

»» Project Information

Implemented by:



Decentralisation and municipal development – Niger

Health care centres, delivery wards, market places, city halls for the local council: there are plenty of tasks in the Nigerien rural areas of Tahoua, Agadez and Tillabéri. Since 2004 the population itself has determined what should be prioritised, which is partly thanks to an investment fund co-financed by KfW Development Bank.

Context

Local municipalities know best what their citizens need: this is the slogan that the Nigerien government is promoting decentralisation with, in a state that is often considered the poorest in the world. Resources are accordingly scarce. However, the more than 100 municipalities in the three project regions, Tillabéri in the heart of the country, as well as Tahoua and Agadez in the north of Niger, have enough challenges to meet. Their most important task is to improve economic, social and administrative infrastructure.

Since the state barely transfers any money and the municipalities themselves have scant revenues, these tasks are financed from a special investment fund (FI-COD) that was founded by KfW Development Bank in collaboration with the Nigerien government. The funds are used to repair schools, establish market places as well as build wells and reservoirs, which provide the population with drinking water. The interests of women are specifically taken into account: projects such as the construction of mother and child units, women’s centres as well as better and closer wells are developed particularly with them in mind. Despite their poverty, municipalities contribute financially to the projects they approve.

One of the challenges is to deal with the difficult condi-

tions. Only one third of the population in Niger can read and write, so there is a lack of qualified staff even in the local governments. The state ministries that should advise and support them are also weak. The municipalities are therefore supported during all the project implementation phases and staff are trained.

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| Project name | Decentralisation / Municipal Development programme (Programme d'Investissement et de Capacitation pour les Collectivités Territoriales / Décentralisation et Bonne Gouvernance) |
| Commissioned by | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) |
| Country/Region | Niger / West Africa |
| Lead executing agency | Cabinet du Premier Ministre Fonds d'Investissement des Collectivités Territoriales Centre de Formation en Gestion des Collectivités Territoriales Agence Nationale de Financement des Collectivités Territoriales |





The municipalities are responsible for securing a safe water supply, and FC helps them with this task. Source: KfW / FICOD.

Project approach

FICOD investment fund and the vocational training centre for municipal administrations (CFGCT, Centre de Formation en Gestion des Collectivités Territoriales) are responsible for supporting the municipalities. FICOD collaborates closely with municipal decision makers, local private companies and the representatives of the central ministries (e.g. the ministry of health or education).

As to which specific measure is promoted, this is decided based on a development plan produced with the participation of the local people. The municipalities decide what is particularly important for them. Once the buildings are constructed, the communities have to manage and sustain them themselves. This increases their civic responsibility.

At the same time, municipal staff are trained in order to maintain and operate municipal facilities. The promotion of local capacities for the planning, implementation and sustainable operation of local infrastructure makes an important contribution to decentralisation progress in Niger. GIZ, the German Society for International Cooperation, advises municipalities and trains municipal employees too – in close collaboration with KfW Development Bank.

Impact

A good 5.6 million people in the programme area benefit significantly from projects that are also partially financed by Germany: especially because they get the

chance to enjoy basic public services. Women can now give birth to their children safely and hygienically in better equipped mother and child units thanks to the supply of electricity during nights. New market places regenerate the economy and the supply of goods for the population, whilst also ensuring increasing revenues for the municipal administration that charges market fees. The local economy benefits from the construction measures too as these projects are realised by local companies and tradesmen. This creates new jobs, at least temporarily.

In conclusion, living conditions in the rural regions of Niger have improved. At the same time the support of the municipal self-administration is reinforcing the political involvement of citizens that now have a say regarding decisions in their village and can review the outcomes. This way, the municipal administration and citizens are taking joint responsibility for sustainable development.

In the future, an agency responsible for the whole country, the Agence Nationale de Financement des Collectivités Territoriales (ANFICT), should also be taking on tasks of the FICOD. This agency is currently being established by the Nigerien government with the support of several development partners, including Germany.



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