



SAVING
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LIVES

Evaluation of Niger WFP Country Strategic Plan (2020–2025)

CONTEXT

Niger is among the least developed countries in the world, ranking 189th out of 193 on the 2023 Human Development Index. In the period from 2020 to 2025, Niger experienced multiple shocks: climate extremes, rising insecurity from insurgent violence, COVID-19, inflation, and a government change in July 2023 that led to temporary aid suspensions and border closures. These events exposed the fragility of Niger's supply chains, which remain constrained by limited infrastructure, dependence on regional trade corridors, and high import reliance. The 2024 Global Hunger Index identified Niger as a country with 'serious' level of hunger, ranking 121st out of 127 countries. Key drivers of food insecurity include poor diets, limited access to safe water, sanitation, and health services. Gender inequality further undermines food security, as women face persistent barriers to land, resources, and decision-making. Conflict and insecurity continue to drive displacements: as of May 2025, Niger hosted approximately 432,000 refugees and 507,000 internally displaced persons.

SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The 2019 Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) for Niger was built around six strategic outcomes (SOs), covering crisis response, resilience building, capacity strengthening to government institutions to enhance emergency preparedness and response, and common services. The 2020–2025 CSP retained the same strategic structure but adapted the SOs to better reflect evolving needs. The CSP underwent six budget revisions, with a seventh planned to extend it through 2026. The CSP targeted 12.8 million beneficiaries in total, and its initial budget increased over time from USD 1.05 billion to 1.8 billion.

EVALUATION SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The key objective of the evaluation was to support accountability and learning, and to inform the development of WFP's future CSP for Niger. The evaluation assessed the performance of WFP interventions, strategic positioning, and partnerships. Conducted by an independent external team between April 2024 and May 2025, it used a mixed-methods approach, including document review, quantitative data analysis, interviews, site visits, and focus group discussions. In-country data collection took place in September 2024.

KEY EVALUATION INSIGHTS

Strategic alignment and partnership

The evaluation found that while the CSP was broadly aligned with national priorities, UN frameworks, and the SDGs, strategic alignment was temporarily disrupted following the July 2023

change in government. Nevertheless, WFP maintained operational alignment, enabling continued support to vulnerable populations in coordination with humanitarian partners. WFP's ability to respond swiftly was recognized as an added value, and the integrated resilience package contributed to strengthening its positioning in the country. Challenges remain in collaboration with cooperating partners – including the limited participation of NGOs in projects' steering committees and the short duration of partnerships agreements – and in expanding engagement with the private sector and academia, which limits broader innovation and sustainability opportunities.

Contextual relevance and adaptive capacity

WFP is widely recognized for its ability to deliver context-specific assistance in crisis-affected areas of Niger, adapting to multiple shocks through data-driven and tailored interventions. The CSP demonstrated strong contextual relevance, with WFP aligning its activities to the evolving needs of vulnerable populations. WFP's adaptive capacity was supported by robust information systems and a flexible framework allowing for strategic and operational adjustments based on needs analysis and the adaptation of assistance modalities. However, operational challenges – such as poor infrastructure, insecurity, and rising costs – persisted, particularly in Diffa, Tillabéry, and Tahoua. WFP addressed these through flexible, community-based approaches and coordination with partners, including multi-ration distributions in hard-to-reach areas. Following the July 2023 change in government, donor funding suspensions affected WFP's capacity to meet growing needs. To better address these new challenges, WFP actively participated in updating the Common Country Analysis with its partners.

Internal coherence

The CSP was clearly structured around emergency response and an integrated resilience package. While this dual focus reflected WFP's strategic intentions under the CSP, weak articulation of the linkages between the two components and limited definition of resilience-specific results at design stage hindered internal coherence. Intended synergies across different activities under the integrated resilience package were not sufficiently reflected in the logical framework, limiting visibility of inter-sectoral effects. Monitoring gaps also affected the understanding of intermediate results, such as income generation from local food purchases for school canteens. Additionally, the relevance of certain sub-activities, including school gardens and livestock keeping, was unclear due to insufficient needs and capacity assessments.

Contribution to strategic outcomes

WFP played a critical role in providing food and nutrition assistance to shock-affected populations in Niger, particularly during the lean season and following displacement or flooding events. Its support to the humanitarian community through coordination and common services strengthened its positioning in the country. In light of funding shortfalls, WFP had to prioritize its assistance, reducing both the number of assisted beneficiaries, and the size of distributed rations compared to initial forecasts. Prolonged decrease in transfer volumes and coverage had a cumulative negative effect on the incomes of vulnerable households, undermining progress achieved. Bringing together a wide range of interventions, the integrated resilience package aimed at building the resilience of targeted communities through a holistic approach that included, among others, school feeding, nutrition support, and the rehabilitation of agricultural assets under the framework of a beneficiary progression strategy. Tangible results were achieved across activities, with some limitations:

- School meals supported improved school attendance and retention, and nutrition, although overcrowding and insecurity strained resources, prompting food storages.
- Nutrition programs showed high recovery rates but were disrupted by border closures, leaving many children unassisted. Community centers and women-led food processing units promoted dietary diversity and empowerment, though faced logistical and market challenges.
- Livelihoods activities reduced emergency coping strategies and boosted agricultural output, but asset maintenance and community ownership could improve. WFP's gradual disengagement strategy lacked clarity, risking dependency.
- Capacity strengthening enhanced government services, though political changes hindered collaboration. Overall, results were positive but uneven, with sustainability and coordination requiring further attention.

Cross-cutting themes

WFP integrated gender equality, protection, and environmental sustainability across its interventions. While efforts were made to promote women's participation and support vulnerable groups, monitoring systems lacked disaggregation, limiting visibility of outcomes by specific groups. Environmental sustainability was considered in programme design, notably through solar-powered infrastructure and vegetation monitoring. Humanitarian access was a challenge for WFP and its partners, and the organization had to apply flexibility to best adapt its assistance to the evolving security situation. WFP strove to adhere to the humanitarian principles, and its assistance was generally perceived as respecting the principles of humanity, impartiality, and operational independence. Despite operational constraints such as the mandatory use of escorts and the requirement to implement assistance modalities under the oversight of local authorities, WFP continued to be perceived as a neutral actor.

Evidence generation

WFP has successfully enhanced the quality of data and information through its support to national systems and structures, and evidence regularly informed program adjustments. Despite funding, security, and access constraints, WFP continued to invest in evidence generation – including through the impact evaluation on integrated resilience – while strengthening its monitoring tools. Phone-based and third-party monitoring ensured continuity, especially in Diffa. Critical gaps remained, including limited tracking of key outcome indicators, which hindered trend analysis and understanding of long-term results.

Financial resources and efficiency measures

Funding shortfalls had a significant impact on WFP's ability to respond to new humanitarian needs, and limited flexibility and predictability of funding significantly hindered medium-term planning. To ensure continuity of assistance, the country office heavily relied on corporate internal advance financing mechanisms. WFP's response has not always been timely or at the required scale and lacked some planning ahead of recurring shocks, mainly due to procedural delays, funding shortfalls, and pipeline breaks.

Human resources

WFP expanded its national staffing and operational presence in the country, but continued to face challenges in human resource capacity, gender parity, and staff retention, particularly in remote or insecure areas. Steps were taken to improve the country office's organizational structure and support staff well-being. Leveraging local talent and partnerships with universities provides a key opportunity to strengthen WFP's human resources in Niger.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the integration of activities in the next CSP, establishing clear linkages between crisis response and resilience-/social cohesion-building activities.

Recommendation 2: Enhance complementarities across partnerships for effective and sustainable action.

Recommendation 3: Enhance monitoring and evidence generation to support more effective and inclusive interventions.

Recommendation 4: Diversify and secure funding to establish a reliable and predictable resource base.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen human resource management to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of WFP interventions.

Recommendation 6: Optimize supply chain processes and management to accelerate food deliveries and reduce operational delays.