

Pro-ARIDES project aims at increased resilience and economic development of Sahel region



Project

The ten-year Pro-ARIDES project (2021-2030) is designed to contribute to increased resilience, food security and household incomes for farmers and (agro) pastoralists in the Sudano-Sahelian zone of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. It is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and executed by SNV, CARE-Nederland, Wageningen University & Research and KIT Royal Tropical Institute.

Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security in the Sahel

The Sudano-Sahelian zone is a geographic band with a short rainy season during which rainfall is low. However, the rainfall is sufficient to practice seasonal and off-season agriculture. The agro-ecological conditions of this arid and semi-arid zone also allow for the development of pastoralism, an agricultural economy that relies on extensive grazing. This sector provides the growing urban population with livelihoods, employment, and competitively priced meat.

Across all three countries, national and local availability of staple foods (millet, rice, sorghum, maize, beans, cowpeas, groundnuts) is in line with demand. However, it is unevenly distributed, and the Sudano-Sahelian zone is more affected by severe food insecurity and chronic malnutrition.

Opportunities

Against this unstable and fragile backdrop, opportunities exist that, if properly exploited, could reverse these trends and make this region prosper. Agriculture remains a key sector and the main source of livelihoods. Inclusive value chains can provide decent incomes and strengthen the nutritional situation, and a trained youth workforce can drive transformation in the agricultural sector. Women could, with appropriate support and empowerment, assume key roles in value chain development.

Creating decent jobs for these populations would help reduce existing tensions, reduce the attraction of violent extremist groups, improve stability in the region, and increase the resilience of populations to external shocks.

An innovative holistic approach

The overall objective of Pro-ARIDES is to contribute to increased resilience, food security and household incomes in agricultural and (agro)pastoral communities through effective decentralized institutions and organizations for improved service delivery, natural resource and land management and local economic development. Local institutions and organizations are strategic levers for achieving systemic change, and Pro-ARIDES places them at the heart of its work.

The program aims to support a more inclusive and sustainable system that incorporates systemic change and translates into five objectives:

1. Improved food, farm and livestock management for more resilient production systems and improved household nutrition.
2. Increased business, service, and employment opportunities and market linkages that generate more economic value.
3. Sustainable management of land, water and other natural resources through peaceful and collective agreements on resource use.
4. Mainstreaming gender, youth and strengthening social inclusion for the development of resilient food systems.
5. Institutional strengthening to restore the social contract.

Applied Action Research

WUR and KIT addresses development challenges at local, regional and global levels through Action Research that generates new insights and knowledge in the following areas of expertise: climate resilient production, sustainable economic development, resilient governance and gender and youth empowerment.