

EVALUATION

ITERATIVE

WITH MINI-

SEMINAR #4



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RESILAC*

*REDRESSEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL
INCLUSIF DU LAC TCHAD

REGIONAL REPORT

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REPORT OUTLINE

I. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- i. Objectives of EIMS#4
- ii. Methodology

II. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

- i. Results
 - i. Typology of partnerships
 - ii. How partnerships work
- ii. Conclusions and recommendations

III. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EIMS

- i. Results
- ii. Conclusions and recommendations

TEAM

ASSESSMENT

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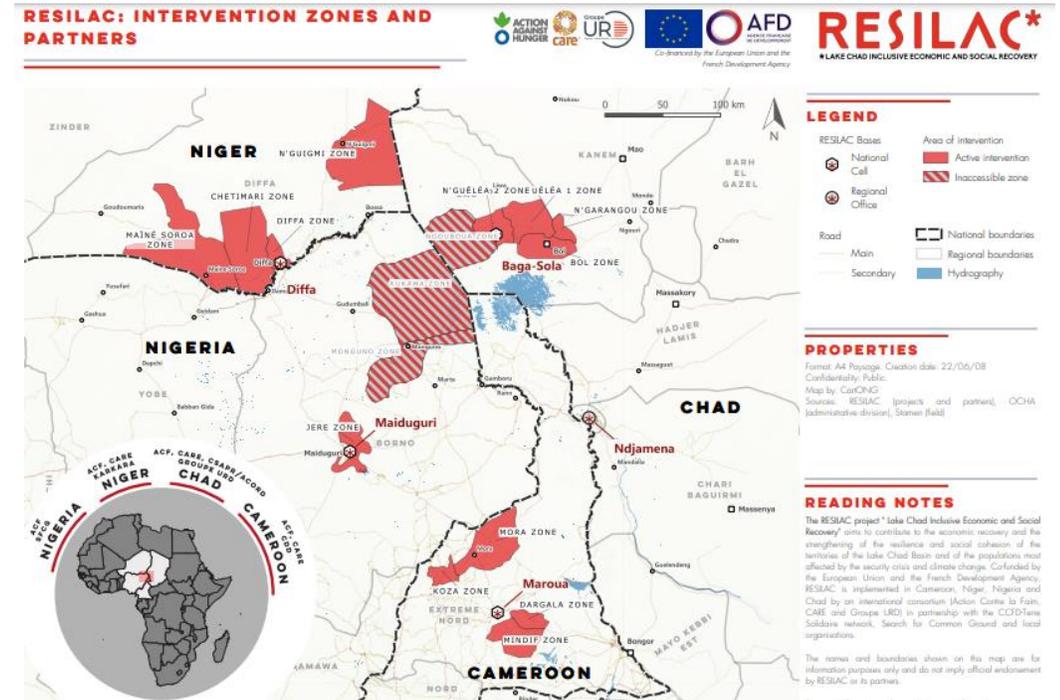
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INTRODUCTION

The RESILAC project " Inclusive Economic and Social Recovery of Lake Chad", was launched in June 2018 and aims at an economic recovery and the reconstruction of the social fabric in the region. This 4-year regional project, funded by the French Development Agency and the European Union, mixes emergency, rehabilitation and recovery actions and is articulated around four intervention axes that have as objectives:

- Pillar 1: Strengthen human capital, social cohesion and collective and sustainable management of natural resources in the target territories;
- Pillar 2: Promote economic recovery in the targeted territories and the resilience of the most exposed populations, particularly young people and women, through access to employment and intensified agro-sylvo-pastoral production systems adapted to climate change;
- Pillar 3: Valuing and consolidating the actors in the targeted territories by promoting dialogue and commitment, and by strengthening their capacities according to the skills and roles of each;
- Pillar 4: Generate knowledge useful for the quality of project activities in a crisis context.

In February 2022, as the fourth and final evaluation exercise begins, the RESILAC project is in its final year of implementation.





OBJECTIVES AND

METHODOLOGY

1. Objectives of the evaluation

As with every EIMS, the main objective is **collective learning for the** purpose of improving practice.

After consultation with the country and regional coordination teams, and taking into account the ongoing capitalisation processes as well as the future final external evaluation planned for 2022, it was decided to focus this latest EIMS on two key dimensions:

- **Institutional and partnership relations** at different levels - local, regional, national, cross-border around the Lake Chad Basin - between RESILAC and key actors working in the region and on the same issues, directly with the project or not.
- The **usefulness of EIMS** as a key tool to help programmes such as RESILAC to take stock and learn and improve along the way.

The EIMS captures the views and opinions of a range of key stakeholders on the relationship with the project: what was achieved, how, what could have been done more or differently, any difficulties encountered, divergent views and opinions of different actors, good practice and lessons learned.

Under this axis, the EIMS is exploring the options and challenges of contributing to a broader partnership approach with other organisations in the region working in the same areas.

Good practice in EIMS, appropriate timing (especially at key points in programme implementation), teams provided (national and international consultants), quality control, etc. are explored.

The EIMS also seeks to understand how RESILAC teams have followed up on the recommendations of the previous EIMS.

2. Geographical coverage and timeframe

Collective development of the collection method and tools between evaluators
Preparation of the next phases

Start-up phase
(February - mid-March 22)

Data collection
(mid-March to early April 22)

Regional workshop (4-8 April in N'Djamena)

Writing and finalising country reports (mid to late April 22)

Regional report (May 22)

Cross-analysis of data and information collected per country between evaluators

Building and sharing key points with the regional team

Sharing and validation of country reports with the teams (NC) in each country

Sharing and validation of the regional report with the team and the regional coordination.

Dissemination and use of results

Country	Sites visited
Cameroon	Maroua, Mindif, Dargala, Mora and Koza
Niger	N'Guigmi: Liskidi and Yambal, Maine Soroa: Adebour, Diffa: Mamari Forage and Ligaridi, Diffa ville
Chad	Canton of Bol: Yakoua village and Sawa village Canton of Nguelea 2: Bagasola Centre and Broumbia village 3 Canton of Nguelea 1: village of Maïmadarom
Nigeria	Jere LGA communities: Fariya, Sabon Bolori, Kolori, Kolori Fulatari, Shuwaki Garki, Old Maiduguri Municipality of Maiduguri

3. Methodology

The evaluation is based on a **qualitative approach**, using **primary and secondary data collection**:

- document review,
- semi-structured interviews,
- group or focus group interviews and
- direct observation.

A particular emphasis on exploring partnership at **different levels**: local, regional, national and international around Lake Chad.

List of key documents consulted:

- EIMS 1, 2 and 3 reports,
- thematic studies carried out in the framework of the RESILAC project,
- activity reports,
- memoranda of understanding,
- partnership agreements, etc.
- any other relevant documents.

Deliverables:

- A country report in power point format
- One report per country and one report for the regional team
- A regional report in power point format

4. Evaluation questions

A grid of **evaluation questions** was developed, structured around the two main themes of the evaluation.

The data collected through interviews, documentary analysis and observations help to answer these key questions.

This grid was developed collectively with the entire evaluation team to ensure a common understanding while allowing for adaptation to each context by each of the national consultants.

Inter-institutional and partnership relations

1. What are RESILAC's institutional and partnership relations?
2. What is the perception of the Quality of partnerships/relationships by key stakeholders?
3. What are the investments and expectations of the teams and the main partners/key players?
4. What are the challenges of partnerships/interactions between key actors?
5. What are the different types of partnerships/relationships established?
6. How sustainable are the relationships and partnerships between local/national/cross-border organisations?
7. What are examples of good partnerships (with RESILAC or other partners)?
8. How can these partnerships be further developed in the future?

Effectiveness of EIMS

1. Are Iterative Assessments with Mini Seminars useful?
2. Have the recommendations of EIMS#3 been followed and implemented?

5. Key contacts

The question of the usefulness of the EIMS was explored primarily with the project implementation teams.

With regard to the question of partnerships, the identification of key informants was done following a double entry approach (*geographical* with the different levels from local to regional; *thematic* according to RESILAC's intervention pillars).

The national coordinators of the RESILAC project proposed a list of key informants to the consultants, including relevant key informants who could validly answer the evaluation questions.

Through a "snowball effect", other interlocutors were included, allowing the information collected to be completed and triangulated.

	Number of interlocutors met	of which women
Representative of administrative authorities	30	1
Representative of traditional authorities	6	0
Implementing partners	18	2
Representative of the technical and deconcentrated services of the State	30	3
Members of civil society organisations (CSOs)	35	11
NGO members of the clusters and participants in the round tables	9	0
Members of the RESILAC project team	18	4
Service providers / private sector and universities	16	0
Total	162	21

6. Limitations and constraints

Constraints:

Very short data collection time due to the large number of actors involved

Safety constraints for moving around the field

Regional feedback just after the fieldwork

Turnover and end of contract for some employees

Limitations:

No possibility to triangulate with all actors

No opportunity to interview field officers whose contracts have ended





RESULTS ON

PARTNERSHIPS

AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL

RELATIONS

1. Typology of RESILAC

partnerships

- 1.1 A network at different scales, from local to global
- 1.2 With more or less formalised relationships
- 1.3 Based on the intersecting interests of different stakeholders

1.1 A network at different scales, from local to global

RESILAC has created and maintains relationships with a **very large number of actors of various kinds**, including donors, national and local authorities, government technical services, civil society organisations, especially women's and youth organisations, traditional and religious authorities and the communities themselves.

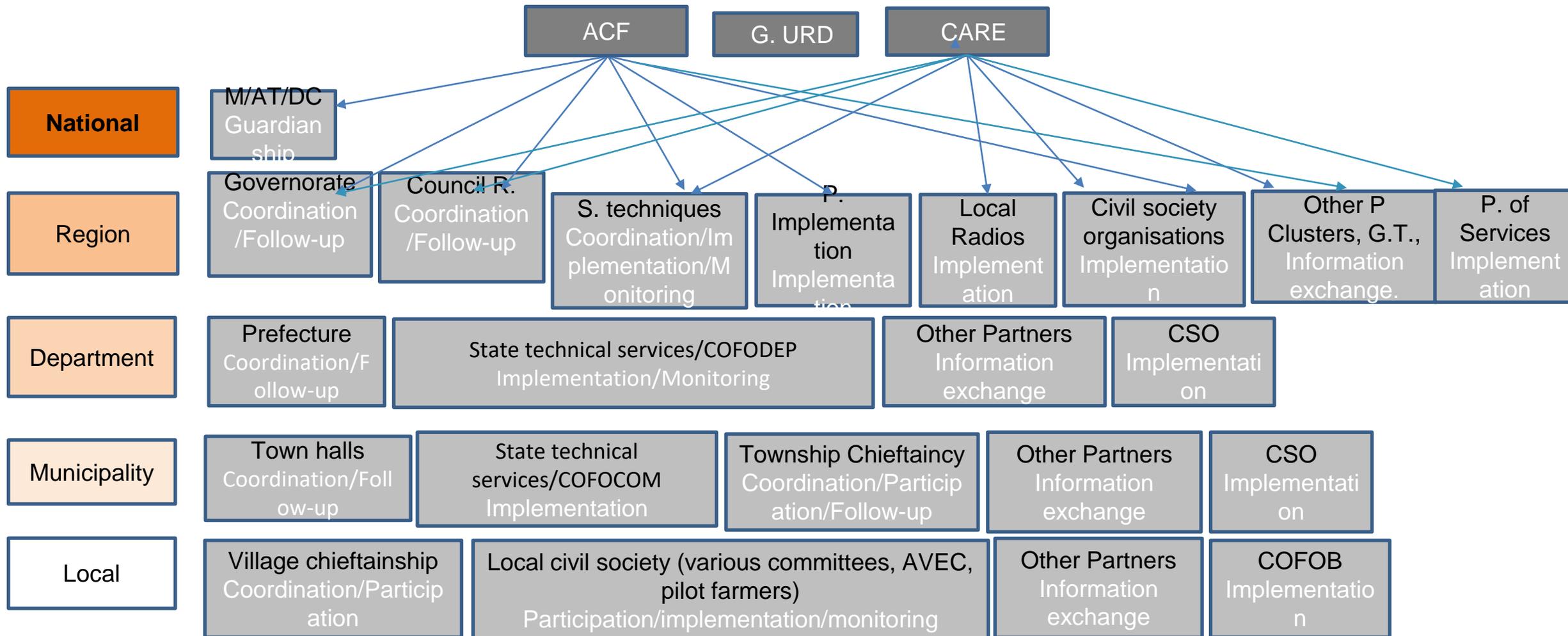
This network of diversified actors takes place at different levels in the four countries - global, regional, national, provincial, communal and local.

Each country has its **own specificities**, linked in particular to its national administrative structure (e.g. Nigeria is a federal state), its degree of decentralisation (more achieved in Cameroon), the level of citizen participation and the maturity of civil society organisations.

The understanding of the actors present at the local level is the result of the initial communal diagnoses, supplemented by the experience gained from the presence and implementation of project activities. The structuring of national networks is above all the pragmatic result of the presence of the Consortium's member organisations (in particular ACF and CARE). **A more detailed analysis of the interplay of actors beyond the communal level would undoubtedly benefit from being deepened, clarified and shared within the consortium to consolidate the partnership strategy.**

Thus, some entities such as Universities could be integrated more strategically into the project, as key actors in the production of knowledge. Similarly, **the transboundary level is not very developed** - apart from the involvement of the Lake Chad Basin Community (LCBC) in the RESILAC Global Steering Committee. The COVID crisis has not helped the travel and exchanges between actors from different countries, which were originally planned. In view of the common issues around Lake Chad, this cross-border level would benefit from being consolidated through a stronger and more operational partnership with the LCBC.

Typology of partnerships - the example of Niger



1.2 With more or less formalised relationships

The relationships established with this diversity of actors are **more or less formal**. Each type of partnership depends on the nature and the organisational and functional capacity of each institution within the project.

- **Formal institutional partnership:** It links two or three organisations in a formal framework. This type of partnership is often symbolised by 'Contracts', 'Protocols' and 'Partnership or Grant Agreements'. It is based on a common interest and rules of operation and decision-making stipulated in the document.
- **Informal operational partnership:** This is defined as an informal and verbal collaboration based essentially on the participation in the action of a partner, in particular the grassroots community organisations or the technicians of the state's technical services. In other words, they are partners who can be mobilised to carry out certain activities. This participation is sometimes sanctioned by financial costs initially foreseen in the project, by other motivations (per diem) or by the achievements of the RESILAC project.

The consortium's contractual relations with donors and between consortium members are obviously formal and governed by rules, which are then applied at all levels and whose **rigour and complexity can sometimes hinder agility**.

Informal partnerships sometimes work better than formal partnerships with identified partners. They allow certain project activities to be implemented directly without having to go through often lengthy and disabling administrative procedures.

In the localities of the Lake Province, these types of non-formal partnerships have brought RESILAC closer to the beneficiaries and vulnerable populations than any other project in the intervention area.

Diversity of partnerships - the example of Nigeria

Types	Networking	Contractual	Cooperation	Coordination	Full Collaboration
Example of Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Committees (CDCs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Providers: UNIMAID, Lawan College of Agric. MAFONI, NDE, Agency for Mass Literacy, Forestry Research Institute Gonglong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional and religious authorities Direct beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Ministries, Department and Agencies State Ministries Departments and agencies CSOs Local Government Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RESILAC Consortium of Implementing Partners: ACF, Search for Common Ground and Neem Foundation
Formalization by a signed document	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Information sharing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Financing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Joint missions	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Involvement in the strategy	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Learning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1.2 With more or less formalised relationships (continued)

For formal partnerships, agreements are often signed bilaterally by the same partner, with ACF on one side and CARE on the other. This can create confusion and possibly inconsistencies. It should be recognised, however, that partnerships between organisations that go beyond the level of a project require a more comprehensive framework, which is difficult to conceive in a multilateral context. **In order to reduce the risk of duplication or inconsistencies while taking into account pre-existing bilateral relationships**, an annex governing the operation of the RESILAC project could be negotiated between the three organisations and annexed to the agreements.

Furthermore, **the harmonisation of procedures** between consortium members working with the same partners is an important issue and should find solutions for the future.

Relations with the national authorities are formal but often go beyond the purely administrative level. Requests have been made by these authorities for **more information on** the progress and results of the activities implemented under RESILAC.

In Niger, and to some extent in Chad, the closer one gets to the local and operational level, the more informal the relationships are, with **communication problems** between the formalised national/regional level and the non-formal operational local level; thus, technical service agents intervene without knowing the terms of the agreement signed at the higher level.

In Cameroon, on the other hand, relations are formalised at the communal level, with a structuring role for town halls at the operational and contractual level.

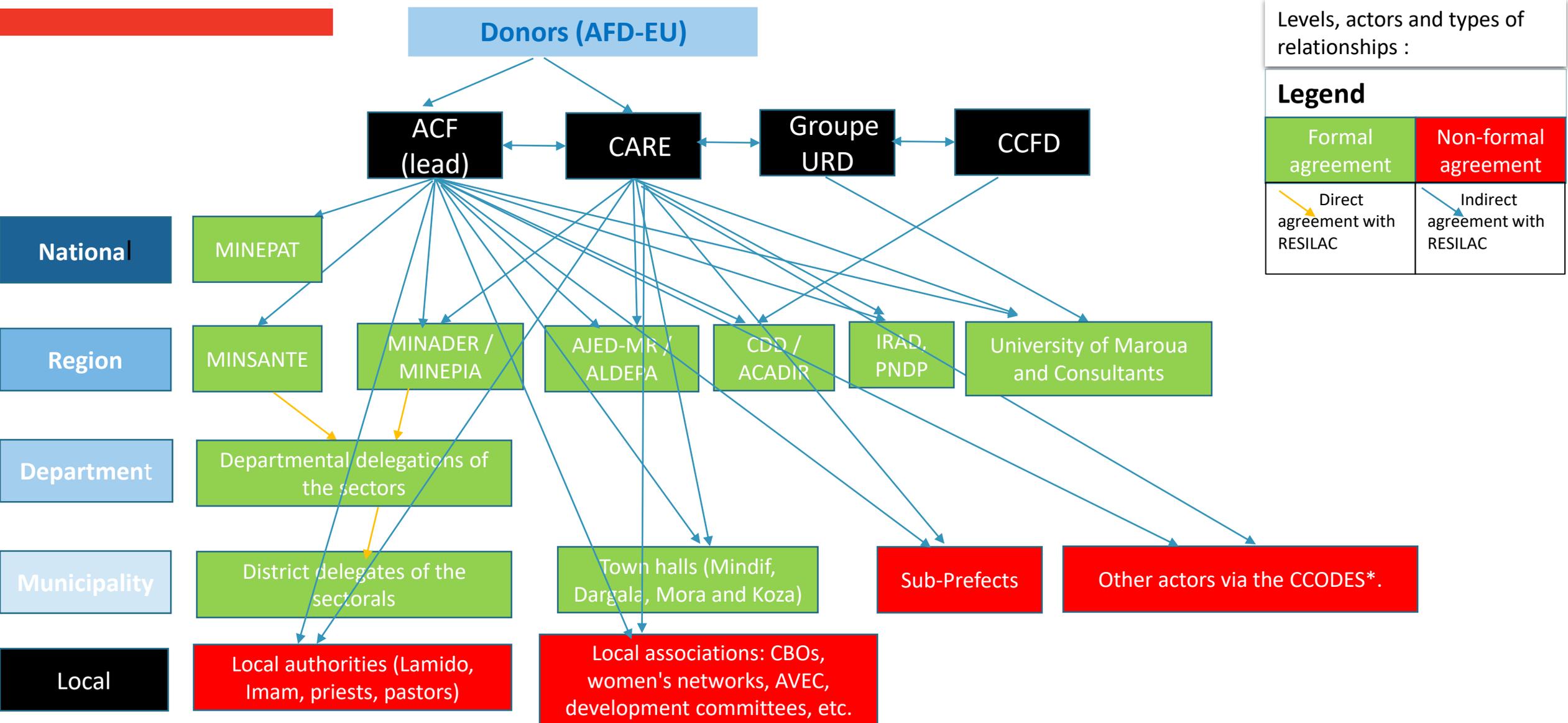


RESILAC is the best partner we have had in the field of economic recovery in the sense that we have a partnership agreement that clearly defines who does what and who should contribute what? We respect each other.

Interview with a Deputy Mayor in Koza, March 2022



RESILAC relationship diagram - example of Cameroon



Donors (AFD-EU)

ACF (lead)

CARE

Groupe URD

CCFD

National

MINEPAT

Region

MINSANTE

MINADER / MINEPIA

AJED-MR / ALDEFA

CDD / ACADIR

IRAD, PNDP

University of Maroua and Consultants

Department

Departmental delegations of the sectors

Municipality

District delegates of the sectorals

Town halls (Mindif, Dargala, Mora and Koza)

Sub-Prefects

Other actors via the CCODES*.

Local

Local authorities (Lamido, Imam, priests, pastors)

Local associations: CBOs, women's networks, AVEC, development committees, etc.

1.3 Based on the intersecting interests of different stakeholders

Each stakeholder invests in the creation and maintenance of partnerships, and investments differ according to the actor and the nature of the partnership.

These investments achieve the following objectives:

1. Implementation of RESILAC's **territorial approach** by combining know-how around the nexus (humanitarian aid, development and peace) with a territorial approach and activities structured around four pillars
2. **Facilitation of action** through geographical accessibility, access to information, availability, support, participation, cooperation by the various partners
3. **Strengthening responsibility and accountability** through information, involvement, support for the authorities' missions, strengthening their legitimacy, implementation of agreements
4. **Mutualisation and provision of human, financial and material resources**
5. **Institutional support** to organisations, formalisation, capacity building, acquisition of new knowledge and expertise, coordination and monitoring of actions, synergy of actors

“ We have helped RESILAC to raise awareness among our populations on how to live together and today we are aware of the factors that divide us and we are working on them with our populations...Thank you very much to RESILAC

Interview with a traditional leader's representative in Mindif, March 2022

“ Today, thanks to RESILAC, the women in our association know that by avoiding cutting down wood, we are preserving our environment.

” Interview with a member of the women's association office in Dargala, March 2022

1.3 Based on the intersecting interests of different stakeholders (continued)

Acknowledging the investments of each stakeholder helps to balance the relationship.

For the international NGO members of the Consortium, being in partnership with local NGOs allows for more flexibility, better access to land in restrictive security contexts, the provision of sectoral and technical expertise and better local acceptance by the populations. This local acceptance is strengthened by partnerships with local councils, which also contribute to the sustainability and durability of projects. Partnerships with state sectoral/technical services enable the expertise of state structures to be used, for example for training, monitoring and support for livestock breeders and farmers. In return, consortium members capitalise on new humanitarian experiences, enjoy the recognition of the local and regional community, are accepted by the administrative authorities and benefit from financial spin-offs for consortium staff and organisations.

The technical services of the State provide their technical knowledge and ensure the integration of the project's activities into the national systems. The partnerships within RESILAC support them in their regalian mission thanks to the logistical, technical and financial means made available to them by the project.

Partnership between RESILAC and the Provincial Action Committee (PAC)

A formal partnership was signed and RESILAC relied heavily on the deconcentrated state services grouped within the CPA to carry out inter-pillar activities. The agreement has proved to be functional despite the instability of state agents and has been beneficial for both parties who have combined their efforts to ensure the smooth running of activities. It is a partnership described as "win-win" by the technical services, which for the first time have found a real opportunity to showcase their skills.

“ *The eternal problem of our public administrations is the lack of means to go into the field. RESILAC has given a breath of fresh air to our rural engineering department by giving us per diems and means of transport to go out into the field to see the realities of agricultural production infrastructure.* ”

Interview with a head of department of the Ministry of Agriculture in Maroua, March 2022

1.3 Based on the intersecting interests of different stakeholders *(continued)*

For the town halls, it means support in carrying out their local development mission - in the case of Cameroon, support in the implementation or updating of the Communal Development Plans - capacity building for local elected officials and municipal councillors, particularly in terms of management, as well as strengthening the presence of the town halls in villages far from their communal districts thanks to the logistical resources made available.

Local actors (administrative, traditional and religious authorities, local associations, etc.) ensure the acceptance and adaptation of activities to the socio-economic and cultural contexts of the territories. In addition, their participation in the project helps to strengthen their technical capacities, for example in terms of natural resource management and social cohesion.

Partnership between RESILAC and the community radio stations of Bol (Radio Kadaye FM) and Bagasola (Radio Langui FM)

The partnership aims to produce information related to the Food Security and Early Warning Information System (FSEWS). A one-year renewable memorandum of understanding was signed between RESILAC and the two radio stations to produce broadcasts and podcasts that are then made available to local populations. This partnership has made it possible to provide local people with clear information on rainfall, food prices, livestock prices, etc.

Partnership with the Cellule de liaison et d'information des associations féminines (CELIAF) of the Lake Province.

This is an operational partnership that helps women's associations to carry out income-generating activities. This partnership is dynamic because it has enabled women to make **exchange trips** to two provinces in Chad, far from the Lake Province, which is the intervention zone of the RESILAC project.



The partnership with RESILAC is a win-win situation... We brought our agricultural expertise to RESILAC and in return we had the opportunity to make enriching field trips

Interview with a MINADER department head in Maroua, March 2022



2. HOW RESILAC'S

partnerships work

2.1 Identify and select partners

2.2 Defining the level and type of involvement

2.3 Investing in communication

2.4 Preparing for the future

2.1 Identify and select partners

Various modalities were used to identify and select RESILAC partners, depending on the needs of the project and pre-existing relationships.

During the initial diagnoses, **stakeholder mapping** identified the main relevant interlocutors for the project in each territory. For some of these interlocutors, partnership is not really an option, but a necessary protocol step for the implementation of the project. In Nigeria, for example, RESILAC does not have a formal partnership with the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement, nor with the religious and traditional authorities, which may have created difficulties during exchanges with other stakeholders and potential partners.

The assessment of partners' capacities was carried out extensively in the different intervention contexts, in order to verify the feasibility of certain partnerships.



In 2015, ACF assessed the capacities of some national CSOs operating in the Diffa Region. Following this assessment, the NGO Karkara was identified as one of those with experience and capacity. When RESILAC arrived, it was approached to collaborate in the implementation. Two consultants from France confirmed the NGO's capacities and the protocol was signed with the Niamey office, while the Diffa office was responsible for implementation.

NGO Karkara, March 2022



Calls for tender have been issued, mainly for project services for the implementation of certain activities. The partnership/service provision is then managed by different departments, e.g. the logistics department in the area of seed selection or animal breeds. In these processes, technical departments are sometimes consulted.

2.1 Identify and select partners

In some cases, the **choice was made by default**, in the absence of an alternative. For example, when there was a need to collaborate with a research institution in Niger, RESILAC turned to the only existing centre in the region, the University of Diffa. The same was true for local radio stations, with only Radio Nationale and Radio Anfani having a regional scope in Diffa. In the absence of multiple choices, it was the needs that helped establish the partnerships.

Finally, in other cases, it is in **response to external requests** that partnerships have been created, for example on the initiative of the chambers of agriculture in Niger. These "public establishments of a professional nature" are not technical services of the State and can create partnerships according to their skills and capacities. It was the CRA that initiated the steps that led to the establishment of a collaboration framework following the creation of a partnership with the RESILAC project at the start-up phase.

The selection process was deemed to be **transparent** and relatively consensual **overall**, although it is often contested by actors who feel aggrieved or left out, and the modalities for identifying partners cannot satisfy all actors. Difficult choices have to be made in order not to interrupt project activities. In all cases, it is important to give clear explanations of the criteria and process for selecting partners.

Finally, it should be noted that the modalities for choosing partners partly reflect the culture of the organisations behind the RESILAC project. For example, CCFD-TS, which has been working with its partners for a long time on institutional strengthening objectives, does not approach the question of selecting implementing partners in the same way as ACF or CARE. This distinction is common between **humanitarian and development** actors.

2.2 Defining the level and type of involvement

The partners were involved in **different** ways **depending on the phase of the project**. Just as it is important in participatory processes to clarify the degree of participation - from consultation to co-decision to consultation or co-production - so it is important in partnership relationships to agree on the level of involvement and participation expected. This level depends on several elements, including the objective of the partnership, its scope, the constraints and possible red lines of the decision-maker. But it can also change depending on the culture of the organisation and the partnership approach adopted.

During the development of the project, a number of workshops were held to build the intervention logic of RESILAC in a participatory manner with a number of stakeholders. This was done through a series of workshops led by the members of the consortium and a dedicated consultant. However, when it came to writing the project and negotiating it with the donors, the consortium members withdrew among themselves. This may have generated a feeling of frustration which should be anticipated for RESILAC 2 by imagining what involvement and communication could be established with the most strategically involved partners. **The integration of some of them into the Consortium itself could be explored**, which would allow a more solid and equitable partnership.

During the implementation of the project, the two phases (start-up and deployment phase) allowed for incremental integration of partners and learning between the two phases. For example, the insufficient involvement of local groups (local development committees, etc.) in the start-up communes of Cameroon was corrected during the deployment phase. It is in this implementation phase that operational partnerships were most numerous and productive. However, the involvement of the sectoral actors in the annual planning would have allowed for a better adaptation of the project activities to the opportunities and constraints of the contexts, particularly the cultural calendar. This would have allowed Cameroon to better align the HLI savings release period with the agricultural calendar (pillar 2) if the sectoral actors (MINADER, MINEPIA) had been involved in the project planning phase.

2.2 Defining the level and type of involvement (*continued*)

As far as **monitoring and evaluation** are concerned, it can be seen that the operational activities linked to the project's objectives are closely monitored, with dedicated resources, since it is on these activities that the members of the Consortium are accountable to the donors. The partners can be involved in the monitoring-evaluation of activities, collect information, verify the proper functioning of the facilities, etc., which strengthens their monitoring capacities and their legitimacy vis-à-vis the governed.

“ We signed a collaboration document to involve them in the implementation of the project but also in the monitoring and evaluation of the project. This is a way for us to facilitate the relationship between the technical services and the target groups. This way, even if the project withdraws, the experiences and achievements of the project remain.”

Interview with RESILAC staff, Bagasola

On the other hand, **partnerships are not monitored in a structured way, nor are they evaluated, with the** exception of this global evaluation of RESILAC's partnership approach. They are not considered enough as direct participants in the project's objectives, but rather as means to achieve results. However, if relationships between diverse actors (authorities, CSOs, communities, universities, etc.) at different levels (from local to national, or even cross-border regional) are considered an ingredient of territorial resilience, partnerships should be monitored and evaluated more systematically.

Finally, with regard to **learning**, the partners involved in the RESILAC project are expecting increased sharing of good practice and hope to benefit from exchanges between themselves and other actors. This is an expectation expressed by many interlocutors during this evaluation.

Finally, although partnerships have evolved over the course of the project's various phases and life, it should be noted that they have been relatively **stable**. The change of mayors following the 2020 municipal elections in Niger, for example, did not affect the good collaboration between the project and the town halls in the intervention zones, and the partnership was strengthened. In most of the intervention zones, the partnership with the communities has continued despite the difficult security and health contexts.

2.3 Investing in communication

Several means of communication are used by RESILAC in exchanges with partners at all levels. These are more or less adapted according to the interlocutors, the contexts, the quality of the network, etc. Even though it may seem trivial, it is important to spend time analysing and choosing the right communication media. As in any relationship, misunderstandings and frustrations often arise from communication problems. The level of formality, the medium used, the time frame for communication, etc. are important to consider and to adapt to the interlocutor and the context.

Analysis of RESILAC's communication channels - Example of Chad

Level	Means of communication	When?	Where?	How?	What works	Areas for improvement
Regional and global	E-mails, meetings	Throughout the project	In the capital and globally	Regional Coordination	Illustrated activity reports and COFIL Global meetings	
National	Official letters, e-mails	At the beginning, during and towards the end of the project	In the capital	National Coordination and lead NGOs	Communication works well...	... but contact must be maintained on an ongoing basis to report on project activities
Provincial	Official correspondence, telephone calls, e-mails, meetings	At the beginning of the project, during the implementation of activities in the framework of the partnerships	In the intervention area	Through the national coordination and regional bases	Mail and telephone calls work very well. Regular and functional communication	E-mails are little or not consulted by some partners due to lack of internet connection! Increase the number of weekly meetings
Departmental	Official correspondence, telephone calls, meetings	During the project and the implementation of the activities foreseen in the partnerships	Locations of implementation	With the support of the field teams and field coordination	The communication channels work well despite the poor quality of the telephone network.	Set up a communication system that can bypass the failures of the telephone network
Local	Telephone calls, meetings	During the implementation of the project activities	Villages of implementation of activities	Thanks to the field teams and in particular the facilitators and		Develop exchanges between informal partners and field teams to ensure a smooth flow of information

2.3 Investing in communication

“ *This is not to give them any credit, but the RESILAC Project team members are the best in collaboration with the technical services. Their advantage is that they always respond to requests even if it is unfavourable, whereas other partners never respond.*

A state technical service manager in Mainé Soroa

”

The feedback from partners on communication with RESILAC teams is **generally very positive**, as the testimonies reported here attest. However, **several points of attention** were collected from the partners during the evaluation.

Some partners (particularly sectoral or national CSOs) consider that they are informed too quickly for activities that are planned in advance and ask for **more predictability and anticipation** in the requests.

The authorities also need the communication channels of the public administration to be respected, and point out that direct contacts at the field level (such as direct exchanges with the Délégués d'Arrondissement) without informing their **hierarchy** at the regional level can cause problems. It would be useful if such communication methods could be discussed without making it more difficult for the partners to work together.

“ *There is honesty and transparency in the collaboration. Many NGOs don't have them. What I saw in the field convinced me. In the eight (8) years I have been in this position, I have not seen a partner like RESILAC. It is the only partner that if they call me, even if I am busy, I give up to answer their call. This is the only project that the Governor has appreciated since he has been here*

A youth CSO leader

”

2.3 Investing in communication

The use of **unofficial** media (phone, WhatsApp as opposed to emails or letters) is very useful for smooth and responsive day-to-day communication. On the other hand, important issues (e.g. delays in transferring funds to national CSO implementing partners) need to be communicated so that an official record is kept. Without this, the memory of institutional relations is lost.

Finally, several partners would like to see more "**two-way**" communication. They noted that communication is often bottom-up - i.e. they are asked to provide feedback - and that they receive little feedback. This is particularly true of the consortium's implementing partners.



RESILAC is one of the few partners to provide feedback to the administrative authorities on the activities carried out in the field and the follow-up of the recommendations of the CCODES meetings

Interview with an administrative authority in Mindif, March 2022



2.4 Preparing for the future

The sustainability of partnerships or of the achievements of partnerships is at the heart of the RESILAC project, as it is an element of the resilience of territories. **These strategies depend directly on the contexts, the actors involved and the level of decentralisation.**

In **Cameroon**, for example, a framework for consultation between the actors present in each commune (CCODES) was set up by RESILAC and made operational by the town halls during the preparation of the ToR and the budget. This collaboration platform allows actors to meet physically, to reflect on the actions to be implemented together and on the relationships to be created between actors to promote the well-being of communities. The partners signed an agreement containing activities in line with the Communal Development Plan (CDP) updated as part of the project. The introduction of progressive co-financing (RESILAC's contribution of 100% in the first year, 75% in the second year, and 0% in the final year) leads the town halls to commit to the project by preparing for their own financing. The ACDES, field animators of RESILAC activities at the level of the town halls, are recruited and paid by the town hall-RESILAC co-financing. These facilitators are already registered in the staff files of the town halls and this allows the continuity of RESILAC's activities with a person recognised for his or her skills in economic and social development activities.

This model, which guarantees the sustainability of efforts, can inspire other countries, even if it is only possible in countries where the decentralisation process is most complete, such as Cameroon. However, it could be strengthened by the contractualisation of CSO partners in the implementation of RESILAC by the town halls to maintain their participation beyond the time of the project, and by the creation of a communal committee for the management of the works between the village committees and the town halls to ensure the maintenance of the works.

2.4 Preparing for the future

In **Niger**, the theft of the pumps from the Yambal site illustrated the issues of sustainability of the project results and the roles of the partners. In order to find a solution, RESILAC acted as an intermediary between the Prefecture as the supervisory authority, the Mairie as the municipal authority representing the communities and responsible for the development of the locality, and the community as the beneficiary. The goodwill of all parties led RESILAC to consider providing support for the re-launch of the site. Since then, the stakeholders (Prefecture, Town Hall and community) seem determined to find a solution and ensure the continuity of the Yambal site.

“ If we had a guard on site the equipment would not be stolen, we have already hired one who will move to the site as soon as the work resumes, we will pay him with our dues. We will do everything from now on to preserve the investments that the Project has made for us.”

Members of the Yambal Site Management Committee

“ Among the things RESILAC has done for us, there are things that are coming to an end and things that we will leave as a legacy to our children, such as the training on land security. We now know how to clearly demarcate our fields, how to formalise land transfers (gift, purchase, sale, lease, loan and customary pledge). The people ask us for help a lot.”

A Chairperson of a Basic Land Commission

For the management of natural resources and land tenure security in certain intervention localities, the system put in place consists - through a participatory process including administrative authorities, the town hall, communities, technical services, civil society and the land tenure commission - of setting up a local convention for the management of shared natural resources (passage corridors, grazing areas, surface water) and strengthening the land tenure security system through the installation and equipment of communal and grassroots land tenure commissions, the training of all the actors involved and the sensitisation of communities.

The sensitisation of communities on land issues, the setting up of local conventions, basic land commissions, training and the provision of kits to members has created a great deal of enthusiasm within the communities, but **the partnership between multiple actors needs follow-up to be sustainable.**

2.4 Preparing for the future

In **Nigeria**, one of the elements of sustainability of the project's achievements and partnerships is the alignment of RESILAC's 4 pillars with the 9 pillars of the Borno State Development Plan and Strategic Plan and the establishment of Community Development Committees in the 12 wards of Jere Local Government Area. On the other hand, the lack of financial support from government partners and the lack of monitoring of the partnership relationships leave little hope for their sustainability beyond the project period.

Capacity building of civil society organisations is prioritised to ensure the impact of the project's activities and this has facilitated access to other funding for organisations supported by RESILAC. Several of them are now supporting grassroots community organisations, a role that should continue beyond the life of the project.

In **Chad**, the examples of partnership described above (in 1.4), notably between RESILAC and the community radio stations of Bol (Radio Kadaye FM) and Bagasola (Radio Langui FM) or the partnership with the Cellule de liaison et d'information des associations féminines (CELIAF) of the Lake Province, are cited as examples of balanced partnerships based on mutual interests. The partners express a common will to perpetuate the achievements and experiences of the partnerships after the departure of the RESILAC project. However, the agreements do not seem to have been signed to last over time and may not be able to survive after the project, especially as they did not include real exit strategies and the perpetuation of achievements and experiences after the project.

2.5 Principles of a good partnership

RESILAC partners listed the principles that govern a good partnership. **Respect for the clauses of the agreements** (for formalised partnerships), **transparency** and **prior information** are the principles most often cited.

“ RESILAC informs us and involves us in everything it does, it is very different from other partners. There are NGOs that come here, we see them like this, we don't know what they do.

An administrative authority, Niger”

“ We had worked with many other partners before, but there were none who respected their commitments like RESILAC, especially in terms of payment.

A manager from an implementing partner”

“ RESILAC informed the traditional chieftaincy before starting the activities, so that we knew our contribution to make.

Interview with a Lamido in Mindif”

“ The RESILAC project is a partnership based on trust and respect for each other...The NGOs in the Consortium are in perfect collaboration without any feeling of superiority of one over the other.

Interview with a pillar leader in Maroua”

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

3.2 Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

RESILAC has created and maintains relationships with a **very large number of actors of various kinds**, including donors, national and local authorities, government technical services, civil society organisations, especially women's and youth organisations, traditional and religious authorities and the communities themselves.

Considering RESILAC as a system, a network of diversified actors, reveals **new facets, opportunities and challenges**, as developed in this evaluation. By working on this **network of actors**, the aim is to **strengthen the resilience of the territories**.

This system is comprehensive in that it strengthens national development policy frameworks in various areas. It fosters collaborations between these actors around project objectives to encourage inclusive economic and social recovery around Lake Chad.

International funds are thus directed towards territorial actors for the implementation of diversified and complementary activities while ensuring accountability to donors according to the required standards. **This is a direct application of aid localisation with a long-term perspective.**

The network of partners **differs from country to country**. The number and nature of actors involved depends on the context and may be constrained by security and acceptance issues, as is the case in Nigeria where the number of actors networked is much lower than in other countries. Each country has its own **specificities**, linked in particular to its national administrative structure, its degree of decentralisation, the level of citizen participation and the maturity of civil society organisations. **The cross-border regional level has not yet been developed and should be strengthened.**

3.1 Conclusions

The network of actors around RESILAC has been built in **two** main **directions**: from local to national level, starting from the municipalities, and from national to local level, depending on the administrative structures. This can create difficulties in monitoring and implementation, but the teams have acquired a more detailed and in-depth knowledge of the countries and actors involved, as well as their functioning, over the four years of project implementation.

Partnerships are **more or less formalised** and formalisation is not necessary in all circumstances. It is obviously necessary in some cases, but sometimes leads to the implementation of restrictive procedures that can hinder agility.

Some partners have bilateral agreements with several members of the consortium, complicating relationships, creating duplication and possibly inconsistencies in *reporting* and procedures.

Each stakeholder invests in and benefits from partnerships. **Recognising each stakeholder's investment helps to balance the relationship.**

The selection process was considered to be **generally transparent** and relatively consensual, although it is often contested by actors who feel aggrieved or left out, and the modalities for identifying partners cannot satisfy all actors. It is important to provide clear explanations of the criteria and process for selecting partners.

The partners were involved in **different** ways **depending on the phase of the project**. Just as it is important in participatory processes to clarify the degree of participation - from consultation to co-decision to consultation or co-production - so it is important in partnership relationships to agree on the level of involvement and participation expected. This level depends on several elements, including the objective of the partnership, its scope, the constraints and possible red lines of the decision-maker. But it can also change depending on the culture of the organisation and **the partnership approach adopted**.

3.1 Conclusions

Partnerships are **not monitored in a structured way, nor evaluated**. They are not considered enough as direct participants in the project's objectives, but rather as means to achieve the results.

Several means of communication are used by RESILAC in exchanges with partners at all levels. These are more or less adapted according to the interlocutors, the contexts, the quality of the network, etc. Feedback from partners on communication with RESILAC teams is **generally very positive**. However, **several points of attention** were collected from the partners during the evaluation concerning the appropriate level of formalism, the traceability of communication, the timeframe for operational communication in order to allow for anticipation and finally the need to be informed in return (two-way communication).

The sustainability of partnerships or of the achievements of partnerships is at the heart of the RESILAC project, as it is an element of the resilience of territories. **These strategies depend directly on the contexts, the actors involved and the level of decentralisation**. Several examples illustrate the potential for sustainability but underline the need to anticipate the end of partnerships. Contractualisation and ownership at the local/municipal level, as experienced in Cameroon, can be a source of inspiration.

In conclusion, **compliance with the clauses of the agreements** (for formalised partnerships), **transparency** and **prior information** are the principles most cited by the partners to define a good partnership.

3.2 Recommendations

1. Continue to deepen and capitalise on the RESILAC experience in order to disseminate the lessons learned from the partnership approach from the perspective of strengthening the resilience of territories and the localisation of aid.
2. Consolidate the network of RESILAC partners and explore what can be done at the cross-border regional level in connection with the CBLT.
3. Explore the opportunity and feasibility of including national partners in the consortium for RESILAC 2.
4. To consolidate RESILAC's partnership approach through the development of a common framework with the consortium members answering the questions: Why? With whom? With whom? How?
5. Define and communicate the expected levels of participation, from information gathering to co-decision.
6. Favour tripartite agreements to avoid duplication and inconsistencies.
7. Invest in and nurture strategic partnership relationships, including adopting the right communication medium.
8. Allocate clearer responsibilities for monitoring partnerships and set up a monitoring system.
9. Systematically think about end-of-project strategies and include them in exchanges and at the heart of partnerships.



RESULTS ON

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF

ITERATIVE EVALUATIONS

WITH MINI-SEMINARS

Reminder of the definition of EIMS

Iterative Evaluation with Mini-Seminars (EIMS) is an evaluation process that is repeated regularly throughout a project and incorporates workshops (*mini seminars*). These workshops are conducted with the organisation(s) whose activities are being evaluated in order to validate the evaluation results and to establish together recommendations and next steps to address these results.

- **Evaluation:** Through an EIMS, Groupe URD brings to a project not only its evaluation expertise but also its skills in monitoring, learning and accountability. Groupe URD evaluators are both 'inside' and 'outside'. They bring an external perspective to the project which allows the teams, who may be "in the thick of things", to step back from the day-to-day implementation of the project. This allows the teams to consider the state of progress of the project and to ask themselves questions such as "Are we going in the right direction?", "How can we consolidate good practice?", or "What do we need to change to meet the needs more effectively?"
- **Iterative:** An EIMS is not just a one-off evaluation process. Over the course of a project, EIMSs are conducted regularly at key points - usually once or twice a year, depending on the duration of the project. An EIMS may look at different elements of a project, but there is continuity in an EIMS process that accompanies a project from start to finish. In general, each stage of an EIMS will include feedback on the recommendations from the previous stage and whether they have been taken into account.
- **Mini-Seminars** Often the presentation of the report marks the end of an evaluation, but this is not the case for the EIMS. In fact, the value of the EIMS lies not in the report, but in the *process*. After a debriefing at the end of each stage of data collection in the field, mini-seminars bring together all stakeholders to validate and complete the results, and to collectively develop recommendations and an action plan.

This is the fourth EIMS of the RESILAC project, in the fourth year of the project and before the final external evaluation.

1.1 Usefulness of EIMS

The teams recognise the learning gained through the recommendations made and the improvement of RESILAC's activities through the adjustments made.

The EIMS is an opportunity for the operational team to step back and take a critical look at the analysis provided by an external consultant.

The use of external consultants in EIMS is an opportunity to bring difficulties and shortcomings in the implementation of activities to the attention of the project team so that they can take corrective action.

It also allows the Project team members to better understand what is expected of them and what they should do. The relevant themes addressed allow for a better understanding of the issues developed in the Project as it progresses.

This represents an opportunity for exchange between consortium members and implementing partners on certain issues.

2. Points of attention for the conduct of EIMS

Timing of the EIMS not always appropriate: In some cases, the EIMS was held in the first quarter of the year rather than at the end of the year, which did not allow recommendations to be taken into account in time.

There is little follow-up of recommendations from one EIMS to the next. There is no mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations made during the EIMS, so the shortcomings noted are not taken into account

The large volumes of EIMS reports combined with the overload of activities of the operational teams mean that the reports are rarely read. They are not made available to all members of the project team, which limits their scope.

The operational teams are not involved in identifying the themes of the EIMS: as they are part of RESILAC's day-to-day work, they can make a significant contribution to identifying the themes of the exercise.

Finally, the number of Project staff participating in the EIMS feedback workshops is very small

3. Recommendations for EIMS

1. Conduct the EIMS in the last quarter of each year to facilitate the incorporation of recommendations into the following year's planning.
2. Set up a monitoring table for the EIMS recommendations and a steering committee in charge of its implementation and follow-up.
3. Reduce the volume of EIMS reports and make them easier to read. Ensure wide dissemination within the teams.
4. Involve operational teams in the identification of EIMS themes and increase the number of EIMS feedback workshops to facilitate wider participation. Invite some implementing partners to these workshops.

ANNEXES

1. EIMS grid

Theme 1: Partnership / Institutional Relations

The targets to be surveyed and the sources for the evaluation of thematic 1 are: authorities, implementing partners, technical services of the State, civil society organisations including local committees, NGO partners of RESILAC, members of the project team, service providers.

Apart from the first question, **the expected results for the two themes are as follows:** This is not an analysis of the accountability system. The aim is to put into perspective the vision of the populations, the authorities and the project teams in order to see if there is a gap or, on the contrary, convergences in the resilience issues to be reinforced. Comparing the perceptions (teams, authorities, populations) with the achievements on the ground will then make it possible to identify the points on which it is possible to act and to reinforce the action.

1) What are RESILAC's institutional (partnership) relationships?

- Basic questions:** With which types of organisations? In what areas are these organisations involved? How were these partners/key players identified? How was the relationship/partnership established between your organisation and RESILAC? Who made the first move and how? How were these partnership relationships established? Were the partners involved? How were they involved? What type of agreement exists between RESILAC and the partner? [If there is no written protocol, is this a problem? Is it a standard agreement or a jointly negotiated agreement? What are your means of communication with your partners (or with RESILAC)?
- Secondary questions:** Agreement in which field(s)? For how long? What were your responsibilities? Are there any protocols or guidance on how partnerships should be established? Who do you think are the key actors in the area? Is there a mechanism for feeding back your concerns and opinions to the project? If yes, which one? How often? How do you think your concerns/suggestions are taken into account by RESILAC? Give us examples of changes that have been made as a result of your requests or suggestions or those of your people? Are you satisfied with these changes? Are you satisfied with this mechanism? Do you have any suggestions for improvement? What other partners are involved in the locality? What have they done or are doing? What are the similarities or differences?
- Expected results:** The aim here is to understand RESILAC's relationship environment. With whom? How and why?

1. EIMS grid

Theme 1: Partnership / Institutional Relations

- 2) Quality of partnerships/relationships - views and opinions on partnerships/interactions with key stakeholders
 - Basic questions:** Why are partnership relations important for the RESILAC project? Why are partnership relationships important for RESILAC's partner organisations? What does a partnership bring - to RESILAC and the partners? Or what has the partnership with RESILAC brought to you or your organisation? How do stakeholders describe these partnership relationships? Choose 3-5 words [make a word cloud]. Why did you choose these words? What are the principles of a good partnership? To what extent does this partnership relationship respect these principles?
 - Secondary questions:** What does partnership mean to you? How do you build a good partnership relationship? What are the behaviours to avoid?
- 3) Investing in partnerships/relationships with key players
 - Core questions:** How did RESILAC invest in creating and maintaining these partnerships/relationships? or what efforts did RESILAC make in creating and maintaining these partnerships? what efforts did you (or your organisation) make in creating, maintaining and achieving this partnership? What should RESILAC have done more or differently in order to establish strong and solid partnerships - functional and appropriate relationships? What should your organisation have done more or differently in order to build strong and solid partnerships?
- 4) The challenges of partnerships/interactions between key actors; even the best relationships have difficulties. Partnerships are no different
 - Core questions:** What types of challenges have been encountered within the partnership? Please specify the challenges internal and external to your organisation. How did they affect you and all other partners? How were they addressed? (What did RESILAC and the partner each do to be more specific? What could have been done better or differently to mitigate the impact of these challenges?
- 5) Typology of partnerships within RESILAC: are there different types of partnerships/relationships, what are they for?
 - Basic questions:** Considering the different partnerships within RESILAC, are there different types of partnerships? e.g. partnership according to types of activities, actors and localities, Explain your answer.

1. EIMS grid

Theme 1: Partnership / Institutional Relations

6) Sustainability of partnerships between local/national/cross-border organisations

- Basic questions:** To what extent has the sustainability of partnerships been taken into account by RESILAC? How sustainable are these partnerships? Will they survive without RESILAC? What could be done more or less to increase their sustainability?

7) Quality of partnerships

- Core questions:** What are the principles that underpin an effective and quality partnership? Have the partners worked together to define the principles that underpin the partnership relationship? Are there particular roles within RESILAC that focus on supporting the partnership relationship? If so, what do they do? If not, who is responsible for supporting the partnership relationship?

8) Examples of good partnerships (with RESILAC or other partners of the contact person)

- Basic questions:** What makes a good partnership? Do you have an example or examples to give us? How did you build this partnership relationship? Who or what makes it exemplary? What behaviours should be encouraged? What behaviours should be discouraged? What are the good practices to follow? Were there any problems encountered during the partnership? What were they and how were they resolved? Arbitration in case of difficulties in a partnership relationship

9) How should RESILAC 2 develop more of these partnerships?

- Core questions:** In order to build on the partnership relationships forged during RESILAC, are there specific activities or approaches that should be included in RESILAC 2? How can RESILAC 2 further strengthen partnerships between local/national/regional partners?

1. EIMS grid

Theme 2: Reflecting on the usefulness of the EIMS

1) Is the EIMS useful?

- Basic questions:** What do you know about EIMS? What do you think? Is it useful? What has it changed in your work or your way of doing things? How do you assess the way it is conducted (actors, timing, choice of themes, etc.)? What are the major changes/improvements made during RESILAC as a result of an EIMS recommendation? Specify the changes/improvements in favour of the resilience effect and the sustainability of the project
- Target and source:** Implementing partners and project team members

2) Follow-up to the EIMS 3

- Basic questions:** Are you familiar with the EIMS 3 report? If yes, has a monitoring/management plan been developed to address the findings and recommendations of the EIMS 3 report? What recommendations would you make for more effective monitoring? If not, what evaluation mechanism are you aware of in RESILAC?
- Target and source:** Implementing partners and project team members