



Pro-ARIDES

Programme Agroalimentaire pour la Résilience Intégrée
et le Développement Economique du Sahel

2023 PRO-ARIDES ANNUAL REPORT

(abridged English version)

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Astan Dembélé is happy with the social transformation going on in her community



1. A year of progress for Pro-ARIDES

1.1 About the project

The Agri-Food Programme for Integrated Resilience and Economic Development in the Sahel (Pro-ARIDES) is a ten-year programme funded by the Dutch and Danish Ministries of Foreign Affairs to pave the way for a more resilient and sustainable Sahel. Pro-ARIDES aims to increase the resilience, food security and incomes of farmers and agro-pastoralist households in the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger through effective decentralised institutions and organisations for improved service delivery, natural resource and land management, and local economic development.

Since January 2021, Pro-ARIDES has been implemented by a consortium of SNV (lead partner), CARE Netherlands, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). The programme is funded with 105.4 million euros, of which 100 million euros from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and 5.4 million euros from Danish Cooperation, for ten years, i.e. from January 2021 to December 2030, in two phases of five years each.

The consortium partners are the main guarantors of the professional, participatory, and adaptive management of the programme, drawing on their extensive experience to make Pro-ARIDES a model development programme in a volatile context.

SNV and CARE, together with their local partners, are responsible for the implementation of the programme activities, while KIT and WUR, in consultation with SNV and CARE, are jointly responsible for the action research,

knowledge development and experience capitalisation components, including part of the monitoring and evaluation.

1.2 The challenge

The Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger faces a confluence of challenges that pose a significant threat to the region's economic stability. The region is affected by climate change, erratic rainfall, inequalities within communities, political instability, conflict and population displacement, degradation of land and water resources, and food insecurity. These factors result in low levels of resilience among the population, making them vulnerable to external shocks, such as increased food insecurity and malnutrition due to the compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there are opportunities to help reverse these trends by strengthening and transforming agriculture and food systems. The active involvement of young people in the agricultural sector can be a catalyst for its transformation, while women can make a significant contribution to the development of value chains. By creating sustainable employment opportunities for these populations, it is possible to reduce tensions and promote regional stability. As agriculture remains the cornerstone of livelihoods in the region, increasing crop and livestock production and building inclusive value chains has the potential to generate substantial income for youth and women, and effectively address malnutrition.

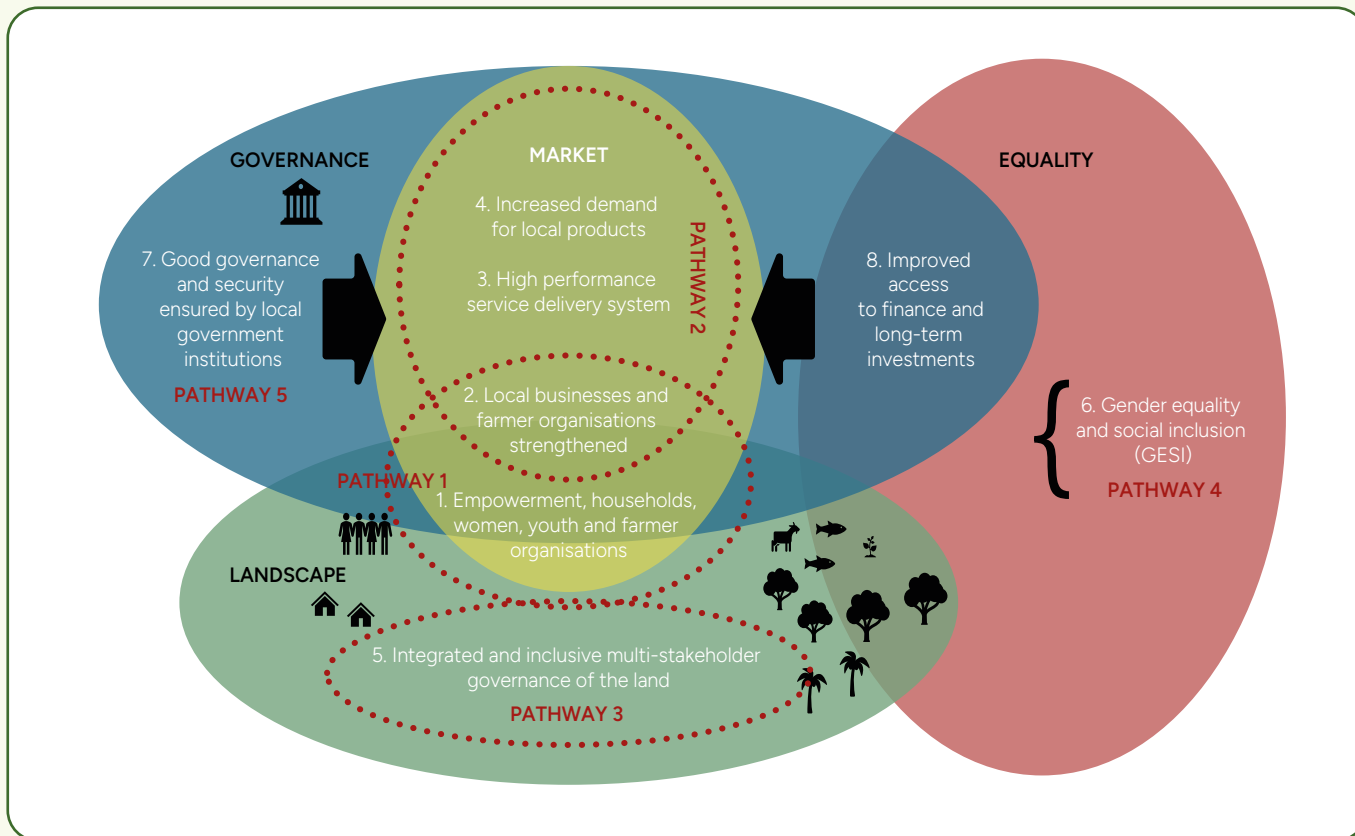


Figure 1: Visual presentation of the systemic changes in the five pathways

1.3 Our theory of change

The project’s theory of change is based on five pathways and 23 outcomes. Based on the results contextualised by country (36 Burkina Faso, 26 Mali and 35 Niger), activities have been formulated by country and each activity is described in terms of its definition, contribution to the expected results, target groups, approaches, sub-activities and stages of implementation. This list of activities is intended to be relevant, coherent, complete and dynamic in order to achieve the programme’s objective.

The diagram above shows the relationship between the eight interdependent systemic issues and how they are addressed through the five pathways. At the bottom, the terroir or landscape is positioned as the basis of the natural resources that feed the value chains at the producer level, as well as other services (e.g. soil fertility). Then the market shows the flow of products to consumers, with the various actors involved. Governance aims to improve the enabling environment for both land and market, through policies and institutions as well as financial resources. Finally, equality shows the cross-cutting importance of gender and social inclusion in all relationships.

Our approach aims to foster systemic change for a broader, more inclusive and sustainable context through the five pathways of our Theory of Change (ToC).

2. Year in review

In 2021, the Agri-Food Programme for Integrated Resilience and Economic Development in the Sahel (Pro-ARIDES) was launched, marking the beginning of a significant initiative. The year focused on translating the recommendations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands into actionable plans, establishing and organising teams, and fostering shared ownership of the Pro-ARIDES theory of change. As we enter the second year of implementation in 2023, we continue to navigate challenging security conditions in the region.

This report highlights the context of the implementation of the programme, the main results of the execution of the plan and the consumption of the budget, the functioning of the governing bodies, the management of risks and the lessons learnt during the first half of 2023, considered as the second year of implementation of the field activities.

2.1 Result highlights

Despite the challenges that affected the implementation of activities, and considering that 2022 is the first year of implementation of activities on the ground, the 2022 programme successfully reached 35,123 households, achieving a completion rate of 60%. Specifically, the completion rates were 103% for 154 farmers' organisations, 121% for 349 natural resource management bodies, 65% for 103 SMEs, 96% for 108 local authorities and a substantial 838% for 134 women's and youth organisations.

Village Savings and Credit Associations (VSCAs), a credible self-financing solution for Income Generating Activities (IGAs), established by the programme to ensure greater impact on women's economic empowerment.

Our goal for the 2023 programme is to reach a cumulative target (2021-2023) of 92,161 households, including 57,038 households by 2023, and to maintain a completion rate of over 95% for all organisations.

To date, the project has achieved significant results, particularly in the following areas:

- Diversification of production and diets: Monitoring data show positive trends in diversifying production and improving household diets through integrated nutrition-sensitive activities.
- Women's participation in village savings schemes raises high hopes for financial inclusion and empowerment.
- Positive trends in land tenure security: Combining traditional and modern approaches leads to better security outcomes. Pro-ARIDES has moved from systematic security (a modern approach) to security on demand.
- Involvement and ownership of local actors/service providers in climate change adaptation. Local partnerships have been strengthened to provide more climate adaptation technologies and services.



This was mainly due to the programme's focus on larger organisations at departmental, provincial and district levels, while still working with women's and youth organisations at community level. In addition, an 87% completion rate was achieved with 205 financial institutions (MFIs) and village savings and loan associations (VSLAs).

Expenditure on the Pro-ARIDES programme amounted to €9,106,158 out of an annual budget of €9,489,315, resulting in a commendable budget execution rate of 96% in 2022.

In 2023, Pro-ARIDES achieved an annual budget execution rate of 70.9%, subject to confirmation by the ongoing financial audit. Expenditure for the Pro-ARIDES programme amounts to EUR 11,289,171.3 out of an annual budget of EUR 15,932,347.9. This performance

contributes to an overall budget execution rate of 45% over the three years of the programme, compared to the initial target of 53.7%.

2023 will be the second year of implementation of activities on the ground. The objective for the 2021-2023 programme period is to reach a cumulative target of 92,161, including 57,038 households by 2023, while maintaining an average completion rate of over 95% for all organisations.

In total, 59,422 out of 57,038 households were reached, i.e. 104% of the target, and 2,960 out of 1,909 organisations, i.e. 155% of the target. The results achieved, i.e. 65% of households and 155% of organisations (whose plans were revised upwards), are in line with the programme implementation period of 60%.

Table 1: Programme implementation - 2023

2023	TARGET (€)	ACTUAL (€)	RATE %
Target households	57,038	59,422	104%
Target organisations	1,909	2,960	155%
Budget (Euro x 1000)	15,932	11,289	70,9%

Table 2: Programme by end 2023

2021-2025	TARGET (€)	ACTUAL (€)	RATE %
Programme execution time	60	36	60%
Target households	141,650	92,161	65%
Target organisations	2,251	2,960	131%
Budget (Euro x 1000)	55,358	24,752	45%

The above completion rates were achieved despite the challenges posed by the context of insecurity, which affected the implementation of activities, and considering that 2022 was the first year of implementation of activities on the ground.

Significant efforts were focused on achieving in particular:

- ownership of the content of the program's technical activities by all stakeholders and the efficiency of Proximity Support Mechanism players, thus improving the quality of program implementation,
- improved annual operational planning,
- further development of methodologies and tools for monitoring systemic change,
- constant readjustment, with decentralized institutions and services to ensure effective positioning to support the social contract and strengthen support for local formal and informal structures,
- improving management culture and knowledge utilization, including the use of digital collaboration tools and other innovations, at all levels of implementation,
- improving collaboration between Action-Research teams and practitioners within countries and at regional level,
- the continued development of synergies through the establishment of collaborations with other programs relevant to Pro-ARIDES' ambitions for systemic change.

Survey of the coordinates by a cadastral surveyor in Burkina Faso to define the areas to be protected, an activity carried out as part of the feasibility study (topographical surveys and socio-economic study) carried out around each rice-growing lowland to confirm the suitability of the areas and the favourable opinions of the communities.



3. Intervention context

The Pro-ARIDES programme is being implemented in the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which forms a continuous and coherent zone with similar characteristics, receiving less than 800 mm of rainfall per year.

In the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, rainfall is the most important climatic variable affecting people's lives, second only to insecurity. It is considered to be the single most important factor in determining the evolution of the environment in this region. The West African Sahel has become wetter over the last 30 years, but droughts are shorter and more frequent, making crop yields uncertain. Existing opportunities in the Sudano-Sahelian zone can promote inclusive and integrated development if adequately supported.

Adaptation options that focus on increasing the resilience of agricultural systems through methods, technologies, and innovations to cope with a changing climate can support economic development ambitions in the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. These options can include redefining agricultural calendars by adjusting sowing dates and crop cycles of varieties to better manage rainfall variability, developing varieties adapted to water stress and/or heat, implementing water management practices for agricultural purposes (water and soil conservation, soil protection and restoration, crop protection in the face of climatic extremes, supplemental and pure irrigation using surface water such as rivers, ponds, reservoirs, groundwater, etc.), developing irrigated agriculture, and more. It also includes the development of irrigated crops, crop diversification and intensification, the

adoption of rational soil fertility management practices, and the improvement of mechanisation and automation of agricultural practices.

The Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger is linked to the northern parts of the Sahel by strategic grazing areas for livestock mobility. The transformation of agricultural and food systems in these areas must significantly increase agricultural production, provide healthy and nutritious food for a population facing a precarious food and nutrition situation, and sustainably conserve natural resources affected by climate change.

The region is rich in mineral resources such as gold, uranium and oil. Mining in these areas remains an economic and job-creating potential if the management of these mineral resources is done in a concerted and inclusive manner.

In this zone, the youth of the population represent available labour for agriculture and human capital for the valorisation of agricultural products, and can be a real driving force for the transformation of the sector. Women, who are also widely represented in agriculture, could, with the right support, play a crucial role in developing value chains for their own benefit.

Providing decent employment opportunities for these populations will reduce existing tensions and the appeal of violent extremist groups, thereby improving the stability of the region and increasing the resilience of the population to various external shocks. Development opportunities exist in the Sudano-Sahelian zone and, if adequately supported, can foster inclusive and integrated development.

Socio-political and security situation

In 2023, although the security situation in all the countries concerned is very worrying, we have noted a stabilisation and/or improvement in the programme's areas of intervention, with a limited impact on implementation.

In Niger, the security context has become fragile in the communes of Bangui, Say, and Sabon Guida in the regions of Tillabéry and Tahoua. There has been a resurgence of attacks and hostage-taking for ransom, significantly restricting the movement of the program team during early 2023.

In Mali, ongoing attacks on the population, theft of livestock, and collection of zakat by armed groups in the Bankass and Koro cercles have been observed, leading to large-scale movements of people from affected villages to urban centers.

In Burkina, the number of low-risk communes has increased from 5 to 9 compared to 2022, and all delegations in intervention communes are now operational.

Within the programme, three communes in Burkina Faso and three in Niger have been effectively replaced due to insecurity.

3.1 Intervention approaches

Agri-Food Programme for Integrated Resilience and Economic Development in the Sahel aims to move towards systemic change for a more inclusive and sustainable overall context. This systemic change is based on four essential dimensions - landscape, market, governance, and equality - and the following five trajectories of change:

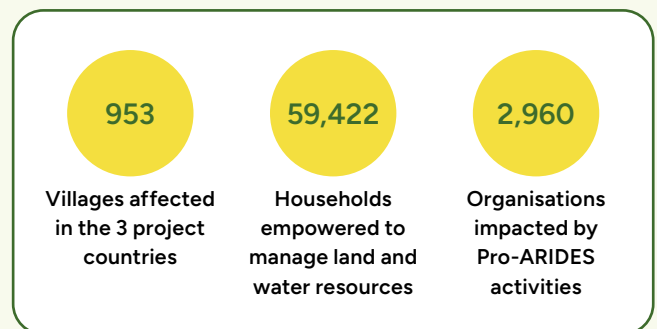
- 1 Improved food, farm and herd management for more resilient production systems and better household nutrition,
- 2 Enhanced market-related business, service, and employment opportunities, generating greater economic value,
- 3 Sustainable management of land, water, and other natural resources through peaceful and collective resource use,
- 4 Gender, youth and social inclusion ensured for the development of resilient food systems, and
- 5 Strengthened institutions to re-establish a social contract.

The program has continued its efforts to build resilience through a comprehensive approach to food and

nutrition systems, backed up by so-called support approaches. This systemic approach involves analysing not only the components of the system, but also the determinants that influence the system as a whole. The support approaches focus on the landscape, the market and value chains, nutrition for all (SN4A) and social and gender inclusion are promoted to achieve the program's objectives.

Reports from the three countries highlight activities and contributions in the areas of food and nutrition security; social and economic inclusion via entrepreneurship and livelihoods; sustainable use of natural resources and climate adaptation; governance and accountability among stakeholders. In operational terms, this approach is characterized by internal programmatic integration of activities and the building of partnerships based on opportunities for complementarity and synergy with external partners. Activity packages covering the five trajectories have been planned and implemented by country to address the various challenges involved. Details in Appendix 1: Explanation of the intervention approaches

3.2 Key results



In 2023, significant progress has been made towards achieving the programme's objectives. A total of 953 villages in 71 communes in the three intervention countries of the programme were positively impacted by Pro-ARIDES activities. A remarkable 59,422 farming and (agro)pastoral households, including women and youth, actively participated in the implementation of these activities in the various villages, contributing to their empowerment. Efforts were also made to strengthen farmers' and women's organisations to enable them to effectively manage land and water resources, improve nutrition and build resilience. The programme's activities reached a total of 2,960 organisations.

These results make a valuable contribution to addressing the systemic challenges faced by vulnerable Sahelian populations affected by both climatic and political adversities in the intervention zones.



4. Impact across key themes

4.1 Food system resilience as a bulwark for household and community development

Food systems encompass all the processes involved in food production, from cultivation to consumption. In the countries where Pro-ARIDES works (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), household food security depends heavily on agriculture and livestock. To increase the resilience of the food system, various activities are carried out by SMEs and cooperatives to bring about systemic changes, such as improving agricultural production and promoting the peaceful use of natural resources.

Burkina Faso - In the village of Nébia, in the commune of Dassa, the women's cooperative "Kélègnè" is active in horticulture. The cooperative manages a one hectare communal garden where they grow a variety of crops including onions, tomatoes, peppers, sorrel and potatoes. The produce not only contributes to a balanced diet for household consumption, but also improves food and nutrition security, while generating income for members through sales profits.

In 2022, the cooperative worked with Pro-ARIDES to rehabilitate a borehole, build two water basins and improve garden fencing. Members were also trained in tree nursery production and compost techniques. However, the cooperative and the entire village of 2,121 people were forced to relocate due to threats from terrorist groups. Despite this, the villagers have chosen to return to Nébia, showing resilience in the face of terrorism, an issue that has plagued Burkina Faso since 2016, causing forced displacement.

The onion industry in Burkina Faso faces the double challenge of conservation and marketing, despite being

located in one of the country's production centres, the province of Sanguié, to which Nébia administratively belongs. Recognising this challenge, Pro-ARIDES has built an "onion conservation house" next to the communal garden of the "Kélègnè" cooperative. This initiative aims to reduce storage losses, a major problem in vegetable production. While the cost of building the storage hut is relatively low, the benefits are significant. Pro-ARIDES has committed 2 million CFA francs to this project, including its own contribution of 250,000 CFA francs. The storage hut, constructed from a steel frame and local renewable materials, has natural ventilation to protect the harvested onion bulbs and extend their storage life to 6-8 months. This innovative facility has not only improved the packaging of the cooperative's onions, but has also strengthened the value chain, providing an opportunity for members to increase their income and serving as a food and nutritional safety net for households.

The hut, which has a maximum capacity of 7 tonnes, has already benefited 21 members of the cooperative, who pay a modest fee of CFA 2,500 per portion to store their onion harvests. The fees collected are used to maintain the hut. "Storage in the hut is the best. One of our women wasn't lucky enough to have some in the hut and she suffered a lot of dry rot losses. Others, who were more fortunate, were forced to sell their new crop of onions on the local market because they did not have the means to preserve them and avoid the risk of damage," says the cooperative's president, Kandiel Dasmaté.



Aboubacar Alou Sidi in front of his biodigester compost pit

Niger - The Pro-ARIDES initiative supported the installation of a home biodigester for Aboubacar Alou Sidi, a farmer and head of household in Dioundiou, in the Dosso region.

Aboubacar was fortunate to be the only beneficiary of a biodigester in Dioundiou, along with two farmer organisations (FOs). Champs Ecole Agro Pastoraux (CEAP) also benefited from a biodigester in Lailawa, in the commune of Tibiri. The widespread adoption of biodigester technology is of strategic importance as it contributes to increasing agricultural productivity and strengthening the resilience of food systems.

Aboubacar has successfully installed the biodigester in a corner of his family's yard and uses it to process his livestock's waste. The resulting benefits are immediate and diverse, particularly in terms of increased vegetable yields. "This biodigester has eliminated the need for chemical fertiliser. It has significantly increased my agricultural productivity. I now grow cucumbers, watermelons, tomatoes and more. The quality of the food I produce has also improved. I am enthusiastic about building another biodigester at my own expense, in addition to the one financed by Pro-ARIDES," says Aboubacar. He currently has 32 tonnes of compost for his own use. Selling the excess compost provides him with an additional source of income. With the income from his vegetable production and compost sales, Aboubacar is able to maintain financial stability for his family. After installing the biodigester, he sold 10 bags for a total of 50,000 CFA francs at his first sale and 60,000 CFA francs at his next sale. The biodigester has significantly improved the living conditions of his household. His wife now uses biogas for cooking on a daily basis, eliminating the need for wood, which is the most common fuel in rural areas despite its increasing scarcity. Biogas is not only good for the family's health, it is also good for the environment. Similar to biogas, the compost produced does not pose a health risk as the decomposition of organic matter is a natural process. Before the introduction of composting, this agro-pastoralist from Dioundiou relied heavily on chemical fertilisers, at considerable cost. "I used to use one tonne of fertiliser in the off-season and two tonnes in the winter," laments Aboubacar. Now, however, he is able to make significant savings. For Aboubacar, replacing chemical fertiliser with biofertiliser has been a blessing, especially given the economic situation in Niger. In particular, the government liberalised the fertiliser sector

in January 2022 due to supply problems. As a result, the state-owned CAÏMA lost its monopoly on fertiliser marketing to the competitive private sector. As a result, the national market experienced a sudden shock of increased selling prices. In addition, the availability and quality of chemical fertilisers is not always guaranteed.

Mali - The inspiring story of Fafouré Sogoba demonstrates the remarkable potential of women in leadership roles in agricultural value chains. A resident of the San region, known for its fonio industry, Fafouré has been diligently processing various fonio recipes, including pre-cooked fonio, fonio enriched with peanuts and dried fonio, at her SME 'Moussa Kounda' in San Lafiabougou since 2015. Despite the challenges she faces in terms of physical mobility, the management of her business has contributed significantly to its commendable reputation.

In 2023, Fafouré received substantial support from Pro-ARIDES to the tune of 5 million F CFA, with a personal contribution of 350,000 F CFA. This support has enabled her to increase her processing capacity from 500 kg to almost one tonne of fonio per year and to increase her staff from 3 to 8 people. This expansion has also enabled her to hire a sales agent to promote her products at various events, resulting in an annual turnover of over one million CFA francs.

Pro-ARIDES has not only provided financial support, but also essential training to strengthen the structural framework of "Moussa Kounda". It has also successfully linked the company to fonio producers, ensuring a seamless and cost-effective supply chain. The positive impact of this support is evident, as Fafouré has been able to enrol all four of her children in school, while also investing in the cultivation of her rice field, as well as groundnut and cowpea fields on her land.

The success of Fafouré and "Moussa Kounda" is a testament to the significant contribution of Pro-ARIDES, which has provided capacity-building opportunities to 43 Malian SMEs in 2022 alone. It is worth noting that Fafouré's products have been highly acclaimed on the exhibition fair, further underlining the positive development of her business.

Fafouré Sogoba, fonio processor entrepreneur





Some members of the Nazari AVEC

4.2 Social and financial inclusion to empower women and young people

Women and young people often face challenges in accessing formal finance from banks and decentralised financial systems (SFD). Pro-ARIDES runs social and financial inclusion initiatives in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Savings groups known as AVEC (Association Villageoise d’Epargne et de Crédit) in Burkina Faso; VSLA (Village Saving and Loan Association) or Musow Ka Jiguiya Ton (MJT) in Mali and MMD (Mata Masu Dubara) in Niger are key to inclusion. The “Homme engagé” approach and business training help to develop the entrepreneurial potential of young beneficiaries.

Niger - The MMD group “Nazari” in the village of Ziaziatou was revitalised by Pro-ARIDES. The group has 34 members, with a weekly membership fee of 250 F CFA per member, a modest amount that ensures the group’s solvency. Pro-ARIDES has provided capacity building sessions to strengthen the group’s management and skills. The group initially focused on providing loans to its members and later moved on to income-generating activities. They have harvested groundnuts and millet for sale and received 7 goats from Pro-ARIDES. The group now has 85 goats and livestock is an important part of their economic empowerment.

The profits from these groups benefit not only the women themselves, but also their families. “With the money, I was able to buy a dowry for my daughter and get her married,” explains Haoua Gado, a member. “I grow peanuts. As the rainy season approaches, the group gives each member a credit of 7,000 FCFA for chemical fertiliser. I took out this loan and was able to produce 6 bags of peanuts, compared to 2 or 3 bags last season,” recalls Digé Boubé, another member who is satisfied with her commitment to the group.

Mali - The “Homme engagé” approach, developed by the NGO CARE, aims to deconstruct negative social norms and promote social justice and positive masculinity. Men’s groups have been formed in selected villages to initiate evaluative dialogues and promote men’s household responsibilities. The approach has led to positive changes within households, with men taking on more household chores and adopting a more consultative attitude towards their wives. Despite criticism, the men involved have been inspired to take on their responsibilities publicly and responsibly, setting an example for others.

The women are proud of this social change, as Astan Dembélé, married and mother of five, testifies. “My husband helps me in the okra field. He washes the children, washes the clothes and sweeps the house,” she enthuses. Having men perform these tasks may seem trivial in other parts of the world, but in the Malian context it represents a revolution in social norms.



Coulibaly Amadou, Moumgoro Augustin and Koné Tiganou Emmanuel are committed to promoting positive masculinity

The men themselves also appreciate the promotion of dialogue between spouses and the changes that have taken place in their households. Tiganou Emmanuel Koné, a resident of Benena, has a polygamous marriage (two wives) and is a father of ten (10 children). “There was no understanding between my 19-year-old son and me. So he decided to go on an adventure outside Mali. I consulted his mother and she explained that our son didn’t feel involved in the running of our family. I then had a discussion with him. We’re now getting on well and he has given up his plans to emigrate,” says Koné.



Djiguemdé Tanga Julien is a young processor of local products who has benefited from vocational training.

4.3 Good governance for community resilience

Good governance involves the active participation of citizens in public administration and fosters trust between the governed and those who govern. Pro-ARIDES works in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, supporting local development through initiatives such as capacity building, resource mobilisation and accountability frameworks. The recent political context includes a coup d'état in Burkina Faso that led to the dismissal of local councils and their replacement by special delegates, while in Mali and Niger local elected officials remained in office despite coups.

Burkina Faso - Pro-ARIDES initiated short-term training courses in various trades for women and young people to facilitate their sustainable employability. Training in agricultural and non-agricultural trades improves skills and facilitates integration into the labour market, thus improving their socio-economic status. 222 women and young people from nine communities benefited from the training courses, which included trades such as animal husbandry, soilless farming, carpentry, masonry, solar electricity, hairdressing, tailoring and weaving. The training cycle for the first cohort ended on 15 December 2023 and the former trainees are now settling in.

Djiguemdé Tanga Julien is a young processor of local products who has benefited from vocational training. He lives in Samba (Passoré Province), which he left in 2023 to train for 4 months with a processor in Yako. The knowledge he acquired included techniques for processing local products ("soumbala" (traditional cooking bouillion), pre-cooked couscous, dried déguè, dried porridge, etc.). "I inherited my passion for processing products from my mother, who used to make soumbala. During my training, supported by Pro-ARIDES, I learnt how to preserve onions and tomatoes. I can preserve them for a year without decomposition and reuse them as fresh ingredients by dipping them in hot water," says Julien, 33. The testimonies of other young beneficiaries are edifying and demonstrate the noble contribution of Pro-ARIDES.

Mali - Good governance is one of the priorities of Pro-ARIDES through concrete activities. As the availability of resources is a determining factor, the 27 communes of intervention have been equipped with resource mobilisation strategies accompanied by mobilisation action plans. The digitalisation of the collection of internal and external financial resources (taxes and duties) has helped to reduce waste and strengthen the economic resilience of the communes while ensuring transparency in the management of the resources mobilised.

"The urban commune of San used to collect all patents related to telecommunications installations from mobile phone companies, which amounted to CFA 11 million per year. In 2023, thanks to a Pro-ARIDES training course, we were able to recover these fees and our rural commune now receives annual payments of CFA 400,000 after notification for the 2 masts installed," explains Mamadou Dembélé, Secretary General of the Sourountoua Municipal Council.

Burkina Faso - Good governance initiatives are targeted at local civil society organisations through the network of Comités Communaux de Redevabilité (CCR) and Comités Communaux de Suivi des Investissements et leurs Effets (CCSIE). To enable them to carry out their mission responsibly, the members of the CCRs have been trained by Pro-ARIDES in the relevant modules on public speaking, advocacy, promoting accountability, etc. The CCRs support local governance through a

citizen-based, non-political approach. The mandate of their members remains entirely voluntary.

Niger - The participatory budgeting initiative developed by Pro-ARIDES is one of the technical innovations promoted within local councils. Through public hearings, the direct involvement of citizens is encouraged to target and prioritise the range of investments by indexing the sources of financial mobilisation. The participatory budgeting process is not limited to planning, but also includes key stages of implementation and monitoring. By 2023, a package of 18 participatory budgets had been developed. The advantage of participatory budgeting is its catalytic and multiplier effect in promoting proactive fiscal citizenship. According to Garba Nouhou, Mayor of Dioundiou, Pro-ARIDES helped his rural commune of Dioundiou to adopt the participatory budgeting methodology.

The commune's approach focused exclusively on the traditional budget. The local council visited 6 of the 88 villages in the commune to involve the local population in budget planning.

Pro-ARIDES is active in Douméya, where the commune also benefited from an introduction to participatory budgeting. The budget planning session was open to the public and broadcast live on local radio. *"Making the budget public allowed us to mobilise more resources. Since participatory budgeting has been institutionalised, we have recorded the payment of taxes in advance. In 2023, 12 out of 34 villages paid before the end of the year,"* says Mayor Oumarou. The local councils have been strengthened in their understanding and execution of their duties in a context where many are limited by illiteracy.

Mayors from the communes of Sanekuy (far right), Kaniegué (center) and Kava (far left), explaining the good governance supported by Pro-ARIDES



5. Program performance against results framework

The performance evaluation shows that in all three countries, Pro-ARIDES support has led to significant progress compared to the baseline situation. See Table 3.

PATHWAY 1 - Increased sustainable and diversified production and improved household nutrition

Here we report that 20% of the 11,956 targeted households experienced a significant increase in production. In addition, the diversification of production increased by at least 9% across all households, equivalent to 7,221 households. This positive development has contributed to improved nutrition for 17% of the affected households, or 11,136 households. In addition, the performance of organisations involved in OP/OF/OJ improved significantly by 59%, with 508 organisations demonstrating improved effectiveness.

PATHWAY 2 - Economic resilience and strengthened household and business assets

Under this pathway, we observed that 63% of households (40,745 households) have diversified their sources of income. This positive trend has contributed to an improved performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and resulted in a net increase in income for 23% of households (11,978 households). However, there was a 2% decrease in the number of households (male/female) accessing financial services/products from the financial institutions supported by the programme. This decrease, which was particularly pronounced in Mali, can be attributed to the withdrawal of some microfinance institutions (MFIs) from the intervention areas and the increased risks associated with lending in an insecure environment.

PATHWAY 3 - Improved land tenure and sustainable use of natural resources

A significant 60% of households, or 35,860 households, have successfully secured their land rights. In addition, 69%

of households, or 39,946 households, have adopted climate-resilient technologies and practices. The adoption of climate-resilient technologies has resulted in a significant increase, covering an additional 65,389 hectares of land, bringing the total to 103,265 hectares.

However, in Burkina Faso and Niger, there was a significant 25% decrease in the number of conflicts resolved peacefully each year over the use of natural resources. There has also been a 2% decrease in the number of communities with at least one local agreement on the management of natural resources in agro-sylvo-pastoral areas. This trend can be attributed to the escalation of conflicts and the length of time it takes to resolve them.

PATHWAY 4 - In terms of improved inclusion of men and women, as well as young people, the elderly and other marginalized populations

The participation of young people and women in citizens' consultation frameworks has increased by 72% to a total of 222,246 people. In addition, there has been a 3% increase to 1,833 OP/OF/OJ/PME/community bodies in which women and young people have at least one significant role. There has also been a 2% increase in the participation of women and young people in household decision-making related to the management of production, consumption, income and/or marketing of agricultural products.

PATHWAY 5 - Re-establishing social contracts between institutions and populations

In the area of decentralised governance, there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of services provided, as evidenced by a 79% satisfaction rate among 49,558 households with regard to agricultural services provided by decentralised/deconcentrated entities. Progress has also been made in improving transparency and accountability in public administration, with 58% of municipalities, or 42 municipalities, showing improvement in this area. In addition, a significant 91% (2,017) of households representing various categories such as primary organisations, farmers' organisations, youth organisations and small and medium enterprises expressed satisfaction with the services provided by these institutions.

39,946 households embraced the adoption of climate-resilient technologies and practices. These technologies enable land restoration and asset creation to strengthen local capacities to withstand and recover from climate shocks and other natural disasters. There are also climate services, environmental education, land regeneration technics, water management/irrigation to increase local production through the "Champs Ecole Agro Pastoraux (CEAP)."

Table 3: Program performance - 2021-2023

Met and exceeded Not fully achieved Regression

TRAJECTORY 1: INCREASED SUSTAINABLE AND DIVERSIFIED PRODUCTION AND IMPROVED HOUSEHOLD NUTRITION		RATE OF PLANNING	RATE OF PROGRESSION	NUMBER	MEASUREMENT UNITS
1.1	# and % of AAP (m/f) households having diversified production, including market gardening	10%	9%	7,221	Household
1.2	# and % of AAP (m/f) households having improved their diet	10%	17%	11,136	Household
1.3	# and % of AAP (m/f) households that have increased their production	10%	20%	11,956	Household
1.4	# of OP/OF/OJ who improved their performance	20%	59%	508	OP/OF/OJ
TRAJECTORY 2: ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND HOUSEHOLD AND BUSINESS ASSETS STRENGTHENED		RATE OF PLANNING	RATE OF PROGRESSION	NUMBER	MEASUREMENT UNITS
2.1	# and % of SMEs that have improved their performance and resilience	20%	15%	116	SMES
2.2	# and % of AAP (m/f) households with increased net income	10%	23%	11,978	Household
2.3	# and % of households (m/f) having diversified their sources of income	5%	63%	40,745	Household
2.4	# and % of households (m/f) having obtained financial services/products from financial institutions supported by the program	5%	-2%	735	Household
TRAJECTORY 3: IMPROVED LAND TENURE AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES		RATE OF PLANNING	RATE OF PROGRESSION	NUMBER	MEASUREMENT UNITS
3.1	Land area covered by climate-resilient technologies	39,870	159%	63,395	Hectares
3.2	# and % of households with increased application of climate-resilient technologies/practices	15%	69%	39,946	Household
3.3	#/% of AAP households with secure land rights	5%	60%	35,860	Household
3.4	% of conflicts over the use of natural resources resolved peacefully per year	50%	-25%	94	Conflicts
3.5	Communes ayant au moins une convention de gestion de ressources naturelles locales pour des espaces agro-sylvo-pastoraux	17%	-2%	- 2	Municipality
TRAJECTORY 4: IMPROVED INCLUSION OF MEN AND WOMEN, AS WELL AS YOUNG PEOPLE, THE ELDERLY AND OTHER MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS		RATE OF PLANNING	RATE OF PROGRESSION	NUMBER	MEASUREMENT UNITS
4.1	# and % of OP/OF/OJ/PME/organes communales in which women and young people hold at least one key position	15%	2%	22	OP/OF/OJ
4.2	% of women and young people involved in household decision-making (on production management, consumption, income and/or marketing of agricultural products)	15%	3%	1,833	Household
4.3	% of women/youth taking part in communal consultation frameworks/citizen consultations	20%	72%	222,246	Citizens
TRAJECTORY 5 : SOCIO-POLITICAL AND - ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTS CONDUCIVE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, THE MANAGEMENT OF ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES, AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL CONTRACTS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS AND POPULATIONS.		RATE OF PLANNING	RATE OF PROGRESSION	NUMBER	MEASUREMENT UNITS
5.1	# and % of communes that have strengthened accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs	20%	58%	42	Municipality
5.2	# and % of municipalities having organized citizen consultations at least once a year	5%	-9%	-4	Municipality
5.3	# and % of households that are satisfied with the products and services provided by OP/OF/OJ/PME	30%	91%	2,017	Household
5.4	# and % of households reporting satisfaction with agricultural services provided by decentralized / deconcentrated services	30%	79%	49,558	Household
5.5	Number of communes having mobilized additional funds of at least 5% of their annual budget for sustainable local development	21	45%	32	Municipality

During the reporting period, there was a 9% decrease in the number of communes holding citizens' consultations. This decrease in Niger is attributed to the impact of the coup d'état, ECOWAS and UEMOA sanctions and the threat of a violent restoration of democracy. In addition, three communes in Niger and three in Burkina Faso were affected by insecurity. In addition, CARE Burkina and SNV Mali faced challenges related to staff turnover,

resulting in prolonged vacancies in key positions. There were also delays of more than three months in the funding of implementing partners of a consortium member partner in Burkina Faso and Niger.

The performance evaluation did not address the results of systemic changes, as it was scheduled for 2025.

6. Program governance and management

Programme governance is structured around a number of coordination mechanisms at different levels of internal and external programme management, including: (1) representatives of the consortium members in the Steering Committee, (2) members of the overall programme team in the Multi-Country Programme Management Unit (UGMP), (3) key stakeholders at country level in the Country Advisory Committee, (4) members of the management team in each country in the Country Management Unit, and (5) members of the country management team and local implementing partners in the Country Coordination Team.

Consortium members are represented in the programme's governing bodies. They are represented at meetings of the Steering Committee and the Multi-country Management Unit, while their national partners are represented at meetings of the Country Coordination Teams, the Country Management Units and the Country Advisory Councils.

The programme is coordinated at country level by a Country Management Unit (CMU). It consists of the following consortium members

- SNV: Country Coordinator, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Programme Finance Officer.
- CARE: Project Manager, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Programme Finance Officer.
- WUR: a local partner appointed by WUR.
- KIT: a local partner nominated by KIT.
- Other members may be invited as appropriate.

6.1 Risk management and mitigation

In 2023, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where we operate, faced a number of challenges, including state fragility, the deterioration of diplomatic dialogue, the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), border closures, the FDS offensive against terrorist groups, the impact of climate change and the suspension of local councils. Nevertheless, compliance with specific measures initiated at the start of the programme has helped to mitigate the adverse effects of programme implementation. These measures include adherence to the security protocol established within the framework of Pro-ARIDES activities, systematic and thorough socio-political analyses, regular monitoring of the security situation in Pro-ARIDES zones, adherence to the provisions established by the United Nations for access to certain insecure areas, increased consultation with local authorities and other partners in the implementation of activities in insecure areas, and the use of the Proximity Support Mechanism in certain inaccessible zones to ensure continuity of programme implementation.



7. Lessons learned

Reflecting on the events of 2023, valuable lessons have been learned through the implementation of different programme activities and approaches. These lessons can serve as a basis for improving future programme implementation. The following key points emerged from this experience:

- 1** Community trainers play a crucial role in linking the programme to the community, facilitating the uptake and effective replication of technologies and training at the local level, using local languages.
- 2** Land tenure security is critical to the success of any development effort. Obtaining the consent and authorisation of landowners through the signing of Quit Claim Certificates before work commences is essential.
- 3** The development of rangelands, enclaves and corridors requires careful planning to ensure timely implementation, taking into account factors such as land registration and procurement procedures.
- 4** Fostering mutually beneficial relationships between value chain actors through B2B workshops and trade fairs is important for cooperation agreements, favourable contractual arrangements and market access for producers and smallholders.
- 5** The use of relays and committees of committed men is an effective and sustainable strategy in areas of volatile insecurity and limited territorial coverage by programme field agents, facilitating community involvement and scaling up of best practices.
- 6** Involving men in gender activities raises community awareness and promotes gender equality within households in intervention villages.
- 7** Creating synergy between participants in different community activities enables beneficiaries to develop food diversification initiatives and improve their incomes using local resources.
- 8** Effective collaboration with local authorities ensures strong community mobilisation, participation in awareness-raising and data collection activities, and increases the visibility of the programme.
- 9** The participatory budgeting approach and the annual investment plan promoted by the programme contribute to improved resource mobilisation within communities. However, sustainable integration into municipal budget planning and accountability is crucial for long-term success.

Annexes

Appendix 1. Explanation of the intervention approaches

1. Global approach: Inclusive and resilient food systems

Countries have invested differently in various aspects of the food system. However, there has been a particular focus on improving the production aspect. In Burkina Faso, for example, a priority has been to strengthen land assets to stabilise production and modernise the agro-pastoral sector. The development of these facilities takes into account the needs of local households, and various stakeholders are guided towards either food self-sufficiency or commercial market orientation through a local support mechanism aimed at capacity building. The choice of animal and plant species to be promoted depends on the communities' potential to engage in processing and access markets.

In Mali, the focus has been on improving vegetable production and providing training to minimise post-harvest losses and make effective use of crop residues. Action research recommendations have contributed to improving market access, recognising its importance in terms of availability and supply for all segments of the population, and adding value to local crop and livestock products, including non-timber forest products.

In Niger, the focus has been on both irrigated and rainfed production, as well as the FARN initiative. School and hut gardens have been established based on community interest. The aim is to identify appropriate and accessible solutions to constraining factors and to promote the adoption of best practices and technologies in order to increase income from the sale of products resulting from improved productivity. Community consultations in clusters of villages have been instrumental in understanding the potential for diversification and development of agro-pastoral value chains. This information has proved valuable in providing tailor-made support for the transformation of the farms concerned.

2. Approaches to support

2.1 Adaptation to climate change and sustainable food for all (SN4A)

Cereal, vegetable and poultry production have enabled food diversification in the intervention communities. While cereal crops provide households with sources of starch, market garden produce, home-grown produce and off-garden produce provide supporting nutrients that households have learnt to value through art sessions and cooking demonstrations supported by Relais/Community Health Workers. The development of activity packages for the same target households has opened up more nutritional options for these households.

In Burkina Faso, community and home gardens have produced a variety of vegetables and communities have benefited from training/awareness raising on good nutrition and hygiene practices. Culinary demonstrations were held to show the best possible combinations to increase the benefits of food to the human organism. Home gardens have been promoted to ensure that fresh vegetables are available to all households at all times and in all seasons.

In Mali, working with community nutrition support groups -GSAN- and health and nutrition relays, nutrition demonstrations, awareness-raising and education, promotion, production and consumption of local products with high nutritional value, updating of food and nutrition security plans -PSAN-; enabling improved food, farm and livestock management for more resilient production systems and better household nutrition.

In Niger, in order to develop a strategy for behaviour change towards better nutritional practices, we organised summary diagnoses of nutritional status (qualitative and quantitative surveys). This information is essential for formulating evidence-based messages and designing other interventions, as well as facilitating the promotion of agro-pastoral production, nutrition-sensitive processing (diversification, nutrient intake, safety, etc.) and market supply management.

Community health workers, community relays, model mothers and leaders were key collaborators in the Sustainable Nutrition for All (SN4A) approach.

2.2 Market Development and Inclusive Value Chain Approach

From the start of the programme, the teams identified inclusive value chains in a participatory way, through community diagnostics complemented by technical analysis. In Niger, economic development plans have been drawn up for each commune to support these initiatives. This is to facilitate the coordination of actions undertaken as part of the economic development plan, or to address any other issues that may affect the value chain. The programme team is also working to align the SME, PO and community funds with the different value chain economic development plans, while respecting the orientations given to these different funds. Mali has given priority to networking forums. To this end, three areas have been identified: seizing opportunities for growth and diversification of demand for local (food) products; the emergence of viable local businesses and local organisations in economic activities; and improving the performance of services, including financial services. The B2B workshops led to the signing of contracts worth FCFA 80,664,500 (EUR 122,972) and influenced the holding of 4 promotional sales and procurement fairs for seeds and agricultural inputs.

The cost of networking meetings is a major constraint limiting their implementation. Opportunities for exhibition through boutiques/windows or other forms of virtual networking should be explored to expand this type of activity, which is very useful for promoting local products.

2.3 Territory management

The landscape approach, based on a spatial continuum, is used to organise the rehabilitation of soils, agroforestry parks and water harvesting on farms, as well as the rehabilitation of priority common natural resources selected by communities. With a view to anticipation, this approach consists of identifying all the natural resources in which investments will be made in the coming years in order to safeguard them. This approach also includes capacity building for formal and informal actors and extends to villages outside the intervention zone of the municipalities involved, in order to create a territorial dynamic and achieve the desired results: concerted, rational and safe management of the various natural resources. One of the main challenges facing the three countries is the availability of technicians to support the security process. This weakens local land management structures where they exist.

2.4 Gender and Social Inclusion “EGIS

At all stages of the Pro-ARIDES management cycle in Burkina Faso, gender and social inclusion have been a key focus of programme implementation. Local village, municipal and regional organisations (youth councils, women’s coordination, IDPs) are involved in the diagnosis, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the programme’s activities. In Niger, instead of a rapid analysis, a comprehensive study on gender and social inclusion was carried out in the 18 intervention communes under the leadership of the NGO CARE. The study’s recommendations were used to improve activities. Grassroots organisations (OF; OJ, OF) were supported in developing gender-sensitive action plans and in influencing the effective participation of women in the management bodies of the organisations. In all three countries, the strengthening of women’s economic capacity through the identification and strengthening of AVECs is not only an opportunity to increase women’s purchasing power with the loans they receive, but also a force for advocacy and lobbying for common interests and the assertion of women’s leadership.

The main challenge in implementing this approach is the lack of country and local programme expertise. A strengthening process is underway to address this shortcoming. Targeting issues are also a challenge. In particular, the participation of all social strata in the programme’s activities. Burkina Faso, for example, is taking steps to make targeting more inclusive by type of activity, based on clear criteria understood at the local level.

2.5 Local governance

Burkina Faso’s approach to local governance includes addressing the capacity-building needs of local authorities and organisations. Civil society organisations have been supported in their efforts to improve citizen monitoring. In all three countries, the focus was on aligning and consolidating existing programmes to ensure the sustainability of investments. To this end, despite the absence of elected municipal councils, efforts were concentrated on local technical services and specialised commissions existing within the municipalities. This has reduced the impact of political reorganisation. In Mali, a new administrative division created new regions and districts in March 2023. The Cercle Council has also been abolished and its representatives will be transferred to the various local authorities. At this stage, there is no impact on our operations.

Appendix 2. Tables

Table 4: Planning and achieving 2023 targets

DESIGNATION	2023		
	TARGETS	REALIZATION	COMPLETION RATE
All households	57 038	59 422	104%
All households without pastors	54 186	56 451	104%
Land area	600	3 976	663%
Farmers' organizations and cooperatives (local POs, 1 st level)	470	648	138%
Organizations representing farmers/OPs (apex, 2 nd and 3 rd degree OPs)	186	89	48%
Local authorities	90	86	96%
Institutions and traditional chieftaincies	195	145	74%
Land commissions	164	141	86%
Natural Resource Management Commissions and Conflict Management Platforms	368	429	117%
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and private service providers	181	657	363%
Savings and Credit Associations	315	711	226%
Private (micro) financial institutions (MFIs)	13	12	92%
Public financial institutions	9	-	0%
Women's Organizations (WO)	61	133	218%
Youth organizations (OJ)	61	66	108%
Research and Knowledge Institutes (other than implementing partners)	5	-	0%
Public institutions (other than implementing partners) supporting target groups	9	1	11%
Private institutions (other than implementing partners) supporting target groups	11	3	27%
Decentralized Technical Services (STD)	274	291	106%
National governments (supervisory ministries and direct partner ministries)	12	12	100%

Table 5: Donor priority outputs

OUTPUT (TOC)	INDICATOR	2023			DONORS
		TARGETS	REALIZATION	COMPLETION RATE	
Increased awareness among households and POs/FOs of the benefits of healthy eating and participatory decision-making processes	# AAP households (m/f) supported through diversification/nutrition activities	34 037	37 127	109%	DGIS
Technologies, inputs, practices, adapted to climate and household needs (their workforce), made available	Land area covered by climate-resilient technologies	10 691	19 397	181%	DGIS
Increased knowledge of PAA households and POs on sustainable farm resource management practices	# PAA households participating in training activities on climate-resilient production	36 845	41 789	113%	DGIS
Agricultural and (agro)pastoral households (AAP households) and women and young people, linked to off-farm income-generating opportunities	# AAP households (m/f) supported through off-farm IGAs	21 932	12 561	57%	CCDMP
Improved skills and knowledge of suppliers, who deliver specific services (some of them ICT-based) to different users/customers	# SMEs and POs providing services to AAP households supported in building their capacity to provide these services to meet household needs	582	831	143%	CCDMP
Elaborate repositories of mechanisms and tools in APP household land tenure security and natural resource management	# Commune which have set up or supported the revitalization of their land structure	68	60	88%	CCDMP
Improved capacity of social and landowner groups for multi-stakeholder dialogue, NRM, equitable decision-making and conflict resolution (mediation skills).	# organizations supported to strengthen their mediation, multi-stakeholder dialogue, NRM and inclusive decision-making capacities	621	557	90%	CCDMP

Table 6: Conclusion of the Action-Research conducted in 2021-2022

NO.	THEMES	SECURITIES
Burkina Faso		
1	SAN	Putting an end to food insecurity for non self-sufficient households: improving their access to supply sources in Burkina Faso
2		Food and nutritional security in self-sufficient and market-oriented households. How to make it work in Burkina Faso
3	GRN+F	Mobilizing land stakeholders to secure their rights in Burkina Faso
4		An approach to successful social negotiations on rural land tenure. A prerequisite for sustainable land tenure security in the lowlands of Burkina Faso: the case of the Pro- ARIDES zone
5	FID Mobilizing land stakeholders to secure their rights in Burkina Faso	Informal financing mechanisms in Burkina Faso: prospects for Pro- ARIDES
6		An approach to successful social negotiations on rural land tenure. A prerequisite for sustainable land tenure security in the lowlands of Burkina Faso: the case of the Pro- ARIDES zone
Mali		
7	SAN	Innovative strategies for household food and nutrition security in Mali's Pro-ARIDES zone
8	SAN	Natural resources: a key factor in household food and nutritional security
9	GRN+F	Natural resource and land management in Mali: local institutions for conflict prevention and management
10		Meeting the challenges of sustainable availability and access to natural resources in Mali: the case of the communes of Koporo-Pen, Segué, San, Benena and Tominian
11	FID Mobilizing land stakeholders to secure their rights in Burkina Faso	Local authorities finance food and nutritional security for grassroots communities
Niger		
12	SAN	Enhancing the value of spontaneous plants and forest products for food and nutritional security in Niger
13		Pastoralists conquer markets in Niger
14	GRN+F	Natural resources for community well-being in Niger
15		Strengthening user capacities for sustainable natural resource management in Niger



Table 7: Summary of knowledge development actions

DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	ACTIVITIES AT THE BF	ACTIVITIES IN MALI	ACTIVITIES IN NIGER
1. People	The Burkina Faso team benefited from a capacity-building workshop on knowledge development, which focused on systemic change.	In May, 15 members of the technical team were trained in the knowledge management approach by the Deputy Director of the program. Identification of thematic focal points in terms of knowledge development.	Training of 26 team members on knowledge development and the mechanism needed to implement it.
2. Systems	The researcher-practitioner partnership continued this year with the production of technical notes and pilot protocols. This knowledge was disseminated to the whole ECP at the 2 nd quarterly ECP meeting.	Setting up a Country Knowledge Management Committee to work on systematizing the development of knowledge linked to management needs knowledge of the program and the country.	Training of 13 members on SAN and exchanges on the diagnostic mechanism for nutritional status.
3. Content	The strategy for implementing the sub-activities has been continually discussed and adapted based on the technical notes developed by action research and the review of literature that the action-research team regularly updates in order to enhance the effectiveness to program intervention.	03 themes have been identified for capitalization, including i) improving food and nutrition security and (ii) a community-based approach to natural resource management in situations of insecurity, and (iii) a mechanism for improving the accountability of elected municipal officials to improve the delivery of public services. Capitalization and publication of 6 technical notes on the results of Action research.	An action plan has been drawn up, containing knowledge development themes and deadlines (see DGC Niger plan), and 4 notes have been produced, 4 notes on 2023 pilots, continuation of FID study, Training of 8 team members on fundamentals with an action plan to improve the way pastoralism is taken into account in the program.
4. The process	The approach used is that of action-oriented research, based on the following perspective systemic; with protocols defining the research questions and the instruments (documentary research, surveys) to be used for data collection/analysis.	Implementation of development tools and knowledge management by the country committee, with the collaboration and support of the UGMP and in consultation with the PSEA team and teams from action research, particularly on results.	A committee is currently being set up.

Table 8: Risk management and mitigation measures

COUNTRY	RISKS	EXPLANATION / MITIGATION MEASURES
Regional	Fragile states	State fragility has recently increased in the region, with the coup d'état in Niger following on from those in Mali and Burkina Faso, and insecurity in all three countries. Trade and financial sanctions by ECOWAS and UEMOA, as well as the interruption of development aid from certain development partners, the closure of borders led to a rise in food prices and a shortage of electricity, with Nigeria interrupting the supply of electricity to Niger.
	Deterioration of diplomatic dialogue	The deterioration in diplomatic dialogue has also affected development aid and bilateral cooperation between the Burkinabe, Malian and Nigerian authorities and certain development partners.
	Coordinating the fight against terrorism	The creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) has facilitated the coordination of the fight against terrorism. We have noted an improvement in security in the program's intervention zones, which will facilitate access to beneficiaries and the implementation of all program activities.
	Cross-border markets	Cross-border market conditions were already difficult due to insecurity. These conditions worsened with the closure of Niger's borders with Nigeria and Benin for 7 months. Hope was revived with the lifting of ECOWAS sanctions, but concern remained with the withdrawal of the ESA states from ECOWAS.
	Livestock mobility	With this context of insecurity from the FDS offensive against terrorists, on the borders of three countries, cattle rustling by armed bandits, cross-border livestock mobility is risky. As long as security is not guaranteed by the authorities of these three countries, this mobility remains uncertain.
	Climate vulnerability	The program focuses on capacity building for households, POs, OFs and OJs on good production practices (agricultural, livestock and forestry) and early warning systems, technologies, inputs, practices, adapted to the climate and to the needs of households, family farm and herd management to strengthen their resilience in the face of climate change.
Burkina Faso	The security situation in the area makes access to some of the project's target zones difficult, and consequently the performance of certain activities	Development and implementation of a safety protocol for Pro-ARIDES activities Regular monitoring of the security situation in the Pro-ARIDES area by the organizations' Security and Safety Officers Monitoring of the security situation by local partners' security managers in tandem with the CARE-BF security manager Registration on the UNHAS platform for access to certain areas and INSO for receiving alerts A focus on endogenous actors to facilitate activities in the field Favoring less risky forms of travel, such as public transport or being accompanied by locals on motorcycles.
	The strategy put in place by the program to ensure the sustainability of certain inland valleys has been undermined by the strategies of other programs, such as those of the Ministry, which have dumped over 50% subsidized fertilizer on the land. The recovery of working capital on the sites has become a difficulty as a result of these situations.	Raising awareness among target lowland farmers. Advocacy with the Ministry at the CCP meeting.
Mali	Implementation of activities in communes with high levels of insecurity	Use of community relays to lead the said communes (Koro, Bankass, Mafouné). These relays receive the necessary training beforehand from project staff. Relocation of certain project meetings from an unsafe area to a more secure one. Compliance with various security instructions.
	High targets following Baseline study	Readaptation of certain references to the Malian context and on the basis of the results of similar studies.
	Adapting CEAP conduct	Introduction of pastoralism and livestock issues as part of the CEP program.
Niger	Insecurity in the 3 communes	Organization of meetings with local stakeholders in secure areas
		Replacement of communes to avoid safety risks for program personnel
		Telecommuting organization at the start of hostilities
	Sanctions following the coup d'état of July 26, 2023	Advance payment of wages to allow employees to stock up.
		Field missions suspended for a while.
	Postponement of high-value activities following bank restrictions between November and December 2023.	

Over the next five years, actions will focus on developing and scaling up approaches and interventions that have proven effective in Phase I, and on integrating these approaches, practices and technologies to ensure sustainability and lasting change. Pro-ARIDES will foster mutual learning, practice improvement and knowledge management.



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