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Report No: ICR00319

IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

GRANT NUMBERS H8400 and D2960

ON A

A GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF SDR 19.9 MILLION
(US$30 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

AND

A GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF SDR 34.4 MILLION
(US$50 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

TO THE

REPUBLIC OF NIGER

FOR THE

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR GROWTH PROJECT

December 20, 2024

Education Global Practice
Western and Central Africa Region

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective {Nov 17, 2024})

Currency Unit =	CFA Francs (CFAF)
US$1 =	CFAF 622.65
US$1.31 =	SDR 1

FISCAL YEAR
January 1 - December 31

Regional Vice President:	Ousmane Diagana
Country Director:	Clara Ana Coutinho De Sousa
Regional Director:	Trina S. Haque
Practice Manager:	Waly Wane
Task Team Leader (s):	Marie Jacqueline Yvette Sacadura, Stanislas Honkuy
ICR Main Contributor:	Sandra Beemer, Hamidou Diallo

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AF	Additional Financing
AfDB	African Development Bank
ANPE	National Employment Agency (Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi)
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CCIN	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Niger (Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie du Niger)
CFJA	Training Center for Young Farmers (Centre de Formation des Jeunes Agriculteurs)
CFM	Professional Training Center (Centre de Formation aux Métiers)
CFPP	Training Center for Professional Enhancement (Centre de Formation et de Perfectionnement Professionnel)
CFPT	Training Center for Technical and Professional Education (Centre de Formation Professionnelle et Technique)
CPA	Business Plan Competition (Concours de Plan d'Affaires)
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
DGFP	TVET Directorate (Direction Générale de la Formation Professionnelle)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FAFPA	Fund for Professional Development and Learning (Fonds d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et à l'Apprentissage)
FCV	Fragility, Conflict, and Violence
FM	Financial Management
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HCI	Human Capital Index
HDI	Human Development Index
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results Report
IDA	International Development Association
IIP	Institutional Improvement Plans
IRI	Intermediate Results Indicator
IRR	Internal Rates of Return
ISR	Implementation Status and Results Report
IT	Information Technology
LMO	Labor Market Observatory
MEMSRS	Ministry of Secondary and Tertiary Education (Ministère des Enseignements Moyens et Superieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
MEN	Ministry of Education (Ministère de l'Education Nationale)

MEPT	Ministry of Vocation and Technical Education (Ministère des Ensignements Professionels et Techniques
MFPE	Ministry of Professional Training and Employment (Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NPV	Net Present Value
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PDDE	Education Sector Development Program (Programme Décennal de Dévelopement de l'Education
PDES	Economic and Social Development Plan (Plan de Développement Economique et Social)
PDO	Project Development Objective
PRODEC	Skills Development for Growth Project (Projet de Developpement des Compétences pour la Croissance
RF	Results Framework
SAA	Agricultural Training Center (Sites d'Apprentissage Agricole)
STEP	Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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DATA SHEET

BASIC DATA

Product Information

Operation ID	Operation Name
P126049	NIGER Skills Development for Growth Project
Product	**Operation Short Name**
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	NE Skills Development for Growth Project
Operation Status	**Approval Fiscal Year**
Closed	2013
Original EA Category	**Current EA Category**
Partial Assessment (B) (Approval package - 24 Dec 2013)	Partial Assessment (B) (Restructuring Data Sheet - 14 Jan 2021)

CLIENTS

Borrower/Recipient	Implementing Agency
Government of the Republic of Niger - Ministre du Plan, Ministry of Planning	Ministry of Professional and Technical Education, Ministry of Labor and Professional Training

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

Original Development Objective (Approved as part of Approval Package on 24-Dec-2013)

The project development objective is to improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training, short term skills development and apprenticeship programs in priority sectors.

Current Development Objective (Approved as part of Additional Financing Package Seq No 3 on 11-Apr-2018)

The project development objective is to improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training, short term skills development and apprenticeship programs in priority sectors.

FINANCING

Financing Source	Original Amount (US$)	Revised Amount (US$)	Actual Disbursed (US$)
World Bank Financing	80,000,000.00	79,997,439.50	74,972,736.64
IDA-H8400	30,000,000.00	29,997,439.50	28,086,091.14
IDA-D2960	50,000,000.00	50,000,000.00	46,886,645.50
Total	**80,000,000.00**	**79,997,439.50**	**74,972,736.64**

RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING

Date(s)	Type	Amount Disbursed (US$M)	Key Revisions
14-Jan-2021	Portal	44.62	• Components • Results • Disbursement Estimates • Loan Closing Date Extension • Reallocations • Implementation Schedule

KEY DATES

Key Events	Planned Date	Actual Date
Concept Review	29-Nov-2011	26-Jan-2012
Decision Review	20-Feb-2013	20-Feb-2013
Authorize Negotiations	18-Mar-2013	18-Mar-2013
Approval	30-Apr-2013	30-Apr-2013
Signing		07-Jun-2013
Effectiveness	30-Oct-2013	28-Oct-2013
ICR/NCO	29-Dec-2024	20-Dec-2024
Additional Financing Sequence.03	Not Applicable	11-Apr-2018
Restructuring Sequence.01	Not Applicable	14-Jan-2021
ICR Sequence.01 (Final)	--	19-Dec-2024
Operation Closing/Cancellation	30-Jun-2024	30-Jun-2024

RATINGS SUMMARY

Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	

ISR RATINGS

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US$M)
01	24-Dec-2013	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.44
02	25-Jun-2014	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	2.79
03	19-Dec-2014	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	3.34
04	23-Jun-2015	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	4.95
05	24-Dec-2015	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	6.84
06	27-Jun-2016	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	9.54
07	27-Dec-2016	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	11.71
08	16-Jun-2017	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	16.00
09	04-Jan-2018	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	20.84
10	30-Jul-2018	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	25.17
11	12-Apr-2019	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	31.27
12	30-Oct-2019	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	34.91
13	27-May-2020	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	40.05
14	09-Feb-2021	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	45.04
15	23-Sep-2021	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	50.29
16	07-Mar-2022	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	55.69
17	04-Oct-2022	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	62.34
18	30-Jun-2023	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	74.97
19	21-Dec-2023	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	74.97

SECTORS AND THEMES

Sectors

Major Sector	Sector	%	Adaptation Co-benefits (%)	Mitigation Co-benefits (%)
FY17 - Education	FY17 - Secondary Education	16	0	0
	FY17 - Workforce Development and Vocational Education	47	0	0
FY17 - Industry, Trade and Services	FY17 - Other Industry, Trade and Services	16	0	0
FY17 - Public Administration	FY17 - Central Government (Central Agencies)	21	0	0

Themes

Major Theme	Theme (Level 2)	Theme (Level 3)	%
FY17 - Human Development and Gender	FY17 - Education	FY17 - Access to Education	19
		FY17 - Science and Technology	19
		FY17 - Standards, Curriculum and Textbooks	19
		FY17 - Teachers	19
	FY17 - Gender		12
	FY17 - Labor Market Policy and Programs	FY17 - Active Labor Market Programs	6
		FY17 - Labor Market Institutions	6
FY17 - Private Sector Development	FY17 - Jobs		100

ADM STAFF

Role	At Approval	At ICR
Practice Manager	Peter N. Materu	Waly Wane
Regional Director	Ritva S. Reinikka	Trina S. Haque
Global Director		Luis Benveniste
Practice Group Vice President		Mamta Murthi
Country Director	Ousmane Diagana	Clara Ana Coutinho De Sousa
Regional Vice President	Makhtar Diop	Ousmane Diagana
ADM Responsible Team Leader	Boubou Cissé	Marie Jacqueline Yvette Sacadura
Co-Team Leader(s)		Stanislas Honkuy
ICR Main Contributor		Sandra Beemer

I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

1. **Country Context**. Niger, a large landlocked West African country, covers approximately 1.27 million square kilometers. It had a population of nearly 19 million people with a population density of 12.5 inhabitants per square kilometer. However, nearly 90 percent of the population resided in the southern and western regions, where the climate and agroecological conditions were more favorable. Women made up 50.1 percent of the total population. Despite its size, Niger was one of the world's poorest countries. In 2013, it ranked 186th out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index. The country's Gross Domestic Product per capita was US$720 in 2010. Niger faced numerous challenges, including: (i) its landlocked position and vast desert terrain hindered economic development; (ii) the population was growing rapidly at a rate of 3.3 percent per annum, straining resources; (iii) over 59.5 percent of the population lived below the poverty line; (iv) the country was vulnerable to climate change, with frequent droughts and desertification affecting agricultural productivity; (v) border regions were exposed to violence, conflicts, and terrorism, hindering development efforts; and (vi) women in Niger faced significant gender inequality, limiting their opportunities and contributing to the country's overall development challenges. Niger's economy was heavily reliant on agriculture, which accounted for over 40 percent of the GDP and employed 80 percent of the workforce. However, the sector was characterized by low productivity and uncertain livelihoods. The informal sector dominated the economy, and the private sector was small and largely comprised of micro and small enterprises. Youth unemployment was a significant challenge, with 25 percent of young people aged 15 to 25 years either unemployed or inactive. Approximately 350,000 youth entered the job market annually, but 90 percent lacked the necessary qualifications. This skills gap hindered job opportunities in sectors like agriculture, construction, and mining, where skilled labor was in demand.

2. **Sector Context.** Niger faced significant skill shortages, particularly in secondary and tertiary education. Less than 10 percent of the labor force held a secondary school certificate, and only 1 percent had a tertiary education degree. While primary school enrollment had increased significantly, with the gross enrollment rate doubling from 35 percent to 67 percent between 2001 and 2010, secondary school enrollment remained low at 13 percent, particularly for girls. The majority of the young labor force was either illiterate or had only completed some primary education, highlighting a lack of quality in education, despite increased access. Quality and relevance issues were pervasive at all education and training levels. Low learning outcomes in primary education limited access and outcomes at higher levels. Most out-of-school youth aged 15 to 25 had only completed primary education. At the secondary level, over 90 percent of students were enrolled in the general academic stream, which did not adequately prepare them for the labor market. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), on the other hand, provided more relevant skills and better employment outcomes. TVET graduates earned significantly more and were less likely to be unemployed compared to upper secondary education graduates.

3. **TVET institutions in Niger faced several challenges in 2013**. Formal TVET institutions enrolled about 13,500 students in 30 public and 80 private institutions, while informal programs enrolled about 7,000 students (excluding apprenticeships). The formal system was characterized by outdated curricula, overcrowded workshops, weak governance, and inadequate funding. Courses were long, theoretical, and lacked practical experience. Additionally, there was a shortage of qualified instructors and limited investment in equipment. As a result, TVET tracks did not adequately prepare students for emerging sectors. The traditional bias against TVET, coupled with limited capacity and a mismatch between training and job market needs, led to under-enrollment and cost inefficiencies. TVET institutions often focused on specific skills without considering the broader range of skills required by the job market, such as information technology, entrepreneurship, and communication skills. In addition, Niger needed to improve the employability of out-of-school youth and address the needs of emerging sectors. The country adopted a two-pronged strategy: (i) informal skills development to address the needs of uneducated youth, and (ii) increased training delivery. Non-formal education in Niger was mainly provided through literacy centers, particularly in rural areas. Apprenticeship programs were a limited option for out-of-school youth. Investing in informal skills development and apprenticeship programs was crucial.

4. **The government of Niger had taken several initiatives to improve the country's education and training system.** In 2006, a Sector Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training was developed, focusing on increasing enrollment, private sector involvement, apprenticeship programs, and collaboration with the private sector. In 2012, a new labor code was approved to strengthen the governance framework for skills development. Additionally, the government, through the Ministry of National Education (Ministère de l'Education Nationale – MEN), Ministry of Vocation and Technical Education (Ministère des Enseignements Professionels et Techniques - MEPT), and the Ministry of Secondary and Tertiary Education, and Scientific Research (Ministère des Enseignements Moyens et Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique - MEMSRS), developed the Education Sector Development Plan (Programme Sectoriel de Développement de l'Éducation - PSDÉ) 2012-2020. This comprehensive plan covers basic education (preschool, primary, and non-formal education) as well as all levels of post-basic education (secondary, TVET/skills development, and higher education).

5. **The government of Niger, through the MEPT, and organizations like the Fund for Continuing Professional Development and Learning (Fond d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et à l'Apprentissage - FAFPA), were working to strengthen TVET institutions.** The Law on Technical and Professional Training was under development to address key issues in the sub-sector. Donors like the Luxembourg Development Cooperation (LuxDev) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) were financing projects to support capacity building, institutional development, and policy formulation. The local education sector group, led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),

coordinated collaboration among government, donors, and NGOs. Key development partners included the French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Belgian Development Cooperation, the AfDB, and LuxDev. As a result, the Bank-supported Skills Development for Growth Project (Projet de Développement des Compétences pour la Croissance - PRODEC) was developed to provide complementary support.

Theory of Change (Results Chain)

6. **The figure in Annex 6 depicts the Theory of Change (ToC) inferred from the original project activities.** This figure links the interventions included in each of the three components (inputs) to their expected outputs, the outputs to their corresponding outcomes and finally, the outcomes of the expected long-term impact.

Project Development Objectives (PDOs)

7. **The project PDO was "to improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training, short-term skills development and apprenticeship programs in priority sectors[1]".** The PDO statement in the Project Appraisal Document and Grant Agreement are consistent. Effectiveness for the three outcomes was to be measured with separate and individual approaches.

Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

8. **The five PDO indicators were directly linked to the overarching objectives and were supplemented by eight intermediate results indicators (IRIs) in the parent project.** The PDO indicator "direct project beneficiaries" is a Corporate Core Indicator and is an overarching project indicator. A description of each outcome and associated PDO indicators is as follows:

- **Outcome 1** "improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training in priority sectors" as measured by "youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the project in the four priority areas" (percentage) (disaggregated by female). Effectiveness was to be improved through activities related to TVET institutions with functioning boards of directors, adoption of new a regulatory framework on management, improved and more relevant curricula, training of trainers and internship programs.
- **Outcome 2** "improve the effectiveness of short-term skills development in priority sectors" as measure by: (i) short-term vocationally trained youth who are employed or self-employed (percentage overall and by sector); and (ii) beneficiaries trained in entrepreneurship (number). Effectiveness was to be improved through the introduction of on-demand training programs in response the private sector needs and introduction of entrepreneurship programs.
- **Outcome 3** "improve effectiveness of apprenticeship programs in priority sectors" as measured by out-of-school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs (percentage) (disaggregated by female—target of 30 percent female). Effectiveness was to be improved through the introduction of a dual apprenticeship program that provided theoretical instructions along with on-the-job training.

[1] The four priority sectors were civil works and construction, meat processing, leather, and hospitality.

Components[2]

9. **Component 1: Improving the Effectiveness of Formal Training (original allocation $11.4 million; 2018 additional financing (AF) allocation = $28.0 million equivalent; Total allocation = $39.4 million equivalent; Actual expenditure = $38.86 million equivalent).** This component helped the government address the demand for skills in economic sectors with the highest growth/employment potential. It also supported youth employability through interventions to improve effectiveness of formal TVET through the support of new demand-driven institutions and a strengthened school-to-work transition approach through two sub-components:

- **Sub-Component 1.1: Demand-Driven Approach to Formal Vocational Training** to improve the quality and relevance of three TVET institutions in the priority sectors through: (i) improved infrastructure; (ii) management autonomy of three technical institutes[3]; and (iii) the establishment of key principle of partnership[4] with the private sector based on the Law on Technical and Professional Education[5].
- **Sub-Component 1.2: Improving the School-to-Work Transition** to strengthen the transition from formal education and training to the labor market by supporting job counseling and internships programs run by the National Employment Agency (Agence nationale pour l'emploi—ANPE).

10. **Component 2: Strengthening Short-term Skills Development and Apprenticeship Programs (original allocation $12.5 million; 2018 AF allocation = $13.0 million equivalent; Total allocation = $25.5 million equivalent; Actual expenditure = $26.84 million equivalent).** Component 2 aimed to address the demand for skills in the economic sectors with the highest growth and employment potential and improve youth employability by supporting short-term skills development and apprenticeships programs through three sub-components:

- **Sub-component 2.1: Expanding Apprenticeships[6]** to expand dual apprenticeship programs[7] in priority sectors[8] while upgrading the program to include entrepreneurship training. The project was to support (full) dual apprenticeships and training in agriculture fields by financing stipends, complementary theoretical training (one-third of the time), and materials kits. The target group was out-of-school unemployed 15–25-year-olds with very limited education background (primary complete or incomplete).

[2] All values are expressed in United States Dollars unless otherwise stated.
[3] The three centers to be supported and restructured were: (i) the Centre des Métiers du Cuir et d'Art du Niger (CMCAN) (red meat processing and leather processing), (ii) the Lycée Technique de Dogondoutchi (LTD) specializing in civil engineering, and (iii) the Lycée Professionnel de l'Hôtellerie et du Tourisme d'Agadez (LPHT).
[4] The partnership model was to be at the core of the partnership agreements to be signed between the selected institutions and private sector representatives.
[5] Law on Technical and Professional Education had been drafted but not yet adopted at the time of appraisal. The law aimed at introducing the management autonomy of the technical institutes and the key principle of partnership with the private sector. At the core of the reform was a partnership model with the private sector that entailed: (i) TVET centers management (creations of TVET centers councils involving the private sector in pedagogical and administrative management); (ii) implementation of dual training programs, (iii) cooperation agreements with sectors involved in curriculum revision, (iv) implementation of apprenticeship in companies; (v) financing training through the apprenticeship tax; and (vi) continuing training for company employees and support for the private training sector.
[6] The project sought to expand a 2010 dual apprenticeship program with the private sector that was piloted by the FAFPA with support from the European Union (EU). As a part of the 2010 pilot the FAFPA and the EU developed and introduced a quality assurance framework for apprenticeships and a new dual apprenticeship program. The project sought to build on the pilot, by expanding it and adding entrepreneurship training at the end of the program.
[7] Dual apprenticeship programs were to combining formal training to confer cognitive and technical skills (1/3 of the time) and apprenticeship (accounting for 2/3 of the time) spent in a formal or informal organization.
[8] Apprenticeships in the construction industry were to include training in plumbing, paving, and tiling, in the hospitality industry training in cooking, baking and restauration services, in the maintenance industry training in electro-mechanics and auto mechanics. Additionally, the project was to provide short-term training to approximately 1,000 apprentices in agriculture related fields (with a focus on products with economic potential, such as onions, gum Arabic, and sesame in addition to livestock).

- **Sub-component 2.2: Developing Short-Term On-Demand Training Programs** to boost short-term skills development by developing on-demand training programs with input from the private sector and offering certification upon completion.
- **Sub-component 2.3: Promoting Entrepreneurship Training** by financing short-term skills development among Niger's youth that could lead to job creation. Activities included the development and application of an entrepreneurship curriculum and related modules. It was expected to expand and improve the courses carried out by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Arts (Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et de l'Art du Niger– CCIN), while developing additional modules tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs, apprentices, and micro entrepreneurs.

11. **Component 3: Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Monitoring and Evaluation (original allocation $6.1 million; 2018 AF allocation = $7.0 million equivalent; Total allocation = $13.1 million equivalent; Actual expenditure = $14.84 million equivalent)**. This component supported institutional strengthening and the monitoring and evaluation of the project:

- **Sub-component 3.1: Institutional Capacity Strengthening** financed the effective implementation of the project by the MEPT and other agencies by supporting the establishment of a Project Coordination Unit (PCU - within the MEPT) to assist the MEPT and all participating agencies in effective coordination and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), as well as the implementation of an information and communications strategy.
- **Sub-component 3.2: Monitoring and Evaluation** supported an effective M&E framework for the project and the MEPT.

B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Revised PDOs and Outcome Targets

12. The project PDOs were not revised during the project period.

Revised PDO Indicators

13. **At the time of the March 2018 additional financing (AF), there were sub-indicators added at the PDO level to measure the impact of the new project interventions that were specific to the addition of the agricultural sector to the original list of priority sectors.** Additionally, the AF Project Paper indicates that one new indicator was added at the PDO level to monitor the new business plan competition program (Concours de Plans d'Affaires—CPA) introduced as part of the AF. This indicator was "percentage of youth trained in entrepreneurship who are prizewinners of the CPA". However, when this indicator was added to the subsequent Implementation Status and Results Report (ISR) it was added as an IRI and was articulated as "number of prizewinner youth in the business plan competition (disaggregated by females) and was monitored as such throughout the remainder of the project. For the purposes of this report the indicator will be reported as an IRI related to Outcome 2 "improve the effectiveness of short-term skills development" given that it was consistently monitored as an IRI during implementation.

Table 1: 2018 Additional Financing PDO Indicator Modifications

Indicator	Baseline	Original Target November 2019	Target November 2022	Comments
1.Number of Direct Project Beneficiaries (number) (% female)	0	11,800 (20%)	31,600 (50%)	Target increased to reflect additional resources, expanded scope and extension of the closing date.
2. Percentage of Youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the project in the 4 priority sectors (% female)	0	20 (20%)	65 (30%)	Target increased to reflect additional resources, expanded scope and extension of the closing date.
New sub-indicator 2018 AF Percentage of Youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the project in the agricultural sector	0		65	New sub-indicator to reflect AF increased focus on agriculture sector.
3. Percentage of out of school youth who complete dual apprenticeship programs (% female)	0	70 (30%)	80 (40%)	Target increased to reflect additional resources, expanded scope and extension of the closing date.
New sub-indicator 2018 AF Percentage of out-of-school youth who complete dual apprenticeship programs agricultural sector	0		70	New sub-indicator to reflect AF increased focus on agriculture sector.
4. Percentage of short-term vocationally trained youth who are employed or self-employed (overall and by sector)	0	60	50	End target reduced to 50 percent because the original target was judged to have been overly ambitious when the parent project was designed. However, this does not constitute a reduction in scope given the significant scale up of other activities.
5. Number of beneficiaries trained in entrepreneurship (% female)	0	2,000 (30%)	5,000 (30%)	Target increased to reflect additional resources, expanded scope and extension of the closing date.

Revised Components

14. **At the time of the 2018 AF, some project activities were scaled up based on the successful implementation under the parent project and some new activities were added.** The modifications were as follows:

Component 1: Improving the Effectiveness of Formal Training

- **Sub-Component 1.1: Demand-Driven Approach to Formal Vocational Training**. Activities in this sub-

component were scaled up to support seven[9] additional TVET centers for a total of 10 centers. In addition, the AF was to further support the operationalization of reforms in the TVET sector, in particular the implementation modalities of the 2015 Law on Technical and Professional Education.

- **Sub-Component 1.2: Improving the School-to-Work Transition.** This sub-component continued to finance internships and job counseling programs for secondary and tertiary technical graduates and the targeted beneficiaries were extended to include young graduates and TVET graduates that had been unemployed for more than two years.

Component 2: Strengthening Short-term Skills Development and Apprenticeship Programs.

- **Sub-component 2.1: Expanding Apprenticeships**. The dual apprenticeship program was scaled up to be implemented with a tailored approach for both urban and rural professions. The rural dual apprenticeship program[10] was specifically focused on agriculture and was to be delivered by newly established agricultural training centers (Sites d'Apprentissage Agricole, SAA) that targeted youth between the ages of 17-30 and would offer a four to six-month formal training combining theory and practice. The SAA's program set up 10 agricultural apprenticeship sites to provide apprenticeship training to 3,000 young people, 40 percent of whom were girls. The AF financed: (i) the initial investment and operating costs of ten SAAs, (ii) allowances for participants in the rural areas[11] that included a meal on site; and (iii) transport allowances[12] for participants in the urban areas.
- **Sub-component 2.3: Promoting Entrepreneurship Training**. The AF added new complementary follow-up activities to the entrepreneurship training that included support for: (i) the design, preparation, and implementation of a "business plan" competition program. It would also provide start-up funds for young graduates who benefitted from the entrepreneurship training under the parent project and those who received entrepreneurship training through the AF; (ii) the introduction of entrepreneurial training modules in educational curricula; and (iii) the newly created ministry in charge of youth entrepreneurship to strengthen the definition of its strategies, coordination mechanisms, and M&E.

Component 3: Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Monitoring and Evaluation.

- **Sub-component 3.1: Institutional Capacity Strengthening.** The AF supported: (i) institutional strengthening, capacity development activities for participating implementing partners and training institutions such as FAFPA, ANPE, CICN, CMCAN, Hotel and Tourism Professional High School of Agadez, Technical High School of Dogondoutchi and M&E; (ii) capacity development activities for the FAFPA and its related professional organizations to effectively establish M&E, and (iii) increased communications activities for more awareness of the project activities.

15. **The December 18, 2020 restructuring introduced the following modifications:**

Component 1: Improving the Effectiveness of Formal Training

- **Sub-Component 1.1: Demand-Driven Approach to Formal Vocational Training.** There were four TVET

[9]The seven new centers were: (i) Training Centre for Technical and Professional Education (Centre de formation professionnelle et technique, CFPT) of Maradi; (ii) CFPT of Diffa; (iii) Training Center for Professional Enhancement (Centre de formation et de perfectionnement professionnel, CFPP) of Niamey; (iv) Lycée agricole de Tera; (v) Training Center for Young Farmers (Centre de formation des jeunes agriculteurs, CFJA) of Keguel; (vi) CFJA of Bélindé; and (vii) a Regional Fashion Training Center to be established in Niamey.

[10]The program was designed to enable youth to acquire basic technical skills in agriculture related fields. The rural apprenticeship program was developed in close consultation with local authorities and farmers' organizations to ensure that it responded to the skills needs and the specificities of the targeted regions in agricultural production and livestock, as well as related activities such as processing and transformation of agricultural products, maintenance and repair of equipment, machinery, irrigation and water management techniques, motor pumps, solar panels, and craftsmanship.

[11]Rural area allowances were CFAF 3,000 per month.

[12] Urban transport allowances were CFAF 15,000 per month.

training centers dropped[13] from the seven centers added at the time of the AF for a new total of six TVET centers supported[14]. The four centers were dropped due to delays in the construction of new facilities and limited time remaining in the project. However, this did not represent a reduction in scope of the project because the restructuring refocused resources on rehabilitation, equipment, teacher training and curricula development at 20 vocational training centers (Centre de Formation des Métiers – CFMs) in fields identified based on local market needs within agricultural trades[15]. Upon completion of the training at the CFMs, trainees would be certified, and the certified youth would be eligible to participate in the preparation of business plans and be eligible for seed capital already supported under sub-component 2.3. All 26[16] of the supported institutions were to receive institutional grants based on Institutional Improvement Plans (IIPs)[17] to cover the costs related to upgrading training programs, procurement of new equipment and furniture and transportation of trainees to the institutions. Institutions, through the IIPs, were encouraged to use grant funds for childcare (including establishing childcare spaces). Additionally, resources were allocated to support 10-15 privately-owned training institutions or women's associations/groups engaged in training primarily in agro-processing, farming, and livestock productions. The support was to focus on upgrading training materials, training of trainers, and developing partnerships with the private sector.

- **Sub-Component 1.2: Improving the School-to-Work Transition.** This sub-component added two additional activities: (i) development and implementation of a mobile mechanism (by smart phone) to enhance monitoring of youth participating in apprenticeships/internships; and (ii) continued development and deployment of an online information platform that could be accessed remotely by youth searching for employment or training opportunities in Niger especially important given the movement/access restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Component 2: Strengthening Short-term Skills Development and Apprenticeship Programs.

- **Sub-component 2.1: Expanding Apprenticeships.** The dual apprenticeship program was extended to five additional municipalities and SAA graduates were now allowed to participate in the business plan/seed money activities under sub-component 2.3. The project was also to finance COVID-19 protection measures that included personal protection equipment (i.e., gels, soaps, face masks and protective gloves) as well as awareness campaigns to curb the spread of COVID-19 for participants in the apprenticeship programs.
- **Sub-component 2.3: Promoting Entrepreneurship Training.** Under this sub-component the restructuring extended the entrepreneurship training/business plan development to CFMs, SAAs and the apprenticeship program as indicated.

Component 3: Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Monitoring and Evaluation.

- **Sub-component 3.1: Institutional Capacity Strengthening.** Under this sub-component, the restructuring

[13] The four centers dropped were: (i) Training Centre for Technical and Professional Education (Centre de formation professionnelle et technique, CFPT) of Maradi; (ii) CFPT of Diffa; (iii) Lycée agricole de Tera; and (iv) a Regional Fashion Training Center to be established in Niamey.

[14] The final six centers supported were—original three: (i) CMCAN, (ii) LTD specializing in civil engineering, and (iii) the LPHT. The AF training centers that remained were:(i) Training Center for Professional Enhancement (Centre de formation et de perfectionnement professionnel, CFPP) of Niamey; (ii) Training Center for Young Farmers (Centre de formation des jeunes agriculteurs, CFJA) of Keguel; and (iii) CFJA of Bélindé.

[15] The agricultural trades consisted of market gardening, arboriculture, livestock production (animal health and reproduction), agribusiness, pisciculture (fish farming), processing, mechanics (auto) and solar energy.

[16] The original three institutions were required to include continued development of digitized training programs in their IIPs in the areas of hospitality, public works, and leather production.

[17] The IIPs were to be prepared at the institutional level using a participatory approach and were to be validated at the national level by the MEPT and PCU. There was a positive and negative list provided in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM). There was also a comprehensive list in the PIM of COVID-19 prevention expenditures/activities that could be financed under the IIPs.

sought to support the operationalization [18] of the five decrees [19] prepared through the project. The restructuring activities also included the development of a national certification framework and continued support for the overhauling of the apprenticeship-tax management system. Additionally, the restructuring sought to support the development and design of functional an integrated digital platform that would include training programs, information on employment, labor insertion programs, entrepreneurship and apprenticeship programs to help create a more resilient system particularly given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other Changes

16. **The March 2018 AF made the following changes**: (i) PDO indicators were modified as indicated in Table 1; (ii) IRIs were added based on new activities and original IRIs were scaled up to reflect the AF (Annex 7) components as indicated; (iii) reallocation of resources between disbursement categories to align the project disbursements with the relevant categories[20]; and (iv) the safeguards policies were modified. The parent project had triggered OP/BP 4.01 Environmental Assessment. The AF triggered Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11) due to the small-scale civil works added that could result in the unearthing of physical cultural resources. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared by the borrower and Environment and Social Management Plans (ESMP) were to be prepared and embedded in civil works contracts.

17. **The December 2020 restructuring made the following changes:** (i) extended the project closing date one year to November 30, 2023; (ii) adjusted the results framework (RF) to ensure alignment of the end-target dates with the new project closing date (Annex 7); (iii) added one IRI related to private training institutions (number of private training institutions support by the project); (iv) modified project components and activities as indicated; (v) reallocated project resources (Annex 8); (vi) modified the project disbursement forecasts; and (vii) included activities linked to the government's COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan that was approved/released April 28, 2020.

18. **On June 10, 2024, the project closing date was retroactively extended from November 30, 2023, to June 30, 2024.** Following the *coup d'état* on July 26, 2023, Niger's neighbors closed their borders, stranding partial equipment shipment dedicated to the CFMs supported by the project. At the same time, the Bank triggered Operations Policy (OP) 7.30 "Dealings with de fact Governments", pausing activities until May 10, 2024, when OP 7.30 was lifted and Niger paid its arrears. As the Bank could not process closing date extensions during OP 7.30, the remaining equipment was no longer eligible for project financing when it was delivered on January 10, 2024. Consequently, the government requested (and the Bank agreed) to process a retroactive extension until June 30, 2024, to allow the payment of the remaining 20 percent of training equipment and ensure all project-supported CFMs were fully equipped by project closing.

[18] The operationalization was to included preparation of detailed regulations to accompany the decrees, support for communications and awareness-raising regarding the decrees and their stipulations, training of staff members and piloting the new requirements in a few institutions including CMCAN, LT and LTHP.

[19] The Decrees were related to: (i) organization of teaching and training, (ii) information and professional guidance, (iii) professional certifications, (iv) national certification framework, and (v) organization and operation of apprenticeship.

[20] According to the Financing Agreement of the parent project, Category 3 (Refund of PPA) was allocated to finance activities of the PCU during the project preparation phase. However, during preparation, only XDR 549.62 was used from Category 3 as a result, XDR 599,400 from Category 3 was reallocated to Category1.

Rationale for Changes and Their Implication on the Original Theory of Change

19. **The modifications did not affect the original theory of change but represented an expansion of scope and strengthening of PDO achievement measurement.** The 2018 AF was important for continuing to increase the scope of the project for skills training with a particular focus on agriculture where 70 percent of Niger's labor force was working as well as expanding the entrepreneurship aspects of the project. Although the 2020 restructuring eliminated six of the formal AF training centers, it substantially increased the number of CFMs that focused on local market needs within agricultural trades. The 2020 restructuring digitized training content to address challenges the COVID-19 constraints. In addition to the 2020 restructuring, the government and the Bank made the decision to support aspects of the project through the Bank-supported Niger Building Institutions and Human Capital Development Policy Operation (DPO) (P175256) following the onset of COVID-19. The DPO was used to: (i) accelerate the implementation of Law No. 2015-22[21] by allowing TVET institutions to collect and use their own financial resources, thereby providing them with a sustainable source of financing; and (ii) ensure that TVET apprentices received a monthly allowance, thereby facilitating the extension of training to rural areas and the poorest households who could not otherwise afford the opportunity cost associated with the training. Through the DPO, the Bank and government leveraged all instruments to support the project to reach its goals. These modifications directly supported the long-term goals of increasing the number of employed, trained public and private workforce as well as the human capital needs required for Niger's socioeconomic development.

II. OUTCOME

A. RELEVANCE OF PDO

Assessment of Relevance of PDOs and Rating

20. **The objectives remain relevant to the World Bank's FY18-FY22 Country Partnership Framework (CPF) which continued to be aligned with the Economic and Social Development Plan (Plan de Développement Economique et Social—PDES, 2022-2026).** The project was also aligned with the April 21, 2022, Performance and Learning Review (PLR) (Report No. 169145-NE). The PLR (i) confirmed the CPFs relevance; (ii) confirmed the CPFs three focus areas; and (iii) extended the CPF period through FY23. The overarching goal of the FY18-22 CPF was to help safeguard and accelerate Niger's economic and social development, by tackling growth constraints and other fundamental (and emerging) drivers of fragility. This was done by focusing, in the short-term, on (i) boosting rural productivity and incomes, (ii) strengthening human capital and governance, and (iii) empowering women and girls. The project is also aligned with the World Bank's Africa Human Capital Plan related to increasing financing for human capital in Africa and preventing and reversing damage to human capital in settings affected by fragility, conflict, and violence. The project objectives also remain consistent with achieving the World Bank's Twin Goals of eliminating poverty and fostering shared prosperity on a livable planet through skills development and youth employment, human capital development, and social inclusion as key levers for building human capital throughout the lifecycle. Based the information provided above, the PDO continues to be **Highly** relevant today.

[21] Law No. 2015-22 entitles educational institutions to manage their own budgets, which are still centrally managed by the Ministry of TVET, limiting the ability of TVET institutions to adapt and provide quality training.

B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)

Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

21. **The overall efficacy of the PDOs is rated as substantial** because the targets for the five PDO indicators were exceeded and seven of the 12 IRI targets were met or exceeded.

22. **Outcome 1. Improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training in priority sectors**. Achievement of this objective is judged to be **substantial** based on the following achievements:

23. **The results of the PDO indicator—*youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the project in the four priority areas* (disaggregated by female and agriculture sector)—increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 88 percent, exceeding the 2023 end target of 65 percent by 35 percent.** The ***percentage of females graduating*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 46 percent, exceeding the 2023 end target of 30 percent by 33 percent. The *percentage of youth graduating in the agriculture sector* also increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 91 percent, exceeding the 2023 end-target of 65 percent by 40 percent.

24. **The IRIs that supported the achievement of Objective 1 are as follows:**

- ***number of youth enrolled in the TVET institutions support by the project in priority sectors (percentage agriculture sector and female*)** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 8,817, exceeding the 2023 target of 8,300 by 517 or 106 percent achievement. The percentage of youth enrolled in TVET institutions in the agriculture sector increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 35 percent, missing the 2023 target of 60 percent by 42 percent. Finally, the percentage of females enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the project in the priority sectors increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 41 percent, exceeding the 2023 baseline of 30 percent by 37 percent.
- ***number of trainers trained in the four priority sectors as a result of project interventions*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 161 far, exceeding the 2023 end target of 70 by 91 trainers or a 230 percent achievement. This training included: 41 trainers (both exogenous[22] and endogenous), four trainers from the Training Center for Professional Enhancement (Centre de Formation et de Perfectionnement Professionnel—CFPP) of Niamey Mechatronics Department and 116 trainers in the agriculture trades. The trainers received training in the 12[23] new competency-based approach training programs developed by the project with support from international and national technical assistance. The project also digitized 41 job referential with 4,338 training programs for PRODEC's targeted institutions/establishments. These digitized programs were used during the COVID-19 pandemic period to allow trainers and trainees to access content material remotely.
- ***number of trained youth unemployed for more than two years requalified as a result of project interventions*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 499, missing the 2023 end target of 600 by 101. The youth received training in areas related to hospitality, construction and public works, solar energy and digital development. The retraining of the 499 unemployed youth led to 63 percent being self-employed and establishing their own bank accounts, 28 percent being employed with companies and 9 percent still looking for employment.

[22] Exogenous trainers are graduates of higher education that are recruited to provide training. Exogenous trainers are external experts who are brought in to provide specialized knowledge, skills, and training to the community where the training center is located, while endogenous trainers are local experts who possess the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct trainings. Both types of trainers are appointed by the Project, depending on the specific needs of the training program.

[23] There were four programs, and eight guides developed in areas that included beekeeping, fattening, arboriculture, and fish farming.

- ***number of tertiary and secondary technical graduates connected with potential employers as a result of project*** *interventions* increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 6,230 (96 percent of the target), missing the target of 6,500 by 270. Although the target was missed the project supported the preliminary design studies for an online platform to facilitate the re-enter of the trained youth into the job market. The project has been developed with ANPE, the online platform which is currently operational and accessible at: *https://www.anpe-niger.ne/offres-d-emploi.html*. This platform enables remote matching of jobs and internships, as companies can submit their job openings and internship offers online and students can apply online.
- ***number of students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (disaggregated by females) (corporate results indicator)*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 20,572, exceeding the 2023 end target of 17,300 by 3,272 or 119 percent of target. The total included 10,410 students from FAFPA's dual and agricultural apprenticeships; 8,817 from the TVET centers, CFMs and Training Center for Young Farmers (Centre de Formation des Jeunes Agriculteurs—CFJA); and 1,345 from the private sector center supported by the project. **The *number of female students benefiting for direct interventions to enhance learning*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 8,817 exceeding the 2023 target of 5,190 by 3,627 or a 70 percent increase over the target.
- ***number of private training institutions sponsored by the project*** increased from the 2020 baseline of 0 to 45, exceeding the 2023 target of 15 (300 percent of the target). In 2021, there were 16 private training institutions selected for the project private-sector support fund. In 2022, there were 29 institutions selected—all women's groups. Support for the private training institutions was based on proposals submitted by the women's groups in the agro-processing, farming, and livestock productions areas and their willingness to develop a public-private partnership for the training. Once selected, the organizations signed financing agreements (based on IIPs) to acquire the equipment needed for training, capacity development and development of specific training modules based on their proposals.

25. **The project also supported the institutional underpinnings to strengthen the sector.** Law No. 12015-22 of April 23, 2015), determining the fundamental principles of TVET in Niger and the law's five implementing decrees (*arrêtés*), which constitute the guarantee of a consolidated architecture of the sub-sector, were part of the project support. Further, the project supported the TVET centers to: (i) develop procedural manuals (administration, finance, and accounting), (ii) complete their upgrading through civil works, procurement and installation of equipment, and (iii) training of trainers, development of training standards, and development of competency-based curricula in the priority sectors as designed.

26. **Objective 2. Improve the effectiveness of short-term skills development in priority sectors**. Achievement of this objective is judged to be **substantial** and was to be achieved through: (i) on-demand training programs that were identified by companies, consortia or trade/employer associations; (ii) entrepreneurship training; and (iii) business plan development along with provision of seed money to implement some selected business plans. As indicated, in 2019 the on-demand program encountered difficulties due to the limited ability of companies to absorb the trainees. Therefore, the FAFPA suspended the on-demand training activities and agreed with the Bank to scale up the dual apprenticeship program and offer opportunities to access seed money to former participants in the on-demand program and participants in the dual apprenticeship program for micro-enterprises and small rural income generating activities based on business plans. Moreover, the rural dual apprenticeship program that was specifically focused on agriculture was to be delivered through the SAAs and offered four to six-month formal training combining theory and practice, which expanded the focus of the project on the agricultural sector for short-term skills development. Despite the challenges related to the on-demand training programs, there was substantial achievement related to this objective.

27. **The results of the PDO indicator—*percentage of short-term vocationally trained youth who are employed or self-employed (overall and by sector) increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 51 percent, exceeding the target of 50 percent.*** The Labor Market Observatory (LMO) conducted beneficiary surveys in 2017 and 2021 that looked at insertion rates. Some of the results for 2017 showed insertion rates as follows: (i) ANPE—70 percent insertion rate of trainees after the internship; (ii) FAFPA—63 percent insertion rate of young people having completed their apprenticeship; and (iii) CCIN—42.7 percent of young people trained in entrepreneurship had created their microbusinesses. The 2021 survey showed an average insertion rate of 51 percent with the breakdown of: (i) ANPE—58 percent insertion rate of trainees after the internship; (ii) FAFPA—54 percent insertion rate of young people having completed their apprenticeship; and (iii) CCIN—39 percent of young people trained in entrepreneurship had created their income generating activities. The factors that influenced the decline in youth insertion were identified in the two insertion surveys conducted (2017 to 2021): (i) the lack of available jobs in the different priority sectors, and (ii) COVID-19, which affected all businesses and activities related to self-employment in Niger due to the decline in demand and economic constraints during and after the pandemic.

28. **The results of the PDO indicator—*number of beneficiaries trained in entrepreneurship* increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 7,127, exceeding the 2023 end target of 5,000 by 2,127 or 143 percent.** The total number of beneficiaries included 1,506[24] trained under the dual apprenticeship program and the SAA program; 2,464 graduates from secondary and higher education; 3,012 FAFPA apprentices and women's groups; and 145 young people retrained by the ANPE. In addition to receiving skills training, the beneficiaries also received training in the development of business plans, and some received seed money for their business plans (see below). The project also supported the development of training modules in entrepreneurship and the training of trainers in entrepreneurship through CCIN. Additionally, the project supported the hiring of coaches (consultants and business executives) for the trainers to support them in their teaching.

29. **The IRIs that supported achievement of Objective 2 are as follows**:

- ***number of out-of-school youth completing on-demand technical training as a result of project interventions*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 923, missing the 2023 target of 1,500 by 577 or 62 percent achievement. The target was missed largely because the FAFPA suspended the on-demand training program in 2019 (with 923 completed out of a forecast of 1,500) due to difficulties of companies to meet their commitments to recruit young people who had successfully completed the training because of the difficult economic and political context within the country.
- ***number of prizewinner youth in the business plan competition (disaggregated by female)*** increased from 2018 baseline of 0 to 609, exceeding the 2023 end target of 300 by 309 or 203 percent of target. The percentage of prizewinners that were female increased from the 2018 baseline of 0 to 35 missing the 2023 target of 40 percent. The prizewinners consisted of 149 young people from the original entrepreneurship program and 460[25] that received seed funds through participation in the SAA and apprenticeship programs to implement their business plans and establish micro-enterprises and small rural income generating activities. The project also supported the prizewinners with the provision of coaches to help them during the start-up period as well as provide ongoing advice during the implementation of their business plans. Of the 149 that were prize winners, 100 youth created companies that provided more than 300 new jobs. The project also supported the implementation of a robust communications program that focused on: (i) production and distribution of testimonial videos from CPA winners; (ii) production of a film on the business plan process; and (iii) introduction of the seed fund to SAA communities.

[24] This included out-of-school youth, youth in the agriculture learning centers and participants in the dual apprenticeship programs.
[25]There were 1,506 beneficiaries under the dual apprenticeship and SAA program that were coached in the development of simplified business plans.

- ***number of trainers in entrepreneurship programs trained as a result of project intervention*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 90 (65 men and 25 women), meeting the 2023 end target of 90. The trainers were national in coverage and participated as needed in entrepreneurship training activities, particularly those organized by CCIN.

30. **Objective 3. Improve effectiveness of apprenticeship programs in priority sectors.** Achievement of this objective is judged to be substantial and was to be achieved through training of out-of-school unemployed youth in the priority sectors with limited education background and placement in apprenticeships. Additionally, the project provided support to the training advisers in each region for the monitoring of the program and to provide pedagogical support to training centers.

31. **The results of the PDO indicator—percentage of out-of-school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs (disaggregated by agriculture sector and female)** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 93 percent, exceeding the 2023 end target of 80 percent (or 116 percent of the target). The percentage of out-of-school youth that completed apprenticeships in the agriculture sector increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 94, exceeding the 2023 end target of 70 (or 134 percent of the target) and the percentage female increased from 0 to 93, exceeding the 2023 target of 40 (or 232 percent of the target). The apprentices received both theoretical training and literacy courses and then were placed with master craftsmen. The 2,500 master craftsmen supervised between 2 and 3 young apprentices in both the s and rural settings. Additionally, the project provided support to the training advisers in each region for the monitoring of the program and to provide pedagogical support to training centers. The overall support for the apprenticeship program included training advisers, apprenticeship masters, and apprentices; all received monthly allowances through the project. This provided income to the participants as well as economic activity in the local communities. The insertion rate surveys showed that approximately 18 percent of the direct recipients were able to open savings accounts and use the resources to augment the kits they received.

32. **The IRI that supported achievement of Objective 3 is as follows:**

- ***Number of out-of-school youth enrolled in dual apprenticeship programs as a result of project interventions (disaggregated by percentage agriculture sector and female)*** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 9,060, exceeding the 2023 end target of 9,000 by 60 participants, reaching 100.7 percent of the target. **The percentage of youth enrolled in dual apprenticeship agriculture programs** increased from the 2018 baseline of 0 to 45 percent, missing the 2023 target of 50 percent (90 percent of the target) and **the percentage of female youth** increased from 2013 baseline of 0 to 48 exceeding the 2023 target of 40 (120 percent of the target). Overall, the rural apprentices benefited from training in sectors related to fattening, skinning, poultry farming, fish farming, agricultural product processing techniques and livestock farming. The urban apprentices benefited from training in sectors related to trades such as sewing, hairdressing, auto mechanics, welding/carpentry, construction, carpentry, cooking and baking.

33. **In addition to these indicators, there were important achievements related to the SAAs**. The project supported the creation of 10 agricultural learning sites (located in Say, Sakoira, Timia, Kantché, Mainé Soroa, Diffa, Bagaroua, Arlit, Madaoua and Gouré in five regions (Agadez (Arlit and Timia), Diffa (Diffa and Mainé Soroa), Tahoua (Bagaroua and Madaoua), Tillabéry (Say and Sakoira), Zinder (Gouré and Kancthé), that included rehabilitation of premises, development of experimental facilities, equipment, and recruitment and preparation

of trainers. In addition, pursuant to Order 57[26] of April 26, 2022 and Order 211[27] of December 1, 2022, the SAAs are now considered to be agricultural trades training sites (Sites de formation aux métiers agricoles) with local Management Committees (School-Based Management Committees for Secondary Schools (Comité de Gestion des Établissements Secondaires—COGES) and functionally attached to the CFMs, under the administrative supervision of the local authorities. The SAAs were also supported by 84 trainers (49 from the training centers and 35 external). The project supported the training of 3,054 young people (51 percent of which were female) at the SAAs—54 more than the original target of 3,000 with 50 young people trained benefited from simplified business plans on a competitive basis, providing them with the necessary financing to establish their own farm sites and businesses. FAFPA with its own funds, also distributed 500 kits (i.e., poultry, fattening, goats, and horticulture) to the first 500 young apprentices that had completed their training to support them in establishing their own agricultural sites and businesses. To ensure knowledge sharing about the SAA program, the project supported a robust communications/awareness campaign that included: (i) broadcast of a humorous sketch on SAA training; (ii) broadcast on community radios in Hausa and Germa French; and (iii) Facebook and Instagram posting. Increased participation in the SAA program has been attributed to these campaigns.

34. **Overarching Achievement**. The PDO indicator **direct project beneficiaries** had increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 33,849, exceeding the 2023 end-target of 31,560 by 2,289 or 1.07 percent achievement. The **percentage females** increased from the 2013 baseline of 0 to 37 percent, missing the 2023 end target of 50 percent by 13 percentage points. There were two overarching IRIs that were relevant to the three project objectives. These were: (i) beneficiary surveys completed to support ongoing training improvement (yes/no); and (ii) labor market observatory data collection (yes/no). Both indicators were met based on the 2017 and 2021 beneficiary surveys conducted by the LMO. The reports analyzed the labor market, insertion rates for graduates by type (internships, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship) and was made available to all relevant institutions.

Justification of Overall Efficacy Rating

35. Based on the analysis presented above, overall efficacy is rated **substantial**.

C. EFFICIENCY

Assessment of Efficiency and Rating

36. **The overall efficiency of the Project is rated Modest**. This section summarizes the economic and financial analysis of the Niger Skills Development for Growth Project (P126049). The detailed economic and financial analysis is presented in Annex 4.

37. **The Nigerien labor market signals higher returns and better employment opportunities for more educated workers**. Women who completed TVET degrees experience a 130 percent increase in their monthly wage relative to women with no formal education, while men with the same level of education experience a 66 percent increase in their monthly wage compared to their peers with no formal education. In addition, TVET degrees are associated with a 24 percent increase in the probability of being in wage employment for women and a 23 percent increase for men relative to individuals with no formal education. The average monthly wage is higher in urban areas, standing at 125,052 CFA ($ 201) than in rural areas 71,115 CFA ($114) for graduates from TVET. The services sector yields increased monthly salaries 126,107 CFA ($203) compared to the industry 79,698 CFA ($129) and agriculture

[26]Order No. 0057/MET/FP/SG/DGFPA/IP/DAFPA/R/DL of 26 April 2022 attached training centers to CFMs.
[27] Order No. 00211/MEN/A/EP/PLN/SG/DGFPA/IP/DAFPA/R/DL set the conditions for the creation and opening of SFMAs and determining the organization ad modalities of their operation and order for the establishment and opening of SFMAs.

sectors 30,628 CFA ($50). [28] However, educated men are more likely to receive better economic returns than educated women indicating gender earning inequalities in the Nigerien labor market. For instance, men who completed TVET degrees earn 121,541 CFA ($195) per month on average, while women with the same level of education earn 86,860 CFA ($140) per month on average. The Nigerien labor market strongly responds to investments in education supporting the economic rationale for investments in youths' education and skills development.

38. **The appraisal stage economic and financial analysis found the overall NPV and internal rate of return were acceptable.** The cost-benefit analysis focused on four main sub-components 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2 and generated a range of Net Present Values (NPV) and Internal Rates of Return (IRR). The overall project's net present value was estimated at $42.6 million with an internal rate of return of 10 percent under the base scenario with a 4 percent discount rate. (See Annex 4 for details.) While the Project received an AF of $50 million in June 2018, the cost-benefit analysis conducted in 2013 at the appraisal stage was not updated. The ICR cost-benefit analysis finds that the investments are efficient. Both internal rates of return and net present value of costs and benefits for all components combined indicate that the project is economically viable at the end of the project implementation based on actual beneficiaries and costs of the project. The present discounted value of benefits for the overall project stands at $216.8 million while the present discounted value of costs is estimated at $46.5 million. The corresponding net present value (NPV) of the project is estimated at $170.3 million. The internal rate of return (IRR) associated with this NPV is 11 percent which is slightly above the IRR estimated at appraisal (10 percent). The benefit-cost ratio is 4.7 at the ICR stage. Thus, although some benefits are not quantifiable, the NPV of quantified benefits is larger than the NPV of costs confirming the efficiency of investments undertaken under the project.

Table 1: Net Present Value (NPV) in millions of USD and Internal Rate of Return (IRR)

I. At the appraisal stage

	Component 1		Component 2		
	Sub-comp. 1.1	Sub-comp. 1.2	Sub-comp. 2.1	Sub-comp. 2.2	Total Project
IRR	9%	54%	14%	6%	10%
NPV	$37.0	$0.9	$4.3	$0.4	$42.6

Source: Project Appraisal Document - Annex 6 Economic and Financial Analysis p.71-p.80

II. At the ICR stage

	Component 1		Component 2		
	Sub-comp. 1.1	Sub-comp. 1.2	Sub-comp. 2.1	Sub-comp. 2.2	Total Project
IRR	10%	14%	13%	5%	11%
Discounted cost (present value of costs)	$29.9	$3.6	$9.7	$3.3	$46.5
Present value of incremental benefits	$194.6	$47.3	$85.8	$5.2	$216.8
NPV	$164.7	$43.7	$76.1	$1.9	$170.3
Benefit-Cost ratio	6.5	13.1	8.9	1.6	4.7

Source: Author's estimations using Harmonized household survey (EHCVM) 2021 data and actual project costs and beneficiaries at the end of implementation

[28] Exchange Rate Effective November 17, 2024, US$ 1 = 622.64652; source: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=XOF.

39. **Due to the AF of $50 million approved in June 2018, the number of beneficiaries of the project increased sharply driving the large differences observed in the NPVs between appraisal and ICR stages**. The original project budget amounted to $30 million in 2013. Once the AF has been approved, the project budget reached $80 million in June 2018. The AF aimed to scale up activities that had been successfully implemented under the project parent and to finance new activities contributing to achieving the PDO. Therefore, the number of beneficiaries increased significantly. For instance, the cost-benefit analysis at appraisal in 2013 for sub-component 1.1 was conducted with an assumption of 3,000 students, while the number of beneficiaries for this sub-component reached 8,817 students at the end of the project corresponding nearly to a threefold increase. The cost-benefit analysis at the ICR stage relies on the actual beneficiaries at the project closing date explaining the increased NPV of the project at the ICR stage compared to the appraisal stage. The NPV of the project at the ICR stage ($170.3 million) is four times higher than the NPV estimated at the appraisal stage ($42.6 million).

40. **Despite significant achievements, the exogenous shock of COVID-19 adversely affected the Nigerien education system and economic activities, leading to some inefficiencies during the implementation of the project**. For instance, the government closed all educational institutions on March 28, 2020, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This situation negatively affected more than 3.7 million students and more than 80,000 teachers. [29] School closure negatively impacted the learning outcomes and well-being of students and youths, especially those who live in the poorest communities. The construction and renovation of TVET institutions experienced delays and the provision of heavy equipment to the centers due to the disruption in international supply chains during the pandemic. Furthermore, several enterprises and informal manufacturers faced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting their capacity to hire some youths who benefited from the training program. Overall, the Covid-19 crisis and the coup in July 2023 adversely impacted the implementation of the project and delayed several activities, leading to some inefficiencies. Based on the analysis presented above, overall efficiency under the project is rated **modest.**

D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING

	Rating
Relevance	**High**
Overall Efficacy	**Substantial**
Objective 1: Improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training	Substantial
Objective 2: Improve the effectiveness of short-term skills development	Substantial
Objective 3: Improve effectiveness of apprenticeship programs	Substantial
Efficiency	**Modest**
Overall Rating	**Moderately Satisfactory**

[29] 177,822 students are in preschools, 2,666,748 are in primary schools, 665,610 are in secondary (cycle de base 2 (*collège*), 58,000 cycle de base 2 (*lycée*), 80,125 are in tertiary education, and 64,327 are in TVET institutes.

E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Gender

41. **The relevant project indicators were gender disaggregated, thereby ensuring that implementation focused on improving gender equity throughout the project.** As indicated, the targets related to the percentage of female participants were exceeded in five out of six cases.[30] To increase girls' participation, the project: (i) stepped up communication campaigns at local level with the support of a specialist firm, which carried out information and awareness-raising activities for young girls using female role models to motivate them to participate in training programs; and (ii) introduced specific benefits for girls, in particular an increased subsistence allowance for women with dependent children.. Additionally, women's economic activity increased at the community level due to their participation in the apprenticeship programs with the provision of monthly allowances and the entrepreneurship programs that provided seed funds for business and job creation. Moreover, the SAAs created childcare spaces for women beneficiaries to encourage their participation. Finally, the project: (i) supported Gender-based Violence (GBV) prevention awareness raising campaigns; (ii) establishment of a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) for GBV; (iii) provided training for the national staff on the GRM; (iv) conducted sensitization workshops at the local level; and (v) conducted GBV awareness raising on the code of conduct for participants. Although the project focused on increasing gender parity, it remains a challenge given that skills-training and TVET programs have not reached gender parity and programs are still geared more toward urban areas and male participation.

Institutional Strengthening

42. **Institutional strengthening was multifaceted and foundational.** The MEPT capacity for overall project management was strengthened through the on-the-job training of the MEPT PCU staff which had overall responsibility for coordination of all project components and activities. In addition, their capacity was strengthened in the areas of procurement, financial management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and reporting based on M&E data. As indicated, the project supported technical assistance in the development of the various legal texts governing the TVET system, that strengthened MEPTs capacity in preparing legal text. The project-supported TVET center infrastructure was improved, and the capacity of their managers and staff to operate them, and their trainers/faculty to teach, were strengthened. Capacity was also strengthened in the development of competency-based training programs. The project supported ANPE: (i) in the expansion of its territorial coverage with the opening and strengthening of Diffa, Dosso, Tahoua satellite offices; (ii) to strengthen the capacity of employment counsellors in intermediation, information and guidance; (iii) to improve the implementation conditions of the internships program; and (iv) to design and start implementing a system of monitoring youth, including a computer application for regular personalized monitoring of youth. The FAFPA staff have been strengthened by the project's focus on provision of apprenticeships and the on-demand training programs that increased FAFPA's connections with the private sector. FAFPA also improved their capacity in support of business plan development and provision of seed funding for the CPAs. The capacity of CCIN was strengthened through the development of an entrepreneurship training program that also had a CPA component. These achievements provide a strong foundation for further institutional strengthening in the TVET sub-sector.

Mobilizing Private Sector Financing

Not applicable.

[30] The average level of achievement was 1.58 times the target. The business plan competition achieved only 88 percent of its target.

Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity

43. **The project did not include any specific impact measurement on poverty reduction and shared prosperity**. However, the project facilitated the acquisition of skills for young people in Niger and provided seed funds to establish small start-up business for project beneficiaries. The project contributed to poverty reduction and shared prosperity by providing a level of quality education and skills development to the beneficiaries which improved their employment opportunities as evidenced by the project supported surveys. Indeed, the various training courses, internships, competitive and simplified business plans and start-up costs enabled young people to obtain paid employment and self-employment, which helped to improve the living conditions of these young people and their families. However, unemployment and underemployment are still a concern for the youth in Niger. To mitigate these ongoing risks associated with unemployment for the youth population, Niger will need to continue to improve the relevance of its TVET programs, continue to connect with the private sector, and encourage more productive employment throughout the economy. This is particularly true given that, Niger still needs to make considerable progress in its human capital development to fully realize its economic potential and allow the country to further reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity. Niger is in the lower tail of the distribution and has not made notable progress across the Human Capital Index releases.

Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts

Not Applicable.

III. KEY FACTORS AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

44. **Relevance of Project Design.** The project's design had analytical underpinnings and was informed by lessons learned from other operations in the sub-sector in Africa. Some of these lessons included the importance of: (i) involvement of employers, flexibility in delivery tailored to beneficiary needs and the right skills mix as some of the key determinants of success of education and training programs; (ii) a strategy, tailored to youth characteristics, to foster entrepreneurship for youth, particularly in the Niger context where youth face multiple constraints in transitioning from training to creating their own enterprise; and (iii) implementation choices to achieve a balance between short-term results and longer-term institutional strengthening objectives. Moreover, the project was designed to address two main types of challenges in a holistic manner. The first type related to job creation where there were limited options for young people. The second type was to address skills mismatch within the system. This approach will be even more relevant to a post-crisis Niger context.

45. T**he theory of change behind the project was sound and the selection of key targets was appropriate.** The PDO was focused and appropriate given the need to improve the employability and increase job opportunities for the youth of Niger. The objective was outcome-oriented and was appropriately pitched for the government capacity and development status of skills training and TVET education in Niger. The RF was developed to measure all the PDO areas using measurable indicators available at the time of project design. The technical design of the project drew from globally recognized approaches for developing effective TVET interventions that are aligned with international best practice as well as for fragile countries. The component activities as inputs to achieve the PDO were comprehensive and selected in close collaboration with the government to provide the means at the national and institutional levels to bring about maximum improvements in the areas of project focus – skills development and private sector led job opportunities. The government also used the project to increase and improve the capacity of institutions throughout the sub-sector. The project design included an M&E system set-up and operated

as part of the project provided the monitoring data to guide implementation and make implementation adjustments if necessary. (See additional information under M&E section.)

46. **Project Financing.** The project was financed by an International Development Association (IDA) grant in the amount of $30.0 million equivalent and an additional financing IDA Grant in the amount of $50.0 million equivalent for a total project funding of $80.0 million equivalent. The instrument used was Investment Project Financing (IPF). A programmatic approach was not selected for the project because this approach could not respond to the need for targeted short-term investments, as well as the need to carefully track individual activities and expenditures for this new investment sub-sector operation for Niger. Furthermore, the MEPT was a newly established ministry and in the absence of a strong fiduciary team, the programmatic approach was deemed inappropriate for this operation. The IPF allowed for provision of the needed technical assistance and institutional strengthening approaches necessary to build the capacity within the government to implement youth employment schemes and skills development.

47. **Implementation Arrangements**. The implementation arrangements were mainstreamed within government structures to build stronger ownership of the project's intended reforms and to build capacity within the new MEPT. The arrangements included technical assistance to support civil servants' responsibilities and strengthen the executing ministries' capacities. The arrangements were aligned with the TVET operational structure, which made the arrangements somewhat complex. The project established a Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Planning and Economy with representatives from MEPT, the Ministry of Population, Gender, and Children's Protection to make sure the gender dimension of the project was maintained, Ministry of Tourism, and Ministry of Youth, representatives from involved civil society organization, and the CCIN. The PCU was staffed through the deployment of existing expertise in the MEPT supported by an additional team of consultants that included a project coordinator, procurement and financial management (FM) specialists, an accountant, and M&E specialist. Component 1 was implemented through its TVET directorate–DGFP with participation from ANPE which was under MEPT and was best positioned to help support improved matching between supply and demand in the labor market. Component 2 was implemented by FAFPA as the lead public organization for the implementation of apprenticeships and short-term in-service training programs, in partnership with the Private Federation of Artisans (Federation Nationale des Artisans du Niger), and training providers called upon to deliver complementary training modules. The CCIN, under oversight and fiduciary responsibility of MEPT, was responsible for implementing sub-component 2.3 Promotion of Entrepreneurship. Component 3 was implemented by the MEPT and PCU.

48. **Risks and Mitigation Measures.** Key risks and appropriate mitigation measures were identified during preparation. The overall risk was rated substantial because of the volatile political and social environment as well as weak implementation capacity of the institutions in Niger particularly, weak institutional capacity related to financial management and procurement and poor governance. Project risk mitigation included: (i) vigilance with regard to security readiness, (ii) inclusion of third party consultants to provide monitoring, (iii) digital communication to the extent possible; (iv) payment of stipends to trainees through direct bank transfers to avoid fraud and corruption; (v) provision of technical assistance to build capacity throughout the system; (vi) inclusion of FM procedures in the project implementation manual (PIM), customization of accounting software for the project and recruitment of external consultants to carry out quarterly internal control reviews and physical verifications; and (vii) recruitment of a procurement specialists, inclusion of detailed procurement guidelines and instruction in the PIM, and capacity building through extensive training of all staff involved in procurement.

B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

49. **Project implementation progress (IP) was rated moderately satisfactory (MS) and satisfactory (S) throughout most of the project implementation.** There were various factors that played a role in the challenges and successes of the project.

50. **Factors subject to government and/or implementing entities control.** Overall, the success and achievements of the project are due to the effective and efficient work of the PCU, MEPT and the other implementing units, with support from technical assistance. PCU's proactivity and strong commitment to the project greatly contributed to the implementation of the project despite some challenges with implementation. However, the rehabilitation of the seven TVET sites could not begin as original envisioned at the time of the AF, due to certain difficulties linked to the acquisition of equipment (very long delay) and delays in the rehabilitation work on these TVET institutes and an implementation schedule that was not again compatible with the remaining time for project implementation. To address this challenge, the MEPT and Bank agreed to restructure the project by dropping construction of four centers, maintaining focus on vocational training centers (which did not require major renovation or equipment) to train youth through grants based on approved that supported the project's objectives. These centers were the CFPP of Niamey and the two CFJAs the 20 CFMs in the agricultural sector. As indicated, another challenge was the on-demand program which encountered difficulties due to the limited ability of companies to absorb the trainees and adjustments were made to mitigate some of this challenge during the restructuring by focusing on training with entrepreneurship training and development of simplified business plans and granting of start-up costs to promote self-employment of trained youth. There were also challenges with coordination of the various implementing units. As indicated, there were different actors (both public and private) for the PCU to coordinate. To ensure the successful completion of the project, the MEPT and PCU organized monthly meetings with ANPE, FAFPA, and the units in MEPT (i.e. Director of Internships, Director of School Construction/Civil Works, and Director of Private Sector Engagement). Procurement capacity was a challenge for implementation and the government and Bank worked to build capacity, and the MEPT/PCU hired additional procurement staff to ensure the completion of activities.

51. **Factors subject to Bank control.** The project benefitted from the fact that there was a consistent Bank team that supported implementation, both local and international. This allowed the team to interact regularly with the PCU/MEPT and other government implementation units, which facilitated the successful implementation of the project. The Bank's procurement staff provided on-going technical support which led to the implementation of all project contracts. There was a formal mid-term review of the project in April 2017 that confirmed the PDO and, project components remained highly relevant to the Niger context. The Bank also supported the government's request for additional financing to scale up the successful activities under the parent project. The Bank supported the 2020 restructuring to: (i) extend the project by 12 months to complete project activities that were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and (ii) make needed adjustments to project activities that were delayed due to capacity and funding constraints, particularly related to the new construction of facilities at the ten TVET centers added at the time of the AF. As indicated, the Bank also supported the project and government through the Niger Building Institutions and Human Capital DPO (P175256). Finally, the Bank team worked closely with the PCU to ensure final delivery of equipment to training centers because of the July 2023 coup d'état during which World Bank operations were suspended.

52. **Exogenous factors.** In March 2020, schools and government offices were closed in Niger for three months due to the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted more than 3.7 million students and 80,000 teachers. Niger developed a COVID-19 response plan and received support from other donors to implement the response plan. As indicated, adjustments were also made to the project to support the digitization of training content and allowed for the inclusion

of COVID-19 protection materials in IIPs. This exogenous event led to the 12-month request for the project extension to November 30, 2023. Finally, the July 2023 coup d'état delayed delivery of some of the agricultural equipment to the training centers due to country border closures. The equipment was kept in Burkina Faso until it could be delivered in January 2024. As indicated, the government requested a retroactive extension of the closing date to June 30, 2024 so that the equipment could be delivered and paid for using remaining project resources.

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

M&E Design

53. **The links between the inputs, outputs, and outcomes and the PDO were sound**. The original PDO was clearly specified at appraisal and was not modified at the time of the AF or 2020 restructuring. The M&E design was robust and developed to monitor and report on progress toward meeting the targets of the PDO and intermediate indicators in the RF through regular routine monitoring and reporting by the PCU. The M&E design was not modified at the time of the AF. The data collected was also to be disaggregated by gender to track the female participants of the programs, to ascertain whether the female enrollment targets were being fulfilled. The project design also included the development of an LMO that, when functional, would support collection of information on: (i) labor market trends; (ii) labor market insertion of graduates and trainees of the skills training programs; and (iii) feedback from employers. This was to be complemented by beneficiary surveys to track employer satisfaction with trainees, youth satisfaction and employment status of beneficiaries. The design also indicated that impact evaluations would be carried out for the on-demand training and entrepreneurship sub-components. Finally, the M&E design included efforts to improve the education management information system (EMIS) within the MEPT to help manage the TVET sub-sectors.

M&E Implementation

54. **Reporting of data for the RF indicators was done throughout the life of the project.** The selected performance indicators were tracked regularly, and the RF was updated on a timely basis for implementation support missions including the mid-term review. LMO also conducted two beneficiary surveys (2017 and 2021). During the first phase of the project, the implementing agencies faced difficulties in collecting and managing data related to youth training due to capacity constraints. However, with strong and continuous support from the PCU, the project-supported agencies' M&E capacity was strengthened, and the PCU was able to collect the data needed to systematically track and evaluate the project's overall performance. The LMO conducted two beneficiary surveys. The project also helped develop a platform and needed software to provide a consolidated database and integrate all data from the implementing agencies. This platform enabled more effective decision-making by ensuring that data was centralized and readily accessible for analysis and planning. Beginning in 2020 there were monthly meetings between the implementing agencies to review progress and make decisions to improve project performance. These regular meetings provided a forum to address challenges proactively, leveraging data insights to adjust strategies and optimize results. In 2020, the project also recruited an international consultant to support the PCU in designing and consolidating the project's new M&E mechanism and information system. The project used Kobo Toolbox software for remote monitoring of the Bank's project activities. Additionally, approximately 95 percent of PRODEC's activities were integrated into the Bank's remote activity monitoring platform (GEMS). Finally, a consortium of two firms were recruited to carry out a final evaluation of the project. The original impact evaluations envisioned were not conducted due to security issues and capacity constraints within the MEPT. Despite these challenges, the enhanced M&E mechanisms contributed to adaptive management, enabling the project to mitigate risks and sustain progress.

M&E Utilization

55. **Data was made available regularly for the RF and was used to inform the analysis of the ICR**. The EMIS system is being used to manage the TVET system including enrollment in TVET institutions and vocational training centers. Additionally, EMIS data is being used to inform training programs and supply and demand issues within the sub-sector. The continuity post-project is encouraging for the development of the TVET system. This data-driven approach facilitated evidence-based decisions to refine training curricula and address skill mismatches in the labor market. The sustained utilization of the EMIS highlights its critical role in supporting decision-making processes and adapting to evolving sectoral challenges.

Justification of Overall Rating of Quality of M&E

56. **Based on the analysis above, the overall rating for M&E is substantial.**

B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

57. **Safeguards.** The project was classified as Category 'B' "partial assessment" as potential adverse environmental and social impacts associated with the construction of classrooms are generally less adverse, small-scale and site specific, thus manageable to an accepted level. The ESMF was disclosed in a timely manner at the Bank's InfoShop and in the country on March 6, 2013, which afforded potential beneficiaries and affected persons access to relevant project information. The AF triggered Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11) due to the small-scale civil works added that could result in the unearthing of physical cultural resources. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared by the borrower and Environment and Social Management Plans (ESMP) and redisclosed. The project had adequate safeguards capacity at the PCU level, with a full-time Social and Environmental Safeguards specialist who followed implementation closely and updated the Bank's safeguards team regularly. Whenever issues arose, the Bank and PCU safeguards teams worked together to resolve them quickly. For instance, the Bank safeguards team noted instances where construction workers did not wear safety equipment as required in their contract, or that hygiene and social distancing guidance were not adequately followed. This led to a downgrading of the safeguards rating from satisfactory to moderately satisfactory in April 2017. Once these issues were addressed, the safeguards' rating returned to being satisfactory for the remainder of the project. In terms of institutional strengthening, the project strengthened the institutional and regulatory mechanisms to address environmental and social issues identified in the framework instruments and improved the safeguards performance of the project.

58. **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).** In May 2020, the project successfully established a functional GRM and developed a Complaint Management Mechanism Manual (CMMM) to provide standards and procedures to manage project related claims, and minimize all social risk associated with the project. Litigation Settlement Committees were set up by the project at the SAAs and all implementing agencies and equipped with tools to record complaints and communicate with local populations as well as constructions sites. Furthermore, the MEPT acquired a GRM tool and created a dedicated line to automatically record all telephone calls from people affected by the project's activities and systematically track and record all received and resolved grievances. Recommendation was made by the Bank to pay special attention to issues related to GBV, especially on construction sites, and ensure that GBV-related safeguards measures were implemented. During implementation, the MEPT provided a bi-annual compliance report on the compliance of project activities and improvements made regarding the project's adherence to environmental and social safeguards policies and performance standard. Additionally, there were no significant GRM complaints recorded; most received through the toll-free number were questions.

59. **Financial Management.** The FM arrangements were adequate and remained unchanged throughout project implementation and FM performance was satisfactory overall. The PCU was in compliance with financial reporting requirements as follows: (i) unaudited interim financial reports (IFRs) were deemed satisfactory and submitted on time; (ii) the external auditor recruitment was finalized by the project's closing; and (iii) external financial audits were successfully carried out, and the reports submitted on time were of unqualified opinion (clean reports), underscoring the fact that the project financial resources had been properly managed and judiciously used for their intended purposes. During implementation, FM supervisions identified areas needing to be strengthened such as record keeping/statement reconciliation and advance justification, which were all satisfactorily resolved. However, these minor challenges did not negatively affect the project. By the retroactive closing date of June 30, 2024, 99.62 percent of the project's total financial resources of $80.924 million equivalent had successfully been disbursed. There were $.924 million equivalent in SDR:US$ exchange rate gains and approximately $0.382 million equivalent undisbursed and returned to the Bank.

60. **Procurement.** The Bank's procurement team conducted regular implementation support missions and found project performance to be moderately satisfactory overall with two exceptions —the August 2020 and August 2022 procurement risk assessment, which rated procurement as moderately unsatisfactory. The downgrades were related to weaknesses in the procurement processes and limited procurement capacity within the PCU. As recommended by the Bank, the PCU hired an experienced procurement specialist and began to take a more central role in supporting other implementation units in procurement activities. Additionally, there were challenges with filing procurement documentation in the Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP). By March 2023, the Bank's procurement risk assessment rated procurement as moderately satisfactory because the PCU had hired the procurement specialist and had made significant progress in archiving documentation in the STEP. During implementation, Bank procurement staff worked closely with the project management unit and provided additional technical and financial support to alleviate procurement challenges.

C. BANK PERFORMANCE

Quality at Entry

61. The project preparation team ensured that the parent project's design was closely aligned with the government's PDDE 2003-2013; the 2008-2011 CAS, FY13-FY16 Country Partnership Strategy and the government's 3N Initiative: To Improve Food Security of April 18, 2012. The parent project's design, and key indicators were completely aligned with the PDO. The AF maintained the original PDO and scaled up important aspects of the parent project. All the AF activities continued to be closely aligned with Bank's FY18-FY22 CPF and PDES, 2022-2026.As indicated, the PDO and supporting project activities were based on the 2011 World Development Report and internationally recognized research that confirmed the critical role of job creation for vulnerable youth in fragile countries. The design included all the necessary ingredients to support skills development and address the mismatch between supply and demand through the provision of training, internships, dual apprenticeship programs and seed money for entrepreneurs. The design teams identified the appropriate risks, incorporated design features to mitigate them, and included the relevant technical specialists to support project development. Preparation of the project was a consultative process with the government and the Bank. Based on this, quality at entry is rated **satisfactory**.

Quality of Supervision

62. The Bank's implementation support missions were all staffed with education, fiduciary and safeguards specialists as well as consultants with needed technical expertise. The project team was regularly and actively engaged

in supporting the government implementing teams in its efforts to implement the project. Whenever implementation challenges arose, the Bank team worked with the PCU/MEPT to find appropriate solutions, particularly related to the challenges experienced in the fragile country context with capacity constraints. When the COVID-19 pandemic impacted implementation, the Bank team organized virtual meetings with the PCU to ensure that implementation continued where possible despite interruptions and delays related to COVID-19. As indicated, the Bank team supported the government's 2020 restructuring request and a 12-month extension of the closing date to accommodate implementation delays due to COVID-19. Moreover, the Bank and government used DPO (P175256) to support the project after the 2020 restructuring and post COVID-19. The Bank also worked to support the PCU/MEPT to systematically close out the project in an orderly fashion after the 2023 coup d'etat, including the retroactive extension to allow delivery and payment of the final set of training center equipment. The implementation support teams consistently reported on FM, procurement and safeguards progress and worked with the PCU/MEPT and other implementation agencies, to build their capacity in these areas. The missions also systematically documented project progress in aide-memories, back-to-office reports, and ISRs, all of which kept Bank management informed of progress and provided the foundation for the ICR analysis. The Bank's steadfast and proactive implementation support to the government ensured the successful achievement of the project's envisaged outputs and outcomes and the institutionalization of project activities. Based on this, the quality of supervision is rated **satisfactory.**

Justification of Overall Rating of Bank Performance

63. **Based on the above, the overall Bank performance is rated satisfactory.**

D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

64. **The risk to sustaining the development outcome is High.** The project was able to impact the TVET sub-sector through: (i) development of policies and decrees; (ii) improvements in TVET facilities (centers, CFMs, SAAs); (iii) institutionalization of project activities related to competency based curricula, (iv) development of entrepreneurship training modules and development of business plans, (v) private sector involvement on TVET training school boards, (vi) linkages with the private sector through internships, (vii) SAA development through community involvement, and (viii) development of the EMIS system. These were all important contributions to the sub-sector. Additionally, after the coup d'état, the government made employment one of the pillars of its strategy. However, the government, at the same time, reduced the budget for TVET due to the lack of resource mobilization, which will potentially contribute to the decrease in the quality of training and the sustainability of the project's achievements (i.e., the operation of the Trade Training Centers, which require the regular supply of materials for the apprenticeship of youth). Additionally, the overarching risks to development outcomes are the continuing political tension and conflicts within Niger. Over the last decade, poor education outcomes combined with relatively high unemployment and poverty rates have made Niger's large youth demographic particularly susceptible to ongoing political tensions. To mitigate these ongoing risks, Niger will need to continue to encourage more productive employment throughout the economy, including for the large number of self-employed, informal workers. In addition, continued implementation of the project reforms and the longevity of equipment and construction activities financed by the project will depend on the allocation of adequate government resources to support the sub-sector. Finally, in January 2025, the Bank will begin discussions with the government on the development of a new project that will focus on youth employment with both the social protection and education teams.

V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

65. **Lesson 1. Skills development projects can be successful in fragile countries when project designs include flexible short-term training that can reach the maximum number of young people in rural areas.** The project's initial design accommodated the country's immediate needs of providing employment for the unemployed and underemployed youth in rural and urban areas by providing decentralized skills training with certification upon completion and with opportunities for apprenticeships. At the time of the AF, this was scaled up to reach many more young people, particularly in the agricultural sector, which dominates the economy of Niger. The skills training was flexible to accommodate the personal work and life situations of the beneficiaries and reached most people.

66. **Lesson 2. Entrepreneurship training in value chain sectors, seed funds, and sustained entrepreneurship training are critical for new entrepreneurs to begin and sustain their businesses.** In addition, effective selection of youth benefiting from entrepreneurship programs should be based on transparent selection criteria. The PRODEC included entrepreneurship training that included the preparation of business plans as well as seed funds for beneficiaries selected to implement their business plans. The PRODEC supported value chain sectors, which was an important design feature and was successful in creating new small businesses and increased employment. Moreover, support for coaches was an important feature that provided ongoing support to young entrepreneurs and their start-ups.

67. **Lesson 3. The establishment of an M&E system should always be prioritized to ensure that the achievements and challenges of a project are well-documented and monitored.** This allows governments and project teams to enhance their overall effectiveness and impact and helps them make needed mid-course corrections and/or modifications to activities. The PRODEC project successfully established a sound M&E system throughout the different implementation units which played an important role in monitoring the project throughout implementation. Additionally, the project used GEMS for remote monitoring of the project's activities.

68. **Lesson 4. Dual apprenticeship programs can be an effective approach to fostering job market integration and/or self-employment.** The dual apprenticeship programs in urban and rural areas combined theoretical training and literacy courses which provided beneficiaries with the skills and training to open local businesses, improve the insertion rates of young participants and strengthened partnership with the private sector, particularly in the agriculture sector.

69. **Lesson 5. Strong private sector engagement is essential for developing and maintaining the relevance of skills training programs.** The project supported the engagement of the private sector's participation on training center boards and through private sector led job creation strategies to improve employment opportunities for youth. Maintaining strong public-private partnerships through the inclusion of business leaders within the TVET governance structure and system was critical. Such partnerships will help instill private sector confidence in the training programs offered as well as the beneficiary graduates.

70. **Lesson 6. Promoting girls' participation despite cultural barriers is essential**. Overall, 37 percent of women benefited from the project, which is a significant share even if the target of 50 percent was missed. Furthermore, participation of women varied greatly depending on the type of training (technical, vocational or apprenticeship) and the area of training. Cultural barriers, which are still very strong in Niger, do not encourage girls or women to choose so-called "male trades" such as construction or mechanics. Instead, women are more likely to be found in the agricultural sector. In order to increase girls' participation, the project strengthened communication campaigns at the local level with information and awareness-raising activities aimed at young girls, using female role models to motivate

them to participate in training programs. The project also introduced specific benefits for girls, including an increase in the subsistence allowance for women with dependent children. Combining these initiatives with others already implemented in the social protection sector (scholarships, income-generating activities, joint sex education, etc.) could further strengthen girls/women's participation and empowerment.

71. **Lesson 7. Cross-sectoral collaboration between education and agriculture, or education and social protection, can be an effective strategy for expanding entrepreneurship and supporting job creation and sustainability in the agriculture sector.** The implementation of project activities was satisfactory in the agriculture training centers. However, to strengthen the creation of self-employment for trained youth, and to sustain their own businesses, it is desirable that beneficiaries be able to benefit from follow-up and support beyond their vocational training. Practical cooperation with other projects financed by the Bank (agricultural and social protection projects) and other technical and financial partners, as well as the government, would be necessary to strengthen the sustainability and impact of this project's achievements in the agricultural sector.

ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS

A. RESULTS FRAMEWORK

PDO Indicators by Outcomes

Not Categorized								
Indicator Name	Baseline		Closing Period (Original)		Closing Period (Current)		Actual Achieved at Completion	
	Result	Month/Year	Result	Month/Year	Result	Month/Year	Result	Month/Year
sub-indicator for "Youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the Project in priority sectors": percentage in the Agriculture Sector (Percentage)	0.00	Nov/2013						
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded. Note: this is a sub-indicator of "Youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the Project in priority sectors" but due to a system glitch, features as a stand-alone indicator.					
Youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the Project in priority sectors (%) (Percentage)	0.00	Nov/2013						
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Percentage of graduating females (Percentage)							46.00	
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Direct project beneficiaries (Number)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Female beneficiaries (Percentage)					50.00		37.00	
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Short-term vocationally trained youth who are employed or self-employed (overall and by sector) (Percentage)	0.00	Apr/2013			50.00	Nov/2023		
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
							93.00	Jun/2023

Out of school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs (Percentage)	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded					
Percentage of youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs in the agriculture sector (Percentage)					70.00			
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Percentage of females (Percentage)	0.00						93.00	
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Number of beneficiaries trained in entrepreneurship (Number)	0.00	Apr/2013			5,000.00	Nov/2023		
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					

Intermediate Indicators by Components

Not Categorized								
Indicator Name	Baseline		Closing Period (Original)		Closing Period (Current)		Actual Achieved at Completion	
	Result	Month/Year	Result	Month/Year	Result	Month/Year	Result	Month/Year
sub-indicator for "Youth enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the project in priority sectors": percentage in the Agriculture Sector (Percentage)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target missed. Note: this is a sub-indicator for "Youth enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the project in priority sectors" but due to a system glitch, features as a stand-alone indicator.					
sub-indicator for "Youth enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the Project in priority sectors" - Percentage female (Percentage)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded. Note: this is actually a sub-indicator for "Youth enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the project in priority sectors" but due to a system glitch features as a sub-component of the previous indicator.					
					8,300.00	Nov/2023		

Youth enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the Project in priority sectors (of which in the agriculture sector) (%) (Number)	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Trainers trained in the 4 priority sectors as a result of project intervention (Number)							161.00	Nov/2023
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded. The key priority areas also included the agriculture sector which was added at the time of the AF.					
Trained youth unemployed for more than two years requalified as a result of project intervention (Number)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target missed.					
Tertiary and secondary technical graduates connected with potential employers as a result of project intervention (Number)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target missed.					
Number of private training institutions supported by the Project (Number)	0.00	Dec/2020					45.00	Nov/2023
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (Number)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning - Female (Number)							8,817.00	
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Out of school youth enrolled in dual apprenticeship programs as a result of project intervention (of which in the agriculture sector) (%) (of which females) (%) (Number)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Out of school youth enrolled in the dual apprenticeship programs in the agriculture sector (Percentage)	0.00				50.00			
	Comments on achieving targets		Target missed.					

Percentage female (Percentage)	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Out of school youth completing on-demand technical training as a result of project intervention (Number)	0.00	Apr/2013			1,500.00	Nov/2023	923.00	Nov/2023
	Comments on achieving targets		Target missed.					
Number of prizewinner youth in the business plan competition (of which females) (Number)							609	Nov/2023
	Comments on achieving targets		Target exceeded.					
Percentage of females (Percentage)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target missed.					
Number of trainers in entrepreneurship programs trained as a result of project intervention (Number)								
	Comments on achieving targets		Target met.					
Beneficiary surveys completed to support on-going training improvement (Yes/No)							Yes	Nov/2023
	Comments on achieving targets		Target met.					
Labor Market Observatory Data Collection (Yes/No)	No	Apr/2013						
	Comments on achieving targets		Target met.					

KEY OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT	
Objective/Outcome 1: Improve the effectiveness of formal technical and vocational training in priority sectors	
Outcome Indicators	O1. Youth graduating in the TVET institutions supported by the project in priority sectors (target 65%) [of which female (target 30%) and agriculture sector (target 65%)]
Intermediate Results Indicators	IRI1. Youth enrolled in the TVET institutions supported by the project in priority areas (target 8,300) [of which female (target 30%) and agriculture sector (target 60%)] IRI2. Trainers trained in the four priority sectors as a result of project interventions (target 70) IRI3. Trained youth unemployed for more than two years requalified as a result of project interventions (target 600) IRI4. Tertiary and secondary technical graduates connected with potential employers as a result of project interventions (target 6,500) IRI5. Private training institutions sponsored by the project (target 15) IRI6. Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (target 17,300) [of which female (target 5,190)
Key Outputs (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	**Component 1: Improving effectiveness of formal training** O1. 88% or 135% of target IRI1. 8,817 or 106% of target (of which female 41% or 137% of target) (of which agriculture sector 35% or 58% of target) IRI2. 161 or 230% of target IRI3. 499 or 83% of target IRI4. 6,230 or 96% of target IRI5. 45 or 300% of target IRI6. 20,572 or 119% of target
Objective/Outcome 2: Improve the effectiveness of short-term skills development in priority sectors	

Outcome Indicators	O1. Short-term vocationally trained youth who are employed or self-employed (overall and by sector) (overall target 50%) O2. Beneficiaries trained in entrepreneurship (target 5,000)
Intermediate Results Indicators	IRI1. Out-of-school youth completing on-demand technical training as a result of project interventions (target 1,500) IRI2. Prizewinner youth in the business plan competition (target 300) [of which female (target 40%) IRI3. Trainers in entrepreneurship programs trained as a result of project interventions (target 90)
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2)	**Component 2: Strengthening short-term skills development and apprenticeships programs**. O1. 51 or 102% of target O2. 7,127 or 143% of target IRI1. 923 or 62% of target IRI2. 609 or 203% of target IRI3. 90 or 100% of target
Objective/Outcome 3: Improve effectiveness of apprenticeship programs in priority sectors	
Outcome Indicators	O1. Percentage of out-of-school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs (target 80%) [of which female (target 40%)] [of which agriculture sector (target 70%)]
Intermediate Results Indicators	IRI1. Number of out-of-school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs (target 9,000) [of which female (target 40%)] [of which agriculture sector (target 50%)]
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2)	**Component 2: Strengthening short-term skills development and apprenticeships programs**. O1. 93% or 116% of target (of which female 93% or 232% of target) (of which agriculture sector 94% or 134% of target) IRI1. 9,060 or 100.7 percent of target (of which female 48% or 120 percent of target) (of which agriculture sector 45% or 90% of target)
Overarching Indicators	

Outcome Indicators	O1. Direct project beneficiaries (target 31,560) [of which female (target 50%)] (**Core PDO**)
Intermediate Results Indicators	IRI1. Labor market Observatory data collection (target yes) IRI2. Beneficiary surveys completed to support ongoing training (target yes)
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2)	**Component 3: Institutional capacity strengthening and monitoring and evaluation.** IRI1. Yes, or 100 percent of target IRI2. Yes, or 100 percent of target

ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION

A. TASK TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Role
Marie Jacqueline Yvette Sacadura	Team Leader
Stanislas Honkuy	Team Leader
Helsy Priscilla Damiano	Financial Management Specialist
Ahohouindo Mongnihoude Jean L Gbaguidi	Financial Management Specialist
Salifou Abdou Dan Baba	Procurement Specialist
Maman Hassane Gabari	Procurement Specialist
Ibrah Hachimou	Environmental Specialist
Taoufiq Bennouna	Environmental Specialist
Johanna Damboeck	Social Specialist
Mamadou Diedhiou	Social Specialist
Bernardo da Cruz Vasconcellos	Team Member, ICR Quality Assurance
Kadidia Daouda	Team Member
Pamela Mulet	Team Member
Germaine M. Ethy	Team Member, ICR Contributor
Bintou Sogodogo	Team Member
Felly Akiiki Kaboyo	Team Member
Ali Sanaa	Team Member
Aoua Toure Sow	Team Member
Abdouramane Abdoulaye Saley Sandra Beemer	Team MembeR ICR Primary Author
Hamidou Diallo	ICR Contributor/Economic and Financial Analysis
Franco Russo	ICR Quality Assurance

B. STAFF TIME & COST

Stage of Project Cycle	Staff Time & Cost	
	No. of Staff Weeks	US$ (including travel and consultant costs)
Preparation		
Total		
Supervision/ICR		
Total		

ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT

Components	Amount at Approval (US$M)	Amount at Additional Financing (US$M)	Amount 2020 Restructuring (US$M)	Actual at Project Closing (US$M)	Percentage of Approval (US$M)
Improving the Effectiveness of Formal Training	11.40	39.40	35.40	38.86	101.19
Strengthening Short Term Skills Development and Apprenticeships Programs	12.50	25.50	29.50	26.84	90.98
Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Monitoring and Evaluation	6.10	13.10	13.10	14.84	113.28
Contingency	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0
Total	**30.00**	**80.00**	**80.00**	**80.54**[1]	**100.68**

[1]The total project resources at project closing were US$80.924 million equivalent. There were US$0.924 million equivalent in SDR:US$ exchange rate gains and US$0.382 million equivalent undisbursed and returned to the Bank.

ANNEX 4. EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS

1. This section provides an economic and financial analysis of the Niger Skills Development for Growth Project. It presents the efficiency of investment in education in Niger based on key sector indicators and the estimates of economic internal rates of returns (IRR) of actual indicators observed at the end of the project implementation. First, the analysis: (a) sheds light on the challenges of educating and training youths in a context characterized by a fast-growing youth population combined with resource constraints; (b) provides a brief literature review on existing evidence on the impact of vocational education programs on youth labor market outcomes in low-income countries; (c) analyzes whether Niger's labor market provides a positive signal that investing in education yields important returns in terms of earnings to both individuals and households. Second, this section replicates the cost-benefit analysis conducted at the project appraisal stage and compares the IRR with actual results obtained at the project closing.

Challenges of educating and training youth

2. Niger's youth is largely uneducated, especially young women, constraining productivity, and economic growth. In 2018, 54 percent of rural women (15-25 years old) and 60 percent of young women from the poorest households had no formal education while only 30 percent of rural men were uneducated (Figure 1.A). Looking at the trend of the educational outcomes over time, the same patterns stand out in 2021-22 (Figure 1.B) indicating that youths are still experiencing low levels of educational attainment, particularly young women. Youths' educational attainment is highest in Niamey, the capital, suggesting more access to schools. The literacy rate of youths increased from 20 percent in 2001 to 43 percent in 2018. Since youths represent 33 percent of employment in Niger, the labor market is composed of unskilled workers which leads to lower productivity and economic growth.

3. The fast-growing youth population raises the pressure on the education system. The annual population growth rate is around 3.8 percent, and 60 percent of the population (13 million) is under the age of 18. The population of young people aged between 15 and 29 years old was estimated at 5.6 million in 2018. According to the United Nations projections, the youth population will increase sharply in Niger to reach 7.8 million by 2025 and nearly quadruple to 19.5 million by 2050 leading to tremendous challenges in terms of educating and training youth as well as job creation. The total budget allocated to education increased by 65.25 percent between 2011 and 2021. However, the investment in terms of school infrastructure is still relatively low, about 9.71 percent in 2021, while the staff expenditures reached 43.07 percent of the education budget in 2021. Important resources are thus needed since investment in human capital is a key determinant of economic growth. The Government of Niger pointed out the demographic growth as a major threat to development in its 2022-26 Economic and Social Development Plan.

4. The proportion of Nigerien youths completing grades in TVET is low, particularly in rural areas. As shown in Figures 1.A and 1.B, only 2 percent of the population aged 15-25 completed grades in TVET schools at the national level. The descriptive statistics indicate heterogeneity by area of residence and wealth quintile. Urban residents (4 percent) and youths from economically advantaged households (5 percent) are more likely to complete grades in TVET. Figures 2, 3, and 4 present the evolution of the number of formal TVET schools, the number of students enrolled in formal TVET schools, and the number of teachers in formal TVET schools by region between 2021 and 2023 in Niger.

5. At the national level, there were 563 formal TVET schools, 118 607 students enrolled in formal TVET, and 6 780 teachers in TVET schools in 2023. The graphs show that 51 percent of TVET institutes are in the three regions of Maradi, Zinder, and Niamey. In addition, these three regions concentrate 59 percent of students enrolled in TVET and 60 percent of teachers in TVET. The figures indicate that the supply of TVET is unevenly distributed nationally raising the concern about the equity in access to TVET.

6. The high proportion of NEET youth 15-25 is a major risk for social stability and economic development, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected countries. The proportion of NEET youth in Niger decreased slightly from 27 percent in 2018 to 21 percent in 2021 at the national level. However, there is a high gender inequality among the NEET youth population. In rural areas, Nigerien young women have a higher NEET rate (77 percent) than young men (23 percent) in 2021 (Figure 5). Examining the gender heterogeneity in urban areas, poorest and richest households, the results reveal the same patterns: young women lag far behind based on the NEET indicator compared to young men. By investing in targeted interventions that provide education, vocational training, and employment opportunities for vulnerable youth, Niger can mitigate the risks of social exclusion, radicalization, and further conflict escalation. Empowering NEET youth, especially in FCV-affected areas, not only enhances their economic prospects but also contributes to peacebuilding and community resilience.

7. More than three out of four youths living in rural areas and the poorest households drop out of school and work only. Figure 6 shows that 85 percent of women (15-25 years old) and 79 percent of men (15-25 years old) living in rural areas are out of school and work only compared to 27 percent of women and 43 percent in urban areas. A number of reasons may explain this situation. Young people living in rural areas have less access to education than their urban peers. Rural parents may send their youngsters to work due to resource constraints and financial hardships within the household. Furthermore, the lack of relevant education and opportunities to acquire skills appear as one of the main drivers of the high number of youths dropping out.

Labor market and returns to education

8. One of the most pressing challenges Niger faces is the fact that millions of young people will come into the job market. The economic development of the country and the welfare of young people will depend crucially on whether they will be able to find good jobs. Youths represent 33 percent of employment in Niger, and more than 500,000 youths enter into the labor market each year. Integrating Nigerien youths into the job market and providing them the skills and training to engage in entrepreneurial initiatives is one of the major challenges facing the country.

9. Existing evidence from low-income countries indicates that youth employment programs relying on vocational training, apprenticeship, and entrepreneurship have positive impacts, although the magnitude of the effects is context-specific. Using a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) design in Uganda, Alfonsi et al., 2020[31] compared the outcomes between young people aged 20 on average who were randomly assigned to a vocational training program and those who did not benefit from the program. Three years after the intervention, individuals assigned to the vocational training are more likely to have jobs and earn more than the control group (those who did not benefit from the program). In terms of the magnitude of the impact, the graduates from the vocational training are 9 percentage points more likely to be employed and experienced a 25 percent increase in their earnings relative to

[31] Alfonsi, L., Bandiera, O., Bassi, V., Burgess, R., Rasul, I., Sulaiman, M., & Vitali, A. (2020). Tackling youth unemployment: Evidence from a labor market experiment in Uganda. Econometrica, 88(6), 2369-2414.

the control group. Crépon & Premand, 2019[32] use an RCT design to assess the impact of a formal apprenticeship program in Côte d'Ivoire on job skills and earnings among the youth population aged between 15 and 24. The authors provide evidence suggesting that young people who benefited from the program engaged in high-skill jobs with wages higher by 15 percent compared to the control group. Furthermore, evidence from Tunisia in Premand et al., 2016[33] shows that entrepreneurship education for undergraduate students at the university significantly raises the self-employment rate one year after graduation.

10. Niger's labor market is characterized by the lack of formal wage employment as in Sub-Saharan countries. As shown in Figure 7, more than four out of five youths 15-25 do not engage in formal wage employment; the same pattern is observed for the working-age population 15-64. Among the youth population, family workers dominate employment at around 60 percent and own-account workers at 25 percent at the national level. Analyzing the heterogeneity by area of residence and gender, the results reveal that urban men are more likely to engage in formal wage employment (42 percent) compared to urban women (16 percent). In rural areas, salary jobs are scarce: only 14 percent of men and 3 percent of women are engaged in formal wage employment. Most of the formal jobs are in the public sector. Own-account and family jobs are considered vulnerable employment due to their informality and precariousness. Since young women are more likely to engage in non-wage employment, it seems that they are more vulnerable in the labor market. Rural youths work mainly in the agricultural sector, while their urban peers are more engaged in industry and service activities (Figure 8).

11. The Nigerien labor market signals higher returns and better employment opportunities for more educated workers. Women who completed TVET degrees experience a 130 percent increase in their monthly wage relative to women with no formal education while men with the same level of education experience a 66 percent increase in their monthly wage compared to their peers with no formal education (Figure 9.A). In addition, TVET degrees are associated with a 24 percent increase in the probability of being in wage employment for women and a 23 percent increase for men relative to individuals with no formal education (Figure 9.B). The average monthly wage is higher in urban areas, standing at 125,052 CFA (US$ 201[34]) than in rural areas 71,115 CFA (US$114) for graduates from TVET (Figure 10). The services sector yields increased monthly salaries 126,107 CFA (US$203) compared to the industry 79,698 CFA (US$129) and agriculture sectors 30,628 CFA (US$50). However, educated men are more likely to receive better economic returns than educated women indicating gender earning inequalities in the Nigerien labor market. For instance, men who completed TVET degrees earn 121,541 CFA (US$195) per month on average while women with the same level of education earn 86,860 CFA (US$140) per month on average. Nigerien labor market strongly responds to investments in education supporting the economic rationale for investments in youths' education and skills development.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

12. At the project appraisal stage, a comprehensive economic and financial analysis was conducted by the original task team. Relying on a quantitative approach and using the data available in 2013, the cost-benefit analysis focused on four main sub-components 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2 and generated a range of Net Present Value (NPV) and Internal Rate of Return (IRR). The overall project's net present value was estimated at US$42.6 million with an

[32] Crépon, B., & Premand, P. (2019). Direct and indirect effects of subsidized dual apprenticeships. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. IZA DP No. 12793.
[33] Premand, P., Brodmann, S., Almeida, R., Grun, R., & Barouni, M. (2016). Entrepreneurship education and entry into self-employment among university graduates. *World Development*, *77*, 311-327.
[34] Exchange Rate Effective November 17, 2024, US$ 1 = 617.05131; source: www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=XOF.

internal rate of return of 10 percent under the base scenario with a 4 percent discount rate. Sensitivity analyses were conducted with a discount rate of 8 percent and various employment and wage scenarios to assess to what extent the benchmark results vary. Under the base scenario, the cost-benefit analysis displayed heterogeneous results by sub-component. The NPV of sub-component 1.1, which aimed to improve the quality and relevance of TVET institutions in key priority sectors, was estimated at US$37 million with an IRR of 9 percent. The sub-component 1.2 generated the highest IRR about 54 percent with an NPV of US$0.9 million. This sub-component supported the transition from formal education and training to the labor market through improved internship and job counseling programs for graduates from secondary TVET and tertiary. The NPVs of sub-components 2.1 and 2.2, which focused on expanding apprenticeships and supporting short-term skills development for out-of-school youths, were estimated at US$4.3 million and US$0.4 million with IRRs of 14 percent and 6 percent, respectively. While the Project received an Additional Financing (AF) of US$50 million in June 2018, the cost-benefit analysis conducted in 2013 at the appraisal stage has not been revised.

13. The project generated both quantifiable and non-quantifiable benefits; nearly 85 percent of the project budget was allocated to the quantifiable components. While Component 1 (Improving the Effectiveness of Formal Training) and Component 2 (Strengthening Short Term Skills Development and Apprenticeship Programs) are quantifiable benefits, Component 3 (Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Monitoring and Evaluation) is non-quantifiable since it ensures smooth project implementation, evaluation and learning across activities. The cost-benefit of each component is calculated separately and then combined to obtain the overall cost-benefit estimates, which are weighted by the cost allocated to each category.

14. **The cost-benefit analysis relies on the key assumptions below**:

- **Earnings**: The wage distribution for individuals with different levels of education and ages based on the latest Harmonized household survey (EHCVM) 2021 data has been used to determine the difference in lifetime earnings.
- **Years in the labor market**: In Niger, the retirement age is 60[35] and the life expectancy at birth is 62[36]. The project's participants remain in the labor market for up to 35 years following the training. It is assumed to be the lower bound as some of the beneficiaries might be in the job market at an early age and stay in the market for more than 30 years.
- **Returns to education**: Using the Harmonized household survey (EHCVM) 2021 data, the education return rate is estimated at 11 percent.
- **Opportunity cost**: The opportunity cost applies to youths enrolled in formal TVET institutions. However, the project doesn't involve forgone opportunity costs for out-of-school youths enrolled in apprenticeship programs as stipends are offered to apprentices.
- **Discount rate**: The discount rate used is 4 percent as the one used at the project appraisal stage. Sensitivity analyses are conducted with a discount rate of 8 percent.
- **Incremental benefits**: Incremental benefits estimated by taking the average net present value of the estimated future earnings stream of project beneficiaries.
- **Exchange rate**: exchange rate effective November 17, 2024 (1 US$ = 622.65 CFA F)[37].

[35] https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2018-2019/africa/niger.html#:~:text=Old%2Dage%20pension%20(Pension%20de,least%20180%20months%20of%20coverage.
[36] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=NE
[37] https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=XOF

15. Table 1 presents the results of the cost-benefit analysis at the project appraisal stage and ICR stage. Both internal rates of return and net present value of costs and benefits for all components combined indicate that the project is economically viable at the end of the project implementation based on actual beneficiaries and costs of the project. The present discounted value of benefits for the overall project stands at US$ 216.8 million while the present discounted value of costs is estimated at US$ 46.5 million. The corresponding net present value (NPV) of the project is estimated at US$ 170.3 million. The internal rate of return (IRR) associated with this NPV is 11 percent which is slightly above the IRR estimated at appraisal (10 percent). The benefit-cost ratio is 4.7 at the ICR stage. Thus, although some benefits are not quantifiable, the NPV of quantified benefits is larger than the NPV of costs confirming the efficiency of investments undertaken under the project.

16. **Due to the Additional Financing (AF) of US$50 million approved in June 2018, the number of beneficiaries of the project increased sharply driving the large differences observed in the NPVs between appraisal and ICR stages**. The original project budget amounted to US$ 30 million in 2013. Once the AF has been approved, the project budget reached US$ 80 million in June 2018. The AF aimed to scale up activities that had been successfully implemented under the project parent and to finance new activities contributing to achieving the PDO. Therefore, the number of beneficiaries increased significantly. For instance, the cost-benefit analysis at appraisal in 2013 for sub-component 1.1 was conducted with an assumption of 3,000 students, while the number of beneficiaries for this sub-component reached 8,817 students at the end of the project corresponding nearly to a threefold increase. The cost-benefit analysis at the ICR stage relies on the actual beneficiaries at the project closing date explaining the increased NPV of the project at the ICR stage compared to the appraisal stage. The NPV of the project at the ICR stage (US$ 170.3 million) is four times higher than the NPV estimated at the appraisal stage (US$ 42.6 million).

17. **The Project was restructured in 2021 to overcome a number of challenges in the implementation of the project during the Covid-19 pandemic.** Despite substantial progress, some activities were unlikely to be fully implemented by the Project's closing date of November 30, 2022, due to delays in implementation exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to these challenges, and given the limited time remaining, the government of Niger submitted a request on December 3, 2020, to restructure the Project. The proposed restructuring aimed to redirect financing to activities that can realistically be implemented in the short- to medium-term and which can demonstrate strong results. Finally, given the Covid-19 pandemic, the proposed restructuring aimed to finance a set of critical activities lowering the adverse impacts of the pandemic on the country's education sector. In 2021, the project was restructured to extend the original closing date by 12 months from November 30, 2022, to November 30, 2023. However, the PDO was not revised during the restructuring of the project. Due to the coup in July 2023, an additional extension of six months from November 30, 2023, to June 30, 2024, was requested by the government to proceed with the disbursement of unpaid invoices and procurement of materials. Overall, efficiency was observed during the implementation of the project, particularly in the use of resources with planned activities carried out on average, with an overall execution rate of 98 percent.

18. **Despite significant achievements, the exogenous shock of Covid-19 adversely affected the Nigerien education system and economic activities, leading to some inefficiencies during the implementation of the project.** For instance, the government closed all educational institutions on March 28, 2020, to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This situation has negatively affected more than 3.7 million students[38] and more than 80,000 teachers. School closure negatively impacted the learning outcomes and well-being of students and youths, especially those who live in the poorest communities. The construction and renovation of TVET institutions experienced delays and

[38] 177,822 students are in preschools, 2,666,748 are in primary schools, 665,610 are in secondary (cycle de base 2 (*collège*), 58,000 cycle de base 2 (*lycée*), 80,125 are in tertiary education, and 64,327 are in TVET institutes.

the provision of heavy equipment to the centers due to the disruption in international supply chains during the pandemic. Furthermore, several enterprises and informal manufacturers faced challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, limiting their capacity to hire some youths who benefited from the training program.

19. **Since the NPV of the quantifiable benefits is higher than the NPV of costs, the Project demonstrated efficiency in investments undertaken during implementation.** However, the Covid-19 crisis and the coup in July 2023 adversely impacted the implementation of the project and delayed several activities, leading to some important inefficiencies as described above. Nevertheless, all five PDO indicators were exceeded, and seven of the twelve intermediate results indicators (IRIs) were met or exceeded. Overall, by the project's closing date, direct project beneficiaries reached 33,056 (37 percent females), exceeding the 2023 end-target of 31,360 by 1,696 or 105 percent achievement. However, the percentage of females increased to 37 percent missing the 2023 end-target of 50 percent by 13 percentage points.

20. In light of the analysis presented above, the overall efficiency under the project is rated **modest**.

Table 1: Net Present Value (NPV) in millions of USD and Internal Rate of Return (IRR)

I. At the appraisal stage

	Component 1		Component 2		
	Sub-comp. 1.1	Sub-comp. 1.2	Sub-comp. 2.1	Sub-comp. 2.2	Total Project
IRR	9%	54%	14%	6%	10%
NPV	$37.0	$0.9	$4.3	$0.4	$42.6

Source: Project Appraisal Document - Annex 6 Economic and Financial Analysis p.71-p.80

II. At the ICR stage

	Component 1		Component 2		
	Sub-comp. 1.1	Sub-comp. 1.2	Sub-comp. 2.1	Sub-comp. 2.2	Total Project
IRR	10%	14%	13%	5%	11%
Discounted cost (present value of costs)	$29.9	$3.6	$9.7	$3.3	$46.5
Present value of incremental benefits	$194.6	$47.3	$85.8	$5.2	$216.8
NPV	$164.7	$43.7	$76.1	$1.9	$170.3
Benefit-Cost ratio	6.5	13.1	8.9	1.6	4.7

Source: Author's estimations using Harmonized household survey (EHCVM) 2021 data and actual project costs and beneficiaries at the end of implementation

Figure 1.A: Youth 15-25 Educational attainment by Gender, Area of residence, and Wealth quintile (%) in 2018-19 - Niger

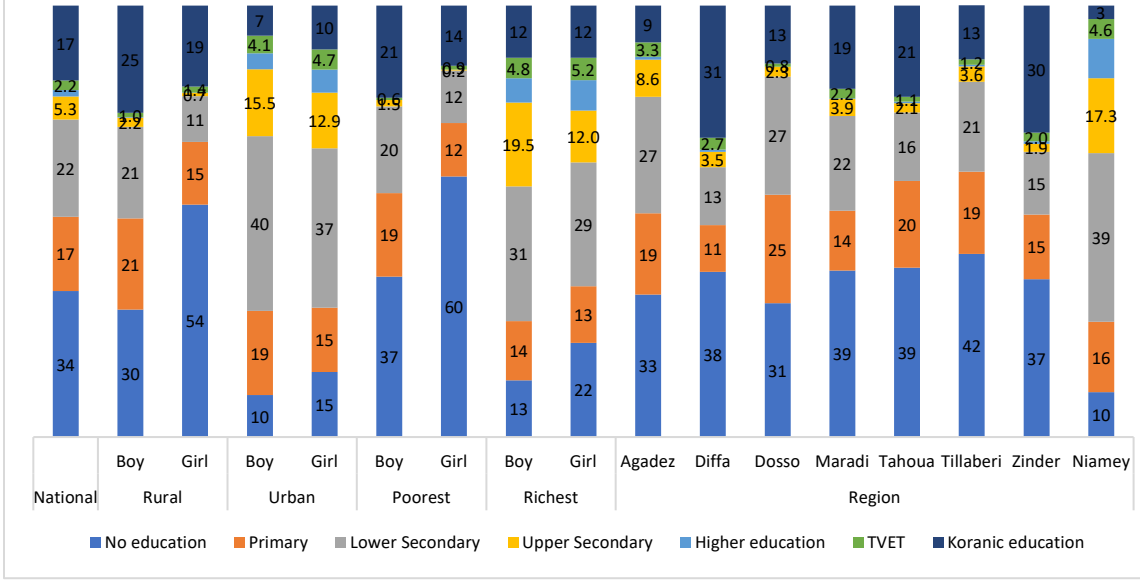


Figure 1.B: Youth 15-25 Educational attainment by Gender, Area of residence, and Wealth quintile (%) in 2021-22 - Niger

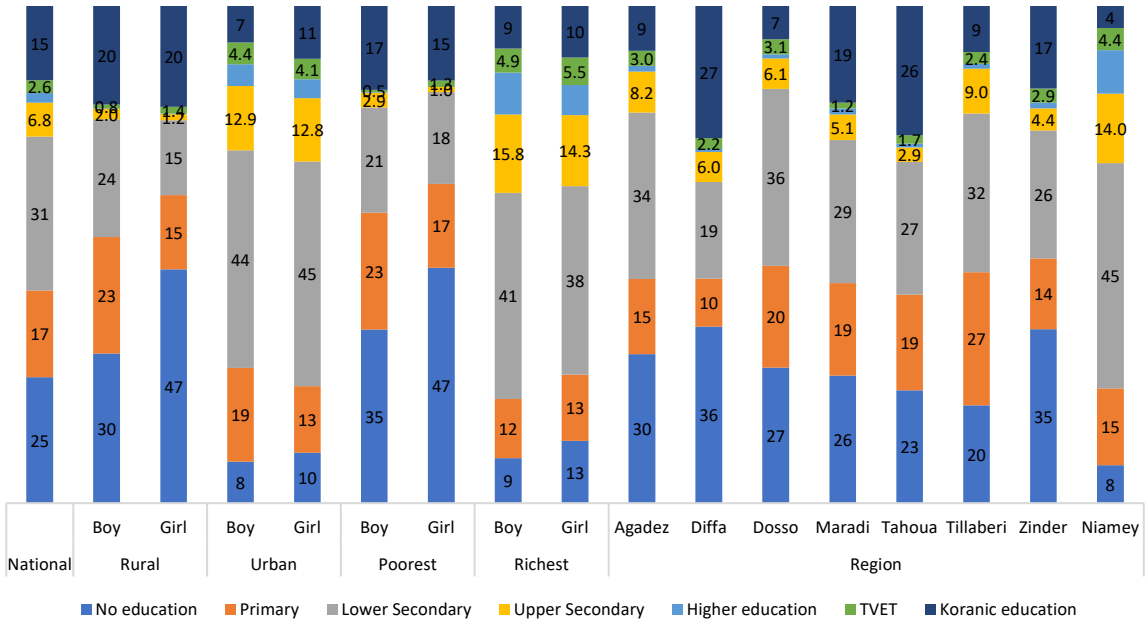


Figure 2: Evolution of the number of formal TVET schools by region between 2021 and 2023 - Niger

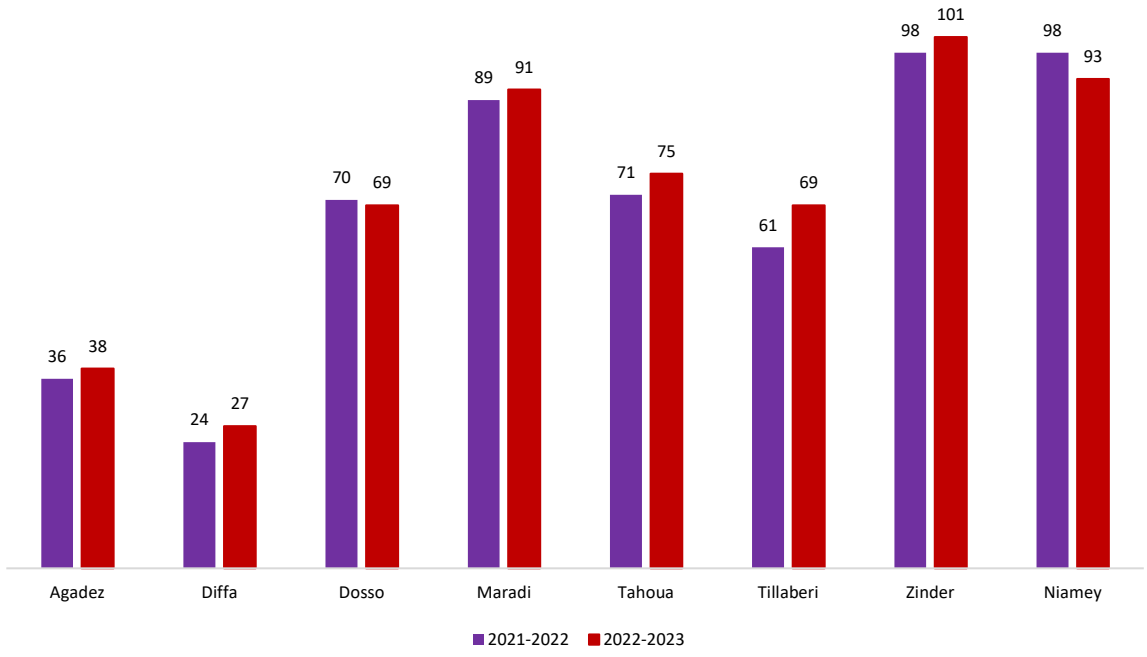


Figure 3: Evolution of the number of students enrolled in formal TVET schools between 2021 and 2023 - Niger

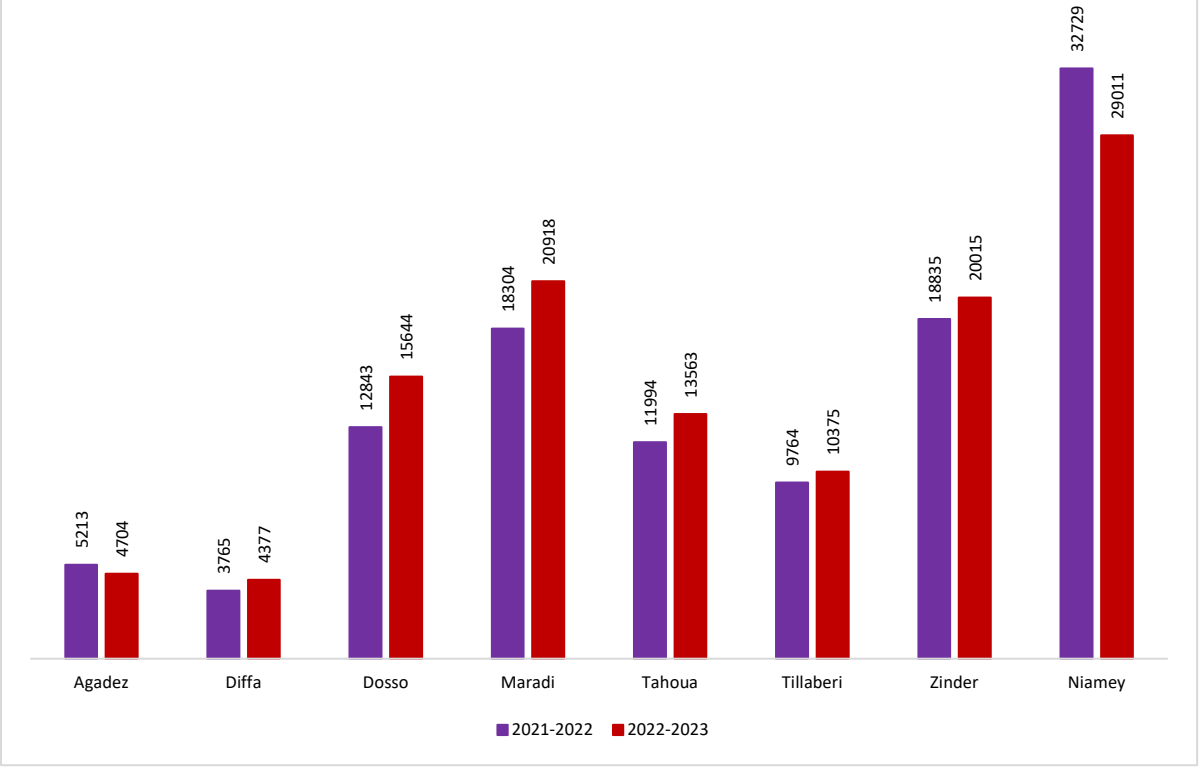


Figure 4: Evolution of the number of teachers in formal TVET schools between 2021 and 2023 - Niger

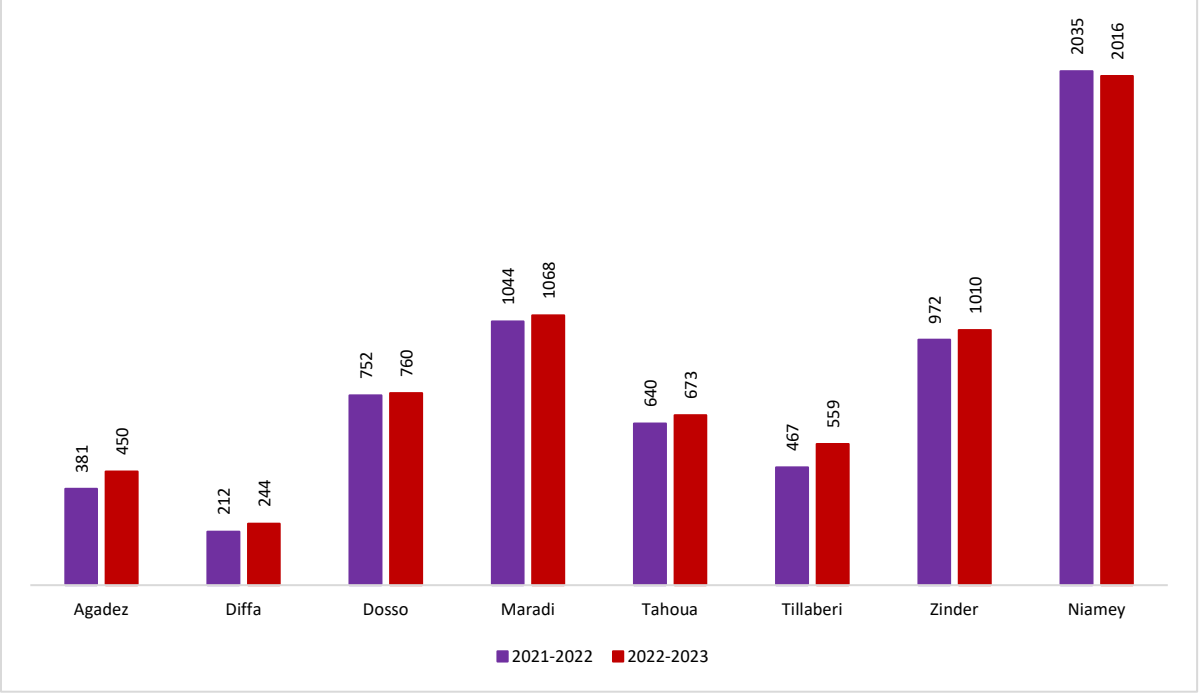


Figure 5: Youths 15-25 Neither in Education, Employment, Training - NEET (%) by Gender, Area of residence, Wealth quintile in 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger

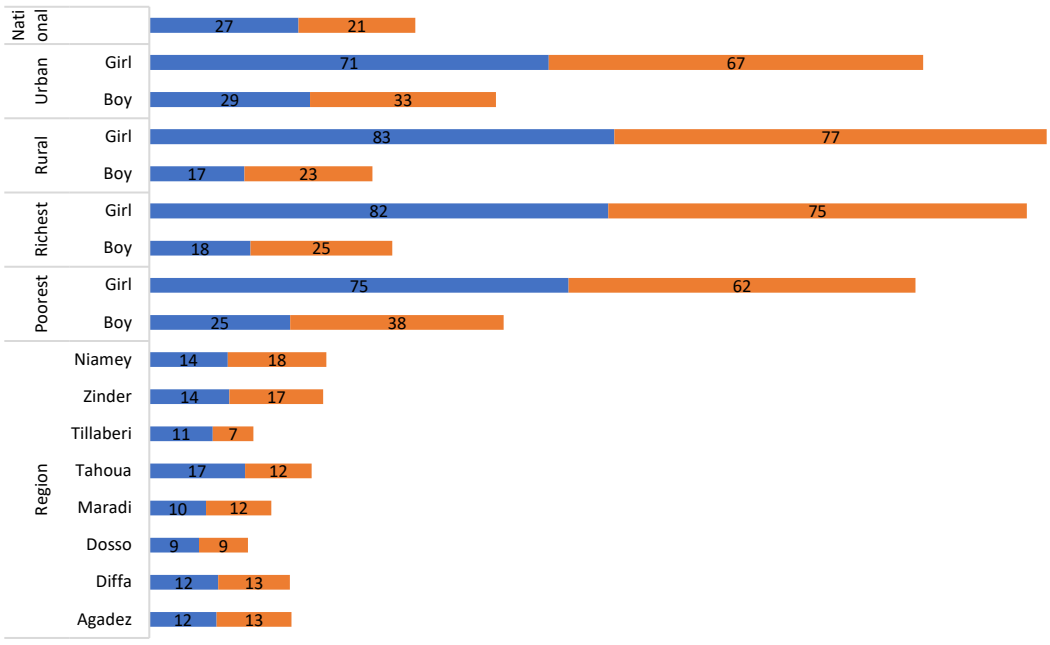


Figure 6: Youth 15-25 Schooling and Work (%) by Gender, Area of residence, Wealth quintile in 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger

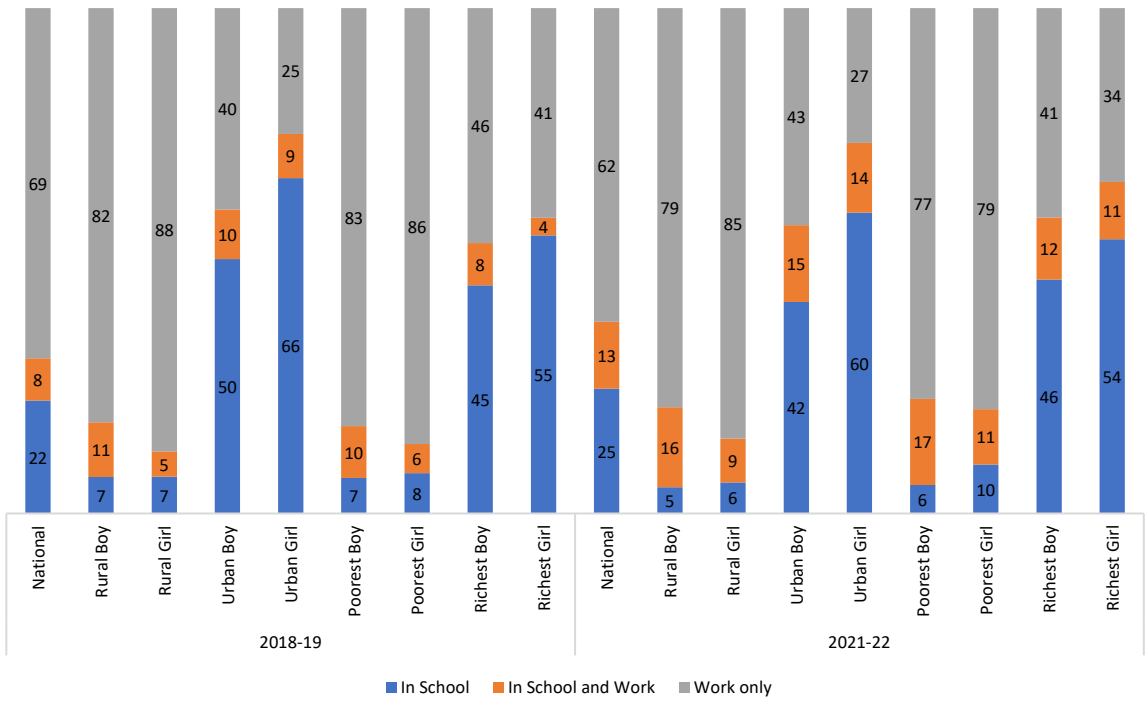


Figure 7: Type of Employment - Youths 15-25 (%) by Gender, Area of residence in 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger

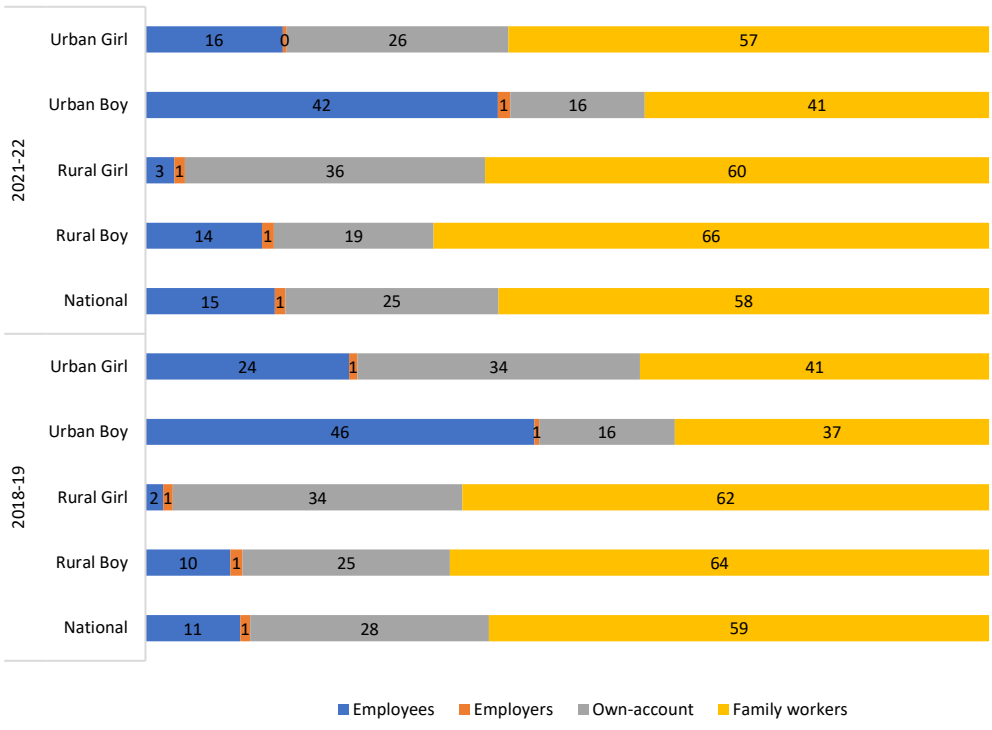


Figure 8: Sector of activities - Youths 15-25 (%) by Gender, Area of residence in 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger

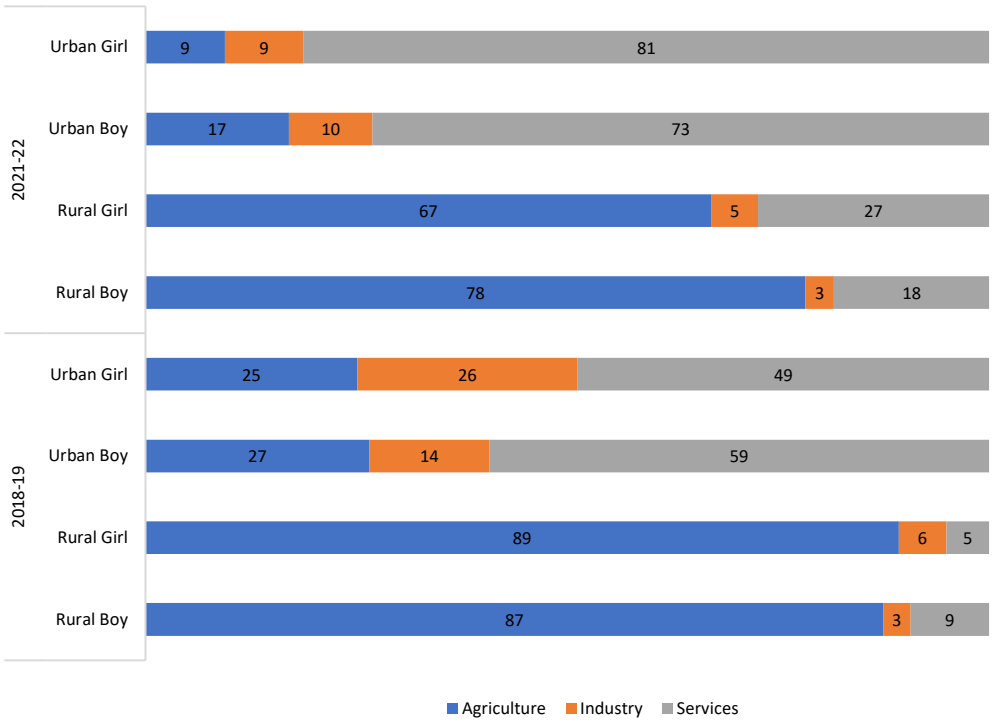


Figure 9.A: Return to education - Working age population 15-64 (%) by Gender, 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger

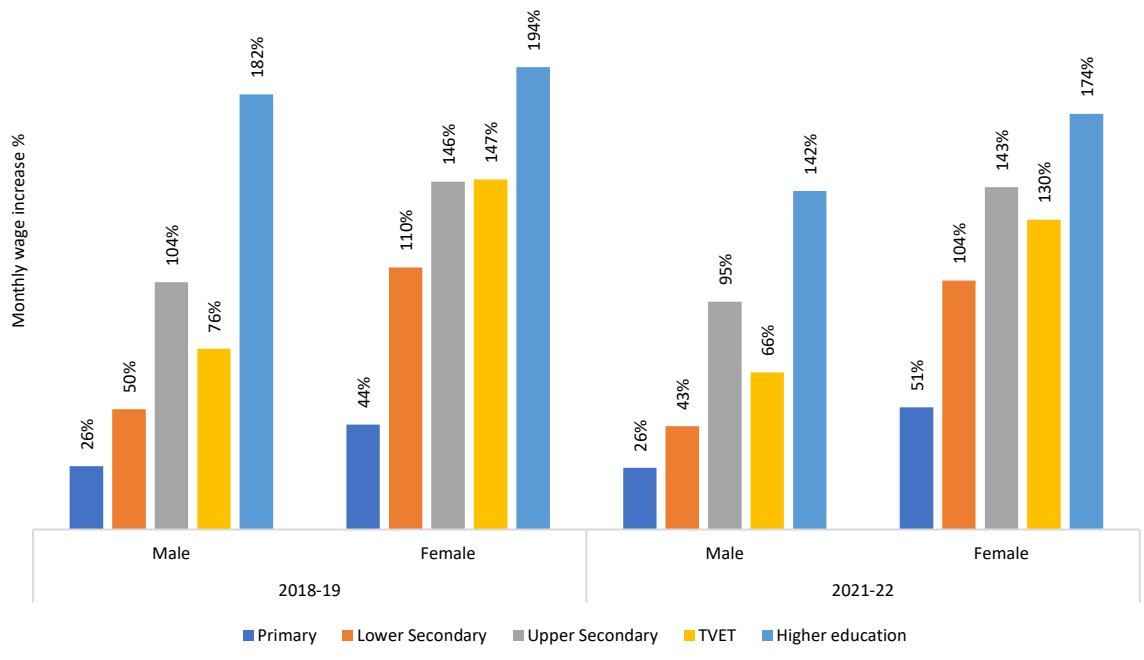


Figure 9.B: Probability of wage employment - Working age population 15-64 (%) by Gender, 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger

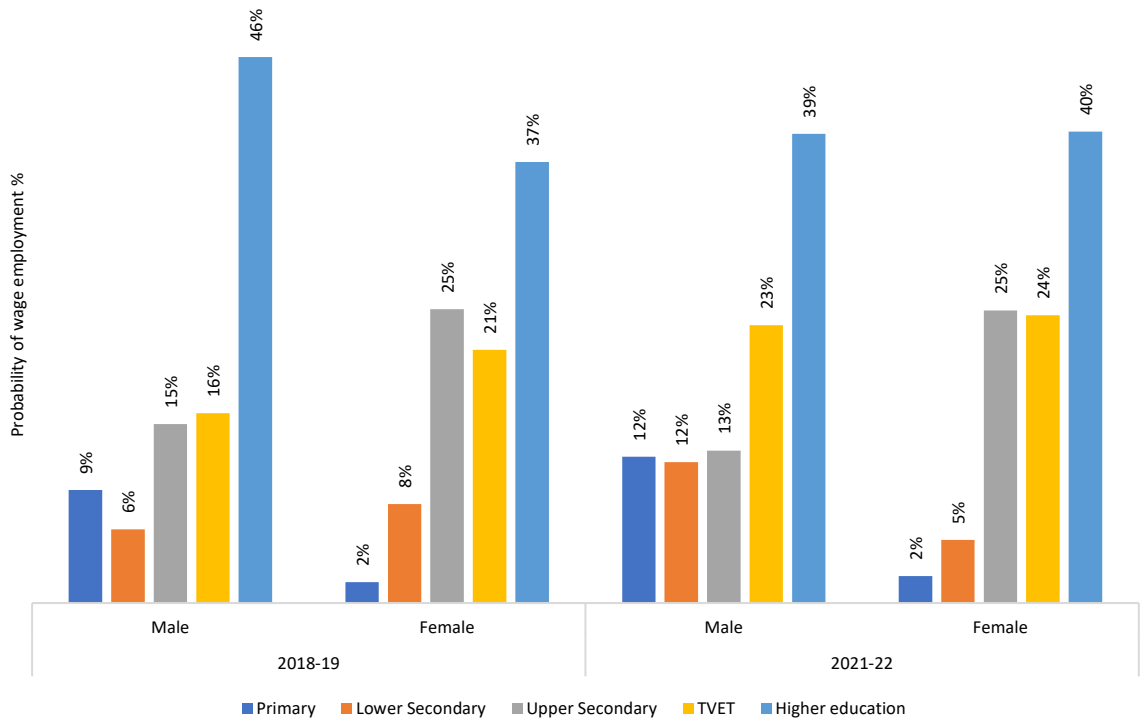
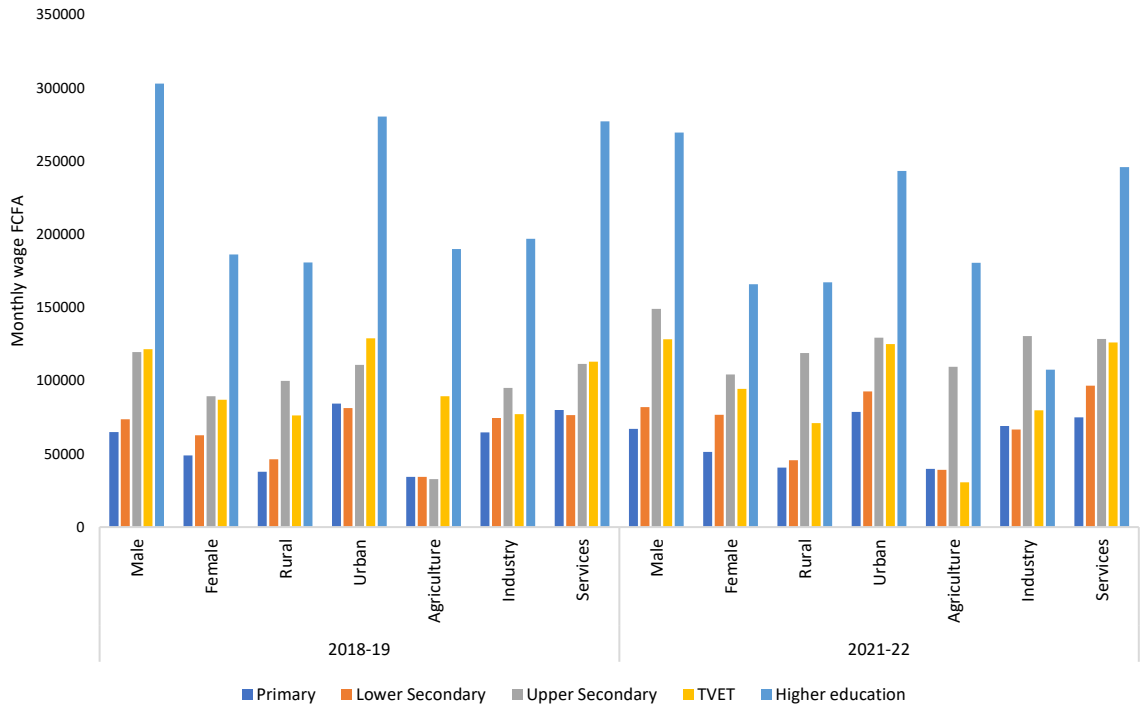


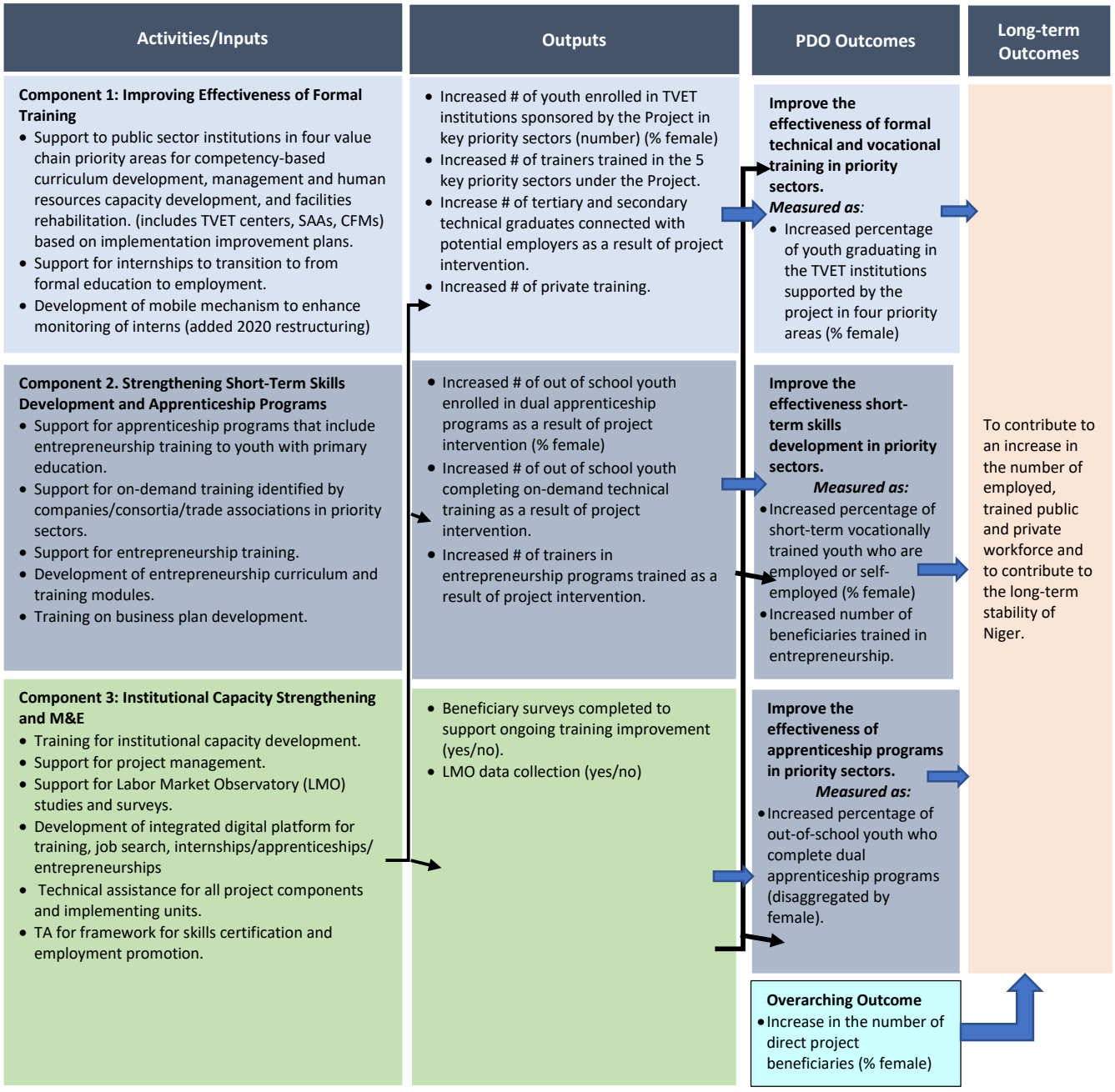
Figure 10: Average monthly wage - Working age population 15-64 by Gender, Area, Sector of activities, 2018-19 and 2021-22 - Niger



ANNEX 5. BORROWER, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

The government confirmed its agreement to the findings of the ICR and had no additional comments. The government provided their final completion report to the Bank which has been filed in SharePoint for information and reference.

ANNEX 6. THEORY OF CHANGE



ANNEX 7. MODIFICATIONS MADE TO INTERMEDIATE RESULTS INDICATORS

	Baseline	Original Target 2019	AF Target 2022	Restructuring Target 2023	Comments
Component 1: Improving the effectiveness of formal training					
1.Youths enrolled in TVET institutions sponsored by the project in key priority sectors (number)	0	2,800	8,300	8,300	Target increased at the time of the 2018 AF. End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
% female	0	20	30	30	
New sub-indicator 2018 AF. Youths enrolled in TVET institutions supported by the Project in the agricultural sector (percentage)	0		60	60	**Added at the time of the AF**. End target date was revised to the new closing date at the time of the 2020 restructuring.
2. Trainers trained in the 5 key priority sectors under the Project (number)	0	41	70	70	Target increased at the time of the 2018 AF. The key priority areas also included the agriculture sector that had been added. End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
3. Tertiary and secondary technical graduates connected with potential employers as a result of project intervention (Number)	0	3,500	6,500	6,500	Target increased at the time of the 2018 AF. End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
4. **New 2018 AF indicator** Trained youth unemployed for more than two years requalified as a result of project intervention (number)	0		800	600	Target decreased at the time of the 2020 restructuring because of difficulties in identifying companies that were committed to recruiting a high proportion of young beneficiaries in a difficult economic context. The end target date was revised.
5. **New 2020 Restructuring indicator** Private training institutions sponsored by the project (number)	0			15	New 2020 indicator to monitor the addition of private training institutions.
6. **New 2020 Restructuring indicator** Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning (CRI, Number) (disaggregated by female)	0			17,300	New Corporate Indicator added at the time of the 2020 restructuring.
Number female				5,190	
Component 2: Strengthening short-term skills development and apprenticeship programs					

7. Out of school youth enrolled in dual apprenticeship programs as a result of project intervention (number) (disaggregated by female and agriculture sector)	0	3,000	9,000	9,000	Target increased at the time of the 2018 AF. End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
% female	0	30	40	40	
New sub-indicator 2018 AF Out of school youth enrolled in the dual apprenticeship programs in the agriculture sector (percentage)	0		50	50	
8. Out of school youth completing on-demand technical training as a result of project intervention (number)	0	1,500	1,500	1,500	End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
9. Trainers in entrepreneurship programs trained as a result of project intervention (number)	0	90	90	90	End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring
10. **New 2018 AF indicator** Prizewinner youth in the business plan competition (number) (disaggregated by female)	0	-	300	300	End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
% female	0		40	40	
Component 3: Institutional capacity strengthening and monitoring and evaluation					
11. Beneficiary surveys completed to support ongoing training improvement (yes/no)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.
12. Labor Market Observatory data collection (yes/no)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	End target date was revised to the new closing date for both the AF and 2020 restructuring.

ANNEX 8. 2020 REVISED PROJECT COSTING BY COMPONENT/SUB-COMPONENT

Component/Sub-component	Current amount (US$ million)	Revised amount (US$ million)
Component 1: Enhancement of formal training efficiency	**39.4**	**35.4**
Sub-component 1.1: Approach based on demand for formal vocational training	35.3	31.3
Sub-component 1.2: Improvement of transition from school to employment	4.1	4.1
Component 2: Improvement of short-term skills and apprenticeship development programs	**25.5**	**29.5**
Sub-component 2.1: Apprenticeship development	14.9	14.9
Sub-component 2.2: Development of demand-based short-term training programs	4.7	4.7
Sub-component 2.3: Promotion of entrepreneurship training	5.9	9.9
Component 3: Institutional capacity building and monitoring-evaluation	**13.1**	**13.1**
Sub-component 3.1: Institutional capacity building	8.0	8.0
Sub-component 3.2: Monitoring-evaluation	4.2	4.2
Project Preparation Advance (PPA) repayment	**0.9**	**0.9**
Contingencies	**2.0**	**2.0**
TOTAL	**80.0**	**80.0**

ANNEX 9. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Project Appraisal Document, World Bank, 2013.

Project Paper, World Bank, 2018.

Restructuring Paper, World Bank, 2020

Aides-memoire and Implementation Status Reports 2013–2023.

Country Partnership Framework, World Bank, 2019.

Evaluation Finale du Projet de Développement des Compétences pour la Croissance (PRODEC) 2023