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# **SECURING THE MOBILITY OF PASTORALISTS**

**THE ZAMTAPO PROJECT IN NIGER –  
CAPITALISATION OF HEKS/EPER  
EXPERIENCES**

**Abstract**

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The project ZAMAN TARE POTAL (Zaman Tare = cohabitation in Hausa language, Potal = peace in Fulani language) - ZAMTAPO is a project to secure the mobility of pastoralists and their herds in the Maradi region of Niger. The project initially started its activities in 2011 and the intervention on securing pastoral land is part of the territorial planning and requires close collaboration with different government bodies responsible for the implementation of the Rural Code and thus the negotiation about use and management of land and other natural resources. Their composition, the collegiality of their decision, their superstructure from the bottom up, is a guarantee of the sustainability of the actions they take. For this reason, they together with a vibrant and engaged pastoral civil society are essential in Niger for securing access and management of pastoral land and resources.

With the ZAMTAPO project, HEKS/EPER has facilitated the formation of various land commissions and supports them in the negotiation process and the recognition of land rights for pastoralists and sedentary farmers. An important instrument to reconcile the potential for conflict between sedentary farmers and pastoralists is a clear demarcation of corridors for pastoralists and their herds. The commissions are responsible for conducting the negotiations between all parties concerned, monitoring compliance with agreed rules and acting as mediator in the event of conflict. The process of demarcation of the corridors has three different phases with 12 distinct steps.

Between its start in 2011 and end of 2018, among others, the project set up and trained 160 land commissions on different levels, 1,553 km of transhumance corridors have been demarcated, and 49 pastoral wells have been constructed.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## **Role of pastoralism in Sub-Sahara Africa**

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The drylands of Sub-Saharan Africa, that occupy about 60% of its land area, are home to over 110 million (agro)pastoralists (De Haan, 2016). They rely mostly on natural grazing by accessing scarce and sparse natural resources and adopting a mobile lifestyle. Tracking the best pasture through the mobility of herds is key to maximizing animal nutrition, and therefore productivity, in environments characterized by great variability. Apart from its productivity aspects, mobility is also a strategy to access and exchange products and services, seize market opportunities and mitigate conflicts between herders and sedentary farmers. Mobility is essential for the adaptability and resilience strategies of these communities to cope with climate variability and change and to mitigate crisis situations. Constraints to mobility represent direct threats not only to pastoralists' livelihoods but also to the ecosystem they and other people living in the area depend on.

The geographical dimensions of mobility vary from pure nomadism through various forms of transhumance (set migratory routes on a seasonal basis), to more sedentarised patterns of agropastoralism (combination of mobile livestock and seasonal crop production) – each demanding a different type of involvement from household and herd members (IFAD, 2010).

In the past, mobility was often regarded as a sign of lack of progress, a constraint to the adoption of a modern lifestyle and an inefficient production practice. Programmes for pastoralists have been focused on sedentarisation, often in combination with the promotion of agricultural practices in marginal environments. However, mobility is the basic condition that allows pastoralists to thrive in their geographical areas, by also ensuring sustainable use of natural resources and maintenance of a rich biodiversity. Today, mobility and the governance solutions built around are acknowledged to be essential within development projects designed for and with pastoralists. Intensification should not be achieved by converting pastoralists into farmers, but rather by carefully supporting current mobile practices and by focusing on improving livestock-related value chains (IFAD, 2018).

Niger is a vast landlocked country with an area of 1,267,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It currently has a population of 19.8 million and one of the highest population growth rates in the world (3.9% per year). In Niger, pastoral production occupies more than 2/3 of the territory. Despite the deaths linked to successive pastoral crises, livestock numbers have been constantly increasing over the past ten years, rising from 11,467,543 UBT in 2005 to 14,467,087 UBT in 2012. The most significant increase was for cattle (+38%) and goats (+22%). Horses and camels have the lowest rates of increase (4% and 7% respectively). As a result, Niger is the sub-regional "reservoir" of animals due to the number of livestock).

Insecure on its borders with Mali and Nigeria, the country also suffers from chronic food insecurity and recurrent natural crises (droughts, floods and invasions).

## **The ZAMTAPO Project**

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The Zaman Tare Potal (ZAMTAPO) project – zaman tare = "cohabitation" in Hausa language, potal = "peace" in Fulani language – is a project implemented by HEKS/EPER to support the securing of herds' mobility in the Maradi region of Niger. The project started its activities in 2011 and has carried out three consecutive phases until the end of June 2019.

This capitalisation report reviews the experiences of the ZAMTAPO project over the past eight years and documents lessons and good practices, achievements and lessons learned.

Niger is a country with a pastoral vocation. Despite the two major droughts of 1973/74 and 1984, which are considered a decisive turning point in the Sahelian pastoral world, livestock farming plays an important role in the country's agricultural production and export earnings (second place after uranium). It is essentially based on the mobility of herds. But gradually the transhumance axes and grazing areas were put under cultivation and thus have diminished. The phenomenon has become so widespread that in some areas, surfaces used by herds during the growing season have almost disappeared, leading to a de facto exacerbation of

conflicts between the different user communities (farmers/breeders). These conflicts, often violent and sometimes deadly, are mainly concentrated at the beginning of the rainy season (when herds are moving to the pastoral area) and at harvest time (when herds are coming back). They are due to difficulties in the movement and access of herds to pastoral resources (including water points) as well as to the damage caused to crops in the fields. As herders, especially transhumant herders, are often marginalised at the political and legislative level, they also suffer from prejudice and resentment among sedentary populations due to a lack of knowledge of their way of life and mistrust due to a lack of perceived social inclusion. The combination of these social tensions often leads to disproportionate reprisals in the event of boundary violations.

In the project area at the start of the intervention in 2011, nine major sources of conflict have been identified, involving transhumant pastoralists and farmers, which can break out into violence. Four sources of conflict are the most visible and linked to natural resources: access to land, access to water, access to crop residues and access to fodder. Additional conflicts are deeply rooted in the "collective fabric" of the communities concerned: land insecurity, pluralism of forms of authority and management systems, questioning of the juridical authority, community prejudices and arbitrary application of the law.

Based on these recurring conflicts in the intervention area, the starting hypothesis of the project was as follows: ***"The rehabilitation of transhumance corridors and their***

***development within the framework of inter-community consultations under State arbitration will facilitate the mobility of livestock while reducing conflicts between farmers and herders".***

To support this hypothesis, the solutions advocated by ZAMTAPO are contained in the methodological approach constructed, harmonised with the legislative texts of the Niger Rural Code and supported by all involved actors.

### **The Rural Code of Niger**

In 1993, Niger adopted the Rural Code and laid the foundations for a Nigerien land policy for the rural world. The first article of the ordinance sets the following objectives: "to define a legal framework for agricultural, forestry and pastoral activities, in the perspective of land management and planning, of environmental protection and human advancement" and "to protect rural actors by recognizing their rights, and to promote development through a rational organization of the rural world".

The Rural Code defines the fundamental principles that govern each rural and agropastoral activity. A whole set of legislation complements it, acting as an operational arm to these principles. What is now called the Rural Code is a corpus of legal texts: In addition, the term «Rural Code» also refers to the institutions that oversee implementing all established laws and standards.



## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ZAMTAPO APPROACH: SECURING PASTORAL AREAS

The approach of the ZAMTAPO project mainly follows three phases for the security of pastoral land access.

### **Phase 1: Building social consensus**

Before any legal and physical securing of pastoral land access, a social negotiation process is conducted based on the establishment of a framework for consultation first between decision-makers, authorities and competent services, and then with the communities concerned (sedentary farmers, transhumants and pastoralists). It is a multi-stakeholder and inter-community consultation process including the following steps:

- *Census and diagnosis:* Under the lead of the Regional Council (SPR/CR), the departmental land commission (COFODEP) with its various representatives and the municipal councillors carry out a pre-identification of the corridors/areas to be marked out in the meeting room based on mental maps and a consensus is reached on the minimum width of transhumance corridors.
- *Meeting of stakeholders and validation of priority actions:* The participants in this meeting propose the transhumance corridors to be secured as a priority, based on the frequency of transhumants using them and also on the prevalence of conflicts related to these corridors. The choice is validated by a meeting of the land commissions extended to farmers' organisations and the different technical and financial partners present in the area.
- *Reconnaissance mission:* It consists of going to the field and checking the corridors based on the mental map. Indeed, members of the departmental and communal land commissions (COFODEP, COFOCOM), municipal councillors and the populations concerned travel to the field to observe the state of these transhumance corridors as well as the grazing areas and the secondary corridor ramps attached to them. The members of this land survey mission register the villages bordering these pastoral areas.

- *Community validation through inter-community forums:* After identifying the transhumance corridors in the field, COFODEPs schedule awareness forums with the populations concerned. These forums allow rural producers who share the same community spaces to identify conflict issues, particularly those that need clarification on access rights. The forums represent a space for communication between farmers and herders under the auspices of administrative authorities, customary authorities and technical services. During the forums, the areas to be marked out are proposed and the consequences for farmers and/or agro-pastoralists discussed. The acceptance of these proposals by all parties and the results of the discussions at the forums constitute the community validation of the land/territory to be secured, which can take the form of a social charter that reflects the points of consensus on which all parties agree on.
- *Administrative validation:* Community validation is sanctioned by an administrative validation of the corridors and territory to be marked out signed by the village chiefs and the departmental land commission. This document signed by the various parties constitute a materialised legal document that will be compiled and sent to the Permanent Regional Secretariat of the Rural Code (SPR/CR) of Maradi for registration in the rural file. The rural file is a bank of legal acts materialised (in paper form) of rural land that are stored at the level of the SPR/CR.



## **Phase 2: Implementation of physical, biological, legal and cartographic security**

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Once the community and administrative validation has been obtained boundaries are marked with oil paint in the presence of representatives of the population. Then, the project proceeds, in close collaboration with the structures concerned, to the final physical, biological, legal and cartographic determination of the boundaries of the transhumance corridors:

- *Technical assembly of the files and contracting of company to install physical demarcation:* The technical assembly of the documented files ensures an evaluation of the technical and financial feasibility of the territory to be marked out in order to prepare corresponding tender documents for the physical work to be done. Then, a procurement process is initiated by the official structures of the rural code and an implementing company contracted.
- *Physical Materialisation - demarcation:* Every 100 meters along the corridors and around the defined grazing areas, concrete posts are installed by the company and in the presence of representatives of the populations. Monitoring and control as well as counter-expertise are carried out by the rural engineering services and local private firms under the supervision of COFODEP and the project.
- *Biological Materialisation - living hedges:* To better demarcate the corridors and to avoid transgressions on both sides (by agricultural fields and passing animals), living hedges with local species are planted along the corridors. For these planting works, community participation is sought to empower the residents and users of the corridors and to strengthen their full acceptance of the pastoral vocation of the delimited areas. The secured grazing areas are not biologically delimited but are subject to natural regeneration actions (e.g. soil restoration, control of invasive species, tree plantations, sowing of fodder grasses, water retention measures).
- *Mapping:* once the posts have been installed on the boundaries of the transhumance corridors, they are geo-referenced by the technicians of a specialised company and corresponding maps produced.



- *Official registration:* The maps are then sent to COFODEP for registration in the rural file at the regional level in order to feed the regionally available land use plans. In order to ensure the accountability and sustainability of the actions undertaken on the corridors, the establishment of basic land commissions (COFOB) is carried out at the level of each village affected by the corridors. It can take place before or after the forums. The COFOB are joint structures of farmers/pastoralists at the village level. The choice of members of these commissions is made by the population themselves and with the support of the COFOCOM. The members of the COFOB play the role of conciliator in the event of a conflict and it is they who complete the land transaction forms (authentic deeds of sale, legacies, etc.) which are then validated by the COFOCOM (customary deeds of ownership).

## **Phase 3: Permanent control of the respect of negotiated/marked areas and training of actors**

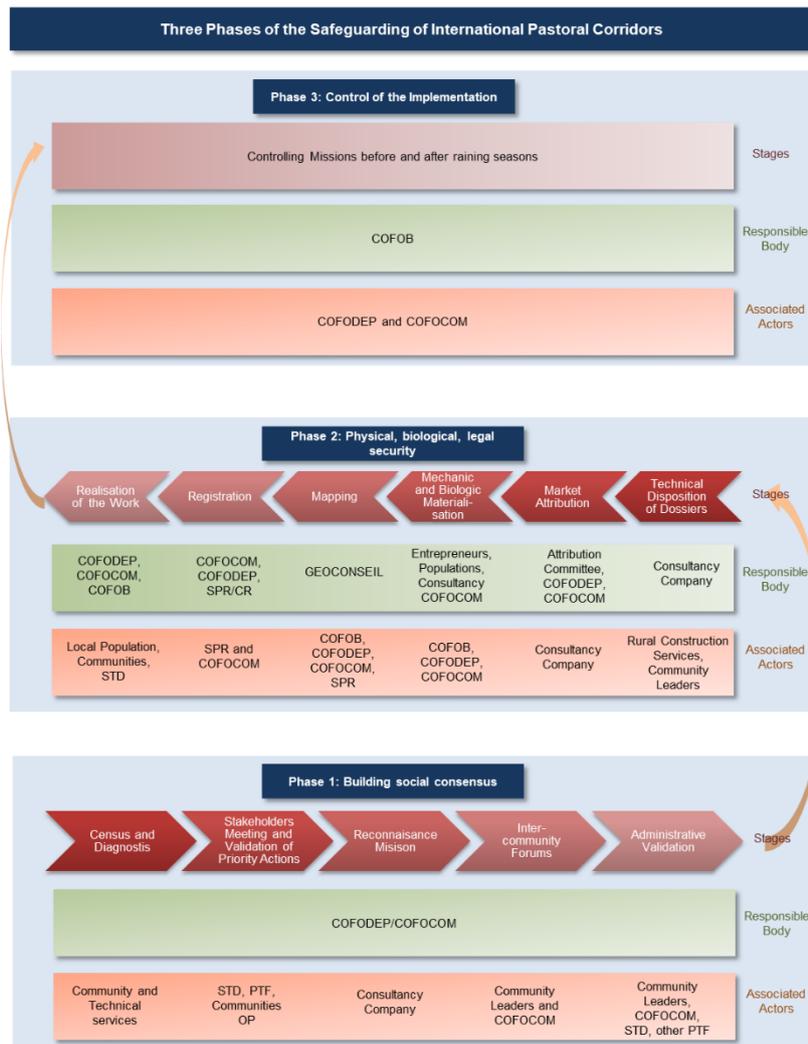
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- *Awareness mission before raining season and after harvest:* The COFODEPs conduct awareness campaigns along the pastoral corridors at the beginning of the raining season, which corresponds to the rise of herders to the north. These awareness-raising campaigns, which are also means of verifying that the pastoral vocation of the marked territories is respected, also serve to remind transhumant herders and sedentary farmers of the need to respect the boundaries of negotiated and secured pastoral areas. These awareness campaigns are fundamental in the first years of marking, especially for transhumants, some of whom are using the corridors for the first time.

Also, after the harvests, the period corresponding to the animals' descent to the south, additional awareness campaigns are carried out by COFODEPs to facilitate transhumants' access to the residues from the harvested fields.

- *Training of land commissions:* Control and monitoring of the pastoral development of demarcated areas go hand in hand with training and capacity building for the different administrative structures of the Rural Code from upstream (SPR/CR) to downstream (COFOB) of the structures of the Rural Code. The trainings are related to the conduction of land transactions, the dissemination of the content of the Pastoral Law, the process of developing Land Use Planning Schemes, and the management of inter-producer conflicts in rural areas.

The following scheme summarises the three phases with the consecutive steps of the process of securing pastoral areas, according to the methodology of the ZAMTAPO project and based on the requirements of the Rural Code.



Abbreviations:

- COFOB: Commission Foncière de Base
- COFOCOM: Commission Foncière Communale
- COFODEP: Commission Foncière Départementale
- CR: Code Rural
- PTF: Partenaires Techniques et Financiers
- SPR: Secrétariat Permanent Régional
- STD: Services Technique Départementaux

### 3. ANALYSIS OF ZAMTAPO'S EXPERIENCES

The ZAMTAPO project is based on multiple and complementary activities, all established with the overall objective of promoting and supporting a peaceful coexistence of rural producers in areas with a high population density. Over the past eight years, the activities of the ZAMTAPO project have constantly evolved in order to meet the various challenges that the modification of conflicting relationships between antagonistic populations may have generated directly or indirectly.

The project focused on three major areas in order to balance the various social and political issues: i) securing pastoral mobility, ii) infrastructure development and management structures, iii) advocacy for pastoralism.

In the following, the results within these three intervention areas are analysed and appreciated.

#### **Intervention area 1: securing pastoral mobility**

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This first area concerns the securing of pastoral mobility with its "soft" part, i.e. the social negotiations of pastoral areas, and its "hard" part, i.e. the materialisation/demarcation of transhumance corridors and grazing areas in order to identify, classify and map them.

##### Social agreements – "social charter"

A strength of this first intervention area is its participatory and inclusive approach to potentially antagonistic rural communities. As described in the last chapter, the two rural production systems, namely agriculture and livestock, often generate serious conflicts between these users of the same areas in a context of high land and population pressure.

The ZAMTAPO project's approach therefore begins with the most sensitive points of these tense social relationships. The intercommunity forums organised along the corridors in question bring together opposing population groups in a neutral and immediate non-conflict environment, which allows both sides to approach and express themselves in a neutral environment supervised by administrative and customary authorities. The opportunity to express oneself and to listen to others allows a better understanding of the constraints on both sides and reduces mistrust and

resentment. Regarding the use of transhumant corridors and their obstruction/congestion in some areas, offenders often acknowledge their existence and use, supported by the social control and knowledge of traditional chiefs who testify the existence of corridors in their area prior to the expansion of cultivated fields.

The social agreements resulting from such forums, agreed on by the population groups present and recorded by an accord signed by customary chiefs, thus constitute "social charters" essential to lasting peaceful coexistence between communities. They represent the basis for any act of security materialised on the ground and draw on local knowledge and consensus.

##### Alignment with national land policy

A second strong point of intervention area 1 is its integration into Niger's national land policy. As such, the methodological approach of the project is fully integrated into the institutional and legislative framework defined in the Rural Code and the Pastoral Law on land tenure security, and on the protection of community areas intended for pastoralism.

ZAMTAPO's methodology follows the legislative requirements and guides its activities in this

*«The ZAMTAPO project has demarcated more than 700 km of corridors and pastoral enclaves in the entity I lead. This has influenced pastoralists from other horizons, particularly those from Nigeria, to bring their herds to graze in the Mayahi department, not only because the demarcated corridors are international in scope, but also and above all these transhumance routes are not disputed by the farmers living along them. (...) The ZAMTAPO project has also set up, trained and equipped land commissions which, through their activities, make it possible to prevent conflicts between rural producers and contribute to strengthening social cohesion in rural areas. These include the inter-community fora that these commissions conduct to obtain the support of local populations for the delimitation of pastoral areas well before the establishment of the physical demarcation. »*

Prefect of Mayahi Department, Mr. Moussa Dan Tanin, June 2017.

direction. It does not create parallel mechanisms or structures, but helps public institutions, defined by law, to meet their responsibilities. This strengthens the process of state formation from its base, contributes to the harmonisation of interventions by all actors and guarantees, in principle, their sustainability over time. In addition, the project also considers ECOWAS texts governing pastoralism and declarations of the African Union.

This orientation towards national and international legislative normative frameworks has for example led to the conclusion of an agreement on cross-border mobility with neighbouring Nigeria and demonstrates the scaling up of interventions.

In the same way, the ZAMTAPO project approach encourages and supports the popularisation of the texts and procedures of the Rural Code by the structures of the latter at several institutional levels (support to COFOB, COFOCOM, COFODEP). It makes it possible to organise the information and awareness of communities on land tenure security procedures by drawing up land deeds that are included in the rural file at the regional level. For example, on a legally recognized pastoral enclave, a pastoralist community can obtain authorisation to sink a pastoral well without difficulty because the legal framework allows it.

The alignment of the project to national legislative texts also allows it to be used in the event of major conflicts over illegal access to pastoral land resources. Indeed, attempts to seize land for private purposes in the middle of a pastoral zone have multiplied in recent years. Private ranching projects, corralling substantial parts of public land and excluding other users as a result, are all the rage. However, these pastoral areas are intended for collective use. However, since the village and communal level are often overtaken by the political and financial stakes involved, it is therefore essentially important to be able to resort to higher, or even national, institutional levels in order to prevent this type of monopolisation, which further demonstrates the need for consistency in legal references in this area.

### Mapping of pastoral areas

The third strong point linked to securing pastoral mobility is its cartographic approach, which provides considerable added value to the sustainability of land tenure security and, ultimately, to conflict resolution. Mapping is done towards the end of the process, when the demarcation is finished and approved by local communities. Each concrete post is georeferenced, and corresponding maps produced. The maps are then given to the departmental authorities, which ensure that national and international corridors are respected. The mapping process allows the development of an atlas of secure corridors in the three departments of Dakoro, Mayayi and Aguié. This atlas, once available at the regional council level, serves as a decision-making tool for the planning of transhumant pastoral areas at the regional level.

It should be noted that the existence of such documents is most appreciated by many actors since they can serve as a reference in many situations. Already, the recording of posts' positions on a map deters any attempt of fraudulent movement in the field and serves as a reference if, for one reason or another, posts are destroyed or damaged. In cases of land access conflicts, the reference point is therefore clear. The units of the Rural Code refer to it, but also the gendarmerie and the judiciary bodies. In addition, georeferenced information can be useful for spatial planning and infrastructure decisions for administrative authorities and future stakeholders. For example, informed decisions can be made, for example, on the location of new wells based on the information available.

Finally, the mapping information is also used to develop Land Use Plans, required by law. To this end, the Maradi Region Land Use Plan is being developed. In this context, ZAMTAPO provided information on all the pastoral areas and developments that have been subject of negotiations and mapping (see Figure 1 on next page).

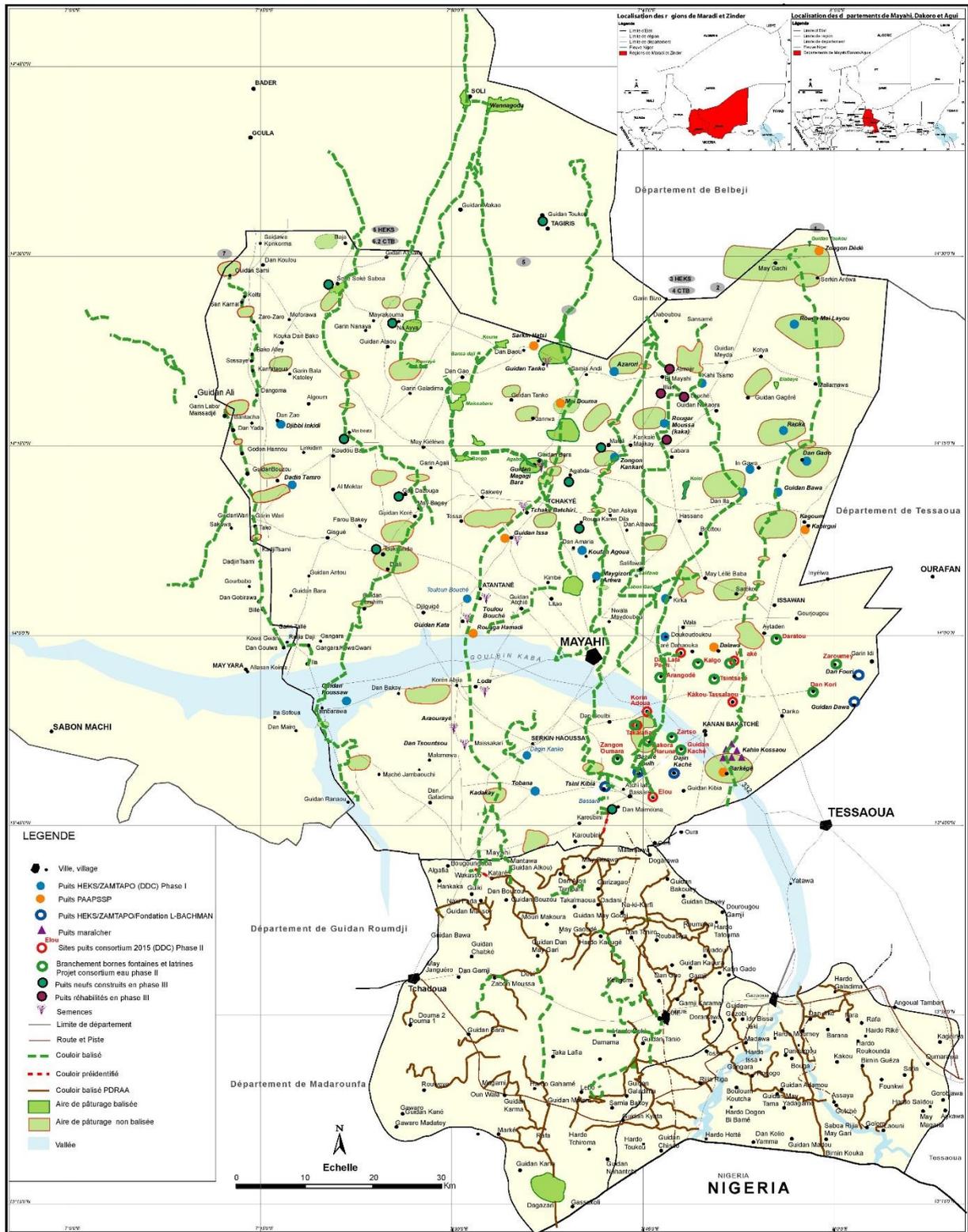


Figure 1: International transhumance corridors and transit areas of the departments Mayahi, Dakoro and Aguié.

### Land commissions to be reinforced

Despite the many positive feedback and opinions from local population groups and decision-makers, it is worth noting some recurring weaknesses of the project with regards to securing pastoral mobility.

The major weakness to be stated is the poor functionality of some structures of the Rural Code. The closer one gets to the local level of land tenure security, the more the functionality of these land commissions does not yet seem to be guaranteed. A first problem reported at the COFOB level is the low number of members trained in e.g. the roles and responsibilities of COFOB members, conflict resolution procedures, securing individual resources, securing and managing shared resources. As these commissions consist of about 10 members from the village and pastoral sector, there are generally only 2 to 3 people who have benefited from trainings conducted by the superior commission level. These are usually the village chief (chairman of the commission) and the secretary general (who keeps written records and draws up deeds). As the other representatives do not have sufficient knowledge of the relevant procedures of the Rural Code, they can not fully contribute to consultations, discussions and decision-making on natural resource management and conflict resolution. This is exacerbated by the second weakness, the fluctuation of members of the COFOBs. In the event of the resignation of a trained person, the functioning may be compromised. This is mainly due to the body functioning on a voluntary, not remunerated basis.

It should be noted, however, that these weaknesses are also understandable. Given the limited funds of the project, it was first imperative to respond to the most urgent needs, i.e. to support the establishment of land commissions in localities bordering negotiated and demarcated transhumance corridors, to equip them and, within the means available, to train the most important members. Indeed, out of about 1,600 COFOB members installed through the project, only 200 members have been trained, which limits the proper functioning of these essential governing bodies.

### **Intervention area 2: infrastructure development and management structures**

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In addition to identifying and delimiting transhumance corridors, ZAMTAPO is completing the process of securing pastoral mobility by

facilitating equitable access to pasture and water for pastoralists and their herds through the provision of infrastructure and support for their sustainable management.

One of the strong points of ZAMTAPO's vision, in the process of securing mobility, lies in taking into account of the mobility system as a whole, including access to the corridors, access to rangelands for rest, grazing and watering, and the development of good relationships with other rural actors. These are three links that are strongly intertwined, and each one contributes to the effectiveness of the other. In addition to securing their mobility, pastoralists using the transhumance corridors must also be able to find the inputs essential to their survival and the reproduction of their animals, i.e. grass, water, rest and a sense of security. To achieve this, ZAMTAPO has based its strategy on the restoration of grazing zones, the construction of hydraulic structures for pastoral purposes and the empowerment of stakeholders at

*Transhumance is carried out over long distances of thousands of kilometres and on a territorial scale. The system, in order to be functional, the herds during their movement – on average 12 to 20 km per day – need rest or transit areas along these routes where the transhumants can rest by watering and grazing their herds.*

all levels.

### Restoration of pasture areas: enclaves, rest areas, pastoral transit areas

Since 2011, ZAMTAPO has been working to make grazing areas along the transhumance corridors more viable so that sedentary farmers and pastoralists can effectively benefit from the natural resources. Thus, those zones have been delimited at the same time as the transhumance corridors to which they are attached to. These pastoral enclaves are often characterised by a high proliferation of invasive species of no pastoral interest – especially *Sida cordifolia* – and bare spots that are sometimes crusted. This required specific measures after delimitation, in particular the clearing of *Sida cordifolia*, the restoration of parts degraded by stony ridges, seeding with edible grasses, planting trees as additional fodder source, and protection of the developed parts to promote their rapid regeneration. This has led to a significant improvement in the forage productivity of the areas. For example, out of the five pastoral enclaves developed in 2017, fodder production increased

from 143 tonnes of dry matter to 466 tonnes per hectare, an increase of 323 tonnes or more than 200%.

#### Pastoral hydraulics on transhumance corridors and pastoral water points in agricultural areas

In parallel with the financing of activities for the regeneration of the grazing areas, ZAMTAPO has also supported the facilitation of access to water for human and livestock consumption. To ensure effective access to water for pastoralists, all structures built or rehabilitated with the support of ZAMTAPO meet certain minimum standards. Indeed, at first glance, their pastoral vocation and their status as public goods are clarified even before the start of the work. Both the user communities and the communal and customary authorities must know that the work to be carried out is for pastoral use and belongs to the public domain. To this end, the cemented wells constructed have a large diameter structure (1.80m) equipped with surface installations including an animal-drawn drainage system. A sanitised area enclosed by a wall is connected by pipes to the surroundings of each structure which are sufficiently spacious to allow watering and animal movements, even if the structure is built or rehabilitated in a village. Consequently, the choice of sites for new water points and those to be rehabilitated considers this condition of accessibility of the structure to the herds of transhumant herders. For this reason, the works are carried out either in an area or in a village that accepts that transhumant livestock keepers have access to the water point and therefore provide enough space around the structure to allow pastoralists to water and reach the corridors without risk of causing damage to fields or houses.

At the community level, the process of building a water structure for pastoral use, includes a technical feasibility study and a zootechnical study to collect all information on conflicts related to access to water and animal flows over pastoral resources, as well as to count the potential users of the future well and their animals. A social agreement concerning the land tenure status of the site, the financial and physical contribution of the beneficiary communities to the works and the methods of access and management of the well, considering the specificities of transhumant livestock farmers, is also sought. The communities also agree on the costs of maintaining the well and on the location of the well. In parallel with the technical and financial set-up/contracting, a site

monitoring committee is set up first and then a management committee formed, monitored and accompanied by the technical services, the municipality and the project. Finally, studies are carried out on the physico-chemical quality of water, the satisfaction of the water needs of all users and their livestock, and the reduction of conflicts related to watering.

According to the results of a diagnosis carried out in 2017, all operative local committees affirm that the common use of pastoral wells has strongly contributed to strengthening relations mainly between sedentary and transhumant people.



#### Empowerment of local management structures

In addition, to make the use of the demarcated and developed enclaves and the water points built, ZAMTAPO has empowered the land commissions, municipalities and local populations in the process of securing pastoral mobility. The objective of these infrastructures is not only to contribute to the satisfaction of water and grazing needs, but also and above all to the mitigation of inter-community conflicts between farmers and herders. To do this, the choice of transhumance corridors to be demarcated and consequently the areas to be developed is made by the land commissions, which include all the strategic groups influencing decisions in rural areas (administrative authorities, customary, communal, representatives of herders and farmers, civil society, technical services).

#### Poor functionality and financial contribution of local management structures as a major challenge

In order to ensure that the beneficiary communities take ownership of the facilities and infrastructure built, each of the recovered areas and all the cemented pastoral wells have management committees. It must be acknowledged that the capacity of some committees to properly carry out their missions has been reduced due to frequent

travel of some members, particularly livestock farmers, the exodus of other members due to food insecurity and the distance of members from the developed area or the location of the well. Nevertheless, these committees manage to meet the minimum of their obligations. Indeed, a survey conducted (2018) among the committees of the restored areas revealed that almost all the committee members present participate in the activities organized by these committees if they are present.

In addition, most of the water commissions were unable to mobilise the funds of deposits necessary before the start of the construction work (recommended by the water code) due to the precariousness linked to frequent food shortages in the area.

To solve this problem, the municipalities must support the funds because they are supposed to ensure access to water for their citizens. Advocacy work influenced municipalities to pay the necessary amount as part of the municipal water funds housed at the level of the City Council. In addition, there was a need to raise community awareness to better understand the interest in community financial participation.

Regarding well maintenance funds, all the water committees have a fundraising mechanism in place to raise the funds needed to maintain water points. To improve the mobilisation of these maintenance funds, the users of cemented pastoral wells agreed on a voluntary contribution from households in villages operating water points ranging from 50 to 750 francs and a flat but varied contribution of funds from pastoralists watering their herds according to the duration and size of the herds.

### **Intervention area 3: advocacy for pastoralism**

In view of the potential for pastoral associations in the Maradi region, the ZAMTAPO project took advantage of the favourable environment to support the emergence of a strong pastoral civil society capable of defending the interests of pastoralists both in the governance of pastoral resources and in their integration into local and regional development plans.

#### **Community and institutional anchoring of the pastoral forum**

The Maradi region has the specificity of benefiting from a vast network of very active pastoral associations at the local, national and cross-border level. The region has nearly thirty pastoral

associations and NGOs that work towards safeguarding pastoral mobility. Thus, the existence of this associative dynamic prior to ZAMTAPO's intervention is a major asset. ZAMTAPO has served as a catalyst to enable the pastoral associations to come together to launch the so called "Pastoral Forum".

The Pastoral Forum is a space for dialogue between several pastoral associations with the vision of an effective management of pastoralism through the emergence of a strong, united, dynamic and sufficiently equipped civil pastoral society to defend the interests of pastoralists and promote a culture of peaceful coexistence between sedentary farmers and pastoralists. Its mission is to work to ensure that pastoral mobility is guaranteed in the sub-region and that transhumance is peacefully secured and the rights of pastoralists are recognized and respected.

An important result of the Pastoral Forum was an inquiry and denunciation that led to the suspension of the process of granting Priority Rights of Use for non-pastoral purposes of a territory in the Bermo pastoral area of nearly 91,000 ha.

#### **Signing of a convention on cross-border transhumance**

On 25 July 2017, a bilateral cross-border agreement on the organisation and management of cross-border transhumance between the Maradi region (Republic of Niger) and the State of Katsina (Federal Republic of Nigeria) was signed with the support of ZAMTAPO and other partners such as PRAPS, AREN, RBM and the Maradi Regional Council.

The parties to the agreement recognise that mobility of pastoralists remains a way of production adapted to their way of life, an essential source of income for populations, communities and States and ensures an optimal contribution to the protection of the environment. So, there is a



need to preserve it for present and future generations. Among other things, the parties to this agreement agreed to take all necessary measures to strengthen the application of the texts governing transhumance and cross-border trade between the two States.

For example, in 2018, the agreement allowed the release of Nigerian pastoralists arrested in Nigeria for crop damage; the recovery of more than 1,000 stolen livestock in Nigeria; the establishment of 70 "information desks" to provide transhumants with all the facilities they need and also to be the voice of the transhumants who have caused damage or are unable to access water for drinking or are victims of livestock theft.

#### Information and sensitisation measures

As the majority of the rural population, both sedentary and nomadic/transhumant, are illiterate, radio programmes in local languages provide a space for information and debate that contributes to the understanding of texts on land and pastoralism. Therefore, ZAMTAPO supported the sensitisation of the widest possible public – in the Maradi region and beyond – on the rights of access of herders to transhumance corridors, pastoral enclaves, water, crop residues, etc. through radio programmes broadcasted by 10 community radio stations. These popular broadcasts have made a significant contribution to the acceptance of mobility as a way of life and production and, consequently, to the easing of the social climate.

#### From lobbying to advocacy and limited resources as challenges

The Pastoral Forum is led by 32 associations, including the association AREN, which is national in scope and has a strong grassroots presence with 88 groups of pastoralists, all of whom are mobilised for advocacy work through the forum. Unfortunately, for a long time, some of the associations that animate the forum have been like defending the causes of the individuals and groups that compose them. Given the scale of pastoral land grabbing and the large resources available to its authors, each association must be able to transcend its interests and move from lobbying to advocacy to defend pastoral mobility, the collective interests of nomadic and transhumant herders without distinction.

Already, the interaction with other associations within the forum and the various successes achieved, in particular the cessation of pastoral land grabbing and the cross-border convention, were important points of support. For the forum to be more effective, it is necessary to strengthen certain associations and especially the focal points in terms of advocacy with political and economic decision-makers and in terms of raising awareness and mobilising the general to put pressure on these decision-makers for pastoralism.

Advocacy, especially for pastoralism, is a strategy that requires rigour towards oneself and strict compliance with institutional rules and procedures, transparency but also sufficient human and financial resources. However, the latter are cruelly lacking in the associations that run the Pastoral Forum because the few donors who intervene in the field of livestock often prioritise physical activities (wells, schools, health centre, etc.).

## 4. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND IMPACT OF ZAMTAPO 2011-2019

### Quantitative results achieved between 2011 to 2019

Intervention area	Results
Securing pastoral mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,553 kilometres of marked corridors, areas and enclaves;</li> <li>• 605 kilometres of planted hedges;</li> <li>• 97 inter-community fora carried out in terms of social negotiations;</li> <li>• 25 awareness campaigns before and after the raining seasons conducted</li> <li>• 860.5 hectares of half-moons planted in pastoral areas, of which 234.75 hectares were planted or covered with acacia trees.</li> <li>• 160 basic land commissions set up and trained</li> <li>• 2,572 land transaction deeds issued</li> <li>• 24 training workshops on structures of the rural code carried out</li> <li>• 19 intercommunity mediations conducted by the structures of the rural code.</li> <li>• 3 geo-referenced maps produced</li> <li>• 7 transhumance observatories carried out</li> <li>• 6 conflict investigations conducted</li> <li>• 1 water consumption survey conducted</li> <li>• 1 film produces</li> <li>• 1 forum for transhumant women organised</li> </ul>
Infrastructure development and management structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49 pastoral wells completed (41 new and 8 rehabilitated): this has made it possible to increase the pastoral water coverage rate in the Mayayi department, which had only 7 pastoral wells over an area of 6,500 km<sup>2</sup> at the start of ZAMTAPO;</li> <li>• 35 standpipes at schools and health centres installed</li> <li>• 96 latrine blocks at schools and health centres constructed</li> <li>• 2 Mini AEP (small-scale water works) (including 1 new and 1 rehabilitated) constructed</li> <li>• 5 community training courses in site monitoring techniques conducted</li> <li>• 47 well management committees created and formed</li> <li>• 585 ha herbaceous seeding</li> <li>• 17 management committees for the areas set up and trained</li> </ul>
Advocacy for pastoralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 441 radio broadcasts in local languages on transhumance scripts</li> <li>• 1 bilateral agreement signed</li> <li>• 1 debate and workshops on pastoral hydraulics conducted</li> <li>• 8 meetings of the pastoral forum facilitated</li> <li>• 2 cross-border meetings between pastoral associations Niger-Nigeria facilitated</li> <li>• 2 land use plan processes supported</li> </ul>

## **Qualitative results achieved between 2011 and 2019** (evolution of the positive context of transhumance compared to the initial situation)

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### Conflicts related to access to land

While the Rural Code theoretically recognizes that "pastoralists, owners or guardians of livestock capital have the right to free access to natural resources" pastoralists' access to natural resources was in the beginning of the project never free. It was subject to respect for local uses and these local uses were often determined by sedentary and agricultural interests. For transhumant or traditional transhumant communities, this insecurity was compounded by the domination of sedentary communities over state organs and traditional authority that decided disputes and determined who may or may not claim ownership of land or access to resources.

The popularisation of the texts and procedures of the Rural Code by the structures of the Rural Code (support to COFODEP, COFOCOM, COFOB) to inform and sensitise communities on land security procedures by drawing up land deeds that will be included in the rural file at the regional level led to better recognition of pastoralists' rights to land and resources. The demarcation of transhumance corridors based on consensus made it possible to identify and demarcate pastoral and agricultural areas and thus mitigate conflicts arising from encroachment on farmers' fields by transhumant livestock or the occupation of pastoral land by farmers seeking to expand their cultivated areas at the expense of transhumants. Due to the interventions of the project, pastoral areas are now delimited, secured, developed, registered with the land use plans and effectively assigned to pastoral activity on a legal basis. Access to pastoral resources is now an inalienable right that is effectively recognised by the various actors.

### Conflicts related to access to water

For transhumants and their herds, access to water was very problematic at the beginning of the project: either the water level of ponds or wells is too low to water the herds, or the villagers have not left enough access to the pond or well to avoid field damage, or the well equipment is not suitable for livestock watering. The number of wells for pastoral purposes is very low. Pastoralists' access to village wells was difficult and was the source of several violent conflicts. The construction of pastoral wells along the corridors makes it now possible to reduce the high demand by

transhumants to use village wells. In addition, animals from villages surrounding the pastoral wells constructed can use these wells. Thus, there are now almost no conflicts over access to water points, due to the construction of 49 cemented pastoral wells alongside corridors and secured areas.

### Conflicts related to access to crop residues

Traditionally, pastoralists came down from the north through harvested fields to feed their animals on the residues, in exchange, the cattle spread manure on the fields and thus enriched the land. With increasing population pressure, the increasing number of livestock remaining in the village and the increasing scarcity of fuel available for cooking, sedentary farmers have been increasingly collecting crop residues for their own needs before the arrival of transhumants. In addition, water or fodder shortages occur earlier than expected in the north (as is the case in a year of crisis), livestock farmers have no alternative but to go to agricultural areas. Finally, a relatively new practice is to plant several species maturing at different times on the same field (e. g. sorghum and cowpea), which extends the period when cattle are not allowed to enter the fields.

Though the conducted post-harvest awareness campaigns which inform communities about the opening dates of fields and advocate for livestock owners to access crop residues, the conflicts around this access substantially decreased. In addition, it is seen that more and more "fertilizer contracts" between farmers and transhumants are established. Now that there is a corridor and clear demarcation of the boundaries, there is no damage of fields. If a transhumant arrives to a field (after the harvest) he informs the village chief. Then the owner of the field in which the transhumant has settled welcomes the herder and brings him millet and/or cowpea. At the end of the stay, the transhumant gives the owner of the field an animal or another compensation.

### Conflicts related to access to fodder

Development activities (after demarcation) within the grazing areas, in particular, the clearing of *Sida cordifolia*, seeding with edible grasses, planting trees, protecting the developed part and its rapid regeneration have led to significant improvement

in forage production in these areas. In addition, awareness campaigns helped to explain to communities the rules of access to shared common resources such as fodder and straw.

#### Pluralism of forms of authority and management systems

In Niger, three systems exist in the exercise of authority and in the management of space. On the one hand, there is the traditional pastoral chieftaincy (group leaders, tribes and families) operating according to a strategy of access to resources (pastures and water). On the other hand, there is the traditional agricultural chieftaincy (canton chiefs, sectors and villages) operating according to a sedentary logic and fixed spaces. And finally, there is the State dominated by the children of farmers with a law that generally favours the recognition of "fixed" development activities, to the detriment of "mobile" activities.

The popularisation of the texts of the Rural Code by COFOB, COFOCOM, COFODEP raised awareness among rural producers of their rights and duties and thus helped to mitigate abuses by certain authorities. Since the start of the project, no deadly conflicts have been recorded in the project area. Conflicts are resolved by the structures of the Rural Code or at least in accordance with the texts of the Rural Code and with reference to the maps of the territory secured by ZAMTAPO. In addition, the pastoral forum that emerged from the HEKS/EPER initiative was able to suspend two attempts to seize pastoral lands, including the 90,000 hectares of pastoral land and 60 km of the international transhumance corridor.

#### The questioning of the authority of the judicial system

As soon as influential persons change (canton chief, group chief, prefect or judge), his decisions can be challenged. A decision taken is always liable to be overturned, and this without the basis of the new decision being understood by the persons concerned. The establishment of land deeds and minutes from the base to the top of the Rural Code structures (COFOB to the SPR/CR) secures and perpetuates land transactions.

The 1,553 kilometres of marked corridors, areas and pastoral enclaves mapped by the project as a result of social agreements provide a solid legal basis for resolving conflicts over shared common resources. In addition, 2,572 land transaction deeds drawn up by the land commissions and geo-

referenced and registered maps are an evidence to limit conflicts, just as the introduction of the COFOB has helped to limit the questioning of the judicial system.

#### Break down prejudices

Prejudices about ethnic groups have been strong in the beginning of the project. When it comes to securing pastoralists' links to natural resources, sedentary people's prejudices about the impossibility for a Peulh to own the land arised. As a result, more and more Fulani and Tuaregs were permanently settling in predominantly Hausa agricultural areas, and Hausas were expanding increasingly northward.

In a context where available land is increasingly scarce, where land management mechanisms are dominated by the Hausa, and where firearms are more and more widespread, the risk of exploiting ethnic prejudices was growing.

These prejudices are the consequences of recurrent conflicts between farmers and herders. Inter-group hatred has developed, but it can fade once the rights and duties of both sides are known and shared in terms of texts and certain achievements. For example, demarcation makes it possible to allocate one area for agriculture and another for livestock during the raining season. The inter-community forums organized along the corridors brought together the antagonistic populations in a neutral and immediate non-conflictive environment, which allowed both sides to approach and express themselves in a supportive environment and supervised by administrative and customary authorities. The opportunity to express oneself and listen allowed a better understanding of the constraints of both groups and reduces mistrust and resentment.

The social agreements resulting from such forums, concluded with the populations present and recorded by an accord signed by the traditional chiefs, thus constitute social charters essential to lasting peace between communities.

#### Counter arbitrary application of the law

While the entire Nigerian population is subject to an exercise of power that is not based on a transparent logic, the arbitrary application of law particularly affected pastoralist populations, due to their low representativeness in the dominant power structures. The livestock sector is the "cash cow" of the powers in place. In addition to the payment of taxes at livestock markets, the

sanctions imposed on livestock farmers are often arbitrary. Thus, in the event of damage to the countryside, the fines imposed often go far beyond the damage suffered. The affected communities have no realistic means of appealing against these abuses, and being mobile, they do not participate in decisions on the allocation of taxes on livestock markets collected by local authorities.

Awareness-raising campaigns, foras, and activities led by COFOBs improved this situation. During these fora and awareness campaigns, the texts are translated into local languages accessible to rural producers. Due to the project's interventions, the structures of the Rural Code make more use of legal tools which allows a non-arbitrary but content-based application of the existing law.

#### Enhanced social cohesion

Land conflicts, particularly those between farmers and herders, decreased considerably in the intervention area between 2011 and 2019. All communities, both herders and farmers, are providing relief and the agreement is back between these communities. The results of the surveys conducted in the beginning of 2011 and in 2018 corroborate this information.

During the "women and transhumance" forum held in September 2018, several people stated that they had forged friendly relations with transhumants since the corridors were marked out and the areas were developed. And some even claimed to have animals in their homes received as donations from transhumants. Forum participants said that often friendship with transhumants begins at the well. When they (women farmers) arrive at the pastoral well to obtain water, the transhumants willingly fill their jars or cans. After two or three days, they bring a gift to the transhumants (millet ball, cowpea, sorrel or other) and the women of the transhumants offer them curdled milk, butter or cheese and before leaving the well (at the end of their stay in the area), the transhumants or their wives give the women farmers a small ruminant or another gift.

From mental mapping to georeferenced mapping: a tool to help conflict management

Geo-referenced mapping of secured territories is a key element of the ZAMTAPO approach. The process begins with a transposition of the mental map of communities on a topographic map. Once the social negotiation process is completed, the mechanical delimitation carried out, the various boundaries are geo-referenced to develop a map of secured pastoral resources. Once completed, this map is placed in the rural file at the regional level to feed the regional land use planning scheme (SAF).

The maps produced as part of ZAMTAPO are also used as a management tool for the structures of the Rural Code, the gendarmerie and the judiciary. Indeed, in the event of conflicts, it is easier for the judiciary or rural code structures to go to the field and survey geographical coordinates to find out who is right or wrong between a farmer encroaching on a secured pastoral zone or a herder crossing the boundaries of pastoral zones. This tool did not exist before the intervention of ZAMTAPO and conflict resolution in the event of land damage became complex and led to disputes that produced inter-community frustrations.

#### Transhumance Observatories: A tool to assist in pastoral planning

The transhumance observatory is a punctual survey system located at the convergence points of the transhumance corridors. It makes it possible to quantify the flow of herds. A grazing area or a bridge are transhumance convergence axes. This is where two portions of corridors meet, which most often constitute a transit area, a pastoral enclave. The transhumance observatory takes place at the time of the rise of transhumants in the North. Its purpose is to discuss with transhumants the difficulties encountered during their journey, but also to identify with them propositions for solutions. This system also makes it possible to quantify the flow of herds using the secured tracks and record the frequency of conflicts during each transhumance on each of the transhumance corridors. It is also a decision-making tool in a transhumant environment.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The work carried out by HEKS/EPER within the framework of the ZAMTAPO project in the Maradi region was well appreciated by the actors and is complementary both geographically and in terms of the sociological process to other development project implemented in the region. This complementarity made it possible to treat the major (95%) parts of the transhumance corridors of the Maradi region both in terms of security and hydraulic facilities along the routes.

This complementarity has allowed the Maradi region to be "the flagship region" in terms of secure and viable pastoral resources for peaceful transhumance and intercommunity cohabitation as the name of the Project indicates: ZAMTAPO - cohabitation in peace. The decrease of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the region over the past two decades and the regional map of

secure and managed pastoral resources below bear witness to this.

Convinced of the results obtained and the effects produced by these interventions, ZAMTAPO plans to carry out a "scaling up" in the Zinder region on the issues of securing transhumance routes, while gradually leaving the Maradi region, allowing it to correct certain deficiencies noted by the capitalisation, in this case the capacity building of rural code structures at grassroots level and those of pastoral well management committees. The experience from the Maradi region will be replicated in the Zinder region to improve transhumance as a whole during the next phase. This replicability will be based on a common pastoral project for both regions (Maradi-Zinder) during the next phase IV of ZAMTAPO.



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