



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# Report on Entrepreneurship: Niger Catalystas

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## RVO Scoping Mission Report on Entrepreneurship: Niger

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The following report was prepared by Catalystas Consulting, an intersectional feminist international development consulting firm. The report aims to provide a snapshot and an overview of the programs, stakeholders, and opportunities related to youth entrepreneurship (18-35 years old) in Niger. This report is based on a two-week field mission undertaken by Catalystas in June 2019 as part of a broader mission to provide insight into the needs and opportunities of youth employment and entrepreneurship in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

The purpose of this mission and this report is to help the Dutch government to support existing structures and/or develop initiatives to be put in place by other local or international actors. Special attention was paid to young women in the areas of productivity and agricultural value chains. The main objective in undertaking this country-by-country entrepreneurial evaluation and in writing this report is to highlight the programs and initiatives which could be extended in the secondary cities of Maradi and Tahoua, two of the target cities in Niger for Dutch policy. The following report consists of a narrative of approximately 25 pages and ■■■ appendices that will provide readers with sufficient insight into the various challenges and opportunities of the target areas and the country. The report is also a first step in informing policymakers and embassy staff of the many opportunities and challenges that need to be considered for effective intervention in the Nigerien entrepreneurial context.

(A full overview of our research methodology pertaining to this report is available in Appendix H: Methodologies of Research - Entrepreneurship Reports)

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## Introduction

The following chapters, based on research and findings on the ground, will clearly reveal that the obstacles to "entrepreneurship in Niger" are not minimal. Catalystas Consulting wishes to emphasize in a non-exhaustive manner the lack of entrepreneurial spirit and the lack of "model" companies and entrepreneurs in Niger.

In addition, it is important to mention the particularly complex and difficult context for entrepreneurship, with regards to the state, security situation, socio-cultural context, and climatic factors. This complexity has recently led to the withdrawal and/or bankruptcy of leading companies such as the Braniger national brewery and the Olga Oil processing company. Several interlocutors with whom Catalystas was able to meet during our mission in the field have mentioned as factors, among others, the lack of good governance, tax evasion, and the "porosity" of borders, particularly with Nigeria.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning other cultural aspects of the Nigerien population, in particular their preference for the consumption of foreign products, the inequality between men and women in several aspects of life, and their unrealistic expectations of employment with state structures.

## 1. Labor Market Overview

### A. Employment by Distribution of Economic Activity

From a historic point of view, the Nigerien state remains the main "formal" employer in Niger and the main modern employer with 34,184 employees in 2005, the wage bill absorbing the bulk of the state budget at the expense of investment shares. When it comes to gender representation, the distribution of civil servants reveals a great disparity between men and women. Out of a total of 39,746 officers (in 2000), there were 10,349 women, a proportion of only 26%.

According to the directory of companies registered in Niger, only eight major companies are mentioned. However, due to economic and national security factors, several multinational and national companies are currently closing their doors (e.g. Braniger, Olga Oil, and Orano). Most entrepreneurs prefer to stay in the informal sector (not asking for a TIN to avoid tax requirements). In general, few companies in the formal sector operate in Niger; this is particularly true for the agri-food sector. The irregularity of work, the seasonal variations of the activities, and underemployment constitute some of the characteristics of the informal employment sector which contribute, together with the above-mentioned elements, to the increase in the vulnerability to poverty of this sector's workers.

With regard to youth employment, it is a priority and a major concern of the Nigerien government. With a natural growth rate of around 3.3%, Niger's population is growing at a rapid pace. Added to this is the mismatch between training and the needs of the labor market, the weakness of the education system in terms of supply, access, and quality, and the general low level of human development in the country. This is reflected in the persistence, both in the city and in rural areas, of economic and social problems such as poverty, illiteracy, begging, delinquency, emigration, to name a few. The National Agency for Youth Employment (ANPE) estimates that, on average, 34.62% of the national working-age population is underemployed.

In rural areas, the main sources of employment are agriculture, husbandry, fishing, and the rural non-agricultural sector, including agro-silvo-pastoral processing activities, handicrafts, agricultural equipment manufacturing, housekeeping, trade, construction, transportation services, food services, and other services.

From an economic point of view, the Maradi Region's border with neighboring Nigeria has established it as the economic and commercial capital of Niger.. On the other hand, Maradi's border with Nigeria also leads to smuggling and an increased danger of terrorism and banditry. In contrast, the Tahoua Region has suffered for decades from fluctuations in its population. Emigration from the city of Tahoua to the capital Niamey or abroad is so endemic, it has become a local joke that "we are 'ready' to marry only when one proves to be a stranger".

## B. Government Development Strategy for the Private Sector

Historically, and unlike other countries in French-speaking Africa (such as Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal), Niger has not inherited solid administrative and social infrastructures nor an industrial character of private enterprise.

The Nigerien economy has remained fundamentally dominated by a rural sector whose contribution to GDP has been around 40% over the last 15 years. Today, this sector employs nearly 82% of the workforce. In addition, over 83% of Niger's population is rural.

The activities of the agriculture sector remain dependent on climatic hazards, and production techniques used remain archaic. Due to the economic crisis of the first half of the 1980s and the adjustment policies that led, among other things, to a rise in unemployment and poverty, the Nigerien economy has been structurally unable to generate jobs to absorb the masses of unemployed workers and first-time claimants who, as they come of age *en masse* (due to the demographic structure of the country), are entering the labor market in droves.

The private sector is embryonic and poorly prepared for modernization of production techniques and massive job creation.

## C. Overview of Capital and Secondary Cities

The agro-sylvo-pastoral sector is the main source of economic activity in the country, employing 82% of the working population. In Niger, the agricultural sector is still archaic and the population practicing this activity often faces poverty. Only 35.3% of households use modern agricultural equipment, such as the plow, compared to common use (64.7%) of the traditional type of equipment, such as the hilar.

Most of the production (85%) is self-consumed. The main obstacles to the development of the agricultural sector are the low volume of private investment in agriculture, the archaic way in which agriculture is practiced, and the lack of real value chain for large-scale production.

Faced with these challenges, the Nigerien government is actively pursuing the implementation of the 3N Initiative ("Nigériens Nourishing Nigériens") which is an example of success and good practices in the field of food security and agricultural development. The goal of this initiative is to strengthen national capacities for food production, food supply, and resilience to food crises and natural disasters.

Security problems in the region have consequences for market activities and the results of humanitarian aid in Niger. The insecurity caused by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region has disrupted the functioning of agricultural markets, including the market of the capital, Niamey.

### i. Niamey

The national capital of Niamey is the main commercial and administrative center and is home to most of the country's industries. It is the most populous city, counting in 2012, 1,026,848 inhabitants (49.78% men and 50.22% women). Many unemployed young people have to look for opportunities in cities, including Niamey, which currently has no infrastructure to welcome them or offer them jobs. Others emigrate abroad to seek jobs. The existence of large contingents of unemployed youth is a major political and social risk factor.

The Niamey Region is a megacity, and the population consumes mainly imported food products, with the city exporting almost nothing to the outside. Various products from all parts of Niger are transported to the capital of Niamey, such as cereals, tubers, sugar cane, peanut, moringa, onion, garlic, and potatoes.

## ii. Maradi

The Maradi Region is centrally located in the south of Niger. It is bordered to the east by the Zinder Region, to the west by the Tahoua Region, to the north by the Tahoua and Agadez Regions, and to the south by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The unofficial economic capital, the city of Maradi is the largest economic center of the country. It owes its rise to its strategic position on the main road that connects the largest cities in the country, Niamey and Zinder.

The Region of Maradi remains the most populated area of Niger, with an estimated population of 3,678,028 as of 2015. An important element of the region's demography is that the majority of the population, some 2,747,666 people (85.4%) in 2012, live in rural areas. The age distribution is marked by a high proportion of young people; 54.7% of the population is under 15 years old. This high proportion of young people results in an increase in certain social needs such as education, health, and especially employment.

Maradi is first and foremost a trading town, with its hinterland playing the role of source in the trade of agricultural products and goods. This is primarily due to Maradi being a Bordertown; Nigeria is only forty kilometers away and Kano is close to three hours away.

Economically, the region has the potential for growth in the processing of onions, tomatoes, peppers, mangoes, sesame, nutmeg, milk, meat (kilichi of Tessaoua), and leather and skins (skins of the red goat of Maradi are highly sought after).

Notably, there is strong potential for processing peanuts into oil, which explains the existence of the only Nigerien oil processor in Maradi, Olga Oil, unable to meet national demand. It is unfortunate that Olga Oil has recently announced that it is closing due to strong competition from "Nigeria's neighbours" and the preference of Nigerien consumers for foreign products.

Security threats are present in the Maradi Region due to the border with Nigeria and the presence of armed groups. During the Catalystas mission, there were incidents surrounding a piece of controversial legislation on religious tolerance, in which individuals wanting to "defend" an anti-Christian marabout set fire to a church.

## iii. Tahoua

Tahoua is the fourth largest city in the country, with a population of 149,498 (49.56% men and 51.44% women). It is a crossing point on the route linking eastern and southeastern cities to northern cities, a position that has made it a major economic centre.

The Tahoua Region is an agro-pastoral zone where breeding for the production of meat (cattle, sheep, goats, and camels) and the production of milk (cattle and camels) is highly developed. It should be noted that important mining sites (of coal and phosphate) in the area are able to generate permanent jobs. Handicrafts are also very developed and popular among ethnic Tuareg and Fulani populations.

Due to security measures for local/expatriate staff of international organizations travelling to the Tahoua Region, there is no unescorted passage in the red zones of Tillabéri, North Tahoua, Diffa, and Agadez Regions. This affects the operational exploitation of value chains, especially for transport and marketing links. For example, there are strong restrictions on the use of motorcycles, which are the means of transport for farmers when they need to access local markets. This aggravating situation of insecurity also affects men and women in their freedom of movement in general, including access to schools and shops.

Finally, given the reputation of the Tahoua Region associated with a relatively high rate of immigration (national and international), there are various measures, such as the provision of youth loans, to discourage rural emigration and to create the conditions for urban migration to rural areas. This would reduce urban unemployment and rural underemployment.

## 2. Government Policy on Entrepreneurship

### A. Opportunities and Constraints

With regard to regional, national, and local (municipal) strategies for private sector development, Niger has an "Economic and Social Development Plan" for 2017-2021. This document, however, does not specifically address private sector development mechanisms.

To illustrate the socio-economic situation of Niger, it should be noted that in 2016, the GDP per capita was 381.1 USD (Statistical Yearbook of Niger Edition 2017) and the unemployment rate was 15.9% (11.78% for men and 24.95% for women). We could not find a more reliable index of the unemployment rate.

Regarding the position of vulnerable groups in the private sector, in particular, minority groups and people with disabilities, in principle the law makes no distinction between fully-abled persons and persons with disabilities. Practice shows, however, that they have difficulty accessing education and economic activities which means that many of them end up begging.

In describing the position of the diaspora, there is no strong desire to enter the private sector. The majority of Nigeriens' remittances abroad consist of financial assistance to parents remaining in the country.

Relevant stakeholders are mentioned [REDACTED] on the Stakeholder List (Appendix B: List of Stakeholders for Niger).

In order to strengthen the institutional and legal framework for youth entrepreneurship in the country, the State of Niger and its partners have decided to update the National Strategic Framework for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship. The methodology used for writing this document was based on a mapping of youth entrepreneurship in Niger. The framework was based on desk research and workshops held in all eight regions of the country to gather the views and concerns of key stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The summary for the Regions of Maradi, Niamey, and Tahoua can be found in a separate unofficial Appendix.

### Summary of Opportunities and Constraints to Promoting Entrepreneurship in Niger

<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Young population</li> <li>· Rich historical and cultural heritage</li> <li>· Quality of craft products</li> <li>· Considerable mineral potential</li> <li>· Raw materials potential</li> <li>· Agro-silvo-pastoral potential</li> <li>· National water potential</li> <li>· Geographical position</li> </ul>
<b>Constraints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· High exposure to natural hazards</li> <li>· Country is landlocked</li> <li>· Insufficient and obsolete infrastructure</li> <li>· High rate of population growth</li> <li>· Low literacy level</li> <li>· Low entrepreneurial culture</li> <li>· Socio-cultural prejudices</li> </ul>



## B. Government Entities with an Impact on Entrepreneurship and their Effectiveness

At the West-African regional level, the Continental African Free Trade Area (ZLECA) has helped to facilitate intra-African trade by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers. On the sidelines of the African Union Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, the annual ZLECA Business Forum took place on 5 July 2019. The question remains whether this new legal and policy framework will work to the advantage of intra-African and, in general, world investments.

At the national level, we must note the new strategy of Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship developed since 2008 by the State of Niger and its partners in the framework of the National Youth Policy. However, it is clear that this does not take into account the current concerns of the beneficiaries and the main actors in the field. Thus, with a view to strengthen the institutional and legal framework for youth entrepreneurship in Niger, the State has decided to update the National Strategic Framework for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship.

The total cost of implementing the five-year strategy (2020-2025) is estimated at 3.639 billion fCFA (5.6 million EUR), of which 478 million fCFA (727.060 EUR) is for the pilot program and 195 million fCFA (296.600 EUR) is for the installation and operation of the Management Unit. The funds, part of the national budget, will be available in January 2020 to accelerate the start of activities. In total, 60% of the funding will be provided by the national budget. The rest of the resources will be sought from development partners, many of whom are already working on behalf of young people, through multiple projects and programs.

**During our field interviews in Niger, several interlocutors spoke positively and enthusiastically about the new Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy, suggesting that the Dutch government/RVO should consider "moral" and financial support for this National Strategic Framework for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship of the State of Niger, implemented in close relation with the Ministry of Youth Entrepreneurship Promotion and the Ministry of Finance, which will make contacts with targeted donors, including the Dutch government. See also Recommendation #5 in Chapter 10 of this report.**

## C. Regulatory Bodies impacting SMEs and Start-Ups

The most important regulatory body in this field is the Ministry of Youth Entrepreneurship. In accordance with Decree No. 2016-624/PM of 14 November 2016, specifying the attributions of the members of the government and the guidelines defined by the government, the Ministry of Youth Entrepreneurship in liaison with other concerned Ministries, is responsible for the design, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the National Policy on Youth Entrepreneurship. In this capacity, the ministry is responsible for:

- identifying promising sectors for entrepreneurship opportunities for young people, whether they have any diploma or not;
- designing, in conjunction with other ministries, training and coaching strategies for young entrepreneurs;
- developing a coherent, rational policy to support the financing of young entrepreneurs' activities;
- promoting youth entrepreneurship by developing programs to support relevant initiatives;
- promoting existing and emerging funding mechanisms for young graduates' projects.

The Ministry of Youth Entrepreneurship has itself set a strategic goal of promoting entrepreneurship. All of these actions are in line with sub-program "5.7: Development of youth entrepreneurship" of Axis 3, Program 5 part of PDES 2017-2021 and its Priority Action Plan (PAP). The major actions included in the PAP are: facilitating young people's access to credit; reinforcing support structures for young entrepreneurs; building capacity for young promoters and entrepreneurs; and creating decent jobs for young people in agriculture and husbandry.

The ANPE, an Administrative Public Agency created in 1996, is also a major player. The agency is responsible, *inter alia*, for jobseeker placements and contribution to the development and implementation of a national employment policy, in particular through the implementation of programs of integration and reintegration of the unemployed.

Recently, the [Maison de l'Entreprise](#) was created by Decree No. 2012-247/PRN/MC/PSP/MM/DI of 30 May 2012, its main mission being to strengthen economic opportunities through the emergence of competitive enterprises and the improvement of the

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business climate. The *Maison de l'Entreprise*'s mission is, among others: (1) to facilitate administrative procedures for the creation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), particularly through the One Stop Shop; (2) to support SMEs in setting up tools for management adapted to their organizational, technical, financial, or commercial needs in order to facilitate their development. Similarly notable is the mission of strengthening managerial skills of SME managers through information, training, sponsorship, industrial coaching, and identifying obstacles and constraints, as well as proposing to competent authorities the necessary organizational measures and regulations to remedy it; and finally (3) to set up the Observatory of Small and Medium Enterprises. The *Maison de l'Entreprise* is a unifying and dynamic tool at the service of companies. Overall, it aims to enable project promoters and entrepreneurs to gain access to a structured offer of services dedicated to them, as well as to ensure a better synergy of actions of various partners in favor of projects. The establishment of the *Maison de l'Entreprise* in 2012 is one of the most relevant institutional reforms for facilitating and streamlining business start-up procedures. However, this structure is currently only present in Niamey and Zinder.

**Catalystas also visited the Directorate of Cooperative Action and Promotion of Rural Organizations (DAC POR), which aims to stimulate cooperative development, highly relevant to the new OHADA regulatory laws applied at the West African regional level. Among other actors, FAO supports the popularization of the Uniform Act on Cooperative Company Law. Although this new act came into effect in 2013, during the Catalystas mission in Niger it became apparent that there is more work to be done in strengthening the technical knowledge of the cooperative structures and promoting their empowerment. See also Recommendation #5 in Chapter 10 of this report.**

It should be noted that the various extension sessions are part of the implementation of the Accelerating Economic Empowerment of Rural Women program in Niger jointly implemented by FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and the World Food Program (see Appendix C No. 29). This program aims to improve living conditions and strengthen the rights of rural women in the context of sustainable development by contributing to strengthening women's leadership, improving food and nutrition security, and supporting rural women's income growth to enable them to support themselves.

Finally, the National Agency for Standards Compliance Verification (AVCN) serves to facilitate the certification of domestic and imported products. During the Catalystas mission in Niger, we concluded from several interviews that accessing AVCN is too difficult for young entrepreneurs. Among other development actors, Oxfam Niger offers support actions. They have developed a national guide to determine the certification steps (in June 2019 in French, with additional translations scheduled for release in Hausa and Zarma).

The secondary sector of industrial manufacturing accounts for some 17% of GDP (2016), half of which comes from the extractive industries of oil and mining (uranium and gold, 11%; petroleum and food manufacturing, 5%). Niger's industrial sector is very underdeveloped. It faces many constraints, the main ones being: (1) the hesitation of human resources to take charge of the technical and financial management of the companies; (2) national and international investors who do not wish to take the industrial risk and prefer to be confined to trading activities; (3) competition by the fraudulent and smuggling market; (4) a business environment that is not sufficiently secure for investors, as it is governed by sometimes inconsistent regulations, complex administrative procedures, and lack of transparency; and (5) poor access to financing, which is essential for making the required investments for the development of the company (SDNOIP [4], 2016).

In addition to storage, conservation, and transportation issues, there are also certification and packaging problems. The AVCN (under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry) is not easily accessible for SMEs, hence it is necessary that an external donor finances the heavy and expensive process of obtaining certification for (processed) agricultural products. In general, especially for the industrial processing links, cooperative groups are needed to benefit from the comparative advantages of networking, sharing on a larger-scale, etc., but there is a lack of organizational skills, measures, and incentives to become part of a cooperative. See also the OHADA law promoted by DAC/POR (under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture).

**In general, Catalystas has noticed several promising projects and programs to stimulate entrepreneurship in the field. However, the implementation of several state programs and services lack financial, logistical, and human resources. This is the case for the AVCN, which, according to rumors, is about to close. Catalystas adheres to the strategy of building capacity of state institutions.**

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

## 3. Overview of the Private Sector in Niger

### A. Overview of Companies Investing in Entrepreneurship

With his Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF Entrepreneurship) program, Tony Elumelu had a vision of investing \$100 million over 10 years to identify, train, mentor, and finance 10,000 entrepreneurs. A program launched in 2015 to boost the development of Africa from within and demonstrate the importance of private entrepreneurship for employment and development: "It is the young entrepreneur who will create wealth."

The country's strategic geographical position offers many opportunities in terms of export markets. Niger is in a pivotal position between West Africa and the Maghreb and is at the heart of WAEMU and ECOWAS, a potential market of more than 200 million consumers. Few companies take advantage of this, as can be seen by Niger's business directory.

Some enterprise development groups exist, mainly in the form of umbrella organizations consisting of multiple agricultural associations. The main umbrella groups are FUCOPRI, which brings together actors in the rice sector, the MORIBEN Federation, and the network of RECA regional Chambers of Agriculture. In addition, it should be mentioned that FUCOPRI is the only umbrella company that operates exclusively in the rice sector; the other two cover multiple aspects of agriculture with training programs/services and accompanying funding.

**Due to time limitations, Catalystas was unable to collect more information during the field mission, in order to examine in-depth the few operational agricultural organizations. We were, however, able to meet an interprofessional poultry association, see Appendices A and B.**

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

### B. Financial Support

The inclusive financial sector is still underdeveloped. In 2016, the strict banking rate was 6.3% compared to an average of 16.1% in the WAEMU zone, and the penetration rate of the microfinance sector was 10% compared to an average of 18.6% in the WAEMU zone. The microfinance sector, which is an important link in Niger's inclusive finance sector, still faces many difficulties, notably due to: the lack of mobilization of domestic savings as a result of the low income of the population; the severe deterioration of risk portfolios; the insufficiency of the institutions' viability; weakness in the management of human resources and the governance of many decentralized financial systems; the absence of a promotional structure; and the lack of a single anchor for donors involved in the sector, leading to a lack of synergies in interventions for the benefit of rural populations.

3N is the only reference policy for agricultural development and food security. The 3N policy identifies programs and strategic priorities for rural finance. It determines the operational and budgetary framework of all the ministries of the sector. Public financing in the rural sector depends on state budget and local authorities as well as the financial contributions of Technical Financial Partners (TFP). This funding is provided in several rural sectors such as agriculture (inputs, agricultural equipment, storage facilities), livestock (animal feed, vaccination), environment and water engineering (irrigated developments, establishment of anti-erosion measure), and spatial and urban planning (opening up of areas). Without TFP projects and programs, the State of Niger would struggle to maintain these operating and investment expenditures in the rural sector.

In 2011, a public bank was created called the Agricultural Bank (BAGRI). It offers agriculture-related loans at attractive rates (12-13%) and finances all sectors of Niger's economy. Nevertheless, its network is still too decentralized to reach the target rural populations. Grants are awarded by actors such as:

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- the SOGEA-SATOM Initiative for Africa (ISSA);
- PISCA , with French cooperation for entrepreneurs in the field of agriculture and the environment;
- the IOM IDEA project;
- Oxfam's Young Entrepreneurs Empowerment Project;
- The Office of Modernization and Restructuring (BRMN) for grants, investment in equipment, and capacity building support.

**Catalystas has found that young entrepreneurs, especially women, are hampered in setting up and expanding businesses due to lack of access to start up funds and excessive interest rates (up to 15%).**

## 4. Focus on Women's Economic Activities

### A. Women, Pillars of Economic Growth

Niger has a predominantly young and female population. According to a report published by UNICEF, more than 50% of Nigeriens are under 15 and female. The rural sector remains undeniably one of the main drivers of growth in the economy. However, it is important to recognize the strong presence of Nigerien populations in rural areas (85% live in rural areas) with 82% practicing agriculture, of which 52% are women. This demonstrates the significant role they play in the harmonious and sustainable development of the community.

Although very involved in agriculture, livestock, trade, and crafts, women's activities are not always taken into account in official statistics because of their informal character and/or very limited need for education, production facilities, agricultural extension services, and market opportunities.

### B. Gender and the Informal Economy

The expansion of the urban informal sector can be noticed as more than 70% of jobs in the capital are generated by the informal sector and almost two-thirds of households are headed by a person working in this sector. In urban areas, regular and irregular self-employment, together with apprentices and caregivers, account for three quarters of employment (INS, 2016).

In the agriculture and agribusiness sectors, this process of becoming less formalized (and hence of job insecurity) is also present, which has two results: a fall in wage-earning rates, and the effect of legally protected employees losing protection.

The informal sector generates and maintains an unstable nature due to lack of regulations and guarantees. This precariousness manifests itself in increasing instability, a lack of controls and protections, and economic and social vulnerability when it comes to maintaining decent employment.

### C. Importance of Female Role Models

Women are found in limited, small-scale activities requiring very little financial investment. With few women reaching the status of independent economic operators, moving towards sustainable development remains a challenge. Durable, long term progress cannot be made with such a significant portion of the working population stuck in the margins of the development process due to lack of access to education and funding.

According to the Global Fund for Agriculture, if women received the same access to productive resources as men, agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa could increase by 20%.

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**During the Catalystas mission to Niger, we met interesting examples of young women who had the courage to start their own businesses, such as women entrepreneurs supported by the US Embassy. These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).**

### D. Female Entrepreneurship in Niger

Africa is leading in women's entrepreneurship according to a new report published by Rolland Berger. It is indeed on the African continent that the rate of entrepreneurial activity (TEA) of women is the highest in the world. African women make up the largest women's business network in the world, but they still face more obstacles than their male counterparts in creating and running their businesses.

The empowerment of African women is imperative; if they represent half of the population of the continent, they produce 62% of economic goods while 8.5% are salaried employees. In just a few years, Africa has become the main content of female entrepreneurship. According to figures from Women in Africa (WIA), an international platform for economic development and support for African women leaders and women of high potential, 27% of women on the continent have started a business - the highest rate in the world - and their startups perform better than those run by men. The *New Deal, New Game for Women in Africa* study states that rates of return would be 34% higher in companies in which women hold management positions.

**In general, Catalystas notes that women are essential actors in the agricultural sector in Niger. However, they face real difficulties when it comes to land ownership, and very few women own their own land. They also have difficulties with access to finance and credit. In addition, there is a pervasive persistence of prejudices based on gender inequality towards women heads of households, as well as against women entrepreneurs.**

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

## 5. Entrepreneurial Culture

### A. Entrepreneurial Standards and Women's Social Status

Many interlocutors stressed during our mission the importance of capacity building to produce goods and services that meet international standards and quality controls. These include sanitation and hygiene standards that would allow locally produced agricultural goods to reach Western markets with the AGOA and ACP mechanisms.

The Nigerien industrial sector is currently experiencing a serial closure or "collective dismissal of personnel for economic reasons" of several industrial units such as Braniger, Unilever Niger, and Olga Oil due to competition, often out of control and unfair, with products imported from abroad and sold cheaply.

On the other hand, and especially in the capital Niamey, there is a growing demand for "ready to consume" goods, for example, juices, couscous, etc. This opens up opportunities for processing companies, particularly of individual women or groups of women who process agricultural products.

Women seem to be more entrepreneurial than men. In the field, Catalystas observed the following about women entrepreneurs: "Whether in microfinance, agribusiness, or banking, they are essential." Thus, the mission met with successful businesswomen like Ms. [REDACTED] who manages the social enterprise *Poulet du Pays* and Ms. [REDACTED] of *Lait de Chamelle*.

In the Nigerien socio-cultural context, traditional gender roles are one explanation for the high rate of inactivity among women and girls; marriage often restricts women's access to economic activity if they marry traditional husbands, and girls marry at young ages.

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

## B. Various Ambitions of Entrepreneurs and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The concept of CSR has been introduced in Niger by multinationals who invest in social actions for the benefit of local populations. On the Nigerien side, few companies stand out for their CSR. One exception is Niger Lait, which has been striving to produce quality milk since 1994 but also offers employees the best possible working conditions. Also, Niger Lait is the first Nigerien private company ISO 9001 certified for its quality management system.

In addition, there is GVD-Niger network, the focal point of the CSR-Niger initiative, a national center for corporate social responsibility. GVD initiated the network in order to bring civil society organizations closer to companies so that together they can develop socio-environmental actions that carry the values of sustainable development.

Orange Niger, one of the most recent subsidiaries of the France Telecom/Orange group, intervenes on a major factor of exclusion in Niger, namely that of educating children in rural areas, particularly young girls, through a joint program with the Orange Foundation, called the PROFILE project.

Finally, there is the First Lady of Niger initiative, which sponsors the incubator and coworking space the Oasis:

Ms. Lalla Malika Issoufou, [First Lady of Niger, is the sponsor of the Oasis](#), an eco-responsible space of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> for recycling, recovery, and greening, similar to the REcyclerie. It includes spaces for training and collaborative work that can accommodate up to 40 entrepreneurs, spaces for creativity and exchange (projection space, library), and an ecological vegetable garden that serves as an educational platform to raise awareness about sustainable agriculture.

[Veolia](#): "The success achieved by the REcyclerie in Paris deserves to be replicated in other regions and be enhanced in Niger," says Martine Vullierme, Deputy Director of the Veolia Middle East Africa region and Director of the Oasis. ["Around Veolia and Empow'Her, we have co-built this project with our partners so that the Oasis puts environmental awareness and training for women at the heart of its actions."](#)

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## C. Tendencies

"Entrepreneurship is fashionable" – this phrase refers to the phenomenon of "young competitions", young "professionals" who only appear in competitions but do not really implement their business plans. Such competitions provide entrepreneurs with the opportunity to gain access to a national and/or international prize and funds thanks to CSR initiatives of some major structures of the place. Examples include:

- Orange with the African Social Entrepreneurship Award (POESA) organized yearly;
- Total with Startupper;
- The National Agency of Information Systems (ANSI) with E-takara for project leaders and entrepreneurs in the field of ICT;
- The Company House with the Business Plan Competition (CPA) and the Pitch Competition for most innovative companies initiated within the framework of the SahelInnov forum.

## D. Successes and Failures

Firstly, one must note the exceptional demographics in the region, with the majority of the population under the age of 30, meaning that rapid job creation will be required for at least the next twenty years. By 2035, there will be approximately 650,000 young people, many of whom will have little or no schooling, available on the labor market in Niger or ready to emigrate to find a job. Unless there are profound changes in the economy, especially in the rural economy where the vast majority of the

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population lives, employment opportunities will be inadequate to absorb this massive influx into the labor market, a factor which can be a source of growing tensions.

In addition, the entrepreneurial environment in Niger is suffering from security crises in the sub-region. The effects are felt not only in declining food security and livelihoods of Niger's households but also in the deterioration of the business climate. Since the beginning of this year, there has been an increase in the number of security incidents that have caused population movements. One example is the displacement of 20,000 IDPs in the Maradi Region following community tensions in the states of Zamfara and Sokoto in Nigeria. For some big companies like Unilever in Niger, the risks related to this situation – of physical (deliberate aggression targeting team members or partners, risk of attack, etc.) and psychological nature (participants to fearful to cooperate with authorities or NGOs, fear of kidnapping, etc.) were part of the considerations for closing their operations.

Another general constraint is linked, as mentioned earlier, to access to funding. At the local level, however, Catalystas – like many development actors such as CARE, Oxfam, and Plan International – is convinced of the good functionality of the AVEC/AJEC model (Village Savings and Loan Associations, for women and young people) and tontine systems that have proven especially successful on a small scale in women's groups. Worth mentioning is the CARE village loan and savings model under the Matu Masa Dubara (MMD) program.

Finally, it should be stressed that among Nigeriens there is little innovative spirit which is the basis for creating entrepreneurial engagement among young people. The reversal of demographic trends is certainly difficult because it involves significant cultural changes. Such reversal of trends, however, is also essential and urgent given the magnitude of the impact of demographic shifts on society and the economy.

**Catalystas has found some effective and profitable entrepreneurship models that are imitated by various actors or public and private donors:**

### ***Testimony of success in the private sector:***

*During the Catalystas mission in Tahoua, we met with the private company Tarmamoun (see Appendix B) which has been operational for more than 20 years and has been able to employ about 20 workers and technicians. It seems relevant for the owner, who has never had outside help, to expand his product offering, including fresh milk. He reacted positively to our suggestion to get in touch with the women's milk processing associations in the same city of Tahoua. In addition, as President of the Regional Chamber of Commerce in Tahoua, the owner of Tarmamoun plays a role as an inspirer for the youngest entrepreneurs in his influence.*

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### ***Tony Elumelu Foundation:***

*On 6 July 2019, on the sidelines of the African Union Summit in Niamey, UNDP Regional Director for Africa, Ahunna Eziakonwa, and Tony Elumelu, founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), signed a 10 years partnership involving the supervision and financial support of 100,000 young entrepreneurs in seven African Sahel countries (Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Mauritania, Mali, and Burkina Faso). The initiative is expected to generate more than one million jobs and about ten billion dollars in revenue in an area where young people make up 64.5% of the total population, with 194 million people under 25. The program, we learned, will be implemented through the Tony Elumelu Foundation which has already supported 7,520 local entrepreneurs in 54 countries of the African continent with the help of the YouthConnekt initiative, which supports young Africans with entrepreneurial skills.*

## **E. Engines, Models, and Media Influencing Entrepreneurship**

In order to overcome the fear of taking risks without any guarantees, potential entrepreneurs need role models to push them towards starting a business. Hence, success stories of young/female entrepreneurs are important to promote. See, for example, the women processing moringa in the Region of Maradi, Sahel Food, STA, NigerLait, Mel plus Informatique, Enterprise Semenciére Alheri, the Sahel dairy, Rimbo, Al Izza, and Bnif Afuwa, among others. **See also Appendix B.**



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Events such as SAHEL, SAJE, SAFEM, FONAF (Niger Forum for the Empowerment of Women), SANEF (National Salon of Female Entrepreneurship), and SahelInnov are also good opportunities to help entrepreneurs promote their companies.

During several interviews carried out during our Catalystas mission, it was noticed that young people have the tendency to imitate other entrepreneurs. This poses problems in the sense that the market quickly becomes saturated with several "competitors" who operate in the same spheres of products, sales outlets, etc. On the other hand, this similar attitude and behavior of young people copying other entrepreneurs can lead to the development of good practices and thus to collective experiences of success.

*Ms. Zeinabou Maidah, 53 years old, is the CEO of Niger-Lait. An agri-food engineer, she invested in the creation of her small company, Niger-Lait, in 1994. At present, she employs 118 people and has a production capacity of 55,000 liters per day (all products combined) which are distributed in all regions of the country (except Diffa).*

*Ms. Rekia Djermakoye is an undisputed icon of microfinance in Niger and is leading a new entity as President and General Director of "MATA & MATASSA Investing 2Mi SA", better known as "2MINVEST" or "Center for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship of Women and Youth".*

## 6. Scenario to Register a Business

According to the Doing Business Report of 2018, Niger ranks **24th place worldwide**. This places Niger first in African business development of 53 African countries. In four years, Niger has seen an increase in the "business development" indicator, from 132<sup>nd</sup> place in 2016 to 27<sup>th</sup> in 2019. Recent economic, institutional, legal, and business development reforms have impacted this result.

The reforms implemented in relation to the business start-up indicator relate to the reduction of time and costs of formal regulations for the creation of a Limited Liability Company (LLC) and the reduction of procedures by making the transition to notaries optional when creating an LLC.

The obstacles, challenges, and risks for young people and women when starting a business, and in particular for integration into the labor market in Niamey, Tahoua, and Maradi are:

Main Obstacles	Main Challenges	Main Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Lack of qualification of young men or women</li> <li>· Inadequacy of the available training for youth as well as the profile of the company</li> <li>· Low level of start-up income that causes young people to leave the company</li> <li>· Insufficient entrepreneurship training</li> <li>· Insufficient capacity in the financial management of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Taxation</li> <li>· Competition of informal enterprises</li> <li>· Unsavory business environment</li> <li>· Difficulties storing national products</li> <li>· Limited processing capacity</li> <li>· Degradation of transport infrastructure and the informal nature of trade</li> <li>· High cost of transport services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Economic crisis</li> <li>· Insecurity</li> <li>· Membership of employees</li> </ul>

In the following section, different phases of business development are described, as well as the structures involved in the business creation phase:



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• **Structuring of Ideas:** There are incubators and private consulting firms that assist entrepreneurs in moving from the idea phase to the implementation of business plans through validation of the business model and plan and presentation to investors. These firms also facilitate participation in major meetings on the issue of entrepreneurship, such as the Global Entrepreneurship Congress.

• **Registration:** With the *Maison de l'Entreprise's* one-stop shop, the Niger Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIN) and the Directorate General of Taxes (DGI), the start-up of a new company can be finalized in less than 72 hours from a single location (for a SARL, it takes 24 hours maximum). There are various possibilities:

- create an SARL with 5,000 fCFA (8 EUR), which is the share required by the Uniform Act OHADA for the constitution of a SARL;
- create an LLC by private deed, or
- the possibility of online publication of incorporation notices on the [website](#) of the *Maison de l'Entreprise*.

The cost of creating a SARL at the *Maison de l'Entreprise* is 17,500 fCFA (265 EUR) for all proceedings.

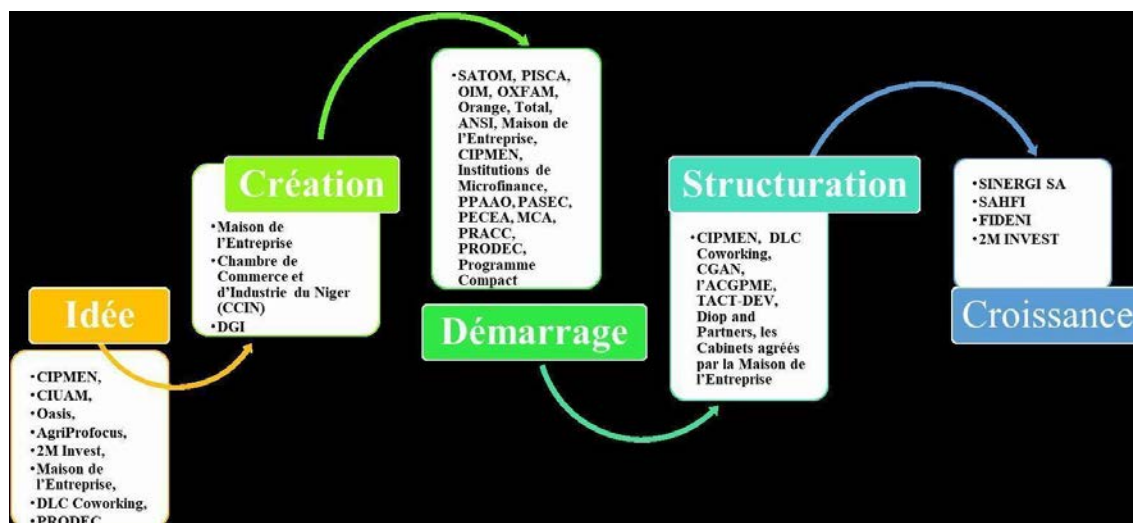
• **Start-Up: Most young entrepreneurs in urban areas use an incubator** which can support them in activities related to the formalization of their company, advise them on the choice of legal form, taxation, and more.

• **Operational Implementation:** Regarding the support of companies, it is important to mention the Center for Business Formalities (CFE) which is a one-stop shop where all the procedures for creating, modifying, and dissolving companies are grouped and processed on behalf of the business owner. The government motivates young people to open new businesses by relieving them of tax measures (exemption).

Catalystas noticed that young entrepreneurs face a vicious circle in business creation because they are, on the one hand, encouraged to set up their own business, but, on the other hand, they face major problems in accessing funds for start-ups, receiving certifications, and administrative attestations, as well as problems of transport, product quality, and storage.



Figure: Ranking of Structures and Range of Relevant Stakeholders Classified by Phase of Entrepreneurial Process



## 7. Access to Funding, Loans, and Allowances

### A. Overview of the Financing System for SMEs and Entrepreneurs

The following stakeholders are mentioned and presented on [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] the list of stakeholders (Appendix B: Mapping Stakeholders – Niger)

The rate varies from one institution to another but generally sits between 9-12%. We noted the fragility of loans issued for agriculture and of medium-term loans (only 200 million in 2005). As for long-term loans, which concern growth and employment-generating investments, they have not been granted for agricultural projects over the considered period.

The industrial processing sector has hardly any more potential to produce sustainable and decent jobs. Although it has benefited from greater lending in the short and medium terms than the rural sector, it has not recorded much in the way of long-term credit. The largest share of lending is reserved for the hospitality sector which does not generate many sustainable and decent jobs.

All sectors combined, long-term loans generating sustainable investment, growth, job creation and development are non-existent. In addition, the modern banking system pays very little attention to the funding of rural activities, which it considers high-risk. Thus, the informal funding system (tontines) remains popular among households (43% of households practice them compared to only 10% of households that use formal banking).

There are banks that offer microcredit programs for young people in the start-up phase in the form of a microcredit fund that provides loans, including working capital; only a few grant start-up funds.

**Despite these efforts, young entrepreneurs need more individual support; it is not enough to just give them prizes (business awards); they must also be assisted in accessing start-up funds in the stabilization phase of the business.** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### B. Financial instruments and avenues available for entrepreneurs to borrow and raise capital

There are microcredit structures for financing income-generating activities, but the poorest households cannot access them. The percentage of Nigerien households whose members have borrowed money is 26%. This rate involves disparities by place of residence. It is 27% in rural areas and 19% in urban areas. Only 12% of these loans are made formally through a bank (1%), a microfinance structure (7%), a cooperative (2%), or a company (2%).

In Niger, young people can obtain access to funds for their businesses through:

- ❖ Banks (Bagri, BIA, Ecobank, BoA, SonyBank, etc.);
- ❖ The Decentralized Financial System (Yarda, Asusu, Capital Finance, etc.);
- ❖ A grant from existing projects and programs (PRAPS, PASEC, PROEMPLOI, etc.);
- ❖ The State of Niger, which organizes competitions on the occasion of rotating festivals;
- ❖ Competitive funds at the level of CCIN, CRA, etc.

For loans of honor there are two funds of this type in Niger managed by CIPMEN – the fund of French Cooperation financed by the FSPI and the PAI fund financed by the French Development Agency (AFD).

With regard to micro-loans, the following financial institutions specialize in providing funds to SMEs:

- ASUSU's MATASSA project
- 2M Invest
- CAPE-Niger

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- Mutuals like YARDA in Zinder and N'GADA in Diffa

In addition, there is the "tontine" as previously mentioned in this report. This ancestral village-based loan and savings model, revived by CARE, has achieved impressive coverage in several African countries since it was launched in Niger in 1993 under the name Matu Masa Dubara (MMD). In Niger, more than 160,000 rural women belong to 5,500 groups, with self-management and savings, each with about 30 members.

Modern financing structures do not operate in sectors where the majority of jobs are created, such as the informal sector and the rural sector. These sectors, where the majority of the working population are informally employed, are considered unsafe by modern banks. Thus, a good deal of household borrowing is done informally.

As far as "business angels" are concerned, worth mentioning is the Niger Business Angels network, a support network for companies at all stages of their development, especially in their start-up phase. The Niger Business Angels Network Association's primary objective is to support the improvement of the business climate through the promotion, accompaniment, and representation of business angels.

After desk research, the Catalystas mission met SINERGI [REDACTED] - a Nigerien investment company created in 2007 at the initiative of I&P and local entrepreneurs - which aims to participate in the creation and development of small formal enterprises. SINERGI takes minority stakes in capital with investments between 30,000 and 75,000 EUR alongside entrepreneurs and provides local support as part of a long-term partnership. SINERGI currently counts among its associates several Nigerien and international companies present in Niger (AREVA and VEOLIA) alongside I&P, SIDI, and Nigerien founding entrepreneurs. The originality of SINERGI's approach rests on the sponsorship of promoters financed by Nigerien entrepreneurs.

SINERGI has invested in seven SMEs since the start of its activities in 2008. 75% of these companies were in the start-up phase at the time of SINERGI's investment and all required long work for formalization. Despite the high risk related to these small start-ups, 100% of the companies in the portfolio have been profitable for more than three years.

The portfolio companies operate in diversified sectors, including those in the agricultural sector, such as ETC, a grain processing company based in Niamey and Compost Niger, an organic fertilizer manufacturer based in Niamey.

Finally, with regard to government initiatives, the State of Niger organizes competitions during rotating festivals and there are competitive funds proposed by the CCIN, CRA, etc. FISAN will be discussed later in the report. On 2 August 2017, the Niger Council of Ministers adopted a draft decree creating an Investment Fund for Food and Nutritional Security (FISAN [REDACTED]), which aims, in particular, to improve the supply of financial services to households, producers, and other value chain actors, with the goal of supporting the transformation of agro-silvopastoral and fisheries production systems and promoting the modernization of processing and marketing systems for agricultural and agri-food products.

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

## 8. Education, Human Capital, and Capacity Building on Entrepreneurship

### A. Human Capital

There is a clear difference between access to information in Niamey and in the other regions. In addition, those interested in producing and/or undertaking entrepreneurial activities are not always informed about promotional activities such as relevant fairs and seminars like the Agricultural, Hydraulic, Environmental, and Food Exhibition. Niger Livestock (SAHEL Niger) is a renowned fair frequented by various groups of farmers and suppliers of agricultural products throughout Niger. The Network of

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Chambers of Agriculture of Niger (RECA) in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock organized the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Salon from 19-24 February 2019 at the Palais du 29 Juillet. Finally, there is a trend, though modest, of valorization of agro-silvo-pastoral products of Niger in order to encourage Nigeriens to "consume Nigerien".

**Catalystas personally notes that several food products of the "daily basket" such as coffee, milk, fruit juice, and fish are either imported (most often from Nigeria or France), or sold by multinationals in transformed form. The best-known case is "milk powder" which is sold at half the price of fresh local milk.**

## B. Gaps Identified in the Areas of Education and Technical Skills

Regarding the gaps identified among young people who want to jump in and put their ideas of entrepreneurship into practice, particularly in the Tahoua and Maradi Regions, it is clear that with a low literacy and schooling rate, it is necessary to focus on basic skills at first, then move on to more technical skills such as business plan design, etc. Basic skills include:

- Literacy skills – know how to write and count, focus on management and accounting
- Life skills – fear of entrepreneurship, lack of self-confidence
- Access to information on opportunities especially offers from support programs, calls for competition, etc.

Barriers to the accessibility of internet services include the generally low level of computer literacy in the population, poor infrastructure, and the high cost of internet services. The itinerant program to raise awareness and introduce young people to computers is an interesting method to put in place to develop computer skills in the population.

Additionally, the supply of electricity is not sufficient. Large rural areas are not connected to electrical grids and large urban centers experience frequent power cuts.

## C. Support structure for entrepreneurs

**For National and International Projects and Programs, see Appendix B.**

In Niger, there is clear lack of measures to protect operating companies from public institutions, noticed due to the serial announcements of closure of industrial units. This is taking place in light of the finalization and the entry into force of the African Union (AU) Treaty establishing a Continental Free Trade Area in Africa (ZLECAF) next July in Niamey.

### i. Incubator Centers, Co-Working Spaces and Acceleration Programs

The Catalystas mission in Niger met with almost all incubator centers, most of which are in Niamey. These are structures involved in the idea or project phase. Technical and financial support activities with qualified human resources for support can be classified into five broad categories:

- assistance with document development (business model, business plan, prototyping, etc.);
- linking with other support structures;
- pitch preparation for fundraising;
- networking with other entrepreneurs; and
- choice of the legal form of the company.

Among the structures that can accompany the entrepreneur in their career at this phase are CIPMEN, CIUAM, DLC Co-working, Oasis, AgriProfocus, 2M Invest, the Maison de l'Entreprise, and PRODEC. These structures also offer shared workspaces (co-working) and associated services.

In addition, there are private entrepreneurship consulting firms such as ACCENTrepreneur and Empow'Her PME's. They accompany

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entrepreneurs from the idea phase to the implementation of the company, through the validation of the business model and plan and the presentation to investors. These firms also facilitate participation in major meetings on the issue of entrepreneurship such as Global Entrepreneurship Congress.

Finally, there are also many private firms licensed by the Maison de l'Entreprise that offer support in business management, such as ACGPM, TACT-DEV, Diop and Partners, and Cabinets. For human resource needs, the ANPE offers young companies the opportunity to recruit trainees who are subsidized by the agency. Lastly, there are structures involved in the growth phase, investment companies such as SINERGI, 2M Invest, SAHFI, and banks such as BOA, whose lending to SMEs is facilitated by the ARIZ guarantee.

In terms of co-working spaces, these are spaces most often linked to incubation centers, almost all located in the capital Niamey.

During on-site interviews in Niamey, Catalystas learned about the establishment of an incubator federation, the Network of Support Structures for Entrepreneurship of Niger (RESAEN). Given the lack or inadequacy of technical support, which is the main obstacle to the survival and growth of SMEs, the founding members of RESAEN have agreed to create a framework to meet and exchange experiences. The main objective of the network is to create synergies between the members to better promote entrepreneurship in Niger and serve as a platform for information exchange between members and dialogue with national authorities, the financial sector, and development partners. The members of the Network of Supporting Structures for Entrepreneurship in Niger are the Incubator Center for SMEs in Niger (CIPMEN), the Abdou Moumouni University Incubator Center (CIUAM), Empow'Her, Mata and Matassa Investment (2M invest), DLC Coworking, and Illimi Labs.

Notably, Catalystas was invited to read the statutes of the Network, although they have not been officially registered with the state yet. In the texts approved by the General Assembly of the Network, their mission is presented as follows:

- Support consultation, reflection, and thematic exchanges;
- Encourage and promote the exchange of information on innovative practices and success stories among members;
- Facilitate synergy in the interventions of members by harmonizing actions and pooling the means of intervention;
- Promote dialogue with national and regional authorities, the financial sector, and development partners on matters within their areas of competence; and
- Join the strategic framework of the promotion of youth entrepreneurship in Niger, the SME charter, and contribute to their implementation.

**The recent creation of the RESAEN Network is an ideal investment opportunity for the Dutch government/RVO, including the potential for the installation of an Orange Corners Program. See Recommendation #1 in Chapter 10**

### More Detailed Description of Existing Supporting Entities

**SAHELINNOV BOOST:** These acceleration programs are proposed by the SahelInnov consortium initiated by the CIPMEN. The nine Sahelian incubators share their skills to support start-ups. The goal is to prepare them to absorb capital and expand their activities in the Sahelian markets.

**IDEA:** IOM's CIPMEN's Business Development Initiative program supports the growth of companies launched by young people who are vulnerable to migration in order to foster job creation. Launched in January 2018 for a 2-year plan, this program targets 40 companies in Niamey and in the Regions of Tahoua and Zinder. The objective is to boost their growth by strengthening capacities and financing.

**L'AFRIQUE EXCELLS:** This acceleration program is organized by the World Bank and implemented by Sahel Innov, Suguba, and VC4Africa over a six month period. This program is aimed at start-ups in phases of expansion in the markets of French-speaking Africa in search of funds of up to 5 million USD. At the end of the selection phase, 20 start-ups will benefit from the expertise of the coordinating team and a mentor of international stature to strengthen their business model and accelerate their expansion into other markets. Start-ups will have privileged relationships with leading investors, industry experts, and business partners throughout the program. Two residential incubations in Mali and France will allow start-ups engaged in the program to meet. More info is available at <https://afrique-excelle.com>.

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**Cabinet AccentrEntrepreneur:** B2B Zaure (meaning "vestibule") incubation program initiated and managed by Yazi Adamou, who is also engaged in the Niger Business Angel Network.

**The US Embassy:** Six month program for "emerging women". In Niger, following this program, there are two groups of women determined to "make a difference for their communities and their own professional future".

**In this context, Catalystas met with local herbal products sellers, a stylist, and a woman processing fruit juice in the city of Maradi. In particular, we heard a testimony from an "emergent" young woman, which can be found in the RVO Scoping Mission Report on Youth Employment in Niger's Agricultural Value Chains.**

**DLC Coworking:** An ambitious project for youth and women, managed by young women entrepreneurs from Niger who have given themselves the challenge of providing women with a space where they can express their talents and find all the necessary comfort for the completion of their business creation projects. They have access to a workspace where they can share their creative ideas for innovative projects.

**The Oasis / Empow'Her:** A space dedicated to female entrepreneurship, circular economy, and eco-responsibility, opened in Niamey on 18 January 2018. 2,500 people have already gathered for 63 events, and 686 women have benefited from incubation programs or entrepreneurship training. The development and formalization of their entrepreneurial management skills enables these women to benefit from independence gained through their own profitable businesses. This dynamic of social and environmental change affects both beneficiaries of the training, who become sensitized through their training, and their wider communities, who training participants share their knowledge with. In fact, many women decide to share knowledge and skills they have gained through trainings with organizations or collective workshops in their neighborhoods.

**CIPMEN:** The Incubator Center of Small and Medium Enterprises of Niger (CIPMEN) is the first incubator of Niger, founded in 2014, whose objective is to support companies in the information technology and communication, renewable energy, environment, and agro-food industry sectors (projects during their start-up, development, and growth phases). It offers a platform for business development, communication and marketing, accounting, and legal assistance. Their services promote the development of business activities in the field of new technologies, renewable energy, the environment, and agribusiness.

**"2Mi SA":** is an innovative center open to women and young project leaders. Created on 28 March 2018, "2Mi SA" is a limited company with a Board of Directors and a capital of 530,000,000 fCFA. Its main mission is to offer innovative services to women and young entrepreneurs through an inclusive approach in four essential areas: training, structured support, ethical funding, and networking. To date, "2MINVEST" operates in three regions: Niamey, Tahoua, and Tillabéri.

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

### ii. University programs

With respect to programs affiliated with universities and educational institutions promoting entrepreneurial dynamics, the only program known to our mission is the Incubator Center of Abdou Moumouni University in Niger, a general structure created on 1 April 2016 (CIUAM) and open to all types of projects in order to reach all levels of the university community. The incubator aims to:

- create awareness of the entrepreneurial spirit;
- support the creation and development of innovative companies;
- promote business accommodation; and
- support fund seeking.

Recently, CIUAM took the initiative to open regional subsidiaries, notably in Tahoua and Zinder:

- The University of Niamey is opening and launching other university centers associated with the University of Tahoua, but this is not yet operational. We could consider the same approach with the University of Maradi.

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- The Cabinet Sahel Bio in the city of Maradi already operates as a coordination and information center where young people can be trained and accompanied; it would be interesting to support it in an expanded role of an incubation center in Maradi.

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

### iii. TVET Centers

The Nigerien government proposed an inter-ministerial strategy aimed at "promoting the training and integration of at least 100,000 youth from 2010 to 2012" through a three-year action program to promote youth employment in Niger. In light of the implementation of the sectoral policy on vocational and technical education and training (TVET) adopted in March 2006, the Ministry in charge of the sub-sector drafted a "Program for the Modernization and Development of the EFPT, (PMD/EFPT)". Since 2008, the ADB, the Luxembourg Cooperation, and SWISSCONTACT have committed themselves to financing and supporting this sub-sector. Thus, the basic cycles 1 and 2 are now supported with the development of the Technical College Network (CET), the Trades Training Center (CFM), and vocational high schools. A network of information and vocational guidance platforms for young people is currently supported by SWISSCONTACT (Programs of the European Union, Swiss Cooperation, and UNICEF).

During the development of the Education and Training Sector Program (PSEF) in 2013, the strategies defined in the PMD/EFPT were revised. Based on the potential demand assessed in 2010 (91,700 young people), then projected in 2016 (229,000) and 2024 (more than 504,000 young people), the PSEF provides for the training of about 15% of the projected workforce.

The EFPT will have to reform to be able to respond to this potential demand and to adapt with the professional integration of new graduates. It appears that there is a need to determine effective means for the operation of various processes and to open up the field of action of the sub-sector to training courses related to productive sectors and actors of the economy. The National Youth Policy was updated in 2016 with the support of UNESCO, BREDA, and UNICEF and is currently being adopted by the Nigerien government. This policy includes the need to take up the challenge of socio-economic integration of young people in line with SDG 8. A regional operational plan for the implementation of this policy has already been drafted by the various local branches of the national youth council (NYC).

### iv. Legal Institutions

The Youth Entrepreneurship Bill was passed to meet the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs and make young people the spearhead of the Nigerien economy. Several strategies have been put in place by the Nigerien government and its development partners in favor of young people. These include, among others, the National Youth Policy and the National Strategic Framework for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship. In order to strengthen the institutional and legal framework for youth entrepreneurship in Niger, the State has decided to update the National Strategic Framework for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship.

Tax mobilization of the informal sector has quadrupled. According to the Directorate General of Taxes, the rate of contribution of the informal sector to the mobilization of tax revenues increased from 0.37% in 2017 to 1.5% in 2018. This increase in the participation of the informal sector is the effect of the 2018 Budget Law. The 2018-2021 strategic plan drawn up and implemented by the directorate will further encourage those involved in the informal economy to formalize their business activities. Other procedures and reforms are underway to better align taxpayers and deter the tax optimization of multinational firms.

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### v. Individuals (Experts, Tutors, Mentors, and Counselors)

These are mainly offices where 'charismatic' individuals and/or businessmen can be found, such as:

- The Honorary Consul for the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Belgium, Mr. Boureïma Wankoye, who facilitated several contacts during our mission;
- A professor at the University of Maradi who opened his own Sahel Cabinet, now functioning as an incubation center;
- The Coordinator of AccEntrepreneur, Mr. Yazi Adamou, who is also the inspiration for the Business Angels Network in Niger;



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- NigerLait CEO, Ms. Zeinabou Maidah, who dared to start from the ground up and achieved her goal of creating a company of several hundred employees with national coverage;
- 2MInvest's CEO, Ms. Yacouba Reki, who is known for her investment efforts in MFI Asusu, which is still operational in certain localities in Niger, and who has also created her own incubation center for young people and women in Niamey; and
- The Business Challenge Initiative, inspired by Mr. Seydou Souley, who is both President of the Niger Trade Association of Business Angels and co-founder of Niger YMCA.

**On several occasions during our mission in Niger, it became clear that promoting the culture of entrepreneurship in general, and in the Tahoua and Maradi Regions more specifically, is imperative.** *These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

### vi. Social Networks

[Facebook](#) plays a fundamental role in promoting initiatives for youth entrepreneurship. This is especially relevant for Niamey, as young people outside the capital are often poorly informed. For example, the Young Entrepreneurship Platform used the platform to invite young men and women to a conference of entrepreneurship. Among social media platforms, WhatsApp also plays a crucial role in the marketing of goods in Niger, for example in the sale of poultry. Ms. "Chicken Country", a social enterprise specializing in the collection of poultry from rural women, operates on WhatsApp. A similar case is that of Ms. Habsou Lait de Chamelle.

The club "Nigériennes d'Exception" in collaboration with DLC coworking and Dynastie Communication, used social networks to compose their first [directory of women entrepreneurs and project holders](#) of Niger. During the Catalystas mission, we met various commercial initiatives using e-commerce to promote and sell processed products, such as Kalto Juice, which is disseminated through the kassouwa.com network, the largest market in Niger.

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## 9. Projects and Programs for Entrepreneurship

For National and International Programs, refer to Appendix **B**, where stakeholders and programs are mapped, listed, and described.

To compile these lists, Catalystas relied on sources of documentation available during the field mission, websites, and brochures (received in hard copy). Several pieces of information were also collected through numerous interviews, focus group conversations, and testimonies obtained during the field mission in Niger. Accordingly, all the boxes in Appendix **B** are not always fully filled, as we had to rely on oral and personal sources to supplement the statistics, reports, and official texts.

### A. National Programs

During the field mission in Niger, Catalystas met several people who referred to support programs run by the State of Niger which cover both the promotion of youth entrepreneurship and the employment of young professionals. Similarly, they are most often known to young people in the modern and informal sector, in rural and urban areas, and to people with higher levels of education. They include:

- the Ministry of Youth Entrepreneurship, responsible for the design, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the National Youth Entrepreneurship Policy.



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- the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment, responsible, *inter alia*, for contributing to the elaboration and implementation of national employment policy, in particular through the implementation of programs of integration and reintegration of jobseekers. ANPE also informs its users (employers and jobseekers) of the implementation of its online information system, called "SIANPE".

- *These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

- the Maison de l'Entreprise: responsible *inter alia* for facilitating the procedures and administrative processes for the creation of Small and Medium Businesses, especially through the Single Window; to assist small and medium-sized companies in setting up management tools adapted to their organizational, technical, financial, or commercial needs in order to facilitate their development; to strengthen the managerial skills of SME managers through information, training, sponsorship, and industrial companionship.

## B. International Programs

The following stakeholders are available 

Appendix B: List of Stakeholders for Niger.

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*

# 10. Recommendations to the Dutch Government

*These sections have been removed due to confidentiality. Requests for more detailed information can be sent to [io@rvo.nl](mailto:io@rvo.nl).*



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### List of Acronyms

<b>ACP</b>	Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific
<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AFN</b>	Association des Femmes du Niger
<b>ANSI</b>	l'Agence Nationale des Systèmes d'Information (ANSI)
<b>ANPE</b>	Nigerien National Employment Agency
<b>APEJ</b>	(National) Agency for Youth Employment
<b>ARM</b>	Agence de Régulation Multisectorielle
<b>ASP</b>	Agro-Silvo-Pastoral
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AVCN</b>	National Agency for Verification of Compliance with Standards
<b>BAGRI</b>	Agriculture Bank
<b>BCEAO</b>	Central Bank of West African States
<b>BDRN</b>	Development Bank of the Republic of Niger
<b>BRMN</b>	Office of Modernization and Restructuring
<b>CERPOD</b>	Center for Studies and Research on Population for Development
<b>CFA/fCFA</b>	(Central) West African Franc
<b>CFFP</b>	Center for Training and the Promotion of Women
<b>CFPT</b>	Professional and Technical Training Center
<b>CGE</b>	Accounting and Business Management
<b>CMCAN</b>	Center of Leather and Art Trade of Niger
<b>CNCA</b>	National Credit Agricole Fund
<b>DDE</b>	(Dutch) Sustainable Economic Development Department
<b>DEFTP</b>	Department of Education and Vocational and Technical Training
<b>DEFTPP</b>	Department of Private Vocational and Technical Training
<b>DEP</b>	Department of Studies and Programming
<b>DGEF</b>	General Directorate of Teaching and Training
<b>DGOIP</b>	Directorate General of Professional Orientation and Integration
<b>DIEP</b>	Infrastructure and Pedagogical Equipment Department
<b>DIFPS</b>	Direction of Insertion and Financing of Outgoing Projects
<b>DMP/DSP</b>	Directorate of Public Procurement and Public Service Delegations
<b>DOSP</b>	Directorate of Orientation and Professional Training
<b>DREP/T</b>	Regional Directorate of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>DSCN</b>	Directorate of Statistics and National Accounts
<b>DSO</b>	(Dutch) Social Development Department
<b>DSH</b>	(Dutch) Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid

<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>ECVMA</b>	National Survey on Living Conditions of Households and Agriculture
<b>EDS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>EDSN-MICS</b>	Demographic and health survey and multiple indicators of Niger
<b>EJOM</b>	Développement de la chaîne de valeur et emploi des jeunes
<b>ENABEL</b>	Belgian Development Agency
<b>ENBC</b>	National Survey on Budget and Consumption
<b>EPA</b>	Economic Partnership Agreement
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAFPA</b>	Fond d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et l'Apprentissage
<b>FAFPCA</b>	Fonds d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle Continue et à l'Apprentissage
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)
<b>FOPROR</b>	Rural Professional Training
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>ICRA</b>	International Center for Development Oriented Research in Agriculture
<b>ICRISAT</b>	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IEC</b>	Information Education Communication
<b>IFDC</b>	International Fertiliser Development Center
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IHPC</b>	Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices
<b>ILRI</b>	International Livestock Research Institute
<b>Lux Dev</b>	Luxembourg Development Agency
<b>MA/E</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
<b>MEP/A/PLN/EC</b>	Minister of Primary Education, Literacy, Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education
<b>MES/R/I</b>	Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation
<b>MEPT</b>	Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education
<b>MES</b>	Ministry of Secondary Education
<b>M/F</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MFP/RA</b>	Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform
<b>MMD</b>	Matu Masa Dubara
<b>MPF/PE</b>	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection
<b>NEPAD</b>	African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>NNN / 3N</b>	Nigériens Nourishing Nigériens
<b>NIGELEC</b>	Société Nigérienne d'Electricité (Nigerian Electricity Company)
<b>NIGETIP</b>	Nigerien Public Works Agency for Employment
<b>NIG-017</b>	Programme Coopération Niger - Luxembourg N°017
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NZO</b>	Dutch Dairy Association

<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OEC</b>	Observatory of Economic Complexity
<b>OHADA</b>	African Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NEP</b>	National Employment Policy
<b>PAP</b>	Priority Action Plan
<b>PADE / FPT</b>	Programme d'Appui au Développement de l'Enseignement et de la Formation Professionnels et Techniques
<b>PAFHa</b>	Projet d'Appui à la Filière Halieutique
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>PAIPCE</b>	Programme d'Appui à l'Initiative Privée et à la Création d'Emplois
<b>PAS</b>	Programmes d'Ajustement Structurel
<b>PDDE</b>	Ten-year Education Development Program
<b>PDES</b>	Economic and Social Development Plan
<b>PIJD</b>	Graduate Youth Integration Program
<b>PISI</b>	Integration Program in the Informal Sector
<b>PPA</b>	Parité de Pouvoir d'Achat
<b>PNPS</b>	Politique nationale de protection sociale
<b>PRC</b>	Long-term Unemployed Reconversion Program
<b>PRODEC</b>	Projet de Développement des Compétences pour soutenir la Croissance
<b>RECA</b>	Network of Chambers of Agriculture of Niger
<b>RESAEN</b>	Network of Support Structures for Entrepreneurship of Niger
<b>RGP/H</b>	General Census of Population and Housing
<b>RNDH</b>	National Report on Human Development
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Size Enterprise
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SDR</b>	Rural Development Strategy
<b>SDRP</b>	Stratégie de Développement accéléré et de Réduction de la Pauvreté
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>SNV</b>	Netherlands Development Organisation
<b>SONIBANK</b>	Nigerian Bank Corporation
<b>SONICHAR</b>	Société Nigérienne du Charbon(Nigerian Coal Company)
<b>SRP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy
<b>TFP</b>	Technical Financial Partner
<b>TIFA</b>	Trade and Investment Framework Agreement
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UAM</b>	Abdou Moumouni Niamey University
<b>UI Say</b>	University of Islamique de Say
<b>UM</b>	University of Maradi
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UT</b>	University of Tahoua
<b>WEAMU</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WIA</b>	Women in Africa

## Appendix B: List of Stakeholders for Niger

City	Name of the Structure	Website
<b>POLICY Government</b>		
Niamey	Ministère du Commerce	
Niamey	Ministère du Travail	
Niamey	Ministère de l'Agriculture de l'Élevage	
Niamey	Ministère de l'Entrepreneuriat des Jeunes	
Niamey	Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme	
Niamey	Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports	
Niamey	Haut Commissariat Initiative 3 NNN	<a href="http://www.initiative3n.ne">http://www.initiative3n.ne</a>
Niamey	ANPE agence nationale de la promotion de l'emploi	<a href="http://www.anpe-niger.ne/">http://www.anpe-niger.ne/</a>
Niamey	Ministère de l'économie et des finances	<a href="http://www.finances.gouv.ne/">http://www.finances.gouv.ne/</a>
Niamey	FAFPA (Fonds d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et à l'Apprentissage)	<a href="https://www.fafpa.net/">https://www.fafpa.net/</a>
Niamey	DAC/POR action coopérative	
Niamey	Ministre d'État, Ministre du Plan, de l'aménagement du territoire et du développement communautaire de la République du Niger	
Niamey	CCIAN Chambre de Commerce (Maison de l'Entreprise)	<a href="http://www.mde.ne/">http://www.mde.ne/</a>
Niamey	RECA Réseau National des Chambres d'Agriculture du Niger	<a href="http://www.reca-niger.org/">http://www.reca-niger.org/</a>
Tahoua	CRA Conseil Régionale d'Agriculture	
Tahoua	Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie	
Maradi	Conseil Régional de Maradi	
Maradi	Regional Governor Maradi	
Tahoua	Direction de l'Elevage	
Tahoua	Conseil Régional de Tahoua	
Tahoua	Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle	
Tahoua	Regional Governor Tahoua	

<b>HUMAN CAPITAL</b>		
Niamey	African Development University	
Niamey	UASTM	
Niamey	SAFEM Salon de l'artisanat pour la femme	<a href="http://niger.areva.com/EN/niger-321/salon-de-lartisanat-pour-la-femme.html">http://niger.areva.com/EN/niger-321/salon-de-lartisanat-pour-la-femme.html</a>
Maradi	Leadership Challenges	
Maradi	Swiss Contact- Fédération des Coopératives Maraîchères du Niger- FCMN Niya	<a href="http://www.swisscontact.org/fr">www.swisscontact.org/fr</a>
Maradi	AREN Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Elevage du Niger	
Maradi	Femmes productives, FGD Fagagaou (MMD group Matsiga)	
Maradi	Femmes productives, FGD Giran Dawaye	
Tahoua	Leadership Challenges	
Tahoua	Associations des Femmes Walwala	
Tahoua	CIPMEN	
Tahoua	GIE groupe d'intérêt économique Kossom	

<b>SUPPORT STRUCTURES</b>		
Niamey	CIPMEN (Centre Incubateur des PME au Niger)	<a href="http://www.cipmen.org">www.cipmen.org</a>
Niamey	Université Abdou Moumouni, incl. centre d'incubation	<a href="http://www.cipmen.org">www.cipmen.org</a> / <a href="http://www.sahelinnov.org">www.sahelinnov.org</a>
Niamey	DC Coworking	
Niamey	L'Oasis, EmpowerHer	<a href="http://www.loasis-ne.com">www.loasis-ne.com</a>
Niamey	Cabinet AccEntrepreneur	
Niamey	2M Invest Mata Matassa	<a href="http://www.2mi-sa.com">www.2mi-sa.com</a>

Experts		
Niamey	Amza Tahirou	
Niamey	Ouma Kaltoume Issoufou	

Donors (multilateral & bilateral)		
Niamey	World Bank	
Niamey	Délégation de l'Union européenne en République du Niger	
Niamey	GIZ	<a href="http://www.giz.de">www.giz.de</a>
Niamey	USAID	
Niamey	NORAD	
Niamey	Coopération Suisse	
Niamey	EIB	
Niamey	AFD	
Niamey	Enabel Niamey	
Niamey	Ambabel	
Niamey	AFP-PME	
Niamey	Millenium Challenge Account US	
Niamey	Coopération Danoise	
Niamey	Coopération Espagnole	
Niamey	Lux-Development	<a href="http://www.luxdev.lu">www.luxdev.lu</a> <a href="https://niger.luxdev.lu/fr/activities/project/NIG/025">https://niger.luxdev.lu/fr/activities/project/NIG/025</a>
Niamey	IFDC	<a href="http://www.snv.org">www.snv.org</a>
Niamey	2 SCALE (SNV & IFDC)	<a href="mailto:niger@snv.org">niger@snv.org</a>
Niamey	SNV	
Niamey	PASEC	
Niamey	PRODEC	

NGOs		
Niamey	Plan International	
Niamey	Caritas	
Niamey	Agriterria via Trias	
Niamey	Croix Rouge Belgique	
Niamey	CARE Niger	<a href="http://www.care.org">www.care.org</a>
Niamey	CISP (ONG Italienne)	
Niamey	Mercy Corps	
Niamey	Oxfam	
Niamey	Swisscontact	<a href="https://www.swisscontact.org/en/home.html">https://www.swisscontact.org/en/home.html</a>

Multilateral Organizations		
Niamey	PNUD (UNDP)	
Niamey	ILO	
Niamey	BAD	
Niamey	IOM	
Niamey	FAO	
Niamey	FIDA	<a href="https://reliefweb.int/report/niger/le-niger-reoit-un-financement-du-fida-pour-appuyer-les-petits-agriculteurs-familiaux">https://reliefweb.int/report/niger/le-niger-reoit-un-financement-du-fida-pour-appuyer-les-petits-agriculteurs-familiaux</a>
Niamey	PAC 3	
Niamey	OCHA	

Technical Vocation Educational Training Centers or Job Training		
Tahoua	Direction de formation professionnelle et technique	

Networks of entrepreneurs / organizations / Business promoters		
Niamey	Réseau AgriProFocus (SNV)	
Niamey	Confédération cooperative paysanne horticole du Niger	
Niamey	Réseau Femmes émergentes (Ambassade des USA)	<a href="https://ne.usembassy.gov/fr/grace-a-lambassade-americaine-deux-groupes-de-femmes-entrepreneures-sepanouissent/">https://ne.usembassy.gov/fr/grace-a-lambassade-americaine-deux-groupes-de-femmes-entrepreneures-sepanouissent/</a>
Niamey	FUCOPRI (faitière sur le riz)	
Niamey	AFJ (Afrique Fondation Jeune)	<a href="http://ne.viadeo.com/fr/profile/ousmane.dantata">http://ne.viadeo.com/fr/profile/ousmane.dantata</a>
Niamey	CNJ (Conseil National de la Jeunesse)	
Niamey	JCI (Jeune Chambre Internationale)	
Niamey	Centre Agroécologique de Productions Intégrées et de Formation en Agrobusiness/ Agro InnoveInspire	

MARKETS		
Niamey	Achats Service International S.A.	<a href="https://www.netherlandsandyou.nl/your-country-and-the-netherlands/niger/about-us/honorary-consulate-in-niger">https://www.netherlandsandyou.nl/your-country-and-the-netherlands/niger/about-us/honorary-consulate-in-niger</a>
Niamey	Niger Lait	
Niamey	Laitière du Sahel	
Niamey	STA (Société de Transformation Agroalimentaire)	
Niamey	Niger Business Angels Network	
Niamey	Avi Niger	
Maradi	Femmes émergentes, coopérative 'babyfood'	
Maradi	SIFA, site intégré de formation agricole, accompagné par Swiss Contact	
Maradi	Groupeement de femmes qui transforment moringa, FGD Giratawa	
Maradi	CRA Chambre régionale de l'Agriculture Maradi	
Maradi	Cabinet Sahel Bio	
Maradi	Maradi Guest House	

FINANCE		
Niamey	BCEAO	
Niamey	SONIBANK	
Niamey	BAGRI	
Niamey	Proxifina Niger SA	

CULTURE		
Niamey	Impact Com. Media Business Challenge	<a href="http://www.businesschallengeniger.com">www.businesschallengeniger.com</a>



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World Bank

# Appendix H: Methodologies - Entrepreneurship

## Research Design and Implementation

Our six-person team of experts has over 45 years of combined experience in program assessment and design on economic empowerment, education for women and youth, and social empowerment, including extensive experience in the Global South. Drawing on our past experiences, we developed a methodological approach based on previous assessments conducted for a wide range of international development clients, including Stichting SPARK, ActionAid International, and Caritas Kosovo on the topics of youth employment, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and women's empowerment.

### Onset Interviews and Fine-Tuning the Scope of Research

Before beginning our mission, our team sat down with various divisions of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to understand the wide range of focuses as well as current and potential programs planned for both the focus countries and the region as a whole. In coordination with RVO, we narrowed down the scope of our mission and created outlines for our two main lines of research, as well as a detailed set of centralized criteria for recommendation analysis and identification.

The following is the specific terms of research for the resulting report on Youth Entrepreneurship:

### Our Deliverables

#### A. A Report per country detailing:

- a. The overarching economic and entrepreneurial context, with particular focus on the criteria of the areas of **culture, finance, markets, policy, human capital, and support structures** (detailed below).
- b. A how-to guide on how an entrepreneur would go about registering a business and accessing finance
- c. A list of at a minimum 8 influential individuals over entrepreneurship in each country
- d. Overview of programs and projects that promote entrepreneurship (see criteria below).
- e. A list of recommendations for programs and policies which we believe the Dutch have a specific niche and opportunity to be involved in or undertake.

[REDACTED]

#### C. Appendix B: Comprehensive List Serv

[REDACTED]

- E. Recommendations, follow-up mission itinerary with specific focus for Orange Corners entrepreneurial site-specific visits.

### Our Research Specifics

Our overview of programs that promote Entrepreneurship dove into national government led initiatives, academic programs, international NGO-run projects, and grass-roots incubator spaces. We have highlighted programs based on our understanding of their effectiveness, having conducted interviews and reviewed reporting when possible in order to assess:

- How well they promote youth entrepreneurship (not self-employment) based on the number of successful businesses started.
- Ability of the program to provide startup funding.
- Program focus on sectors that can help boost the rest of the economy, with an emphasis on programs that promote entrepreneurship and “giving back” to improve local communities and support the SDGs (for example, technology for agricultural innovation; production methods that promote ethical working conditions).
- Programs that have a gender specific or sensitive design
- Programs which aim to provide coverage to our geographical areas of focus outside of the major cities (or would be willing to do so).

Recommendations: We have limited our list of recommendations to a concise selection of mixed policy and program suggestions which keep in mind the constraints of Dutch presence on the ground, impact potential over short, medium, and long terms, as well as impact at local and national levels. There is no specific order to our recommendations in terms of hierarchy of importance or need. Using the criteria set out by and agreed upon with RVO, we have based our final recommendations on the following:

A. Culture: entrepreneurial norms, trends, success stories, failures, various ambitions, social status (gender-segregated), drivers of entrepreneurship, and the role of media and local role models in informing these factors.

B. Financial: financial instruments and pathways available for entrepreneurs to borrow and raise capital, including but not limited to: micro-loans, loans from family and friends, Angel Investment opportunities, Zero Stage Venture Capital, Venture Capital Funds, Private Equity, Public Capital Markets, government initiatives, multilateral programs (WB, AFDB, EU etc.).

C. Markets: the relationships and interconnectedness between the private sector, SMEs, start-ups, knowledge and educational institutions, gov, financial instruments, investors, and entrepreneurs, what governs them, their rules of practice (such as CSR), and how they affect specific markets.

D. Policy: the governmental entities responsible for impacting entrepreneurship, corporate organizations investing in entrepreneurship and enterprise development groups, such as but not limited to: ministries and gov institutions for entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship programs, financial support structures, fiscal regulatory bodies.

E. Human Capital: insights into knowledge centers and educational institutions which provide professional or academic training and/or degrees on entrepreneurship including: incubator spaces, TVET centers, hubs or programs affiliated with universities and educational

institutions that promote dynamics of entrepreneurship--as well as the international and national programs that support them.

F. Support Structure: the infrastructure, systems, and spaces that support entrepreneurs such as but not limited to: incubation centers and programs, legal institutions, individuals (experts, tutors, mentors, and advisors) accelerator centers and programs, coworking spaces and business plan contests and hackathons organized by and programs, conferences, social network, NGOs (multinational and bilateral)organisation. As well as the specific budgets, and geographical location and area of focus of these specific stakeholders.

We believe all the actions recommended should be assessed by the Dutch governmental audience and cross-referenced with internal knowledge and focus. Additionally, our list is not exhaustive. There are various points of information and recommendations throughout each of the country reports in addition to our general recommendations. In particular, in the cases of specific subject being omitted (such as the creation of financial lending mechanisms), this decision has been made after much consideration, due to constraints which are clearly indicated in the body of the reports. Our recommendations are based on our field-informed findings and our extensive experience promoting youth employment and entrepreneurship in the Global South. However, the choice remains with the Dutch government in making a final decision on the implementation of any or all of these suggestions.

### 3. Limitations and Adaptations in Methodology

Due to limited quantitative and quantitative data available to answer our central research questions directly, our team utilized an approach of research triangulation to help support and lead our research and final findings. Our three-part methodology: **1) desk-research** (including meeting with foreign-based stakeholders), **2) field missions** (conducted by Catalystas field researchers and partnered local consulting researcher(s) per-country, centralized by the HQ Research Coordinator and Technical and Logistical Coordinator), and **3) final formulations** of our research, triangulated cross each country to ensure capture, verification, and substantiation of our findings. <sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> As previously noted, we have made a clear indication in each report where, due to lack of data, time, or scope of work, we were limited in substantiation capacity (particularly with regards to in-depth assessments of INGO programs, which fell outside the scope of our study).

a. Desk Research:

Our research began with extensive desk-based literary research to understand the framework for understanding the ecosystem of entrepreneurship as laid out by RVO (see six-points of criteria for assessing the entrepreneurship ecosystem, above). Based on these specific focuses, our team also conducted further literary research to begin planning each field mission and to onboard each local consultant ahead of departure in early June 2019.

After initial methodology design, primary research, and review, our team recruited 1-2 local consultants per country based on a profile of expertise in women and youth economic empowerment, agricultural value chains, and localized contexts in each scoping location. Once hired, each local consultant was onboarded by the relevant Catalystas field team member in order to ensure familiarity with the scope of the mission, methodologies, and needs. Each country team worked closely to verify desk-research findings, make logistical plans, and initiate local contacts in the field. The teams coordinated while in field, with local consultants working alongside our field researchers to schedule and conduct meetings, conduct additional research, identify new and important persons and institutions of interest, and hold focus groups. Our local partners also provided extensive insights into navigating the complex security situations in each country. Field visits were made on a case-by-case basis, with the security context, accessibility, and approachability of specific stakeholders determining whether a visit was made by a Catalystas field researcher, a local consultant, or both.

b. Field Missions:

During the field missions, each Catalystas field researcher deployed to their respective country and met their local consultant(s), who assisted them in preparing for the pre-planned itinerary developed together before departure in order to meet with various stakeholders. The itineraries were designed specifically to allow the local consultant(s) to accompany their Catalystas partner at the beginning of the mission in order to gain hands-on training, experience, and insights into our approach and methodology for each interview and meeting. During the first few days of the field mission, our Catalystas team member(s) provided hands-on training for their local consultant on topics relating to organizing focus groups, categorizing data, transferring information securely, and/or other areas on an ad hoc basis. This hands-on experience and training made it possible to ensure the quality of our research throughout the mission, including when the local consultants conducted certain location visits on their own due to their inaccessibility to the Catalystas team members (including Dori, Burkina Faso, and Gao, Mali). Any location visits conducted solely by the local consulting partners were held in the second half of the field missions, ensuring that each Catalystas-local researcher team would have the opportunity to conduct at least one visit together before a local researcher was sent to a location alone.

In-field, our team gathered information categorized as essential and secondary in regards to developing a full market analysis on the agricultural food processing sector respective to each country, as well as the greater value-chains surrounding these processes and the factors and stakeholders which influence them. We also conducted a definitive and deep ecosystem scope and analysis to capture the current status needs and opportunities for youth entrepreneurship in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

c. During Field Mission:

i. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): In order to gain in-depth insights from the future potential beneficiaries'

sides, several FGDs were organized during the field missions. Between five and nine persons were invited to participate in each FGD, and Catalystas ensured that the participants were representative of the target population(s). The FGDs were carried out in an open, participative, and respectful way, in order to create a safe space for the participants, where they could freely share their thoughts and feelings. The objective was to capture the challenges and obstacles that stand between them and the job market, as well as their wishes and expectations for the future. The exact composition and location of each focus group was decided during the desk study phase; including at least one FGD with women only (so as to gain a deeper understanding of their specific challenges), and at least one FGD in each city targeted by the study.

ii. Centralized reporting and reformulation of agenda: During the field missions, each field researcher sent a daily recap of their findings to the centralized Research Coordinator based in the Netherlands. This process allowed for the field researcher to make the best use of field time, utilizing video conferencing and voice and audio recordings in order to send information to the Research Coordinator and Technical and Logistical Coordinator, who worked to formulate and cross-examine findings between all three missions. This process allowed for increased data collection as well as rapid triangulation, eliminating time normally wasted in writing multiple reports while in-field. This process also allowed for the central researcher to provide feedback to each field team member on a daily basis. Based on these feedback meetings, the agenda of each field mission remained flexible and able to adapt in order to meet the most pressing and newly identified needs and challenges. Furthermore, this system ensured that the final analysis and formulation of deliverables was time sensitive, effective, and conducive to the short timeline of delivery request for this scope of research.

## **4. Formulated Findings**

Following the return of our field teams to home-base, Catalystas assessed both the documented paper findings collected by the researchers in-field, as well as the triangulated data centralized by the research coordinator. Based on a thorough review of these materials in combination with additional desk research and validated assumptions, Catalystas triangulated the findings for our reports. The final documents consisted of a per-country entrepreneurial ecosystem mapping of young entrepreneurs (report + Map), Google Map of ecosystems as identified by RVO, Stakeholder Listserv pertaining to each focus, comprehensive summary analysis which makes fully transparent our methodologies for data collection and formulation of findings, as well as final recommendations and a draft of a recommended itinerary for follow-up visits to each country for i4Y staff (with a specific focus for Orange Corners differing from PSD-Toolkit teams). Final report findings have been substantiated, when necessary, with the local consultants contracted in each country as well as with other relevant stakeholders met throughout the scope of this study. This has resulted in an individualized assessment of each country and an overarching Sahel-focused strategic approach that the Kingdom of the Netherlands can (re)formulate around their Multi-Annual Regional Strategy (MARS), Year Plans, and i4Y framework programs for the Sahel.

Finally, with the help of our local consultants, we have developed draft follow-up mission plans for the i4Y team in each country. Our local consultants, now familiar with the objectives and scope of research as well as with the stakeholders visited during the field missions, will be excellent support staff for i4Y's team, should they require local assistance for their visits to each country during the follow up mission.

We have also mapped out the existing national and international youth-oriented education, job training, and entrepreneurship programs as well as public, private, INGO, and civil society stakeholders, assessed their

effectiveness and shortcomings, and provided market-driven insights into how the Dutch can contribute to strengthening existing projects while simultaneously developing new programs to improve economic empowerment for youth across the Sahel Region through closing the gaps identified in our assessment.



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