

## Synthesis Note: The Engagement of National NGOs in the Coordination of the Protection Cluster in Niger



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The Protection Cluster in Niger has led many initiatives to integrate national NGOs into Cluster activities. In 2018, out of partners listed in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), eight (8) are national NGOs that have actively participated in the humanitarian needs assessment and in the strategic and operational planning of the protection sector. Seven (7) national NGOs are active in the Protection Cluster and have been actively involved in the development of the Protection Cluster Strategy in 2017.

In addition, it should be noted that there is a good involvement of state actors who play a strategic role as co-lead of coordination at the level of the national cluster, regional clusters and certain sub-clusters or thematic groups. For example, the Regional Directorate for Child Protection (DRPE) is the lead agency of the Protection Working Groups (including General Protection, Child Protection, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Protection Working Groups) in the region of Diffa and Tillabéri. The Ministry of Humanitarian Action is also the co-lead of the Protection Working Group at the national level. This practice has allowed for better involvement of the authorities at national and regional level. The involvement of national authorities in the coordination of clusters, sub-clusters and protection clusters has also been reinforced by ongoing and effective support for capacity building.

One of the good practices observed for better engagement of local and national NGOs as well as state actors in protection coordination mechanisms in Niger is the integration of these actors in the programming of international NGOs promoting their role in protection programs. In addition, as the humanitarian space is increasingly restricted in the Tillabéri region, the operational capacity of the humanitarian community is limited. It is worth noting the crucial role played by national NGOs in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to people living in inaccessible areas due to insecurity and the context of ongoing conflict. National NGOs regularly share their expertise and lessons learned in terms of acceptance and humanitarian access.

The main problems in terms of national NGO engagement in coordination remain access to humanitarian funding mechanisms for national NGOs, despite efforts to support national NGOs in accessing the humanitarian common fund more easily. In addition, partnerships with national NGOs mainly take the form of a subcontracting model limiting the leading role they can play in decision making.

The Protection Cluster is following its elaborate exit strategy in order to ensure that the coverage of protection issues by the country's stakeholders is sustainable and continuous.