

REPORT 2 2023

Evaluation of Norwegian aid engagement in the Sahel

Food Security in Mali





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Carried out by Tana Copenhagen.

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Preface

Norway has been engaged in the Sahel area in Africa since the 1970s with both humanitarian and development assistance. The Department of Evaluation in Norad decided to evaluate this engagement as it is an important, but also challenging part of Norway's development assistance.

We can now offer our findings in two different reports. The purpose of report no. 1 is to critically evaluate the organisation, coordination, and management of Norway's engagement in the Sahel. In this report, we review evidence of results of the Norwegian support to improve food security in Mali. The two reports will hopefully enhance learning and may be used to adapt the current Sahel strategy, which is presented as a living document subject to adjustments and refinement when required.

In recent months, the Sahel region has witnessed significant changes. Our evaluation completed its data collection in March 2023 and the report was written in May. By June 2023, we learned that MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) decided to withdraw from Mali by the end of the year. July saw another coup in the region, this time in Niger. And as August concluded, news arrived that the Norwegian Embassy in Mali will close down by year's end.

However, we believe that there are important lessons to be drawn for the work in the Sahel from evaluations in these unpredictable contexts.

Norway's support to countries in fragile situations has increased in recent years. Such assistance requires both flexibility and a high degree of coordination and scenario planning. We therefore hope that the insight of these two reports can also be of use in future support to countries outside the Sahel region in fragile situations.

The evaluation was carried out by a team from Tana Copenhagen in collaboration with Chr. Michelsen's Institute (CMI).

We thank the team for a job well done.

Helge Østtveiten

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Abbreviations and acronyms

IER Adaptation of Agriculture for Climate Change Phase II	ACC
Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme	CAADP
National Executive Committee of Agriculture	CENA
Center for International Forestry Research	CIFOR
Higher Council of Agriculture	CSA
Climate-Smart Agricultural Technologies	CSAT
Drylands Coordination Group	DCG
Strategic Framework for Growth and Poverty Reduction 2012–2017	GFCPR III
National Council for Research in Agroforestry	ICRAF
International Committee of the Red Cross	ICRC
Rural Economy Institute	IER
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	IITA
Mali Folkecenter	MFC
National Determined Contribution	NDC
Nongovernmental organisations	NGO
Norwegian Refugee Council (Flyktningshjelpen)	NRC
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	OCHA
Official development assistance	ODA
National Agricultural Sector Investment Programme	PNISA
Sustainable Development Goals	SDG
State Intervention Stock	SIE
National Security Stock	SNS
Terms of Reference	ToR
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
World Food Programme	WFP





Executive summary

Purpose

The purpose of this report, one of two reports produced on the subject of Norwegian support to the Sahel region, is to provide evidence-based learning and provide accountability in relation to Norwegian support to food security in Mali. This report is intended to inform the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Norad and the Norwegian embassy in Bamako by providing an assessment of Norwegian support to food security in Mali, as well as of how lessons and learning are translated into the strategic direction of work in the Sahel. The period covered by the evaluation is from 2016 to 2022. The accompanying report focuses on the organisational setup, strategic planning, partner selection and management of Norwegian aid to the Sahel, as well as on how lessons and learning are translated into the strategic direction of work in the Sahel.

Background

At the 1996 World Food Summit, food security was defined as existing *'when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'*. Food security is understood as including four dimensions. These are: *Food availability, food access, food utilisation, and food stability*. The above definition of food security and its key dimensions summarizes how food security has been understood during this evaluation. Mali is a country affected both by conflict and by climate challenges and has considerable annual population growth. Agriculture is the cornerstone both of the nation's food security and of its economy. As such, agricultural production influences all four dimensions of food. The country faces distinct food security challenges linked to the regional context

(re: conflict level, environmental conditions). During the 2016–2021 period, Norway disbursed almost NOK 400 million of earmarked funding for activities on food security in Mali, this funding focused mainly on emergency response and agriculture. Support to agriculture has been aligned with Mali's own national strategic priorities. In 2022 Norway launched a new policy on food security - *Combining Forces against hunger – a policy to improve self-sufficiency* – which is expected to guide future support in the sector.

Methodology

The assignment followed a theory-based approach and was anchored on the use of the following data-collection tools: document/archival research; in-depth interviews with staff at the MFA in Oslo, Norad and the embassy in Bamako, as well as with implementing partners; and interviews and group meetings with right-holders in Mali.





Main findings

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent (and eventually how) has Norwegian development assistance contributed to improving food security in Mali?

Key Finding: Norway has contributed to food security in Mali by supporting interventions that address aspects of each of the four dimensions of food security. The interventions funded have reached the targeted right-holders, and Norwegian-funded projects have served to show that improving food security in Mali is possible despite contextual challenges. Norwegian support provides opportunities to identify and capitalise on linkages between different interventions. Doing this could have a multiplier effect by producing wider gains across different food security dimensions. However, by and large these opportunities have not been utilised thus far.

Evaluation Question 2: Has Norwegian development assistance to food security in Mali had any unintended effects, positive or negative?

Key finding: The activities supported by Norway have led to some unintended impacts in Mali. In most instances, a trade-off is involved, whereby a positive result for some leads to a potentially negative effect for other would-be programme participants – for example, when project activities have been moved

owing to increasing conflict levels in certain areas. In other instances, project activities have led to the identification of additional intervention opportunities or to changes in how activities were designed that have been beneficial to those involved. While these experiences merit mention, the overarching finding is that the degree of reflection by implementing partners is minimal (except in the case of Caritas). Indeed, unintended effects are not systematically documented. This points to a gap in how support is provided and to potential missed opportunities due to the lack of active reflection about what an intervention is achieving more broadly (poor monitoring strategies). The implications of interventions in relation to cross-cutting issues, for example, is one area that is not systematically explored.

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent is the partner setup appropriate to contribute to improving food security in Mali?

Key finding: Norway has supported a range of interventions focused on humanitarian, development and research activities in Mali. Although the selected partners and interventions have been able to contribute to improved food security, the collective contribution has been limited because the partner setup has not been anchored on ensuring complementarity between activities, cross-learning and exchange of experiences.

Overall, the portfolio is expansive, covers all food security dimensions and is well-balanced. Partners identified and funded have been able to execute their activities as planned or have been able to move the geographical point of implementation and hence continued to generate outputs. However, the support is rather siloed, which means that each implementing partner works independently of other partners. For example, there is no systematic link between research activities focusing on the identification of new seeds and development activities which focus on the use of new seeds. This is mainly due to the way funding is allocated, which has no requirement by Norway to ensure collaborations and a lack of self-driven interagency thematic coordination.

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent does Norway ensure that lessons and experiences gained from its ongoing operations, from partners and from research evidence are used for learning and to adjust the strategic direction of Norwegian assistance?

Key finding: The capitalisation on experiences and learning has been limited because Norway has few mechanisms for facilitating learning within the MFA in Oslo, Norad and the embassy structure, and because organisations funded are not required to engage in inter-institutional cross-learning. This has been the case even though there are a number of platforms/mechanisms in Mali that are focused on food security-related coordination and information exchange.





However, despite these weaknesses, the experience supporting food security has influenced policy development, as is clear from interviews conducted and the recently drafted policy Combining Forces against hunger – a policy to improve self-sufficiency.

Conclusions

The food security support provided by Norway has been valuable to those targeted. At the output level, the achievements are clear. However, given the available data, it is difficult to make substantial assessments regarding the outcome or impact of the interventions examined. Similarly, it is also hard to establish results over the full life-cycles of the interventions funded or to document unintended impacts. The majority of these challenges could be addressed through improved reporting mechanisms.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, the data suggest that all interventions are well aligned with Norwegian priorities and meet basic Norwegian requirements (transparency, anti-corruption, etc.), and, critically, that the interventions do have an impact on the targeted population.

In relation to organisational management, oversight of activities and institutional learning, there are opportunities to improve what/how lessons are documented and shared. The organisational structure used by the MFA in Oslo, the embassy in Mali and

Norad relies heavily on grant managers who oversee and follow up on the activities funded. These staff are provided with guidance on administrative and financial requirements, but not with the tools needed to ensure that interventions funded effectively integrate cross-cutting issues, are conflict-sensitive and are based on sound assessments. In addition, tools, mechanisms and/or approaches that help foster exchange between grantees are also important. Grant managers could have promoted the development and use of such tools and approaches and participated in such exchange, but doing the latter would require additional time commitments that would be challenging given the limited time resources staff mentioned during interviews.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - Align new interventions to the new strategy: Ensure that support to food security sector in Mali is aligned with Norway's policy on food security, "Combining Forces Against Hunger: A Policy to Improve Self-Sufficiency." Ensure that interventions are in line with the policy's objectives and strategies, emphasising self-sufficiency in addressing food insecurity.

Recommendation 2 - A comprehensive set of clear definitions: Develop a set of definitions which explain how key elements of interventions must be understood. For example, how rights holders

should be understood and accounted for (individuals, communities, households). This will allow for the consolidation of data across the portfolio.

Recommendation 3 - Intended and unintended impacts: Enhance the reporting formats used by implementing parties to include a detailed assessment of unintended impacts, both positive and negative. Provide a clear definition of what constitutes an unintended impact to ensure consistency in reporting. This will allow for a more thorough understanding of the consequences of interventions.

Recommendation 4 - Third party monitoring: Invite implementing partners to explore opportunities for third-party and/or mobile device-based monitoring of project results (outcome and impact), especially in remote or conflict-affected areas. Implementing third-party monitoring and/or mobile-based monitoring will help ensure duty-of-care considerations are met, and interventions are adequately monitored for effectiveness and impact.





1

Introduction





This report, one of two reports part of this evaluation,¹ presents the findings from an evaluation of Norwegian support to the Sahel, with a specific focus on the **results secured from Norwegian food security support to Mali**. The evaluation also assessed the **role of learning** and how lessons are translated into Norway's strategic direction of work in the Sahel. The evaluation covers the period between 2016 and 2022.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Norwegian embassy in Bamako and Norad are expected to be the principal users of the evaluation. However, it is also expected that the evaluation will provide key insights that may also be useful to other actors, including other government ministries and departments/sections in Norway, as well as implementers working in the Sahel and in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions where lessons from the food security sector can inform other sectors or where experiences of supporting food security in Mali can inform efforts supporting food security elsewhere. An overview of what this component of the evaluation captures, focuses on and targets is provided in Figure 1.



Photo: UN Photo | Harandane Dicko | Flickr

¹ See Norad. 2023. Evaluation of Norwegian Engagement in the Sahel – Report 1 - Organisational Engagement.





FIGURE 1

Overview of the assignment

Objective	Evaluation scope		Evaluation users
<p>The main objectives of the Evaluation of Norwegian Aid to Improve Food Security in Mali are:</p> <p>Evaluation Objective 2: To assess effects of Norway's aid cooperation to improve food security in Mali</p> <p>Evaluation Objective 3: To provide information on the extent to which Norway harnesses knowledge and experience to adjust the strategic direction of its engagement in the Sahel.</p>	Thematic	Evaluation of Norwegian Aid to Improve Food Security Mali	<p>Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad, the Norwegian Embassy in Bamako and the partners implementing the food security projects in Mali</p>
	Temporal	2016 - 2022	
	Spatial	Mali	
	Evaluation questions (EQ)		
<p>Objective 2: Effects</p> <p>a) To what extent (and eventually how) has Norwegian development assistance contributed to improving food security in Mali?</p> <p>b) Has Norwegian development assistance to food security in Mali had any unintended effects, positive or negative?</p> <p>c) To what extent is the partner set-up appropriate in contributing to improving food security in Mali?</p>		<p>Objective 3: Learning</p> <p>To what extent does Norway ensure that lessons and experiences gained from its ongoing operations, from partners and research evidence are used for learning, and to adjust the strategic direction of Norwegian assistance?</p>	

The report is organised in terms of seven main sections. Following this introduction, Section 2 focuses on the methodology of the evaluation. Section 3 presents the food security context in Mali. Section 4 presents a statistical overview of Norwegian support to food security. Section 5 presents the findings of the evaluation. Finally, Section 6 sets out the conclusions from the evaluation, and Section 7 presents the recommendations.

Source: Proposal Evaluation Team.





2

Methodology





The evaluation team has taken a theory-based approach anchored on process tracing to identify how Norway has contributed to food security in Mali. The theory-based approach has been implemented by first developing a Theory of Change (which reflects what was intended with the different interventions) that captured all sample cases² and was based on a preliminary review of documents and interviews, and then problematising and testing the Theory of Change using original data collected and documents reviewed during the evaluation. This second process enabled the creation of a theory that explores what actually happened. This Theory in Use, reflecting what actually happened, was then problematised further to see whether all linkages between interventions and the different dimensions of food security have been fully exploited. Instances where opportunities for improving results by making links between different activities, outputs or outcomes were not taken by implementing partners, but where linkages between activities are likely to have improved the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability or overall impact of the funded interventions, are included in the Theory in Use and discussed in the text, as these represent an important learning opportunity for both Norway and the food security sector. This approach has enabled the evaluation team to understand what has

² These constitute a sub-set of all support provided to Food Security in Mali. The cases included in the Theory of Change were determined through a detailed assessment which enabled the selection of representative cases.

occurred, what may have been unintended, and what the broader impact of support to food security has been or could be.

The 1996 World Food Summit, food security was defined as existing *'when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'*. Food security is understood as including four dimensions. These are:

- **Food availability**, which pertains to the supply of food. More specifically for farmers and fisherpersons, availability depends on what they are able to harvest.
- **Food access**, which pertains in large part to having the means to acquire food through cash, barter or gifts. Uneven distribution of food among the population is a common attribute of food security conditions even when food is available.
- **Food utilisation**, which pertains to the quality and safety of the food consumed. This dimension relates to people's ability to have access to the nutrition their body needs. Dietary diversity and food preparation are contributing factors determining safe and nutritious food utilisation.
- **Food stability**, which pertains to having sufficient food over time. Here, the focus is on securing availability of and access to food despite changing environmental, political and economic circumstances.

The above definition of food security and its key dimensions summarizes how food security has been understood during this evaluation. Here, it is important to note that what might be included or addressed under each dimension of food security is in and of itself expansive. In turn, this means that each dimension of food security can be explored independently, and also that linkages between different dimensions of food security are important. In responding to the evaluation questions, this report explores both each individual dimension and the relationships between various dimensions. Moreover, how Norway has contributed to improving food security is examined in a qualitative way, not just by examining the numbers of right-holders directly supported (for these, see Annex 9), but also by taking a broader-scope view to assess how interventions supported by Norway have entailed opportunities to improve food security more broadly and the degree to which those opportunities have been capitalised upon.

The sample of projects that were included in the evaluation was determined by first reviewing the Norad Sahel project database for 2016–2021. This led to the identification of 12 projects that had a considerable food security component. These projects were then examined further to identify ones that represented different time periods and budget sizes. The eight projects selected as a result of that process constitute 96% of the total funding disbursed by Norway during





the period under review,³ and thus the sample is highly representative of the work supported by Norway. The projects are also representative of Norwegian support in that they include different types of implementing partners and different funding (See Table 1).

The data reviewed included documentation (see Annex 10) and interviews with representatives from Norwegian government staff at the MFA in Oslo, the Norwegian embassy in Bamako, Norad, as well as representatives from implementing partners who received funding from Norway. In addition, 11 group discussions with right-holders were conducted in different areas of Mali (See Annex 2). A gendered approach to data collection was employed throughout the evaluation. This included the conduct of gender-separated group discussions with right-holders, identification of locations for meetings with right-holders that were accessible to women, the use of venues that allowed participants to speak in private, the choice of the time of the interview to facilitate attendance (not at key times when housework would take precedence), and, lastly, the avoidance of market days to facilitate participation.

³ Four projects representing 3.62% of total funding in the period 2016–2022 were not included. These projects were relatively small (three projects by Digni that represented 0.64% of total funding) or had already ended before 2018 (Drylands Coordination Group and the Mali Ministry of Agriculture, which together represented 2.98% of total funding). These three partners are referred to as 'others' in certain graphs.

TABLE 1
Organisations included in the sample⁴

Type of organisation	Implementing organisation	Disbursements (1000NOK)	Length agreements
Government	Mali Ministry of Agriculture	8,322	7 years (2010-2016) 1 year (2017)
UN agencies	UN Development Programme (UNDP)	74,100	8 years (2010-2017) 4 years (2014-2017) 3 years (2018-2020)
	World Food Programme (WFP)	12,000	1 year (2017) 4 years (2018-2021)
NGO international	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	22,878	1 year (2016) (2019) 2 years (2020-2021)
	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	52,000	6 years (2018-2023)
NGO local	Caritas – Mali	19,557	4 years (2018-2021)
	Mali Folkecenter (MFC)	42,000	4 years (2016-2018) 4 years (2018-2021)
NGO Norwegian	Norwegian Refugee Council (Flyktninghjelpen)(NRC)	88,485	3 years (2016-2018) 4 years (2020-2023)
	Norwegian Red Cross (Norges Røde Kors)	22,878	3 years (2018-2020)
Public sector	Rural Economy Institute (IER)	56,525	7 years (2010-2016) 5 years (2018-2022)

Source: Norad database 2016-2021 Sahel.

⁴ The Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC are implementing organisation to same project (funded through different administrative channels).





Data collection took place over two separate phases. The first phase was conducted between 24 February and 2 March 2023 and involved a focus on Bamako, where the main implementing partners and staff stationed at the Norwegian embassy in Mali were interviewed. A second phase subsequently focused on data collection from right-holders to ensure that their experiences were reflected in the evaluation. The views of right-holders were secured from seven project sites in different regions of the country.⁵ The areas included were the north (Tombouctou), the central region (Djenné and Ségou) and the south (Sikasso). Right-holders interviewed were purposely identified with the assistance of implementing partners. The three criteria used were: a) experience with the intervention; b) availability; c) age/gender. Due to the considerable number of right holders willing to participate, which exceeded the capacity for a single focus group discussion, participants were selected randomly from those present. The evaluation team carried out this selection process. Interviewers were mixed gender, had direct experience working in the context and on food security, and were briefed in detail on the task, use of data collection tools and on gender sensitivity. In addition, staff at Norad and the MFA in Oslo and staff at the headquarters of the Norwegian

⁵ Right holders of the Mali Climate Fund could not be included in the sample of visited interventions because the list of relevant projects was not available when the field visits were planned. Notably, the majority of these interventions (15 of 19) have started recently therefore there are no documented results yet.

Red Cross in Oslo and at its Regional Office in Dakar were interviewed remotely following data collection in Bamako.

All interviews followed a pre-established interview checklist/guide that allowed for all key data to be systematically collected (see Annex 7). During the interviews with right-holders, particular attention was given to gender issues. One interview group consisted almost exclusively of youth.

Limitations: The assignment was affected by two important limitations that warrant mentioning. The first of these was the absence of a Norwegian policy on food security that could guide the support provided for the totality of the period under review and allow the evaluation team to assess the degree to which food security support was clearly aligned with Norwegian intent. A second factor that also affected the analysis was directly tied to how organisations receiving funding report on the activities they conduct and how outcomes/results are attributed to funded activities. Project documentation reviewed showed that theories of change or log frames were often very basic; that indicators were not clearly defined; and, importantly, that indicators were defined differently by different organisations. This means that it was not possible to compare results between organisations, and it was often hard to establish exactly what results indicated from a quantitative perspective. Indeed, reporting in the period examined relied extensively

on qualitative assessments, but these were also not always clearly defined. These limitations in reporting meant that:

- a) A Theory of Change could not be reconstructed on the basis of documentation alone, but relied on interviews with staff and on their recollection. In turn, this means that the Theory of Change used as a starting point (see Annex 8) may also include elements of the Theory in Use that were not envisioned at the start of the project. This has limited the degree to which the evaluation team has been able to assess the accuracy of the Theory of Change (intent/expectation) for the interventions relative to what actually transpired. It is noteworthy that data from interviews with implementing partners and right holders suggests that the project development lacked the involvement of right holders. As a result, the theories of change devised by implementing partners might have overlooked important factors. The data from discussions with right holders revealed several changes in project design, such as the selection of seeds, animal breeds, and technological details, differing from the original project conception. However, these changes did not significantly affect the core elements of the theory of change, thus having a limited impact on this assignment. The emphasis here has been on the implemented concepts rather than the specific interventions' fine details.





- b) During the interviews with programme staff, the reconstructed Theory of Change was discussed with a view to aid the development of an accurate Theory in Use. The Theory in Use presented in this report reflects data collected through interviews and document review (progress report data and evaluations, where the latter are available).
- c) The evaluation team had to rely on self-assessments done by implementing partners (self-reporting), which were not verified by third parties and for which the definitions of key indicators were often not clearly defined. This meant that it was not possible to compare results from different organisations with each other.
- d) A quantitative assessment of progress could not be made on the basis on available documentation as the information provided by implementing partners was assessed as being too inconsistent to allow for comparability over time or documentation was simply not available. This means that although quantitative information was included in the evaluation, it was not possible to assess or compare such data across organisations.

The overall implication of the above is that the evaluation was able to assess the value of certain interventions, but could not conclusively assess the relative impact that they had had (i.e., in comparison with each other).



Photo: **Dominic Chavez** | World Bank | Flickr





3

Context and the evaluation object





This section sets out the context within which food security interventions have been implemented, both at the regional level and in relation to Mali more specifically.

3.1 Food security – in the Sahel

For the purposes of this assignment the Sahel region includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, which are situated in the transitional zone between the Sahara Desert and the northern parts and tropical savannas of Central Africa. This region has been affected by ongoing instability and challenges involving environmental, political and security issues. These include unstable governments, protracted conflict, terrorism, climate change and poverty, all of which to some extent affect food insecurity.⁶

The expanse of this vast semi-arid region is characterised by limited rainfall and high temperatures, which lead to poor soil fertility and a

6 WFP. 2023. Sahel Emergency; and World Bank. 2022. Responding to the Food Crisis in the Sahel by Addressing the Food Emergencies and Structural Challenges of the West African Food System.

dry climate.⁷ There is no doubt that climate change is exacerbating these harsh environmental conditions and is unfavourable to livestock and agriculture, affecting food security and livelihoods.⁸ Agriculture and pastoralism are the main forms of livelihood for more than half of the population of the Sahel and are drastically affected by recurrent episodes of drought and the irregularity of floods and rainfall patterns.⁹

The large amount of inhospitable desert and sparsely populated areas of the Sahel have made the region difficult to control, leaving armed groups and criminal networks free to roam between the easily penetrable borders of the various countries, increasing the threat to safety and facilitating the movement of drugs, people and arms.¹⁰ Insecurity in the region has escalated owing to several coups d'état, including the 2020 and 2021 military coups in Mali, and two successive coups in Burkina Faso in 2022. Political instability has resulted in the displacement of people and disturbances to the markets and food production systems of the region, reducing access to food. Furthermore, as Mali is the centre for major trade and transport routes of the Sahel, recent coups have also affected the movement of food, resulting in a reduction of food availability in other parts of the region.

7 Imperato, P., et al. 2023. Mali.

8 World Bank. 2022. Climate explainer series. Central Intelligence Agency. 2023. Mali.

9 WFP. 2021. WFP Sahel Integrated Resilience Programme.

10 Dieng, A. 2022. 'The Sahel: Challenges and Opportunities'.

Along with other environmental, political and security issues, poor access to food has led to the displacement of people within and across national borders in search of food, safety and better opportunities. The displacement of people further adds to the complexity of the situation as, for instance, host communities struggle to keep up with the demand for food.¹¹

The crisis of food insecurity and child malnutrition in the Sahel is being fuelled by ongoing conflict, displacement and the effects of climate change, which have led to disruptions in food production and trade, as well as shortages and high costs for staple foods. The Sahel region has one of the highest population growth rates in the world, and its population is expected to double by 2050. The need to secure food to feed this growing population is therefore of the highest priority.¹²

3.2 Food security – in Mali

In the period 2001–2021, the population almost doubled from 11.5 million inhabitants to 21.9 million.¹³ Feeding the growing population remains a challenge.

Agriculture is the cornerstone both of the nation's food security and of its economy. As such, agricultural production influences all four dimensions of food

11 UNHCR. 2023. Sahel Situation.

12 Plan International. 2022. Hunger Crisis in the Central Sahel.

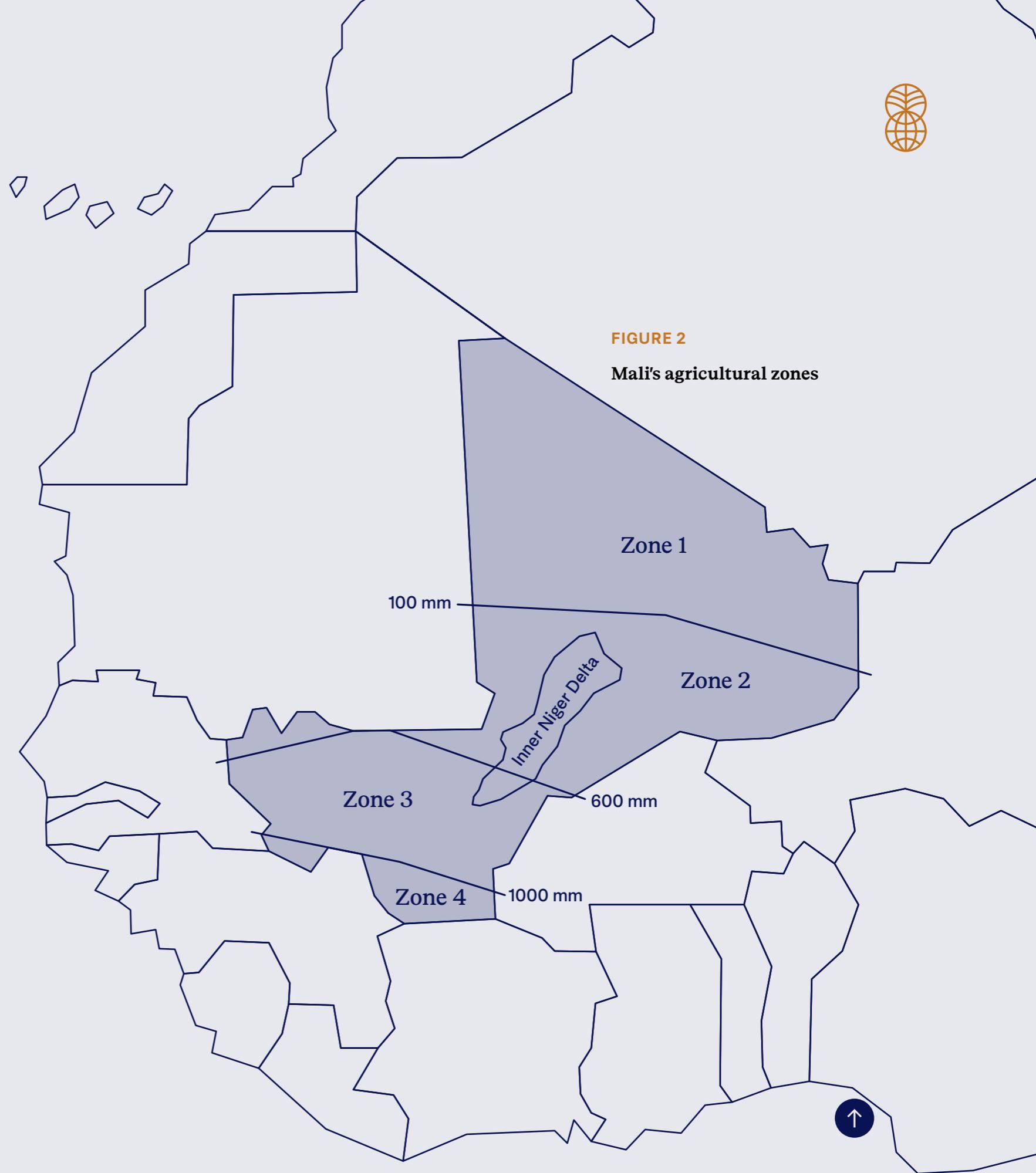
13 World Bank. 2023. Population, total – Mali.





security (availability, access, utilisation and stability). Indeed, 80% of the Malian population is engaged in agricultural activities, mainly subsistence agriculture.¹⁴ Agriculture is mainly rain-fed. In general, rainfall decreases and becomes increasingly unpredictable as one moves towards the north of the country. The country's agricultural patterns can be categorised as falling into four distinct zones and the central interior delta, presented in (Figure 2). The four zones are:

- **Zone 1** – Sahara zone: In the northern part of Mali, the keeping of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, dromedary) is the predominant agricultural activity.
- **Zone 2** – Sahelian zone: In the centre, agriculture is characterised by a mix of sorghum and millet production and livestock-keeping.
- **Zone 3** – Sudanian zone: The southern part of the country has the most productive farming areas. Agriculture in this area is dominated by cotton production and food crops.
- **Zone 4** – Sudano-Guinean zone: The southernmost part of the country receives the most precipitation. It is, in its northern part, covered with savanna becoming increasingly dense and gradually transforming into forest towards the south.



14 International Trade Administration. 2022. Mali- Country Commercial Guide.



The central interior delta along the River Niger is a very diverse agro-ecological zone, with irrigated rice, cattle and fish production. The main crops grown include maize, millet, sorghum, (irrigated) rice, cowpea, peanuts, cotton and (irrigated) vegetables. During the dry season (January–May), residual moisture in the edges of the valley is used to produce a wide array of off-season crops, particularly vegetables but also grains such as rice.

Most crops – the main exceptions being cotton and rice – are grown for home consumption and some petty sales for cash. Overall productivity is low, and the main strategy for increased production is one of expansion of the area cultivated. Only 7% of 43.7 million hectares of arable land is currently being cultivated, and 14% of 2.2 million potentially irrigable hectares are irrigated, particularly for rice production in and around the Interior Niger Delta.¹⁵

Overall, Mali produces enough food to feed its population. In most years, including 2022, supplies of local cereals were sufficient to support food availability in the country.¹⁶ However, food insecurity is a recurrent phenomenon, owing to erratic rainfall, particularly in the Sudanian and Sahelian zones, as well as poor infrastructure (roads, rail, food conservation capacity/

¹⁵ USAID. 2022. Mali: Agriculture and Food Security.

¹⁶ FEWS.2022. Mali Food Security Outlook February to September 2022: Insecurity and Rising Food Prices Are Reducing Households' Access to Food.

facilities) and a large population settled across a vast geographical area. Drought has led to the loss of more than 225,000 hectares of croplands and affected more than three million people, mainly in Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu. Floodings are also an issue of considerable concern, and which have had negative impacts on different areas of the country.

Conflict-related insecurity has played an important role in the country's food insecurity. Since the start of conflict in the north in 2012, which has since also affected the central area, food security has further deteriorated. The recurrent violence in many parts of the country and the ensuing political instability have meant that, by the end of 2022, over 412,000 people had been internally displaced.¹⁷ Given the country's heavy reliance on agriculture, displacement has had a considerable impact on food security, as populations have been forced to abandon their agricultural fields, and their livestock have become increasingly vulnerable to theft. In addition, agricultural production has also been targeted by warring parties, and food destroyed purposefully. Households in northern and central areas of the country continue to face reduced food access due to insecurity, especially in the Timbuktu, Ménaka and Gao regions in the north, but also in the Ségou and Mopti regions in the centre.

¹⁷ OCHA. 2022. Global Humanitarian overview 2022.

Rising insecurity, political instability, climate variation and the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 have driven up the price of staple food items such as maize and rice, thus limiting access to food for poorer households. In Gao, for example, the price of staple foods increased by 22% (maize) and 18% (rice) in 2021 alone.¹⁸ The war in Ukraine that started in 2022 has further disrupted food supplies to many countries, and Mali has been no exception. Indeed, prices of foods which were already a problem for many have also been affected as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.¹⁹ Matters have been exacerbated by the fact that, in many instances, humanitarian organisations have been unable to provide food assistance to vulnerable households in conflict-affected areas.

Overall, the most current data estimates that over 29% of the population is malnourished.²⁰ Current levels of hunger are the highest recorded since the coup d'état in 2012 in Mali. In terms of food quality, current WFP data indicate that 13 million people are suffering from insufficient food consumption.²¹

Within this context, finding ways to ensure that populations can safely produce food, can buy food

¹⁸ NRC. 2021. Alarming Food Crisis Leaves 1.2 Million Hungry.

¹⁹ WFP. 'Market Monitor' (online).

²⁰ IPC Cadre Harmonisé. 'Mali'

²¹ WFP, 'HungermapLive'. The Food Consumption Score is a proxy for households' food access that is used to classify households into different groups on the basis of the adequacy of the foods consumed in the week prior to being surveyed.





they lack, have access to foods that are nutritious and are able to receive support in cases of emergency is critical. As detailed in the findings of this report, Norwegian funding has supported all of these aspects of food security.

3.3 Malian agricultural and food security policies

The main Malian political strategy of relevance to agriculture and food security is the Strategic Framework for Growth and Poverty Reduction 2012–2017 (GFCPR III), which aimed to transform Mali into an emerging economy, primarily on the basis of agricultural development to accelerate growth. In 2015, Mali adopted a ten-year investment plan, the National Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (PNISA) – which was based on the National Agricultural Policy 2011–2020 – as part of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The PNISA reaffirmed Mali's commitment under the Maputo Declaration of 2003 to increase public spending on agriculture to at least 10% of total public spending and to achieve agricultural productivity growth of at least 6% per year.

Government price policies for many food crops may discourage production as they are based on protecting consumers in ways that have a negative impact on the income of agricultural producers.

According to a 2022 FAO report, most agricultural subsidies in Mali have gone to the cotton and rice sectors.²²

Mali's Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries²³ produce an annual agricultural campaign plan that is subsequently approved by the prime minister and the president of the republic through the National Executive Committee of Agriculture (CENA) and the Higher Council of Agriculture (CSA). A key strategic document, each plan reviews the previous campaign plan and outlines the upcoming one.

In 2013, with the aim of strengthening food security and nutrition among vulnerable households, the Malian government began to implement a social assistance and unconditional cash transfer programme with the support of a World Bank loan, targeting poor and food-insecure households.

In 2017, the government developed its National Food and Nutritional Security Policy, which aimed to improve food and nutrition security and social protection programmes. Measures to combat malnutrition were put in place, such as the general feeding programme, under which both children aged 2–6 and pregnant and lactating women would receive a monthly ration of fortified supplements tailored to their age group during high-risk periods such as the lean season.

²² FAO. 2022. Suivi des politiques agricoles et alimentaires au Mali.

²³ In 2021 these ministries became the Ministry of Rural Development.

Another flagship programme is the National School Feeding Programme. In 2009, Mali adopted its National School Feeding Policy and launched the National School Feeding Programme to ensure sustainable management of school feeding. In 2013, the government adopted the School Feeding Sustainability Strategy to reduce its dependence on external funding and to strengthen national ownership of school feeding programmes.

In 2016, Mali adopted the National Plan for Responses to Food Hardship to improve food and nutrition security through emergency interventions and resilience-building. This plan mobilised resources to restore the national security stock (SNS) and the state intervention stock (SIE) in order to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the country's food security system. The SNS provides free rations of millet and sorghum to households affected by shocks. However, it covers only a relatively small part of Mali's national food security needs.²⁴

Mali ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2007. In October 2021, Mali revised its National Determined Contribution (NDC). In the revised version Mali committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 31% for energy, 25% for agriculture, 39% for land use and forestry, and 31% for waste sectors by 2030 compared to business as usual – an overall increase on its first NDC submitted in 2015.

²⁴ FAO. 2022. Suivi des politiques agricoles et alimentaires au Mali.





Norwegian support for Mali's agriculture aligns well with Mali's priorities, covering food security and agricultural objectives. Mali's strategy emphasises local community engagement and large-scale food production, while Norway's assistance concentrates on enhancing local farming practices and building resilience through climate-adapted approaches. Additionally, by collaborating with government agencies, Norway has successfully contributed to the development of Mali's agricultural sector, which is also a key priority for Mali. The support consistently aligns with all of Mali's strategies.



Photo: **P. Casier** | CGIAR | Flickr





4

Norwegian engagement on food security in the Sahel





4.1 The policy environment

As noted earlier, Norway did not have a policy or strategy on food security during most of the years under review in this evaluation. In 2022, however, this changed with the publication of *Combining Forces Against Hunger: A Policy to Improve Self-Sufficiency*. This strategy document emphasised that achieving an end to hunger is essential for the achievement of other Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), such as Goals 1, 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, and 15). The strategy states that climate resilience and reduced environmental destruction are also essential to food production security. The policy goes on to declare that to achieve progress towards ending hunger SDG goals 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 must also be addressed.

More specifically, the policy focuses on the need to achieve the following four objectives:

- an increase in local climate-resilient food production;
- an increase in local value creation and incomes for food producers;
- a reduction in malnutrition and undernutrition; and
- a reduction in the scale of hunger crises.

In addition, the policy makes special mention of other strategies and action plans that should be taken into account during its implementation. These include:

- **Climate Change, Hunger and Vulnerability: Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and the Fight Against Hunger.** This strategy is particularly relevant to Mali because it places emphasis on the impact that climate change can have on food security.
- **Norway's Humanitarian Strategy: An Effective and Integrated Approach.** This strategy focuses on addressing immediate food security needs, as well as addressing the underlying issues that affect food security (building resilience).
- **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.** This plan does not address food security as such, but is relevant to the context in Mali because the political insecurity (conflict-related) impacts food security in the country.
- **Equality for All: Norway's Strategy for Disability-Inclusive Development.** This strategy is relevant because persons with disabilities are more likely to be subject to discrimination, which can impact their food security. Enabling persons with disability to be self-reliant can be critical to ensuring their food security.

Another key document for the present evaluation is the *Strategy for Norway's Efforts in the Sahel Region*, which focuses specifically on strengthening governance, human rights and the rule of law; supporting inclusive economic development; and strengthening regional security. In relation to the

activities reviewed for this evaluation, the latter two objectives – economic development and regional security – have been a key focus, as multiple activities have centred around improved production of goods and drew on the notion that improved food security can have a direct influence on local security and stability. It is also worth noting that the Strategy for the Sahel places particular attention on women and their economic engagement, which are issues that have been actively addressed by the interventions reviewed for this evaluation. In addition, the Sahel strategy also has, as a secondary objective, to promote more sustainable, climate-resilient and productive food production. All the support reviewed during this assignment is well aligned with and supports this objective.

Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasise that the interventions funded by Norway focus on small-scale subsistence activities, resulting in no major energy consumption issues related to the supported activities. Therefore, through these activities, Norway's impact on Mali's efforts to reduce greenhouse gases is not significant.





4.2 The funded interventions

During the 2016–2021 period,²⁵ Norway disbursed almost NOK 400 million of earmarked funding for activities on food security in Mali (see Figure 3), with 2018 and 2019 being the years in which the most funding was disbursed.²⁶ The majority of the resources disbursed were for interventions with a lifespan of 3–4 years (see Table 2).

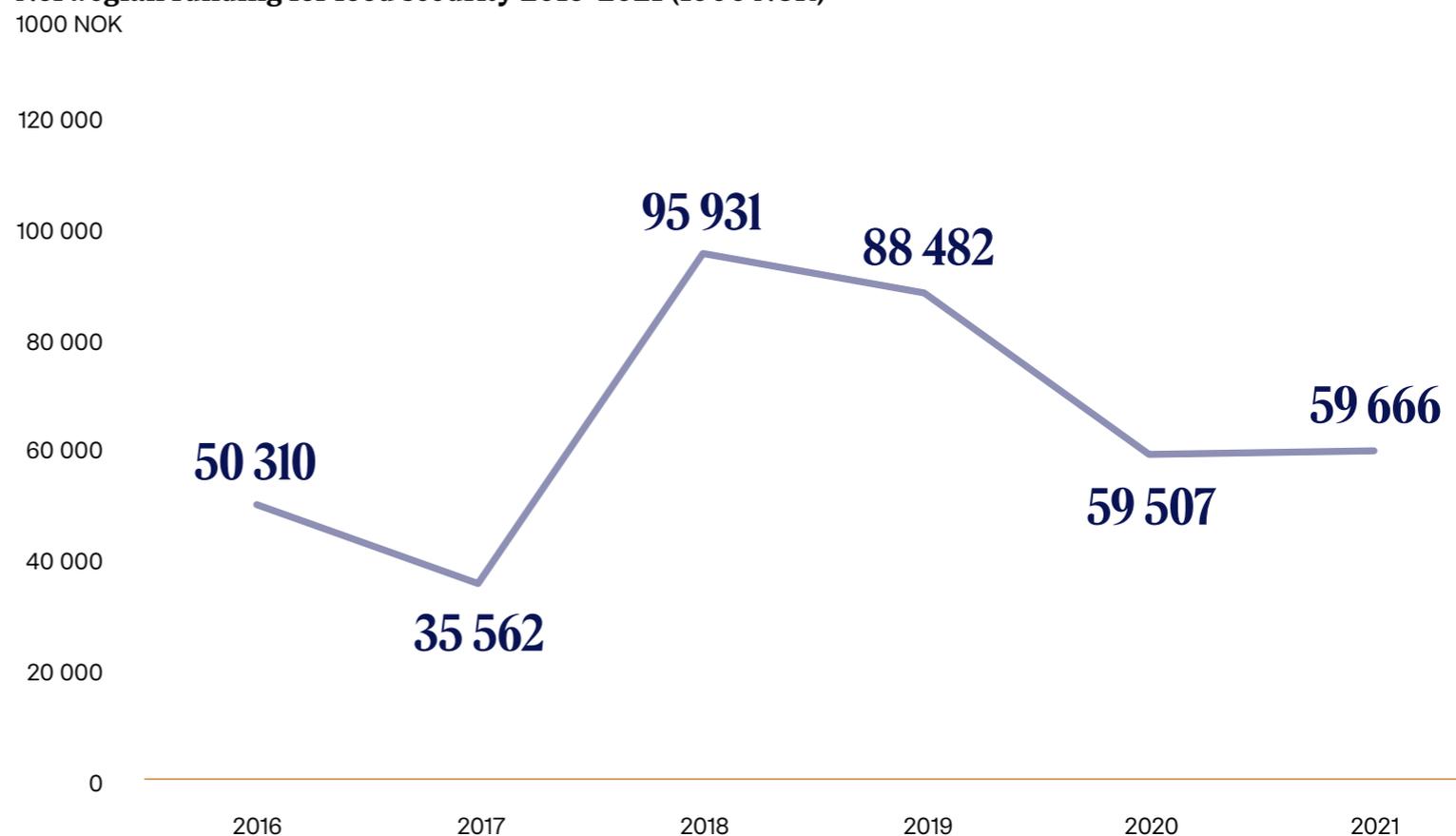
Annex 5 sets out the complete Norwegian portfolio of food security-related projects that were funded in the 2016–2021 period. The variation in funding – in particular the increase in 2018 and 2019 – is mainly related to the disbursement of the second phase of the Mali Climate Trust Fund, which in those two years received NOK 58.9 million (representing 32% of total disbursements for 2018–2019). Excluding this fund, the disbursements from 2018 onwards were relatively constant, varying between 58.0M to 67.4M NOK.

²⁵ This evaluation covers the 2016–2022 period, but statistical data were only available until 2021. The analysis presented here therefore does not include 2022.

²⁶ Between 2018–2021, 5% (NOK 50 million) of Norwegian core funding to IFAD, FAO and WFP, organisations with a clear food security related mandate, was allocated to Mali. Source: OECD-DAC statistics. Note: data for the years prior to 2018 is not available.

FIGURE 3

Norwegian funding for food security 2016–2021 (1000 NOK)



Source: Norad database 2016–2021 Sahel





From this it can also be observed that in 2018 two projects with the Ministry of Agriculture and Drylands Coordination Group respectively together representing about NOK 11.5 million, were discontinued, and two new research programmes with IER and IITA as implementing partners started. Funding for the NRC has been rather constant and remained at a high level throughout the entire review period, varying between NOK 11 million and NOK 20.5 million.

Figure 4 presents the allocation of the food security-related budget. Norwegian NGOs and UN organisations account for over half of the resources disbursed to the country to promote food security.

The funding to food security-related activities has been used to support humanitarian and development activities, as well as research efforts. The Mali Climate Fund is handled separately below as it provides funding directly to the projects it manages. The Fund focuses mainly on building resilience to climate change (see Box 1). A review of the funding provided by Norway to implementing partners reveals that (see Figure 4):

TABLE 2

Length and number of agreements, and associated disbursements (1000 NOK)

Length of agreement	Number of agreements	ODA disbursement (1000 NOK)
1 year	5	27,629
2 years	2	6,178
3 years	4	117,999
4 years	8	127,304
5 years	1	50,579
6 years	1	52,000
7 years	2	6,769
8 years	1	1,000
Total	24	389,459

Source: Norad database 2016-2021 Sahel

BOX 1:

Mali Climate Fund

Norway and Sweden have contributed a total of 20,876,541 USD to the Mali Climate Fund, with Norway contributing 8,447,648 USD between 2016 and 2022. The fund has five main priorities, including mobilizing innovative financing, piloting innovative partnerships and policies, and building capacities through partnerships and networks. 29 projects have been conducted or are still ongoing in Mali under the Mali Climate Fund, with the majority focused on agriculture, breeding, and fish farming, water, energy and forestry, and research and innovation. These projects aim to strengthen food security by improving agricultural practices, enhancing communities' resilience against climate change, and promoting the rational use of water resources. Tracing results to Norwegian funding is not possible based on available data.

Source: UN MPTF Office. Mali Climate fund. <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/3ml00>





- Five organisations funded by Norway engage in food security related humanitarian activities in Mali were allocated 38.6% of the total disbursed funds.
- Five organisations funded by Norway engaged in development type activities received 33.46% of the funds.
- Two organisations funded by Norway engage in research activities received 28% of the funds.
- The UNDP Mali Climate Trust Fund received 19% of the funds (see Box 1).

The distribution of funding shows that Norwegian funding to food security is generally focused on emergency response and agriculture (see Figure 5). This focus has been followed closely by support to activities aiming to improve resilience to climate change, which is a key subject of concern for the Mali Climate Fund.

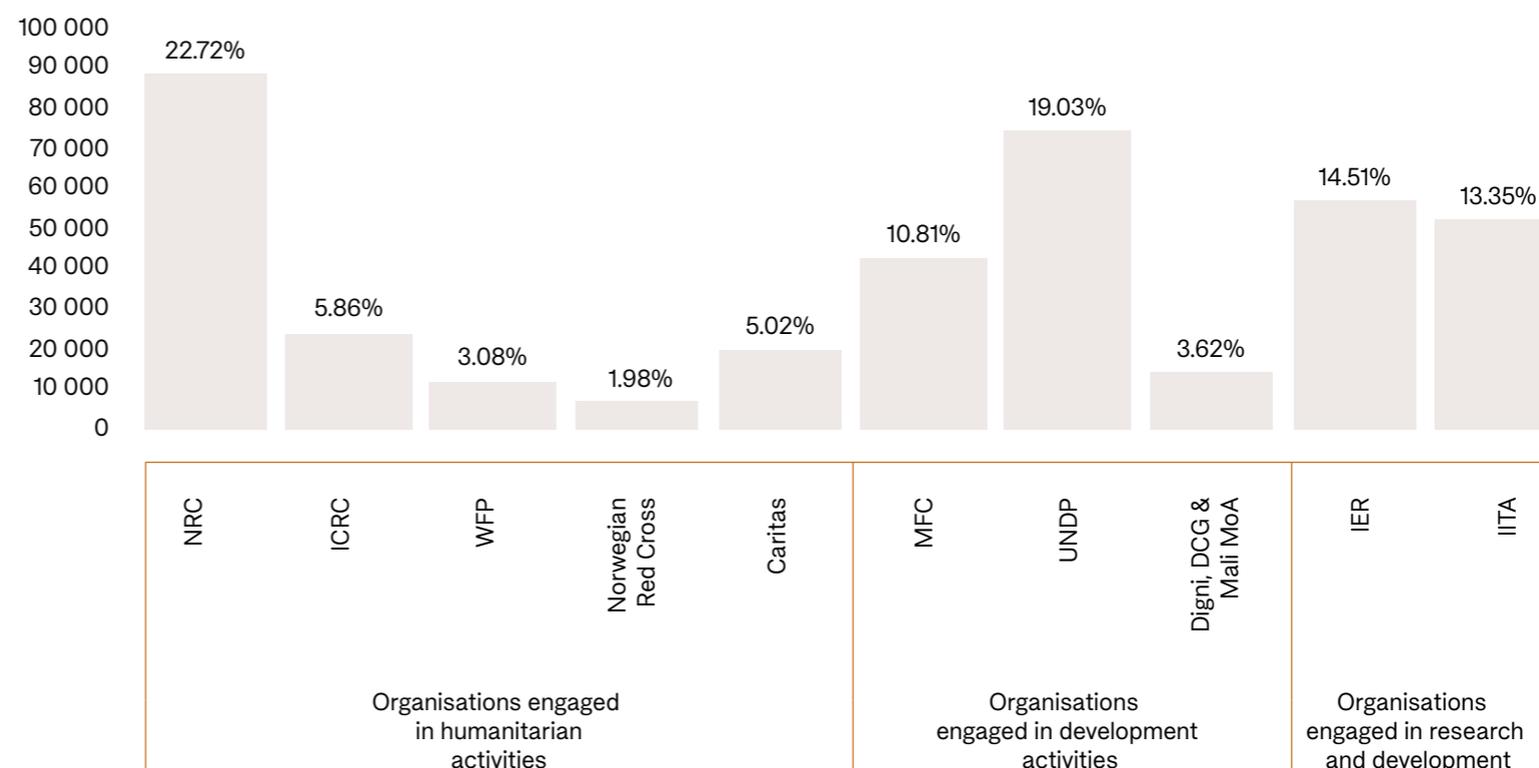
A review of the original data also shows that the majority of resources (76%) are allocated through bilateral agreements,²⁷ with the remaining resources allocated through earmarked funding to bilateral organisations or through Humanitarian Partnership Agreements, as in the case of NRC. The data also shows that most of the earmarked funds are disbursed to Norwegian NGOs and multilateral institutions. These two types of recipients account for over 60% of funding allocated (see Figure 6).

²⁷ Norad database 2016-2021 Sahel.

FIGURE 4

Earmarked Funding allocated to food security (1000 NOK) by Norway by organisation, 2016–2021.

Disbursement 2016-2021 in 1,000 NOK



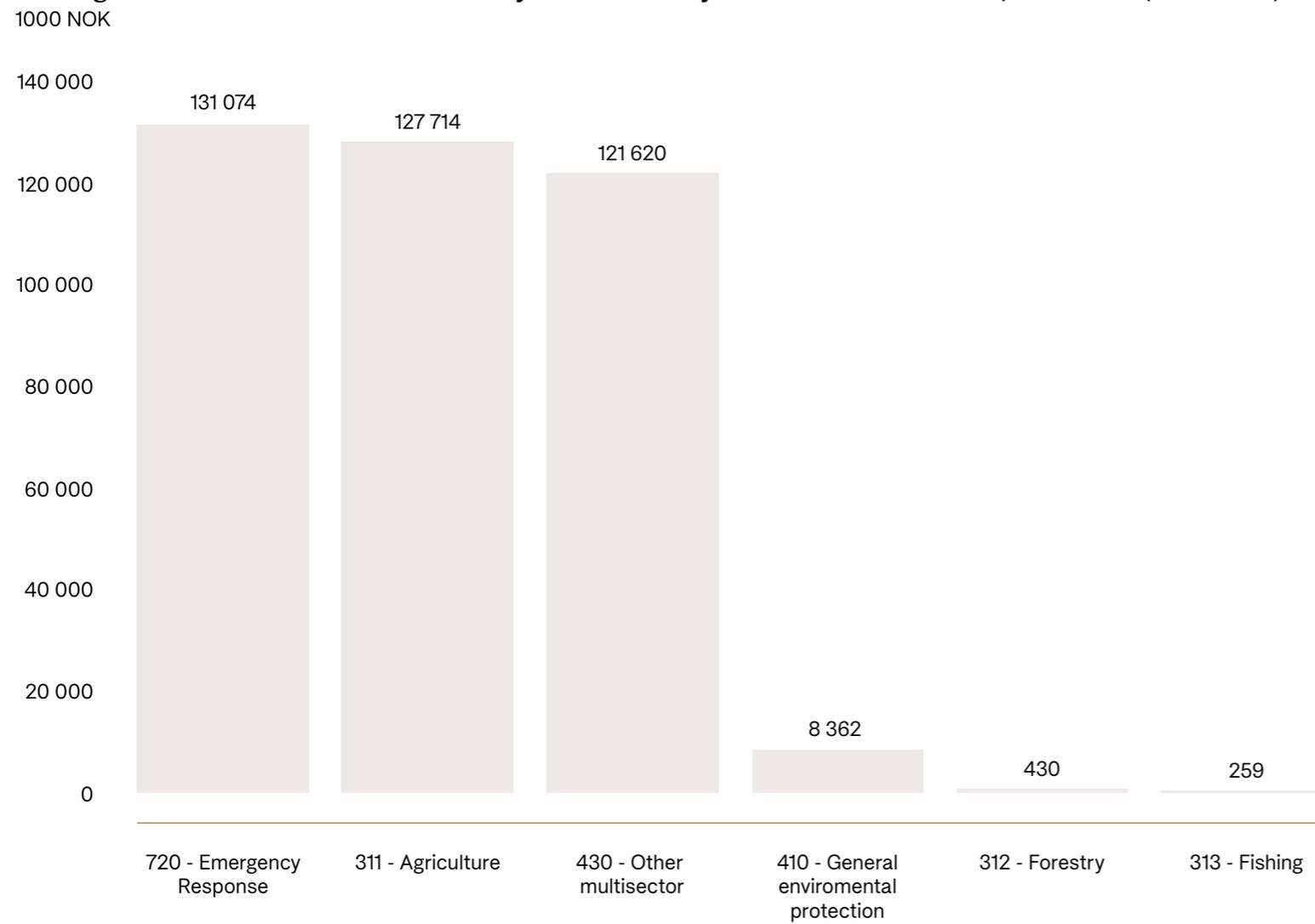
Source: Norad database 2016-2021 Sahel





FIGURE 5

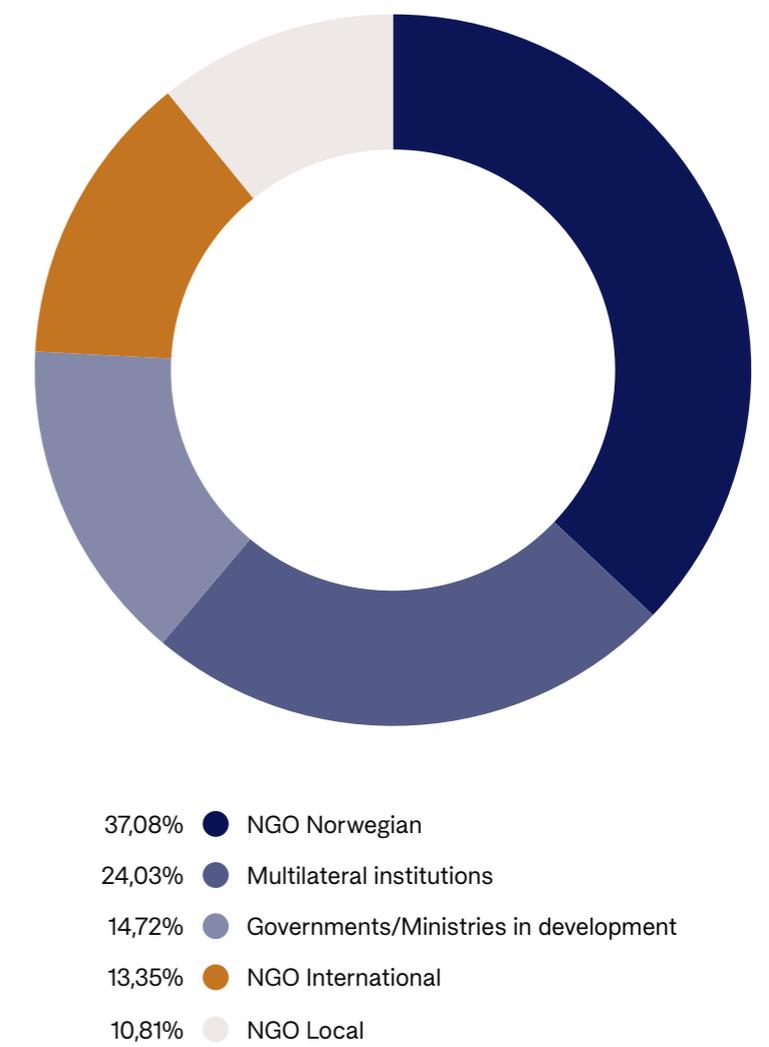
Norwegian disbursement for food security to the Sahel by DAC main sector name, 2016-2021 (1000 NOK)



Source: Norad database 2016-2021 Sahel

FIGURE 6

Share of disbursements by type of partner, 2016-2021



Source: Norad database 2016-2021 Sahel





5

The findings





5.1 To what extent (and eventually how) has Norwegian development assistance contributed to improving food security in Mali?

Key Finding: Norway has contributed to food security in Mali by supporting interventions that address aspects of each of the four dimensions of food security. The interventions funded have reached the targeted right-holders, and Norwegian-funded projects have served to show that improving food security in Mali is possible despite contextual challenges. Norwegian support provides opportunities to identify and capitalise on linkages between different interventions. Doing this could have a multiplier effect by producing wider gains across different food security dimensions. However, by and large these opportunities have not been utilised thus far.

Norwegian-funded interventions in Mali influenced all four dimensions of food security. The Theory in Use (Figure 7) presents each dimension using a distinct colour: blue for food availability, green for food access, pink for food utilization, and orange for food stability. This representation also shows that several funded interventions support multiple dimensions. Moreover, the available data also demonstrate that some results are documented (solid lines), while others are expected but have not yet been documented and therefore the evaluation is unable to determine whether or how they will materialise (dotted lines). The Theory in Use highlights

that there are a number of conditions that ultimately determine the success or failure of interventions (enabling conditions). The original data collected in Mali served to highlight some of these conditions and connections.

Enabling conditions and connections that had a direct impact on different dimensions of food and which facilitated or hindered the attainment of outputs, outcomes or impact, included:

Food availability: A critical aspect for ensuring improvement in the availability of food as a result of the activities implemented in Mali concerned the acceptance of newly introduced products. This required considerable dialogue with communities/right-holders. The absence of such dialogue would render any such effort invalid, which is why the identification of a new product without a clear roll-out scheme cannot be expected to succeed. The evidence showed that, in certain instances, new products were introduced and were ill-fitted to the environment, but, in others, where success was achieved, a considerable effort to work with communities was a critical step. Right-holders interviewed underscored the importance of community engagement and dialogue.

Food access: Right-holders targeted, including when formed as cooperatives, needed to have the resources to buy raw materials and/or machines to enable their participation in the relevant activity. Likewise, financial

resources are often important for ensuring the maintenance of tools (equipment used). This meant that the right-holders targeted were not among the poorest because the activities were not designed for the most disadvantaged groups. Another factor critical to the success of activities, which focused on developing/producing a new product, was the degree to which the products introduced were accepted by right-holders and (where different) end users. This element is similar to the dynamic observed in relation to food availability. Interviews with right holders served to highlight the most successful experiences in Mali were those in which clear efforts were made to ensure acceptance of the new food or new product – for example, shea butter. The introduction of new products for sale as a conduit to improving food access is dependent on stable markets, which can be negatively impacted by changing security conditions. In addition, overproduction also plays an important role. Mainly that the product for sale cannot exceed demand. As with many activities supported in Mali, the security situation and how it affects the daily life of right-holders is an important determinant factor.

Food utilization: These interventions focused on fostering localised systems, which is considered positive as such efforts can improve the development of local economies. However, activities that seek to rely on local products and local markets are dependent on a number of critical factors, including political stability (schools remain open, school systems are well administered, there is enough food in the market to be able to buy





food for schools, food prices are stable). All of these factors are important in terms of the continued benefit and ultimate impact of the activities. The evidence collected showed that the activities worked well when the environment was stable, but could not be replicated in areas where the environment was not stable.

Food stability: As with other support, the existence of stable markets with available products and affordable prices is a critical element in terms of determining the success (or not) of these efforts. Efforts focused on food stability relied on localisation of efforts, as did efforts targeting food utilisation, and hence experienced similar challenges. Providing right-holders with cash to purchase food means that food must be available for purchase and at an affordable price.

Thus far, the above-mentioned conditions have been mostly met at least in some instances, but the security conditions in Mali make the support vulnerable to changes, as all interventions are anchored on semi-stable economies and local markets. This means that thus far expected outcomes have been achieved, and impact has been reached, at least for some right-holders, but activities need careful monitoring as the context can change rapidly. More information on individual experiences are detailed in later sections of this report.

A critical lesson is that ensuring food security is complex and interventions must be multifaceted. This suggests that many of the interventions could have

produced more solid results (been more effective) and/or been more efficient if they had been linked with each other. For example, activities related to researching and developing new seeds could have benefited from collaboration with organisations that were delivering seeds and supporting their use. The evidence mainly show that there have been opportunities for capitalisation that have been overlooked. There was no deliberate overlap and complementarity between most interventions in the support provided by Norway. Rather, each actor developed and implemented single projects that covered one or more activities without exploring how partnerships or relationships with other actors (links between activities) could be central in determining the success of their interventions. The only exception has been interventions by IATA and IER, where synergies have been explored and indeed encouraged by the embassy.²⁸ The evaluation team recognises that the majority of identified links are theoretical because they do not reflect the experience on the ground, and transaction costs associated with links should also be considered. Accordingly, it is not possible to quantify how much more efficient or effective interventions would have been had these links been made. Still, the data are consistent in suggesting that such linkages would have improved results and they have therefore been included. The findings also show that there are clear linkages and overlaps between

²⁸ It is relevant to note that the representatives from these organisations interviewed during data collection were not aware of the effort to collaborate with each other.

different food security dimensions, and that some of the interventions supported different dimensions simultaneously. This is also reflected in the Theory in Use, Figure 7.

TABLE 3

Theory in Use legend

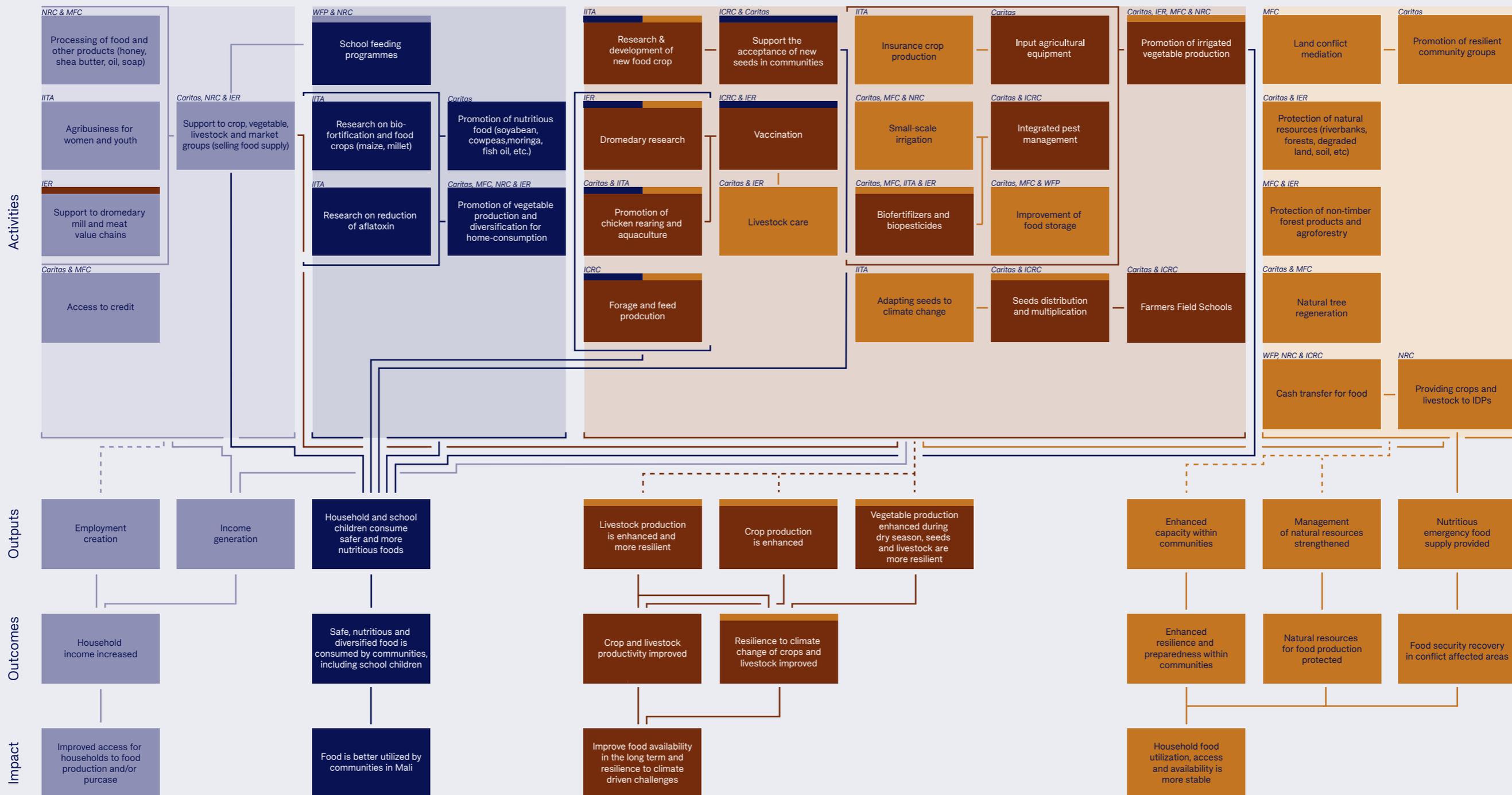
Organisations	Food Security Dimension
IER	Availability
IITA	Access
ICRC	Utilization
MFC	Stability
Caritas	
NRC	
WFP	





FIGURE 7

Theory in Use of the Norwegian support to food security in Mali (2016 – 2021)





5.1.1 Food availability

Finding: Norway has supported a number of initiatives that have aimed to support food availability in Mali, mainly through activities related to crop productivity and animal-rearing. In multiple instances, complementarity between the different types of programmes is visible but has not been capitalised on. For example, research activities have led to the identification of products that could improve food availability, while organisations working with communities have introduced new products that they hoped would improve food availability. However, research organisations have not worked with organisations that have disseminated new products. This has meant that, although a wide range of technologies and practices are being disseminated (or tested), these have had limited outreach, and organisations working directly with right-holders have not benefited from the new technologies and products.

The evaluation has found that Norway contributed to longer-term **food availability** in three important ways: by improving crop productivity, by improving livestock productivity and by introducing climate-smart agriculture practices. Efforts to support crop productivity have centred around four main modalities: First, *seed improvement and acceptance*. The focus of these interventions has ranged from research into and development of new seeds that are able to thrive in the context (IITA), to activities that emphasised the acceptance of new seeds within the targeted communities (Caritas and ICRC). Second,

seed multiplication. These efforts have focused on already existing seeds and their multiplication locally (Caritas and ICRC). Third, *the use of bio-fertiliser and bio-pesticides* and, lastly, the *distribution and promotion of specific tree species* that are able to thrive in the environment and serve to improve soil quality and the planting environment by providing shade and creating biomass input (foliage nurturing the soil) (IITA). This last activity has also had implications for food access (see below). In addition, in certain instances, partners such as NRC provided short-term cash for food prior to bridging the gap between the current state of emergency (i.e., limited food availability) and longer-term food availability solutions which NRC also supported - food access (see below).

The objective of these activities, as per the Theory of Change, was improved agricultural production, which in turn would improve food availability in the long term and resilience to climate-driven challenges, irrespective of the conflict status. This was to be achieved through the identification of new seeds along with the provision of training, farming tools and seeds to local farmers. The focus on local crop production was based on the premise that communities would have continued access to their farmlands (unaffected by the conflict). Efforts to improve resilience are based on a climate change adaptation approach. This involves introducing technologies, practices, and inputs that are better suited to the climatic conditions resulting from climate change in Mali.

The data collected from implementing partners show that a considerable number of right-holders have received support and that crop productivity has improved (see Annex 5). While the evaluation team has been able to identify critical factors that affect the likelihood of success (see Figure 7), the analysis conducted by the implementing partners does not problematize the degree to which the activities introduced have been adopted and can be identified as responsible for the changes made. In addition, there is considerable variation in the coverage of the different interventions. For example, IITA reports having reached over 25,000 individuals through training, but they have no data on how the training received has affected the practices of those trained. Likewise, the bio-fertiliser work conducted by the Mali Folkecenter claims to have trained 106 individuals, but no data on the outcomes of the training have been recorded. Caritas, which works more closely and on a longer-term basis with communities, reports increased crop productivity of between 12–89% depending on the crop, and that it has supported some 57,000 individuals. However, it is unclear from the documents if all those supported received the same level of support in terms of training, materials and continued follow-up, or whether some received more support than others. Discussions with program staff could not confirm if/how the same level of support has been provided to all right-holders as detailed data is not collected.





The data secured through interviews and reported results mentioned above suggest that little is known about the actual results of activities that did not include consistent work and follow-up with right-holders. These results do not mean that training or conducting demonstrations is ineffective, but they do illustrate that while the practices taught or demonstrated can be a critical asset for improved food availability, these activities alone do not guarantee that learned practices will be implemented and that food availability will improve. Indeed, the need for ongoing follow-up beyond initial training is highlighted in a number of studies and reports, including reports by the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.²⁹

Moreover, the review of interventions showed that activities related to the improvement of seeds were not linked to efforts to disseminate and ensure acceptance of seeds. Rather, organisations that focused on acceptance at the community level did not work directly with organisations developing new seeds. Taken together, these factors suggest

²⁹ FAO. 2014. Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services: Enhancing the Productivity of Smallholder Farming Systems; World Bank. 2023. Agriculture Action Plan; and International Fund for Agricultural Development. 2021. Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services. Note: In Mali, among the interventions funded by Norway, only those of the ICRC and WFP involve some level of post-distribution monitoring to assess the food consumption score in order to assess food consumption quality after food assistance. No other partners have carried out a similar level of post-support assessment, and it is therefore difficult to quantify the levels of success of those interventions.

that while all crop-improving activities have had some impact, the reach (number of right-holders) of the impact and the full implications of the activities undertaken may have benefited from closer collaboration between the different parties. The findings also suggest that without a support mechanism to ensure that demonstrations and training are systematically followed up, uptake of new practices may be limited, and hence the impact of the interventions reduced. The findings also suggest that there may be some duplication, with agencies finding their own seeds to introduce instead of using ones tried and tested by other Norwegian-funded programmes.

5.1.2 Food access

Finding: *The Norwegian support has improved food access in Mali through a number of interventions. The improvements were achieved through income generation and, to a lesser degree, job creation. While data on income generated per household (or per individual) are unavailable, both the organisations managing the activities and right-holders suggest that the activities have been valuable, and some female right-holders noted that improved financial independence had led to an increase in their self-esteem. Programmes aiming to enhance employment were fewer. The creation of employment through the promotion of value-chain development, through the promotion of agri-business or through business incubators targeting youth and women has been*

limited, and results are not yet fully clear. However, if environments and markets remain stable, these efforts could prove positive.

Food access support provided is in some instances also linked to food availability, where support is provided both to production and to marketing. The support was anchored on two main categories of aid: income generation and employment creation.

Income-generation activities, and specifically those focused on vegetable production, improved both food access and food availability, since home consumption surplus foods were sold. **Vegetable production** (Caritas, Mali Folkecenter, NRC, IER), where surplus can be sold at local markets was the most common income-generating venture supported. These efforts focused on vegetable gardens and in income-generation activities engaged women in particular (see Annex 5).

Overall, right-holders who participated in these project interventions, as well as staff from implementing agencies, noted that the vegetable gardens were successful in terms of production and sales and had the added benefit of supporting improved food availability. The support provided involved a significant focus on irrigation. The lack of consistent rains in the region is an important and noticeable impact of climate change that affects agricultural production, as well as a factor that was highlighted by project participants





interviewed. It is not therefore surprising that individuals engaged in activities to increase production of vegetables to enable the sale of surplus emphasized that irrigation techniques were a critical factor in determining the success or failure of the schemes. On the other hand, irrigation alone is insufficient, and effective training and the provision of seeds and tools are all important elements in the success of vegetable gardens, particularly if the goal is to produce a surplus.

Participants interviewed during data-collection reported having doubled or tripled their income as a result of the sale of vegetables. According to women engaged as participants in these activities, this had increased their overall household income, which in turn had implications not just for food security, but also for the general household economy and standard of living (see Annex 5).

Shea butter production is another activity that has been supported. This activity has aimed to contribute to women's income generation through the establishment of several units in which shea nuts are processed to produce shea butter, soap and oil. The technology introduced as part of the project is labour-saving as it increases the productivity of shea butter extraction by 200% (see Annex 5). This activity specifically targeted women and aimed at improving financial independence and positively influencing household income and food security. However, there are no clear data on how the new resources have been used and whether the

engagement with women directly had a positive impact on them. A number of dynamics related to household economies – such as who the earners are and how resources are managed – were not explored. Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this section these type of activities are dependent on market opportunities.

Soya bean processing. Right-holders report that, despite some challenges (pests, fertilisation, threshing), there has been a considerable increase in soya productivity as a result of improved seeds, farming techniques and fertiliser, along with an increase in income from the sale of soya. Many project participants who started growing soya noted that the biggest change is the fact that they can consume their product and also earn money. Project reports note that the processed soya beans are sold by women and used as food for young and old (i.e. as porridge). As with shea butter production, the actual gender implications of these practices are not explored by implementing partners and the original data collection did not shed light on the more nuanced gender implications of these activities.³⁰ This activity is also demand dependent.

³⁰ The team did not find relevant literature on gender dynamics in the specific regions of Mali visited during the evaluation. However, from their own experience and previous research, they recognize that gender has a significant impact on women's well-being, independence, and self-sufficiency. These aspects are closely linked to land ownership practices and access/management of financial resources within households.

The data above suggests that right-holders can benefit access to marketable products. However, several right-holders interviewed suggested that they experience supply chain challenges. The interventions funded do not focus on the intricacies of supply chain development.

In addition to the above activities, food access has been promoted through the introduction of employment-creation activities. These have focused on the promotion of value-chain development or agri-business or have taken the form of business incubators targeting youth and women. However, the available data do not indicate whether or to what extent these efforts have served to generate employment and/or the degree to which this has been sustainable.





5.1.3 Food utilization

Finding: *Improved availability of nutritious food in Mali, through food production activities, has been achieved through several activities. The production of vegetables in irrigated gardens has been important for improved food utilisation because it has contributed to the diversification of home consumption through the production of a wide variety of vegetables. Likewise, the promotion of livestock products (goat milk and chickens for eggs) can be very valuable as a contribution towards improving the nutritional status of children. High-nutrition formulas for complementary feeding of young children (6–59 months) that can be prepared at home have also been successful, as their adoption has surpassed 90%. Research on bio-fortified crops, such as maize with Provitamin A, which can supply 50% of the daily required Vitamin A consumption, has the potential to be an important contribution. Activities funded by Norway have also focused on food safety, a critical aspect of effective food utilisation, addressing issues such as aflatoxin³¹ control in crops and hygiene in food preparation for school meals.*

³¹ Aflatoxins are toxic substances produced by certain molds that can grow on crops such as corn, peanuts, and tree nuts. These molds thrive in warm and humid conditions and can contaminate food during production, harvesting, storage, and processing. Exposure to aflatoxins can cause acute and chronic health problems in humans and animals, including liver damage, immune suppression, and an increased risk of liver cancer.

Food utilization has been improved by some of the activities mentioned earlier in this report – specifically, the increase in vegetable production, the expansion of soya production and the increase in the planting of moringa which is considered to be a highly nutritious plant and could improve the attainment of dietary needs. The production of fish and livestock (see ‘Food Availability’) has also improved food utilisation by making a more diverse nutritional panel available to the targeted population. It is noted that not all of the activities reviewed mentioned a focus on food utilisation. However, even in instances where food utilisation was not a central objective of the activities, it is noted that the support to food consumption had a direct impact on food utilisation as a result of the modalities used for the interventions funded (see ‘Food Availability’ and ‘Food Access’). One specific intervention that has focused on food utilisation was the WFP school feeding programme. This intervention supported the purchase of local products, which was expected to have an impact in terms of improved food access (economic turnaround). The pandemic had a direct negative impact on the school feeding programme, however, as schools closed. This led, in turn, to an indirect impact in the form of a reduction of demand for local food.

The school feeding programme is important not only insofar as it has supported food utilisation in terms of children’s nutrition, but also because it is well aligned with national priorities (see Box 2). Indeed, the government of Mali identified school feeding as a national priority in 2019, when the issue was highlighted in the 2019–2028 national development plan, and even earlier as part of the Ministry of Education strategic goals dating back to the introduction of the National School Feeding Policy in 2009 and the introduction of the Strategy for National School Feeding in 2013. School feeding has been reported as successful, despite some challenges, specifically related to school closures during Covid-19 or due to conflict. In addition, some schools have been closed owing to the war, but it is unclear from the available data whether schools that were benefiting from the school feeding programme have been closed due to the conflict or not.³² Despite these limitations, WFP data suggest that while enrolment of children in school has not improved drastically (from 21% at baseline to 25% in 2020 and 2021), attendance of those enrolled in school has increased from 75% at baseline to 85% in both 2020 and 2021, suggesting that a greater number of those enrolled in school

³² UNICEF. 2023. 10 million children in extreme jeopardy in central Sahel as insecurity seeps into neighbouring countries.





are benefiting from improved nutrition. WFP further emphasizes that the programme has had an impact on the local economy, as a result of the local sourcing of food, which in turn improves food availability, and that it has enabled the provision of over 600,000 more meals per year over the 2020–2021 period than at baseline, making the annual reach of the school feeding programme 1.8 million children.

BOX 2:

Food utilisation – School feeding

The school feeding programme run by WFP in Mali is designed to provide daily meals to vulnerable children attending school in order to improve their nutrition and education outcomes. The programme is aimed at reducing the prevalence of malnutrition among schoolchildren, increasing school enrolment and attendance, and promoting gender equality.

The programme targets primary school children in the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, which are among the most food-insecure regions of Mali. The meals provided typically consist of a hot cereal made from maize, millet or sorghum, often enriched with vitamins and minerals, and sometimes accompanied by a protein-rich food such as beans, lentils or peanuts.

WFP works in partnership with the Ministry of Education and other government agencies, as well as local communities, to implement the programme. The meals

are prepared by local women’s groups using locally sourced ingredients, which helps to support the local economy.

In addition to providing meals, the programme also includes nutrition education and health screenings for children to identify and treat cases of malnutrition. The programme also works to promote school gardens and other agricultural activities to help communities become more self-sufficient in food production.

Overall, the school feeding program run by WFP in Mali has had a significant impact in improving the nutritional status and education outcomes of children in the regions where it operates, and is an important component of the broader effort to reduce poverty and food insecurity in the country.





5.1.4 Food stability

Finding: Norway has made a substantial contribution to humanitarian action in Mali, particularly in the form of emergency food assistance during the hunger gap period (lean season), in rapid response in the event of attacks on communities, and to families displaced as a result of conflict and their host families. The three organisations that Norway has funded (WFP, ICRC and NRC) are among the largest humanitarian food security organisations in Mali. Together, they are reaching out to a very large part of the people in need of food assistance in Mali. On a yearly basis, this may add up to almost two million people being assisted. The coordination between these and other humanitarian organisations is based on the humanitarian response plan that is developed each year under the auspices of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). For all three organisations, cash is the preferred modality of distribution (varying between 55% [ICRC] and 77% [WFP]). In-kind distribution is used only in areas where the use of cash is not possible owing to conflict and/or poorly functioning markets. Resilience-building and disaster preparedness, through the improvement of storage of food and improved social cohesion, are additional important results of six of the seven reviewed projects.

The Norwegian support has also contributed to **food stability**. This type of support has focused on three main mechanisms: emergency food assistance, resilience-building and natural resource management.

NRC, the ICRC and WFP have been able to provide cash transfers for food as part of efforts focused specifically on emergency food assistance. Right-holders targeted have been mainly from conflict-affected areas – specifically, support has been provided to communities displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict. In some instances, however, organisations such as NRC have supported communities with cash-based transfers in the interim period until activities that are more sustainable (e.g., crop production) could be started. This suggests that there are opportunities to link activities that focus on emergency (food stability) and longer-term efforts to support food availability. In this specific case, the work of NRC must be highlighted as an important example of an intervention that has worked along the nexus continuum. The same can be said of the activities of the ICRC, which has worked with both providing food and developing crop production to improve food availability, again showing a clear nexus process as part of the effort to improve food security in Mali.

Efforts to improve **resilience** have focused mainly on activities to improve storage facilities for crops and facilitating access to livestock care (see 'Food Availability'), as well as improved conservation of stored food through the use of bio-repellents. In some instances, activities have focused on providing crops or livestock to displaced communities so that they may 'start over', in the hope that the support could serve as a mechanism to improve longer-term resilience of targeted communities. Resilience-focused activities have included a focus on

dialogue between sedentary and nomadic communities, with the aim of strengthening social cohesion, which could in turn lead to improved resilience in terms of community-shared resources.

Support to improved food storage represents a major effort by four of the six organisations and is aimed at enhancing resilience. Caritas contributes to resilience through the creation of food reserve stocks at the community level. Food for storage is produced on a collective field and then stored. In case of disaster the stored food is sold at a subsidised price to vulnerable households. The food store is managed by the community. The improvement of food storage either through the use of bio-repellents or the testing of plastic storage bags was also used as a way to improve food stability. The village shops set up by NRC also serve the purpose of creating a food reserve at the community level (or in and around camps for internally displaced persons) to facilitate food access. These village shops are also an important means for combating gender-based violence against women: As women do not have to travel far to purchase necessary goods, they are less exposed to the risk of violence.

In 2021 IITA began to promote crop insurance. About 107 hectares were insured against adverse weather. In the same year, farmers received compensation because of drought, which helped stabilise their income.³³

³³ According to key informants, there was no compensation in 2022.





The protection of natural resources for agriculture, including food-crop production, is the goal of a number of activities. Three organisations are explicitly implementing activities related to the protection of natural resources.

The protection of natural resources, particularly the protection of the tropical forests in the south of Mali (Sikasso Region) has also been important. In close collaboration with World Agroforestry (International Council for Research in Agroforestry - ICRAF),³⁴ tree seed banks have been established, and a limited number of communities have received training on how to propagate and cultivate these trees. More than 30 species are being propagated and disseminated. The major objective of forest protection has also been achieved, as the communities are now practising naturally assisted regeneration of trees (see Annex 5).³⁵

In general, activities directly involving communities depend on a certain level of stability and security. In cases of increased instability or insecurity, some projects have been relocated to different areas. However, it's important to note that there have been no documented instances of intervention failure so

³⁴ In December 2021, World Agroforestry, a member of the CGIAR family, completed a three-year programmatic and operational merger process with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

³⁵ Trees were introduced in various activities for different purposes. In some cases, they served an important agroforestry role, while in others, they contributed to food diversification, improved nutrition, or offered opportunities for cash income.

far, as the majority of the focused area has remained generally stable. The shifting of activities has transferred their potential impact from one group or right holders to another.

5.2 Gender and food security support

Findings: *Income generation has been the most important contributing factor in enhancing women's empowerment with regard to food security in Mali. Interviewed women stated that their income had increased, which improved their economic autonomy and their food and nutritional conditions and those of their families. The vegetable gardens, shea butter production, soya bean processing and fish oil marketing have all enabled women to achieve a certain degree of economic empowerment and contributed to the improvement of living conditions (health, better quality of food). Attention given to income generation and employment through diversification of sources of income and the promotion of agribusiness for women and young farmers has contributed to improved access to food. However, these inputs assume that women are able to manage the income they generate and are able to make important food-related decisions in the home. The projects funded have not conducted a clear assessment of gender (and family dynamics) to ensure that the support provided influences food-related decisions. However, these inputs assume that*

women are able to manage the income they generate and are able to make important food-related decisions in the home. The projects funded have not conducted a clear assessment of gender (and family dynamics) to ensure that the support provided influences food-related decisions.

The gendered approach to food security adopted in Mali has generally centred around supporting women directly, in particular through income generation – for example, the introduction of shea trees and the provision of tools to make shea butter as an income generator; and the promotion of gardening practices focused specifically on women. Right-holders report that participating households have doubled or tripled incomes from sales of produce from the vegetable gardens. Caritas claims that the percentage of women in cooperative societies had increased from 45% to 86% by the end of 2021 (mainly through their participation in vegetable-growing groups). Moreover, female representation in the governing bodies of mixed cooperative societies has increased more than fivefold, from 7% to 40% (see Annex 5).

Another important approach has been the promotion of voluntary savings and loan associations. Right-holders claim that the loans provided by such associations have been used for a wide range of, including income-generating activities (small trade, the purchase of seeds for market gardening), children's schooling, purchase of small livestock and purchase of food (see Annex 5).





As noted briefly in the previous section, the gendered approach employed in Mali by organisations implementing food security projects with Norwegian funding has not looked in-depth into gender dynamics and how support for food security may affect gender relations, regardless of the specific target beneficiary (i.e., men or women). Likewise, there has been no assessment of how resources are managed within the family. The assumption is that the adoption of a gendered approach means engaging women specifically, without exploring what this engagement may entail and the positive or negative consequences that may emerge from the support provided. Indeed, it cannot be assumed that engaging women in income generating enables them to command the income, or that training them on improved nutrition automatically leads to changes in food practices.

The village shops promoted by NRC in conflict-affected areas are considered by respondents as a key instrument for combating gender-based violence against women. The fact that women do not have to travel far to purchase necessary goods makes them less exposed to particular types of violence.

There are claims made by implementing partners, and right-holders themselves, that certain activities have improved female autonomy in addition to having an impact on food security – for example, activities where women were able to generate cash revenue from shea butter production, fish oil production,

soya bean processing and/or vegetable gardens. Indeed, some interviewees noted that access to cash income improved their levels of autonomy. However, the available data do not explore the implications of this autonomy. The data suggest that there are a wide number of ways in which the interventions may affect gender relations and opportunities for female empowerment; however, in the absence of clear in-depth assessments of how families and communities function, by whom and how food-related decisions are made, or how finances are managed, the results reported by implementing partners appear very superficial.

5.3 Cross cutting issues

Findings: *Cross-cutting issues are not systematically addressed/included in project development or in the monitoring of activities in Mali. However, efforts are made to ensure compliance with anti-corruption requirements at the organisational level.*

The implications of activities in relation to cross-cutting issues, when these are not the specific focus of the intervention, are not clearly documented. This is mainly due to a very limited understanding of what the different cross-cutting issues mean in practice. Organisations have limited guidance from Norway regarding how they should understand cross-cutting issues, and the default position is to confuse cross-cutting issues with focus

themes or right-holder groups targeted.³⁶ For example, activities related to climate change clearly report on the effect that they are expected to have on climate change, but activities that do not specifically address climate change do not explore how the intervention itself or its management may affect or address climate change. Similarly, human rights are understood as being part of interventions because food security is a human right. However, the understanding of human rights has not expanded to a human rights-based approach with clear and systematic mechanisms to ensure participant empowerment, non-discrimination, accountability or even sustainability. Indeed, it is very unclear how many of these interventions will be sustainable in the long term. However, it is important to note that there is no observable evidence of the activities conducted having a negative impact on human rights.

As has been noted earlier, the inclusion of gender is largely limited to including women as targets of interventions. Often, even activities that seek to do this are not founded on a gender-sensitive approach to programme design, implementation or monitoring. Moreover, the activities often fail to include a clear exploration of food security and gender-related dynamics. In addition, gender is understood in binary terms, without any consideration for other genders.³⁷

³⁶ See Norad. 2023. Evaluation of Norwegian Engagement in the Sahel – Report 1 - Organisational Management.

³⁷ Considering the contextual understanding of gender, this focus is considered appropriate and was also incorporated into the data collection tools used by the team.





Anti-corruption is a clear focus of interventions through efforts to ensure that financial accountability standards are met. The main focus here is on ensuring that partners can meet financial accountability requirements. This is a key reason why local organisations are not favoured. Specifically, larger organisations such as UN agencies and the ICRC, as well as international and Norwegian civil society actors, are more easily able to demonstrate the use of mechanisms and systems to ensure as well as is possible that corruption is identified early and addressed. In addition, the aforementioned organisations have their own control systems for overseeing activities in Mali and are able to provide assurances to the donor – in this case, Norway – that systems and mechanisms in place are being applied. Ensuring the same level of rigour within smaller organisations would require greater direct follow-up by Norway and hence more resources, of which there are few.³⁸



³⁸ See Norad. 2023. Evaluation of Norwegian Engagement in the Sahel – Report 1 - Organisational Management.

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5.4 Has Norwegian development assistance to food security in Mali had any unintended effects, positive or negative?

Key findings: *The activities supported by Norway have led to some unintended impacts in Mali. In most instances, a trade-off is involved, whereby a positive result for some leads to a potentially negative effect for other would-be programme participants – for example, when project activities have been moved owing to increasing conflict levels in certain areas. In other instances, project activities have led to the identification of additional intervention opportunities or to changes in how activities were designed that have been beneficial to those involved. While these experiences merit mention, the overarching finding is that the degree of reflection by implementing partners is minimal (except in the case of Caritas). Indeed, unintended effects are not systematically documented. This points to a gap in how support is provided and to potential missed opportunities due to the lack of active reflection about what an intervention is achieving more broadly (poor monitoring strategies). The implications of interventions in relation to cross-cutting issues, for example, is one area that is not systematically explored.*

Of the organisations funded, **Caritas** is the only one that focuses specific attention on exploring and documenting unintended effects. Interestingly, the range of unintended effects identified by Caritas is quite wide. Positive unintended effects that were reported as a result of the interventions by Caritas included instances where right-holders reported that the activity not only improved their food security, but also improved their economic standing, health and social cohesion. These effects are mainly attributed to the reduced costs of making food. The results were attributed to either the reduced cooking times of introduced foods, which in turn had implications for fuel needs, or reduced time and physical stress from collecting fuel (firewood) as a result of the introduction of agricultural machines that could be used for transport to key locations. Social cohesion resulted from a number of activities in which right-holders could observe the value of working together (voluntary savings and loans) and learning jointly and collaboratively (nutrition training). Examples of positive unintended consequences of activities by organisations other than Caritas include the expansion of activities resulting from specific requests made by right-holders, which led to the inclusion of production and processing of foods that impacted the nutrition of right-holders.

Negative effects have also been identified. Those documented by Caritas included the use and roll-out of seeds that were not tested for the environment, and hence did not deliver, and the provision of support that was intended to target the improved nutrition of children, but that was not accompanied by sufficient information sharing/education of right-holders and hence was used more widely by family members. Most striking among the unintended impacts of activities undertaken were those that resulted when it was necessary to move activities as a result of increased insecurity (e.g. the IER dromedaries programme). Such changes meant that right-holders initially engaged in the activities lost their benefit and new right-holders benefited. While such developments are not a common occurrence in the context of Norwegian-funded activities in Mali, they do illustrate some of the challenges faced in the Malian context. Some respondents noted that similar developments could happen with other interventions if the security situation worsens and makes activities untenable.

It is important to emphasise that during the field data collection, the evaluation team aimed to understand unintended consequences, but none could be identified. Respondents were unable to highlight any, and inquiries in this regard did not yield meaningful findings.





5.5 To what extent is the partner setup appropriate to contributing to improving food security in Mali?

Key Finding: Norway has supported a range of interventions focused on humanitarian, development and research activities in Mali. Although the selected partners and interventions have been able to contribute to improved food security, the collective contribution has been limited because the partner setup has not been anchored on ensuring complementarity between activities, cross-learning and exchange of experiences.

Overall, the portfolio is expansive, covers all food security dimensions and is well-balanced. Partners identified and funded have been able to execute their activities as planned or have been able to move the geographical point of implementation and hence continued to generate outputs. However, the support is rather siloed, which means that each implementing partner works independently of other partners. For example, there is no systematic link between research activities focusing on the identification of new seeds and development activities which focus on the use of new seeds. This is mainly due to the way funding is allocated which has no requirement by Norway to ensure collaborations and a lack of self-driven interagency thematic coordination.

The partner setup over the period 2016–2022 consists of a diverse portfolio with a wide range of activities incorporating a wide range of different approaches that all aim to contribute to food security. The list below exemplifies this:

- Community-level activities supporting agricultural development, which focus on food availability and food access (Caritas, Mali Folkecenter);
- nutrition-oriented, which focus on food utilisation (WFP school feeding) (IER, IITA, Mali Folkecenter);
- (climate-smart) agricultural research, which focus on food availability and food access (IER, IITA);
- humanitarian assistance, which focus on food stability (WFP, NRC, ICRC) in the north of Mali; and
- the UNDP Mali Climate Fund, which focus on food availability, access and in some ways also stability (funding of 31 NGO projects, of which 19 have a food security component).

The variety seen in the portfolio allows for all dimensions of food security to be covered, which in turn means that the portfolio as a whole is balanced.

As mentioned in previous sections, with the limited exception of work by IIER and IER there is no engagement between different partners nor any effort to combine interventions for improved results. This type of combination could have been thematic – that is, based on situations where activities are

complementary – and/or geographic – where activities are focused on the same location of work. While actors operating in the same geographical areas have not focused on the same activities (there is no evidence of direct duplication), there may have been opportunities to capitalise on mechanisms for engaging communities and/or reinforcing each other's work (see Figure 7). This is the result of the individual contracting of partner organisations, either by the MFA in Oslo through partnership agreements or by the embassy in Bamako. The limited exceptions to this include the engagement of the three humanitarian organisations that are coordinating under the auspices of UN OCHA in the context of the Humanitarian Response Plan. The lack of collaborative efforts and the adoption of a siloed project-specific approach can be expected to have had some important negative implications for the results achieved. Indeed, a review of the portfolio and the development of the Theory in Use (see Figure 7) demonstrates that linkages between activities could have improved efficiency and effectiveness considerably. Lessons from work in the fields of climate-smart agriculture, seed improvement and land conflict management are not shared between partners.

In sum, the above suggests that the partners are the right partners and have the right skill-sets, but that opportunities to bring their work together should be capitalised on.





5.6 To what extent does Norway ensure that lessons and experiences gained from its ongoing operations, from partners and from research evidence are used for learning and to adjust the strategic direction of Norwegian assistance?

Key Finding: *The capitalisation on experiences and learning has been limited because Norway has few mechanisms for facilitating learning within the MFA in Oslo, Norad and the embassy structure, and because organisations funded are not required to engage in inter-institutional cross-learning. This has been the case even though there are a number of platforms/mechanisms in Mali that are focused on food security-related coordination and information exchange. However, despite these weaknesses, the experience supporting food security has influenced policy development, as is clear from interviews conducted and the recently drafted policy *Combining Forces against Hunger – a policy to improve self-sufficiency*.*

Norwegian aid architecture is such that multiple project managers based at the MFA in Oslo, Norad and the embassy in Bamako are responsible for the different activities in the food security sector. This means that different people are responsible for different activities that are similar to each other, and

that, aside from the archival system, there are limited opportunities for staff to come together and discuss the sector and what has been learned.

Project managers may or may not be able to effectively comment on activities proposed or challenge the reports they receive, not least because managing the interventions in question is only one of their many priorities. In addition, project managers may or may not have time to review other interventions and lessons learned (e.g., conduct in-depth archival research on projects they do not manage).

The second issue is perhaps more problematic and has to do with how partners document their project experiences and the challenges that the current system presents. The current Norwegian project-cycle setup allows each organisation to define its own logical framework and monitoring approach and to report progress in the way it sees fit, which as discussed below has a number of demonstrated weaknesses. The experience from Mali demonstrates that monitoring has varied from one organisation to another, with some organisations, for example, exploring unintended results systematically (i.e. Caritas) and others not. Likewise, some organisations only record outputs and do not follow up to see whether the expected outcome was achieved. For example, some organisations report on the number of trainings realised and the number of participants involved (often disaggregated by sex), but they do not report on

adoption rates of technologies or practices supported, let alone on the results at impact levels. The above shortcoming suggest that there is a need for much stronger guidance and oversight from the donor – Norway. Stronger monitoring guidelines could serve to ensure that results are documented.

Third, in addition to the challenges with documentation, while there are coordinating platforms through which actors engaged in supporting the food security sector in Mali can come together to share experiences and challenges. Existing mechanisms, including the food security cluster, are opportunities to collaborate and coordinate, but there is no evidence that Norwegian funded projects have been able to use these platforms to exchange experiences and ensure effective collaboration.

Still, Norwegian experiences in the food security sector have been reflected in the recently published policy that focuses on food security: *Combining forces against hunger – a policy to improve food self sufficiently*. This suggests that, despite limitations on ongoing internal dialogue, key lessons are learned and do lead to policy shifts.



6

Conclusion





This evaluation shows that the support provided by Norway has been valuable to those targeted. At the output level, the findings are clear. However, given the available data, it is difficult to make substantial assessments regarding the outcome of the interventions examined. Similarly, it is also hard to establish results over the full life-cycles of the interventions funded or to document unintended impacts. The data do show, however, that the interventions supported have been modified in response to on-the-ground experiences, which demonstrates flexibility and adaptability.

Although reporting on interventions has made it difficult to effectively measure progress made, it is important to underline that Norway has worked with trusted organisations that have considerable subject-area experience and that are known for delivering. Therefore Norway expects that, despite reporting challenges, the interventions in Mali have also delivered at outcome and impact levels.

Still, it is problematic that the currently available mechanisms for reporting do not systematically document outcomes or impact, and that there is no common set of indicators, or definitions of key

factors, that may allow reporting on the portfolio as a whole. Indeed, it is not currently possible to know with certainty how many individuals have been supported and at what level. Different interventions define target groups differently which makes comparisons or consolidating data difficult, and outcomes are not consistently documented.

There are also some important challenges associated with how the broader impact (effects), both positive and negative, of any one intervention is understood and documented. Cross-cutting issues, for example, are very loosely interpreted. This in turn means that they are reported on in a very superficial way that does not take into account any contextual or cultural nuance.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, the data suggest that all interventions are well aligned with Norwegian priorities and meet basic Norwegian requirements (transparency, anti-corruption, etc.), and, critically, that the interventions do have a positive impact on the targeted population.

In relation to organisational management, oversight of activities and institutional learning, there are important shortcomings. The organisational structure used by the MFA in Oslo, the embassy in Mali and Norad relies heavily on grant managers who oversee and follow up on the activities funded. These staff are provided with guidance on administrative and financial requirements, but not with the tools needed to ensure that interventions funded effectively integrate cross-cutting issues, are conflict-sensitive and are based on sound assessments.

In addition, there are no standardised mechanisms to ensure that lessons learned through the implementation of interventions are effectively shared with others who may oversee food security.





7

Recommendations





Here the recommendations provided focus specifically on aspects which are specific to food security. All the recommendations provided in Report 1 of this evaluation, which focused on Organisational Management are relevant to the food security sector. Based on the findings of this assignment and discussion with stakeholders, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendation 1 - Align new interventions to the new strategy: Ensure that support to food security sector in Mali is aligned with Norway's policy on food security, "Combining Forces Against Hunger: A Policy to Improve Self-Sufficiency." Ensure that interventions are in line with the policy's objectives and strategies, emphasising self-sufficiency in addressing food insecurity.

Recommendation 2 - A comprehensive set of clear definitions: Develop a set of definitions which explain how key elements of interventions must be understood. For example, how rights holders should be understood and accounted for (individuals, communities, households). This will allow for the consolidation of data across the portfolio.

Recommendation 3 - Intended and unintended impacts: Enhance the reporting formats used by implementing parties to include a detailed assessment of unintended impacts, both positive and negative. Provide a clear definition of what constitutes an unintended impact to ensure consistency in reporting. This will allow for a more thorough understanding of the consequences of interventions.

Recommendation 4 – Third party monitoring: Invite implementing partners to explore opportunities for third-party and/or mobile device-based monitoring of project results (outcome and impact), especially in remote or conflict-affected areas. Implementing third-party monitoring and/or mobile-based monitoring will help ensure duty-of-care considerations are met, and interventions are adequately monitored for effectiveness and impact.



Photo: P. Casier | CGIAR | Flickr





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Appendix 3 to 9 can be found as a separate document together with the report at norad.no/evaluation.





Annex 1

Terms of References

Evaluation of Norwegian aid engagement in the Sahel

Background

These terms of references explain how the Department for Evaluation will evaluate Norway's engagement related to official development assistance (ODA) in the Sahel. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide input on how Norway can adapt its engagement in a fragile and unstable context, such as the Sahel. The evaluation is part of a series of evaluations of Norwegian efforts in countries in fragile situations. So far, evaluations have been carried out of Norway's engagement in South Sudan in the period 2011–2018 and Somalia in the period 2012–2018. Both individually and collectively, these evaluations can provide useful input to Norway's engagement in fragile contexts.

Context

The geographic limits of the Sahel have been drawn in different ways. The Central Sahel refers to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The Chad lake basin area refers to Cameroon, Chad, Niger and north-eastern Nigeria,

while the Sahel G5 used to refer to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. However, Mali has withdrawn from the G5 countries. There are also ongoing debates on the geographical framing of the response in the area and some have argued that the Sahel should not be separated from Western Africa. In these terms of references, the Sahel refers to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, as this is how Norway has framed its engagement in its Sahel strategy.

These countries have in common that they are among the most fragile and poorest in the world. Niger ranges number 189 out of 189 on the UNDP Human Development Index in 2021. Mali is ranked number 184. Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali were all part of the Norwegian Refugee Council's list of the world's most neglected displacement crises for 2021.¹ The Sahel countries face several shared transnational challenges. The countries are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and cross-border security threats.

¹ NRC, 2022: The world's most neglected displacement crises in 2021.





According to the Global Report on Food Crises 2022², conflict and insecurity were the main drivers of acute food insecurity in the region in 2021 (GRFC 2022: 50). This is especially visible in the two main regional crises in the Lake Chad Basin and Liptako-Gourma (Central Sahel) areas, with competition over resources, climatic changes, demographic pressure, high levels of poverty, and violence reinforcing each other. The two crises have triggered large-scale internal and cross-border population displacement and severe disruption to livelihoods in 2021, particularly regarding agriculture, pastoralism, markets, and trade. These crises are the origin of most population displacements in West Africa and the Sahel. As of December 2021, around 3 million IDPs and 270 000 refugees and asylum seekers were registered across the region (GRFC 2022: 50). Coup d'états in Mali (2020 and 2021) and Burkina Faso (2022) further complicate the picture and make collaboration with these governments challenging. The security situation also makes development cooperation challenging.

The surge in forcibly displacement fuelled by instability and insecurity has resulted in increasing protection risks and needs. Against this background, local and international actors are to various degrees promoting conflict-sensitive integrated approaches to overcome the operational, organisational and financial

² Global Report on Food Crises: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000138913/download/?ga=2.142663857.566271014.1652441255-443062028.1641212448>.

differences between humanitarian, development and peace efforts – the so-called “triple nexus” or HDP nexus.

Norway in the Sahel

Norway has been engaged in the Sahel since the 1970s with both humanitarian and development assistance. Since the late 1980s Norwegian engagement in the Sahel was mainly in Mali, and the country continues to receive more than 50% of the Norwegian aid to the region. Mali has been a so-called partner country for Norwegian development cooperation since 2013.³ In 2016, Niger was also added to the list of partner countries. One year later, in 2017, the Norwegian embassy in Bamako, Mali, was established. The embassy is responsible for following up Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Since 2018, Norway has had a dedicated Sahel strategy and is currently implementing its second one (2021-2025), contributing with funds for development, humanitarian aid and stabilisation. The strategy is covering the totality of Norwegian engagement in the region, including humanitarian and development assistance, security, and peace efforts. Norway's strategy for efforts in the

³ Since 2013, Norway has had a list of focus countries for Norwegian development cooperation. The list was last updated in 2018 and now contains 16 countries in two categories (now called partner countries). One for partners for long-term development cooperation, and one for partners with a need for stabilisation and conflict prevention. The updated list can be found on the following link: Partnerland i norsk utviklingspolitikk - regjeringen.no

Sahel region underscores the importance of achieving better interaction between humanitarian efforts, the long-term development assistance and peacebuilding.

In addition to the Sahel strategy, the Norwegian engagement in the Sahel is guided by a range of policies and strategies, both at an overall development policy level, and more specifically with country strategies for Mali⁴ and Niger⁵. While the Sahel strategy covers all the five countries, with a few exceptions, only Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso receive direct aid from Norway. Even though there are several dedicated geographic Norwegian strategies for the region, Norwegian aid has the last years had a more thematic focus. The engagement is therefore also increasingly guided by thematic strategies⁶. In the last years for example, more than half of Norwegian aid is channelled through multilateral organisations either as core contributions or earmarked funding.

Some numbers

Total aid disbursed to the five Sahel countries in the period 1980-2021 is about NOK 5,9 billion. For the period 2016-2021 the total is about NOK 2,5 billion. These numbers exclude Norwegian core support through multilateral organisations to the Sahel

⁴ MFA: Partner country strategy Mali: [partner_mali.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)
⁵ MFA: Partner country strategy Niger: [partner_niger.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)
⁶ For example, a new strategy for food security in the Norwegian development policy is planned to be finalised by the end of 2022.





countries. About 53% (NOK 1,3 billion) of the total support to the Sahel between 2016-2021 is disbursed to Mali.

The Sahel status report 2018-2019 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) claims that Norwegian civil society organisations are behind a significant part of Norway's effort in the reporting period, not least at the community level and in sectors such as education, food security and climate.⁷ This is also supported by the Norwegian aid statistics. Volume-wise, Norwegian NGOs have consistently been the most significant channel for Norwegian development aid to the Sahel receiving 53% of the total support in the period 2016-2021. Norwegian NGOs and multilateral institutions together have channelled about 82% of all funds to the Sahel in the same period.

The main sectors supported in the period 2016-2021 are 1) education, 2) government and civil society, 3) emergency response, and 4) multisector and other. However, this is at a very aggregated level and hides a more nuanced picture of funding allocations per sector. For example, the relative weight of Norwegian food security related aid will be more significant if we disaggregate the numbers in the "multisector and other" and "emergency response" sector codes.

⁷ MFA Sahel status report, 2020: p. 3

The evaluation

The evaluation of Norway's engagement in the Sahel will assess different components of the support. The main objectives are

- Evaluation Objective 1: To assess whether the organisational set-up, strategic planning, partner selection and overall management of Norwegian aid to Sahel is enabling effective assistance to the region.
- Evaluation Objective 2: To assess the effects of Norway's aid cooperation to improve food security in Mali.
- Evaluation Objective 3: To provide information on the extent to which Norway harness knowledge and experience to adjust the strategic direction of its engagement in the Sahel.

Purpose and use of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is learning and accountability through critical discussion of the organisation, coordination, and management of the Norwegian engagement in the Sahel, and through the provision of evidence of results of the Norwegian support to improve food security in Mali. The evaluation may be used to adapt the current Sahel strategy as the strategy is presented as a living

document to be subject to adjustments and refinement when required.

Learning can be achieved through; a) discussing the institutional set-up of and the regional aspect of the support; b) through a critical analysis of how Norway selects partners and how this can be optimised to be able to work in an unstable and unpredictable context, and c) documenting results of Norwegian aid in one country through one specific sector.

Accountability can be achieved by providing information to key stakeholders (and the public) who can use this information to hold other actors accountable. It is important to stress that the Department for Evaluation can only provide information for others to use.

Potential users of the evaluation include decision makers, and those involved in grant management and partner dialogue of the support to the Sahel. This includes sections in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad, and the Norwegian Embassy in Bamako. Other users may be organisations implementing projects in the Sahel, especially related to different dimension around food security.





Scope of the evaluation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has previously commissioned a review of the Sahel strategy (2018-2020) focusing on peace and reconciliation, and security and political stability.

These terms of references focus exclusively on official development assistance funded through the budget of the Norwegian Foreign Affairs (*budsjettområde 03 Internasjonal bistand*), both long-term development efforts and humanitarian assistance. Even though the evaluation focuses on the aid engagement, it will also cover other policy areas, to the extent that these affect the operationalisation, implementation and effects of Norwegian development policy affecting the Sahel.

For Evaluation Objective 1, the geographic scope is regional and includes all the countries covered by the Norwegian Sahel strategy. For the second objective, the geographic scope is limited to Mali.

The thematic scope for Evaluation Objective 2 is limited to support to food security, herein defined in an encompassing way including all four dimensions (availability, access, utilisation and stability) covered in the definition commonly employed by UN agencies⁸. Both development and humanitarian food security

⁸ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2021). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. FAO.

related aid are included. The choice of thematic focus is first and foremost based on interest expressed in stakeholder conversations, the emphasis of food security in the various strategies and the fact that it will also be an area where substantial needs will exist and likely a high priority for Norway in the years to come. The current government platform⁹ has food security as one of its top priorities. Together with climate smart agriculture, this is also one of the priorities in the country strategies for Mali and Niger. The priority of food security support is also reflected in Norway's Revised National Budget for 2022 and in the allocation letter (*tildelingsskrivet*) to the embassy in Bamako for 2022.

The overall evaluation period covers the years 2016-2022. For 2022, statistics will not be available until the second quarter of 2023. However, other guiding documents and reports will be available for 2022. In the case of Evaluation Objective 2, the team will propose a time period that will allow for assessing the effects of the support (see Approach and methodology section below).

The scope of this evaluation is also defined considering synergies with other planned or ongoing evaluations as per the 2022-2024 Evaluation Programme of the Department for Evaluation¹⁰, including the evaluation of the sustainability of

⁹ Government platform: [hurdalsplattformen.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](https://www.regjeringen.no)

¹⁰ Evaluation programme 2022–2024 ([norad.no](https://www.norad.no))

Norwegian food security aid and the evaluation of the interaction between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace efforts. Both these evaluations are planned to start in the second half of 2022. In addition, the section for food in Norad is currently conducting a midterm review of four agricultural research-for-development projects in Mali and Niger. The report is planned to be finalised by the end of 2022 and may be used when responding to evaluation objective two if deemed relevant.

Evaluation questions

1. Organisational set-up, strategic planning, partner selection and management of Norwegian aid to the Sahel:
 - a. To what extent does the organisational and management set-up and strategic planning enable optimal use of all available workforce and expertise to facilitate efficient and effective Norwegian assistance to Sahel?
 - b. To what extent is Norwegian assistance to the Sahel relevant, and shows flexibility and ability to adapt to the continuously changing contexts and challenges in a conflict-sensitive manner? How does the organisational and management set-up affect flexibility and adaptability, if at all?





- c. To what extent is the Norwegian engagement coordinated, both internally and externally?
- d. To what extent do the different Norwegian strategies affecting the Sahel engagement facilitate a coherent and conflict-sensitive approach? To what extent are these strategies helpful for prioritising the support?
- e. What is the rationale behind the choice of partners? What assessments are done when selecting partners by Norway? (Including in relation to conflict sensitivity and coordinating with other donors in selecting partners)

2. Effects

- a. To what extent (and eventually how) has Norwegian development assistance contributed to improve food security in Mali?
- b. Has Norwegian development assistance to food security in Mali had any unintended effects, positive or negative?
- c. To what extent is the partner set-up appropriate in contributing to improve food security in Mali?

3. Learning

- a. To what extent does Norway ensure that lessons and experiences gained from its ongoing operations, from partners and research evidence are used for learning, and to adjust the strategic direction of Norwegian assistance?

Organisation of the evaluation

The evaluation will be managed by the Department for Evaluation.

The evaluation will be conducted through one tender with two distinctive deliverables, each of them addressing specific sets of evaluation questions and with slightly divergent scopes as described above:

1. An evaluation of the organisation, strategic planning, and management of Norwegian development assistance to the Sahel. (Evaluation Objectives 1 and 3, corresponding with evaluation questions 1a – 1-e and 3).
2. An evaluation of the effects of Norwegian development assistance to improve food security in Mali. (Evaluation Objectives 2 and 3, corresponding with evaluation questions 2a, 2b and 3).

The evaluation team will report to the Department for Evaluation through the team leader. The team leader shall be in charge of all deliveries and will report to the Department of Evaluation on the team's progress, including any problems that may jeopardise the assignment. The Department for Evaluation and the team shall emphasise transparent and open communication with the stakeholders. Regular contact between the Department for Evaluation, team and stakeholders will assist in discussing any arising issues and ensuring a participatory process. All decisions concerning the interpretation of this Terms of Reference, and all deliverables are subject to approval by the Department for Evaluation.

The team should consult widely with stakeholders pertinent to the assignment. In some evaluations, the Department for Evaluation participates in parts of the field visits to better understand the context of the evaluation. This may also be discussed for this evaluation. Stakeholders will be asked to comment on the draft inception report and the draft final report. In addition, experts or other relevant parties may be invited to comment on reports or specific issues during the process. The evaluation team shall take note of all comments received from stakeholders. Where there are significant divergences of views between the evaluation team and stakeholders, this shall be reflected in the final report. Quality assurance shall be provided by the institution delivering the consultancy services prior to submission of all deliverables. Access to archives





and statistics will be facilitated by the Department for Evaluation and stakeholders. The team is responsible for all data collection, including archival search.

The Department for Evaluation will develop recommendations on how to improve future Norwegian development assistance to the Sahel building on the two deliverables. The Department for Evaluation may also develop an overall summary of the two deliverables for communication purposes.

The security situation may affect the evaluation in terms of timing of field visits, access to people and areas in Mali, and security and safety of evaluation informants and evaluation team members. This requires flexibility and will have to be carefully considered during the evaluation.

Approach and methodology

The evaluation team will propose an outline of a methodological approach that optimises the possibility of producing evidence-based assessments. All parts of the evaluation shall adhere to recognised evaluation principles and the OECD Development Assistance Committee's quality standards for development evaluation, as well as relevant guidelines from the Department for Evaluation¹¹.

¹¹ See Evaluation guidelines (norad.no)

The methodological approach should:

1. Rely on a cross-section of data sources and using mixed methods of both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means.
2. Be synthesised in an evaluation matrix, which should be used as the key organising tool for the evaluation.

The evaluation shall include the following components:

1. Evaluation of the organisation, strategic planning, and management of Norwegian development assistance to the Sahel. (Evaluation objectives 1 and 3):

- The evaluation team will propose an approach that responds to the purpose and objectives and ability to respond to the evaluation questions. It is expected to carry out a systematic review of relevant documents. This includes archival searches in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassy in Bamako and in Norad. The consultants are expected to gather information through key informant interviews and other primary data collection methods as necessary.
- Data collection in Oslo and Bamako will be necessary.

2. Evaluation of the effects of Norwegian development assistance to improve food security in Mali. (Evaluation objectives 2 and 3):

- The evaluation team will in its proposal suggest an approach for how to best assess the effects of the Norwegian support to food security in Mali. It is strongly recommended for the team to conduct an evaluability study early in the process to define the exact scope, including the optimal time horizon to enable this type of evaluation.
- The evaluation will follow a rigorous approach to measure causality, by resorting to quasi-experimental and/or theory-based approaches (e.g. process tracing in combination with Bayesian updating or a method with similar rigour).
- For this component, the evaluation team might want to correlate data on Norwegian development aid with external data sources such as the Famine and Early Warning Systems Network, the World Bank or the OECD.
- Data collection in Mali will be necessary.

3. Communication plan: The consultants will propose a plan for how the evaluation findings shall be disseminated to all those involved in the evaluation at country/regional level.





Ethical considerations

The evaluation process itself should be conflict sensitive and be guided by an overarching analysis of risks, including ethical risks. The evaluation shall be undertaken with integrity and honesty and ensure inclusiveness of views. The rights, dignity, and welfare of participants in the evaluation should be protected. The evaluation team should seek informed consent and safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. Ethical considerations and accompanying safeguards shall be documented throughout the evaluation processes. Moreover, an introductory statement to the expected deliverables shall explain what measures were or were not taken to abide by ethical principles.

Evaluation deliverables

The deliverables consist of the following outputs:

- Inception report describing the approach of maximum 15 000 words (excluding figures, graphs and annexes). The inception report needs to be approved by the Department for Evaluation before proceeding further.
- Debrief country/regional level after data collection.
- Draft report evaluation objective 1. After circulation to the stakeholders, the Department for Evaluation will provide feedback.

- Draft report evaluation objective 2. After circulation to the stakeholders, the Department for Evaluation will provide feedback.
- Workshop(s) on draft findings and conclusions facilitated by the Department for Evaluation.
- Final report evaluation objective 1 not exceeding 15,000 words (approx. 30 pages) excluding summary and annexes.
- Final report evaluation objective 2 not exceeding 15,000 words (approx. 30 pages) excluding summary and annexes.
- Datasets generated and used in the evaluation shall be submitted in .csv or another Excel compatible format. Similarly, if computer assisted qualitative data analysis is conducted, the data files are to be submitted together with the draft analysis report.
- Oral presentation at a seminar in Oslo.
- Evaluation brief not exceeding 4 pages.

All reports shall be prepared in accordance with the Department for Evaluation's guidelines¹² and shall be submitted in electronic form in accordance with the progress plan specified in the tender document or later revisions. The Department for Evaluation retains the sole rights with respect to distribution, dissemination and publication of the deliverables.

¹² <https://www.norad.no/en/front/evaluation/about-evaluation-department/evaluation-guidelines/>.





Annex 2

List of interviewees

Title	Organisation	Gender
MFA and Embassy Staff		
Second Secretary	Norwegian Embassy in Mali	Female
Program Officer, Agriculture and Climate Change	Norwegian Embassy in Mali	Male
Senior Adviser - section for Humanitarian Affairs	MFA-Oslo	Female
Senior Adviser - section for Humanitarian Affairs	MFA-Oslo	Female
Norwegian Development Partners in Mali		
Chef de Programme	Norwegian Refugee Council	Male
Spécialiste Éducation	Norwegian Refugee Council	Male
Chargé Gestion de Subventions	Norwegian Refugee Council	Male
Spécialiste en Sécurité Alimentaire	Norwegian Refugee Council	Male
MEL Officer	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Male
Administration et Finance Officer	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Female
Chargée Renforcement de Capacité	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Female
Coordinateur	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Male
R4D Director Sahel Africa Hub	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Male
Chargée de Communication	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Female
Coordinateur Entrepreneur-Jeunesse	Mali FolkeCenter	Male
Assistance Suivi et Évaluation	Mali FolkeCenter	Female





Title	Organisation	Gender
Board Chairman	Mali FolkeCenter	Male
Directeur Exécutif	Mali FolkeCenter	Male
Gestion des Ressources Forestières	Mali FolkeCenter	Male
Consultant Éducation Environnementale et CC	Mali FolkeCenter	Male
Experte Environment et CC	Mali Climate Fund/ PNUD	Female
Conseillère Environment et Résilience	Mali Climate Fund/ PNUD	Female
Team Leader Environment et CC	Mali Climate Fund/ PNUD	Male
Coordinatrice Mli Climate Funde	Mali Climate Fund/ Ministry of Environment	Female
Coordinateur Diocésien Kayes	Caritas	Male
Coordinateur Diocésien Ségou	Caritas	Male
Chargée PASAN Bamako	Caritas	Female
Chargé PASAN Ségou	Caritas	Male
Secrétaire Générale Mali	Cartias	Male
Coordinateur PASAN	Caritas	Male
Coordinateur Bamako	Caritas	Male
Comptable National	Caritas	Male
Directeur Général	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Directeur Scientifique	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Ancien Directeur Général	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Directeur Général Adjoint	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Caméraman/information /publication	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 1	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 2	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male





Title	Organisation	Gender
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 3	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 4	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 5	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Female
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 6	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Female
Chercheur/ coordinateur composante 7	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Male
Partnerships officer	World Food Programme	Female
Chef Programmes	World Food Programme	Male
M&E et VAM	World Food Programme	Male
Nutritioniste	World Food Programme	Female
Programme Cantines Scolaire	World Food Programme	Female
Partnerships Officer	World Food Programme	Male
Programme Quality Assurance	World Food Programme	Male
Coordinateur Sécurité Economique (EcoSec)	International Council of the Red Cross	Male
Coordinateur adjoint Sécurité Economique (EcoSec)	International Council of the Red Cross	Male
Norwegian Development Partners in Dakar		
Regional Programme Adviser Central and West Africa	NRC Regional Bureau Dakar	Female
Regional Programme Adviser Central and West Africa	NRC Regional Bureau Dakar	Male
Regional Programme Adviser Central and West Africa	NRC Regional Bureau Dakar	Male
Norwegian Development Partners in Oslo		
Senior Adviser – Institutional Partnerships	NRC-Oslo	Female





Number and locality of beneficiaries interviewed

Date	Organisation	Location	Female	Male
13-3-2023	Institut de l'Economie Rurale	Dio	18	7
14-3-2023	Caritas	Wacoro	13	28
16-3-2023	Mali FolkeCenter	Garalo	32	5
17-3-2023	IITA	N'kourala	17	18
23-3-2023	NRC	Djenné	12	1
23-3-2023	ICRC	Djenné	8	5
24-3-2023	NRC	Djenné	19	-
27-3-2023	WFP/ School Feeding	Tombouctou	7	6



Department for Evaluation