



MID-TERM EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE PROGRAM FOR
EASTERN POPULATIONS FACING CONFLICT AND
CLIMATE CHANGE IN CHAD (RESPECCT)

Executive Summary



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Program context and evaluation methodology approach

The Economic and Social Resilience of Eastern Populations Facing Conflict and Climate Change in Chad (RESPECCT) program is part of a regional context marked by a profound multidimensional crisis. Since April 2023, the resumption of conflict in Sudan has caused a massive influx of refugees into the eastern provinces, including Ouaddaï, Sila, and Wadi Fira, exacerbating already heavy pressure on natural resources, social services, and community cohesion. This crisis adds to long-standing structural vulnerabilities linked to poverty, chronic food insecurity, and the effects of climate change. In this context, the program, implemented since February 2023 by a consortium of international and national NGOs, aims to combine humanitarian aid, economic recovery, and peacebuilding using a Nexus approach.

The external mid-term evaluation analyses the program's performance using the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, while incorporating a cross-cutting analysis of issues such as gender, local governance, and conflict sensitivity. It is based on a mixed methodology combining documentary analysis, quantitative household surveys, individual interviews, and group discussions conducted in the three provinces of intervention. The triangulation of sources has made it possible to assess in a nuanced way the progress made, the limitations observed, and the dynamics at work.

Mid-term program performance

In terms of relevance, the program appears to be strongly aligned with the needs of host populations, refugees, and returnees. The priorities identified by the communities (access to livelihoods, food security, social cohesion, and prevention of tensions) closely correspond to the areas of intervention selected. The Sudanese crisis of 2023 has profoundly changed the context since the program was designed, but it has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt. RESPECCT plays a central role in areas outside camps, which are less covered by traditional humanitarian aid, by helping to absorb the shocks associated with new arrivals and limiting local tensions. The Nexus approach thus appears relevant in responding to the intertwining of humanitarian, economic, and social vulnerabilities, while RESPECCT will be responsible for building certain basic service infrastructures, as some structural needs go beyond the scope of the program.

The program's coherence is generally satisfactory. This is evident first and foremost in the complementary roles of the consortium members. This division of responsibilities promotes functional coordination between assistance, recovery, and peace. External coherence is also ensured by the program's alignment with national priorities and strategic frameworks related to resilience, decentralization, and conflict management. Decentralized government services participate in consultation mechanisms and technical monitoring, although the regularity of exchanges and the formalization of this coordination could be strengthened. At the community level, local committees play a key role in reporting information, mobilizing resources, and mediating, helping to anchor the program in local dynamics.

The effectiveness analysis shows mixed results at mid-term. The cash assistance component is the most advanced and visible: nearly 9,000 households have been reached through several transfer cycles, with tangible effects on reducing negative survival strategies and temporarily stabilizing food consumption. Quantitative data indicate a moderate improvement in consumption and food diversity scores. However, the structural components (IGA, vocational

training, environmental actions, and social cohesion activities) have experienced significant delays due to administrative, security, and organizational constraints, as well as the impact of the Sudanese crisis. These delays have hampered the sequential logic of the Nexus and limited the program's ability to produce lasting effects at this stage. The positive dynamics observed (functional AVECs, initial improvements in community relations, increased participation of women) remain fragile and unevenly distributed across areas.

In terms of efficiency, the program presents a marked contrast between good control of financial procedures and slow operational execution. The budget consumption rate remains low at mid-term (26% of the overall budget), reflecting implementation delays rather than financial inefficiencies. However, the cash component illustrates efficient use of resources: transfer costs are contained at around 5% and the transfer amount has been adjusted from 42,000 to 48,000 CFA francs to take inflation into account. Monitoring, accountability, and control mechanisms are functional, and audits have not revealed any major irregularities. Nevertheless, the lack of synchronization between the different components (cash, IGA, social cohesion) limits the overall return on investment. The costs incurred for studies, diagnostics, and technical tools are relevant, but their added value will depend on their effective translation into operational activities in the next phase.

In terms of impact, the effects observed at this stage are mainly emerging. The program helps to mitigate immediate vulnerabilities, by stabilizing food consumption and providing partial support for livelihoods. AVECs are an important lever for economic empowerment, particularly for women, although their potential remains conditional on the effective deployment of IGAs. On the social front, there are encouraging signs of cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities, particularly through the collective spaces and dialogue mechanisms supported by the program. However, the effects on gender norms and conflict prevention remain embryonic and require further action. A comparative analysis with former beneficiaries of the DIZA-East program suggests that sustainable impacts are achievable, but that they require time, continuity of intervention, and stronger coordination between the different components.

Cross-cutting issues are generally integrated into the program design, but their operational implementation remains uneven at mid-term. The conflict-sensitive approach is an important achievement, particularly through the analyses produced and the initial community dialogue mechanisms, which help prevent tensions between host populations, refugees, and returnees, but are not yet fully deployed in the field. Gender mainstreaming is visible in the targeting and strong participation of women, with emerging effects on their economic autonomy and ability to speak out, but changes in social norms remain limited due to a lack of systematic transformational actions. Environmental and climate issues are well identified in the program strategy, but their operationalization remains partial due to the late start of activities and the still weak link between warning systems and operational decision. Finally, accountability and community participation mechanisms are functional and widely recognized, although their effectiveness varies across areas and would benefit from greater coordination with local authorities. Overall, the cross-cutting dimensions provide a relevant foundation for the Nexus approach, but their full potential will depend on more consistent and synchronized implementation during the remainder of the program.

In conclusion, the mid-term evaluation shows that RESPECCT is a relevant program, well aligned with strategic needs and priorities in a particularly unstable context. It has a solid conceptual architecture and real potential for transformation, particularly thanks to its Nexus approach.

However, its effectiveness and efficiency remain below initial ambitions due to cumulative delays and the still incomplete implementation of the structural components. The remaining period is a decisive window of opportunity to accelerate implementation, strengthen the link between the humanitarian, development, and peace pillars, and consolidate achievements. If this momentum to catch up is confirmed, the program will be able to fully play its role in stabilizing and sustainably strengthening the resilience of the populations of eastern Chad.

Lessons learned and good practices

Lessons learned

The implementation of the program confirms that interventions in eastern Chad must be designed to be fundamentally adaptive, in a context marked by recurring and unpredictable shocks. The Sudanese crisis has shown that the ability to adjust quickly is crucial, and that *crisis-type* mechanisms should be integrated more structurally into planning in order to avoid disruptions in implementation.

Experience shows that the Nexus approach only produces results if its various components are implemented in a synchronized manner. When cash assistance, economic recovery, and social cohesion are deployed in an unbalanced way, the impacts remain partial and fragile. Conversely, their gradual articulation is an essential lever for stabilization and resilience.

Community structures appear to be indispensable for mobilization, accountability, and the prevention of tensions. However, their effectiveness depends on continuous support and coordination with decentralized services, without which their role remains limited or uneven depending on the area.

Managing community expectations is a key challenge in a context marked by a strong humanitarian presence. The introduction of structural approaches requires constant communication, transparency, and explanation to avoid misunderstandings and frustrations and to maintain confidence in the program's targeting and priorities.

Finally, the results already achieved confirm that technical approaches must be adapted to local ecological and social realities. Agroecological practices, for example, produce different effects depending on the area and require specific support, highlighting the need for finely tailored interventions.

Good practices

Village Savings and Credit Association (AVECs) are one of the program's most solid achievements, both as a mechanism for economic empowerment and as a space for social cohesion. Their rapid adoption, smooth operation, and ability to continue beyond the direct support of the project make them a key lever for community resilience.

The accountability mechanisms put in place have increased transparency and helped prevent tensions related to targeting. Beyond their control function, they promote dialogue, trust, and peaceful dispute resolution, which strengthens the overall acceptability of interventions.

The gradual integration of gender, protection, and social cohesion dimensions is an important step forward. Awareness-raising activities have promoted greater participation by women and initiated changes in intra-family and community dynamics, laying the foundations for more sustainable social transformations.

The context and conflict analyses and methodological frameworks developed represent a major strategic asset. They improve understanding of local dynamics and enhance the quality of management, provided they are quickly translated into operational decisions and concrete actions.

Coordination within the consortium is a key factor in ensuring consistency, promoting complementary expertise and aligning interventions. Despite the costs of coordination, this organization enhances the program's visibility and supports a truly integrated approach to the Nexus.

Finally, community and institutional anchoring reinforces the sustainability of actions. The gradual involvement of local authorities, technical services, and community structures promotes ownership, alignment with public priorities, and continuity of effects beyond the project cycle.

Recommendations

The recommendations below aim to remove the main obstacles identified at mid-term and accelerate the production of results, while consolidating the coherence and sustainability of the program:

1. Streamline administrative and validation procedures at the donor and consortium levels to reduce implementation delays and secure the operational sequence of the Nexus.
2. Strengthen the institutional anchoring of the program through the formal involvement of local authorities and decentralized services in order to improve the coordination, continuity, and sustainability of actions.
3. Structure proactive community communication, based on regular information and accountability mechanisms, to limit misunderstandings, manage expectations, and build trust among the population.
4. Implement a plan to accelerate structural components (IGA, environmental projects, social cohesion), with a clear timetable, defined responsibilities, and close monitoring of progress.
5. Strengthen the link between AVEC, IGA, and vocational training in order to maximize economic and social impacts and consolidate pathways out of vulnerability.

6. Expand social cohesion and conflict prevention activities in the most sensitive areas, particularly around land issues, transhumance, and cohabitation between refugees and host populations.
7. Strengthen technical support for environmental actions, relying more on decentralized services and practical exchanges to promote the sustainable adoption of agroecological techniques.
8. Enhance and strengthen existing accountability mechanisms by improving their visibility and feedback to communities in order to consolidate transparency and trust around the program.