



WFP Niger Country Strategic Plan (2020-2024) Proposal to the Government of Belgium

Country:	Niger
Executing Agency	World Food Programme Niger
Project Title:	Country Strategic Plan (2020-2024); Strategic Outcome 1: Provide integrated food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations (refugees, IDPs, host communities and returnees)
Total Budget of Proposal:	EUR 1,000,000
Project sites:	
Estimated Number of Beneficiaries:	
Project Duration:	12 months

1. Description of the context

In Niger, the population faces chronic malnutrition, recurrent epidemics, cyclical floods, droughts and forced displacement. An estimated 6.8 million people are chronically food insecure and do not have enough to eat all year round, every year. The rainy season is only three months long, and as such keeps the agricultural period very short.

In 2022 the country is facing an unprecedented food security and nutrition crisis with trends and indications pointing to a record high level of needs. The number of acutely food insecure people in Niger is estimated twice a year through the Cadre Harmonise (CH) exercise carried out in November and March. The March 2022 CH results showed the highest number of food insecure people in Niger since the inception of the CH in 2012. This number was 3.3 million people (13% of Niger's population) who were already in a food crisis or emergency phase (phase 3 or 4) during the March-May 2022 period. This number increased to 4.4 million people (18% of the population) during the June-August 2022 lean season. For the March-May period, this represents a 106% increase over last year (1.6 million people in Phase 3 and 4 in March 2021 CH); for the June – August lean season, it is a 91% increase (2.3 million people in Phase 3 and 4 in the March 2021 CH).

The results of the March 2022 CH also show an increase in food insecurity compared to the forecasts made in the November 2021 CH. In particular, the March 2022 CH marks the first time since the beginning of the CH in Niger that departments have been classified as phase 4 (until now only individuals have been classified as phase 4, but not entire departments). Phase 4 is the "emergency" phase, which precedes the "famine" phase. The departments in phase 4 for the projected June-August 2022 phase are Abala and the "limited access" part of the Ouallam department, both located in the northern part of Tillabéri region.

On top of those record high numbers of food insecure people, Niger is currently hosting over 283,000 refugees and asylum seekers which are not included in the CH calculations. Moreover, this 4.4 million figure projection for the lean season of the CH is actually a conservative estimate as it does not factor in the possible effects of

the crisis in Ukraine on the availability and price of wheat, oil and other food commodities in Niger. Wheat products (pasta, bread, couscous) are increasingly relied on when normal staple commodities are too expensive (millet, sorghum), as well as by pastoral/transhuman households. The global increase in fuel prices and supply chain constraints are factors that compound existing problems.

There are three main factors behind this unprecedented food crisis: the alarming production deficit of the 2021/22 agro-pastoral season following the early cessation of rains in September 2021; the food price crisis that began in 2021 and has worsened since the beginning of 2022, particularly because the security context in the border areas of Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso, as well as in the Lake Chad basin exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine with its impact on the global food procurement. The strong link between fragility and food insecurity in Niger is illustrated by the situation in border areas. As with previous years, the March 2022 CH analysis underlined the link between food insecurity and conflict: over 40% of the areas classified as Phase 3 or more (including the 2 areas classified in Phase 4) are conflict affected/ hard-to-reach. The most affected areas are those along the borders with Mali, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria.

In Niger, the spill-over of conflict from Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria has resulted in widespread insecurity and recurrent large-scale attacks involving mass atrocities against communities with the deliberate targeting of civilian populations. Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) are behind numerous instances of abuse, looting, extortion of goods, killing of people, the slaughter of livestock, pillaging of agricultural lands, attacks on schools and health centres, kidnapping and forced recruitment into armed groups. The year 2021 was characterized by increased attacks by NSAGs, causing 727 civilian casualties (a 73 percent increase compared to 2020, and a 260 percent increase compared to 2019). In the first 5 months of 2022, 70 publicly instances of violence against civilians, with 113 victims; as well as 116 other incidents with 187 victims were recorded for a total of 303 victims (against the 499 civilian victims of the first semester of 2021). What has been more challenging to capture accurately is the increase in other types of violence such as kidnapping, which has become a key revenue-generating criminal activity, conducted by NSAGs and organized criminal groups alike; the ability of NSAGs and organized criminality to instil fear and confusion in border communities, is further eroding communities' confidence in the future and the present.

The global supply chain crisis, the increase in prices due to different factors (not least the recent conflict in Europe), and poverty are likely to contribute to NSAGs' ability to recruit more among the youth and disenfranchised, challenging the current security response even further. Across the country, more than 264,000 persons are, as of the end of April 2022, internally displaced. Protracted armed conflicts have a compounding and lasting impact, preventing sustainable solutions for displaced people, and aggravating pre-existing causes of the crises, particularly impacting local food systems, which are already severely impacted by climate change, and steeply rising food, fuel, and fertilizer costs.

Insecurity has also resulted in important socio-demographic pressures on the limited existing basic services, local systems, and the communities comprised of displaced populations, host populations, and returnees. The massive and recurrent arrival of IDPs, and in the case of Niger refugees, heightens tensions and may lead to conflict within communities. Host communities that are already unable to cover their basic needs continue to receive displaced households, which adds to the pressure on the natural resource base. Insecurity, as well as

the security measures imposed by authorities, have inevitably contributed to the weakening or collapse of production systems and value chains and the deepening of divisions within the populations.

2. Needs analysis

In the face of unprecedented needs, the Government and the United Nations jointly launched the Support Plan and the Humanitarian Response Plan on 15 February 2022, to assist more than 3.5 million. The target was subsequently revised to 4,4 million following the final results of the CH. Considering this alarming food and nutritional crisis in the country, the Government called for international assistance.

In support of the Government, WFP Niger through the third budget revision (BR03) of its 2020-24 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) approved in May 2022, increased the number of beneficiaries to be assisted under emergency response activities in 2022 with targeted beneficiaries going from 742,000 to 2 million (an increase of 170%), and related budget went from USD 118 million to USD 180 million (an increase of 53 percent).

Given funding shortfalls combined with the high food prices, WFP was forced to cut rations for host populations and refugees to 50% and to 80% for the Rapid Response Mechanism component. Several awareness raising sessions have been held for beneficiaries to provide a better understanding of the reasons for this reduction. Based on a prioritization plan, WFP has revised the ration to provide 65% of the full ration for the protracted crisis while maintaining the ration at 80% for RRM and refugees in the camps as of May. A second revision of the prioritization note took place in early June and WFP will be able to provide 100% of the cash distribution for all beneficiaries under the emergency component.

3. Description of the Project

Description of activities

WFP's emergency response activities are grouped under Strategic Outcome 1, Activity 1 of the CSP: *Provide an integrated package of food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected people and during the lean season (refugees, internally displaced persons, host communities and returnees)*

Through this contribution from Belgium, WFP intends to provide unconditional food assistance to 4,256 vulnerable people (around 608 households), over a period of 12 months¹. Of this, an estimated 2,244 people will receive in-kind food assistance and 2,012 will receive cash transfers.

In conflict and insecurity-prone areas, the overall response will consist of unconditional food or cash assistance to vulnerable populations residing in or outside refugee camps.

In protracted crisis areas, vulnerable refugees, IDPs and host communities will receive a 12-month package of unconditional food or cash assistance, combined with general supplementary feeding for children aged 6-23 months to prevent malnutrition. For vulnerable households during the pastoral and agricultural lean season, WFP will provide unconditional assistance combined with general supplementary feeding for children aged 6-23 months for three months. WFP will also assist newly displaced by conflicts in the regions of Diffa, Tillabéri,

¹ This is a duration estimate based on the assumption that WFP will reach the same number of beneficiaries month after month (in line with the protracted crisis component of its emergency assistance). However, if needed WFP can adapt its response and reach a higher number of beneficiaries over a shorter period. **Hence, if the needs are high and there are no sufficient contributions coming from other donors, WFP could complete its Belgium funded distributions before the estimated 12 months period.**

Tahoua and Maradi, working in the framework of the multi-sectoral, multi-partner Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) where WFP covers IDPs' food needs through three-month unconditional food assistance.

Among targeted households, WFP will also provide supplementary feeding to all children aged 6 and 23 months to prevent malnutrition. Under this action, it is estimated that 341 children will be supported. This aims to ensure children receive the micro-nutrient and caloric values required to prevent malnutrition, mortality, and irreversible damage to childhood development. During all targeting exercise and distributions, WFP will also screen all children aged 6-59 months for acute malnutrition and refer malnourished children to the nearest health centre and will conduct sensitization sessions on nutrition and health practices.

The size of the food basket/ cash transfer value is designed to meet food needs that assisted households are unable to meet through their own livelihoods/ other sources of assistance. For populations which have no other sources of food/ income and therefore rely entirely on humanitarian assistance, WFP provides a full food/ cash ration covering 100% of kilocalorie needs (i.e., 2,100 kcal/ person/ day). For populations which do have other sources of food or income, WFP covers only their "food gap" (e.g., 65% of full kilocalorie needs).

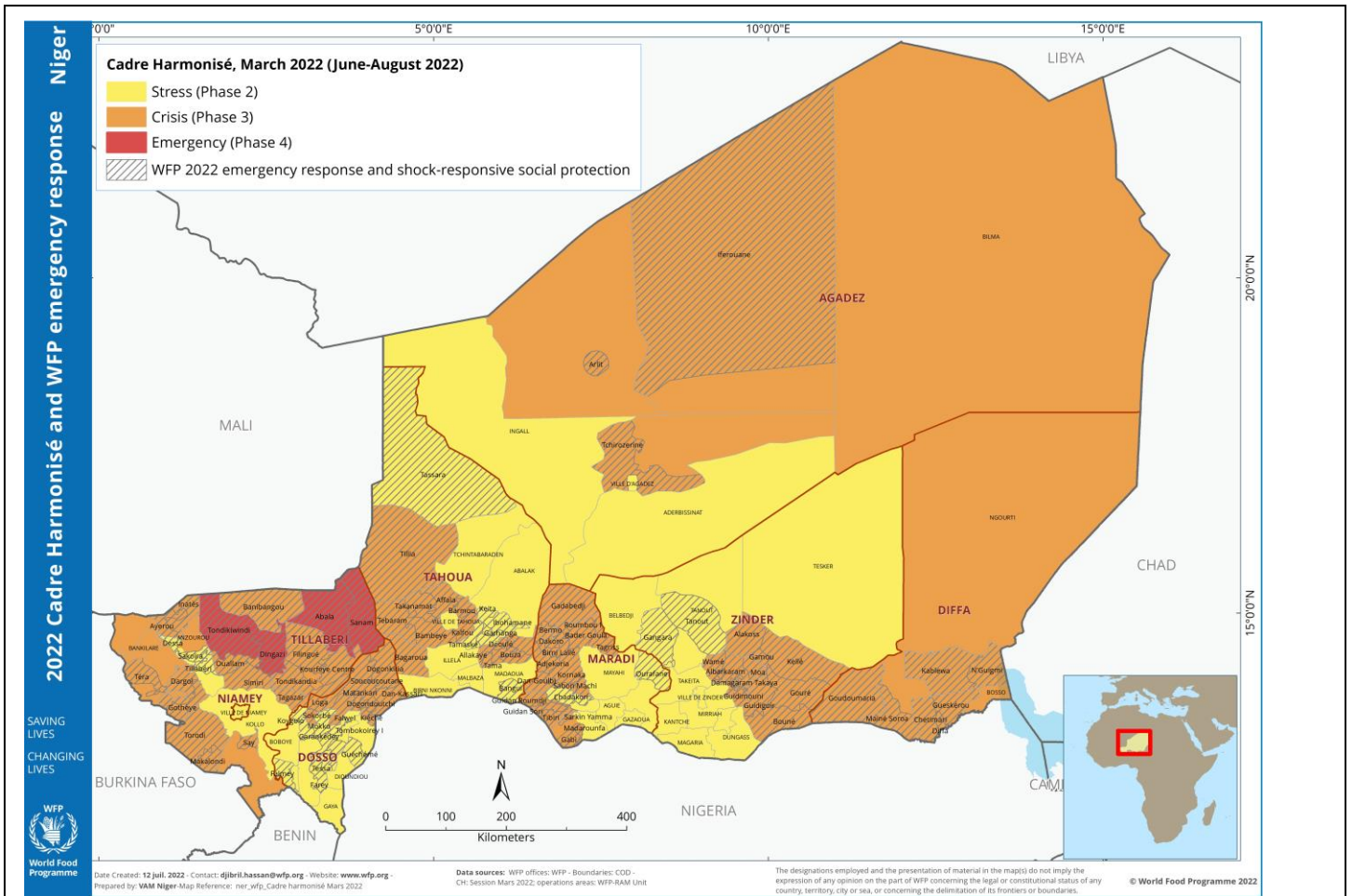
For cash rations, the transfer amount is based on the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) for food adopted by the Food Security Cluster and the Multi Sectoral Cash Working in November 2021. The full MEB amounts to CFA 40 000 per household per month (in cases where WFP does not seek to cover the full 2,100 kcal needs, the actual transfer value will be a percentage of this amount).

Targeted areas

The communes targeted for this action will be identified using WFP's standard geographic targeting protocol for emergency operations:

- Communes targeted by WFP for the 2022 lean season response have been identified based on the March 2022 Cadre Harmonisé results, in close coordination with the government (DNP-GCA and CFS) and other food security cluster partners. For the 2022 lean season, WFP is targeting only communes classified as moderately or extremely vulnerable, with priority given to communes located in departments classified as Phase 3 (crisis) or 4 (emergency) in the March 2022 Cadre Harmonisé.
- Communes targeted for the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), which supports recently displaced IDPs are identified through the RRM consortium alert system, which activates an RRM response for each new wave of displacement.
- Commune supported with WFP's protracted assistance programme are targeted at the beginning of the year based on the prevalence of insecurity and displaced populations. All protracted assistance operations are carried out in conflict (affected areas).

The map below shows the level of food insecurity for the period June-August 2022 as per the March 2022 Cadre Harmonisé analysis, along with WFP emergency intervention areas



Beneficiary targeting

Assisted households will be identified through a participatory community targeting approach based on the Household Economy Approach (HEA). This approach categorizes all households in the targeted villages based on their livelihoods and asset ownership. WFP emergency food assistance will target only those households classified as very poor. Targeting will pay specific attention to gender and protection aspects, in order to identify the most vulnerable households within the targeted communities, as well as refugees and IDPs households as the context evolves. Specific target groups for nutrition and education activities will include children aged 6-59 months, and school-age children.

4. Programme Implementation and Coordination

Partners play a key role in all WFP interventions as they enable the organization to deliver quickly and effectively and access areas where WFP would be unable to reach alone. They are selected based on their expertise and capacities, and their unique position of having a long-term presence in, and a deep contextual understanding of, the communities WFP works within Niger. Their daily contact with communities before, during and after emergencies provides WFP with a valuable connection to the people we serve. WFP has

recognised humanitarian access that assures a quicker and safer delivery of its interventions to the beneficiaries.

As regards the coordination, the Office of the Prime Minister leads humanitarian coordination and manages activities through the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Crisis Management for IDPs and floods, the Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of Civil Registry and Refugees for refugees, and the Dispositif National de Prévention et Gestion des Crises Alimentaires (DNP-GCA) which is responsible for food security and the coordination and implementation of relief activities.

UN and NGO coordination is led by a Humanitarian Coordinator who is supported by mandated agencies through the Humanitarian Country Team. Within this structure, various working groups on Civ-Mil, Access, Relocations, etc. have been established. However, due to the increasing involvement of security forces and growing insecurity, coordination with the various government authorities on humanitarian access remains ambiguous.

The Food Security Cluster (FSC), which is anchored within the Ministry of Agriculture, is co-led by FAO, WFP and a local NGO *Alliance Contre la Faim et la Malnutrition*. The Cluster currently serves as a platform to share information on the food security and agriculture situations and coordinate the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) processes in the country. WFP and FAO are jointly working on the national anchorage and the terms of reference of the cluster to enhance its role as a key actor in the planning and decision making of FSC partners and the government. Monthly meetings are organized at the regional and national level with governmental partners, national and international NGOs and UN agencies. Similarly, WFP has strong collaboration with local, regional and national authorities in the areas of food security, nutrition, and vulnerability analysis. Annual vulnerability assessments are undertaken by the Government, with the technical and financial support of the European Union, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, UNDP and Comité inter-État de Lutte Contre la sécheresse au Sahel (CILSS).

WFP is actively supporting and participating in coordination efforts of the local authorities, attending meetings at the governorate and other actors. WFP also attends OCHA coordination meetings and works together on a regular basis with UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, IFAD and other agencies. WFP continues to implement a logic of full collaboration with all the existing coordination mechanisms; namely the *Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des Crises Alimentaires* DNP-GCA and its regional divisions and also the ministries in charge of health, agriculture and livestock and their regional divisions (Regional Directorates). WFP provides timely, integrated and protection-sensitive humanitarian assistance to crisis affected populations through the rapid response mechanism and the DNP-GCA to save lives and protect livelihoods.

Through the Rapid Response Mechanism, WFP plays an important role with partners, especially in Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua and Tillabéri regions to address urgent food and nutritional needs and improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable households through a nexus approach following a shock resulting in a population movement. Together with other RRM partners, WFP coordinates the response on the ground to better distribute the intervention areas and avoid duplication.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

WFP Niger's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is aligned with WFP's corporate M&E requirements and best practices. This framework aims to provide the necessary information on how WFP programmes are implemented (process indicators to measure the quality of programme implementation), who receives assistance and what type of assistance they receive (output indicators), and what impact this assistance has on beneficiaries (food security and nutrition outcome indicators). This is done through three distinct types of monitoring activities.

1) Process monitoring monitors the implementation of WFP activities, to ensure that they are carried out in a timely, efficient, and safe manner, in line with WFP and international humanitarian standards. This is done via regular field visits to project implementation sites by WFP field monitors, as well as third-party monitors (TPMs) for areas that WFP staff cannot access. All data is collected via tablets using standardized activity checklists and is transferred automatically to the Country Office's M&E unit in Niamey. In 2021, WFP monitoring staff/ TPMs monitored over 3,140 sites on the ground. This is in addition to sites monitored remotely through phone calls and to sites visited by WFP programme staff (whose role is to support the implementation of activities through technical guidance, planning, and coordination - rather than carry out independent monitoring functions).

2) Output monitoring aims to capture the number of beneficiaries reached and the amounts of cash/ food/ nutritional products distributed. For general food distribution activities, data is captured through beneficiary distribution reports, logistics commodity delivery documents (for in-kind food assistance) and financial service provider distribution reports (for cash assistance).

3) Outcome monitoring seeks to measure the impact of WFP's interventions. For emergency activities, this focuses on measuring the impact of food/ cash assistance on beneficiaries' food security and nutritional status, as well as beneficiaries' satisfaction with the quality of the assistance and how they use the assistance (especially for cash transfers). For food or cash assistance and prevention of malnutrition activities, household-level food security and nutrition indicators (e.g. food consumption score, coping strategies index, minimum acceptable diet (MAD) for children, etc) is collected via standardized post-distribution (PDM) household-level questionnaires. These are carried out before and after the programme (baseline and end line surveys), in order to measure the progress made. Data is analyzed by the M&E unit in Niamey and shared with programme managers and country office management, to inform the adjustment of programmes (including targeting approaches, ration sizes, the timing of assistance etc.).

6. Reporting and visibility

Reporting: WFP publishes the Annual Country Report (ACR) by the end of the first quarter every year for each of its operations. As such, this contribution will be officially reported in the 2022 and 2023 ACR, expected to be published in March 2023 and March 2024 respectively. The ACR is the principle means through which WFP

informs donors of how resources for given projects were obtained, utilised and accounted for during the preceding year. The report will be available at the following address: <https://www.wfp.org/operations>.

WFP also disseminates monthly country briefs, external situation reports and external dashboards that showcase current achievements, challenges and needs pertaining to WFP's assistance to its beneficiaries in Mali. Regular updates are also available on <https://www.wfp.org/countries/niger>

Representatives from the Government of Belgium may also be kept informed of the evolution of WFP operations in Niger through exchanges or bilateral meetings with WFP at the country level as well as the facilitation of field visits upon request.

Visibility: WFP is committed to pursuing its donor visibility strategy to acknowledge the contribution and thank the people of Belgium for their generosity. WFP will aim to ensure visibility for the Belgian Government's funding, and demonstrate its impact, through various media platforms, regular local donor bulletins and annual reports. The logo of the Government of Belgium will be placed on WFP reports and all visibility materials, as appropriate, along with other donors. Banners and posters with donor logos will be displayed on WFP leaflets to ensure that beneficiaries are aware of the assistance provided by the Government of Belgium.

- **Social media posts:** posts will tag Belgium's official accounts on social media and will range from photos to infographics to videos. The aim of the posts will be to convey Belgium's contributions in a human-centric way, bringing forward stories that do not necessarily always mention assistance directly but instead focus on humanising communities by amplifying their voices and featuring 'relatable' narratives. Posts on announcing and acknowledging the contribution will also be made.
- **Media mentions:** Belgium's contributions will be mentioned when conducting media interviews (if and when possible).
- **Field visits:** organizing joint visits to specific sites across Niger, whether simply with donors or with media accompanying the team. However, the sensitivity of the situation in Niger (conflicts/insecurity) must be taken into consideration before moving forward with any on-site visits and visibility.
- Support from the Government of Belgium will also be highlighted in the communication channels mentioned above, when appropriate. WFP will also provide visibility photographs and beneficiary stories to the Embassy of Belgium.

7. Budget

The total budget needs from July to the end of the year (December 2022) under the emergency response component of the CSP are valued at nearly USD 69 million. Of this amount, WFP was able to mobilize more than 49 % to respond to this unprecedented food crisis. As the needs continue to mount, WFP and partners endeavour to attract more resources so as to reach all the vulnerable people in need of lifesaving assistance.

Breakdown budget of the contribution from Belgium:

FOOD VALUE	\$	355 889,87	337 739,48 €
FOOD TRANSFER	\$	106 832,52	101 384,06 €

CBT Transfer Value	\$	369 356,15	350 518,98 €
CBT Transfer Cost	\$	45 504,68	43 183,94 €

IMPLEMENTATION	\$	76 174,22	72 289,34 €
Direct Support Cost	\$	35 670,53	33 851,33 €
Indirect Support Cost	\$	64 312,82	61 032,86 €

TOTAL -----> \$ 1 053 740,78 1 000 000,00 €