the strategies of zones C and F are considered here. The strategies of zone F are outside the area of influence of TFPs in the general sense in that they can only really be carried out by the government and administration of Niger. These strategies are:

- Decentralisation of the health sector and hospital reform;
- Community participation, as a non-institutional form of decentralisation;

<sup>227</sup> Source: J. Coulter, *Revue du warrantage paysan au Niger (Review of Country Warranties in Niger)*, AFD, 2009.

<sup>228</sup> These indicators can be identified on the basis of the “assets” defined by DFID in the “sustainable livelihoods” approach that it has defended since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Setting up contracts and the management system of public and private health institutions.

The strategies of zone C are mainly based on long-term investments that may include a strong ODA constituent and supporting the operation of health services, limited by a precise framework.

- Extension of health coverage;
- Reproductive health activities;
- Training of personnel;
- Effectiveness of the management and allocation of resources;
- Availability of essential medicines, treated mosquito nets, and antiretroviral drugs.

These five strategies alone represent a considerable effort and it should be possible to carry out another session to determine priorities that could bring together the overlapping priorities of DPEs in particular, TFPs in general, and the government of Niger, by focusing for example on three of them: training of personnel, reproductive health activities, and the availability of essential medicines, treated mosquito nets, and antiretroviral drugs.

Such a definition of priorities, which has been proposed but remains subject to change with additional studies, along with a transparent and continual allocation of ODA resources for these policy priorities, is linked to the objective of continuity put forward in the principal recommendations.

#### 1.11 Other social sectors:

In the same way, long-term support strategies will need to be developed to support the most vulnerable. In some cases (**access to drinking water**), a contribution from users will be requested to cover recurring charges. In other cases (**basic education, literacy, primary health care**, some **rural development** programmes focussing on the poorest), DPE support will remain vital to guarantee the continuity of the service.

#### 1.12 Food security :

Enormous human suffering and the destructive effects on the socio-economic fabric caused by food crises that are in danger of becoming more common with growing pressure on resources and the hypothetical increase of climatic instability mean that DPEs will maintain a significant technical and financial presence in early warning systems and food crisis management.

## 5. Allocation of resources and

## 6. Programmes

### *C4-4. The dispersion of resources: wastefulness to be avoided.*

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To support accelerated growth, the SDRP has called for much more aid than Niger currently has access to. All sector reports emphasize the scale of needs, in social services, infrastructure, and institutional support. The public deficit is very large<sup>229</sup>. The protection or even restoration of the natural resources potential, the increase in the value of some of the country's natural assets<sup>230</sup>, the development of the population's skills... require considerable public and private resources. Private investments are very limited. Official Development Assistance is extremely present in public accounts and in the economy in general. Available human resources, whether for launching projects, governing, or administrating, are very limited at all levels of power, particularly at the most decentralised levels<sup>231</sup>. Both funding and skilled and motivated workers are very rare and expensive to find. Their appointment to relevant but non-priority activities should be considered wastefulness to be avoided.

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<sup>229</sup> Annex 7, macroeconomics section.

<sup>230</sup> Dams, mineral exploration and exploitation, irrigated farming developments, etc.

<sup>231</sup> See macroeconomic sector reports on public finance management, the rural development report, and reports on Danish cooperation on the Danish Support to Rural Development project.



#### *R4-4. Optimising the allocation of resources: a necessity.*

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Optimising the allocation of resources to match a limited number of **priority** objectives is a necessity. To achieve this goal, after having defined in the cooperation agreements the objectives in zones A and C of the areas of cooperation, split between two political axes identified above, they should be **prioritised**, in partnership with the government and donors, in order to create a genuine, articulate strategy whose execution is defined over time in the form of a **programme** in which DPEs are involved.

Weak capacity in terms of human and financial resources limits the possibilities of support in the decentralisation process, which requires an improvement in local human and financial capacity. DPEs will weigh the advantages, costs, and sustainability of decentralisation initiatives before supporting them.

## Efficiency

### 7. Implementation

#### *C5-1. The results of projects are not sustainable and sectoral support is difficult to implement.*

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Projects, whether managed directly or through local institutions, have generally achieved the expected results, but over much longer time periods than anticipated. Thematic and sectoral reports are similar when considering that, with the exception of certain values and institutional reforms, the effects of DPE-funded projects are generally not sustainable<sup>232</sup>. At the end of a project, the choice is therefore:

- to interrupt an activity that Nigerien partners are generally unable to take on; or
- to renew funding, which sometimes implies a long interruption of activities, additional studies, and defining a new project conceived for a limited amount of time, based on a new sustainability hypothesis, the credibility of which is not necessarily different from that of the previous project. Beneficiaries and players then find themselves involved in a new initiative with set time span and no visibility on the outcome of this new project.

DPEs choose their own instruments; the government stands back for these decisions. The project has remained the main instrument used by DPEs during the period<sup>233</sup>. The EC is the DPE with the greatest commitment in terms of untargeted budgetary aid. France has used various instruments, from non-budgetary sectoral aid to targeted budgetary aid in support of health, education, and food security. Belgium has also contributed to some of these funds. Denmark as well, to a limited extent, strictly supports PDDE on the very specific theme of hygiene. Luxembourg has always operated by project.

The desire of DPEs to move away from projects towards these more continuous aid instruments is undeniable, but the trend to increasingly use these instruments has reversed, as indicated by OECD figures. Furthermore, the MEBA situation blocked the sectoral approach in one of the sectors where it was most involved: education.

Denmark, Belgium, and Luxembourg tried to make up for the discontinuity of projects with an effort to provide intervention continuity by aligning successive projects in the same field or intervention zones.

The effort of alignment to national strategies is indisputable, but the process to make procedures and the choice of instruments coherent has barely begun. The health sector is an emblematic example – the

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<sup>232</sup> See annex 8, Q10.

<sup>233</sup> Note that the total aid provided by DPEs to Niger during the period amounted to approximately a billion euro.

dialogue on its policies is very active and constructive, but very diverse means of funding are used, both by DPEs and other donors. The choice of funding instruments and related procedures are strictly the responsibility of DPEs. The Government has very little influence on these issues.

### ***R5-1. The choice of instruments must favour continuity over sustainability.***

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Along the lines of the Paris Declaration and insofar as the prospect of intervention sustainability is far-off, general budget support can be considered as the most relevant instrument of cooperation (assuming the climate of cooperation is transparent and based on very similar objectives). It is an instrument of continuous support which by definition adheres to national policy and procedures<sup>234</sup>. On the other hand, in the context of more difficult partnerships, general budget support cannot provide enough guarantees for the policies agreed upon by the government and donors to be carried out according to plan. In this case, targeted budgetary aid instruments and even non-budgetary basket funds have a role to play.

The instrument used must be trusted by a maximum number of donors. In the short and medium term (at least for the next ten years), the advantages of these instruments are more important than their disadvantages, mainly because they can be used to surpass the stage of the project where discontinuity is a hindrance when faced with continuous needs over several decades. Projects should be progressively kept for intervention with a restricted timeframe, such as for the construction of infrastructure. In this sector, for example, the project approach is most recommended for the creation or restoration of transport infrastructure. However, in terms of road infrastructure maintenance, budgetary or non-budgetary support such as support to the CAFER is a more appropriate instrument.

### ***C5-2. Using ad hoc TA and management units is still very common.***

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The cost of technical assistance is criticised; interviews carried out by LASDEL are very clear about this. It has not always been managed in a strict enough manner. The time it takes to replace experts and the fact that national partners have little say in the selection of technical assistants contribute to the rather negative image that TA has in Niger, even though it plays an important role because of the scarcity of qualified professionals in the country. Relying on project management units is still common for both centralised and decentralised authorities. In certain cases, projects are entrusted to NGOs rather than the local government<sup>235</sup>.

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<sup>234</sup> Main advantages of budgetary aid compared to project aid, according to the Belgian Technical Cooperation (source: <http://www.btcctb.org/rwanda/showpage.asp?iPageID=359>)

1. Budgetary support is less costly in terms of time and money than project support. It is less expensive to procure aid where it will be used, which is essentially advantageous for the beneficiary State; moreover, budgetary aid increases the scale of results compared to project aid, which results in an increase in efficiency in terms of reduction of poverty, with the aim of reaching the century's objectives for development.
2. Budgetary support also reinforces ownership and the management capacity of the beneficiary State because it is the State itself which is responsible for allocating the budgetary aid based on the State-designed strategy to reduce poverty.
3. General budgetary support (i.e. not related to a specific sector) contributes more specifically to increasing centralised power, in this case at the Ministry of Finance and Budget, which is advantageous for the quality of budget management. Considering that the Ministry of Finance play a central role, it should be the one in charge.
4. Budgetary support also increases internal responsibility, i.e. the partner State is accountable to its Parliament, National Audit Office, and the civil society; it must know how it will distribute the budgetary support. This means that justification no longer needs to be given first to donors (as is the case for project aid), but rather to the institutions of beneficiary countries.
5. Budgetary aid can be used for both capital and current expenditure, as opposed to project aid which generally funds capital expenditure. With budgetary support, there are more available resources for recurring expenses, which in this way allows for projects with previous investment funding from donors to remain operational.

<sup>235</sup> This is the case, for example, of the Danish Support to Rural Development project, for historical reasons.

***R5-2. Favour the immediate effectiveness of aid rather than the objective of sustainability. The situation requires relying on classic means, which are sometimes assessed as substitution aid.***

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Substitution will remain necessary for a long time. Technical assistance must be managed more effectively and must be put at the service of the effectiveness of interventions. But its importance in Niger should not be decreased in value too quickly. Neither Niger nor the DPEs can afford to accept a loss of effectiveness due to a lack of human resources. In the same way, use of management units is probably justified in many cases. Contrary to what the Paris Declaration recommends, in the case of Niger, retracting from this type of management too quickly could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of actions.

In the transport sector, for example, in particular concerning road infrastructure, effectiveness is often immediate. Technical assistance remains essential because of the technical nature and cost of creating and restoring infrastructure. Technical assistance is also useful for optimising the maintenance strategies of these infrastructures.

***C5-3. Central and local Nigerien authorities do not express the desire for leadership that could be expected.***

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“Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth”: Nigerien partners are aware of the economic importance of the aid flow and their priority is to keep it from slowing down. There are not necessarily looking to control operations funded by the DPEs. Many cases of failure have been observed when projects have been handed over to national or local institutions<sup>236</sup>. These failures are due to a lack of financial and human resources, but also in certain cases to a lack of motivation from Nigerien authorities.

***R5-3a. Transferring initiative to the Nigerien partner is a long-term objective that must not jeopardise effectiveness.***

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In the current context, this transfer of initiative is not urgent. The intervention carried out by DPEs with the approval of the government does not always correspond with a high priority from their Nigerien counterparts. Among other things, the responsibility of projects has often been handed over to Nigerien partners while taking away the means needed to take on this role, considering that they should find their own resources. The general scarcity of public resources must be considered as a given for at least the next decade; this type of transfer must therefore be made very carefully.

Certain experiences are positive. For example, the transfer of funds for road maintenance and axle load monitoring to CAFER should be considered as a success. This success justifies maintaining the institutional contribution to this organisation as well as its financial support.

***R5-3b. Avoid trying to impose the sharing of certain values or priorities by passing on the initiative too early to national institutions not motivated enough to take them on.***

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Zone C of the cooperation area, in which DPEs will keep the initiative with the approval of the Government, will remain important for as long as the average per capita economic growth stays low. Only gradually will a middle class emerge that is aware of the issues of social solidarity, gender, and even long-term environmental issues. Likewise, only gradually will the State have the means to make these issues a priority.

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<sup>236</sup> See the section devoted to sustainability in the sectoral reports (annex 7).

From now until then, DPEs have no choice but to take charge of activities in zone C, or else transfer them to another donor, or else leave them to their fate.

### ***R5-3c. Improve harmonisation.***

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Keeping initiatives and concentrating resources reinforces the importance of harmonisation. It is important for DPEs, like other donors, to go through the cooperation cycle with the Government as much as possible. This is particularly important because the number of objectives to pursue needs to be reduced to limit the dispersion of resources. Reducing the number of objectives and attempting to optimise the allocation of resources will concentrate DPE resources on common themes. Finding synergies and complementarities is a priority.

Shared funding instruments could contribute to this goal. It would allow DPEs to focus their efforts on the effectiveness of shared objectives. This is not necessarily in line with the principles of the European Code of Conduct which, motivated by efficiency (reducing transaction costs), recommends the “division of labour” on a sectoral basis chosen in practice according to the donor’s capacity rather than the country’s needs. This type of approach is adapted to assign the contribution of donors to strategies for alleviating poverty with a large number of non prioritized objectives, as is the case with the current SDRP. When a real effort is made to concentrate resources to a limited number of priority objectives (which can of course change over time), the European notion of the “division of labour” should be applied cautiously to avoid it becoming a factor of dispersion and being perceived as encouragement for an “everyone in his field” approach in the face of a weak government, which would not be favourable to concentrating means on a limited number of objectives. However, the option of “silent partners” with a lead investor would allow for this sort of concentration.

## **8. Monitoring**

### ***C5-4. The weakness of the monitoring of results and impacts characterises the entire intervention structure (from the project to the general policy).***

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The weakness of the monitoring of results and impacts that characterises all levels of intervention will become an even greater hindrance if Niger and its partners turn their strategies into action programmes focused on prioritised objectives for which it will be necessary to follow progress.

The problem arises right from the formulation of projects and policies. The logical framework, when it exists, is not always rigorous enough in terms of defining objectives, identifying OVI for each of them, and defining monitoring tools and procedures<sup>237</sup>. Strategically speaking, the monitoring instruments for general and sectoral development strategies have either not been set up or have not been implemented. The Directorates for Studies and Programming (DEP) of different ministries are generally ill-equipped and have little incentive to perform this monitoring.

### ***R5-4a. An integrated (from the project to general policy) and shared monitoring system must be designed, maintained, and used in partnership.***

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Monitoring is expensive and should be designed as a public good shared between all partners (government and TFPs). Greater discipline is needed to plan intervention, both to design more rigorous logical frameworks and to explicitly “attach” these interventions to the policies and strategies they contribute to.

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<sup>237</sup> The health sector report talks in particular about this point.

Likewise, these strategies should include a limited number of critical indicators whose monitoring procedures must be clearly set up. These indicators can be built up from the two general performance indicators mentioned above for each of the policies proposed (growth and social solidarity support):

1. per capita GDP;
2. livelihoods of the poorest 20% of the population<sup>238</sup>.

Based on indicators corresponding to these two general objectives, logical frameworks can be designed to show the manner in which every intervention contributes to changing one or the other of the indicators and defining specific indicators necessary for the assessment of this contribution.

It is important to circulate this information. Internet platforms with public access or restricted to official national and international representatives, depending on the case, must be considered as additions essential for designing monitoring systems. The attention used to make information available that is adapted to the need must be at least as important as the attention given to collecting the information. Monitoring systems usually disappear because of a lack of users.

***R5-4b. Build, maintain, and share an integrated monitoring system. Support general growth management.***

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The growth strategy needs to be managed based on performance indicators that include a restricted number of critical indicators. Using the budget to implement this strategy should also be supported as a priority. This is particularly the issue of sectoral MTEFs, especially the overall MTEF that is the keystone for articulating strategic choices and budget management. DPEs will support the development of capacities for analysing this information.

The effective operation of monitoring and analysing the performance of economic development strategy is essential to implementing growth policy. DPEs should agree to allocate significant financial and human means to the monitoring. They should require it to be effectively implemented. This should become a condition for future interventions.

## **9. Evaluation**

***C5-5. All DPEs learn the practice of evaluation.***

***R5-5. Each DPE should have the freedom to design and carry out evaluations according to its needs. The results will be shared.***

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Contrary to monitoring, which is presented as an activity shared between all players for the benefit of everyone, the evaluation must be designed so that each DPE can make its own strategy adjustments, which are the basis of negotiation for future interventions. For reasons of accountability, evaluations should be public. Each donor will decide whether these evaluations should be carried out jointly or separately. Improving the monitoring system will have a decisive impact on the quality of evaluations.

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<sup>238</sup> Indicators that are relevant and measurable (sometimes qualitative) to monitor the evolution of livelihood of the poorest groups depend on the lifestyle of these groups. A very limited number of indicators for each of these groups should be identified wherever possible by agreement between donors and the Government.

## 10. Lessons learned

*C5-6. Cooperation with Niger is not halting the spread of poverty.*

*R5-6. Efforts to analyse the lessons from experience and the context of intervention must be increased. Results should be integrated into new strategies.*

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Development aid in Niger involves raising particularly complex challenges. The ability of DPEs to draw lessons from their experiences and those of their partners, and to expand on them with additional analyses, is crucial. The process for creating strategies for DPEs in Niger and the means available to the players of these strategies must allow them to incorporate the results of this analysis.

The situation of Niger's population and the threats over the country after 40 years of cooperation justify this effort of reflection, based on an accumulation of experience and research into new approaches.

With the expected results in terms of overall objectives not achieved, it is crucial to find out if the current methods for creating strategies are adapted. These methods basically consist of developing the list of objectives provided as conclusions in strategic documents, then allowing donors to choose their stance and take on related interventions, or rather a portion of these since means are limited. Previous techniques of rationalising budgetary decisions based on the concept of optimising the allocation of resources are no longer used. The reasons for no longer using these techniques and the interest of restoring them should be examined.



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