WFP Niger
Country Brief
May 2021

Operational Context

Niger is a land-locked and food-deficit Sahelian country with a population of over 24.2 million (UNFPA, 2020) and an annual demographic growth of 3.9 percent, the highest in Africa. The results of the March 2021 Cadre Harmonisé estimates 1.6 million people to be food insecure during the March-May 2021 period and 2.3 million over the upcoming lean season period (June-August 2021).

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 coupled with socioeconomic deteriorations.

WFP’s emergency response provides support to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in Diffa, Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Maradi regions. 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 2020. As of 29 May 2021, Niger had 5,410 confirmed cases, including 5,083 people recovered and 192 deaths. WFP response has prioritized lifesaving assistance, while adjusting resilience activities and interventions to comply with all COVID-19 preventive 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.

Opportunities

• Together with other partners, WFP supported the Government on the development of the three-year action plan for Nexus operationalization, validated in May. WFP is providing financial and technical support to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and to the other line ministries involved in the tripartite technical committee on the nexus.

• Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, WFP took part in the consultations organized with the Government and key stakeholders on key thematic areas to support the elaboration of the new Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The dialogue has identified root causes of conflict, challenges, and bottleneck which undermines economic and social development of Niger and proposed alternatives approaches. The results of this consultation will be used for the formulation of the new UNSDCF.

In Numbers

2,760 mt* of food assistance distributed
USD 2.39 m* of cash-based transfers made
USD 94 m six months (June-November 2021) net funding requirements.

1.03 million* people assisted in May 2021

* These are preliminary figures.

Strategic Updates

• A Note Verbale on access was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10 May, overruling the one issued on 2 September which restricted access outside of all main city limits for international organizations unless accompanied by a military escort. The new Note Verbale establishes that regional and departmental authorities will determine whether armed escorts are needed. WFP resumed field missions in compliance with the new terms. However, humanitarian access remains an issue of concern, as was already the case before September 2020.

• The security situation continues to be volatile. In Tillabéri, some attacks by non-State armed groups (NSAGs) caused the displacement of some 24,000 people in May. Following an attack in Diffa city on 28 May, all UN missions to Diffa were suspended for two weeks. In Maradi and Tahoua regions, persistent attacks, killings and kidnappings were recorded, especially in the villages close to the borders with Nigeria and Mali respectively. WFP is providing emergency assistance to the displaced people.

• WFP is implementing the pastoral lean season response (April to June) and is preparing the agricultural one (June to August). The March 2021 Cadre Harmonisé (CH) identified a total of 2.3 million people in need during the lean season. Due to funding gaps, WFP downsized its implementation plan target to some 680,000 people (instead of 1.3 million initially planned in its needs-based plan) to be reached with unconditional assistance. The overall beneficiaries targeted by WFP, the Government and Food Security NGOs are now estimated at 1.8 million people, with a gap of at least 500,000 people in need of assistance that cannot be reached due to funding constraints.
**Country Strategic Plan (2020-2024)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2021 Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>2021 Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300.5 m</td>
<td>147 m</td>
<td>94 m*</td>
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</table>

*Six-month net funding requirements as of 7 June 2021.

**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.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**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 Outcome 4:** Food systems are sustainable

**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 6:** 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.

- **School Feeding:** During May, WFP reached 250,000 students (51 percent boys and 49 percent girls) in 1,581 schools in Niger, including with USD 1.2 million in direct cash transfer to 1,376 schools (targeting 220,000 children) to allow the purchase of 1,500 mt of food locally; and 169 mt of food delivered by WFP to 205 schools (targeting 30,000 children).

- **Nutrition:** in May, WFP reached almost 108,000 beneficiaries with supplementary feeding for the treatment and prevention of malnutrition. WFP participated in an equipment handover ceremony organized by its partner GRET on 26 May, as part of the implementation of the Réponse à la Crise Alimentaire au Centre Sahel (CRIALCES) aimed at strengthening local producers’ capacities to produce fortified food.

- **Food assistance for assets (FFA):** WFP renewed its agreements with the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Hydraulics, and with Universities for the technical monitoring and validation of FFA activities. During the lean season, WFP is targeting 500,000 beneficiaries of FFA activities with unconditional food assistance in the form of in-kind or cash-based transfers, to preserve gains obtained so far in vulnerable areas targeted through the resilience package.

- **WFP and GIZ are kickstarting** a collaboration to strengthen resilience in Tahoua and Zinder through integrated packages of interventions.

- **WFP is further strengthening the collaboration with the other Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs)** through a three-year (2021-2023) project called “Joint Sahel Programme in response to the Challenges of Climate Change, Conflict and Development (SD3C)”, with IFAD. The project aims at strengthening the resilience and improving the economic integration of smallholder producers.

- **A joint mission carried out by WFP and the Ministry of Community Development in Maradi and Zinder** from 24 to 28 May to oversee resilience activities, found that the absence of WFP from the field sites for eight months due to access constraints, caused in certain sites a sub-standard quality of activities implementation and monitoring. The mission discussed with key stakeholders and formulated recommendations on how to improve the monitoring system, the appropriation at all levels, and how to leverage on the results achieved for the scaling up.

- **Cash-Based Transfers:** WFP, is working with the Government and partners on the revision of cash transfer values according to the Minimum Expenditure Basket which may be used for the 2022 cash-based responses.

**Assessment and Monitoring**

- **Update on market analysis:** Given rising food prices in Niger and the West Africa region, WFP continues to closely monitor market prices across the country. WFP also launched data collection for the Market Functionality Index (MFI), WFP’s global market assessment methodology which will help refine the choice of modality (food or cash) and the cash transfer value.

- **Resume of on-site WFP monitoring:** Since the new Note Verbale was issued on 10 May, in addition to continuing its remote monitoring via phone calls as well as through third-party monitors (TPMs), WFP was also able to resume on-site monitoring by Field Monitoring Assistants (FMAS) in over 90 locations across the country.

**Donors**

Donors to WFP Niger in 2021 include Canada, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and USA. Additional support has been provided by UNICEF, UNAIDS and UN CERF.