



**1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly report  
August-December 2012**

***“Sawki”***

**Niger Development Food Aid Program  
2012-2017**

*January 2013*

<b>COUNTRY CONTACT</b>	<b>HEADQUARTERS CONTACT</b>	<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>
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**Acronyms**

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BEO	Bureau of Environmental Officer
COP	Chief of Party
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFAP	Development Food Aid Program
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
EMMP	Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance
FFP	Food For Peace
GEMS	Global Environmental Management Support
GoN	Government of Niger
HKI	Helen Keller International
IEE	Initial Environmental Estimates
IFAD	International Funds for Agriculture Development
INRAN	Institut National de Recherche Agronomique du Niger
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PREP	Pipeline Resources Estimates Proposal
STA	Société de Transformation Alimentaire
SBCC	Social Behavior Change Communication
SO	Strategic objectives
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## 1- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mercy Corps, Africare and Helen Keller International are implementing a Development Food Aid Program (DFAP) entitled “*Sawki*” that is designed to respond to the food security needs of more than 115,000 beneficiaries in Maradi and Zinder, two of the most food insecure regions of Niger. Within these regions, *Sawki* is targeting 81 villages based on criteria of social vulnerability, economic opportunities and agro-pastoral linkages. A staggering 60 percent of children under five in Maradi and Zinder are suffering from chronic malnutrition. This is rooted in a combination of factors, which include poverty, high population growth, limited knowledge about appropriate health and nutrition behaviors, inadequate access to health services, gender inequity, and weak agricultural and livestock systems. Consecutive droughts and other natural disasters due to climate change contribute to the problem. Even during years of normal rainfall, child under-nutrition persists, suggesting that suboptimal nutrition and health practices contribute significantly to the problem.

Mercy Corps, Helen Keller International (HKI) and Africare have joined their expertise in Niger to deliver a comprehensive package of activities, supported through partnerships with the Government of Niger (GoN), local NGOs, the National Institute of Agronomy Research (INRAN) and the private sector. *Sawki*'s overall goal is *to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition among vulnerable populations in Niger*, with a special emphasis on empowering women and adolescent girls to achieve this goal. The two strategic objectives (SO) are:

**SO1:** Reduce chronic malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under five with an emphasis on children under two

**SO2:** Increase the local availability of and households' access to nutritious food by diversifying agricultural productivity, rural households' income and increasing resilience to shocks

In accordance with the program detailed implementation action plan, the first and second quarters focused on the startup and preliminary activities, which will ensure that established objectives will be effectively reached moving forward. This report covers activities from program inception (August 2012) through December 31, 2012.

## 2. Program implementation

The *Sawki* objectives for this quarter entailed operational and program start-up. All objectives established for the period have been successfully accomplished or are on track to be completed by February 2013. Related to office management, this included staff recruitment and relocation to Maradi, securing office and warehouse spaces and procurement of office equipment. On the program side, goals for the period included developing monitoring and evaluation tools, reviewing BEO recommendations of the program's IEE, and participating in a baseline workshop led by FANTA and ICF Macro to inform decisions about intervention sites and indicators to be included in the baseline. Furthermore, identification of target communities was also an objective for this period, accomplished through a participatory process involving local stakeholders. Finally, protocols with the GoN ministries were developed and finalized, while protocols with other partners will be finalized at a workshop scheduled for February/March 2013.

### 2.1. Operational Start Up

#### 2.1.1. Staff recruitment

The process of *Sawki* staff recruitment was launched in September 2012. By the end of the reporting period, most key positions had been identified and hired. These include the Chief of Party, SO2 team

leader (Agricultural Livelihoods Specialist), the M&E Specialist and the Gender specialist. Hellen Keller International is in the process of recruiting the SO1 team leader for nutrition. All program and commodity management positions are expected to be filled by mid-February 2013. Recruitment of both technical and support staff has been a critical issue due to the high competition among all development and emergency projects for Niger and Mali.

### **2.1.2. Offices and warehouses**

Both in Maradi and Zinder, offices have been secured and are currently operational. Warehouses have been identified in both Maradi and Zinder, and will be operational by the end of February 2013. All office materials and equipment have been ordered and most are in place. The internet network is currently being installed and should be fully operational by January 31, 2013.

Mercy Corps conducted a security assessment in Maradi and Zinder in September/October 2012. This assessment was conducted by Mercy Corps logistics team and Mercy Corps' Regional Security Advisor. The assessment recommendations were taken into account when securing offices and warehouses.

## **2.2. Program Start Up**

### **2.2.1. M&E tools development**

In order to develop the Niger Title II M&E tools, FANTA and FFP held a first M&E workshop in October 2012 in Niamey. This workshop focused on the integration of gender and environmental issues into the M&E tools, and compliance with FFP Title II indicators. Six Sawki team members attended the workshop. The Results Framework, IPTT, PMP and DIP were subsequently finalized and submitted to FFP in November 2012.

In addition to the workshop Sawki worked with the Global Environmental Management Support (GEMS) of the BEO to help strengthen the environmental M&E components. As a result, Sawki revised the IPTT by redefined a few indicators and included new ones.

### **2.2.2.. Baseline planning workshop**

A baseline preparation workshop for Niger Title II DFAP programs was conducted by ICF Macro on December 11-14, 2012. Eight representatives of the Mercy Corps consortium attended the workshop with Africare and HKI to discuss the methodology and tools that will be used during the baseline. Key aspects addressed during the workshop included the review and adaptation of baseline quantitative and qualitative tools and improvements to the methodology. Also, based on FFP recommendations, the three DFAP holders (Sawki consortium, Save the Children and CRS) harmonized their indicators, which were to be integrated into the baseline. The program M&E tools, such as the Results Framework, IPTT table and PMP, were again reviewed. Also, additional Performance Indicator Reference Sheet PIRS were drafted for the program-level indicators that will be taken into account in the baseline study.

### **2.2.3. IEE review**

The Bureau of Environmental Officer (BEO) conditionally approved Sawki's IEE in November 2012. Sawki team members met several times to discuss the recommendations listed by the BEO and provided responses to questions and concerns of the BEO. Both the IEE and the EMMP will be revised and submitted with the PREP, as requested (PREP submission date to be confirmed by FFP).

#### **2.2.4. Target communities selection**

The selection of villages was completed in two steps during the final quarter of 2012 (October-December) through a participatory process with key stakeholders: local government, government extension services, municipalities and communities. The criteria for village eligibility were:

- Size of the village: in order to take into account all activities it was decided that Sawki would be implementing the program in villages of at least 500 people;
- Natural resource potential;
- Local authorities' commitment to the program and community mobilization;
- Accessibility and security; and
- Contiguity to other villages where the program is implemented to create more synergy.

As a result of this process, the overall number of villages for the program implementation increased from 75 to 81 villages.

#### **2.2.5. Development of protocols with government and others partners**

The program implementation protocol between Mercy Corps and the Ministry of Planning, Land Use and Community Development<sup>1</sup> has been submitted for signature. The objective of the protocol is to inform the GoN through this ministry on how the program is aligned to the government strategy. For the others partners (STA, INRAN, Demi-E, Animas Sutura) a workshop is planned for Feb/March to outline roles and responsibilities.

#### **2.2.6. Strategic meetings**

Several meeting of SAWKI actors were conducted during this period in an effort to discuss possible areas of synergy and to avoid duplication. It is agreed that both projects meet at the technical level to discuss areas of collaboration. Meetings included:

- DFAP's COP steering committee meetings
- Monetization steering committee meetings
- Meeting with environmental division of USAID regional mission
- Meeting with IFAD Maradi

### **3.0. Monetization**

Africare assisted Mercy Corps, Save the Children and CRS in the harmonization of specifications and tonnages for the first call forward for monetization commodities for the DFAP project. As monetization agent for Mercy Corps and Save the Children, Africare led the monetization steering committee with CRS. The steering committee has met biweekly since September 2012. Africare developed the first consolidated year 1 commodity procurement schedule for the three programs, led the revision and re-submission of the Host Country Agreement to include Save the Children's DFAP, and met with the High Commissioner for 3N to explain the monetization process.

Africare organized the bulk tender of 4,000 MT of monetization rice in early December 2012, with nine participating buyers. Eight bids were approved, with a final sales price of 378,667 FCFA/MT based on the average of the highest winning bids. The six lots, ranging in size from 500 MT to 1000 MT, were initially awarded to 4 buyers. However by the end of December 2012, none of the buyers had successfully

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<sup>1</sup> Ministère du Plan, de l'Aménagement du territoire et du Développement communautaire

fulfilled their contractual obligations and payment terms. Africare has identified new buyers interested in purchasing part of the whole lot if prices are revised. Africare and the monetization steering committee will meet again in January 2013 to analyze the monetization status and finalize contingency plans for sales.

#### **4.0. Plan for next quarter**

This coming quarter will be crucial to Sawki. Formative research will be conducted at the village and commune levels to shape SBCC strategies, notably:

- Assessments/analysis of market access, yield gap analysis of major crops; and access to factors essential for sustainable livelihoods).
- Identification and strategies to overcome individual, social, political and environmental barriers leading to poor hygiene and nutrition practices
- A gender analysis that will yield a gender strategy.

In addition, the following trainings will be held:

- Gender training for staff focusing on the inclusion of adolescent girls in program activities will be held February 13-15. Due to the current security situation the training will be held in Niamey.
- TOPS Commodity management workshop for commodity management staff of all DFAPs will be held February 18-22 in Niamey.
- TOPS data analysis training will be held March 3-9 in Niamey.

In early March, Sawki will hold a broad implementation workshop that will include HKI, Africare and external partners including INRAN and STA. The purpose of this workshop is to determine each stakeholder's roles and responsibility as well as a detailed implementation that includes external partners' activities.

An integrated relational database will be built to encompass all Sawki activities of all strategic objectives, cross-cutting issues and commodity distribution. A skeleton of a web-based knowledge management system will be developed and finalized once the program starts collecting data.

An M&E plan will be finalized and training modules designed for M&E staff.