

Request for Proposal for Consulting Services

NATURE of SERVICES: Market study to characterize market food environment in zone of interest of USAID-funded Yalwa project, Niger

CONTRACTING ENTITY: Helen Keller International

Helen Keller International is a global health organization dedicated to eliminating preventable vision loss, malnutrition and diseases of poverty. Co-founded by Helen Keller – and guided by her fierce optimism and belief in human potential – the organization delivers life-changing health and food security solutions to build resilience of vulnerable families where the need is great but access to care is limited. In the US, Africa, and Asia, Helen Keller’s proven, science-based programs empower people to create opportunities in their own lives and build lasting change.

PLACE of PERFORMANCE: Flexible.

Selected consultant should expect to accommodate time zone variations to meet with Helen Keller staff and consultants working on the project.

DURATION: 75 days.

SUMMARY

The consultant will conduct a study to characterize food environments in markets of the Yalwa project intervention areas. The results of this study will help inform the selection of nutrient-rich safe foods and food products that may be supported as part of the project. The consultant will co-develop a research protocol with Helen Keller International to assess the availability, price, as well as the vendor and product characteristics of relevant foods. While there should be special attention given to the Feed the Future-supported value chains of cowpeas, poultry and small ruminants, the study should include other economically viable nutritious food products found in the markets as well.

BACKGROUND

The consultancy will be one of three formative research studies to be performed under the U.S. Agency for International Development-funded Markets and Nutrition Activity, known as USAID *Yalwa* (“fulfillment” or “blossoming” in Hausa), which targets zones of influence (ZOI) in the regions of Maradi, Tillabéri, and Zinder. USAID Yalwa is designed to support the objectives of the Regional Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) II initiative. For the RISE II nutrition outcomes, USAID Yalwa’s unique contribution is to prioritize a market-based approach to enhance the market availability and local purchase of nutritious, safe foods. As such, USAID Yalwa will expand and improve market linkages for nutrient-rich foods¹; build individual and institutional capacities to produce, promote and sell these products; encourage vulnerable populations to buy and consume these foods; and engage processors and traders to profitably meet increased demand. USAID Yalwa will train and mentor a cadre of service providers who can provide market actors with high-quality services to support the

¹ For the purposes of this Terms of Reference, nutrient-rich and nutrient-dense foods are defined as those with a high nutrient content per caloric unit. This includes all animal-source foods, dark orange fleshed fruits, vegetables and tubers, dark green leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts, and may include indigenous, wild and underutilized plants.

growth of nutrient-rich, safe products in the rural markets of the ZOI. While three value chains will be prioritized – livestock, poultry, and cowpea – the production, processing, promotion, supply, and demand of other promising nutrient-rich products will also be supported. New market linkages and better services will be developed to increase the organizational, financial, and risk-management capacity of farmer organizations, livestock market management committees, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – agro-dealers, traders, processors – and generate increased sales and incomes. Special strategies will be pursued to expand the participation of women and young entrepreneurs in these markets.

Three studies are planned sequentially to (a) understand the factors that drive consumer food choice and better define the gap between the nutritional needs of households, (b) map out impact pathways at the market system and individual household levels to fill nutrition gaps, and (c) determine supply and demand interventions along those pathways to improve the availability, accessibility, affordability, desirability, and consumption of diverse nutritious safe foods in the project's ZOI, especially among pregnant and lactating women and children under 2. Thus the three studies will be guided by a conceptual framework proposed by Turner et. al.² (**Figure 1** below).

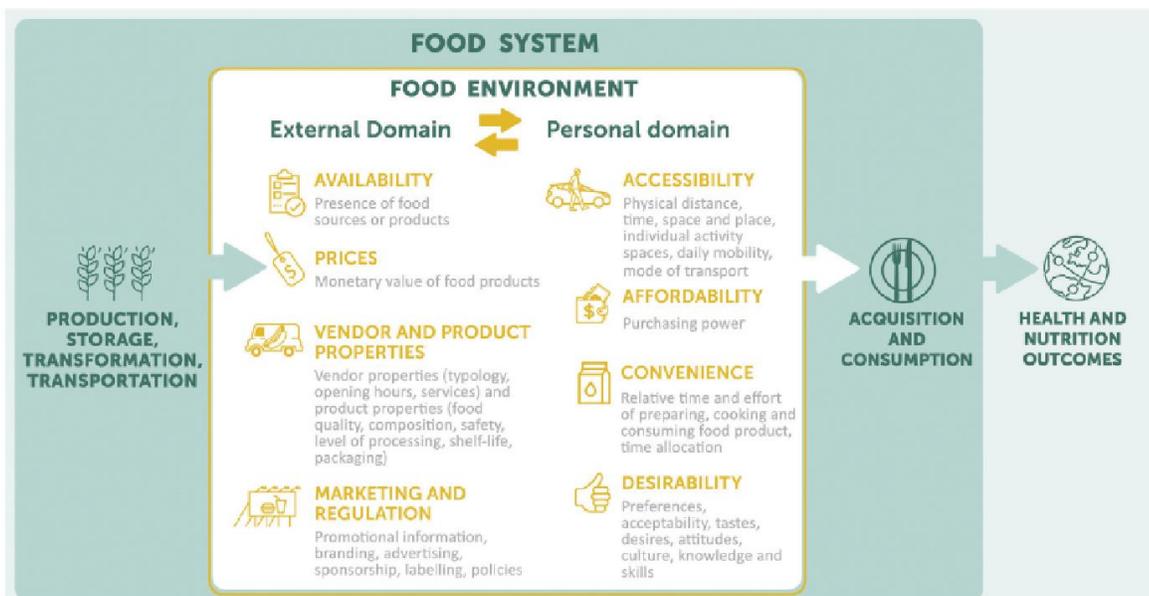


Figure 1:

Conceptual Framework from Turner, et. al. (2018)

The second phase of research is the subject of this request for services: a study of the market food environment to determine what foods are available, their price, and what the characteristics of vendors and available foods are. The first phase of the formative research included a review of the existing literature on markets and food supply, nutrient gaps, and possible interventions to overcome them in the ZOIs. The review will serve as an input into the design of the market study. Key findings of the review are in Annex 1. The market study will inform the third phase of formative research, which will include a study of consumer practices, preferences and the most important influences on food purchases.

² Turner, C., Aggarwal, A., et. al. (2018). Concepts and critical perspectives for food environment research: A global framework with implications for action in low- and middle-income countries. *Global Food Security*, 18, 93–101.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the market study are to:

- (i) Determine the availability of foods, price of foods, as well as the characteristics of vendors and foods (e.g. packaging, quality, marketing) in a representative set of food retail locations in the USAID Yalwa ZOI.
- (ii) Identify high-impact nutritious foods potentially available and accessible that USAID Yalwa could promote to improve nutritional status for targeted beneficiaries.

While the focus of the intervention will be on cowpea, small ruminants, and poultry, the study will seek to characterize the market food environment as a whole. The study will: (a) assess the current availability of high-impact nutritious food or food products in the market; (b) determine the price and units of sale of the most common foods of interest and assess affordability; and (c) assess objective measures of product characteristics such as marketing, quality, safety, packaging, and convenience.

One possible methodology for the study would be an adaptation of the nutrition environment measurement survey³. However, the lead consultant will be responsible for helping to develop the most appropriate study design and methodology to address the objectives. The proposed approach will be reviewed, amended as necessary, and approved by the Yalwa implementing team. The lead consultant will also contribute to recruiting, training and supervising a team of enumerators to collect the primary data required.⁴ The consultant and the Yalwa team will determine together the types of retail spaces to be included (e.g. wet markets; kiosks; semi-permanent vendor structures).

DELIVERABLES

1. Draft study protocol to be submitted by day 5, remote workshop held on work day 6 to provide feedback from Yalwa team on study design and approach, and final study protocol to be submitted by work day 10
2. Draft data collection tools to be submitted by day 15 for review and feedback by Yalwa team. Final study tools to be submitted by day 20
3. Training of data enumerators and field testing, adjustment of tools completed by day 20.
4. Collection of primary data completed by day 50
5. Preliminary results summarized and submitted to Yalwa team in PowerPoint format day 60
6. Participation in remote workshop (via Zoom or other online platform) to share key findings with Yalwa reviewers and discuss feedback and recommendations on additions/revisions o/a day 65 and feedback/additional analyses incorporated into revised draft by day 70.
7. Final survey report and recommendations submitted by the end of day 75.

Please see our website to view main findings from Study 1 on the Yalwa Project.

[US & International Jobs - Helen Keller International \(hki.org\)](#) : Consultants

³ Glanz, K., et. al. (2007). Nutrition Environment Measures Survey in Stores (NEMS-S). Development and Evaluation. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 32(4), 282–289. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2006.12.019>

Menezes, M. C., et al. (2017). Local food environment and fruit and vegetable consumption: An ecological study. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 5, 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.10.015>

⁴ While the consultant will identify the local enumerator team, the cost of these additional consultants (daily rate, travel, per diem) will be covered by a separate contract paid for by the Yalwa project.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS and EXPERIENCE

Required:

1. Experience conducting quantitative market surveys in developing countries in West Africa, preferably including Niger.
2. Experience developing rigorous research protocols and conducting quantitative data analysis.
3. Technical expertise in nutrition and food systems work
4. Ability to recruit, train and supervise a local enumerator team with appropriate data collection and local language skills for research zones within the Yalwa ZOI.
5. Ability to lead design meetings and work well with other professionals of varied cultural and technical backgrounds.
6. Ability to compose clear, compelling written documents in English.
7. Relevant academic qualifications, such as master's in business administration, public health or economics.

Desirable:

1. Specific technical knowledge of analysis and field experience in international nutrition in low income countries.
2. Speaking fluency in French and English

SPECIFIC REQUESTS for INFORMATION

Please describe the nature of your education and experience and why it is well suited to the nature of the work described above. In particular, please be sure to address the qualifications and experience listed above and comparable project work.

In addition, please provide:

- Your CV
- Three references who may be contacted by Helen Keller Intl. These references should be should be clients or employers for whom you have provided similar services.
- Pricing/Price Sheet: a pricing list for the services that you/your company is interested and able to offer based on the activities listed above.

Please submit your proposal to consultants.recruitment@hki.org noting the title "Market Study-Yalwa Project" in the subject line.

EVALUATION and AWARD PROCESS

This RFP is open to all persons or entities that are deemed capable of implementing the scope of work, with a solid record of integrity and business ethics.

The award will be made to the Seller representing the **best value** to the project and to Helen Keller. For the purpose of this RFP, price, delivery, technical and past performance are of equal importance for the purposes of evaluating and selecting the "best value" awardee.

**In the spirit of our founder and namesake,
Helen Keller places diversity and partnership at the core of our work.**

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**We encourage small minority, women, or veteran-owned businesses to submit proposals.**



Nutrition  Opportunities  
WORLDWIDE

# Yalwa Project Market Literature Review Key Findings

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FIONA WALLACE & RABAB YAZBECK



- National Capital (390,000 in 96)
- over 100,000
- over 40,000
- over 20,000
- over main city
- other city
- Chief town of department





# Consultancy Deliverables

| 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Compile what is known about <b>local food production and imports into the ZOI (products available, unit quantities, price per unit)</b></p> <p><b>As well as dietary intake/quality/nutrient gaps among pregnant and lactating women and children 6-23 months.</b></p> | <p>Summarize what is known about <b>what, when, where, why, how, and by whom food is produced or purchased as well as the gender, socio economic and cultural factors that shape decisions around diets and food purchases in the ZOI.</b></p> | <p>Identify <b>high-impact nutrient rich foods (NRFs) currently missing in the diets but potentially available and accessible that Yalwa could promote to improve nutritional status for targeted beneficiaries.</b></p> <p>Identify promising <b>intervention models for supporting production, processing, marketing and consumption of nutrient-rich foods.</b></p> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

# What we did: 20 days (ish)!

## Step 1

- **We divided the project into three separate objectives:**
- 1) Food environments in ZOI 2) Nutrient Gaps 3) Interventions

## Step 2

- **Performed Search: Google, Google Scholar, Pubmed, Institutional websites**
- 1) 909 potentially relevant papers 2) 73 relevant documents identified.

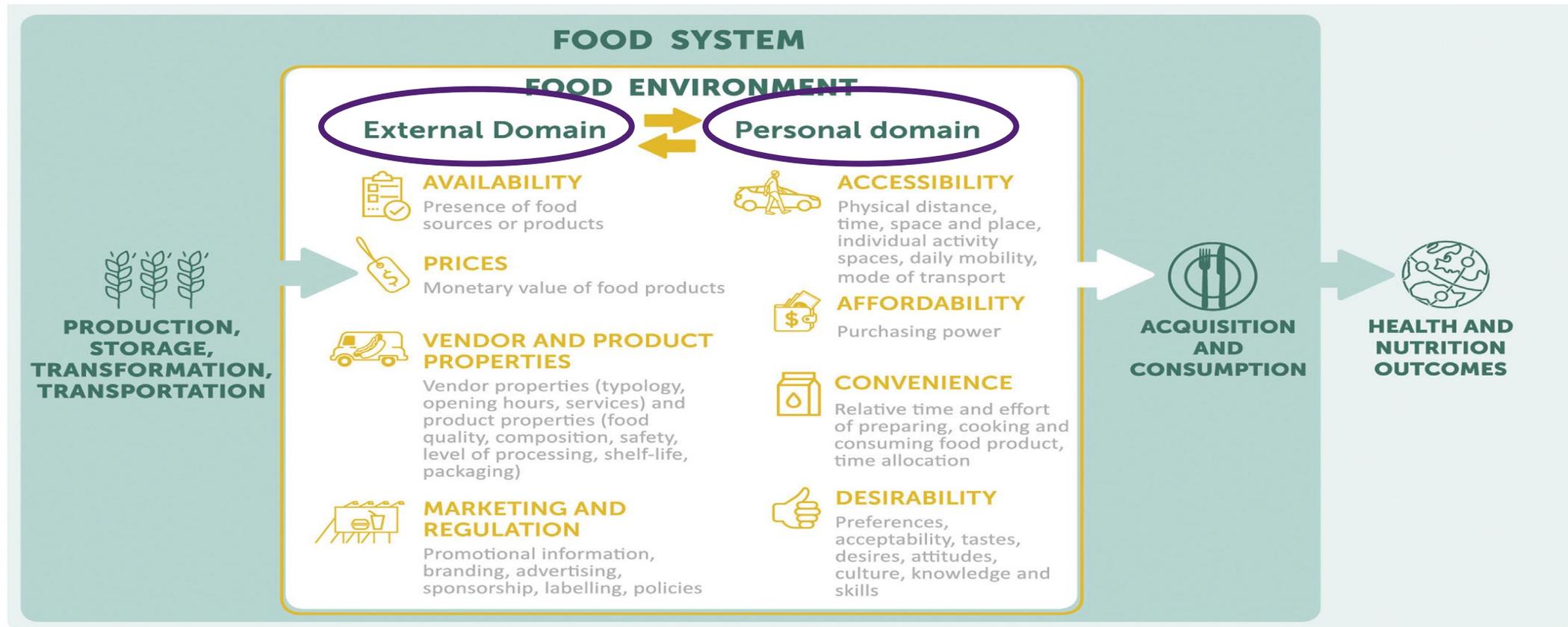
## Step 3

- Excel database was created used to analyze findings against Turner framework
- **Data synthesis and report writing**



# Objective 1: Food Environment

# Turner: Food environment in the ZOIs



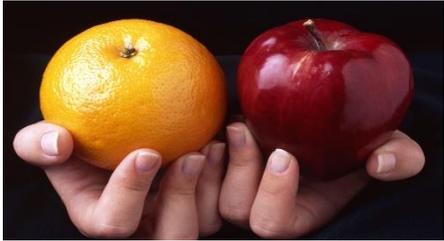
# Key Findings: 42 studies reviewed

| External Domain               |                                                                                                                                                                                        | Personal Domain |                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Availability                  | NRF are widely available in the ZOIs. Niger is self sufficient in most NRFs except for fruit and fish.                                                                                 | Accessibility   | Some markets only open one day a week, transport to markets can be difficult, reducing choice.                        |
| Prices                        | Food prices are generally higher in Tillaberi district compared to the other two zones                                                                                                 | Affordability   | Food is expensive for most in Niger, and many households already spend 70% of household budgets on food.              |
| Vendor and product properties | Majority of vendors are male, and many are farmers directly selling their produce. Few offer any value adding services. Food safety is an issue. Lack of refrigeration and cold chain. | Convenience     | Few papers looked at 'convenience'. Regis-AG looked at different formats of cowpeas                                   |
| Marketing and regulation      | few regulations mentioned in documents. Minimal branding, no advertising papers found                                                                                                  | Desirability    | Papers focused on taste and product preferences such as preferred cowpea size, colour. Preferred poultry/potato types |

# Where food comes from in Niger

- ZOI self sufficiency rates not available

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## **Fruits:**

Self sufficiency rate: 12%  
Import dependency rate 94%



## **Fish:**

Self sufficiency rate: 0 %  
Import dependency rate: 100%



## **Meat and Milk**

Self sufficiency rate: 100%  
Import dependency rate:  
0%

## KEY MESSAGES

Niger is highly dependent on imports for fruit.

There is enough meat & milk for the population- so in theory enough protein rich food for everyone.

The country is also self sufficient in Tubers, vegetables, cereals, legumes (peanuts)

Information on Eggs was not available- however there is a 35% tariff on the importation of eggs.

RCA good resource for ZOI data for prices and crops grown.

# Availability: Niger Agricultural Seasons

**Figure 3. Niger Seasonal Calendar (Typical Year)**



(Source: Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), accessed at: <http://www.fews.net/west-africa/niger>)

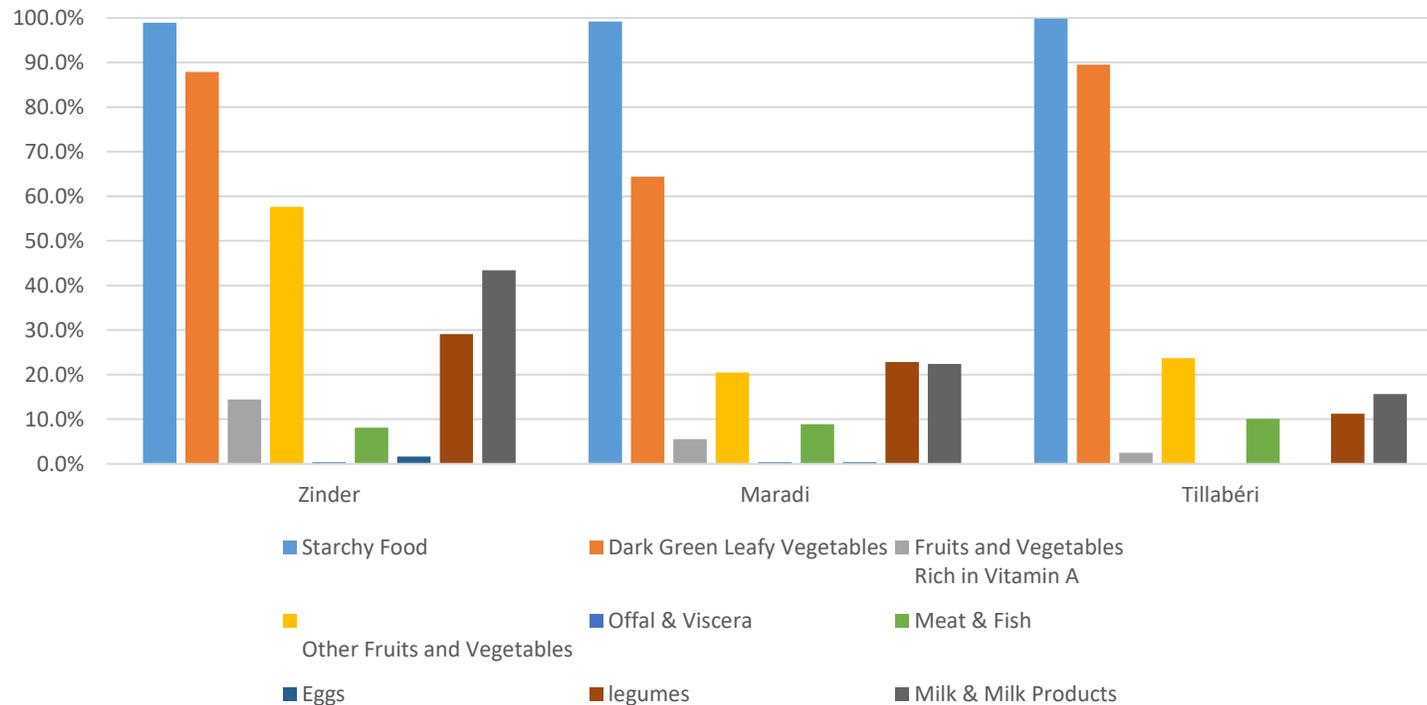


# Objective 2: Nutrient intake

# Food groups consumed by women in ZOI

Percentage of Women Who Consumed the Different Food Groups by ZOI

Source: INS Niger, Enquête nationale sur la diversité alimentaire des femmes âgées de 15 à 49 ans. 2014.



Diets are rich in starchy foods and dark green leafy vegetables,

ZINDER: More eggs, milk and legumes eaten than in the other zones.

Offal: barely eaten

Some cultural barriers limit the consumption and the development of small ruminant milk and milk products in Fulani regions

# Key nutrient statistics in ZOI

| Group                        |                           | Maradi | Zinder | Tillabéri |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Pregnant and Lactating women | Global Acute malnutrition | 2%     | 4%     | 2%        |
| WRA                          | Global Acute malnutrition | 3%     | 5%     | 3%        |
| Pregnant women               | Anemia                    | 44%    | 55%    | 68%       |
| WRA                          | Anemia                    | 49%    | 61%    | 68%       |
| WRA                          | MDD                       | 28%    | 53%    | 46%       |
| 0 – 59 Months                | Stunting                  | 58%    | 56%    | 38%       |
| 6 – 59 Months                | Anemia                    | 42%    | 72%    | 69%       |
| 6 – 23 Months                | MDD                       | 9%     | 8%     | 7%        |
| 6 – 23 Months                | MAMF                      | 96%    | 90%    | 91%       |
| 6 – 23 Months                | MAD                       | 9%     | 7%     | 7%        |

# Nutrition research gaps in ZOI

| Nutrient           | WRA          | Pregnant women | Children 6-23 months |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Iron               |              |                |                      |
| Folic Acid         | Research gap |                | Research gap         |
| Vitamin A          |              |                |                      |
| Iodine             | Research gap |                |                      |
| Zinc               | Research gap |                | Research gap         |
| B complex vitamins | Research gap |                | Research gap         |
| Calcium            | Research gap |                | Research gap         |



# Objective 3: Interventions

## Maradi

Maradi has established formal and informal trade channels with Nigeria; Ethnic homogeneity is boosting trade on the border

Maradi has the lowest food diversity score between the ZOIs

Maradi had the largest number of interventions, and it was tied with Zinder for the most studied regions

## Zinder

Established formal and informal trade channels with Nigeria, Ethnic homogeneity is boosting trade on the border with Nigeria  
Largest ZOI with considerable pastoral area.

Highest consumption of milk and milk products

Highest number of research studies.

Stunting is highest in Zinder at 52% (INS, 2020)

Widest variety and availability of food and best data on prices.

Higher consumption of leafy green vegetables

## Tillabéri

Borders with Mali, Burkina Faso, and Benin, potentially offering import opportunities.

Access to Indigenous plants, National W park

Least studied of the three ZOIs.

Crossed by the Niger river, so water access to water and fish.

Stunting is lowest in Tillabéri at 35%

Some civil unrest to be aware of in Tillabéri.

# Potential NRFs

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| Nutrient Rich Foods             | Reference documents & Interventions                                                         |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Eggs                            | REGIS-AG. REGIS-NADIRCO Sarlu. Tchokanaka, 2017.                                            |
| Chicken                         | REGIS-AG. Moussa, 2019.                                                                     |
| Tubers (potatoes)               | Adamou, 2014                                                                                |
| Biofortified millet (or grains) | Salou, 2020.<br>Fortification of regularly consumed Processed Food Products Project (FOPAT) |
| Small ruminants                 | REGIS-AG. Issa, 2020.                                                                       |
| Dairy                           | REGIS-CNFA, Tchokanaka, 2018.                                                               |
| Indigenous plants               | Dan Guimbo, 2013. Hama, 2019.                                                               |

# Potential indigenous plants



Borassus aethiopum



Adansonia digitata  
Baobab



Vitellaria paradoxa  
Shea



Vitex doniana  
Sweet black plum



Parkia biglobosa  
locust bean

## KEY MESSAGES

Fruits and leaves are mainly consumed

The majority are seasonal and some grow year round

Access to transport limit their distribution

Consumed during lean seasons by vulnerable households

# Research Gaps/Opportunities for Yalwa

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## PROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES

- ❖ Biofortification of crops
- ❖ Fortification technologies (micronutrient you could add) or fortified complementary feeds
- ❖ Storage and packaging improvements
- ❖ extraction/drying/preserving- Increase availability within the three ZOI
- ❖ transport and market improvements (infrastructure?)

## INTERVENTIONS

- ❖ Market opening hours (accessibility)
- ❖ Social Cash Transfers- food is available
- ❖ Community communicator/communication strategies- mobile phones
- ❖ Gender empowerment
- ❖ Food purchasing schemes
  - Institutional purchase schemes
  - (price assurance)

# Recommendations

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## Prices

- NRFs are available in ZOIs
- SIMA
- Seasons
- Purchase schemes
- Barter?

## Availability

- NRFs are available in market if not available in household
- Indigenous plants and livestock

## Gender/Ethnicity

- Women's groups
- Empowerment, livelihoods
- Male vs female vendors
- Work with synergies created by ethnicity – esp at border
- Be aware of cultural barriers for NRF

## Markets

- Infrastructure needs- food safety
- Transport needs
- Storage needs
- Opening hours
- Value added services

## Processing

- Increase processing options & knowledge
- Packaging

## Understand the consumer

- Consumer research
- Research what the consumer wants
- Who is the consumer and what is their economic reality?

# Limitations

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- ❖ More information could (and should) be mined from the data collected
- ❖ Papers only reviewed from 2010 onward
- ❖ Search for potential innovations outside of Niger limited by time constraints

