



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Niger Country Brief May 2020



Operational Context

Niger is a land-locked and food-deficit Sahelian country with a population of over 23.2 million people and an annual demographic growth of 3.9 percent, the highest in Africa. The latest food security analysis (March 2020 Cadre Harmonisé) projected 2 million people to be food insecure during the upcoming lean season (Jun-Aug 2020).

Food and nutrition insecurity are driven by poverty, environmental degradation, and recurring shocks. In addition, the deteriorating security situation on the border with Mali, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria is causing large population displacements.

WFP's emergency response assists refugees, IDPs and host communities in Diffa, Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Maradi. In areas of chronic food insecurity, WFP supports resilience with an integrated package of assistance in cooperation with the Government.

The first case of COVID-19 in Niger was declared on 19 March. As of 31 May, Niger had 958 confirmed cases of infections, and 64 deaths due to the COVID-19 epidemic. WFP response has been to prioritize lifesaving assistance, while adjusting resilience activities and interventions to comply with all COVID-19 preventative requirements. This includes integrating protection and WASH measures to mitigate health risks, implementing operational and programmatic changes to activities and distributions, and adapting transfer modalities.

WFP has been present in Niger since 1968.



Income Level: Low	2018 Human Development Index: 189 out of 189
Acute malnutrition: 10.7% of children between 6-59 months	Chronic malnutrition: 47.8% of children between 6-59 months

Contact info: niger.information@wfp.org
Country Director: Sory OUAINE
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/niger
Photo: WFP/Communication
Caption: Food Distribution in Diffa region

In Numbers*

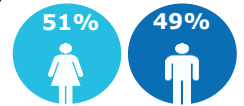
*Most of the March distributions were carried out between mid-April and early-May 2020 due to delays related to programmatic adjustments linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4,677 mt of food assistance distributed in March

USD 938,162 cash-based transfers made in March

667,546 people assisted in March 2020

USD 64 m six months net funding requirements (June - November 2020)



Strategic Updates

- The state of emergency in Niger, enacted as a response to the COVID-19 emergency, is active until 11 July 2020. The **Government of Niger has gradually lifted some restrictions that were in place to limit the propagation of the virus.** Between 13 and 15 May, the Government lifted the curfew and sanitary cordon around Niamey and authorized the re-opening of places of worship. On 25 May, the Government also lifted the ban on the organization of seminars and workshops and the restriction on the number of government employees present at service and announced the return to normal working hours.
- A joint analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on food security in Niger was finalized** by a technical working group composed of government institutions, international organizations and donors, under the lead of the National Mechanism for Food Crisis Management (DNP-GCA) and with significant technical support from WFP. The results indicate that 4.2 million people are currently prone to the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 (April-May 2020), and 5.6 million are projected to be affected during the period from June to August 2020. This estimate includes severely food insecure populations identified by the March 2020 Cadre Harmonisé (IPC Phase 3 or above) for the period April-May (1.6 million people) and the period June-August 2020 (2 million people). In addition, 2.9 million fewer vulnerable people, who were not identified as severely food insecure by the Cadre Harmonisé, are estimated to be affected by the impact of COVID-19 as well. This analysis informed the Government's revision of the "Plan de Soutien" and is part of a live document subject to update according to how the situation progresses.
- The **Government of Niger is reviewing the joint note to scale up the national Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) programme for vulnerable households as part of the response to COVID-19.** In the framework of the ASP, WFP will continue to operate under its Country Strategic Plan (CSP), whose activities are considered to be a pertinent response to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable households. The ASP is also aligned with WFP's ongoing and planned assistance programmes during the lean season and post-lean season. WFP, UNICEF, World Bank and other partners will continue to cooperate and advocate for additional resources to implement the ASP programme.
- On 28 May, **the WFP Niger Country Director and the German Ambassador to Niger hosted a press conference** (respecting all COVID-19 distancing requirements), as part of the visibility of Germany's recent €24 million contribution to support the sustainable improvement of livelihoods and food security in Niger. The press conference was broadcasted on various national and international channels, and a press release was disseminated in the local print media.
- WFP Global Air Services as part of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan:** The Government of Niger officially authorized the opening of the humanitarian corridor between Niger and Ghana under the WFP Global Aviation Service on 6 May, allowing disembarking of passengers in the capital Niamey on 20 and 24 May, with mandatory COVID-19 testing and 14-day hotel quarantine at passenger agency expense, for all arrivals. However, since 5 out of 25 disembarking passengers tested positive for COVID-19 on 24 May (no passengers disembarked on 20 May), the Government has withdrawn its authorization for passengers to disembark in Niger, as a precautionary measure. A technical group made of the Ministry of Health, WFP, OCHA and WHO, under the lead of the Humanitarian Coordinator, is developing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) indicating measures to be put in place to allow passengers to disembark. Until the SOP is finalized by the technical group and approved by the Government, passengers cannot disembark in Niger. Flights will still be authorized to land to pick up passengers leaving Niger for other destinations.

Country Strategic Plan (2020-2024)

2020 Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
265 m	174.5 m	64 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis affected populations, including refugees, IDPs host communities and returnees in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of a crisis

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide an integrated food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations (refugees, IDPs, host communities and returnees)

Strategic Outcome 2: School-aged girls and boys including adolescents in targeted food insecure and pastoral regions have access to adequate and nutritious food during the school year.

Activities:

- Provide an integrated school feeding package to boys, girls and adolescents during the school year in a way that relies on and stimulates local production (home-grown school feeding)

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations including children 6-59 months, pregnant women and girls, adolescent girls, in targeted areas have improved nutritional status by 2024

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Support national nutrition programme through provision of preventive and curative nutrition services (including SBCC, local food fortification, complementary feeding and capacity strengthening) to targeted populations.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 4: Food insecure populations and communities including those affected by climate shocks, in targeted areas have more resilient livelihoods integrated into sustainable food systems to ensure access to adequate and nutritious food by 2024.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food insecure and at-risk men, women, boys and girls, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets (FFA), climate risk management measures, and value chains.

Strategic Result 5: Countries strengthened capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions and other partners have strengthened capacities to design and manage integrated gender-responsive food security, nutrition and shock-responsive social protection policies and programmes by 2024

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide capacity strengthening to national, decentralised institutions and partners on: (i) coherent and gender-transformative intersectoral policies; (ii) planning, (iii) coordination mechanisms, (iii) ownership and programme implementation, and (iv) knowledge management.

Strategic Result 8: Global partnership

Strategic Outcome 6: Humanitarian and development partners in Niger have access to common services and expertise to access and operate in targeted areas until appropriate and sustainable alternatives are available

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide UNHAS flight services to partners, to access areas of humanitarian interventions.
- Provide logistics, ITC and coordination services to partners in absence of alternative to ensure humanitarian assistance as well as other supply chain services and expertise on demand.

Operational Updates

• **Access and humanitarian missions to support vulnerable populations affected by the impacts of COVID-19 and food insecurity are still restricted,** due to continued insecurity in the west (Tahoua and Tillaberi), South (Maradi) and South-East (Diffa) regions and the extension of the State of emergency (on 17 March) for a period of three months in Diffa, Tillaberi and 2 out of 12 Departments of the Tahoua region.

On 31 May, a non-State armed groups (NSAGs) attack was carried out in the *zones d'accueil des réfugiés* (ZAR) nomadic refugee area of Intikane, North Tahoua. The attack resulted in the deaths of two refugee community leaders and the kidnapping of two other people. On 2 June 2020, WFP participated in a joint mission to assess the extent of the physical damage. The mission noted serious damage to a central water pumping station which cut off the only source of drinking water in the area, sabotage to the telephone network, and the burning of a store containing non-food items. In addition, significant population movement from this area has been noted following the attack.

• **Schools in Niger will reopen for 45 days from 2 June to 15 July to allow for the completion of the school year.** The Government has maintained a ban on school canteens during this time to avoid large groupings and to limit the risk of exposure to the virus for canteen staff during meal preparation. WFP will continue its response in distributing take-home rations covering three-months from April to June, serving as an essential safety net for children and families in rural areas. Remaining stock from end of June may be used for an additional 15-days where possible. Take-home rations are coupled with facemask distributions, as part of WFP's contribution to the Government's campaign to promote the widespread use of facemasks.

• In line with its adapted COVID-19 Response Strategy, **WFP has been providing 2-3 months combined distributions to targeted beneficiaries.** Cumulative April and May distributions for the pastoral lean season are close to completion. WFP plans to reach around 1.06 million beneficiaries during the pastoral and agricultural lean season interventions (600,000 beneficiaries under crisis response and 465,000 beneficiaries under resilience interventions), based on available resources. WFP is already providing lean season food assistance to 34,000 pastoralists in the Tahoua region. WFP is exploring the possibility to further prioritize cash interventions where possible, considering limited local purchase options at this time of the year, as well as the lead time related to food procurement through international purchases. WFP's food and cash distributions are coupled with prevention of acute malnutrition activities for children aged 6-23 months from the same households.

• On 11 May, WFP Niger set up its **Remote Monitoring System (RMS)** to ensure the continuity of monitoring & evaluation data collection activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The RMS is fully compliant with WFP corporate guidance setting out requirements for monitoring during the pandemic, and with the COVID-19 minimum monitoring requirements. The RMS relies on remote data collection via mobile phone.

Food Security Cluster

• The **revision of the Humanitarian Response Plan is still ongoing** considering the latest Cadre Harmonisé results (March 2020) and the impact of COVID-19 on food security.

• With the support of the Food Security Cluster (FSC), **the Government (DNP-GCA) is creating synergies between the multiple assessments and evaluations on COVID-19 and food security planned by different actors** (including FAO, Oxfam, Reach and ACTED). A committee has been created within the DNP-GCA to review the planned assessments. WFP is exploring how its remote data collection systems (mVAM) can contribute to the update of the COVID-19 impact analysis.

• The Government (Director General of the Locust Watch in Niger, *Observatoire Acridien*) has prepared a national response plan to mitigate the risk of locust infestations.

Air Services

• On 28 May, **UNHAS Niger received authorization from the National Civil Aviation to resume domestic flights** which were suspended since 30 March. UNHAS aircrafts already meet all COVID-19 safety, hygiene and protective requirements as per government preventative measures. WFP is working with WHO, OCHA and the Government to ensure that all airports in the country are compliant with preventive measures to mitigate COVID-19 related risks before officially resuming domestic UNHAS Niger flights.

Donors

Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, UN CERF, UN Other Funds and Agencies, UK, USA.