Maradi is among the most vulnerable regions of Niger, with a poverty rate of 87 per cent. Its population is mainly rural (86 per cent) and relies heavily on rain-fed agriculture, which is subject to varying climatic conditions. The level of malnutrition in this region is very high compared to the rest of the country, with a severe chronic malnutrition rate of 54 per cent among children aged 0-59 months.

The goal of the Food Security and Development Support Project in the Maradi Region (PASADEM) was to improve the food and nutritional security of 65,000 rural households through five economic development hubs (EDH). It combined support to agro-pastoral productivity, access to markets and food resilience for the most vulnerable households, whilst ensuring sustainability through the capacity building of peasant organizations and rural action groups.

In 2018-19, the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) assessed the project’s impacts through a variety of methods. It analysed its effects on household agricultural productivity, food security and net assets by using the difference-in-differences method and techniques based on propensity score matching. Interviews were carried out with 1,350 households, including 614 project beneficiaries and 736 control households. IOE also developed an innovative qualitative method based on participatory narrative surveys to estimate producers’ bargaining power and women’s empowerment and collected 560 stories on each subject.

Main findings
The EDH approach was visionary and ambitious. However, an underestimation of costs and of the time needed to develop infrastructure prevented these hubs from reaching their full economic potential.

The Food Security and Resilience component of the project yielded the best results. PASADEM helped extend the period of food sufficiency by one month. The impacts of the cash-for-work activities, women-managed lean season grain stores and goat farming kits (table 1) are even more impressive, as they contributed to reducing the depreciation of the value of small ruminant herds.

1 National report on human development in Niger, 2016, INS.
2 Nutrition survey, 2016, INS.
Further recommendations

- **Recommendation 1.** As part of the EDH approach, significantly increase the relevance of actions aiming at improving the food and nutritional security of poor and vulnerable households, to guarantee that no one is left behind.

- **Recommendation 2.** Set up, manage and follow through at least one EDH in every region, in order to assess their efficiency and impact as development models.

- **Recommendation 3.** Further strengthen grassroots peasant organizations, in order to ensure the quality and sustainability of production and postproduction services aimed at producers.

### Facts and figures about PASADEM

- **Date of approval:** 13/12/2011
- **Inception date:** 12/03/2012
- **Date of completion:** 31/03/2018
- **Total cost:** US$33.83 million
- **IFAD contribution:** US$21.99 million
- **Government contribution:** US$5.55 million
- **Beneficiary contribution:** US$1.16 million
- **World Food Programme contribution:** US$4.43 million
- **Number of beneficiaries:** 50,710 households

*Source: Project completion report, January 2019.*

**Further information:**

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