



Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience (REGIS-ER)

FINAL REPORT

April 2021

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CONTENTS

List of Acronyms	i
1 Executive Summary	1
2 Development Objectives and Theory of Change	3
2.1 REGIS-ER Activities: A Path to Resilience	4
3 Technical Approach – Description of the Activities	5
4 Implementation Phases	8
4.1 Start-up, Piloting and Trust-building: November 2013 – January 2016	8
4.2 Restructuring and Scaling up: February 2016 – October 2018	9
4.3 Consolidation Period (No-cost Extension): November 2018 – December 2019	10
4.4 Cost-extension Period: January 2020 – March 2021	11
5 Management Approach	11
5.1 Partnerships and Synergies	12
Project Consortium Partners	12
Local Institution Partners	13
RISE I Implementing Partners	14
Working in Insecurity	15
COVID-19	15
5.2 Sustainability	16
6 Significance of the Activities and Results	17
6.1 Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being (SO 1)	17
6.2 Strengthened Governance and Institutions (SO 2)	23
6.3 Improved Health and Nutritional Status (SO 3)	29
6.4 Cross-cutting Objectives on Gender and Youth	31
Asset-Building for Women and Youth	33
Strengthening Social Capital for Women and Youth	36
7 Lessons Learned	37
7.1 Adaptive Management Lessons	37
Technical integration	37
Multidisciplinary Field Agents	38
Focus on Local Institutions	38
7.2 Lessons Learned by Program	39
Habbanaye	39
Horticulture (gardening for sale and consumption to improve nutrition)	40
Access to Financial Services	40

Resilient Production Systems (rainfed agriculture, conservation farming, farmer-managed natural regeneration, bioreclamation of degraded land)	41
Disaster Risk Management and Local Institutions	41
Water Services	42
Hygiene and Sanitation	42
Community Health and Nutrition	42
7.3 Youth	44
Positive Youth Development Integration	44
8 Best Practices, Innovations and Success Stories	44
Citizen Working Groups: Strengthening the System for Resilience	44
Commune Resilience Plans: Institutionalizing Commune Resilience	45
Local Conventions: Community-Driven Land Use Planning	46
Community-based Solution Providers: building out a local private sector network	47
Gender Integration: Empowering Women is a Driver of Resilience	48
Conservation Farming: Climate-Smart Food Production at Scale	50
9 Recommendations	50
Annex 1: Table on Indicators of Project Performance . .	52
Annex 2: Success Stories	56
Annex 3: Cost-Share Data	60
9.1 Leverage in Accordance with REGIS-ER's Sustainability Strategy	60
Annex 4: Knowledge Management Products	62

List of Acronyms

APS	Agents Prestataires de Services
BDL	Bioreclamation of Degraded Land
CBO	Community-based organizations
CBSP	Community-Based Solution Provider
CLTS	Community-led Total Sanitation
CLD	Local Development Committees (Niger)
CVD	Village Development Councils (Burkina Faso)
CWG	Citizen Working Groups
EWR	Early warning and response
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GoN	Government of Niger
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
MSME	Micro, small, and medium enterprises
MtM	Mother-to-Mother
NRM	Natural resource management
ODF	Open-defecation free
PCPR	Commune Resilience Plan
PDC/PCD	Commune Development Plan
PYD	Positive Youth Development
REGIS-ER	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel –Enhanced Resilience
REGIS-AG	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth
SAREL	Sahel Resilience Learning project
SECCA	Self-managed Community Savings and Loan System
URC	University Research Co., LLC
VSLA	Village savings and loan associations
WFP	World Food Program
WSRA	Water Security and Resilience Activity
ZOI	Zone of intervention

1 Executive Summary

The Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience (REGIS-ER) is a seven-year activity (2013-21) of the RISE portfolio, supported by USAID. It aimed to increase the resilience of chronically vulnerable populations in marginal agro-pastoral areas in Burkina Faso and Niger by strengthening livelihoods, governance and the health and nutritional status of communities. From November 2013 to November 2018, REGIS-ER worked in six regions, 25 municipalities, reaching 570 villages across the RISE zone of intervention in Burkina Faso and Niger. From October 2019, the project entered cost-extension period, concentrating on eight municipalities in three regions of Burkina Faso and Niger.

REGIS-ER was comprised of a large consortium of 11 partners, including eight local organizations in a one-team approach. Consortium member staff were integrated at all levels of the project.

Consortium Partners	Country	Expertise
Sheladia Associates, Inc.	USA	Partner in irrigation, water use management, and M&E
University Research Co., LLC (URC)	USA	Technical lead in health and nutrition, behavior change communication, and quality assurance
Dimagi	USA	Develop monitoring systems for stakeholders to monitor outcomes
Mwangaza Action	Burkina Faso & Niger	Expertise in community health and nutrition, and gender
A2N (Association Nodde Nooto)	Burkina Faso	Livestock services
EAA Burkina Faso (Eau et Assainissement pour l’Afrique)	Burkina Faso	Lead project support in WASH
EAA Niger (Eau et Assainissement pour l’Afrique)	Niger	Lead project support in WASH
ADROC (Action pour la Dynamisation et le Renforcement des Organisations)	Niger	Governance, producer organization development, training
KOKARI	Niger	Support activities to improve access to financial services
AREN (Association pour la Redynamisation de l’Elevage au Niger)	Niger	Livestock services
APOR (Action pour la Promotion des Organisations Rurales)	Niger	Governance, producer organization development, training

As a multi-sectoral resilience project, REGIS-ER was originally centered around four components covering livelihoods, health and nutrition, WASH, and governance. Halfway through the period of performance, REGIS-ER restructured into eight programs for improved integration and shifted focus to capacity strengthening of local institutions for sustainability

REGIS-ER Objectives

1. Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being: Diversified economic opportunities, intensification of climate-smart agricultural and animal production and marketing, increased access to financial services.

2. Strengthened Governance and Institutions: Reinforced management of natural resources, disaster risk management, conflict prevention and management, increased coordination between regional and local governance structures.

3. Improved health and nutrition: Increased access to drinking water, improvement of health and nutrition practices.

4. Embedded Humanitarian Response: A crisis modifier component and coordination at the nexus of humanitarian and development assistance. This component would only be activated in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

Eight Integrated Programs:

1. Habbanayé plus Animal Feed and Health
2. Horticulture
3. Access to Financial Services
4. Resilient Production Systems
5. Disaster Risk Management and Local Institutions
6. Water Services
7. Hygiene and Sanitation
8. Community-based Health and Nutrition

Combined with administrative decentralization, the restructuring facilitated dramatic scaling up and generated significant results, and the focus on local institutions improved sustainability of outcomes.

Notable REGIS-ER Results:

Livelihoods Results

92% of project households reported increased income from off-farm economic activities.

5,747 full-time equivalent jobs created.

181,976 farmers applied improved technologies or management practices.

92,246 hectares under improved management practices.

Governance Results

19 local conventions drafted.

1,875,000 hectares directly under natural resource management plans.

659 hectares of farmland registered for women.

Up to 75% reduction in conflicts over access to natural resources such as pastures or farmland.

12 commune resilience plans drafted and adopted.

Health and Nutrition Results

123,350 people have access to an improved water source.

137 villages certified Open-Defecation Free.

334,747 people trained in child health and nutrition.

150,290 children under 5 reached by nutrition programming.

50 safe spaces established reaching 848 adolescent girls.

REGIS-ER adopted a multi-stakeholder engagement methodology to bring local actors together to create a shared vision, identify a common objective, and then execute an action plan to achieve them. This whole-of-system approach to development engages all actors within that system to work together through a common framework. Our facilitative role ensured that the process is led by the community, not

dictated by the project. From our first meetings with stakeholders, we leverage local resources, strengthen local capacity and target strategic leverage points for intervention. When the project ends, the community is left with the skills, resources, will, and power to drive their own development.

As part of REGIS-ER's sustainability strategy, the project focused on four local institutions to reinforce the commune resilience system:

1. Municipal Councils
2. Citizen Working Groups
3. Village Development Councils in Burkina Faso or Local Development Committees in Niger (Citizen Working Groups, Village Development (CVD)/CLD)
4. Community-Based Solution Providers (CBSPs) and Local resource persons Networks

REGIS-ER facilitated system-level change by reinforcing relationships between local stakeholders. Municipal councils were better connected to their constituents through Citizen Working Groups and village development councils. Citizen Working Groups coordinated links between communities, municipal councils, and service providers such as CBSPs. Vertical links clustered CBSPs at the commune level and suppliers at the regional or national level, and horizontal links networked CBSPs for complementarity and exchanges about innovations and new business opportunities. All served to reinforce the local system's ability to absorb, respond and adapt to stresses and to build resilient communities.

2 Development Objectives and Theory of Change

REGIS-ER seeks to strengthen the resilience of chronically vulnerable communities to food and nutrition insecurity in marginal agricultural and agro-pastoral areas in Niger and Burkina Faso. Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

REGIS-ER addressed the building of resilience through three strategic objectives and one cross-cutting objective.

- **Strategic Objective 1: Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being:** Diversified economic opportunities, intensification of climate-smart agricultural and animal production and marketing, increased access to financial services.
- **Strategic Objective 2: Strengthened Governance and Institutions:** Reinforced management of natural resources, disaster risk management, conflict prevention and management, increased coordination between regional and local governance structures.
- **Strategic Objective 3: Improved health and nutrition:** Increased access to drinking water, improvement of health and nutrition practices.
- **Embedded Humanitarian Response:** A crisis modifier component and coordination at the nexus of humanitarian and development assistance. This component would only be activated in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

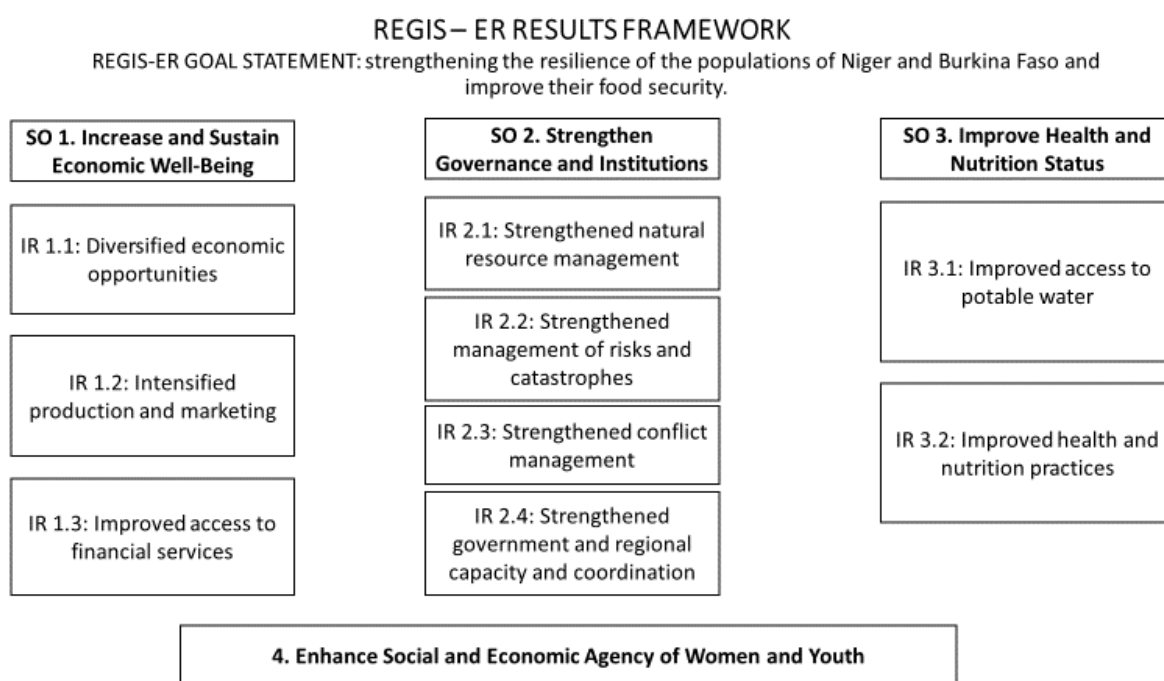
The theory of change is illustrated through its results framework and can simply be described as follows:

- **If** households and communities develop diversified year-round economic activities;
- **If** individuals, households and communities build capacities and accumulate assets, including social capital, to adapt and recover from shocks and stresses;
- **If** individuals, especially women of reproductive age, adopt improved health, nutrition, and hygiene practices; and

- **If** local governance institutions effectively engage with citizens to plan and manage community services, natural resources, and conflict, while preparing for emergency response,
- **Then** vulnerable agro-pastoral populations in Niger and Burkina Faso will have greater food and nutrition security and be more able to absorb, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses.

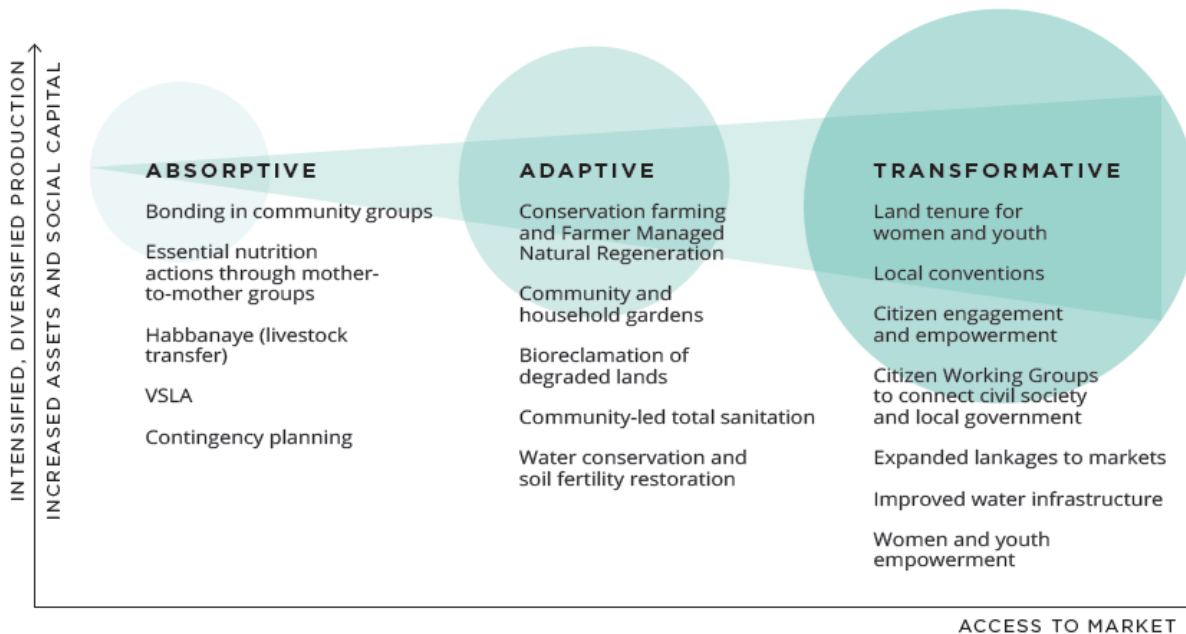
Enhancing the social and economic agency of women and youth will both reinforce and accelerate achievement of the goal as family health and nutrition is greatly influenced by women and their ability to exercise decision-making power is increased as they gain access to productive assets and discretionary income. The engagement of youth in productive enterprises and improved WASH, health, and nutrition practices builds a legacy for the future, integrates youth in the socio-economic fabric of society and may reduce conflicts or the appeal of violent extremist ideology.

This improved condition is expected to be sustainable given REGIS-ER's participant-centered approach to the transfer of skills, knowledge, and attitudes, of underwriting risks without large subsidies, and of building private-sector networks and strengthening of institutions.



2.1 REGIS-ER Activities: A Path to Resilience

The project's activities were designed to build absorptive, adaptive and transformative resilience capacities to enable vulnerable households and communities to mitigate, respond to and recover from shocks and stresses.



3 Technical Approach – Description of the Activities

CLUSA built on its prior experience with food security, agriculture, nutrition and resilience in crafting a set of impactful interventions that REGIS-ER would support where and when communities and households felt they would be useful and were willing to take ownership. These intervention areas are described in brief below.

Habbanaye plus Animal Feed and Health

Habbanaye is an asset-building activity for vulnerable households. REGIS-ER promoted habbanaye to enhance the economic resources of women and youth. Habbanaye also served to strengthen community solidarity by promoting and extending the traditional support model for households in need by giving them small ruminants (goats) so they were better able to cope with sporadic shocks and stresses.¹ As part of the project, communities selected the recipients of animals (small ruminants, poultry). These families received training on their breeding and the maintenance of good animal health through nutrition, animal medicines and by offering vaccination programs. Habbanaye recipients were gifted one male goat and three females. S/he had to pass on one male and three female offspring to the next recipient within 18 months. Sometimes the cycle was shorter. The initial recipient would keep the four animals that s/he had received plus any additional offspring over and above the four offspring to be passed on.

Horticulture - Community and Household Gardens

The community and household gardens were established to promote nutrition, food security and contribute in some cases to income generation. REGIS-ER assisted with irrigation, seeds and other inputs and facilitated the formation and training of community groups in the case of community gardens.

¹ Kelly, V; Ndiaye A; Me-Nsope, N. "The Contributions and Challenges of USAID | Yaajeende's Passing on the Gift Component". Michigan State University. 2015. Page 9

Access to Financial Services: Self-managed Community Savings and Loan System (SECCA)

Groups with common interests such as Mother-to-Mother groups with community gardens were supported by REGIS-ER with training and guidance in setting up a community savings and loan system. These SECCA groups selected their own officers and contributed modest funds to a pool that would serve to maintain the common elements of their gardens (or other activity). Members could also take loans and then repay them with service fees thus increasing the funds available while serving the needs of the members. See the story at the following link: <https://ncbaclusa.coop/blog/a-community-savings-and-loan-group-builds-resilience-in-burkina-faso/>.

Resilient Production Systems

Conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration of local tree species increase yields and maintain soil structure, keeping land fertile and productive well into the future. Conservation farming employs three methods: 1) low tillage (leaving soil undisturbed so it does not dry out); 2) covering it with mulch and using compost to retain water and combat erosion; and 3) rotating crops to maintain the nutrients in the soil. REGIS-ER also promotes the systematic protection of existing local species of trees, which are best adapted to the environment and provide products such as wood, fodder or fruit, as well as enhancing soils.

Soil and water conservation techniques, such as half-moon water catchment basins, contour walls, have been adopted by farmers to reclaim degraded land. Bioreclamation of degraded lands is used often to provide women's garden groups opportunities for generating income from land that has been over-exploited, stripped of its vegetative cover and biomass and ultimately abandoned. By using water retention and soil restoration techniques, the land is brought back into cultivation, and serves as a source of nutrition and income for the local communities. Together, the package of conservation farming techniques enables families to feed themselves and sell surpluses, while enhancing their resilience to climate shocks and stresses.

Disaster Risk Management and Local Institutions

Local conventions are community-developed natural resources management plans that promote equitable and sustainable management of resources, improve soil fertility and reduce conflicts between user groups in the communes that have adopted them. The natural resources that fall within the purview of the plans include farmland, pastures, water resources such as ponds, and woodland including non-timber products. The overall goal of the local convention is to ensure the conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources of a rural community to satisfy growing demands, while maintaining productivity, and ecological and social well-being.

The local convention has five specific objectives: 1) Regulate in a consensual manner access to and use of a commune's natural resources; 2) Include citizens in the sustainable management of their own natural resources; 3) Ensure that all citizens can access the natural resources they need to meet their needs without compromising the needs of others or the long-term viability of the environment; 4) Prevent conflict and reduce the degradation of natural resources; and 5) Promote good governance (transparency and accountability). Local conventions exemplify REGIS-ER's multi-stakeholder systems approach whereby all system actors are brought together around a shared vision. Unlike top-down natural resource management plans, Local conventions are a collective effort. As a result, local conventions do not just sit in a drawer gathering dust, they are adopted and championed in the community.

Water Services

REGIS-ER facilitated access to safe drinking water and improved water management at the community level. Activities focused on improving the effectiveness and transparency of water collection and management, sustainable maintenance, and sanitation of water point sites throughout the Burkina Faso project intervention sites. Such activities included strengthening the human, technical and financial resources of water user associations and the local private sector, as well as the local authorities and regional technical departments. The goal of these activities is to provide communities with a safe multi-use water supply while empowering the local management groups to take full responsibility for maintenance, ensuring the infrastructure investment is sustainable.

Hygiene and Sanitation

Community-led total sanitation raises awareness of the entire community about the dangers of open defecation. A mapping exercise is conducted with the villagers walking along the streets to look for and map feces. Analogies to drinking a glass of water with feces in it is then made to what is being done every day with the population drinking water from contaminated surface water. This tends to lead to a “triggering” moment when a collective sense of disgust and shame among community members is achieved as they confront the crude facts about mass open defecation and its negative impacts on the entire community. It is then up to community members to decide how to deal with the problem and to act, including constructing their own household latrines using locally available materials and practicing improved hygiene behaviors. The goal of Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is for a practicing community to become open-defecation free.

Community-based Health and Nutrition

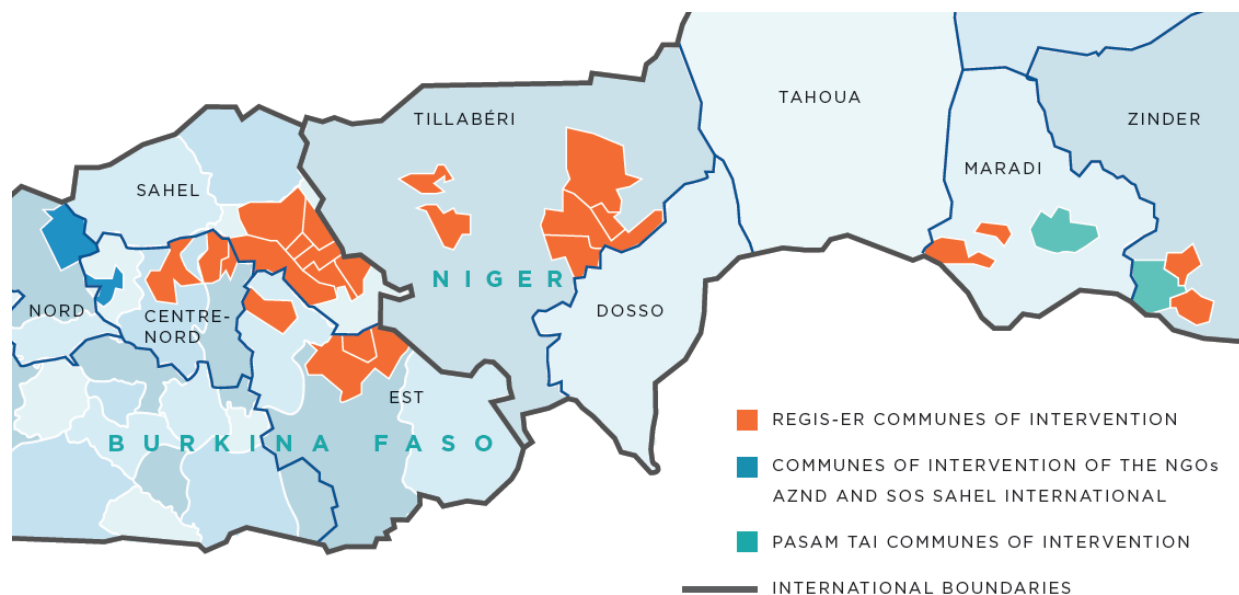
Mother-to-mother groups provide a forum for pregnant women and mothers of children 0-23 months to discuss key health and nutrition behaviors, with an emphasis on the critical window of 1,000 days (from conception to a child’s second birthday). Mother-to-Mother groups were the primary village-level platform for reaching women in the community. Unlike care groups, the Mother-to-Mother groups went beyond child health. While the groups addressed nutrition and sanitation behaviors, they also integrated asset building and income generating through participation in village savings and loan associations, habbanaye and market gardens. Lead mothers of Mother-to-Mother groups and women CBSPs are regarded as prominent voices in their communities and participate in local decision-making through the village development councils (CVDs, in Burkina Faso) and Local Development Committees (CLDs, in Niger) and Citizen Working Groups. Priority Behaviors Promoted by Mother-to-Mother included: increased consumption of nutrient-rich foods during pregnancy and breastfeeding; Early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life; Adequate and safe complementary feeding and continuing breastfeeding for up to two years of age or beyond; Increased use of preventative health services and care-seeking during illness; Family planning; Handwashing at critical moments; Proper handling and storage of potable water; and Improved use and maintenance of latrines.

4 Implementation Phases



4.1 Start-up, Piloting and Trust-building: November 2013 – January 2016

At its inception, REGIS-ER covered the regions of Centre-Nord, Nord, Est and Sahel regions in Burkina Faso; and Maradi, Tillabéri and Zinder in Niger.



The project originally was structured around four objectives:

- 1. Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being:** Diversified economic opportunities, intensification of climate-smart agricultural and animal production and marketing, increased access to financial services.
- 2. Strengthened Governance and Institutions:** Reinforced management of natural resources, disaster risk management, conflict prevention and management, increased coordination between regional and local governance structures.
- 3. Improved health and nutrition:** Increased access to drinking water, improvement of health and nutrition practices.
- 4. Embedded Humanitarian Response:** A crisis modifier component and coordination at the nexus of humanitarian and development assistance. This component would only be activated in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

The project launched an impressive array of resilience-building activities across this vast geographic area. Communities selected the activities that interested them, they vetted our field agents as part of the

recruitment process and they contributed, financially or in kind, to the implementation. Although this process takes time to achieve results, it was an important step in the project's ultimate sustainability.

However, the project team observed that the structure around the three objectives created silos—participants were effectively dealing with three separate projects. Opportunities for synergy were lost. After reflection, REGIS-ER underwent restructuring to create multidisciplinary teams that worked across objectives. This ushered in a new project phase.

4.2 Restructuring and Scaling up: February 2016 – October 2018

Restructuring facilitated scale up, enabling the project to reach over 1,980,000 people by the end of the performance period. At its peak, REGIS-ER worked in six regions, 25 municipalities and reached 570 villages.

More autonomy was granted to the regional offices and the project ramped up activities that had proven successful during the first phase and for which there was great community demand. During this period, the project increased the number of water points built or repaired by 282 giving access to potable water to over 87,100 additional people; registered land tenure for women on 283 more hectares (a 180% increase); and increased the number of farmers applying new technologies by over 113,600 (a 225% increase).

In October 2017, REGIS-ER launched a sustainability strategy to capitalize on what emerged as two foundational project elements: capacity strengthening of local institutions and CBSPs. These two project focus areas fostered sustainability by ensuring the effective local ownership and management of resilience activities and built private sector networks for continued access to inputs and technical expertise.

Local institution capacity strengthening: As the team's experience grew and deepened with the project, selected staff graduated from facilitators to coaches. Coaches were trained to provide advisory services to local institutions and transition leadership and responsibility for project activities to the institutions themselves. This included municipal councils, CWGs, village development councils (CVD in Burkina Faso) or Local Development Committees (CLD in Niger), and the community-based groups supported by REGIS-ER such as producer organizations, Mother-to-Mother groups, Husband Schools, support groups for female adolescents (GASA), conservation farming groups, habbanaye groups, women's garden groups, village savings and loan associations (VSLA), and water user groups.

Community-Based Solution Providers (CBSPs): CBSPs are last-mile social entrepreneurs who work with their communities to address social and market needs and challenges. During the scaling-up phase, REGIS-ER increased the diversity of CBSP services, facilitated the formation of CBSP networks and linked CBSPs to buyers and suppliers for bulk input purchases and aggregated sales.

4.3 Consolidation Period (No-cost Extension): November 2018 – December 2019

REGIS-ER withdrew from about half of its 25 communes and concentrated interventions in 13 selected communes.

The mayors of the 13 communes identified nine “successful activities”² that they wanted to continue and scale up to other villages:

1. Habbanaye (livestock asset building)
2. Community and household gardens
3. Self-managed community savings and loan system (SECCA in French or VSLA)
4. Conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR)
5. Soil and water conservation, and soil protection and restoration (CES/DRS)
6. Local conventions covering natural resource management, disaster risk management, conflict management, and land tenure
7. Water services (this activity was selected only in Burkina Faso)
8. Community-led total sanitation, and
9. Mother-to-Mother groups.

Burkina Faso		Niger	
Region	Commune	Region	Commune
Sahel	Sebba	Tillabéri	Sakoira
	Seytenga		Tagazar
Est	Manni		Filingué
	Gayéri	Maradi	Guidan-Roundji
Centre-Nord	Barsalogho	Zinder	Bandé
	Bouroum		Droum

Per the sustainability strategy, REGIS-ER coaches intensively worked to strengthen the capacity of municipal councils, Citizen Working Groups and CBSP networks in each of the 13 communes of concentration, and of 238 village-level CLD/CVDs to take responsibility for the resilience activities. With new Food for Peace development food security activities, in October 2019, REGIS-ER withdrew from three regions (Centre-Nord in Burkina Faso, and Maradi and Zinder in Niger) and further reduced its intervention zone to eight successful communes:

Burkina Faso		Niger	
Region	Commune	Region	Commune
Sahel	Sebba	Tillabéri	Sakoira
	Seytenga		Tagazar
Est	Manni		Tondikandia
	Gayéri		Filingué

The commune selection process was based on the following criteria:

- Focus on the regions where there were no active DFSAs
- The presence of all 8 REGIS-ER program areas
- A favorable/manageable security context
- Effective and engaged commune leadership
- At least 50% of the project activities are rated “successful”
- At least 1 successful activity per program
- At least 1 successful activity which highlights the integration of 2 or more programs, and

² A successful activity is an activity that generates positive and noticeable change, the process of which is adopted and owned by communities, and which can be scaled up.

- The existence of a Local Convention and/or the presence of RISE partners in the commune would each be considered a plus.

4.4 Cost-extension Period: January 2020 – March 2021

During the cost-extension period, REGIS-ER focused on consolidating the resilience capacities of the eight communes in the face of mounting insecurity, in accordance with the following:

1. **Reinforcing local institutions and the links between them** to improve collaboration, accountability and transparency with local government—and empower communities to drive their own development agenda.
2. **Strengthening networks of local resource persons (PRL) and community-based solution providers (CBSPs)** so that knowledge and inputs are readily available.
3. **Building local conventions and commune resilience plans** through participatory processes.
4. **Creating community demand for resilience activities** through behavior change communications and the PRL and CBSP networks.

This period also marked a greater focus on youth. The project adopted a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach and trained commune leaders in PYD.

Highlighted Cost-Extension Period Results:



1,008 Local Resource Persons engaged.



218 Community-based Solution Providers organized and with a business plan, including 140 Community-based Solution Providers under 30.

All eight communes have adopted their Commune Resilience Plans and mobilized 1,075,379,000 CFA (\$1,809,563) to fund them.



203 CVD/CLD transmitting data to Citizen Working Groups.

All eight CWGs received their legal recognition and authorization to operate as community development entities.



288 young men and women benefited from habbanaye (animal exchange) of 1,152 goats.



218 Youth Enterprises supported with a \$275,000 grant fund.

Four Municipal Councils developed youth employment strategies.

5 Management Approach

REGIS-ER's implementation phases highlight the project's **adaptive management approach** in action. Strategic decisions were made by the project's Senior Management Team in-country with support from NCBA CLUSA headquarters. Information generated by the regional offices filtered up from the Regional Coordinators to the Deputy Chief of Party who also supervised Monitoring and Evaluation. While the Chief

of Party supervised technical leads who in turn provided technical quality assurance of regional program staff. This ensured a feedback loop between regional offices and offices in each capital city location (Ouagadougou and Niamey). The Senior Management Team met formally each quarter to discuss challenges and progress and make course corrections as needed.

The restructuring phase saw some notable improvements to project operations for scaling up interventions:

1. **Decentralization** of planning and administrative functions to the regional offices. The project trained regional coordinators in their added responsibilities, hired regional administration and finance officers for better segregation of duties, and relocated technical leads to regional offices. This restructuring proved essential for achieving scale on a large, two-country, multi-region project.
2. **Evolution of field staff from agents to coaches.** The field agents progressively withdrew from direct intervention after they had enhanced the capacity of local resource persons to provide services to the community via information, awareness-raising, training, needs-identification to consolidate demand for goods and services and linked them with locally available, high-quality supply. Consequently, field agents became coaches for the local resource persons.
3. **Empowering local actors as community-based extension.** REGIS-ER has trained over 7,000 local resources persons in zone of intervention communities. Many local resources persons are recognized not only within their communities, but also by local institutions and government actors, and are called upon to offer technical guidance on resilience activities. These local resource persons include lead mothers, lead farmers and sector-specific relays for horticulture and financial services.

5.1 Partnerships and Synergies

Project Consortium Partners

REGIS-ER managed a large consortium of 11 partners, including eight local organizations in a one-team approach. Consortium member staff were integrated at all levels of the project. The project held annual general assembly meetings with all staff as work planning and team building sessions.

Consortium Partners	Country	Start Date	End Date	Expertise
Sheladia Associates, Inc.	USA	11/15/2013	2/28/2021	Partner in irrigation, water use management, and M&E
University Research Co., LLC (URC)	USA	11/15/2013	12/31/2018	Technical lead in health and nutrition, behavior change communication, and quality assurance
Dimagi	USA	11/21/2013	5/31/2018	Develop monitoring systems for stakeholders to monitor outcomes
Mwangaza Action	Burkina Faso & Niger	11/15/2013	12/31/2020	Expertise in community health and nutrition, and gender
A2N (Association Nodde Nooto)	Burkina Faso	11/15/2013	12/31/2018	Livestock services

EAA (Eau et Assainissement pour l'Afrique)	Burkina Faso	11/15/2013	9/30/2020	Lead project support in WASH
EAA (Eau et Assainissement pour l'Afrique)	Niger	11/15/2013	2/29/2016	Lead project support in WASH
ADROC (Action pour la Dynamisation et le Renforcement des Organisations)	Niger	11/15/2013	9/30/2019	Governance, producer organization development, training
KOKARI	Niger	11/15/2013	9/30/2018	Support activities to improve access to financial services
AREN (Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Elevage au Niger)	Niger	11/15/2013	10/31/2018	Livestock services
APOR (Action pour la Promotion des Organisations Rurales)	Niger	11/15/2013	12/31/2018	Governance, producer organization development, training

Local Institution Partners

Local institutions were central to REGIS-ER's sustainability strategy and critical partners in the implementation of resilience activities.

Municipal Councils: The municipal councils played a key role in the consolidation and scaling up of successful resilience activities. For example, by coordinating and implementing habbanaye asset placements and, in their capacity as contracting authorities for water infrastructure in the commune, in ensuring that the borehole rehabilitation work was performed correctly. They played an equally important role in the implementation of the youth entrepreneurship grants program, actively participating in the selection process and the establishment of the committee to guide youth grantees at the start of the procurement process. In FY20 all eight project communes updated their Commune Development Plans and integrated their Commune Resilience Plan. They mobilized a total of 1,339,525,000 CFA (\$2,293,768) in 2020 for implementation of their resilience plans:

Country	Commune	Region	CFA	USD
Burkina Faso	Gayérie	Est	0	0
	Manni	Est	0	0
	Sebba	Sahel	82,808,000	141,798
	Seytenga	Sahel	42,170,000	72,211
	Sub-total		124,978,000	214,009
Niger	Filingué	Tillabéri	118,991,000	203,757
	Sakoira	Tillabéri	396,447,000	678,866
	Tagazar	Tillabéri	417,950,000	715,687
	Tondikandia	Tillabéri	281,159,000	481,449
	Sub-total		1,214,547,000	2,079,759
Grand Total			1,339,525,000	2,293,768

Communes in Est region were not able to mobilize any funds for their plans due largely to the deteriorating security situation in the region and the limited presence of other development partners.

Citizen Working Groups and Local Development Committees (NE)/Village Development Councils (BF) [Comités Locaux de Développement/Conseils Villageois de Développement, CLDs/CVDs]: have become indispensable development actors in communes and communities. They have forged an effective partnership with their municipal councils, especially in implementing resilience activities. All eight Citizen Working Groups in the final project communes received their legal recognition and authorization to operate as community development entities. Municipal councils increasingly rely on Citizen Working Groups (CWG) to communicate with communities throughout the commune.

Qualitative Assessment of the CWG:

Commune	CWG Registered	Scaled up successful activities	Operational and internal governance capacities	Initiatives to physical realisations	Capacity for advocacy and mobilization of financial and material resources	Nature and quality of relations with stakeholders
Sebba	Yes	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong	Good
Seytenga	Yes	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong	Good
Manni	Yes	Yes	Average	Yes	Average	Average
Gayéri	Yes	Yes	Average	Yes	Average	Average
Sakoira	Yes	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong	Good
Tagazar	Yes	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong	Good
Tondikandia	Yes	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong	Good
Filingué	Yes	Yes	Average	Yes	Average	Good

Service Provider Platforms: Community-based Solution Providers (CBSPs) are last-mile entrepreneurs based in the community who are designated and accepted by the community to facilitate access to useful products, services and information and find solutions to problems communities face. REGIS-ER's established CBSP networks have become valuable development partners in their communities. For example, in Burkina, the CBSP platform in Seytenga Commune (Sahel Region) signed agreements with the Water Security and Resilience Activity (WSRA, also known as *Terres-Eau-Vie*, TEV) and Oxfam for training producers on conservation farming techniques and organizing awareness-raising sessions on hygiene and sanitation.

RISE I Implementing Partners

Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth (REGIS-AG): USAID designed REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG with complementary push-pull approaches in the same zone of intervention (ZOI). REGIS-ER collaborated with REGIS-AG on the select value chains of cowpea, poultry, and small ruminants, and on the promotion of local animal health. REGIS-ER complemented REGIS-AG's activities in the small ruminant value chain by leading the effort in the provision of equipment for Livestock Auxiliaries and linking Livestock Auxiliaries with farmers (through the project's habbanaye and animal fattening activities). REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG's collaboration on the cowpea value chain allowed REGIS-ER's conservation farming groups to access inventory-based credit (*warrantage*) promoted through REGIS-AG.

Sahel Resilience Learning Project (SAREL): The SAREL project focused on collaboration, learning and adaptation across the entire RISE platform.

Food for Peace-funded Development Food Assistance Programs: REGIS-ER collaborated closely with the three DFSAs in Niger and two in Burkina Faso. Including training PASAM TAI (Burkina Faso) staff in conservation agriculture to expand this practice in a wider ZOI covering an additional 434 villages.

World Food Program (WFP): REGIS-ER worked with WFP in Niger and Burkina Faso from 2015-2018. The partnership aimed to build resilience to food crises through combined resources. Through cash or food distributions, WFP provides the most vulnerable an opportunity to feed their families, support agricultural activities, and prevent losing gains made in poverty reduction during the lean season from June to August. WFP implemented Food and Cash for Asset activities in partnership with REGIS-ER.

Working in Insecurity

During FY18 to FY20, the volatile security situation in REGIS-ER's ZOI, Sahel and Est Regions (Burkina Faso) and Tillabéri Region (Niger), continued to deteriorate, especially in Burkina Faso, which had a significant impact on project implementation. In Burkina Faso, the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) increased from about 486,000 at the start of FY20 to 1,035,000 by early September 2020. Travel became increasingly risky in FY20 throughout the project ZOI for staff, partners (members of local institutions) and beneficiaries. In Tillabéri Region, the government of Niger prohibited the use of motorcycles in January 2020, which prevented REGIS-ER's commune-based field staff (the coaches of Local resource persons and CLDs/CVDs) from using project motorcycles to travel to the villages they covered. REGIS-ER sought to turn this problem into an opportunity by further empowering local institutions, the heart of its sustainability strategy. Thus, when the coaches were no longer able to travel safely in the two countries to collect data for monitoring purposes, this task was delegated to CWGs, whose members were trained accordingly. In addition, the security environment led members of local institutions and beneficiaries to increase their use of the project-initiated WhatsApp networks to avoid the risk of travel, whenever possible.

The insecurity affected not only travel, but also the implementation of the youth grants program. Project management avoided cash grants to youth not only to ensure full compliance with financial requirements, but just as importantly, to avoid the risk of potentially putting the beneficiaries in harm's way from armed groups. Fortunately, however, the effects of the security situation on the consolidation and scaling up of successful (resilience) activities were minimal, primarily because the project had already transitioned to an indirect mode of intervention, by which local institutions took ownership and conducted activities and the field staff coached ILs rather than facilitating the activities themselves.

COVID-19

REGIS-ER was able to leverage our partnerships with the municipal councils and CWGs in the eight communes of intervention in responding to the Coronavirus crisis. After consulting with the local institutions in each commune, REGIS-ER developed and submitted to USAID an action plan for each country to respond to this humanitarian crisis and limit the spread of COVID-19. The project provided protection kits (the kits included handwashing devices, cloth masks, bleach, hydro alcoholic gel, and soap) to local institutions and helped the local institutions to raise local awareness through interactive radio broadcasts, visual aids (counseling cards and posters) for sensitization sessions, training CBSPs in the preparation and sale of relevant health products. The municipal councils, in collaboration with the CWGs, CLDs/CVDs, traditional leaders and the decentralized technical services (especially health centers), coordinated awareness-raising activities in their communes and distribution of the kits provided by REGIS-

ER for use in communities and key locations. The municipal councils delegated to the CLDs/CVDs the management of these items, the transmission of COVID-19-related information and the implementation of awareness-raising activities in their communities. Each of the eight municipal councils developed a commune response plan with the support of partners, in particular REGIS-ER and WSRA. They also mobilized partners for the implementation of their response plans.

5.2 Sustainability

REGIS-ER focused its sustainability strategy on building and strengthening local institutions including municipal councils, CLDs/CVDs, CWGs, farmer groups, women's groups and CBSP networks from the project's inception. As it focused its interventions geographically to 13 communes in the last few years, the project has increasingly focused on strengthening local governance and consolidating efforts to build capacity across all groups and institutions. In particular, the project worked with some communal governments to help them in drafting Commune Resilience Plans that could be integrated into Commune Development Plans. This process of building the capacity of local governments to competently design and implement their own development plans is essential to sustaining many of the project's activities. The challenge, of course, is whether the communes have the capacity to generate the funds necessary to draft and implement these plans. The news is encouraging as six communes had already mobilized a combined total of \$2,293,768 by the end of FY 2020 for implementation of their Commune Resilience Plans.

Citizen Working Groups in the eight communes of concentration not only actively ensured follow-up and coordination of activities at the level of their own communities, but many expanded their reach to other villages within their commune. In the Sahel Regio of Burkina Faso, for example, the Citizen Working Groups covered all the villages in the communes of Seytenga (27 villages) and Sebba (18 villages). The CWGs have provided services to other development partners, have actively collected data and information for sharing with local institutions and have assisted in identifying beneficiaries for various program interventions.

Income generation and profitability are not the only motivators of CBSPs, but clearly for sustainability these are minimal required conditions. As noted in an earlier section, more than 1,000 enterprises (which include CBSPs) operated profitably.

The project also supported the organization of water user associations and Water Point Management Committees with the main objective of establishing or reviving entities that would ensure the long-term management of wells and boreholes. These were, therefore, actions that aimed to put in place a mechanism that would ensure the sustainability of the intervention for augmenting the access to safe drinking water or access to irrigation.

Consistent with its sustainability strategy, REGIS-ER accomplished the following:

- Assisted municipal councils in developing Commune Resilience Plans
- Assisted municipal councils in updating and renewing Commune Development Plans
- Facilitated incorporation of local conventions into Commune Development Plans
- Assisted municipal councils with local youth employment strategies
- Supported peer learning across municipal councils
- Built the capacity of CWGs including action planning, resource mobilization strategy, youth activities
- Built the capacity of CLD/CVD
- Built the capacity of CBSPs including business plan development

- Built the capacity of Local resource persons

6 Significance of the Activities and Results

REGIS-ER employed a unique systems framework for building resilience using both time-tested and innovative approaches to expand institutional, HH, and individual capacity to adapt, recover from stresses, and improve nutrition, health, and well-being of vulnerable populations, including those most at risk economically and physically. Generally, REGIS-ER saw greater achievement in Niger

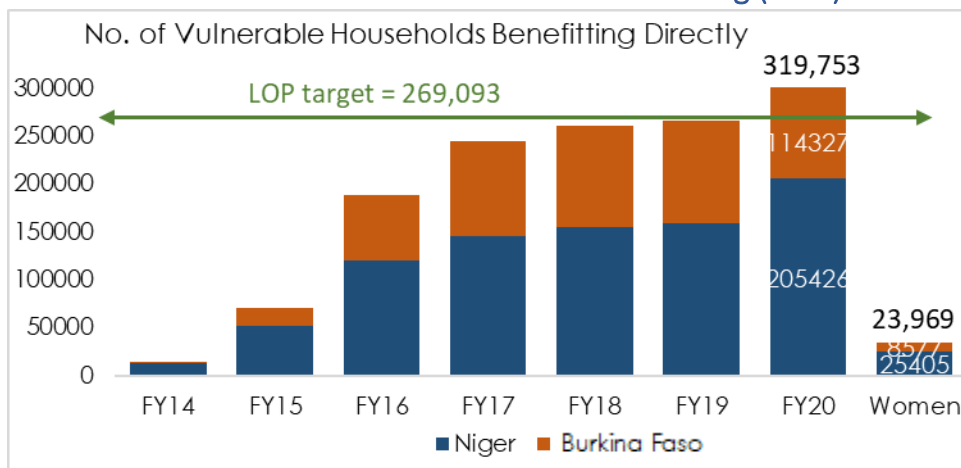
than Burkina Faso for the population-denominated indicators. This is due in some part to REGIS-ER targeting a larger geography and population in Niger than in Burkina Faso. In addition, security was a greater constraint in Burkina Faso in all three regions (five of the six communes) which led to some activity disruptions compared to Niger where only two commune were affected by security-related disruptions.

Economic Rate of Return is 29.7%

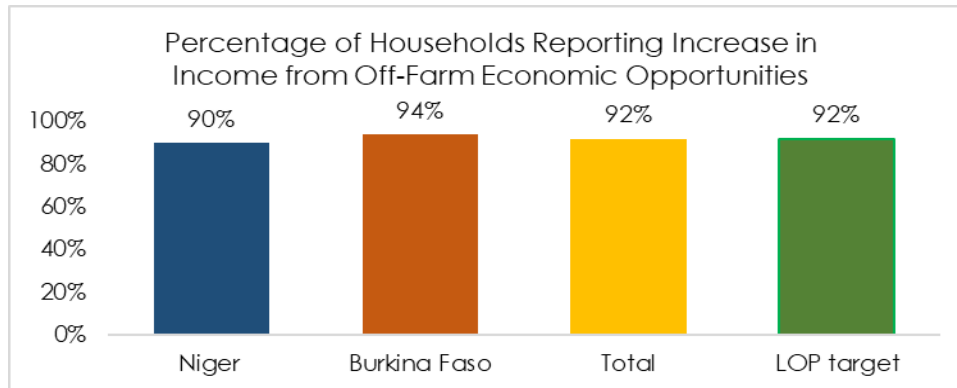
External study "cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of USAID Resilience in the Sahel enhanced (RISE)" commissioned by USAID showed that:

"the overall outcome of REGIS-ER's interventions in both Burkina Faso and Niger is positive...the project generates in the aggregate...an ERR of 29.7%."

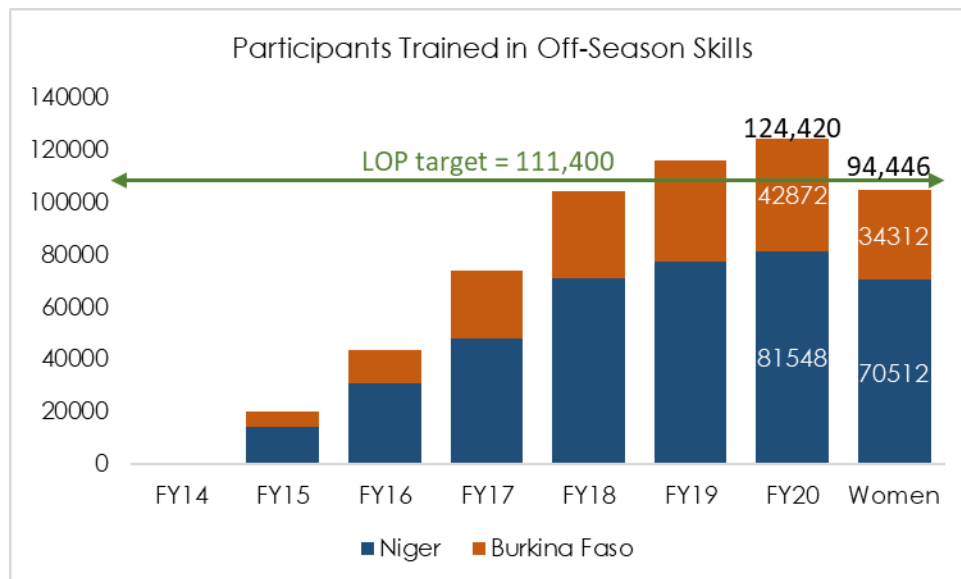
6.1 Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being (SO 1)



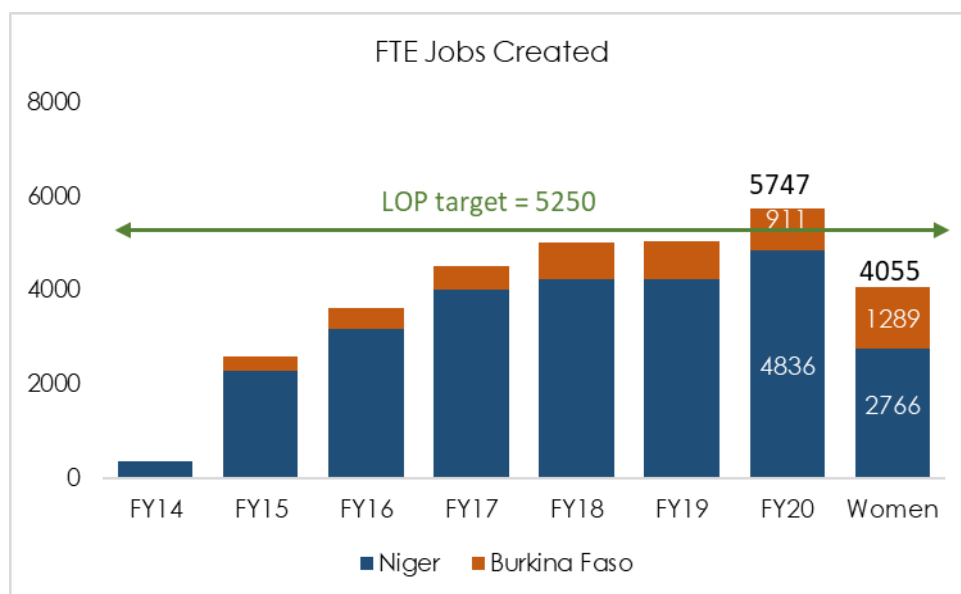
REGIS-ER addressed resilience in part through improved economic well-being. In its 88-month duration, it was able to reach 319,753 vulnerable households (205,426 in Niger and 114,327 in Burkina Faso). This is 119% of the target. Eleven percent (11%) of these vulnerable households were headed by women.



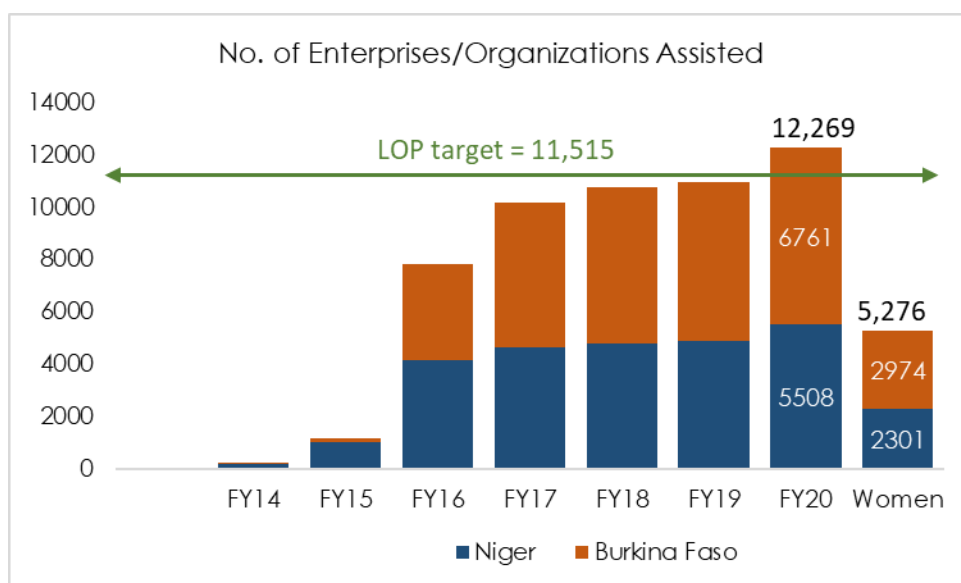
Over the duration of the project, REGIS-ER met its planned target of improving off-farm (non rainfed agriculture-based) income for 92% of the vulnerable households engaged. There was a slightly higher percentage achieved in Burkina Faso than Niger.



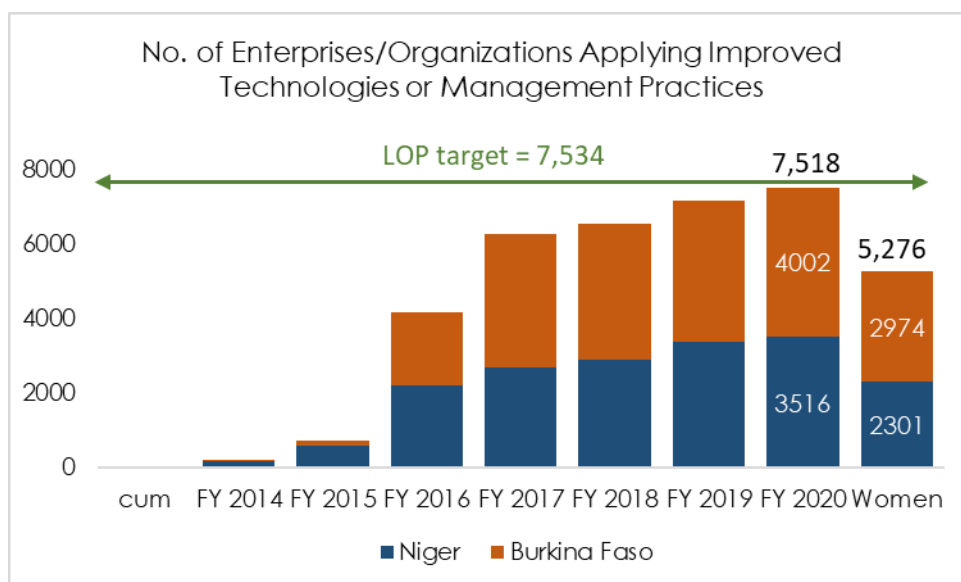
Against a target of 111,400 participants to be trained in off-season skills, REGIS-ER reached 124,420 participants, or 104% of target. A total of 94,446 participants, or 84%, were women.



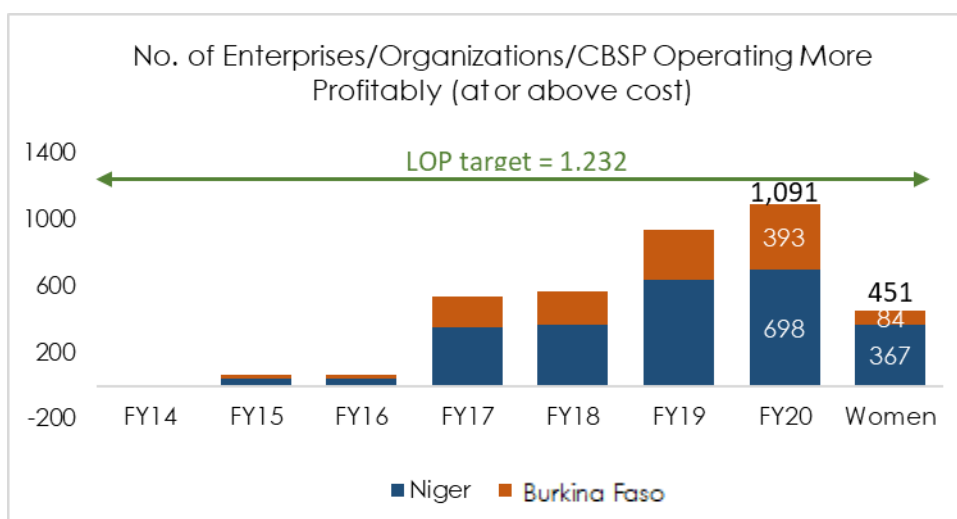
Through its efforts, primarily with the Community-Based Solution Providers (CBSP), REGIS-ER created 5,747 full-time equivalent jobs by its final year in FY2020. This was comprised of 4,836 full-time equivalent jobs in Niger and 911 full-time equivalent jobs in Burkina Faso. The number of FTE jobs created each year is depicted in the figure above, with an aggregate total of 26,891 FTE jobs during the life of the project (LOP). While women represented 71% of these jobs in FY2020, women represented 81% of the jobs over LOP with 21,684 FTE.



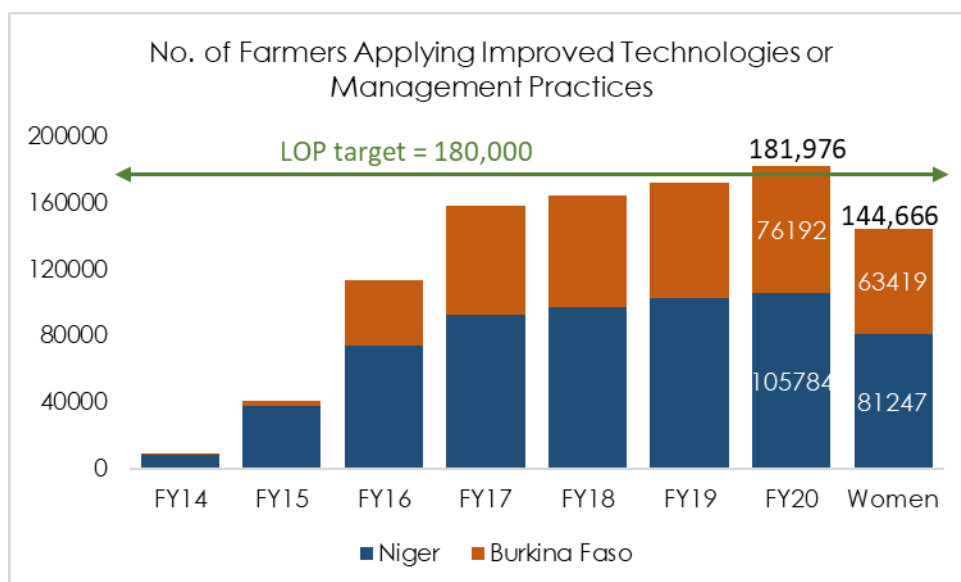
The Project assisted 12,269 enterprises and organizations amounting to 107% of the planned target. These include the CBSPs, cooperatives, women's groups, Mother-to-Mother Groups, gardening groups, conservation farming groups, BDL groups, Habbanaye enterprises, water management committees, NRM Committees, SCAP-RU, CVD, COFOB, CFV, and others. Women's groups represented 43% of the total.



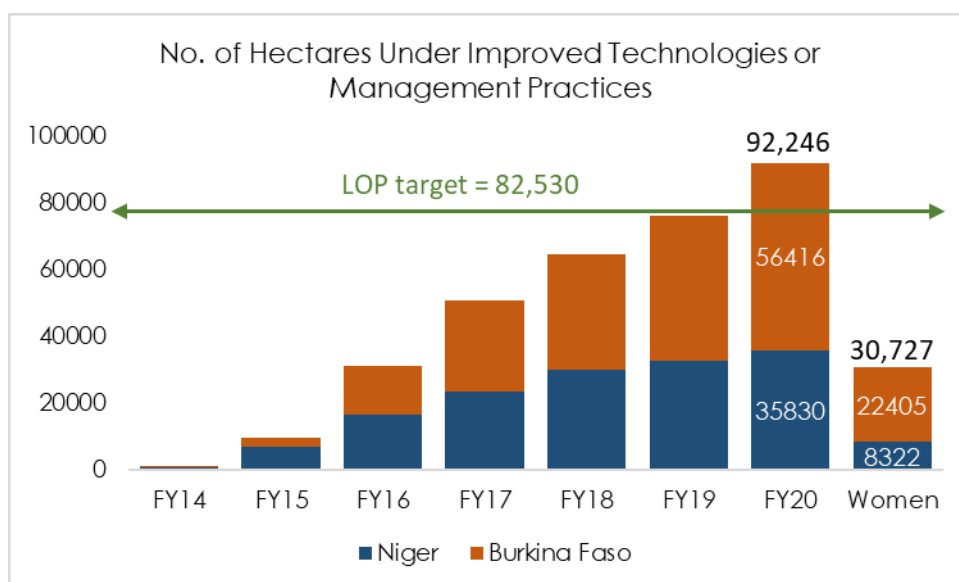
The number of enterprises and organizations applying improved technologies or management practices reached 7,518, which was 99.8% of the target. Seventy-six percent (76%) of these - or 5,712 - were operated by women.



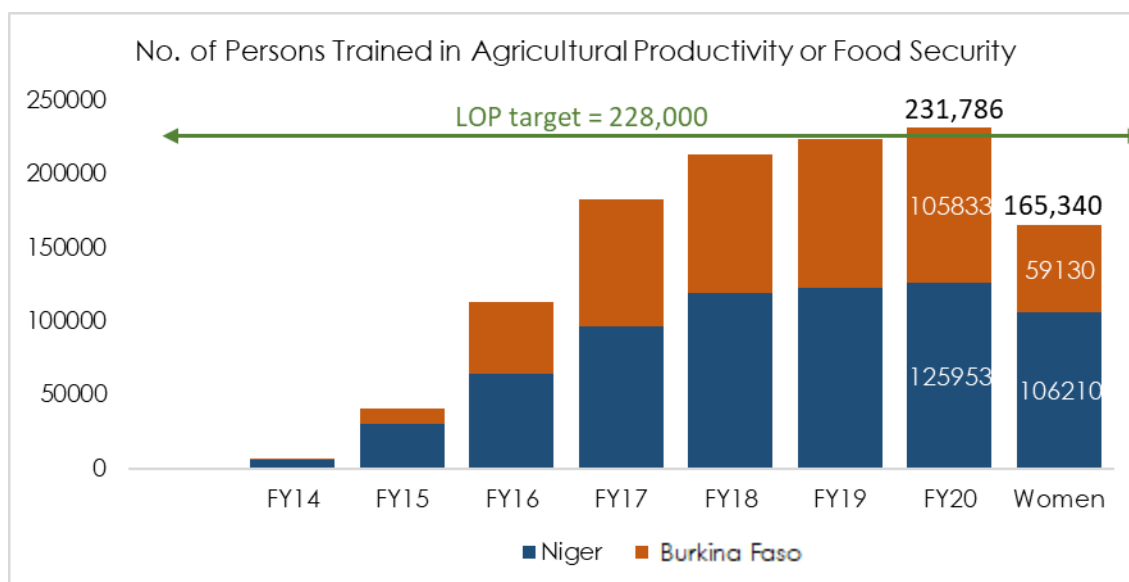
REGIS-ER assisted enterprises and CBSPs to become more profitable using business plans, record-keeping, networking, and logistic support. These enterprises were involved in providing services or agricultural products which directly addressed food security in the communities where they worked. The number of firms/enterprises/CBSPs operating more profitably (at or above cost) reached 1,091 or 89% of the target. Women-operated enterprises and female CBSPs represented 41% of the total in this category.



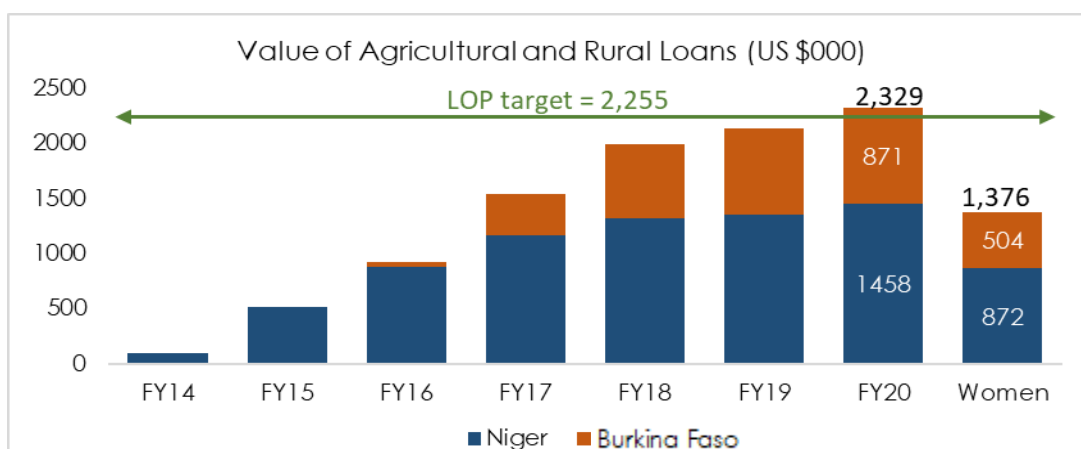
REGIS-ER supported more than 180,000 farmers to apply improved technologies and management practices such as conservation farming, farmer-managed natural regeneration, bio-reclamation of degraded land, pastoral or agricultural soil and water conservation, soil fertility restoration, irrigation, gardening, crop genetics, pest/disease management, animal fattening, habbanaye, post-harvest loss reduction, storage, and others. Female farmers made up 79% of the total.



In terms of hectares, the area under such improved technologies or management practices increased each year of the project for a total of 92,246 hectares over the life of the project – or 112% of the 82,350 hectares target. The number of hectares under women’s management is 30,727 or 33% of the total.



REGIS-ER provided training in agricultural productivity or other elements of food security such as the improved technologies and management practices that would enhance household resilience. A total of 231,786 participants were trained over the life-of-project, or 102% of the target. Seventy-one percent (71%) of participants were women.



Agricultural and rural savings and loan programs were promoted among farmer and village groups as a means of building reserves, assets and funds for emergencies as well as productive investments. REGIS-ER-supported groups lent \$2,329,000 in agricultural and rural loans, or 103% of the target. The value of such loans among women's groups was \$1,376,000 or 59% of the total. Niger saw a higher level of achievement given that village-based savings and loan associations got their start in Niger preceding REGIS-ER so there was a history of acceptance and familiarity. Also, the project had an experienced partner in Niger – Kokari – while there was no such counterpart organization available in Burkina Faso.

6.2 Strengthened Governance and Institutions (SO 2)

Municipal councils were coached by REGIS-ER to develop Commune Resilience Plans and to renew or update their Commune Development Plans. In FY 2020, four communes each in Burkina Faso and Niger adopted Commune Resilience Plans with funding commitments for their implementation or implementation of youth business activities. Seven of the eight municipal councils have Community Development Plans that are current and active and four of these seven CDPs have incorporated local conventions that have been developed with the support of REGIS-ER.

A key innovation of REGIS-ER was the establishment of Citizen Working Groups who provided a link between local government institutions and their constituents. These CWGs performed several important functions – communicating community needs to local officials, providing advice to the officials, increasing accountability and communicating back to the communities on the plans and initiatives of local government. In FY 2020, all eight focus communes developed and implemented their action plans, had a resource mobilization strategy for their continued operation and implemented activities for youth. During this year, a total of 126 new villages were covered by citizen working group activities – 43 in Niger and 83 in Burkina Faso.

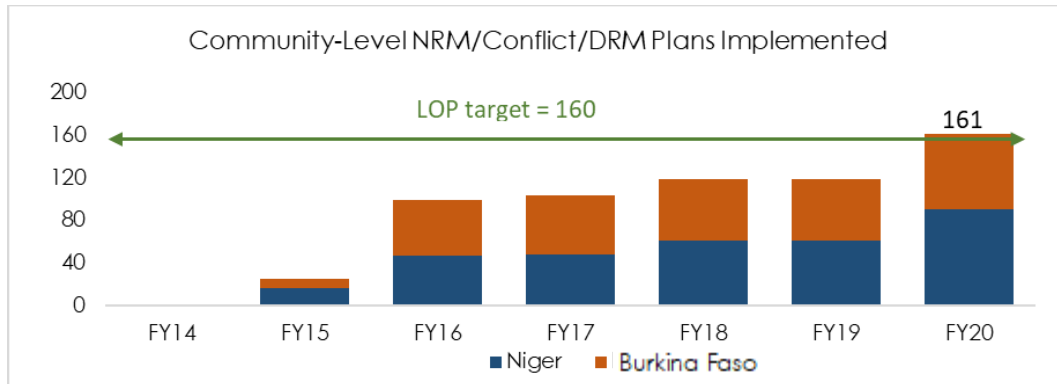
A total of 42 Local Development Committees (CLD) in Niger and 31 village development councils (CVD) in Burkina Faso began scaling up at least five of the nine successful resilience activities during FY2020 while 50 CLDs and 15 CVDs introduced new activities. At the conclusion of the project, a total of 203 CLD/CVD continue to collect and transmit data on these activities to the CWGs.

In FY2020, 218 CBSPs were newly established and developed a business plan with the support of REGIS-ER – 119 in Niger and 99 in Burkina Faso.

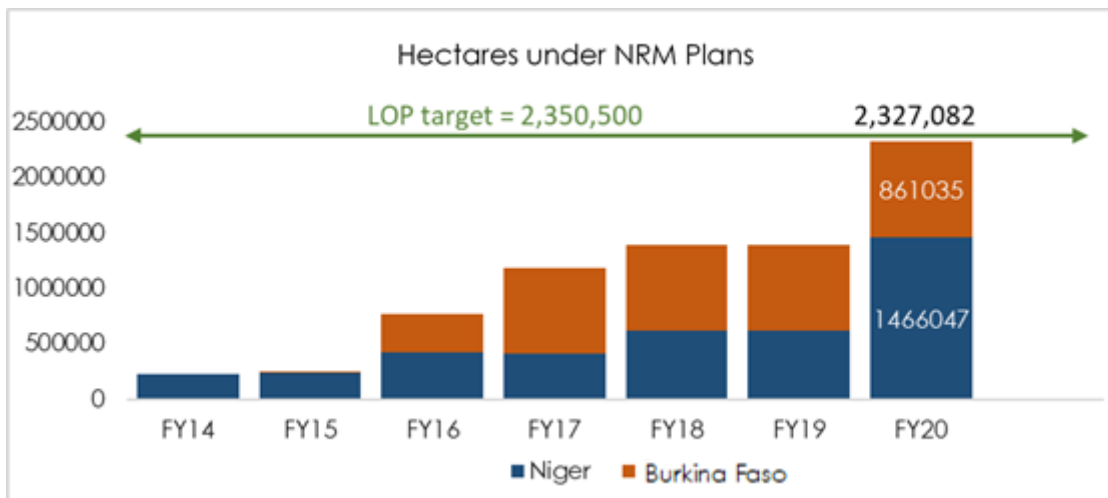
Local resource persons have been engaged to support CLD/CVD to consolidate and scale up successful resilience activities – 534 in Niger and 474 in Burkina Faso. In FY2020, 203 CLD/CVD have continued to use LRP services – 123 in Niger and 80 in Burkina Faso.

"... the capacity of communities to manage conflicts is an element of project success.... This approach has served as an effective instrument for the reduction of land conflicts and resulted in the strengthening of social values with regards to land management. The outstanding outcome has been the virtual disappearance of conflicts between farmers and herders around water points."

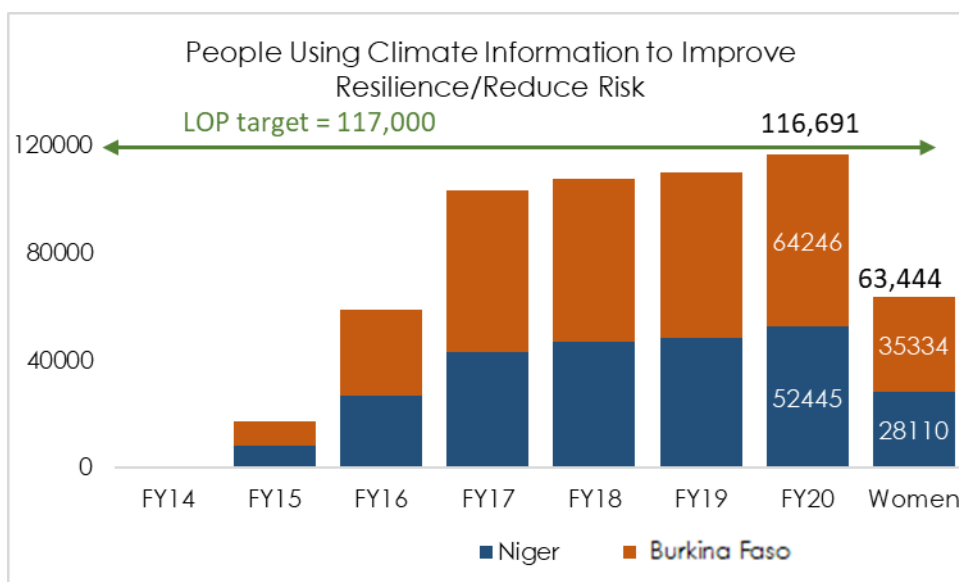
--External Final Evaluation Report, March 2021, CESA0.



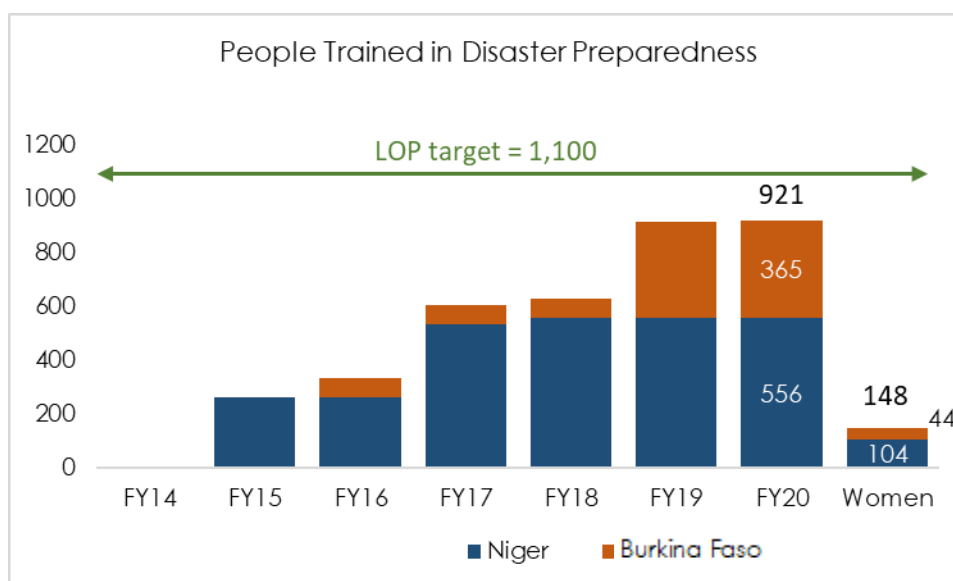
REGIS-ER innovated effective conflict resolution mechanisms and coached commune- and village-level institutions to develop Natural Resource Management Plans and Disaster Response Management Plans. The number of such mechanisms and plans implemented reached 161, just over the planned target. As a result, conflicts have declined markedly as noted in the text box.



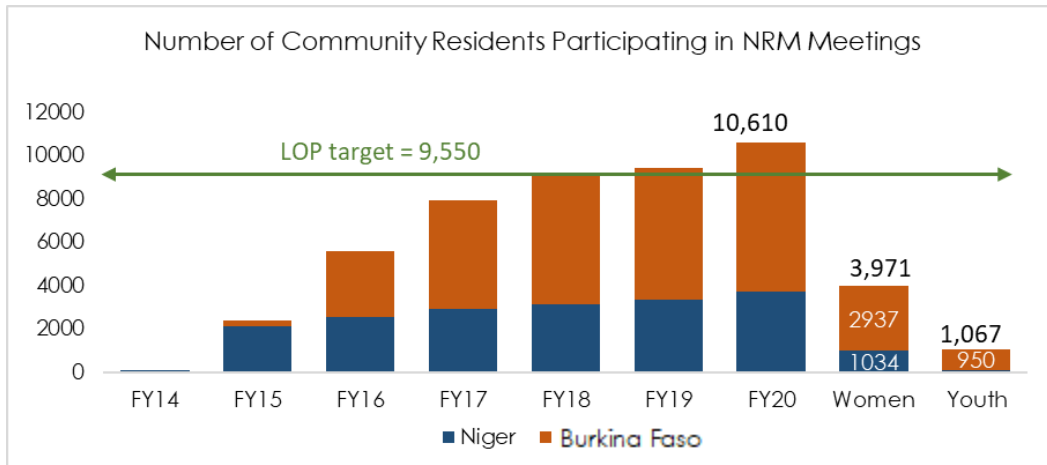
The NRM Plans facilitated by REGIS-ER covered communities and communes. They included management of common property resources, grazeland, watersheds, and water resources to accommodate competing uses such as crop production, livestock grazing, natural drainage channels, etc. and users such as farmers, transhumant herders, and municipalities. The area falling under the NRM Plans reached 2,327,082 hectares compared to the target of 2,350,000 – i.e., 99% of target. A greater share of this area was in Niger than Burkina Faso, with 63% in the former and 37% in the latter due to the greater size of the areas governed by the communes in Niger.



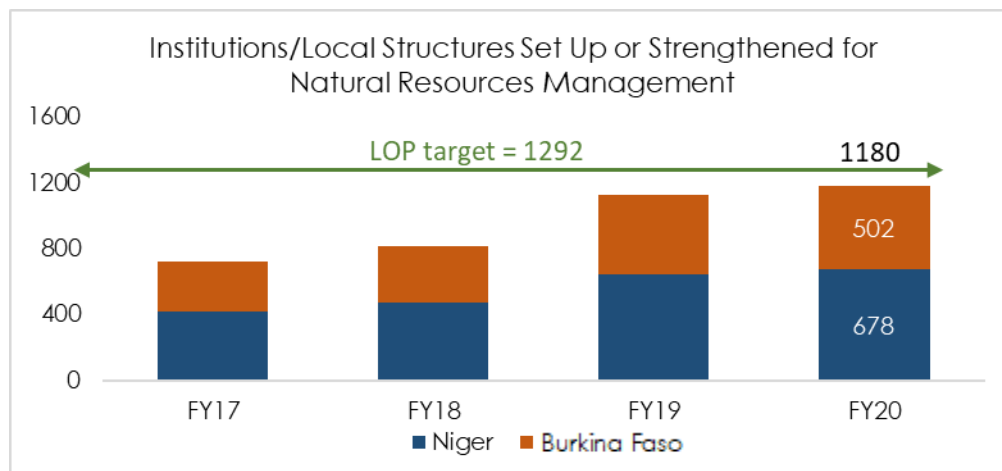
REGIS-ER promoted climate change adaptation and mitigation to improve resilience and reduce the risk of shocks. These included crop production, soil and water conservation, soil fertility management, natural regeneration, post-harvest handling and storage, pest management and other techniques. They included off-farm (non-rainfed) employment and income generation. A total of 116,691 individuals used climate change information to improve their resilience and reduce their risk resulting from REGIS-ER assistance. This represents 99.7% of the planned target. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the individuals were women.



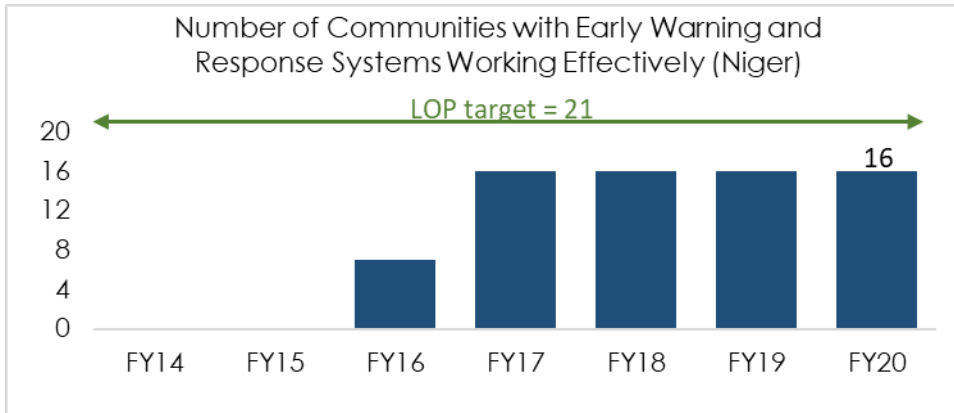
As part of its resilience strategy, REGIS-ER trained commune and village officials in disaster preparedness. REGIS-ER set up: i) response teams who are trained and ready to intervene in the event of a disaster; and ii) other groups which are responsible for alerting local authorities and state services in the event of a disaster. While 921 persons were trained, this amounted to 84% of the 1100-person target. Women represented 16% of those trained.



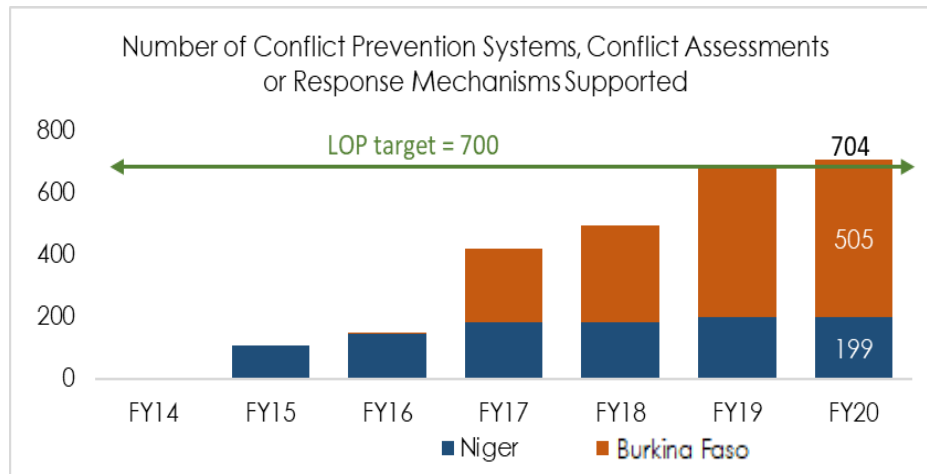
The number of community residents participating in NRM Meetings reached 10,610 individuals over the life of the project compared to the target of 9,550. This represents an 111% level of achievement. The share of women and youth in these meetings was 37% and 10% respectively. Women and youth participation were more pronounced in Burkina Faso than in Niger.



REGIS-ER focused on setting-up institutional platforms and strengthening existing institutions for more effective governance and delivery of public services. One of the target areas was natural resources management and the number of institutions/local structures (e.g., Municipal Councils, CWG, PRL, CVD/LVC, etc.) set up or strengthened for NRM reached 1,180 which is 91% of the planned target.

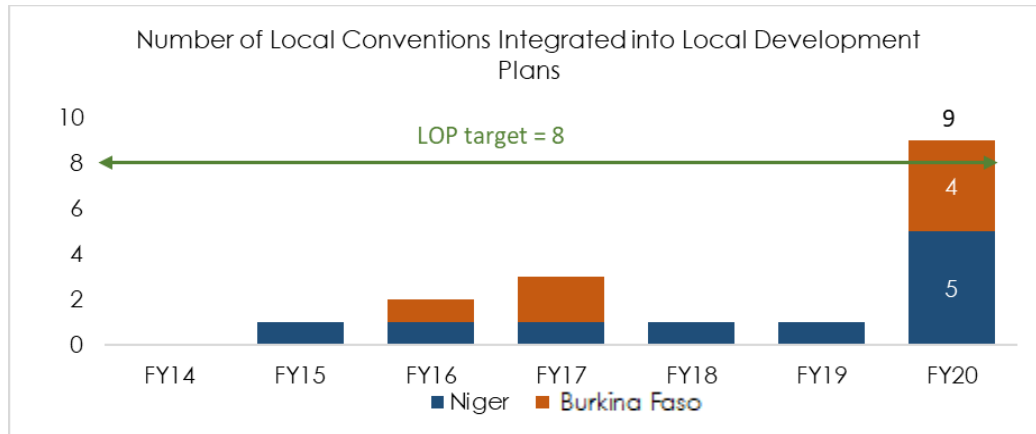


REGIS-ER worked with communes to develop early warning system for a rapid response (EWR or SCAP-RU as the English and French acronyms respectively) and then trained officials so that the systems were implemented. Sixteen (16) communities have effective EWR systems compared to the target of 21. This is an achievement level of 76%. There is no equivalent national early warning system in Burkina Faso.



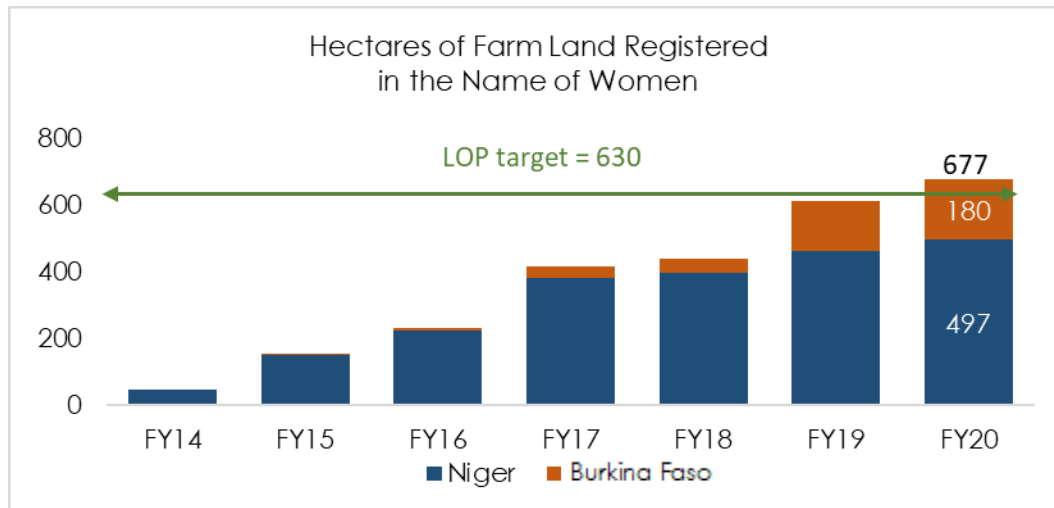
Given a target of 700 conflict prevention systems for response mechanisms supported, the project delivered 704, or 101% of the target. The capacity of communities to manage conflicts is one of the elements of success of the project, especially considering the establishment of management committees and the training of the actors who lead it. These project actions served as an effective tool for:

- Reducing land conflicts
- Strengthening social values to manage land
- Virtual disappearance of conflicts between farmers and herders around water points, and
- Increasing women's access to land for agricultural activities.



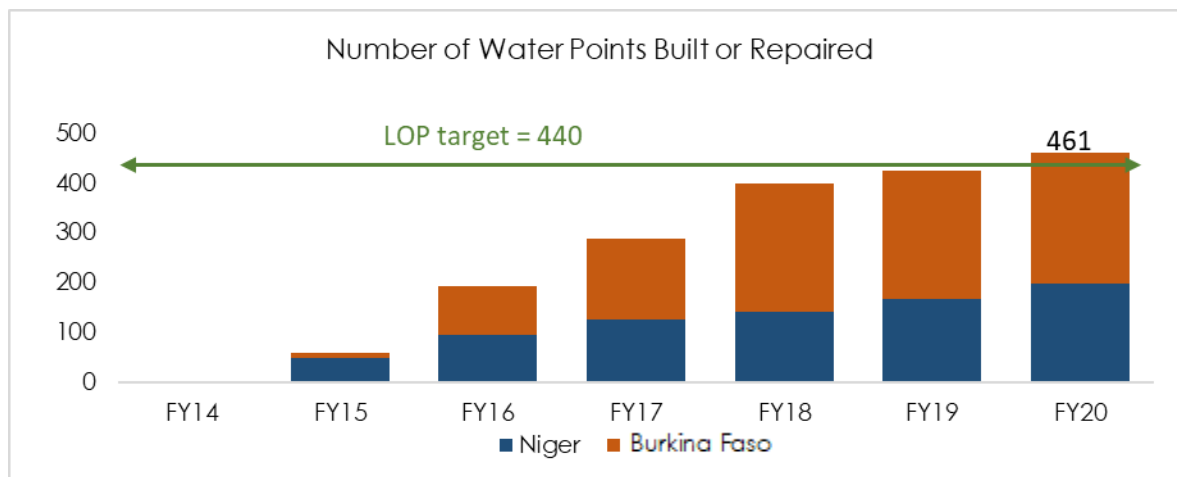
Nine (9) local conventions were integrated into local development plans compared to a target of eight (8). The integration of these local agreements (“conventions” or CLCs) and Commune Resilience Plans into the Commune Development Plans are essential as they capture the needs of the population in the medium-term. Commune Development Plans are available resulting from project support since communes usually do not have their own resources or capacity to prepare them with all required elements. At the conclusion of the project:

- 11 of the 13 municipalities have Commune Development Plans.
- 8 of the 13 municipalities of concentration have a PCDR integrated into their Commune Development Plans.
- 7 of the 13 concentration communes in FY19 have a local convention integrated into their Commune Development Plans.

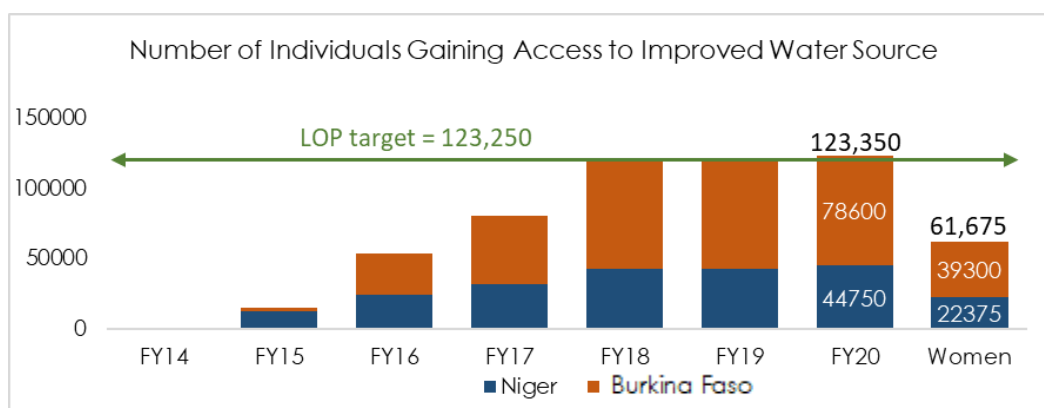


Through its work with village elders, REGIS-ER was able to facilitate the registration of farmland in the name of women. Usually this was related to the bio-reclamation of degraded lands initiative. The project had sought to reached 630 hectares by the close but managed to get 677 hectares registered in the name of women – an achievement rate of 107%.

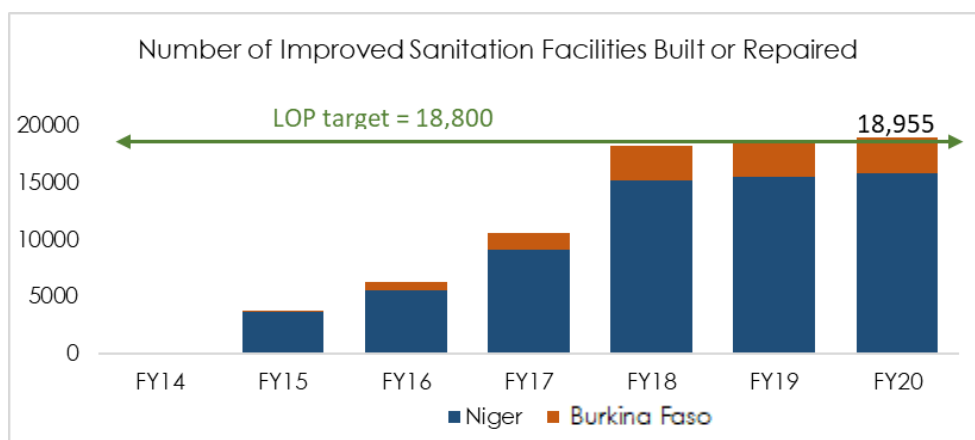
6.3 Improved Health and Nutritional Status (SO 3)



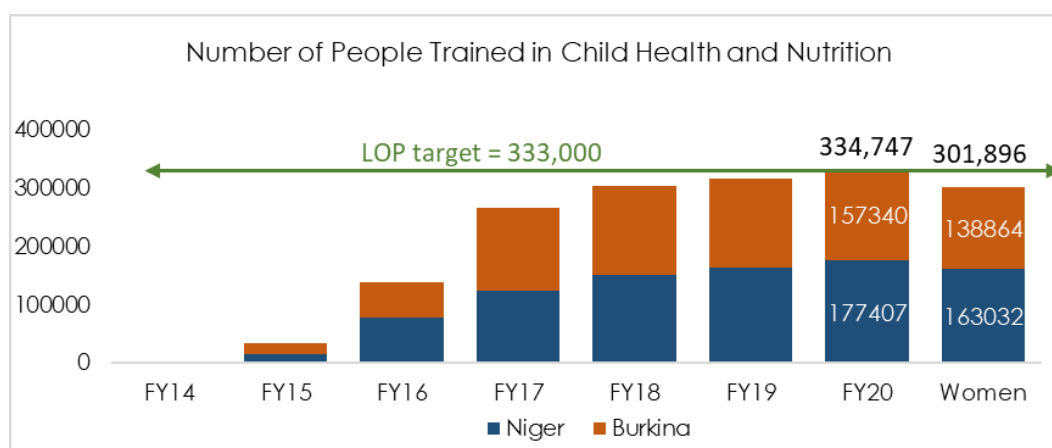
Properly functioning and well-designed water points (wells or boreholes and pumps) give communities potable drinking water that is protected from contamination. Adults and children alike suffer from loss of nutritional uptake when afflicted with diarrhea and other waterborne diseases. In children, this contributes to wasting and stunting. REGIS-ER built or repaired 461 water points to a proper standard – 105% of the target. The greater share of water points built (57%) was in Burkina Faso.



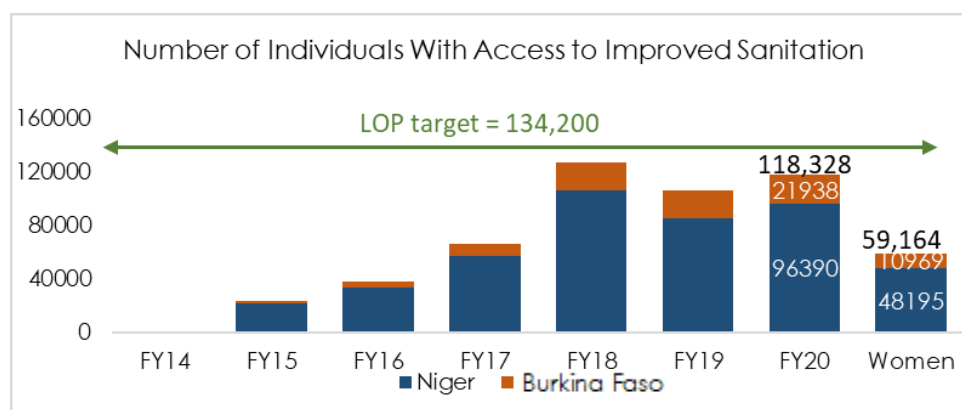
The number of individuals gaining access to an improved water source reached 123,350 or slightly more than 100% of the target and 50% of these were women.



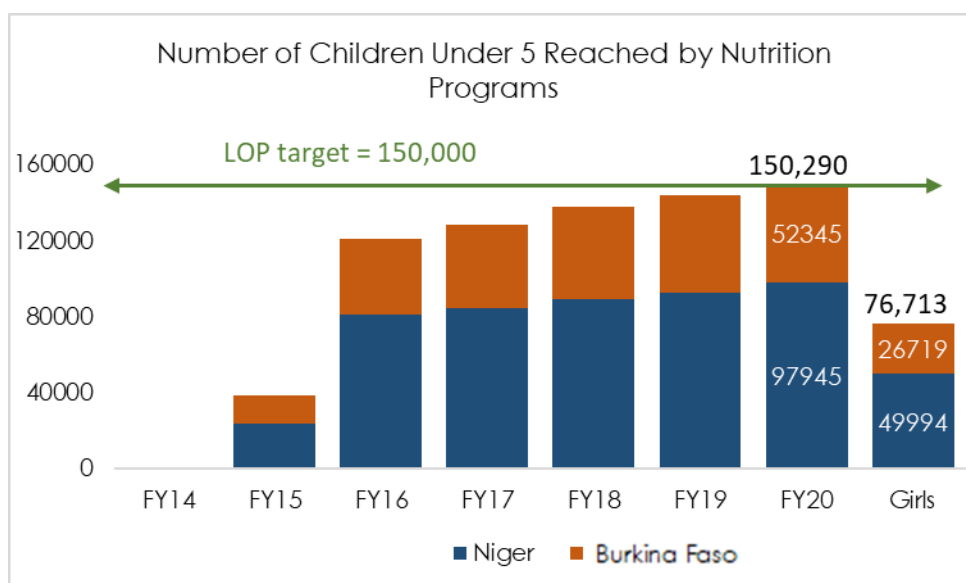
REGIS-ER also supported the construction and repair of 18,955 improved sanitation facilities. This represents 101% of the target that was planned. The majority of these (83%) were in Niger, but this was consistent with the program targets which were exceeded in both countries.



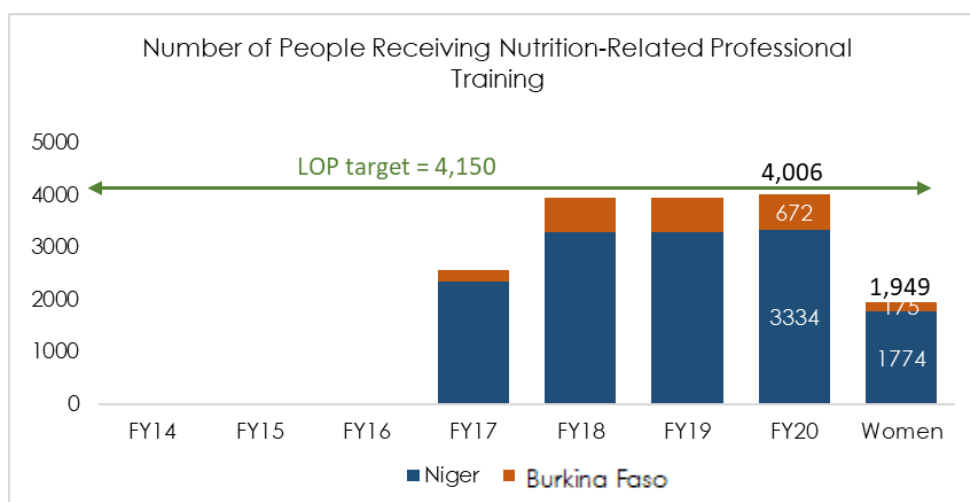
Training of men and women in practical and effective means of maintaining and improving child health and nutrition was an essential element in reaching this strategic objective. The target of 333,000 persons trained was exceeded with 334,747 persons actually trained. Women made up 90% of the trainees overall with 92% and 88% in Niger and Burkina Faso, respectively.



The number of individuals served by the improved sanitation reached 118,328 which is 88% of the target. Half of the individuals benefitting from improved sanitation are female.



REGIS-ER invested substantial efforts to improve child nutrition through improved availability, access, and utilization of nutritious food and through behavior change and communication campaigns. The target of 150,000 children (under 5) reached was met. Girls made up 51% of the 150,290 children reached.



The project targeted 4,150 persons to receive nutrition-related professional training. This would include both degree-level training and non-degree professional training. A total of 4,006 persons (97% of target) did get such training and 49% were women.

6.4 Cross-cutting Objectives on Gender and Youth

REGIS-ER fully embraced gender from its inception and its implementation explicitly and deliberately drew on both women and men, considering the cultural norms and practices but advocating for gender equity and social inclusion. Many of the activities, tools, management practices, technologies and messages engaged both sexes and sex-disaggregated data was provided where appropriate in the previous sections.

Women were involved in income-generating, asset-building, health and nutrition, and governance activities and their engagement was substantial as evidenced by the following figures:



Income-generating and Asset-building:

- Jobs created for women during life-of-project, in full-time equivalents, totaled 21,684 person-years which was 81% of the total jobs created.
- The number women trained in off-season skills was 94,446, or 84% of the total persons receiving such training.
- The number of women farmers applying improved technologies or management practices due to REGIS-ER reached 144,666 or 79% of farmers doing so.
- The number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices managed by women was 30,727 or 33% of hectares facilitated by the project.
- Seventy-one percent (71%) of persons trained by the project in agricultural productivity or food security were women. They numbered 165,340.
- Forty-three percent (43%) of enterprises/organizations assisted by REGIS-ER were women entrepreneurs or women's groups. These entrepreneurs/organizations represented 70% of those adopting improved technologies or management practices. In total, there were 5,276 such enterprises/organizations.
- REGIS-ER secured 659 hectares of land for women by long-term leases, loans and donations for bio-reclamation of degraded land and Oasis Garden activities.



Health and Nutrition:

- Half of the more than 118,000 people gaining access to improved sanitation and the more than 123,000 people gaining access to an improved water source were female. This means more than 59,000 women and girls with improved sanitation facilities and more than 61,000 women and girls with access to an improved water source.
- 76,713 girls under five years of age were reached by REGIS-ER-promoted nutrition programs.
- A total of 301,896 women were trained in child health and nutrition and 1,949 women received or are receiving nutrition-related professional training.



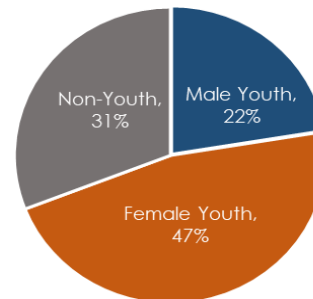
Governance:

- Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the community residents participating in NRM meetings were women.
- Fifty-four percent (54%) of the people that are using climate information to improve their resilience or reduce risk due to REGIS-ER are women and 148 women were trained in disaster preparedness.

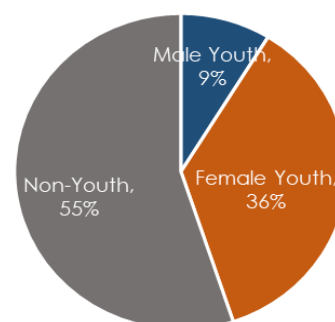
REGIS-ER engaged youth throughout its duration, but progressively provided greater and more deliberate focus on youth in the final years of the project. For example:

- REGIS-ER assisted CMs in focusing strategic actions on youth and in FY 2020 four of the eight communes adopted local youth employment strategies. CW Gs of all eight communes, however, implemented activities for youth.
- All 218 CBSPs established in FY2020 were new youth businesses.
- In FY2020, 98 of the 534 Local resource persons in Niger and 97 of the 474 in Burkina Faso were newly engaged youth.
- Local Institutions (CWG and CLD/CVD), under the leadership of the municipal council, have conducted a youth grant process. They identified, pre-selected, selected, trained and supervised young people with entrepreneurial projects/ideas. REGIS-ER awarded grants to 217 youth enterprises (both individuals and groups) – 118 in Niger and 99 in Burkina Faso – with a total value of \$286,233.

No. of Persons Trained in Burkina Faso in FY20



No. of Persons Trained in Niger in FY20



From 2019 REGIS-ER re-oriented its focus on youth. In FY20, 58% of the participants trained to apply improved technologies and management practices were 15-35 years of age. This varied from 45% in Niger to 69% in Burkina Faso. Young women represented 36% and 47% of all trainees in the two countries respectively.

Training was designed to transfer skills in conservation farming, farmer-managed natural regeneration, bioreclamation of degraded land, pastoral or agricultural soil and water conservation, soil fertility restoration, irrigation, gardening, crop genetics, pest/disease management, animal fattening, habbanaye, post-harvest loss reduction, storage and others.

The two main strategies adopted for engaging women and youth were 1) asset-building for economic empowerment and 2) strengthening social capital.

Asset-Building for Women and Youth

Securing Land Tenure

Sustaining Expanded Access to Land for Women, REGIS-ER's Partnership with the National Observatory for Land Tenure in Burkina Faso (ONF-BF)

Access to land for women is complex in Burkina Faso. Social and economic constraints limit their access, the legal land tenure system is arcane, and customary rights favor men. Often, sites for bio-reclamation are gifted, and women working these fields are at risk of losing the fruit of their labor once the land is fertile again. The partnership with the National Observatory for Land Tenure in Burkina Faso (ONF-BF) sought to secure land rights for women's groups by obtaining formal documents like Rural Land Tenure Deeds. With formal tenure, women are guaranteed the benefits from the lands they have restored and farm. They can also use the land as collateral to access loans to diversify their economic activities.

The project and partners trained commune government services, such as the rural land service and local land commissions in title-granting laws. The training specifically developed technical skills to implement a rural land tenure system. USAID|REGIS-ER trained more than 225 civil servants, elected leaders, and religious leaders in the tenure law, and 216 local land commissions have been established and are ready to facilitate the obtention of land tenure certificates. REGIS-ER and ONF-BF also trained commune teams to use a mobile digital mapping tool known as MAST (Mobile Application to Secure Tenure). Using a participatory approach, MAST enables land tenure services to collect and manage data about land resources, which is essential to guaranteeing rights.

With the governance capacity, survey tools and newly reclaimed lands, women's groups are building resilient, sustainable futures for their families and communities, founded on secure land rights.

Self-Managed Community Savings and Loan System (SECCA)

Women and youth made up the majority of the SECCA group participants. This activity has a threefold benefit of generating group solidarity (social capital), promoting a savings culture and financial literacy, and providing access to credit to start micro-enterprises.

SECCA groups are a powerful intervention for transforming lives: A Case Study from Burkina Faso

In Gongorgol, Sahel Region, the 30 member all women's savings group, "Kumtal Haaju," formed from neighbors who grow sesame and okra together on a bioreclamation of degraded land (BDL) site. After its second 8-month cycle, the group had saved 734,000 CFA (over \$1,300 USD). Thanks to member contributions as well as repaid interest from members taking out loans, the capital increased and each member received between 25,000 and 50,000 CFA during the final sharing exercise (up to \$100 USD, a large sum for small businesses). That opened a wealth of opportunities for its members. This group's SECCA activities brought change not only broadly for the village, but at the individual household level, increasing economic empowerment for women, community-based solidarity, and husband/wife relationships.

When the group started a new cycle in July 2017 (even earlier than most groups that start in September or October after the rainy season with more income), the savings share rose from 200 CFA to 500 CFA because the women had increased their savings capacities, while also strengthening the volume of their income-generating activities. They were most of all motivated by the savings shared at the end of the cycle, giving them the possibility to invest in livestock.



Banimaté Group, Tillabéri region (Imanan)

At just their eleventh meeting, most members have already taken out credit to grow, diversify or start up small income-generating activities (IGAs).



Mamou Amadou, member: "Before the group, I didn't do anything. Now, I buy peanuts and sugar and I make candy."

“We didn’t even ask ourselves the question whether we should go on. The SECCA is helpful, so everyone wants to stick to the system,” one member said. The group now hopes to be able to “hand this over to our daughters, because it has the power to improve [their] lives,” she added.

Habbanaye

The habbanaye activity targeted mainly women and in the final year of the project youth. This activity was effective in increasing incomes and assets of vulnerable households.³ In FY20 alone, 1,152 goats were placed in the eight communes of intervention with 288 beneficiaries, at least 90% of whom were under the age of 35. The activity has been overwhelmingly popular with communes as a means of building assets for women and youth.⁴

Habbanaye, A Sustainable Practice that Elevates Women and Youth in their Communities

Chosen by her community to be a beneficiary of habbanayé activities, Tissa received five goats during the 2015 rainy season. “I learned how to feed goats, produce mineral licks and grow enough livestock feed. I also learned to build sheds to protect the animals from the rain, and how to monitor the animals’ health,” she explained. After 14 months, Tissa’s goats had given birth to nine kids. She passed five of them to another woman chosen by the community. Tissa has taught her daughter-in-law everything she learned, and her own daughter recently started raising goats. “I hope my daughter will breed these goats and get the same benefits,” Tissa says. “She could break the circle of poverty and help somebody else afterwards.” Word is getting around and Tissa is now a local celebrity of sorts. “These activities brought me more self-confidence and social recognition in my family and my community,” she says.

Enterprise grants

During the cost-extension focus on PYD, REGIS-ER re-oriented its grant fund to promote youth enterprise development. The project helped 160 young people in Tillabéri prepare business plans through a partnership with Empow’Her Niger, a local business incubator. In collaboration with Empower’Her Niger, Tillabéri youth received entrepreneurship training, participated in idea workshops, and were coached on business plan development. In Burkina Faso, the project collaborated with the Regional Directorates of Youth in Est and Sahel

to provide entrepreneurship training and support to youth grant recipients. Overall, REGIS-ER issued 218 small business grants for youth across the zones of intervention in Niger and Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, 70% of youth grant recipients surveyed said that the grant enabled them to have year-round employment and 66% were happy to secure employment within their village.⁵

Stories from youth: how the grants have impacted their lives

Yahaya, a young restaurateur in Filingué, Niger was in the process of migrating to Libya when he stopped in Niamey with a friend and saw him spend 4,000 CFA a day on take out. This inspired Yahaya’s interest in catering and he immediately sought an internship to learn the trade. After almost five years, Yahaya returned to Filingué and started his own business outdoors with a pot, a stove and a bench for customers. It was while running this humble business that Yahaya heard of the REGIS-ER enterprise grants. He applied, and was selected, for a grant. The modest 1,305,000 CFA (approximately \$2,375) grant allowed Yahaya to buy a refrigerator and utensils, gain access to a venue and have some operating capital. Today, Yahaya’s business is flourishing. He has hired five employees and makes a daily turnover between 150,000 and 200,000 CFA per day (about \$270-\$360) compared with 60,000 to 80,000 CFA before the grant (about

³ REGIS-ER- Final Evaluation

⁴ REGIS-ER- Final Evaluation

⁵ REGIS-ER surveyed 94 youth grant recipients as part of follow-up monitoring.

\$109-\$145). Now that he is making a profit Yahaya has been able to invest in his business. He has bought an oven, a stove, built a shelter and a set up a terrace. He has diversified his menu and now receives orders from NGOs and government technical services. Recently during the elections, he received an order from the Independent National Electoral Commission for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for its members in Filingué. Yahaya's business status has also increased his social standing in his community and his family. He is consulted on family decisions and is a respected employer.

Judith in Manni, Burkina Faso had a small sewing business. She received a grant of three additional sewing machines and materials to construct a workshop. She has already expanded her business to employ five people, and has a steady stream of work orders, including special events such as weddings and baptisms. Her weekly revenue is around 35,000 CFA (\$64) during normal weekdays and higher over holiday seasons. Her business has given her a new lease on life and provides for herself and her family. Now, Judith can pay her rent, her employees and set aside savings. Judith has further aspirations for her business, and she plans to open a small shop selling sewing supplies.

Strengthening Social Capital for Women and Youth

Mother-to-mother Groups

Mother-to-mother is a platform to promote behavior change through mutual support within a group of women and the sharing of information and experiences under the leadership of an experienced mother leader in an atmosphere of confidence and mutual respect. Each group has 12 to 15 women divided into three overall categories: pregnant women, breastfeeding women with children age 0 to 6 months and breastfeeding women with children age 6 to 24 months. REGIS-ER established approximately 2,800 Mother-to-Mother groups (Niger: 1,600; Burkina Faso: 1,200), reaching 39,000 women (Niger: 26,000 and Burkina Faso: 13,000). In 2018, REGIS-ER developed a certification process for mothers to recognize all the efforts they made from pregnancy through their child's 2nd birthday. Thus, 460 mothers were certified as model mothers according to the criteria listed in the textbox below.



Lead Mother facilitating a mother-to-mother session.

Safe Spaces for Adolescent Girls

In Niger, REGIS-ER established 50 adolescent girl groups in two communes (Guidan Roumdji and Sabon Machi) of the Maradi region as part of the health and nutrition community groups. The adolescent girl groups reached 848 adolescent girls divided into two age groups (10 to 14 and 15 to 19), who dropped out of school and/or with no schooling, unmarried and with no child. Implementation of the model was facilitated by the Hausa tradition, of 'second mothers', counsellors of adolescents (*Ouwa rana*) that were

Model mothers' certification criteria:

1. For pregnant women: received four antenatal visits according to MOH schedule.
2. For mothers of 0-5-month-old children: delivery in a health facility, exclusive breastfeeding and up-to-date immunization.
3. For mothers of 6-23-month-old children: delivery in a health facility, consumption of enriched porridge and up-to-date immunization.

used as mentors. Each group was under the guidance of a mentor, a role model in the community. The mentors, trained by the project, facilitated sessions on health and nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, as well as life skills and basic financial education. The training curriculum was developed and adapted to the context, taking the needs of adolescent girls into account. The different modules made use of games, songs, dance, and skits to encourage participation and made it easier for girls to understand and relate to the messages. According to a rapid assessment led in June 2018, 175 adolescents reported that they had begun an open dialogue with adults, especially their mothers, aunts and sisters. 262 adolescents age 15-18 had a savings plan with an average savings of 4,744 CFA (8 USD).

Adolescent Girls' Learning and Support Group successfully reducing child marriage in Niger

Abou Nouhou, a 28-year-old mother of seven, is not only a successful saleswoman in Achalou (village of Sabon Machi commune in Maradi region, Niger), she also serves as a mentor for her village Adolescent Girls' Learning and Support Group (Groupe d'apprentissage et de soutien aux adolescentes / GASA in French). GASA discussions provide girls with the opportunity to meet with their mentor and peers to share their experiences. The meetings help them build self-confidence and strengthen a sense of solidarity. As a mentor to adolescent girls, Abou makes a difference in their future. She is proud of the changes she has seen. *"I helped stop four child marriages in my village thanks to the support of the local health agent, REGIS-ER project coaching, and, most of all, to the teenagers' trust and understanding,"* said Abou. Abou has developed a close and trusting relationship with the girls in her group. They constantly seek her advice, even outside of scheduled group discussions. *"I listen to them, and I provide them support."* Abou is enthusiastic: *"We beat the odds! I feel proud of myself and my community. As members of the GASA group, these girls gain self-assurance and leadership skills. They are way more integrated in community life now than before we had the groups. I am confident that they will be positive role models for girls and women in their community all through their lives."*

7 Lessons Learned

7.1 Adaptive Management Lessons

Technical integration

Initially the project components were translated into three project teams: 1) livelihoods, 2) governance and 3) health, nutrition and WASH. Each component lead was responsible for discrete indicators and targets within their technical purview, with little incentive to collaborate across technical components. In fact, this resulted in components identifying project participants for activities irrespective of their participation in other component areas. There were many missed opportunities for integrating activities to enhance resilience. After identifying this issue, the project underwent a restructuring into eight integrated programs:

Programs	Examples of Main Activities
Habbanaye plus Animal Feed and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Habbanaye (small ruminants, poultry exchange) - Animal fattening - Animal feed (producing feed for animals, fodder, fodder cropping, rehabilitating degraded pasturelands) - Animal health (Local Network for Animal Health, Local Private Veterinary Services, vaccination campaign)
Horticulture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irrigation - Home gardening

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market gardening - Nurseries
Access to Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA or SECCA) - Links to microfinance institutes - Warrantage (grain banks)
Resilient Production Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration - Bioreclamation of degraded land - Soil and Water Conservation/Soil Protection and Restoration - Strengthening producer organizations
Disaster Risk Management and Local Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land tenure, particularly for women - Local conventions for natural resource management and land management - Commune Resilience Plans
Water Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water source construction (wells and boreholes) - Water user associations and management plans - Irrigation systems
Hygiene and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CLTS - Hand washing stations - Social Behavior Change
Community-based Health and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mother-to-Mother support groups (MtMs) - Husband Schools - Learning and Support Groups for Female Adolescents (Safe Space groups) - Community-based Quality Improvement - Infant and maternal health and nutrition

Component leads started to work together more effectively in planning and executing their activities. Households received an integrated package of complementary activities from which they could pick and choose. Women engaged in Mother-to-Mother groups were also habbanaye beneficiaries and participated in market and home gardens, their husbands were involved in Husband Schools and conservation farming.

Multidisciplinary Field Agents

From the beginning of the project, field agents were expected to be multidisciplinary and versed in all technical aspects of the project. This was one way the project anticipated integration would naturally occur under the three component areas. Field agents received technical oversight from staff in all three component areas. This had two main drawbacks: 1) field staff were often overextended, trying to manage expectations, and at times competing priorities, of the three components; and 2) field staff tended to be strongest in a particular technical area and less well-suited to the other areas. This latter issue was particularly stark in health and nutrition activities where an agent who excelled in leading conservation farming activities was not necessarily the best choice for overseeing the adolescent girls' groups.

Focus on Local Institutions

In October 2017, REGIS-ER launched a sustainability strategy to capitalize on what emerged as two foundational project elements: capacity strengthening of local institutions and CBSPs. These two project focus areas fostered sustainability by ensuring the effective local ownership and management of resilience activities and built private sector networks for continued access to inputs and technical expertise.

While REGIS-ER's community engagement spurred the revitalization of the Burkinabe village development councils (CVD) and Nigerien local development committees (CLD), the project noticed that there were

limited avenues for civil society actors to formally engage with the commune government and vice versa. In response, REGIS-ER worked with community groups and commune government to form Citizen Working Groups that operate at the commune level to facilitate two-way communication between villages and municipal government. REGIS-ER formed 15 CWGs in Burkina Faso and Niger that encompass 1,200 villages. However, it takes several years to establish the sustainability of these local institutions. If the project had anticipated this gap in the governance system, then CWGs would have been established from year 1 in all active communes of implementation.

7.2 Lessons Learned by Program

Habbanaye

Habbanaye was an immensely popular activity and effective in increasing household incomes.⁶ It allowed households to accumulate assets without keeping cash in the homestead, but easily used in the time of a crisis. The success and sustainability of this program depended on the following practices:

1. The project needs to establish the ecosystem for habbanaye from the beginning. It is important to increase the availability of veterinary health products, to strengthen the skills of extension veterinary services, and to train recipients in crop production forage.
2. Integrating habbanaye with Mother-to-Mother groups increased women's economic empowerment, solidarity among women, and led directly to improved nutrition outcomes. Furthermore, it meant that habbanaye recipients did not have to wait a full reproduction cycle of 18-months before benefiting from REGIS-ER.
3. By transferring to local institutions, the skills and tools for distributing and transferring animals and tracking both, REGIS-ER ensured that communes will be able to continue this practice.

Challenges:

1. While poultry proved popular in Burkina Faso, it was less so in Niger. This intervention was dropped by the project in Niger. The project's initial hypothesis was that poultry would be better for the most vulnerable and goats for the less vulnerable. After monitoring the activity, the project noted that the opposite was true. Goats proved to be more robust than chickens and required less complementary inputs and veterinary care.
2. Growing insecurity poses a serious threat to this intervention as families flee their homes and lose their animal assets in the process. However, habbanaye could also be a means for recovering assets for internally displaced people or repatriated refugees.

Institutionalization of habbanaye was one of the project's biggest innovations and is integral for the activity's sustainability. The project started the activity with village habbanaye committees as a village-level activity, and then later brought in the Mayor's Office and Citizen Working Groups. In fact, starting with the commune institutions as leading this activity would have been a better starting point for sustainability and as a commune-level resilience tool to be directed to vulnerable communities in the event of a shock. The commune-level institutions also provide oversight and quality control of the village committees.

⁶ Cost-Benefit Analysis of USAID Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE). 2018. IDG: Learning, Evaluation and Analysis Project-II (LEAP-II), Contract Number: AID-I-12-00042/AID-OAA-TO-14-00046. Page 4.

Horticulture (gardening for sale and consumption to improve nutrition)

Oasis Gardens

Oasis Gardens or community gardens offer a prime example of REGIS-ER's integrated development approach. In REGIS-ER, Oasis Gardens created a nexus for women's empowerment, governance, and enhanced nutrition, incomes, and social capital. Originally envisioned as a 1.5-hectare plot catering to a group of 50 women, the initial investment required for an oasis garden was large (15 to 20 million CFA or about \$26,000-\$35,000). This investment is unlikely to be replicated through local resources and will require external grant funds. The Oasis Gardens also require substantial support for training in cultivation techniques, planning, and financial management to generate profits for 50 people. Alternatively, mini-Oasis Gardens (0.2 to 0.4 hectares) for 12-15 women would allow much more cost-effective infrastructure investments (mini-boreholes and low-cost solar pumps). REGIS-ER explored this concept in 2017 and it looked promising.

A holistic approach that integrates complementary interventions with Oasis Gardens fosters sustainability. Most of the garden members were active participants in other project interventions such as Mother-to-Mother groups, which reinforced nutrition knowledge and behavior change, and self-managed community savings and loan system (SECCA)⁷ which established a culture of saving and solidarity.

Access to Financial Services

REGIS-ER hired an independent consultant to conduct an evaluation of the VSLA activities in 2017. The results of the evaluation highlighted that the savings groups were a successful and essential activity, but hampered by some challenges:

1. Data collection was too burdensome for community finance agents and discouraged participation.
2. High illiteracy rates among group members place greater dependence on community finance agents.

The first challenge was easily resolved by streamlining the data collection requirements and forms. The second challenge required a multifaceted solution. First, the project needed to reinforce the business dynamics of the community finance agents so that they had an entrepreneurial mindset and that the groups they served understood the importance of a fee-for-service model. Secondly, the project promoted basic literacy and numeracy of VSLA members. Third, the project invested in easy-to-follow guides and videos to ensure the standardization of group training and capacity strengthening.

The consultant also noted, project adaptations to the VSLA model in Niger and Burkina Faso that could be replicable to others:

1. The standard calculation for savings groups is the "proportional method" whereby members who save more, get more in return. However, this method is complicated to calculate. REGIS-ER in Niger introduced simplified calculation method based on "equal contributions" calculations. Under this method, the savings and surplus interest and fees are divided into equal shares. This method is a compromise—members who save more do not receive more in return. Yet there is a major advantage in its simplicity.
2. In Burkina Faso, the program gave a new name to the surcharge that members pay on funds borrowed from the group when they pay it back. Instead of interest or administrative fees, terms

⁷ REGIS-ER's form of village savings and loan associations (VSLA)

used in both savings groups, some groups have adopted the term *frais de remerciement* which, loosely translated, is a “thank-you fee.” The surcharge was renamed to fit the cultural tradition in which it is normal to thank someone who lent you something by giving them a small gift. Similarly, the groups use the term “forgiveness fee” instead of “penalty” or “fine” when group rules are not followed.

Resilient Production Systems (rainfed agriculture, conservation farming, farmer-managed natural regeneration, bioreclamation of degraded land)

Compost Production

Composting is a key element of conservation farming. The project effectively promoted composting, thanks in part to its “compost operation”, a fun competition set up by REGIS-ER, which awarded prizes to producers who were most successful in adopting this best practice. The winners received practical prizes such as carts which made it easier for them to transport their compost from their homes or other sites to their fields. This approach was very successful. The demand for compost exceeds the supply. People in rural communities throughout the Sahel have multiple and competing uses for compost.

REGIS-ER noted a problem with traditional composting guidance which commonly promoted the use of compost pits lined with cement. Scaling up compost production is challenging. Firstly, not all producers have the means to scale up. Secondly, producers have competing priorities. Thirdly, waiting until the rainy season arrives results in poor quality compost. REGIS-ER addressed two critical aspects to improve expanded compost production - availability of water and biomass – by shifting the traditional composting period. During the hot dry season, water and biomass are scarce. REGIS-ER promoted compost production as soon as the rainy season ended to prepare ahead of the next rainy season. Composting takes two to three months. At the end of the rainy season, there is water, and there is also biomass (rainy season grasses, crop residues). Through compost competitions, radio programs, information dissemination and training through CBSPs, REGIS-ER effectively changed composting behavior. Notably, this practice also requires no investment because the compost can be made in heaps without the pit or wall construction.

Bio-reclamation of Degraded Land (BDL)

BDL is a great opportunity for women and youth to gain access to productive land. During the initial years of the project, the land tenure institutions were not in place for obtaining formal land tenure for BDL participants. Instead, the project focused on land leases. With the establishment of Rural Land Services in Burkina Faso (in partnership with the National Observatory for Land Tenure in Burkina Faso) and strengthening in Niger the Community and Commune Land Tenure Commissions (which are part of the institution known as the Rural Code), the project saw increased formal access to land by women’s groups. It is important for future activities to build on this progress to ensure women’s groups obtain permanent land tenure to their production sites.

Disaster Risk Management and Local Institutions

Local Conventions (integrated into Commune Resilience Plans)

Local conventions proved to be an important activity for commune-led natural resource management and conflict reduction. An important recommendation stated in an independent consultant evaluation, is to ensure that revenue generation potential matches local convention goals.⁸ Long-term sustainability is at risk due to lack of financing for the management of local conventions. Certain communes are currently

⁸ “Local Conventions in Niger and Burkina Faso – A Case Study”, by Brook Johnson, Ben Moussa Traoré, and Ibrahim Amani. October 2019. Page 35.

exploring the use of land commissions to carry out the management role at the village level. The advantage of using land tenure commissions is that they receive some revenue from their land title work, which might well be enough to compensate for the less-remunerated role of monitoring resource conflicts. However, once a commune decides to manage higher value forest, mineral, or animal resources then the local convention must implement local taxes to generate revenues to support the necessary management systems or risk failure.

Water Services

The project's approach to ensuring the sustainability of water services starts with an evaluation of the operating costs, repair costs, and pump replacement costs of a given borehole in a village as the basis of an operating statement [*compte d'exploitation*]. This operating statement motivates users to pay directly for the cost of the water services but must include measures to ensure the proper use of the funds that have been set aside for these services. The approach is innovative and allows for the self-management of the water points by the users in the village. The municipality's involvement is a prerequisite for the success of this approach.

Hygiene and Sanitation

Community-led Total Sanitation

CLTS was a challenging activity, particularly in Burkina Faso where the open-defecation free (ODF) certification requirements were substantially more onerous than in Niger. REGIS-ER supported 137 villages to obtain open-defecation free certification (104 in Niger and 33 in Burkina Faso). Four lessons learned from the project's implementation of CLTS were:

- 1) The use of Local resource persons in village sanitation committees is necessary for the effective implementation of CLTS. These people are available locally and will be able to continue this process at the end of the project.
- 2) Certification is a strong motivator. Villages that attained ODF status made efforts, often by mobilizing local resources, to obtain compliance of all households. Given that a governmental committee grants the certification, it can take time and sap village morale. This results in a return to open defecation. It is therefore important for the committee to proceed with certification to maintain and strengthen villagers' motivation.
- 3) The support of important traditional leaders for CLTS was instrumental in project success, notably in Zinder region, where the Sultan played an active role in motivating villages.
- 4) CLTS is a hard sell, which requires the strong commitment of a project's field staff. Their capacity to persuade people, especially leaders, to adopt behavior changes is critical.

Community Health and Nutrition

Community meals: Local initiatives carry within themselves the seeds of their sustainability

To promote food diversification, REGIS-ER used a community meal strategy whereby Mother-to-Mother group members were supported to organize community meals. During these meals, households were encouraged to use a variety of foods to prepare rich and diversified meals including different food groups. The community meal is intended for pregnant and lactating women and mothers of children under the age of two from Mother-to-Mother groups and is generally led by the mother leader of the Mother-to-Mother group. The community meals are held monthly. When the Mother-to-Mother approach started, the project offered a subsidy of up to 5,000 CFA (about \$9) to the group to cover the purchase of ingredients that were not always readily available in households (oil, sugar, meat, etc.). Some groups did

not need the subsidy and others only used a portion of it. For those who used the subsidy, it was gradually reduced, at first to 2,500 CFA (about \$4.50) then, as a group became established, to no subsidy. By 2018, none of the organized community meals were subsidized. The withdrawing of the meal subsidy was an important shift towards sustainability and local ownership.

With the increase awareness of their children's nutritional needs, mothers from the Mother-to-Mother groups started granaries on their own initiative to stock bulk food products (millet, cowpeas, peanuts, sesame etc.) to cover the lean period. The granaries made it possible to continue community meals during this difficult period without subsidies. As of December 2018, 116 villages had these granaries. The nutritional granaries initiative introduced by communities to sustain community meals during the lean season is a replicable model that could be expanded to other villages to sustain community meals and the group production of composite flour.



Community meal preparation in Zinder, Niger

Husband Schools

In FY16, the focus of the Husband School approach was redirected to align with the social learning model, which asserts that people are more apt to learn new behaviors by observing their peers. The Husband School is based on a model that encourages men to take part in actions that support the key health and nutrition actions promoted in Mother-to-Mother groups, which are usually performed solely by women. The first phase started with 10 small, doable actions. Men graduate once they are practicing at least eight of the 10 specified actions and were certified as model husbands. Certification as a model husband takes place at a community gathering where the model husbands can be role models and encourage other men to be more supportive for the health and nutrition of their families. Male involvement through the Husband School strategy contributed to shifting social norms in remote communities of Burkina Faso and Niger.

It is critical that local organizations and community groups are involved in the design of the approach for their community. Then, close monitoring and supervision are important to ensure providers and community groups understand approaches and are supported in their implementation. For example, the way the Husband Schools were initially designed in Burkina Faso did not work well and received poor community buy-in. But, once

The 10 small doable actions

1. Accompany his pregnant wife to the ANC visit.
2. Bring meat/fish kebabs to his pregnant wife.
3. Bring meat/fish kebabs to his breastfeeding wife.
4. Accompany his wife to the health center for family planning.
5. Accompany his wife to the health center in case of child illness.
6. Help his wife provide treatment to the child.
7. Attach the treated mosquito net and have his wife and child sleep under it.
8. Install a handwashing device with soap and ensure that all members of the household wash their hands at critical times.
9. Feed his child.
10. Participate in a session to prepare enriched porridge.

the project started working with communities to come up with something that would work through community dialogue, the approach was better adopted.

7.3 Youth

Positive Youth Development Integration

In the second half of 2019, REGIS-ER focused on incorporating a PYD approach. Staff were trained in PYD best practices and the remaining grant fund was used predominantly to support youth initiatives (enterprise development and habbanaye). Local institutions such as the CWGs were trained by project coaches in PYD. However, for a project to truly ensure adoption of a PYD approach this is best integrated earlier in a project, if not from the initial design phase. While PYD is an important and critical approach, one year of implementation was insufficient for the holistic support youth needed for their enterprise development. Despite this youth reported satisfaction with the level of support received.⁹ REGIS-ER also laid a foundation for RISE II and BRIDGE partners to build upon.

8 Best Practices, Innovations and Success Stories

Citizen Working Groups: Strengthening the System for Resilience

A citizen working group consists of representatives from CVDs or CLDs and other village groups, such as Mother-to-Mother groups, VSLAs, youth groups or farmers' associations and the private sector. A citizen working group is an inclusive, participatory platform that gives voice to citizens' interests, communicating needs and priorities. In collaboration with the municipal council and development partners, the citizen working group plans, builds awareness of, and monitors development activities. The CWGs have proven to be instrumental at closing the gap between villages, commune governments and NGO partners; reinforcing the system for resilience.



The Citizen Working Group in Action. When the first COVID-19 cases were detected in Niger in March 2020, the Tagazar citizen working group in Tillabéri Region of Niger stood out for its proactive engagement. Understanding the threat of the disease, the local citizen working group took the initiative to use its WhatsApp group, "*Groupe Tagazar Ma Zaada*," to raise awareness of the pandemic.

Noting the impact of the citizen working group's initiative, the prefect of the Department of Balleyara decided to use the WhatsApp group to relay government announcements and other important messages relating to the number of cases and measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. Messages shared by the Tagazar citizen working group WhatsApp group included communications from influential local leaders such as the President of the Tagazar Special Delegation and the president of the Municipal Youth Councils, a youth non-governmental organization, who shared dozens of awareness messages.

⁹ Project follow-up survey.

The Tagazar citizen working group chairman undertook awareness-raising sessions in six villages (Téguef, Sassaba, Gao Tawey, Tinkafa, Kogori Tondikiré and Kogori Bangoubi) with small groups of five CLD members (to respect social-distancing guidelines), who in turn continued to raise awareness in other villages in compliance with social distancing and safety requirements. The citizen working group pivoted from its regular development work to focus on COVID-19 precautions:

- The installation of hand washing stations, and
- The designation of a compliance officer to remind community members to observe the social distance of at least 2 meters and to wear face masks.

The response of the Tagazar citizen working group to COVID-19 demonstrates its integration and contribution to the local development system. Its reach expands beyond the initial project zones of intervention and it has grown into a trusted and leading local institution.

Commune Resilience Plans: Institutionalizing Commune Resilience

REGIS-ER facilitates a truly participative process for the development of Commune Resilience Plans (*Plan Communal pour la Promotion de la Résilience*). These plans detail the commune's strategy for resilience against food and nutrition insecurity, including the implementation, monitoring, partnerships and budgeting for these actions. At their final stage, the Commune Resilience Plans are integrated into the Commune Development Plans.

It is a multi-stakeholder process led by municipal councils that engages civil society and citizens. By building the capacity of local institutions in advocacy and coordinated action, REGIS-ER has encouraged communes to source and negotiate additional resources to further their resilience goals. These strategies entail incorporating resilience activities into commune budgets, negotiating with development partners to support commune-led initiatives, and generating revenue from the community for specific development goals.

The involvement of local actors made it possible to identify useful actions for the communities; it is not the project that decided what will be done; we ourselves said what we can and want to do, and how.

**Mayor of Seytenga, Sahel region,
Burkina Faso**

"As the saying goes, "You can't collect flour with only one finger". That's why we will involve all stakeholders of the commune to achieve our mission."

**Barsalogho Citizen Working Group,
Centre-Nord Region, Burkina Faso**

The System in Action: Successful Transition of the Habbanaye Activity to Local Institutions

Habbanaye (small ruminant asset transfer) proved to be a popular and successful activity that communes wanted to continue and expand. A 2018 Cost-Benefit Analysis sponsored by USAID confirmed that "the Habbanaye intervention when coupled with the animal husbandry training is an efficient way to assist the most vulnerable households."¹⁰ REGIS-ER developed simplified tracking and monitoring tools for the municipal councils and CWGs and then coached them on the management of the habbanaye activity, gradually reducing the project role as direct implementers. Municipal councils assigned habbanaye focal points to monitor and report on the activity and to ensure the animals are vaccinated and connected to

¹⁰ Cost-Benefit Analysis of USAID Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE). 2018. IDG: Learning, Evaluation and Analysis Project-II (LEAP-II), Contract Number: AID-I-12-00042/AID-OAA-TO-14-00046. Page 8.

veterinary services during transfer. They also took over responsibility for funding the expansion of the initiative.

In Sebba (Sahel Region, Burkina Faso), the municipal council convinced the NGO *Humanité et Inclusion* to support their habbanaye operation for the benefit of all 18 villages and the 5 districts of Sebba town. The Sebba Mayor said of the experience: *"As mayor, I personally saw evidence that habbanaye produced successful results in our commune. We, the municipal council, want to sustain and scale-up this activity which has been properly managed by local institutions and the Citizen Working Group. We contacted the RESA project and presented the municipal council's proposition, explaining the merits of habbanaye and informing them that we were ready to support the communities in implementation. We also emphasized that this would create real happiness in the communities as they are quite familiar with and appreciate habbanaye, which they have already conducted with USAID | REGIS-ER."*

Local Conventions: Community-Driven Land Use Planning

As part of the project's governance and natural resources management activities, REGIS-ER drafted 19 local conventions covering communes totalling over 27,500 km² – an area the size of the state of Massachusetts. Local conventions are community-developed natural resources management plans that promote equitable and sustainable management of resources, improve soil fertility and reduce conflicts between user groups in the communes that have adopted them. The natural resources that fall within the purview of the plans include farmland, pastures, water resources such as ponds, and woodland including non-timber products. The overall goal of the local convention is to ensure the conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources of a rural community in order to satisfy growing demands, while maintaining productivity, and ecological and social well-being. The local convention has five specific objectives:

"Conflicts related to the use of water points like ponds have decreased. From the harvest period (Oct-Nov 2016) to April 2017, no such conflict was reported in the commune. We are also proud because people respect grazing area limits. Farms no longer intermingle with pasture areas and livestock corridors. Droum commune residents insistently request the marking of livestock corridors because they understand that it is effective in preventing conflict between farmers and herders and significantly improves the situation of livestock. We truly thank God for all this progress."

Maoudé Dan Soufoua, Permanent Secretary of Droum's Land Commission

- Regulate in a consensual manner access to and use of a commune's natural resources.
- Include citizens in the sustainable management of their own natural resources.
- Ensure that all citizens can access the natural resources they need to meet their needs without compromising the needs of others or the long-term viability of the environment.
- Prevent conflict and reduce the degradation of natural resources.
- Promote good governance (transparency and accountability).

Local conventions exemplify REGIS-ER's multi-stakeholder systems approach whereby all system actors are brought together around a shared vision. Unlike top-down natural resource management plans, local conventions are a collective effort. As a result, local conventions do not just sit in a drawer gathering dust, they are adopted and championed in the community.

Community-based Solution Providers: building out a local private sector network

The CBSP approach developed by NCBA CLUSA is a variation of a market-based, local service provider. A CBSP is an individual entrepreneur based in the community who is designated and trusted by the community to facilitate access to useful products, services and information and find solutions to problems communities face. In contrast with other market-based service provision approaches which are sector oriented, employing specialized providers, the CBSP approach has a broad focus, responding to demand and looking for opportunities to address the needs of their communities.

At the root of the CBSP approach is the recognition that communities best know their own needs and should be empowered to take charge of their own socio-economic development. This philosophy identifies the critical role of client-oriented, community-based entrepreneurs who serve as change agents by providing market-based solutions to development challenges. CBSPs serve as a bridge between development agencies or private enterprises and rural communities by facilitating access to products, services and information and introducing innovations, while at the same time generating a livelihood for themselves. The CBSP approach is based on five principles:

1. *Entrepreneurial*: CBSPs realize financial gain from their activities.
2. *Different types of providers*: To respond to community demand for different types of products and services, one or more different types of CBSPs may operate in the same community.
3. *Community engagement and linkages*: Local institutions work with and support CBSPs and community involvement ensures that providers are accepted and trusted by their communities.
4. *Strong support from partners and collaborators*: CBSPs work with and are supported by a range of organizations including private firms (e.g. agricultural input companies, agricultural machinery companies), agricultural research and advisory (extension) agencies, government sectoral agencies, producer organizations and NGOs. Collaborators provide technical and business training and serve as a source of innovation which is critical for the sustainability of the approach.
5. *Complement existing service providers*: CBSPs work alongside, but do not substitute for public and private sector service providers such as extension/rural advisory services and NGOs.

CBSPs became a key element of the project's sustainability strategy after demonstrating the transformational impact they brought both for the individual CBSPs themselves as well as the communities they serve. In the last few years of the project, promising CBSPs emerged as highly-successful entrepreneurs. These promising CBSPs became central agents who coordinated efforts with other CBSPs to aggregate services to access larger contracts and to purchase inputs in bulk. This evolution strengthened the CBSP network and its ability to meet the growing demand for their services. Several CBSP networks in Burkina Faso have formally registered as associations and cooperatives and are generating local off-farm employment.

Gender Integration: Empowering Women is a Driver of Resilience

REGIS-ER emphasized women's inclusion in all activities. This was a purposeful and conscious decision based on the important role that women play in their family's health and nutrition. To elevate women's voice and agency, the project targeted their economic and social standing within their communities, ensuring that community leaders and their husbands supported this transformation. REGIS-ER's locally led systems approach ensured that the whole community was engaged in resilience and thus created an enabling environment for women to succeed.

Mother-to-Mother groups were the primary village-level platform for reaching women in the community. Unlike care groups, the Mother-to-Mother groups went beyond child health. While the groups addressed nutrition and sanitation behaviors, they also integrated asset building and income generating through participation in VSLAs, habbanaye and market gardens. Lead mothers of Mother-to-Mother groups and women CBSPs are regarded as prominent voices in their communities and participate in local decision-making through the CVDs or CLDs and CWGs. Men participated in Husband Schools to elevate their role in the care of their children and pregnant or breastfeeding wives.

A Mother's Resolve: The Unbreakable Alimata Korogo

A 40 year old mother of six, Alimata Korogo lived until 2019 in her native village of Kegléssé (Barsalogho Commune, Burkina Faso), where she became a model of enhanced resilience thanks to her ingenuity and determination, and to support from USAID | REGIS-ER. Prior to REGIS-ER, Alimata and her family struggled with chronic food insecurity, poor health and debt. In 2014, Alimata participated in several trainings from REGIS-ER. With the skills and knowledge she gained, Alimata became a community leader, a successful producer and entrepreneur. Her life was transformed from crushing

The CBSP Network in Manni

The CBSP network in Manni (Burkina Faso) joined forces to achieve economies of scale in their individual activities, such as by collaborating to place bulk orders for agricultural inputs. In 2020, the network joined together to order 2.5 tonnes of fertilizer for market gardening. The CBSP network also cooperated in the acquisition of 150 tonnes of livestock feed valued at \$29,000. These inputs are then sold in communities in small doses that are more affordable, particularly among women. The network is now mobilizing a working capital fund for making ongoing bulk orders of inputs, increasing level of sophistication of their operation, as well as its effectiveness.



challenges to opportunities to generate income for her family.

Then in 2019, the growing insecurity in the Sahel decimated Alimata's home area. Deadly attacks by unidentified armed groups in a nearby village caused many residents of Kegléssé, including her family, to flee. Alimata sought refuge in the town of Barsalogho, making her family IDPs.

Having left everything behind, Alimata drew on her resourcefulness and quickly adapted to her new life as an IDP. "Upon arrival in Barsalogho, I spent most of my time with the REGIS-ER coaches who provided us much needed moral support." Once again Alimata relied on the training, coaching, savings and ingenuity to restart her business activities.

The new challenges as an IDP did not impede Alimata's determination to succeed. Alimata says, "I think I have remained resilient because my motivation and adaptation persist unaltered despite the deterioration of our situation. I quickly got back to work despite our internally displaced situation, and I embraced other activities to improve my well-being and contribute to that of the community." Alimata continues to nurture her entrepreneurial spirit and generously shares her business talent with local residents, despite being an IDP. She is living proof of the REGIS Enhanced Resilience.¹¹

Bio-reclamation of degraded lands: Koudouma Women's Association

With support from REGIS-ER, 50 women from Koudouma (Droum Commune, Niger) established a garden on a degraded site identified for bio-reclamation. The land had been over-exploited, stripped of its vegetative cover and biomass, and finally abandoned. Using water retention and soil restoration techniques, the land was brought back into cultivation.

The group was formed by a local facilitator who trained women in horticulture techniques. For their effort at restoring the soil fertility, and to guarantee that they reap the benefits over the long term, the group obtained title to the land from the local land commission. Members of the group now grow lettuce, cabbage and moringa during the dry season, and okra during the rainy season. In 2019, the group's revenue was \$13,560. With a 50% reinvestment, each woman earned approximately \$135 that year—a enormous contribution to the household economy in one of the poorest countries in the world. The oasis garden provides more stable income than cutting hay and is more sustainable than collecting firewood in the rapidly dwindling woodlands.



Rabi Ousmane is one of many women whose household income has increased significantly through Oasis Gardening. Rabi grows a variety of crops in the Iguéfane Oasis Garden, such as moringa and leafy vegetables. She uses the profits from the sale of these crops to provide more diverse nutritious food to her family. Rabi used to weave *tangaras*, or straw mats, to sell in the market but this earned her very little income. She often struggled to meet the needs of her family. "Now we can take care of our own needs and we can even take care of other's needs," Rabi said. In addition to meeting the needs of her family, Rabi uses her income to reinvest in the garden to keep production going.

¹¹ <https://medium.com/usaaid-2030/the-unbreakable-alimata-korogo-495e38935ad6>

Conservation Farming: Climate-Smart Food Production at Scale

The combination of conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration is one of REGIS-ER's most successful interventions. By the project's end, over 92,000 hectares of land was under improved management and technologies – 112% of the project's target.

Conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration employs three main methods:

1. Low tillage (leaving soil undisturbed so it does not lose its structure and dry out)
2. Covering the soil with mulch and using compost to retain water and combat erosion and transpiration, and
3. Rotating crops to build and maintain the nutrients in the soil.

REGIS-ER also promoted the systematic protection of native tree species, which are best adapted to the environment and provide products such as wood, fodder or fruit, reduce erosion and enhance soil fertility. Farmers were shown soil and water conservation techniques, such as half-moon water catchment basins or contour bunds, to reclaim degraded land. Together, the package of conservation farming, soil improvement, increased water infiltration and increased tree cover has enabled families to increase yields, feed themselves and sell surpluses. Meeting immediate needs, through reliable harvests, and ensuring long-term environmental sustainability are the hallmarks of Resilience Enhanced. The farming techniques were disseminated through demonstration fields, farmer visits and broadcasts on local radio. Coaching by lead farmers enabled quick scale up and affordable access to inputs through the CBSP network ensured sustainability. Conservation farming was an early success of REGIS-ER. It spread rapidly, including spontaneous adoption by farmers outside the REGIS-ER intervention zone, and with training from the REGIS-ER team, it was adopted and disseminated by other RISE implementing partners.

9 Recommendations

1. Integrated programming is key to household resilience: Household resilience requires intentional integration of services across livelihoods, health nutrition and WASH. Having complementary community entry points for interventions, such as Mother-to-Mother groups, habbanaye, and Husband Schools, maximize household exposure to resilience activities and reinforce behavior change. This is one benefit from having a single resilience project rather than multiple sector-specific projects. Deliberate and consistent coordination is needed across sectors.

2. Mapping and understanding the local governance system at the start of a project would facilitate the early adoption of remedial strategies like Citizen Working Groups and the immediate substantive involvement of local government in the project: REGIS-ER identified a critical gap in local governance structures. After REGIS-ER's community engagement spurred the revitalization of the Burkinabe village development councils (CVD) and Nigerien local development committees (CLD), the project noticed that there were limited avenues for civil society actors to formally engage with the commune government and vice versa. In response, REGIS-ER worked with community groups and commune government to form CWGs that operate at the commune level to facilitate two-way communication between villages and municipal government. The CWGs have been critical development partners in the 15 communes where they were established.

3. Local capacity strengthening ensures sustainability: Projects should identify the core local institutions and resource persons who will continue implementation early in the project cycle and start

institutionalizing activities locally as soon as possible. Resilience is not an outcome, but an essential set of capacities that enables outcomes to be achieved and maintained in the face of compound and complex risks. Over the course of the project, these capacities need to be monitored and maintained through refresher trainings. REGIS-ER's sustainability strategy involving the municipal councils, citizen working groups, village development councils (CVD in Burkina Faso) or Local Development Committees (CLD in Niger) would have benefited from earlier application.

4. There is tremendous opportunity to build on the foundations laid by REGIS-ER with local institutions:

The established CWGs and the revitalized CVDs and CLDs are critical partners in locally led development and as such should be engaged as key stakeholders in other USAID activities.

5. A three-year and ten-year evaluation after REGIS-ER's close will provide a needed evidence-base for the project's sustainability strategy: An impact evaluation three years after REGIS-ER's close will fall within the RISE II period of performance and therefore can be used to inform RISE II as well as future USAID investments. An evaluation ten years after REGIS-ER's close would provide a fuller picture of the long-term impact on household resilience.

Annex 1: Table on Indicators of Project Performance¹²

Performance Indicators	Disaggregation	LOP Performance Report		
		LOP Target	Cumulative Achieved Inception to Date	Percent Achievement of LOP Target
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Increased and Sustainable Economic Well-Being				
Intermediate Result 1.1: Diversified Economic Opportunities				
1.1.1. Percentage of households reporting increase in income from off-farm (out of rainfed agriculture) economic opportunities	Total	92%	92%	100%
	Niger	92%	90%	98%
	Burkina	92%	94%	102%
1.1.2. Number of full-time equivalent jobs created with USG assistance (C)	Total	5,250	5,747	109%
	Niger	4,400	4,836	110%
	Burkina	850	911	107%
1.1.3. Number of individuals trained in skills relevant for off-season labor (NC)	Total	111,400	124,420	112%
	Niger	75,400	81,548	108%
	Burkina	36,000	42,872	119%
Intermediate Result 1.2. Production and Marketing Scale up				
1.2.1. Number of farmers who have applied improved technologies or management practices (C)	Total	180,000	181,976	101%
	Niger	105,000	109,647	104%
	Burkina	75,000	72,329	96%
EG.3.2-24 Number of persons in the agricultural system who have applied improved technologies or management practices with USG assistance.	Total	180,000	181,976	101%
	Niger	105,000	109,647	104%
	Burkina	75,000	72,329	96%
1.2.2. Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance (C)	Total	82,530	92,246	112%
	Niger	34,329	35,830	104%
	Burkina	48,201	56,416	117%
EG.3.2-25 Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices with USG assistance.	Total	82,530	92,246	112%
	Niger	34,329	35,830	104%
	Burkina	48,201	56,416	117%
1.2.2.bis.Hectares under new or improved/rehabilitated irrigation or drainage services as a result of USG assistance (C)	Total	583	590	101%
	Niger	480	489	102%
	Burkina	103	101	98%
	Total	228,000	227,234	100%

¹² Data tables have been uploaded to the [Development Data Library \(DDL\)](#)

1.2.3. Number of individuals who have received USG-supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training (NC)	Niger	115,000	116,414	101%
	Burkina	113,000	110,820	98%
EG3.2 (1.2.3.bis.) Number of persons participating in the USG's food security program. (NC)	Total	1,747,145	1,981,133	113%
	Niger	1,114,911	1,340,037	120%
	Burkina	632,234	641,096	101%
1.2.4. Number of for-profit private enterprises, producer organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG food security-related organizational development assistance during the reporting year (C)	Total	11,515	12,269	107%
	Niger	5,218	5,508	106%
	Burkina	6,297	6,761	107%
1.2.5. Number of for-profit private enterprises, producer organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations and CBOs that applied improved organization-level technologies or management practices with USG assistance (C)	Total	7,534	7,518	100%
	Niger	3,645	3,516	96%
	Burkina	3,889	4,002	103%
1.2.6. Number of firms/enterprises/CBSPs involved in service provision and/or agricultural product transformation relating to food security now operating more profitably (at or above cost) (NC)	Total (CBSP)	672	1,091	89%
	Niger	766	698	89%
	Burkina	466	393	89%
1.2.7. Number of households benefiting directly from USG assistance under Feed the Future (C)	Total	269,093	319,753	119%
	Niger	161,245	205,426	127%
	Burkina	107,848	114,327	106%
Intermediate Result 1.3: Improved access to financial services				
1.3.1 Value of agricultural and rural loans as a result of USG assistance (in \$USD) (NC)	Total	2,255,141	2,328,780	103%
	Niger	1,437,216	1,457,898	101%
	Burkina	817,925	870,883	106%
EG.3.2-27. Value of agricultural financing attributed to USG assistance (in \$USD) (NC)	Total	-	2,381,119	
	Niger		1,510,237	
	Burkina		870,882	
1.3.1. bis Value of SECCA loans (in \$USD) (NC)	Total	747,223	808,723	108%
	Niger	486,296	542,167	111%
	Burkina	260,927	266,556	102%
	Total	1,350	1,312	97%
	Niger	740	768	104%

1.3.3. Number of active informal savings and loan groups strengthened (C)	Burkina	610	544	89%
1.3.4. Value of savings accumulated by project beneficiaries (in USD) (NC)	Total	2,303,666	2,441,752	106%
	Niger	1,337,351	1,482,119	111%
	Burkina	966,315	959,633	99%
1.3.5. Number of micro, small, and medium enterprises, including farmers, receiving agricultural-related credit as a result of USG assistance (NC)	Total	1,570	1,693	108%
	Niger	1,140	1,307	115%
	Burkina	430	386	90%
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthened Governance and Institutions				
2.A. Number of community-level plans implemented with NRM, conflict management or DRM components (C)	Total	160	161	101%
	Niger	90	90	100%
	Burkina	70	71	101%
2.B. Number of people using climate information or implementing risk-reducing actions to improve resilience to climate change as supported by USG assistance (C)	Total	117,000	116,691	100%
	Niger	52,000	52,445	101%
	Burkina	65,000	64,246	99%
Intermediate Result 2.1: Strengthened natural resource management				
2.1.1. Number of institutions, local structures set up or strengthened thank to the USG assistance (NC)	Total	1,292	1,180	91%
	Niger	709	678	96%
	Burkina	583	502	86%
2.1.2. Number of community residents participating in NRM meetings (NC)	Total	5,350	5,210	97%
	Niger	3,850	3,717	97%
	Burkina	1,500	1,493	100%
2.1.3. Number of hectares under natural resource management plans (CL) (C)	Total	2,350,500	2,327,082	99%
	Niger	663,500	1,466,047	221%
	Burkina	1,687,000	861,035	51%
Intermediate Result 2.2: Strengthened disaster risk management				
2.2.1. Number of people trained in disaster preparedness as a result of USG assistance (NC)	Total	1,100	921	84%
	Niger	630	565	90%
	Burkina	470	356	76%
2.2.2. Number of communities with disaster early warning and response systems working effectively as a result of USG assistance(C)	Total	21	16	76%
	Niger	21	16	76%
	Burkina	0	0	0%
Intermediate Result 2.3: Strengthened Conflict Management				
2.3.1. Number of conflict prevention systems, conflict assessments, or response mechanisms supported by USG assistance (C)	Total	700	704	96%
	Niger	210	199	95%
	Burkina	490	505	103%
Intermediate Result 2.4: Strengthened government and regional capacity and coordination				

2.4.1. Number of local conventions integrated into PDC/PCD (C)	Total	8	9	113%
	Niger	4	5	125%
	Burkina	4	4	100%
4D. Number of hectares of farmland registered in the name of women (C)	Total	630	677	105%
	Niger	470	497	102%
	Burkina	160	180	112%
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Improved health and nutritional status				
Intermediate Result 3.1: Increased access to potable water				
3.1.1.a Number of water points built or repaired through REGIS-ER (C)	Total	440	461	105%
	Niger	175	198	113%
	Burkina	265	263	99%
3.1.1.b Number of individuals with access to an improved potable water source (C)	Total	123,250	123,350	100%
	Niger	43,750	44,750	102%
	Burkina	79,500	78,600	99%
3.1.3 a Number of improved sanitation facilities built or repaired thanks to USG assistance through REGIS-ER (C)	Total	18,800	18,955	99%
	Niger	15,800	15,821	100%
	Burkina	3,000	3,134	104%
3.1.3.b Number of individuals with access to an improved sanitation facility thanks to USG assistance(C)	Total	134,200	118,328	88%
	Niger	108,500	96,390	89%
	Burkina	25,700	21,938	85%
3.1.3 c. Number of ODF villages as a result of USG assistance through REGIS-ER (NC)	Total	163	137	84%
	Niger	125	104	83%
	Burkina	38	33	87%
Intermediate Result 3.2: Improved Health and Nutrition Practices				
3.2.2. Number of children under five reached by nutrition programs (C)	Total	150,000	150,290	100%
	Niger	96,000	97,945	102%
	Burkina	54,000	52,345	97%
3.2.2.bis Number of children under two (0-23 months) reached with community-level nutrition interventions through USG-supported programs (C)	Total	44,300	40,256	91%
	Niger	18,800	19,123	102%
	Burkina	25,500	21,133	83%
3.2.2.a Number of pregnant women reached with nutrition-specific interventions through USG-supported programs (NC)	Total	17,000	19,448	114%
	Niger	11,300	14,175	125%
	Burkina	5,700	5,273	93%
3.2.4. Number of people trained in child health and nutrition thanks to USG through REGIS-ER (NC)	Total	333,000	334,747	101%
	Niger	175,000	177,407	101%
	Burkina	158,000	157,340	100%
3.2.4.bis HL.9-4 Number of individuals receiving nutrition-related professional training through USG-supported programs (NC)	Total	4,150	4,006	97%
	Niger	3,450	3,334	97%
	Burkina	700	672	96%

Annex 2: Success Stories

Success stories prepared by REGIS-ER during its implementation are listed below.

	Success Story Title, Place	Major Themes	Year	Distribution
1	Women Respond to Climate Change by Reclaiming Degraded Lands Maradi region, Niger	BDL, nutrition, gender	2014	FY14 Annual Report
2	Conservation Farming, an Innovative Technology Tillabery region, Niger	Conservation agriculture	2014	FY14 Annual Report
3	A Self-motivated Farmer becomes a Conservation Farming Spokesperson Bouroum, Centre-Nord region, Burkina Faso	Conservation agriculture	2015	FY15 Q2 Report
4	CF: Exceptional Production with a Revolutionary Technology Zinder region, Niger	Conservation agriculture	2015	FY15 Annual Report
5	These West African Women Found Prosperity in a Garden Oasis Iguéfane, Tillabery region, Niger	Market gardening, oasis garden, gender	2015	Frontlines (November/December 2015 issue)
6	Farmer Success Spreads with Adoption of Conservation techniques in Burkina Faso Djora, Est region, Burkina Faso	Conservation agriculture	2016	Feed the Future March 2016 newsletter
7	Any father needs to see his family in good health conditions. Men's involvement, a local solution to improve mother and child health and nutrition Farié Hausa, Tillabery region, Niger	Gender, nutrition	2016	"Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Global Learning & Evidence Exchange" event in Ghana, January 2016
8	Resilience starts at birth; Mothers support each other to raise healthy children in Niger Gourbébé, Zinder region, Niger	Exclusive maternal breastfeeding, nutrition	2016	NCBA CLUSA website
9	Home-made fortified infant flour: a tangible success, for the long term Kabeika, Sahel region, Burkina Faso	Nutrition	2016	"Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Global Learning & Evidence Exchange" event in Ghana, January 2016
10	In Niger, NCBA CLUSA-supported home gardens combat malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies Tigoderet, Tillabery region, Niger	Home gardens, savings and loans, nutrition	2016	NCBA CLUSA website

11	In rural Niger, empowering women through livestock vaccination programs Kaba Dan Koraou, Tillabery region, Niger	Vaccination, savings and loans, gender	2016	NCBA CLUSA website
12	In her own words: Maïmouna Amadani tells the story of her journey to financial independence Tagantassou, Tillabery region, Niger	Vaccination, savings and loans, gender	2016	NCBA CLUSA website
13	An agricultural challenge becomes an opportunity for women in Niger Tilla, Zinder region, Niger	BDL, gender	2016	NCBA CLUSA website
14	Keeping Grain Silos Full into the Lean Season Kourmou, Tillabery region, Niger	Conservation agriculture	2016	October 2016 RISE Newsletter
15	Paying it forward - the habbanaye way Margou, Est region, Burkina Faso	Livestock, credit, gender	2016	NCBA CLUSA website
16	From donuts to salt blocks, how one woman built a resilient business in Niger Guidan Roumdji, Maradi region, Niger	Livestock, CBSPs, Gender, Credit	2017	NCBA CLUSA website
17	How Tilla, Niger, became the “Cleanliness Capital” Tilla, Zinder region, Niger	Hygiene, Sanitation, Leadership	2017	NCBA CLUSA website
18	Farmers experience surge in food security, resilience after adopting conservation farming Bombonyenga, Est region, BF	Conservation farming	2017	NCBA CLUSA website
19	It takes a village: How a mothers' group in Niger is transforming early childhood nutrition Bourdounga, Tillabery region, Niger	Nutrition, Health, Gender	2017	NCBA CLUSA website
20	Professionalizing producer group reaps big rewards for onion farmers in Sahel Seytenga, Sahel region, Burkina Faso	Horticulture	2017	NCBA CLUSA website Used by the Agribusiness Market Ecosystem
21	Surviving in the Sahel, These Women Give New Meaning to the Term ‘Tough Girls’ Manni, Est region, Burkina Faso	Habbanaye, Gender, Credit, Conservation farming	2017	Frontlines USAID's Medium page State department blog:
22	Enriched flour for porridge: A win-win for children's health and women's financial progress Angoual Manda, Zinder region, Niger	Nutrition, health, entrepreneurship	2017	FY17 Annual Report
23	In Woulmassoutou, villagers come together to promote handwashing Sampelga, Sahel region, Burkina Faso	Hygiene, Sanitation, Quality Improvement (QI)	2017	URC website

24	Kids take health in their own hands Bandé, Zinder region, Niger	Hygiene, Sanitation, Gender, Leadership	2018	NCBA CLUSA website
25	A community savings and loan group builds resilience in Burkina Faso Sebba, Sahel region, Burkina Faso	Livestock production, Gender, Credit	2018	NCBA CLUSA website
26	Reducing child marriages: Success through dialogue and community video Tilla, Zinder region, Niger	GASA, Community Video, Leadership, Early Marriage	2018	NCBA CLUSA website URC website
27	Developing a supply chain of solar pumping technologies for small-scale producers in Burkina Faso Dori, Fada, and Sahel regions, BF	Supply Chain, Horticulture, Irrigation	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story was shared by Centre Sainte Famille to celebrate the new year (January 2018, Ouagadougou) • Shared with USAID Burkina Faso
28	Ahmed Goumar proves that entrepreneurship in Niger can succeed Imanan, Tillabéri Region, Niger	Horticulture, Entrepreneurship	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared with REGIS-AG.
29	Water users' association ensure sustainability of water services in Bombonyenga village Manni, Fada Region, Burkina Faso	Water Services, Governance	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by the National Forum on Water and Sanitation (January 2018, Ouagadougou) and Water Festival (March 2018, Fada N'Gourma)
30	Proud of their local convention, villagers in Droum commune Niger modified their natural resources management practices Droum, Zinder region, Niger	Local Convention, NRM, Commune Ownership	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used in the Program Highlight on local conventions
31	With its local convention, the Bouroum commune is better equipped to manage its natural resources and mitigate conflicts Bouroum, Kaya region, Burkina Faso	Local Convention, NRM, Commune Ownership	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used in the Program Highlight on local conventions
32	How collaboration is building resilience in West Africa All regions, Niger and Burkina Faso	RISE, Collaboration, REGIS-AG, Livestock, Warrantage	2018	NCBA CLUSA website
33	Through citizen engagement, community groups build village health center in Niger Bandé, Zinder region, Niger	Health, Collaboration between communities and local institutions, Advocacy	2018	NCBA CLUSA website URC website
34	Komboissikpéri village in Eastern Burkina Faso put a stop to open defecation on its own initiative	Hygiene & sanitation	2019	URC Website (in French)

	Manni, Est Region, Burkina Faso			
35	Women reap the benefits of land tenure in Burkina Faso and Niger Burkina Faso, Centre-Nord and Sahel regions	Land tenure	2019	NCBA CLUSA website
36	A Mother's Journey to Self-Reliance Barsalogho, Centre-Nord region, Burkina Faso	CF, Market gardening	2019	NCBA CLUSA website Feed the Future
37	Sebba commune has its say with partners on resilience Sebba, Sahel Region, Burkina Faso	Governance, habbanaye	2020	NCBA CLUSA website
38	Sakoira, the first commune to incorporate the PCPR into its PDC: the mayor reflects Sakoira, Tillabery region, Niger	Commune resilience plans, local institutions	2020	FY20 Q1 report
39	The commune of Seytenga, champion in conflict management in Sahel Region Seytenga, Sahel region, Burkina Faso	Land-related conflict management	2020	FY20 Q2 report
40	REGIS-ER's upcoming closeout prompts youth in Tondikandia Commune to take on a leadership role to sustain project activities Tondikandia, Tillabery region, Niger	Youth participation and advocacy	2020	FY20 Annual Report

Annex 3: Cost-Share Data

In FY19, NCBA CLUSA was awarded a \$6,606,509 Cost Extension under the REGIS-ER agreement through December 2020, which brought the total program budget to a maximum of \$76,645,520 and the cost-share obligation to \$7,810,178.49.

REGIS-ER far surpassed its life-of-project cost-share target of \$7,810,178.49. The total cost share achieved by NCBA CLUSA and its partners was **\$10,416,858.87** (133.38% of the LOP target).

Activities	Cumulative
Livestock and Poultry	\$273,282.23
Agriculture Inputs and Labor	\$7,670,039.80
Latrines, Boreholes, Wells	\$1,193,993.06
URC's Cost Share	\$263,983.30
Partnerships	\$568,954.09
Trainings	\$9,596.41
Upward Adjustment	\$437,010.00
Total	\$10,416,858.87

Active community involvement was the main driver of its cost share. REGIS-ER's cost-share approach relied heavily on community members taking the initiative to plan, implement, and monitor activities. Agricultural activities (conservation farming, BDL) provided the greatest cost share contributions over the life-of-project. REGIS-ER used volunteer labor as the main basis for cost share from these activities. Since conservation farming and BDL are labor- and time-intensive, require higher quality inputs, and do not produce immediate results, farmers and women's groups do not adopt these techniques until they see results. Farmers that piloted conservation farming techniques to improve soil fertility saw their yields increase significantly and continued to apply conservation farming technology on their land. With such impressive results, the project observed that neighboring groups of farmers adopted the techniques and expanded the use of conservation farming to other tracts of land. In the case of BDL, the communities we worked with volunteered their time to reclaim a land to a productive state.

Water and sanitation activities, livestock activities (habbanaye), consortium partner URC, and the partnership with WFP brought in most of the remaining cost share. Groups we worked with, such as Water Users' Associations (*Associations des usagers de l'eau* – AUEs) in Niger, committed to providing cash contributions to the construction or rehabilitation of wells and boreholes. Through CLTS, communities built latrines without project subsidies. With habbanaye, REGIS-ER based cost share on the passing of small ruminants. Initially, the project was expected to obtain \$5,993,328 from this activity alone, but an unexpectedly high mortality rate amongst goats significantly reduced the number of small ruminants distributed during the first two years of the project. While there was a decrease in anticipated cost share from habbanaye, REGIS-ER revised its strategy in 2016 and collected more cost share from agricultural activities.

9.1 Leverage in Accordance with REGIS-ER's Sustainability Strategy

As part of REGIS-ER's sustainability strategy, the project encouraged communes to raise funds for the implementation of their Commune Resilience Plans. Six of the eight communes had already mobilized a combined total of \$2,293,768 by the end of FY 2020. Communes in Est region were not able to mobilize

any funds for their plans due largely to the deteriorating security situation in the region and the limited presence of other development partners.

Country	Commune	Region	CFA	USD
Burkina Faso	Sebba	Sahel	82,808,000	141,798
	Seytenga	Sahel	42,170,000	72,211
	Sub-total		124,978,000	214,009
Niger	Filingué	Tillabéri	118,991,000	203,757
	Sakoira	Tillabéri	396,447,000	678,866
	Tagazar	Tillabéri	417,950,000	715,687
	Tondikandia	Tillabéri	281,159,000	481,449
	Sub-total		1,214,547,000	2,079,759
Grand Total			1,339,525,000	2,293,768

Annex 4: Knowledge Management Products

Project evaluations, activity assessments, and knowledge management products are listed below.

	Title	Year	Responsible
1	Manuel de Formation des Formateurs : Adaptation au changement climatique, focus sur les œuvres CES/DRS	2014	NCBA CLUSA
2	Guide d'élaboration et de mise en œuvre des conventions locales dans les communes rurales du Niger et du Burkina Faso	2014	NCBA CLUSA
3	Manuel de formation en élevage de la chèvre rousse	2014	NCBA CLUSA
4	Guide de Formation – Conservation Farming	2015	NCBA CLUSA
5	Gestion des pépinières et techniques de propagation des arbres fruitiers et forestiers - Manuel destiné aux APS Pépiniéristes et Techniciens	2016	NCBA CLUSA
6	External CBSP Assessment	2017	Perry Amitai, consultant
7	External SECCA Assessment	2017	Paul Rippey, consultant
8	External Habbanaye Assessment (French)	2017	Stéphane Pil, consultant
9	Mid-term Evaluation	2017	MSI
10	Training manual for the Learning and Support Groups for [Female] Adolescents (GASA)	2017	URC
11	Two posters – one on GASA and one on creating an enabling environment for inter-couple dialogue in the Sahel for the 2018 International Social and Behavior Change Communication/Entertainment Education Summit	2018	URC
12	Program Highlight on CBSPs (2 pager)	2018	NCBA CLUSA
13	Program Highlight on Local Conventions (2 pager)	2018	NCBA CLUSA
14	Program Highlight on Conservation Farming (2 pager)	2018	NCBA CLUSA
15	Program Highlight on Local Development Committees (2 pager)	2018	NCBA CLUSA
16	Cost Benefit Analysis of USAID Resilience in the Sahel	2018	USAID
17	Outcome Harvesting Report	2018	Nilu Rimal, NCBA CLUSA
18	Training manual for Mother-to-Mother (MtM) groups	2019	URC
19	Technical brief on the organization of community meals	2019	URC
20	Video on Building Self-Reliance in the Sahel through Community-led governance	2019	NCBA CLUSA
21	External Citizen Working Group Evaluation	2020	Abdou Diouf, consultant
22	External Local Conventions Evaluation	2020	Brook Johnson, consultant
23	Video on REGIS-ER's Main Achievements	2020	NCBA CLUSA
24	Video on Local Institutions	2020	NCBA CLUSA
25	Video on Habbanaye	2020	NCBA CLUSA
26	Final Performance Project Evaluation (English) (French)	2020-21	CESAO
27	REGIS-ER Overview Brief (English) (French)	2021	NCBA CLUSA
28	Technical Brief on Local Conventions (English) (French)	2021	NCBA CLUSA
29	Technical Brief on Habbanaye (English) (French)	2021	NCBA CLUSA
30	Technical Brief on Citizen Working Groups (English) (French)	2021	NCBA CLUSA
31	Oasis Garden Manual	2021	NCBA CLUSA