

NIGER-DENMARK



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Partnership Policy

2016-2020

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Draft

MAP



Niger facts	
Area	1,267,000 km ²
Population size	17.1 million
Annual population growth	3,9 %
Population groups	Hausa (53%) Djerma-Sonrai (21%) Tuareg (10%) Fulani (10%) Others (6 %)
Language	French (official)
Religion	Muslims (95%)

1. Denmark and Niger- introduction and future vision

Niger faces tremendous challenges - a hostile climate, deep poverty and associated social tension aggravated by very high population growth, a large and very sparsely populated landmass, a fragile economy and a very young democracy which is being threatened by incursion of violent extremism from neighbouring countries. Providing even very basic services such as access to drinking water, education and health care to the rapidly growing population is an enormous challenge for the government - but it has never the less managed in recent years to establish a fairly stable society and achieved some degree of economic development partly but not exclusively based on exploitation of mineral resources. The situation remains fragile and particularly recent attacks by terrorist insurgents poses a serious problem.

The **overall vision** for Denmark's engagement in Niger is thus to support the government and people of Niger in order to *consolidate stability, democracy and peace, stepping up joint efforts to ensure fundamental rights for all and to reduce poverty.*

The **main objectives** will first of all be to *enhance stability and peace in Niger and the region, reduce extreme poverty and improve service delivery.* It will also be an important objective to *improve human rights with increased protection of the rights of specially women and girls.*

Denmark is seen as a reputable and reliable partner and has played a significant role in supporting democracy in Niger via policy dialogue and support to government and civil society actors. Denmark has a significant leverage in Niger and the long standing development cooperation has resulted in a solid and trustworthy partnership between Denmark and Niger. Many of the challenges Niger is facing i.e. poverty, security, women's and girls' rights are key priority areas for Denmark. It is essential that Denmark as one of the few bilateral donors in the country continues the important engagement in a flexible and adapted manner to address causes of poverty and conflicts.

The objective of this policy paper is to establish a strategic framework for Denmark's engagement in Niger over the coming five years (2016-2020). The Danish engagement will build on results obtained so far in order to consolidate and expand progress. Due to the uncertainties associated with the very complicated situation in key areas such as security and democracy that might impact negatively on Niger's development it will be of paramount importance to have a flexible strategy that can be adapted to major and possibly unexpected events.

2. National context

A fragile country in an unstable region

The Sahel belt demarcating the area between the Sahara desert and the savannah to the south has become increasingly instable over the last decades. The region has known several armed conflicts and terrorist organisations have extended their activities over the last years. Many of the historic trade routes across the desert are currently controlled by terrorist and criminal networks. Drug, weapon and human trafficking have taken unprecedented dimensions involving great economic interests. The northern area is inaccessible and sparsely populated which makes effective control of national territories extremely difficult. Niger has long been considered a fairly stable country in an unstable region. However, the stability is fragile and threatened by the instability in the region, the presence of terrorist groups and domestic political tension.

Instability and armed conflicts in neighbouring countries contributes to severe pressure on Niger: Mali to the west, Libya to the north and Nigeria- a central trading partner - to the south. The presence of the major jihadist groups AQIM¹, MUJAO² and Boko Haram with increased and still more organised terror-activities poses a serious risk to Niger's security, stability and territorial integrity. Taking into account the magnitude and complexity of these conflicts, it must be expected that Niger will have to cope with the consequences of regional instability for some years to come.

Niger is landlocked. Although the largest country in the Sahel, only 11 pct. of the land is suitable for cultivation, primarily in the south and west along the Niger river, where almost the entire population is living in semi-arid conditions. Niger's population is concentrated in the southern arable areas. The rest of the territory is made up of the Sahara desert with dispersed oasis and mining communities.

One of the poorest countries in the world, Niger was ranked last on the UNDP Human Development Index in 2014.

The highest population growth rate (3.5%) and the youngest population (mean 15.1 years) in the world. According to projections, the actual population of 17 million will triple before 2050.

See annex I for further key facts.

The government in Niger is strongly engaged with regional organisations such as the AU and ECOWAS concerning security and development issues in the Sahel and has contributed to the establishment in 2014 of the G5 Sahel group alongside Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Mauritania. Niger is one of the countries in Sahel most resolutely engaged in the fight against terrorism at the side of Western allies and plays an important role in the stability of the region. Since 2011 Nigerien security forces have been on alert

¹ Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

² The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)

with the EU, France and the US as major security partners. Niger is pivotal to the European Union's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. Encouraged by its allies to upgrade its security apparatus, the government has also substantially increased its security expenditures. But this focus on security has required a reallocation of resources at the expense of already weak social sectors.

Peace and stability in Niger plays a paramount role to the stability of the Sahel region. If Niger should fail in countering radicalization among the population, including the threat of Boko Haram, it can have a major destabilising effect for the region. Given the proximity to Europe, increased instability can also impact directly on European interests, including through increased migration influx.

Niger has experienced several armed rebellions during the period 1990- 2009. Pastoral groups, in particular the Tuaregs, claimed that they were marginalised from the state and did not benefit from resources from extractive industries (uranium) in the Agadez region. Complex drivers of these conflicts include identity issues and the territorial delimitation of states in the Sahara, threats to the nomadic lifestyle linked to major droughts, the availability of arms in the region and trained mercenaries among the Nigerien Tuaregs having served under Gaddafi in Libya. In order to respond to such challenges, government policies emphasise a better balance between regions, decentralisation reform, social dialogue and a range of specific measures for socio-economic development in conflict prone regions. An extended process of reintegration of ex-rebels in the army and public administration has been implemented.

A range of small-scale conflicts concerning access to resources provides constant risks of escalation. The country has put in place an innovative, participative and broad ranging legislative framework in order to improve land tenure and management of natural resources. However, institutional coherence and implementation lack behind. In a context of legal uncertainty, conflicts regarding the use of land to agricultural and pastoral purposes remain a source of persistent tension reinforced by increased pressure on resources resulting from land degradation and population pressure. State authority in preventing and settling local conflicts remains limited. Deteriorating living conditions and marginalisation contribute to frustration among pastoral groups creating a recruitment ground for radical groups.

Niger is particularly exposed to the risk of violent extremism through the influence of terror organisations operating in neighbouring countries. Various factors such as poverty, inequality, marginalisation, as well as limited employment opportunities for youth and a weak and inappropriate education system further contributes to these risks. Religion plays an important role in Nigerien society where around 95 pct. are Muslims. The religious sphere in Niger has become increasingly diversified with the appearance of numerous new associations and religious trends since the 1990s. While representing a minority, more radical strands have gained influence and attracted youth. Close ties among

populations across borders and influx of refugees facilitate infiltration. Groups such as Boko Haram have been reported to pay fees to recruit fighters. Against this backdrop, countering violent extremism through a range of efforts including dialogue between religious organisations and the government, as well as preventive actions among youth, remains extremely important.

The poorest country in the world

Around 90 pct. of Niger's population live in poverty with overlapping deprivations in health, education and living standards. Poverty touches all regions of the country but is most salient in rural areas where around 80 pct. of the population is living. Illiteracy among youth and adults is widespread and affects more than 70 pct. of the population, mainly women and girls.

The country has the highest fertility rate in the world which creates enormous challenges to provide access to basic services, food, education, infrastructures and employment for all, especially for women and girls. It is estimated that around three out of four poor in Niger are women.

The country has made progress in attaining the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Three targets relating to urban water supply, child mortality and HIV/AIDS are likely to be met by 2015.

The economy of Niger is characterised by fluctuating economic growth heavily influenced by external shocks stemming from terrorist attacks, price fluctuations on key imports and exports and repeated droughts. It is largely based on agriculture and livestock which occupy the majority of the population. In addition, the importance of extractive industries is growing. The economy remains fragile depending heavily on rain-fed subsistence agriculture which is vulnerable to climatic variations. Pastoralism and livestock is adapted to the arid climate and is the second source of exportations after uranium in Niger. Private sector development is limited by low-level qualifications of the labour force and lack of infrastructure as well as security risks for investors. Providing even basic services to the rapidly growing population is an enormous challenge in a context of limited internal resource mobilisation.

Extractive industries constitute a main potential driver of change for the Niger economy in the medium term. The country has longstanding experience in uranium production and became an oil producer in 2011. Major foreign investments have been realised in extractive industries in recent years and the prospects for economy growth in Niger are relatively good. The 2010 constitution details that revenues from extractive industries will be invested in socio-economic development and that a foundation for future generations will be established. Niger has established an institutional set up involving the private sector and civil society on transparency in revenues from the mining sector. However, complex challenges remain concerning the distribution of revenues, social tensions

related to negotiation of mining contracts as well as social and environmental consequences of an expanding extractive industries sector in Niger.

Niger remains highly dependent on external aid that contributes to around 40 pct. of the national budget. Niger is monitored by OECD as potentially under-aided. Aid levels are relatively low due to political instability in the country.

Repeated food crisis, malnutrition and scarce water resources

In 2014, the global acute malnutrition rate in Niger was 14.8 pct., the highest in the Sahel and close to the critical emergency threshold. Even in years with good agricultural harvests between 3 and 4 million people are affected by food insecurity. Following four successive food crisis since 2005, vulnerable households face serious difficulties to recover. Limited resilience is linked to population growth and increased pressure on already limited natural resources. Only around 11 pct. of the land area is arable. Weather hazards constitute a continuous threat for livelihoods of agro-pastoralists and pastoralists that depend on grazing and water resources for their animals. The vulnerability of households is highly variable even within the same communities due to growing inequality in the distribution of productive assets and incomes. Food security in Niger not only depends on food production but also on the functioning of market and food prices that have proven highly volatile.

In 2012, the government adopted the 3N initiative, Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens, which is an essential part of Nigerien efforts to cope with climate change and reverse a situation of chronic deficit of food production. The strategy is based on improvements of yields from rain fed agriculture as well as the development of irrigated cultures, livestock and fisheries sectors. Despite unfavourable climatic conditions, Niger has a potential to improve food security. Wetlands and oasis systems can be exploited for increased irrigated production. The country has taken steps to promote the livestock sector including the recognition of mobility as a key to productivity and resilience. Soil conservation techniques and agro-forestry have proven successful in reversing environmental degradation.

Regional instability represents an additional challenge to food security in Niger. Seasonal migration, used to diversify incomes and secure pastoral production, is negatively influenced by instability in neighbouring countries. The influx of refugees in Niger constitutes additional pressure on limited resources. Cross border trade, a major element in local livelihood strategies, becomes exceedingly difficult.

Water resources are scarce in Niger and are further pressured by climate change and population growth. Depth of ground water resources and difficult geological formations contribute to high costs of water supply. Access to clean drinking water remains limited, in particular the rural sector. Only around 47 pct. of the population in rural areas have access to clean drinking water compared to 87 pct. in urban areas. Current prognosis on

climate changes in Niger points to the risk of increased temperatures and variations in rainfall. Future periods of droughts combined with increasing temperatures may have severe human and environmental consequences. A continued provision of safe water is needed to maintain a basic level of food production, health and security. Water resources must be managed in a sustainable manner to secure basic services and to prevent conflicts related to scarcity of water.

Governance and human rights

Niger's democracy emerged in 1990 in a particularly difficult context with economic crisis and a majority of illiterate voters. Following a range of severe political crises and three military coups, Niger returned to a democratic phase in 1999 lasting until 2009 where a new political and institutional crisis resulted in the latest military coup in 2010.

The present government has been in power since 2011. Its program to address Niger's development challenges has raised renewed hopes among the population. However, political stability has remained fragile and a split in the government alliance in 2013 created new tensions which have increased as presidential and parliamentary elections in 2016 is drawing closer. The population's mistrust of politicians has grown, in particular among the large rural population. It is therefore a major challenge and potentially important mile stone for the Nigerien democracy to find consensus among the political class to organise free and transparent elections in 2016. A new military coup would be a serious setback for the country.

Democratisation in Niger – albeit unstable – has contributed to progress in terms of improvements in human rights and governance. Globally, the country has endorsed international human rights conventions. The 2010 constitution emphasises the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers, liberty of expression and equal rights for all.

The large size of the country combined with uneven population distribution patterns adds to costs and distances to achieve universal access to public services and infrastructures. In addition, state capacity to provide services is limited. Government services are characterised by relatively limited staff especially in peripheral areas, inadequate management of human and financial resources as well as politicisation of the administration and widespread petty corruption. Major national investments in social sectors supported by international donors in the last decades have contributed to increasing coverage of public services but the quality of these services remains a key challenge.

Corruption is a major challenge. Reflecting a positive trend, Niger occupies a rank of 103 out of 175 countries on the 2014 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. An institutional set-up for anti-corruption measures is in place, including a hotline for citizen claims, and several high-level corruption scandals have been revealed.

Huge challenges are identified in an overall reform policy in order to modernise the state over the next decades. Decentralisation reform, which has been implemented since 2004, is a key public sector reform. Local elected governments established in 2004 are essential for the promotion of inclusive decision-making processes at the local level and to build up capacities to coordinate public action and deliver services. The decentralisation reform is only partially implemented and sustained efforts are essential to accompany the transfer of powers and resources from central to local government.

The rights of women and girls in Niger stand out as a critical human rights issue. Women meet discrimination regarding early marriage, divorce, limited access to inheritance of property, credit, education and health care. The country has one of the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world as three out of four girls get married before reaching the age of 18. In a context of religious awakening, women's issues are extremely controversial and strong resistance from religious organisations has prevented a family code from being adopted. The country ratified the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women with four major reserves on family issues including equal rights and responsibilities within the household. Since the 2000s, however, enrolment of girls in primary education has increased and a gender quota law, backed by women's organisations, has contributed to increased participation of women in politics. The national policy on gender focuses on improving the socio-cultural environment for changes, completing legislation and integrating gender approaches in sector strategies.

Civil society organisations play important roles in multiple domains including development and humanitarian action, human rights and democratisation. They have gained essential experience but several factors limit their development. Many organisations are highly politicised and insufficiently transparent. Collaboration and networking between these organisations are insufficient and they are often in competition concerning access to funds. Finally, they lack information and skills in order to exercise more influence on government action and policies.

Danish engagement in Niger

The Danish cooperation with Niger goes back to 1974. Denmark has provided long term support to development with a geographical focus on the Zinder and Diffa regions in the southern part of Niger, in particular support to improvement of agricultural production systems and access to drinking water and sanitation. Denmark is a major donor in the water sector in Niger and has been a pioneer for alignment on national systems and procedures. The Danish cooperation has also addressed the issue of women's rights through support to government and women's organisations (ref. annex II for details).

Denmark's representation office was closed in 2014 and the overall responsibility for the Danish development cooperation to Niger rests with the Danish embassy in Ouagadougou. The daily management of the current development activities has been

delegated to other international organisations and donors in Niger. Based on former experiences and the specialisation of other donors, the current set-up involves delegation of activities among others the LuxDev, SWISSAID World Bank, USAID and UNFPA. Even though these experiences are recent and have not yet been reviewed, it must be expected that delegated partnerships and cooperation with multilateral organisations will continue to be the preferred implementation modality for Denmark.

Several Danish organisations (CARE Denmark, Danish Demining Group, The Danish Institute for Human Rights) have development activities in Niger within the area of human rights, peace and stabilisation as well as local development and food security. These activities constitute an important contribution to the Danish development cooperation in Niger.

3. Strategic objectives and key areas to be addressed

Niger is, as described above, facing major challenges in areas such as poverty, violent extremism and radicalisation, food security, malnutrition, governance, equality and human rights which make the country an obvious development partner to Denmark. The strategic choices will take into account the major challenges Niger is facing and Denmark's key comparative advantages particularly building on the existing engagement in Niger and Denmark's position as a reliable partner.

The future cooperation will be guided by the following strategic principles.

- A **comprehensive and flexible approach** at the national and regional level, including active diplomacy, political dialogue, social-economic development, security and stabilisation efforts as well as humanitarian assistance.
- **Synergy** with other donors favouring a joint and harmonised approach to complex security and development.
- Focus on long term **state building objectives** favouring inclusive political and institutional processes considering that state capacity is essential for durable peace.
- A **rights-based approach** considering that discrimination and exclusion are root causes of conflicts.

The strategic focus areas are highly interlinked and will contribute to enhancing the stability in the country and will, to the extent possible, include a focus on capacity building of government institutions and civil society. Across the entire Danish engagement a cross-cutting human rights-based approach will be adopted. Considering Denmark's comprehensive engagement in the Sahel region, it will be a priority to ensure synergies and coordination with existing Danish efforts, including the Regional Sahel Peace and Stabilisation Programme and the Africa Programme for Peace.

The selected strategic focus areas are in line with Niger's overall government priorities outlined in the national poverty strategy "Le Plan de Développement Economique et

Social (PDES 2012-2015)” and relevant sector policies³. Efforts based on shared values within different areas such as human rights, democracy, good governance and security will be promoted through close political dialogue and cooperation at multilateral, regional and bilateral level.

The EU political dialogue with the authorities in Niger will be the main vehicle for interaction with the government on key security policy, democracy and development issues. In addition, Denmark will seek to maintain contact with key civil society partners.

EU countries present in Niger have started a joint programming process of development cooperation that constitutes a key opportunity for enhancing complementarity. Denmark will engage in cooperation with the EU-delegation, EU-member states that are present in Niger and likeminded partners both in terms of coordination as well as in the policy dialogue with the government. Denmark will also engage actively, both in Brussels, under UN and AU-auspices and other international fora, in issues and formulation of policies relevant to Niger. Close coordination and engagement with likeminded partners will also be prioritized in light of the fact that Denmark no longer has a permanent presence in Niger.

Due to the complexity of the situation in Niger, the following cooperation modalities will be used: 1) Development support through the country programme for Niger; 2) Efforts targeted stabilisation and security from the Peace and Stabilisation Fund; 3) Funds from Climate envelope if there should be a possibility to integrate these into the country programme, 4) Danish support to and alliances with Niger in multilateral organisations and fora where relevant; 5) Humanitarian aid may be considered based on an analysis of overall humanitarian needs.

Strategic focus area 1: Stability and Peace

Peace and stability in Niger are closely linked to the evolving situation in neighbouring countries, including armed conflicts and the spread of radicalisation and terror activities in the broader Sahel region. Key challenges at regional level include preventing terrorist organisations from further expanding their activities, countering the spread of violent extremism and strengthening the dialogue and cooperation on anti-terror activities at regional and international level.

The trans-border nature of security threats in the Sahel have been recognised at the international level. Denmark will engage with EU, UN, AU and regional organisations such as ECOWAS to promote regional security and stabilisation with a special focus on efforts to address the root causes of instability. At the country and regional level, these efforts in security and conflict prevention include strengthening security forces and their

³ A commission is currently working on renewing the poverty strategy for the period from 2016-2019. It is expected that main priorities on security, governance, food security, economic growth and social development will not be fundamentally altered.

presence throughout the territory and strengthening anti-terror readiness and border control. The main vehicle for Danish support in this area will be the Danish Regional Sahel Peace and Stabilisation Programme financed from the Peace and Stabilisation Fund. Denmark will continue to provide support to border control based on community participation and regional collaboration. Tactical cooperation with armed forces in the region provides a contingency capacity to assist in case of a future severe crisis.

At the national level in Niger, major challenges include countering Boko Haram's infiltration into Niger and hindering the spread of terror attacks from Boko Haram as well as AQIM, Mujao and other radicalised groups. Increasing border control and overseeing movements across borders are essential means of hindering terrorist groups from expanding their activities and fighting against criminal networks. Curbing the influence of radical movements among the population and youth in particular, countering violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism is a key long term challenge. In this regard, access to education and employment, especially for young people, play a crucial role. Denmark will continue to support knowledge gathering and the conception and implementation of holistic strategies that favour preventive action including dialogue between government and Muslim organisations. Consolidating democratic institutions is a major condition for a viable response to security challenges fostering a plural political debate on essential societal issues including security and oversight of government action. Denmark will continue to support capacity building in key democratic institutions. Denmark supports education through a sizeable core fund to Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In the policy-dialogue with GPE, Denmark will emphasize the importance of education in preventing radicalisation and the particular needs of Niger.

Possibilities for establishing synergies between the Danish Regional Sahel Peace and Stabilisation Programme and the country programme will be explored. Stability and peace will also constitute an important subject in the overall policy dialogue with government institutions and civil society organisations.

Strategic focus area 2: Enhanced access to basic rights for ordinary people

Ensuring access to basic rights is extremely important in a long term perspective in order to fight the main causes of poverty, exclusion and discrimination and eradicate root causes of conflicts. This includes providing basic public services for all , improving equal access to decision-making processes and fighting corruptive practices and discrimination. Denmark has built

Denmark will:

Support multilateral and regional initiatives to promote regional security and collaboration among Sahel countries.

Strengthen security forces and border control.

Support activities countering violent extremism

Support capacity building in key democratic institutions

Strengthening the focus on Niger in the strategic dialogue with Global Partnership for Education

up important experience in the promotion of women's rights and access to water that will be consolidated during the period 2016 - 2020.

Despite the range of initiatives to improve girls and women's rights in Niger, discrimination remains widespread. Denmark will continue to promote girls and women's rights in Niger in order to establish a favourable socio-cultural, institutional and legal environment for gender equality. Specific actions to promote access to reproductive rights and reduce child marriage and early adolescent pregnancy will be sustained. Finally, Denmark intend to support the capacity building of civil society organisations working with women and girls' issues and take an active role in international forums to promote human rights and gender equality in Niger.

Access to water in Niger is a key challenge. The use of water for different purposes, in particular human consumption, mining, agriculture and livestock requires integrated strategies to reduce conflicts and protect the resource for future generations. Niger has developed a legal framework for integrated water management to improve knowledge on the water resource, its management and protection. Denmark will continue to support the Niger government in providing water supply to the rural population and to implement policies on integrated water management.

Long term Danish support to the water sector has contributed to the reinforcement of government capacities at the national and regional level. Exceptionally in Niger, it has been possible to build up a program approach based on national systems and procedures.

Denmark will continue to focus on strengthening government capacities to provide water supply and management water resources. Denmark will accompany Niger in implementing decentralisation in the water sector and to build capacities in local governments.

The concrete engagements in this area will primarily be funded from the bilateral country programme.

Strategic focus area 3: Resilience

Acute malnutrition and repeated food crises reflect an underlying trend of increasing vulnerability. While the arid climate is a major barrier for improvement of food security in Niger, the country has potential in irrigated

Denmark will:

Promote a favourable socio-cultural, institutional and legal environment for gender equality.

Promote access to reproductive rights for girls and women

Support actions and capacities of civil society organisations working on girls' and women's issues.

Take an active role in international forums to promote human rights and gender equality in Niger.

Promote increased and equal access to water for human consumption, livestock and irrigation.

Strengthen sustainable management of water resources and reduce conflicts concerning access to water.

Support central and local government capacities to provide water supply and manage water resources.

agriculture and livestock sectors. In line with the 3N initiative and the national poverty reduction strategy, Denmark will support the development of irrigated agriculture and livestock sectors, building upon the potentialities of Niger in the perspective of increasing rural revenues and food production. At the same time, specific actions will be oriented towards securing and diversifying revenues for vulnerable households.

Previous food crises have revealed that women are taking on an increasing share of responsibility to support and feed the household. By developing low-return but relatively prudent opportunities, they are able to make a substantial contribution to household members' survival in terms of crisis. Denmark will support income generating activities for women in rural areas, their access to land and means of production.

Population growth in Niger has contributed to increased pressures on resources, deforestation, droughts and soil degradation. Rain fed agriculture is an exceedingly insecure source of income and land available for pastoral use is reduced with severe consequences for pastoralists. Denmark will contribute to promote sustainable agricultural techniques and land restoration.

In order to prevent and improve responses to food crisis, a national early warning and response system has been put in place in Niger. Denmark will contribute to building capacities at the local level to identify triggers and signs of food crisis. Strengthening of local early warning and response systems may contribute to prevent or mitigate livelihood crises and loss of assets through early action.

The concrete engagements in this area will primarily be funded from the country programme. Funds from Climate envelope might be considered if there should be a possibility to integrate these into the country programme. Humanitarian aid may be considered based on an analysis of overall humanitarian needs.

The management of extractive industries will be crucial for the socio-economic development of Niger. Denmark will encourage international organisations such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the international finance institutions and bilateral partners with greater expertise to support Niger in this matter.

Denmark will:

Promote irrigated agriculture and livestock production.

Support income generating activities for women, their access to land and means of production.

Contribute to promote sustainable agricultural techniques.

Support capacity building in key organisations providing service to local producers.

Contribute to building capacities at local level to identify triggers and signs of food crisis

4. Risks and scenarios

Due to the fragile situation in Niger, the Danish engagement involves risks that should be taking into account from the outset.

On the 2014 state fragility index⁴, Niger's situation is considered alarming and classified among the most fragile as number 19 out of 177 countries. Limited public service delivery combined with high population growth, trans-border threats and pressure from insecurity in the region are critical factors. Set-backs in terms of democracy is a major contextual risk linked to a deteriorating political climate and severe tensions between government and opposition up to 2016 elections. Niger has recently taking an active role in the organisation of a joint international response to the crisis linked to Boko Haram. Finally, the humanitarian situation is vulnerable linked to possible upcoming droughts and limited capacities to accommodate refugees.

The risk of kidnappings limits movement within the country, especially for foreigners, but so far government offices and Nigerien organisations have been operating relatively freely. Deteriorations in the security situation may, however, further restrict activities in border areas.

Weak capacity of national organisations and corruption are risks that may influence the possibility of achieving program objectives. However, international measurement of government capacities, such as the World Bank CPIA, point to some improvements in Niger. In designing the programme, it should be considered how these improvements can be supported and further strengthened.

Delegated partnership and funding through multilateral organisations and other international partners will be the preferred funding modality for the Danish support. At the same time, alignment to national systems, harmonisation and joint financial arrangements will be pursued. It is particularly important to pay attention to “doing no harm principles” though conflict sensitive and rights based approaches in Niger. Latent conflicts and discrimination risk being exacerbated by new infrastructures.

The country policy paper operates with three major scenarios:

1. **Status quo:** The political situation remains stable but with a fragmented political scene characterised by strong conflicts, limited progress on legislation and public sector reforms and a highly politicised administration. The national security situation is fragile but remains relatively stable albeit pockets of insecurity and terrorist attacks threaten stability. Insecurity in the region limits private sector development and economic growth remains unstable. With support from external partners, investments in social and economic sectors

⁴ The Fragile States Index is an annual ranking of 178 nations based on their levels of stability and the pressures they face. The Index is published by The Fund for Peace (FFP) which is an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit research and educational organization that works to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security.

contribute to some but modest poverty reduction and attenuation of food crisis.

2. **Best case:** The political climate improves allowing for successful implementation of reform projects. The regional security situation is improved. Progress accelerates in terms of public service delivery and protection of human rights. Expanding mining sectors provide an increase in resources available for government to invest in socio-economic development and foster economic growth.
3. **Worst cases:** Political tensions result in paralysis of government or a military coup plunging the country into a new economic and social crisis. Terrorist attacks multiply and the state loses control with major parts of its territory. Humanitarian crisis expand.

Responses to risks and scenarios

The programming approach to interventions in Niger will be flexible and will incorporate risk assessments according to the Danida Risk Management Tool. Programs will be conceived in order to support long term improvements, including capacity building in government and civil society organisations, but in the case of set-backs in democracy or government breakdown, emphasis will be made on humanitarian assistance, stabilisation and support to civil society. Whatever the scenario, Danish assistance to basic services will be sought maintained. In a worst case situation, Danish support will include humanitarian assistance and participation in peacekeeping operations or international military operations and even participation might be considered. Geographic focus will be decided on the basis of a close monitoring of the security situation within the country and coordination of donor interventions. In the case of signs of stabilisation of the regional situation and improvements in the business environment in Niger, instruments for developing business collaboration will be employed in areas such as water and energy efficiency. Taking into account the depth of poverty in Niger, it must be expected that Niger remains a low income country within the period covered by this policy paper.

5. Results

Denmark's engagement with Niger will focus on not only results obtained on a short-term basis but will also focus on ensuring long-term impact. Denmark's engagement will contribute to:

- Enhanced stability and peace in Niger and the region assuming that the political and economic situation in Niger does not deteriorate
- Reduction of extreme poverty and service delivery within water and improved management of water resources.
- Improved human rights situation in Niger with increased promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls.

The specific engagements will be determined and described in the country programme for Danish development cooperation in Niger, paying regard to available resources of the Danish Embassy in Ouagadougou. In addition there will be engagements under the Peace and Stabilisation Fund and a possibility for humanitarian assistance. The country policy paper will provide a common framework for all Danish engagements and instruments to ensure coordination and synergy.

6. Monitoring and evaluation framework

Within each focus area, specific out-put based indicators will be determined to manage and monitor progress, performance and results. Where possible, indicators will be derived from the government's own systems so that monitoring and evaluation can be aligned to national systems. Denmark will identify potential risks within each area and accordingly develop risk management strategies, partly to minimize the risk and partly to adjust efforts continuously to cope with these risks.

7. Communication

The Danish Embassy in Ouagadougou will present the country policy paper to relevant stakeholders in Niger including ministries, partners and civil society organisations. The purpose will be to inform about the continued Danish cooperation in Niger and the main areas which will be prioritised for the coming years.

In Denmark the policy paper will constitute an important and strategic communication tool in explaining the Danish cooperation in Niger including the importance of continued Danish development assistance to Niger.

Annex I- Key data Niger

Key economic data	Unit		Source
Area (2013)	Km ² million	1.3	WDR
Population (2013)	Million	17.83	WDR
GDP (2013)	USD billion	7.407	WDR
Annual economic growth (2013)	% of GDP	4.1	WDR
GNI per capita (2013)	USD (Atlas method)	400	WDR
Growth in GNI per capita (2013)	%	-1.5	WDR
Ease of doing business (2014)	Rank	168	DB/WB
<i>Economic sectors (share of GDP)</i>			
a) Agriculture (2013)	% of GDP	37.2	WDR
b) Industry(2013)	% of GDP	19.4	WDR
c) Manufacturing (2013)	% of GDP	6.1	WDR
d) Services (2013)	% of GDP	43.4	WDR
General government expenditure (2013)	% of GDP	28.9	IMF
Tax revenue percentage (2013)	% of GDP	15.2	IMF
Development assistance per capita (2012)	USD	53	WDR
Net official development assistance (2012)	% of GNI	13.8	WDR
Debt service (2011)	% export of goods, service and primary income	2.4	WDR
Key social data	Unit		Source
Population growth (2013)	% annual	3.9	WDR
Life expectancy (2013)	Years	58	WDR
Infant mortality (deaths during the first year) (2013)	Deaths per 1000 births	60	WDR
Access to clean drinking water (2013)	% without access in rural and urban areas	53 (rural) 13 (urban)	Niger government
Access to health facilities (national coverage rate of primary health care infrastructures)	% without access	47	Niger government
Number of doctors (2012)	Per 100.000 inhabitants	2	WDR
People btw. 15-49 years living with hiv (2013)	%	0.4	UN-AIDS
Adult literacy rate (2013)	% (above 15 years)	28.7	HDR
Net primary school enrolment (2013)	%	68.8	WDR
Net primary school enrolment, girls (2013)	%	57.15	WDR
Expenditure on education (2012)	% of public expenditure	18.2	WDR
Military expenditure (2013)	% of GNP	1.05	WDR
<i>Distribution of income</i>			
Richest 10% of population (2011)	% of national income	26.3	WDR
Poorest 10% of population (2011)	% of national income	4.0	WDR
Key environmental data	Unit		Source
Ratio of protected areas to maintain biological diversity to surface area (2012)	%	16.7	UN statistics division
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone depleting CFCs (2010)	Metric tons	0.09	UN statistics division
Key human rights data	Unit		Source

Ratification with core international human rights instruments (9 in total)	Treaties	8*	OHCHR
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*The Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women was ratified with reserves

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Annex II- Denmark's ongoing cooperation with Niger

Overview

Development partnerships between Denmark and Niger have evolved since 1974 and in 2011 Niger became a priority country. Long term development assistance has been built up in two sectors in particular: drinking water and sanitation as well as agriculture and rural development. The current governance and human rights program is oriented towards promoting women's rights and strengthening of democratic institutions i.e. the National Assembly and the media. In addition to the three sector programmes Denmark supports activities to strengthen the security sector and counter violent extremism and organised crime through the regional program for peace and stabilization in the Sahel.

Drinking water and sanitation

Denmark has been a partner for Niger in the area of drinking water supply since the 1970s. The bulk of activities concern the construction and management of infrastructures for drinking water supply in rural and semi-urban areas including wells, boreholes equipped with pumps and networked systems in bigger agglomerations. Even though coverage has been improved over the years more than half the population in rural areas still lack access to clean drinking water supply. A sanitation component has been added and includes construction of improved sanitation facilities. Infrastructure construction is geographically focused on the Eastern Zinder and Diffa regions. Successive programs have included major institution building activities, including reinforcement of capacities for programming and monitoring at the level of the ministry in charge of water and its regional offices. Construction of infrastructures in the framework of the previous program running from 2009-2011 (PASEA1) allowed access to drinking water supply for an additional estimated population of 126,500. The program was designed as a transition to a program approach, preparing the conditions for more alignment to consolidate national systems. The current program for the water sector, hygiene and sanitation (PASEA2) has been defined for the period from 2012-2016 for an amount of DKK 200 million. The program is the first in the water sector to be almost entirely built on existing institutions and national procedures. The program foresees major construction and rehabilitation projects of infrastructure in order to keep up with population growth and improve access to drinking water supply and sanitation. Training of local actors involved in drinking water supply including user organisations, private firms and local governments is part of the program. Some activities at the regional level allow for promoting integrated water management which is proceeding slowly in Niger.

Agriculture and rural development

Danish support to agriculture and rural development is focused on developing local production systems in the Zinder and Diffa regions combined with institutional support to a range of local and national partners. A program for rural development running from 2009-2014 has supported a range of micro projects benefitting around 30,000 producers hereof 45% women. These micro-projects have allowed for developing irrigated

agriculture, security of land tenure, transformation of local products and related activities in fishery. Initiatives of local and regional governments were also supported concerning collective infrastructures and works for irrigation, markets, livestock production and environmental protection. Danish support has contributed to reinforcing the national chamber of agriculture and its regional offices, a semi-public organisation having the mission of providing services to local producer organisations. A new program, “The program on promotion of jobs and economic growth in agriculture” (PECEA) with a budget of DKK 195 million has been defined for the period from 2014-2018. The program builds on achieved results and adds a focus on value chains in order to improve economic growth and job creation based on the agriculture and livestock sectors. Five value chains have been identified as entry points: green pepper, *niabé* beans, ground nuts, poultry and cattle rearing including sub-products such as milk. The program also includes activities on the business climate and framework conditions for private sector development. The programme is anchored with a national coordinating entity, the High Commission for the 3N initiative (Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens).

Governance and human rights

In governance and human rights, a programme has been defined in 2014 (PADDH) for an amount of DKK 50 million running to 2017. The overall objective is to contribute to stability and democracy in Niger through protection of human rights, defence of civic values and reinforcement of the credibility of democratic governance. The program continues and enlarges former activities conducted in the field of women’s rights and provides capacity building in the National Assembly and the media. Denmark provides support to the implementation of the UNFPA country program with the objective of promoting and protecting women’s rights. In a context where conservative currents of Islam are gaining influence, UNFPA has adopted sensitive strategies to work with government and moderate religious organisations and leaders on family planning and women’s rights issues. The organisation also work with awareness raising programs of men, including an initiative called “husband schools”, in order to improve women’s situation. The National Assembly is an essential democratic institution especially for oversight, legislation and democratic representation. The support consists in reinforcing capacities of specific parliamentary commissions and dialogue with civil society actors and private companies in the field of natural resources, management of public finance and human rights. Finally, the program supports reinforcement and regulation of the media. Activities concern access to information by supporting the establishment of community radios in non-covert areas and regulating of the press by government and media organisations. Press freedom in Niger has considerably improved but a major challenge remains ethic and professionalism in the media meaning that the media risks contributing to social tensions and to promote violent extremism.

Financed by the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs through framework grants, the Danish Institute for Human Rights provides support for human rights in Niger. The

overall objective in Niger is to support the development of a well-functioning national human rights system, where key human rights actors effectively exercise their mandate or missions in the country. The Institute has a local office with a local representative and a local human rights adviser in the capital Niamey. Ongoing activities include support to developing a governmental action plan on human rights, to clarify the role of different human rights actors in Niger, to develop a human rights compliant mechanism with the police and improve human rights reporting and documentation in the country. Since the 2000s, the institute has been working with security and police forces on the respect of human rights including the elaboration of manuals and in service training.

Peace and stabilisation

Denmark supports conflict prevention in Niger through the regional programme “Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Sahel region” running from 2013-2017 with an overall amount of DKK 125 million for activities covering Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The programme has received additional funding from Norway (NOK 15 million). In complement to long term development cooperation and humanitarian aid, the programme addresses underlying and regional political and security challenges in the Sahel. The regional programme is focused on enhanced mediation and conflict solution, improved security and activities to counter violent extremism and organised crime.

The regional Sahel programme supports activities to prevent conflicts and improve border control in the Liptako-Gourma border region between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. The approach is based on community participation, communication between local populations and security forces as well as cross-border collaboration between security forces, local authorities and communities. The Regional Sahel Programme is also supporting a programme in the Liptako-Gourma region on “Conflict Prevention among pastoralist communities in Sahel through support to mediation mechanisms. Denmark provides a major contribution to the EU intermediary response programme to reduce risks of insecurity and instability in the North-West and South-East regions of Niger with a specific focus on activities to reinforce security, offer opportunities to youth and promoting religious tolerance and dialogue. In addition, the regional Danish Sahel programme supports activities to build capacities to reinforce democratic control of security forces in Niger at the level of the Ministry of Interior, the National Assembly and civil society actors. Finally, Denmark supports the Sahel programme of the UN office on drugs and crimes (UNODC). The programme contributes to implementing the UN integrated strategy for the Sahel with the aim of supporting the development of accessible, efficient and accountable criminal justice systems to combat illicit trafficking drug trafficking, organised crime, terrorism and corruption.

Denmark supports the ongoing civilian EU CSDP mission in Niger, EUCAP Sahel Niger, with staff and financial resources. The objective of the mission, having a mandate until mid-2015, is to enable the Nigerien authorities to define and implement their own

national security strategy as well as contribute to develop an integrated, multidisciplinary, coherent, sustainable, and human rights based approach among the various Nigerien security actors in the fight against organised crime and terrorism.

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Annex III- Overview of progress towards attaining the MDGs in Niger

MDG	Baseline	Current level	MDG targets	Likelihood of achievement
1. Poverty Halve, between 1990 and 2015: - the proportion of people whose income is less than 1\$ a day - proportion of people who suffer from hunger (% underweight children under 5)	63% (1993) 36% (1992)	48% (2011) 38.5% (2011)	32.5% 18%	Unlikely Unlikely
2. Universal Primary Education Ensure full access to primary school (net enrolment) Ensure full completion rate in primary school	18% (1990) 15% (1991)	70.5% (2013) 51% (2011)	100% 100%	Unlikely Unlikely
3. Gender equality Eliminate disparities - Girls/boys ratio primary school	62.5% (1997)	81% (2012)	100%	Unlikely
4. Child Mortality Reduce by 2/3 under-5 mortality deaths/1000 live births)	318 (1992)	127 (2012)	106	Likely
5. Maternal Health Reduce by ¾ maternal mortality - deaths/100,000 births) Births attended by skilled health care staff	652 (1992) 14.9% (1992)	535 (2012) 29.4% (2010)	175 100%	Unlikely Unlikely
6. HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases HIV/AIDS Prevalence rate	0.87% (2002)	0.7% (2006)	<0.7%	Likely
7. Environmental Sustainability - halve non-access to safe water (improved sources) - halve non-access to improved sanitation facilities	22.3% (1992) 12% (1992)	51% (2008) 12% (2008)	45% 36%	Likely Unlikely

Sources: Niger government, national statistics institute.