



Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research

Case study—Social protection and humanitarian responses to food insecurity and poverty in Mali

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About the project

The [Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems](#) study is a research programme (2015 to 2018) led by Oxford Policy Management (OPM), in consortium with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and INASP. Its aim is to strengthen the evidence base as to when and how social protection systems can better respond to shocks in low-income countries and fragile and conflict-affected states, thus minimising negative shock impacts and reducing the need for separate humanitarian responses. The research is funded by UK Aid from the UK government, as part of the UK Department for International Development's (DFID's) Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP), an initiative to improve the quality, quantity and use of evidence in humanitarian programming.

Six case studies form the core of the analysis of features of a social protection system that facilitate its use to respond to shocks, and of the ways in which social protection, humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management systems can best work together for a more effective response. The three in-depth case studies—of Mozambique, Mali and Pakistan—explore the issue across a wide range of shocks, and reviewing a number of social protection interventions. Two light-touch case studies, of the Philippines and Lesotho, focus on a single shock. Finally, a light study of the Sahel region reviews regionwide mechanisms for responding to food security crises.

About this report

The in-depth case study of Mali analyses the experiences of the social protection, humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management sectors in coming together in recent years to try to reduce reliance on annual humanitarian interventions as a response to large-scale food insecurity in the country and to strengthen the use of social protection interventions to respond to covariate shocks. The study focuses particularly on activities undertaken since the sociopolitical conflict of 2012, and also takes into account the effect of that conflict on policy design and implementation. It should be noted that, while research was completed in late 2016, this report was only published in January 2018, meaning 2017 evolutions are not discussed. This is the full case study report. A summary briefing note is published separately.

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Executive summary

Approach and method

Globally, the frequency, size and duration of natural, economic and political disasters and crises are on the rise. Governments and international agencies alike are committed to responding more efficiently and effectively to shocks. Our research explores two related themes: the potential role of social protection systems in responding to large-scale shocks; and opportunities for coordination or integration of humanitarian interventions, disaster risk management (DRM) and social protection.

Mali is one of our six case studies. Mali has addressed seasonal food insecurity for decades, often using humanitarian aid to assist households that might rather be considered chronically poor. Since 2012 this situation has been combined in the north with conflict and internal displacement, which impede the government's delivery of routine social protection services. A few shock-responsive social protection interventions are already being considered or undertaken. Between October 2015 and October 2016 we conducted over 60 interviews, complemented with documentary review and participation in Mali's social protection conferences, to understand the features in the system that facilitate or impede an effective response to shocks. We focus here on the contribution of free food distribution, school feeding programmes and cash transfers.

Shocks and vulnerability in Mali

Mali experiences repeated widespread droughts that can affect millions of people. The northern regions—Gao, Kidal and Tombouctou—are largely desert. Livelihoods there are adapted to the conditions, and herding rather than agriculture is common. The regions with the lowest average household consumption are all in the south, though this area has the greatest agricultural potential. Some 90% of the population of 18 million lives in the south, so in absolute numbers, seasonal food insecurity is highest there. Recent annual estimates of the number of food insecure people, which take into account structural needs as well as drought emergencies, have been around 3-5 million a year, of whom around 400,000 are in need of immediate food assistance (precise numbers vary).

The major recent shock has been the political crisis of 2012 and the ongoing conflict in the north, which affected 3 million people, including 400,000 displaced (half within Mali, half going abroad). This has compounded vulnerability nationwide, owing to e.g. a lack of assets among the displaced, pressure on infrastructure and services in host communities, and lack of access to markets.

Poverty is thought to have increased significantly since 2010. Meanwhile the total fertility rate is one of the highest in the world (6.2 births per woman). The slow demographic transition is challenging for food security.

Institutional arrangements and their implications

Responsibility for addressing shocks is split mainly across the three ministries covering social protection, DRM and food security (known respectively as the MSAH, MSPC and CSA). Social protection interventions are also implemented by ministries of finance, education, agriculture and health. There is political will for using social protection to address shocks, both *ex-ante* and *ex-post*: it is discussed in the national social protection policy of 2016 and in the national document of resilience priorities known as the PRP. Some refer to the need for overall expansion of social

protection as a priority; others suggest there is value in a system that scales up in a crisis. Human resource and financial implications had not always been detailed at the time of the research. The main document guiding food security assistance is the annual National Response Plan, which combines government and donor-funded interventions. The CSA is in the midst of reform and plans to strengthen its position in favour of longer term support to livelihoods and resilience. This includes considering the use of cash transfers and expanding activities with a nutrition focus. The sector least integrated with the others at a policy level is DRM: the national DRM strategy highlights close links between DRM and humanitarian aid but is less explicit about a role for social protection in managing disasters, though the MSPC recognises the broader benefits of social protection for households' resilience.

Interventions for short-term crises and for long-term development are not always perceived by the government as distinct activities. We see convergence in the approaches of state and non-state actors supporting social protection, DRM, food security, resilience and humanitarian initiatives: social protection is trying to be more flexible, while humanitarian actors aim to offer more predictable support.

Over 150 humanitarian agencies were operating in Mali as of late 2015, of whom nearly half were dealing with food insecurity. Most operate in the north, though the fragility of the security situation in that region has constrained even their access. Some, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), have a dual humanitarian–development mission, which is valuable for achieving a flexible approach when the boundary between the two is not strongly evident.

Social protection interventions and their responsiveness to shocks

Since the government differentiates little between policies to address seasonal food insecurity as promoted by 'humanitarian' and 'development' actors¹, we ask what is meant by the concept of making the system more 'shock-responsive', regardless of who delivers the service. We consider that an intervention can be said to be improving its shock-responsiveness if, during a crisis, it succeeds in offering more **comprehensive** coverage of those in need, is more **timely** (i.e. responds sooner—maybe even before the crisis), and more **predictable** (in particular, funding can be relied upon) and if it reduces unnecessary duplication of delivery systems, compared with whatever was previously in place. We assess how several social protection interventions are addressing these challenges.

Free food distribution

CSA's annual food aid distribution has developed into a *de facto* safety net addressing chronic needs, tied to an early warning system and a cycle of short-term needs assessments and funding. It is fundamentally designed for *horizontal expansion and contraction* (i.e. flexibly extending to new households as needed) depending on the population living in areas classified as in crisis. Coverage is wide: the 166 of Mali's 703 communes that are identified as the most vulnerable always receive support, while coverage of others varies depending on need. *Vertical expansion* (i.e. increasing the household ration) is often implemented in the lean season. International agencies work in communes where the CSA is present and a discussion is ongoing as to whether they should only provide top-ups to CSA-supported households, or complement the CSA's list. While food distribution operates fairly soon after the annual food security assessment, it is *post-hoc* so does not prevent households becoming food insecure. A response reliably takes place each

¹ Interventions that would be considered elsewhere as emergency / humanitarian response are viewed by the government in Mali as part of social protection. See also Section 4.1.

year, but the support is less predictable for individual households as targeting is redone annually. As for reducing duplication of systems, the main opportunities are in targeting and subsequent monitoring. If the CSA moves towards distributing cash this will create opportunities for harmonisation of e.g. payment methods. Other agencies' interventions are not closely *aligned* with the CSA's in either composition or timing, partly because they are aligned with other interventions, notably Jigisèmèjiri (see below).

School meals programmes

The government's school meals programme reaches 20% of primary schools and is complemented by externally funded schemes, mainly by WFP. The government scheme prioritises the 166 most vulnerable communes and plans to expand when it has the funds and capacity. It has education—not just food security—objectives, so it would be inappropriate for it to constantly shift its priority schools in response to shocks. By focusing on vulnerable areas it is already somewhat sensitive to shocks. Two constraints in expanding the government scheme, especially in a conflict, are, first, that provision of school meals must keep pace with basic education (schools will not be reopened in conflict areas to provide meals unless there are also qualified staff, a secure building and a water supply); and second, disbursement of government funds to the decentralised authorities responsible for school meal provision is slow, as seen in an attempt at temporary expansion in 2014–15.

The WFP-funded scheme has more flexibility. It has *expanded horizontally* (reaching more schools and pupils) and *refocused* (moved areas); it has also *expanded vertically* (providing extra to existing beneficiaries by increasing to two meals a day, giving take-home rations and extending into the school holidays). *Piggybacking* on its organisational systems to provide other social protection support had not been done, and raised some legitimate concerns about weakening the educational objective of the intervention. Note that the flexible elements move WFP's intervention out of alignment with the government's, since the core intervention is already closely aligned: alignment between government and non-government programmes is not always crucial.

Cash transfers: Jigisèmèjiri and two emergency cash transfers, the CCFS and CCTS

ECHO funded NGOs to deliver one-year emergency cash transfers in northern Mali in 2014 (called the CCFS) and 2016 (called the CCTS). In both cases a group of five or six NGOs, the *cadre commun*, harmonised their interventions with one another. They also aimed to harmonise where possible with the national cash transfer programme, Jigisèmèjiri, and with aspects of the DRM system. ECHO is aiming to better embed its intervention into longer term systems by collaborating with the EU's development arm to provide complementary support to the CCTS and by contributing to the establishment of a unified beneficiary registry, leading eventually to a 'social registry' (the 'RSU'), a management information system (MIS) for multiple interventions and service providers.

Meanwhile Jigisèmèjiri was set up in 2012 and was working in around 100 communes at the time of the research. It provides poor households with three years of support at CFA 10,000 (\$16) per month. Some 47,000 households were receiving support as of late 2016. Jigisèmèjiri is a project implemented by a unit in the ministry of finance and largely funded by the World Bank, whose wider project includes support for establishing a government-led system of basic social assistance. It has mostly worked only in the south, but in 2016 it moved into Gao region in the north, bringing about the need for closer alignment with the CCTS which operates there. A project amendment by the World Bank in mid-2016 adjusted Jigisèmèjiri's objective to state explicitly the building of an '*adaptive national safety net system*', to emphasise the importance of resilience to shocks.

Alignment between the CCFS / CCTS and Jigisèmèjiri has included cooperation on components of the method for household listing and selection of households, the use of a common household identification code and—in 2016—the use of the same transfer value (the CCFS in 2014 was CFA 100,000 per year rather than CFA 120,000). The *cadres communs* linked up with DRM systems by using early warning system data to select geographical areas for intervention.

The alignment of NGOs in the ECHO *cadres communs* with each other, not only with Jigisèmèjiri, is useful in an eventual transition between humanitarian assistance and social protection. Aspects of programming that have been aligned include the logframe, questionnaires and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach. In turn Jigisèmèjiri is harmonising with other social protection interventions (not just with emergency programmes). For example, the automatic enrolment of Jigisèmèjiri beneficiaries onto the RAMED medical assistance scheme is being trialled, since households requiring cash assistance are also likely to be those targeted by RAMED.

Humanitarian interventions such as the *cadres communs* are responding largely to recurrent, predictable needs, not exceptional situations. Donors such as ECHO would like to see a progressive transfer of this caseload to the state-run system so they can focus on acute crises, in Mali or elsewhere. This requires the state system to be fully operational in the north, which is likely to take many more years. In the meantime it is appropriate to continue with harmonising humanitarian interventions, alignment with the emerging state system, and piggybacking on existing system components. There remain many aspects of humanitarian programming that are not yet aligned, including the interventions of many agencies not in the *cadre commun*.

In a chronic crisis it is vital to ensure sustainable financing. A government programme based on the CCFS and Jigisèmèjiri would need, at full scale, to cover several hundred thousand households at a cost that the Malian government cannot afford in the short term. These interventions remain largely funded by international donors. Mechanisms for disaster risk financing of social protection measures are being explored by the government and its partners, including through the African Risk Capacity (ARC) insurance mechanism, though the details of how this would work are not specified. The World Bank and the multi-donor funded Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery are looking at options for funding the possible scale-up of Jigisèmèjiri in a disaster, and have set up a working group. We see the appeal of such a programme, and the working group offers a good prospect for developing a rigorously designed system. Nonetheless, since Jigisèmèjiri reaches only about 2% of households, while about one-quarter of the population is chronically food insecure and 44% of the population lives below the poverty line, it is reasonable to prioritise the question of how to increase its long-term expansion.

There remains a question about how easily a state-run system can take on further responsibilities in a situation of extreme fragility as in northern Mali. An advantage of the CCFS as expressed by some community members was precisely that it was not the state. Besides this, the MSAH, is quite small nationally. This is not necessarily a problem: it is not required to run all social protection activities. However, it has a mandate to coordinate these activities, and should be able to do so.

Using the elements of a social protection system for shock-response

The government is working on strengthening the elements of a social protection *system* as well as improving the effectiveness of individual interventions. We review the system's human resources, targeting approach and the planned database, the RSU.

We found general agreement on five attributes of human resourcing required for the use of social protection in large-scale crises in Mali. First, the government should be taking the lead where appropriate (though this might not always be possible in conflict situations). Second, some

government capacity already exists. Third, this capacity is extremely stretched, especially in the north, which impedes the delivery of even routine social protection. The government cannot create 'surge capacity' through recruiting extra staff to respond to a continual 'crisis'; still less to bolster its presence in conflict zones. Fourth, capacity should be strengthened locally as well as nationally, as decentralisation becomes more prominent. Fifth, non-government actors will continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock-response and social protection for the long term.

Regarding targeting, the preference for different methods by humanitarian and development actors (the household economy approach, and proxy means testing) results in very different beneficiaries. This may be a challenge in moving between programme types. Actors in Mali are fully aware of this and are undertaking research to address it in Gao, where both types of programme are delivered. Changes to targeting may have less impact on households in the Sahel than might be expected because of the widespread practice of redistribution of benefits. Programme effectiveness also depends on geographical targeting. There are already links between DRM and social protection systems to promote shock-responsiveness, through use of the list of vulnerable communes.

Mali's proposed integrated MIS, the RSU, is envisaged as a gateway for actors working on social assistance to access information about individuals and households. It was in its design phase at the time of the research. The fact that the RSU is planned does not automatically mean it will be relevant or efficient for use in all shocks. Two factors favouring the development of the RSU are, first, political support for its creation, and, second, momentum from the process being underway for over a year already. Integrated MISs still have challenges even once they manage to solve the fundamental problem of maintaining comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate data. The use of databases in emergencies—and, more so, in a conflict—adds further complexity, as there are concerns about the protection of beneficiaries. Table 2 in the main report lists features of the RSU that determine its relevance. Three challenges that affect the use of the RSU in any situation are the multisectoral nature of social protection, which means it is not feasible for every intervention to be on it; mistrust in data quality; and accessibility of the data in a highly resource-constrained environment. With the major shocks in Mali being food insecurity and conflict, if the RSU is to work in a shock it will also have to deal with timely updates, changes to households' material situation, population displacement and the reluctance to share personal information in conflict zones.

Funding considerations

It is complex to achieve a shift from funding *ex-post* responses to crises, to *ex-ante* measures for resilience-building and disaster prevention. Government expenditure on shock-responsive social protection is shaped by the overall health of its budget, the share for routine social protection and food security, the availability of funds for unexpected or large shocks, and its ability to disburse and use the amounts budgeted. While both the Malian economy and the government budget are expected to grow in the medium term, spending on social protection is due to rise at a slower rate than other sectors, resulting in a slight decline in its share of the government's main strategic framework budget. Public spending on DRM is hard to identify because it is not classified as a sector.

If the government wishes to address seasonal food insecurity by social protection alone it will have to make more efficient use of existing domestic resources and increase spending in the sector by an order of magnitude. The latter is unrealistic: it struggles to fund even existing programmes. Some analysts propose helping the sector justify a reallocation of funds to its activities. Others suggest 'innovative financing sources', though many sectors—including e.g. health—are looking to the same sources. Within social protection there would need to be advocacy for using funds for food security, as there are other pressing demands unrelated to crises, e.g. a deficit in contributory social security programmes. Social protection is a small part of the overall budget, so any radical

increases in spending will have to come from across all sectors including e.g. agriculture. Since responsibility for responding to crises is now decentralised, a critical issue is the availability of funding locally. A recent evaluation suggests that funding for crisis response has not followed the transfer of responsibility. Insurance may be one way of smoothing expenditure to deal with crises, but is intended to handle exceptional events, not annual fluctuations in need.

The government does not distinguish between development and humanitarian aid in its reporting. Expenditure by self-declared humanitarian donors has declined since the 2014 peak; half or more of humanitarian needs are unfunded. This illustrates the difficulty that governments face in securing funds from international partners for early recovery activities once an immediate crisis is perceived to have passed. A recent report on humanitarian financing declares that, for financing mechanisms to look 'beyond the crisis', attention needs to be paid to anticipation and analysis; upgrading the architecture for financing; and improving efficiency (Poole, 2015). We conclude that Mali, first, is making progress in medium-term planning and analysis of funding needs, and in joint government–donor strategic planning. Second, it faces greater challenges with the mobilisation and release of funds, even for routine social protection, let alone for crises. Third, the shift to large-scale harmonised cash programming is in line with global recommendations for the future efficiency of humanitarian financing. Cost-efficiency analyses of these changes are as yet limited.

Coordination between social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors

Mali is an example of good practice in having quite a comprehensive set of active bodies for agency coordination and joint planning in many relevant sectors, including a functioning UN cluster system and the working group on scaling up Jigisèmèjiri. Some are led by the government; others have joint leads with international partners or are solely for international organisations. Often those with a strong international lead are country-level incarnations of Sahel-wide or global structures, such as the Cash Working Group. ECHO-funded NGOs have strengthened their visibility in policy discussions through the *cadre commun* which makes it easier for them to collaborate with the government and others. At local level the picture is a little more fragmented.

While attendance at meetings is variable, and there were some observations of there being too many, the broad sense was that there was plenty of scope nationally for agencies to learn from others. Ministries responsible for DRM and agriculture are less integrated into the discussions than those for social protection and food security, though the Ministry of Agriculture represents Mali in the regional resilience-building initiative, AGIR, which emphasises the use of social protection.

Conclusion

We have seen that a key question for Mali has been how to achieve the transition of some of the caseload of humanitarian assistance to long-term development, especially for food security. There is no linear progression from 'emergency' to 'transition' to 'development': it is hard to say if, five years after '*la crise*', there is still an emergency in the north or if protracted instability is the 'new normal'. Humanitarian and development agencies are likely to be working in the same space.

A recent paper that explores design challenges for social protection systems cites three prerequisites: *political commitment* to establish the system; *political influence* to secure resources; and *institutional capacity* to deliver. Shock-responsive systems are more complex than those for routine social protection as they draw in a wider set of actors—requiring good coordination—and must hold firm in a crisis. In Mali our analysis has shown that political commitment to shock-responsive social protection is present; political influence to secure resources is much harder in the light of competing priorities; and institutional capacity for shock-responsive social protection is an even greater challenge.

Mali's social protection interventions are currently limited and still developing, though there is a vision for their expansion. Anything that strengthens the ability of routine social protection to support resilience and disaster risk reduction as part of its standard objectives is beneficial. Nonetheless Mali already employs mechanisms for shock-responsive social protection in several of its programmes (vertical and horizontal expansion, piggybacking, alignment and refocusing).

We recommend the following:

1. **Policy integration.** Strengthen the integration of the MSPC, Ministry of Agriculture and decentralised local authorities into policy debates on the transition from humanitarian to social protection responses to food insecurity.
2. **Coordination by the MSAH.** The MSAH should be supported to deliver its mandate for coordination of social protection, including by addressing any blockages that are preventing the establishment of a division of social safety nets which was already approved a year prior to the research.
3. **Support to routine social protection.** The government and its international partners should continue to support the delivery of routine social protection, as a core part of shock response.
4. **Working with local authorities.** Strengthening of human resource capacity should be taking place locally as well as nationally.
5. **Attention to social protection in DRM framework.** The potential role of social protection in DRM is underplayed in frameworks and policy documents. Support DRM actors to consider how social protection interventions and systems can help them achieve their objectives.
6. **Creating an effective integrated MIS.** Take into account the factors that promote or constrain the use of the RSU for shock-responsive social protection, especially how to improve trust in data quality, maximise accessibility without compromising data privacy, and accommodate the changed circumstances of households affected by food insecurity or conflict or who are internally displaced.
7. **Fiscal space for shock-responsive social protection.** Consider how relevant activities can be funded through other sector budgets, especially agriculture.
8. **Cost-efficiency analyses.** Cost-efficiency analyses and other value-for-money studies can help track improvements in value for money brought about by amendments to social protection and humanitarian programming.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| AGIR | Alliance Globale pour la Résilience |
| AMU | <i>assurance maladie obligatoire</i> [= compulsory health insurance] |
| ANAM | Agence Nationale d'Assistance Médicale |
| ARC | African Risk Capacity |
| ASP | Adaptive Social Protection |
| CaLP | Cash Learning Partnership |
| CANAM | Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie |
| CCFS | Cadre Commun sur les Filets Sociaux |
| CCOCSAD | Comité Communal d'Orientation, de Coordination et de Suivi des Actions de Développement |
| CCTS | Cadre Commun Transferts Sociaux |
| CLOCSAD | Comité Local d'Orientation, de Coordination et de Suivi des Actions de Développement |
| CMU | couverture maladie universelle |
| CNSA | Conseil National de Sécurité Alimentaire |
| CREDD | Cadre stratégique pour le relance économique et le développement durable |
| CROCSAD | Comité Régional d'Orientation, de Coordination et de Suivi des Actions de Développement |
| CSA | Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire [Food Security Commission] |
| DDC | Direction du Développement et de la Coopération (Swiss development agency) |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DGPC | Direction Générale de la Protection Civile [Directorate General for Civil Protection] |
| DNDS | Direction Nationale du Développement Social |
| DNPSES | Direction Nationale de Protection Sociale et de l'Economie Solidaire |
| DNSA | <i>Dispositif national de sécurité alimentaire</i> [= National institutional arrangements for food security] |
| DRM | disaster risk management |
| DRR | disaster risk reduction |
| ECHO | European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department |
| EMOP | Emergency Operations (World Food Programme terminology) |
| ENSAN | <i>Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle</i> [= National Survey on Food and Nutrition Security] |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation |
| FNAA | Fonds National d'Appui à l'Agriculture |
| FONGIM | Forum des ONG internationales au Mali |

| | |
|---------|---|
| GFDRR | Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery |
| HEA | Household Economy Approach |
| HIEP | Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| INSTAT | Institut National de la Statistique [National Institute for Statistics] |
| MINUSMA | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali |
| MIS | management information system |
| MSAH | Ministère de la Solidarité et de l'action humanitaire (from 2016) |
| MSAHRN | Ministère de la Solidarité, de l'action humanitaire et de la reconstruction du Nord |
| MSPC | Ministère de la Sécurité et de la Protection Civile [Ministry of Security and Civil Protection] |
| NGO | non-governmental organisation |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OPM | Oxford Policy Management |
| ORSEC | Organisation des secours |
| PMT | proxy means test |
| PRP | Priorités Résilience Pays |
| PSNP | Productive Safety Net Programme |
| RAMED | Régime d'Assistance Médicale |
| RSU | registre social unifié |
| SAP | <i>système d'alerte précoce</i> [= early warning system] |
| SHA | Secrétariat à l'Harmonisation de l'Aide |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UTM | Union Technique de la Mutualité Malienne |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

1 Approach and method

1.1 Research questions

Globally, the frequency, size and duration of disasters and crises—be they the consequence of natural phenomena or economic or political shocks—are on the rise. The cost of responding to these disasters has been increasing, too. While national governments bear the main responsibility for mitigating the risk of shocks and responding to them, the demands placed on the international humanitarian community to provide assistance continue to grow. The value of international humanitarian assistance keeps hitting record highs—the last three years have each seen the highest ever levels of assistance provided—yet the gap compared with what is needed continues to widen (Development Initiatives, 2016).

Many shocks are predictable and protracted, and often slow-onset. For this reason governments and international agencies alike are committed to finding a way forward that responds more efficiently and effectively, rather than reactively, to shocks: they aim to 'use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term', in the words of the Grand Bargain made by the humanitarian and development communities at the World Humanitarian Summit ('Grand Bargain', 2016, p. 14). Many actors are now asking whether and how long-term social protection systems can be part of the solution, since these are already intended to meet the needs of the poorest households, to build resilience and to respond to crises.

This research programme has been commissioned to explore this issue. We examine two related but distinct themes: first, social protection and its potential role in shock response; and second, the opportunities for coordination (and possible integration) of humanitarian interventions, disaster risk management (DRM) and social protection.

Our overarching research question is: **What factors enable social protection systems to be responsive to shocks and to deliver effective shock response?**

There are two associated sub-questions:

1. What features in the design and implementation of social protection systems facilitate an effective response to shocks?
2. How can humanitarian, DRM and social protection systems best work together for effective responses to shocks?

We are addressing these by means of a series of six case studies—including this one—and a number of related outputs (a literature review, synthesis report, toolkit and others).

1.2 Approach taken in Mali

Mali has been selected as a country case study for several reasons. First, it has been addressing seasonal food insecurity for decades, until now often using humanitarian aid to assist households in a situation that might be viewed as having a strong chronic poverty element, and that might equally be addressed by long-term development and social protection measures. Second, since 2012 this situation has been combined in the north with conflict and displacement of the population which affect the government's ability to deliver routine social protection services (see section 2 for a discussion of the shocks facing Mali). Third, there is political will among the government and its partners to support closer links between humanitarian assistance and social protection, to reduce the uncertainty of relying on annual humanitarian responses; shock-responsive social protection

interventions are already being undertaken in this regard. Translating the global research questions to the country level, our research thus aims to investigate themes such as:

- What features in the social protection system in Mali as of 2016 facilitate an effective response to shocks? What more could be done? How has its operation been affected by the conflict?
- How are the government and international humanitarian actors operating in order to achieve closer links between their interventions in social protection and humanitarian assistance?
- How can social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors and systems best work together to respond effectively to shocks in Mali?

The research uses a broad set of analytical tools (see Annex B for details of the method). These include an analysis of poverty and vulnerability, a mapping of policies and interventions, a review of their effectiveness in response to shocks and an analysis of the factors that shape their design and performance, including political economy issues, operational capacity and financial resources. The study draws mainly on consultations with more than 60 key informants over four periods of research in Mali between October 2015 and October 2016, as well as a wide-ranging review of documentation. A consultative approach was taken to the research: concepts, preliminary and emerging findings were presented at meetings of the cash working group in October 2015 and June 2016, and at a meeting of the technical working group on the expansion of social safety nets in June 2016, as well as at the national social protection conference in October 2016.

1.3 A note on terminology and research scope

It is useful to define the term ‘shock-responsive social protection’, since all social protection is inherently intended to respond to shocks. In this research we use the term ‘shock’ to refer implicitly to covariate shocks, i.e. those that affect large numbers of people and/or communities at once. Covariate shocks may be natural, economic or political. We focus on the types of covariate shock that affect a substantial share of the population and result in a ‘crisis situation’ that is likely to trigger an international humanitarian response. However, we do not cover the influx of refugees, which triggers specific international mechanisms and is not the sole responsibility of the host country, or disease outbreak, which calls primarily for a response from the health system.

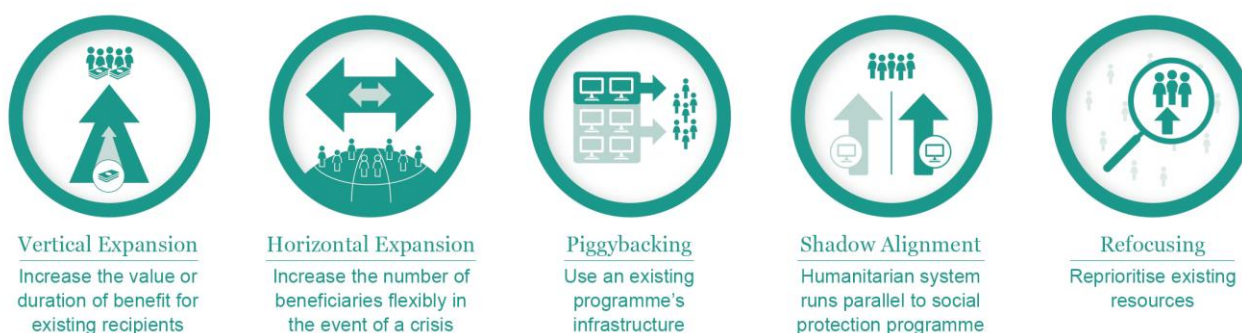
We adopt a broad definition of social protection which encompasses a range of instruments including, for example, food distributions, cash transfers, school feeding, grants for goods and basic foodstuffs, subsidies, health insurance and pensions. The overall research programme therefore considers both contributory and non-contributory instruments. Similarly, state and non-state social protection providers are included. We include interventions that can be put in place in advance of a shock to mitigate its impact, not only those implemented after the event. A subset of these interventions is explored for each case study. In Mali, for example, we examine mainly the contribution of free food distribution, school feeding programmes and cash transfers.

Two further concepts merit a brief mention here as they drive the diagnosis of what types of needs a country must address, and what sort of response is feasible (OPM, 2015). First, in terms of need, we recognise that social protection needs in relation to covariate shocks fall into three categories: structural, seasonal and humanitarian. ‘Structural needs’ refer to the type of chronic poverty commonly addressed by long-term social protection programmes. ‘Seasonal needs’ refer to cyclical crises whereby every year or so, poor weather or other conditions push an additional number of households into requiring short-term assistance. ‘Humanitarian crisis needs’ refer to the occasional exceptional year or event when communities that usually manage without any assistance find themselves in need of support.

Second, in terms of response, we note that the ability of a formal (as opposed to informal, household-level) social protection system to handle shocks depends to a large part on the degree of maturity of the system. Our emphasis on understanding opportunities for using state-run social protection systems to respond to shocks means that our studies cover countries where some kind of system is in place. In some cases it is only nascent and we take into account the implications of this.

A starting point for the research was a thorough literature review which identified five main ways in which social protection and humanitarian assistance interventions may adapt or collaborate to address needs arising from covariate shocks (OPM, 2015). We have organised these into a typology of shock response (Figure 1)²:

Figure 1 Typology of shock response



Source: OPM (2015).

In brief, systems are not only shock-responsive if they provide top-ups to existing beneficiaries or temporarily add beneficiaries to existing social protection programmes (which we term 'vertical expansion' and 'horizontal expansion' respectively)—although these are two commonly perceived options, often referred to as 'scaling up' an intervention in response to a shock. Other possibilities include taking advantage of part of an existing programme's infrastructure, such as a database or its personnel, while delivering an entirely different intervention ('piggybacking' on the system); running a separate humanitarian intervention that is designed to have the characteristics of a long-term social protection intervention, in order to facilitate subsequent integration ('shadow alignment'); and, if no additional budget is available, simply 'refocusing' existing resources on the priority households suffering from the shock. This typology is referred to throughout the report.

² Following completion of the case studies the typology was updated to reflect the findings from the research. The updated typology is presented in the synthesis report which accompanies this study.

2 Shocks and vulnerability in Mali

Key points

- Mali experiences widespread droughts that can affect millions of people; and flooding that occurs more often but is more localised and smaller in scale. In recent decades the crises have become more frequent and more severe. Climate change may increase the risk of drought further.
- The major shock in recent years has been the political crisis of 2012 and the ongoing conflict in the north, which affected 3 million people across the country, including 400,000 displaced.
- 90% of the population of 18 million lives in the south, and the regions with the lowest average household consumption are all in the south although this is the area with the greatest agricultural potential. This means that in absolute numbers, seasonal food insecurity is highest in the south.
- Since estimates of the number of food insecure people were revised in 2012 to take into account structural needs as well as drought emergencies, the average number of people at risk of food insecurity annually has been estimated at around 3-5 million, of whom around 400,000 are estimated to be in need of immediate food assistance (precise numbers vary each year).
- The lean season occurs around April to July for pastoralists and July to October in agricultural areas. The annual National Response Plan for food insecurity covers the whole of this period.
- The conflict in the north has compounded vulnerability nationwide, owing to factors including a lack of assets among internally displaced people and returning refugees, pressure on infrastructure and services in host communities, and lack of access to markets.

2.1 The major shocks and crises in Mali

Both slow- and rapid-onset shocks have affected Mali regularly over the last several decades. These include natural shocks (droughts, floods, pest infestations), coupled with economic shocks (such as the 2007–08 food and energy price crisis) and political shocks (notably the conflict in the north) (Government of Mali, 2013b). In turn these can cause population displacement including rural-urban migration and migration towards neighbouring countries. Moreover, the country is regularly subject to health epidemics such as cholera³.

2.1.1 Natural shocks

Being in the Sahel in west Africa, Mali is located in one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change and deteriorating environmental conditions. Over the last 50 years the region has been subjected to many severe natural disasters, particularly repeated droughts, which have led to widespread hunger and made food insecurity the main humanitarian and development issue. These crises have become more frequent and their impacts more extreme.

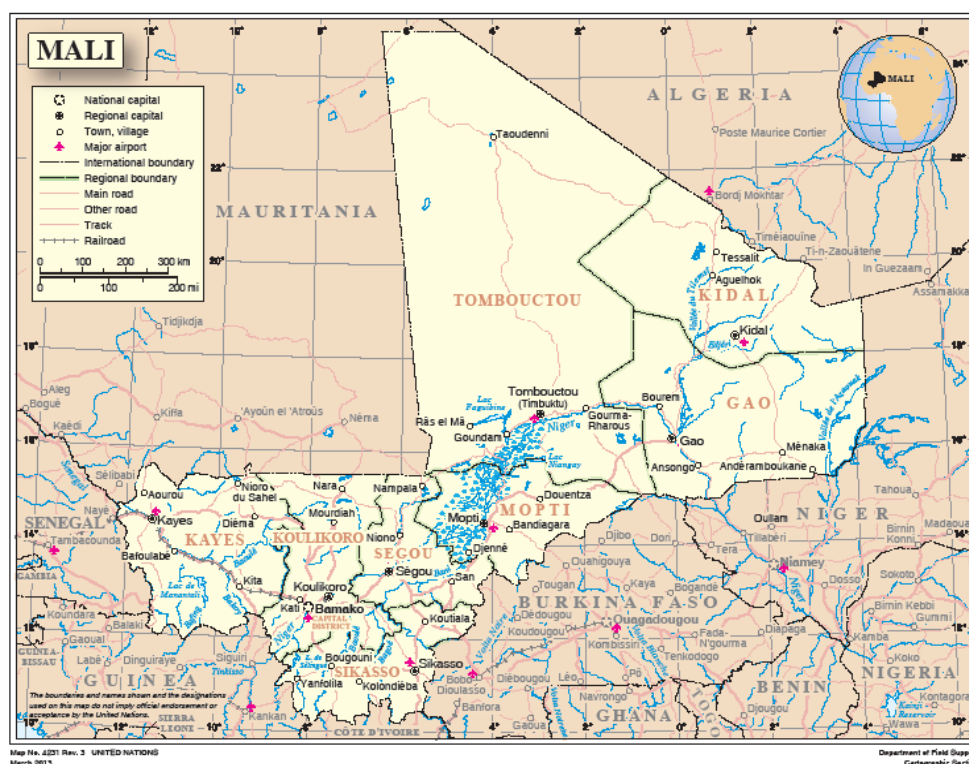
Among natural shocks, drought has had the most persistent adverse effect on households' livelihoods, being a major contributory factor to food insecurity (see section 2.3). The north is the driest part of the country—much of Tombouctou and Kidal are designated as Sahara desert (see map in Figure 2)—but these regions are not classified as being prone to drought, since drought is generally measured relative to a long-term norm. In the northern regions livelihoods are adapted to the dry conditions, and herding rather than agriculture is the most common livelihood strategy⁴. The regions most at risk of meteorological drought, experiencing long periods of below average rainfall, are in the centre of Mali and westwards, from Mopti to Kayes; there is a slight risk, too, heading eastwards towards Gao (WFP, 2014). The threat of drought is expected to worsen:

³ Mali experienced eight cases of Ebola during the regional epidemic in 2014, resulting in five deaths; so the risk from that shock was considerable but the incidents were successfully contained.

⁴ A map of livelihood zones is in Figure 7 in Annex C.1.

climate change analysis predicts up to a 10% reduction in average annual rainfall by 2025 compared with 2000, and an increase in year-on-year variations (Government of Mali, 2015).

Figure 2 Map of Mali



Source: [UN Cartographic Section](#). Note: Mali's eight regions are divided into 49 *cercles*, and then into some 703 *communes*, the third level of administration. The capital, Bamako, is a separate district. A reorganisation of administrative units was underway as of 2016 to create new regions, of which Ménaka (hitherto a *cercle* of Gao region) and Taoudénit (covering the north of Tombouctou region) are the first.

The major droughts of the last two generations, cited in Mali as the benchmarks for how severe a drought can become, are those of 1973, 1984, and 2004 (Government of Mali, 2015). The government's Food Security Commission (*Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire*, CSA) uses the 2004 drought as a basis for its scenarios of the number and distribution of households that might suffer from food insecurity in the event of an extreme, large-scale drought affecting most of the country. In that year more than 2 million people across almost every region were estimated to be suffering from food insecurity directly arising from the dry conditions.

Floods, meanwhile, occur much more often than droughts, though the scale of impact is generally very small compared with the millions that can be affected by a drought. Nonetheless the numbers affected can reach the tens of thousands (Fallavier, 2015). Flooding most commonly occurs each year along the river Niger, especially around the delta in Mopti region and part of Ségou region (WFP, 2014). Routine flooding is accommodated in those areas: irrigation systems are designed to take advantage of it, and people's livelihoods are adapted. Flooding owing to unexpectedly above average rainfall is more notable in other parts of Ségou and in Kayes, in the west; Sikasso, too, is vulnerable to floods, especially as it is heavily populated and preparedness for flooding is less developed (REACH, 2014). The risk of flooding is extremely low in the north.

2.1.2 Political shocks and the 2012 conflict

There are recurrent conflicts in the north in the form of armed rebellion against the central state (AGIR, 2014). The greatest shock to Mali in recent years has been the political upheaval of 2012,

commonly referred to simply as *la crise* ('the crisis') or *la grande crise* ('the big crisis'), in which the government suffered a military coup in March, and then the main northern cities of Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal were seized by non-state armed groups while an interim government was being set up (WFP, 2013b). This coincided with a poor harvest and pre-existing food insecurity, which led to a complex crisis with a general increase in the price of grains (WFP, 2014). By the end of 2012 the conflict was estimated to have affected nearly 3 million people across northern and central Mali, triggering the displacement of over 400,000 people—about half internally displaced, mostly moving southwards, and half leaving the country—and limiting access to water and basic social services for those remaining in the north (OCHA, 2013). Armed violence destroyed much of the social and economic infrastructure in occupied territories (Fallavier, 2015). The population is still struggling to access social services and humanitarian actors cannot operate in certain areas (OCHA, 2016).

In April 2013 a United Nations (UN) mission, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), was established to support political processes and carry out security-related tasks⁵. The peace deal signed in June 2015 between the government and Tuareg-led rebels is still not successfully implemented, while other rebel groups (notably Islamist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda) are not included in the agreement. The fragile political situation hinders the development process, and not only in the north (International Crisis Group, 2015). More than four years on, as of October 2016, a little over 36,000 people were still internally displaced, mainly in Gao and Tombouctou regions, and new cases of displacement were being registered, which increases the pressure on resources in host communities. Moreover, while over 50,000 refugees had returned, close to 135,000 Malians were still hosted in neighbouring countries (OCHA, 2016).

Aside from this major conflict, localised conflicts over the control of land are common throughout Mali. In the long term the scarcity of resources, increased by climate change, is likely to fuel migration towards Libya, Algeria, and Mauritania and towards urban centres in Mali. This in turn may fuel conflicts over resources and between different cultures and livelihoods (Fallavier, 2015).

2.2 Key poverty issues for social protection provision

Mali is a vast country—the eighth largest in Africa by area, and more than twice the size of France—with a population of nearly 18 million, 90% of whom are concentrated in the southern third of its landmass. The northern regions of Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal, that make up two-thirds of the country, contain only 10% of the population⁶. Further south, agricultural potential increases and so does population density and average household size. The exceptionally low population density in the north has resulted in low levels of service provision in that area, giving rise to significant spatial inequality between north and south. Some commentators question whether this fuelled the conflict:

The crisis raised questions about whether it was fuelled by high levels of poverty and low levels of service delivery, whether too many, or too few resources were spent in the north, whether it is reasonable to expect a comparable level of service delivery in low density areas (the north)

⁵ 'Integrated' means that the military, political, humanitarian and development arms of UN activity are all placed under the responsibility of one Special Representative. The head of the humanitarian arm, the humanitarian coordinator, is the deputy special representative. There is some concern that the close relationship between the military and humanitarian missions can make it difficult for humanitarian actors to distinguish themselves as separate from the military presence (Donini and Scalettaris, 2016). NGOs that arrived in the north around the same time as the MINUSMA peacekeeping force also have some difficulty distinguishing their mission from the military mission.

⁶ Population estimates are from the official projections of the Direction Nationale de la Population. Population density is very low at 14 people per sq. km of land area (World Development Indicators, 2015).

where unit costs are higher and whether improved service delivery in the north could help secure peace. (World Bank, 2015d, p.vii).

Nationally, monetary poverty is widespread with 44% of the population living in poverty; the rate is considerably higher in rural than urban areas and those who depend on agriculture are the poorest with a poverty incidence of 57% (AGIR, 2014) (Table 1). Around three-quarters of the population lives in areas classified as rural.

Table 1 Basic demographic and socioeconomic data

| Indicator | Value |
|---|-------|
| Population (million) | 17.6 |
| Rural population (2009) (%) ¹ | 77 |
| Fertility rate (births per woman 2014) | 6.2 |
| Annual population growth (%) | 2.9 |
| Poverty headcount (national poverty line, 2009) (%) | 44 |
| Rural | 51 |
| Urban | 19 |
| Human Development Index ranking (out of 188, 2014) ² | 179 |
| GDP per capita (current US\$) | \$724 |
| Primary sector (% of GDP) | 41 |

Source: Authors based on World Development Indicators, World Bank, except for: (1) INSTAT, 2012 (2) UNDP, 2015.
Note: Unless otherwise specified the data refer to 2015.

It is significant for social protection policy that the regions with the lowest average household consumption are actually in the south, not the north: Sikasso, followed by Ségou and Mopti (World Bank, 2015d). The World Bank calls this the 'Sikasso paradox'—'the coincidence of high levels of poverty with the region Sikasso with the highest agricultural potential' (World Bank, 2015d, p.47). While the factors that cause this are much debated (and methodological factors are not excluded) our interviews with key informants confirmed that chronic vulnerability to food insecurity is a strong feature of the south, even in areas where there is a food surplus. Typically poorer households may lack able-bodied adults to cultivate their plots, or productive assets with which to farm the land; or they may be day labourers who end up working for better off households cultivating cash crops while either having no land of their own, or practising subsistence agriculture on their own land without being able to sustain their households in the lean season (World Bank, 2015d).

Mali's economy has grown more slowly on average than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades. Growth was severely affected by the 2012 crisis and the economy remains highly exposed to exogenous shocks, such as droughts (IMF, 2015a). Estimates suggest that poverty may have increased significantly since 2010 on account of the combination of the security crisis, the cyclical failures of rains, and flooding (World Bank, 2015d).

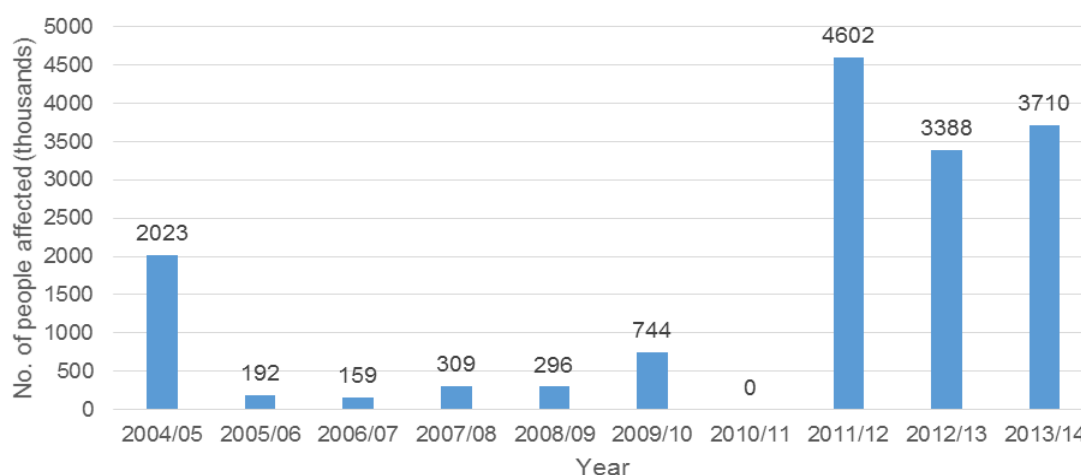
The country is close to the bottom of the ranking of the Human Development Index. Most of the population has low human capital and limited capacity to diversify income sources to become more resilient. Meanwhile the total fertility rate has not changed much in the last three decades and is one of the highest in the world. The slow demographic transition is challenging for food security and poses enormous pressure on public services and infrastructure which are inadequate even at current population levels. Moreover, high fertility rates affect women's health and productive capacity as well as their ability to engage in the labour market (IMF, 2015a). Gender inequality is

very marked: Mali ranks 150th out of 188 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (UNDP, 2015). Female participation in the labour market has stagnated in the past decade and was 35% in 2010. This is partly a consequence of the lower literacy and education enrolment rates for women (IMF, 2015a). Social discrimination against women is also very high with women having lower control over resources and land rights (Fallavier, 2015). Other categories particularly at risk of poverty include orphans and vulnerable children and elderly people as well as people with disabilities. The latter suffer from exclusion from appropriate social services, the education system and the labour market (Fallavier, 2015).

2.3 Vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition

Shocks such as drought and conflict exacerbate the already great vulnerability to food insecurity and seasonal peaks in the need for assistance. Even in a year when rainfall is above average and there are no floods or other natural shocks, several million people face a lean season. When the government department that runs the early warning system, the *Système d'Alerte Précoce* (SAP) revised its method for calculating the number of people at risk of food insecurity in 2012 to take into account factors besides drought—including sociopolitical and security crises, as well as other natural shocks where possible, such as floods—the total shot up to between 3 and 5 million people per year, or about one-quarter of the population (Government of Mali, 2015) (Figure 3)⁷. This far exceeds the high levels of 2004 that previously served as the benchmark for severe food insecurity. This points to structural poverty, rather than unusually severe droughts, as a major cause of food insecurity. Among these, upwards of 400,000 people are typically estimated to be in immediate need of food assistance in any year⁸.

Figure 3 Estimated number of people at risk of, or affected by, food insecurity, 2004/05–2013/14 (thousands)



Source: CSA (2015b). Note: From 2011/12 the method of estimating the number of people affected by food insecurity changed to include additional factors besides drought.

A symptom of the widespread food insecurity is the high level of malnutrition. Nutrition rates are troubling. Both acute and chronic malnutrition rates for children under five are constantly above the World Health Organisation's 'alert' level, often at 'emergency' level (Bernard and La Rosa, 2015).

⁷ This new measure is in line with the guidelines of the *Cadre Harmonisé*, the harmonised framework for classifying current and projected acute food insecurity across the Sahel region.

⁸ Those classified as in need of food assistance are in Phase 3 or above on the five-point scale used by the *Cadre Harmonisé*. As an example, the projections for the 2017 lean season predict that some 495,000 people will be in need of food assistance (Phase 3–5), and a further 3 million will be *at risk* of food insecurity (Phase 2) (see table in Annex C.2).

The pattern varies regionally: a survey in September 2016 found the highest rates of acute malnutrition in Tombouctou, at 18%, while chronic malnutrition is highest in Sikasso in the south, at 35% (INSTAT, 2015; World Bank, 2015d).

For Mali's pastoralists and farmers the lean season falls at different times. The pastoral lean season is approximately April to July, around the start of the rains which are expected from May: at this time the pasture is the least rich for animals. As soon as the rain arrives the animals begin to recover. The agricultural lean season is a little later, around July to October, as the harvest is not collected until the rainy season has finished. For this reason the annual National Plan for Response to Food Insecurity (*Plan National de Réponse*) is issued by the Government of Mali in April each year, and its committee meets every two weeks until October to monitor the situation (see section 3.4.3 below). Many emergency interventions take place during these lean periods.

Vulnerability depends on geography and livelihood, with the rural population highly susceptible to climatic and environmental shocks, and urban wage-earning households mainly hit by economic shocks (Fallavier, 2015). At the same time, poor households rely on markets to access staple foods and are therefore susceptible to price increases (Bernard and La Rosa, 2015). Strategies to cope with a shock vary depending on the intensity of the shock, household resources, and livelihoods. In pastoral zones households are likely to sell livestock, while in agricultural areas sending children to work, consuming seed stocks, and credit are more widespread (Cherrier *et al.*, 2011). In rural areas about half of households resort to unsustainable coping strategies every year (Bernard and La Rosa, 2015).

The crisis in the north has compounded the vulnerability of the population nationwide, both in areas directly affected by the conflict and in areas further south that host displaced people. Internally displaced people are often particularly vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity since they have left behind or sold most of their assets when fleeing from occupied territories. Those hosted in low-density areas do not have access to proper infrastructure, while those who moved to the south may have limited access to accommodation and sources of revenue. Likewise, refugees coming back to Mali are very vulnerable to shocks since they frequently they find their livelihoods destroyed and may not have access to proper shelter and water and sanitation. Most returnees are pastoralists highly affected by the lack of access to markets owing to insecurity (OCHA, 2016).

3 Implications of institutional arrangements for social protection, DRM and humanitarian action

Key points

- Responsibility for sectors relating to shocks is split mainly across the three government ministries with a mandate to address social protection, civil protection and food security respectively.
- The government does not perceive a marked difference between humanitarian assistance for households and social protection.
- There is political will for using social protection to address shocks, both *ex-ante* and *ex-post*. The national social protection policy of 2016, and its action plan 2016-18, refer to the need to support households in disasters and the value of scaling up social protection in a crisis. They do not elaborate human resource and financial requirements.
- The national DRM strategy highlights close links between DRM and humanitarian aid but is less explicit about a role for social protection in managing disasters, though the ministry that deals with disaster risk recognises the broader benefits of social protection for households' resilience.
- Mali's policy document for resilience, the AGIR PRP, notes the connection between social protection, DRM and reduced vulnerability to shocks; it focuses on the overall expansion of social protection as a priority rather than the need for systems that expand and contract at short notice in response to covariate shocks.
- Humanitarian assistance is coordinated mainly through the cluster system with the Humanitarian Response Plan and National Response Plan for food insecurity as the guiding documents.
- There is convergence in the approaches of the state and non-state actors supporting social protection, DRM, food security, resilience and humanitarian initiatives: social protection is trying to

3.1 Overview

In Mali, government responsibility for social protection, DRM and humanitarian action—especially in relation to addressing food insecurity, one of the major crises giving rise to humanitarian interventions—is split across three main ministries and agencies:

1. The **Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action** (*Ministère de la Solidarité et de l'Action Humanitaire, MSAH*) is responsible for contributory and non-contributory social protection, the coordination of humanitarian interventions, the promotion of mutual health organisations and the scheme of free medical assistance to the poorest households.
2. The **Ministry of Security and Civil Protection** (*Ministère de la Sécurité et de la Protection Civile, MSPC*) is responsible for DRM and for emergency and rescue services.
3. The **Food Security Commission** (*Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire, CSA*) promotes food security, overseeing the annual national response to food insecurity including the distribution of free food. It also contains the department that handles the African Risk Capacity (ARC) insurance scheme (see section 3.3 below).

In addition the **Ministry of Economy and Finance** (*Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances*) has been housing the national cash transfer programme, Jigisèmèjiri, since it was set up in 2012, though it does not expect to be running social protection programmes in the long term. The **ministry of education** leads on the school meals programme, while the **ministry of health and public hygiene** is responsible for the policy of free access to certain health care procedures such as malaria, caesareans and vaccinations. The **ministry of agriculture** contains the national secretariat for the *Comité permanent Inter-États de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel* (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, CILSS) which represents Mali in the Global Alliance for Resilience (*Alliance Globale pour la Résilience, AGIR*), the West Africa-wide body that addresses resilience issues, amongst which social protection is the first pillar (see OPM's report on social protection in the Sahel for more on CILSS, AGIR and related initiatives

(O'Brien *et al.*, 2017)). It also has the authority to manage a fund to help rural populations recover from disasters.

Mali has a deconcentrated system of local administration. The MSAH is represented at the regional level by the regional directorate for social development and the solidarity economy (*Direction régionale de développement social de l'économie solidaire*); at the *cercle* level by a 'local service' (*Service local de développement social de l'économie solidaire*) and in communes by 'commune centres' (*Centres communaux de développement social de l'économie solidaire*). These structures are staffed by civil servants who are social workers or social development professionals. The CSA has a light presence in every *cercle*, consisting of the SAP and the deconcentrated statistical service. The deconcentrated branches of the national sectoral ministries engage with the **Ministry of Territorial Administration** (*Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale*) through the 'committees for the orientation, coordination and monitoring of development activities' at the regional ('CROCSAD'), *cercle* ('CLOCSAD') and commune ('CCOCSAD') level. The Ministry of Territorial Administration therefore plays a role in managing the local response to disasters.

While the ministries involved in these issues vary between countries—in the Philippines, for example, DRM is dealt with by ministries for social welfare, science and technology and interior affairs—it is normal that the management of covariate shocks is handled by several agencies⁹. It is as logical for, say, a school meals programme to be integrated with education interventions as to be linked with other social protection interventions. In this section we therefore ask:

- What are the mandates of these agencies in social protection, DRM, food security and humanitarian response, and what do policy documents tell us about their objectives?
- How do organisations such as the UN agencies and international and national NGOs fit into the setting of the government's response to crises, including food insecurity?
- How successfully do these arrangements respond to the challenge of major covariate shocks?

3.2 Social protection

3.2.1 The mandate for shock-responsive social protection in the MSAH

The lead ministry for coordinating social protection is the MSAH. From 2014 to mid-2016 the ministry was known as the MSAHRN (*Ministère de la Solidarité, de l'Action Humanitaire et de la Reconstruction du Nord*). During this time it was mandated to ensure the provision of essential services to people living in, or returning to, the north after the conflict, including support for the reintegration of displaced people. The MSAH remains divided into two main directorates (Figure 4):

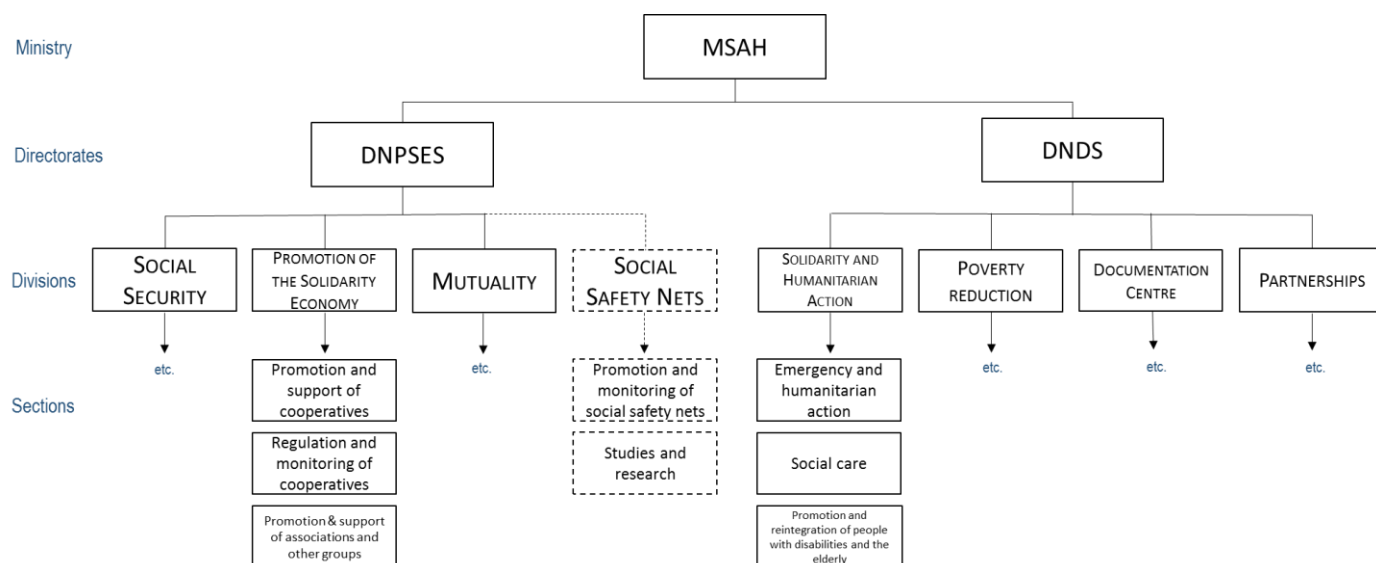
1. The *Direction nationale de la protection sociale et de l'économie solidaire* (the national directorate for social protection and the solidarity economy, DNPSES) leads the coordination of social protection interventions across government and the promotion of mutual organisations.
2. The *Direction nationale du développement social* (national directorate for social development, DNDS) provides in-kind social care services eg. for older people and people with disabilities; coordinates humanitarian response at local level; leads poverty reduction initiatives; and offers support post-crisis to households affected by a disaster.

Locally the activities of both directorates are the responsibility of a single person in each geographical area (the 'service technique').

⁹ See OPM's case study of the Philippines under this research (Smith *et al.*, 2017).

The ministry approved a division for social safety nets under the DNPSES, but had not set it up at the time of the study in 2016. It is intended to coordinate cash- and food-based social assistance, providing objective oversight of issues such as targeting approaches and transfer values.

Figure 4 Organisation of the MSAH



Source: OPM, from documents provided by, and conversations with, the MSAH. Notes: (1) Sections of some divisions are not shown as they are not related to shock-responsive social protection. (2) Division on Social Safety Nets was agreed in February 2016 but is not yet set up. (3) Some staff sit above the directorate level, such as technical advisers.

Besides these directorates, the MSAH encompasses several implementing agencies, including the social security agencies for pensions and workplace benefits for formal public and private sector workers; a national solidarity fund that mobilises resources to support the delivery of basic social services by NGOs; and the national agencies for contributory medical insurance (*Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie*, CANAM) and non-contributory medical assistance (*Agence Nationale d'Assistance Médicale*, ANAM) whose scheme is known as the *Régime d'Assistance Médicale*, RAMED.

The structure of the MSAH's divisions implies that institutional arrangements for long-term social protection and humanitarian assistance are separated at national level, albeit combined locally. In practice this distinction is not clearly felt. In part this is a question of resourcing, since no department is big enough to work in isolation: the section for emergency and humanitarian action, for instance, is staffed by only three people. However, there is also a feeling that humanitarian assistance for households does not differ markedly from social protection. As respondents in the MSAH observed,

'Helping people in distress is humanitarian action, but it's also social protection' (Key informant, MSAH).

'There isn't a clear distinction between humanitarian assistance and social protection. Taking care of the poorest people and those with disabilities is a continuous activity that doesn't wait for a crisis to break out' (Key informant, MSAH).

This may help to explain why, despite having 'humanitarian action' as one of the two components of the name of the ministry, there is no directly corresponding directorate. The view of our respondents reflects a general tendency across the Sahel region not to clearly separate emergency from development activities: a recent analysis noted that, 'In the Sahel [...]

conceptualizing the lines between emergency and non-emergency, chronic crisis and acute crisis, becomes a matter of interpretation' (Donini and Scalettari, 2016, p.10). A similar blending is evident in recent policy documents on social protection, as discussed below.

It may appear odd that the pilot national cash transfer scheme, Jigisèmèjiri, operates from a project implementation unit housed in the Ministry of Economy and Finance rather than in the MSAH. This arrangement reflects the fact that the programme was being set up just at the time of the 2012 crisis. It was necessary to use a ministry that would continue to operate, have a consistent structure and be able to disburse the World Bank's funds, which were converted from a loan to a grant because of the crisis. During this time the ministry with responsibility for social protection was being restructured and had only a limited presence in some parts of the country.

3.2.2 The articulation of shock-responsiveness in social protection policy

Social protection is not new in Mali: the country held its first congress on social development in 2001 and issued a policy declaration on social protection (*Déclaration de politique nationale de protection sociale*) in 2002. This confirmed the rights of all citizens to social protection in line with the constitution. Since then Mali has put in place numerous initiatives that aim gradually to extend coverage to the whole population, with a vision for a 'social protection floor' inspired by the concept of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Its planned activities have been documented in three medium-term action plans (2005–09, 2011–15 and 2016–18). The crisis of 2012 slowed down these activities: the 2011–15 action plan was implemented to only a very limited extent owing to the challenge of mobilising resources. However, they have now restarted under the MSAH.

In 2015 the **National Social Protection Policy** (*Politique nationale de protection sociale*) was revised with UNICEF assistance, in the light of the context both of the needs of displaced people and refugees, and also the ministry's then mandate to supervise humanitarian response and the rebuilding of the northern regions. Approved in 2016, the policy cites four strategic priorities:

1. The extension of **social security**, including to agricultural and informal sector workers as well as to civil servants and people in formal salaried employment.
2. The development of **social assistance and social action** (social care).
3. The development of **mutual societies** and other organisations based on solidarity, with the aim of increasing coverage by mutual insurance (including health insurance) for people not covered by compulsory regimes. The government has set itself an objective to deliver universal health insurance (*couverture maladie universelle*, CMU) for everyone by 2018.
4. Strengthening of **institutional capacity and financing** for social protection.

There is a political commitment to use social protection to respond to covariate shocks. The theme is central to the policy. One of its two general objectives is to, 'Develop mechanisms for preventing and managing calamities, disasters, catastrophes and other humanitarian crises' (Government of Mali, 2016b, p.26). The policy also recognises that,

'Generalised poverty is worsened by various crises and disasters that exacerbate the fragility of the most vulnerable groups of the population, necessitating the establishment of specific mechanisms devoted to improving living conditions for the poorest population groups and for geographical areas that are without the minimum level of social infrastructure' (Government of Mali, 2016b, p.19; *author's own translation*)

In several places it sets directions that recognise the contribution of social protection in responding to shocks, and the usefulness of linking households to multiple interventions. For instance:

- Objective 1 proposes the activation of the section of the Ministry of Agriculture's fund, the *Fonds National d'Appui à l'Agriculture* (FNAA) that is intended to provide financial support to applicants in rural areas to help them recover from agricultural disasters.
- Objective 2 declares as an explicit output, 'the implementation of a system for scaling up social transfers in the event of natural disasters to support affected populations, in order to strengthen their resilience' (Government of Mali, 2016b, p.30). It also raises the principle of complementarity between programmes, specifically between social safety nets and RAMED, the medical assistance scheme for poor households.

This political commitment has not yet been translated into political influence to secure the necessary resources. Achieving these objectives requires flexible and rapidly accessible funding and human resource capacity. Priority 4 of the policy, which is intended to operationalise the others by outlining proposals on institutional capacity and financing, does not specify how the additional resources for either a flexible or a permanently expanded system might be made available. Its intended outputs include simply that, 'Services, organisations and structures responsible for social protection are functional' and that, 'The share of the government budget devoted to social protection should increase' (Government of Mali, 2016b, p.33). The action plan 2016-18 is also not specific on this. It lists the expected annual cost of each activity and cites the lead ministry and other implicated actors, but does not allocate responsibility for funding. Donors, private firms and civil society organisations are all listed as vital for resource mobilisation and for technical assistance. This may signal a challenge in implementation of the policy.

As for relevant policies by ministries other than the MSAH, the ministry of education established the National Centre for School Canteens (*Centre National des Cantines Scolaires*, CNCS) and issued a national school feeding policy in 2011. This does not explicitly refer to the use of school meals as a response to emergencies but it does prioritise the establishment of the scheme in the 166 communes that have been identified by the government's early warning system as being most vulnerable to food insecurity (see section 4.3). The mandate for provision of school meals is devolved to local authorities at the commune level.

3.2.3 Donor support for social protection policies

Numerous development partners offer technical assistance and funding for social protection programming in Mali. These include the UN organisations—the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and UNICEF, for example—as well as multilateral (eg. World Bank, European Union) and bilateral (eg. DFID, Luxembourg, Swiss, United States) agencies.

This is not the place for a comprehensive listing of all social protection support programmes, but to note two of the main programmes working on shock-responsive social protection policy: first, Mali is one of six countries supported by the **Adaptive Social Protection** (ASP) programme for the Sahel. Funded from a multi-donor trust fund managed by the World Bank with financing from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the programme aims to, 'increase access to effective adaptive social protection systems for poor and vulnerable populations' (World Bank and DFID, 2015a, p.1). Its work includes support to the national social protection policy, the strengthening of early warning systems, and the design of tools that are complementary to cash transfer programmes and that aim to promote resilience, such as public works projects and improved access to microcredit (World Bank, 2015e). Second, the World Bank leads the technical

and financial support to Jigisèmèjiri (see section 4.4 below). Further discussion of relevant donor activities is presented below in relation to humanitarian assistance and food security.

3.3 DRM

3.3.1 The mandate for DRM in the civil protection agency

The Directorate General for Civil Protection (*Direction générale de la protection civile*, DGPC) in the MSPC is the lead government agency in the implementation of the global Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. It handles all types of emergency response and rescue, from fire and ambulance services to first response during large-scale shocks such as floods. It plays a coordination role in disaster response, eg. organising task forces during floods or concluding agreements with the CSA to stock grains in case of drought. It may coordinate with other ministries and/or international partners, depending on the assistance needed after people are rescued from immediate danger. As expressed in our key informant interviews with DGPC, 'we are always there, but we're never alone'. It has some involvement in food security crises insofar as it contributes to the organisation of emergency relief, but its mandate is not to provide long-term food assistance.

As for disaster prevention and preparedness, the DGPC's activities include running a platform for managing disasters; analysing risk; leading the development of a 'multi-risk contingency plan' that designates the expected response to different crises, and also a plan for emergencies commonly known in Francophone countries as the 'Plan ORSEC'; training staff in disaster risk reduction (DRR); and communicating the DRM strategy.

3.3.2 Social protection and humanitarian assistance in DRM policy

The MSPC-led **National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction** (*Stratégie nationale pour la réduction des risques de catastrophes*) was passed in 2015. Its focus is on making communities more resilient to the effects of disasters and reducing the risk of disasters. Its objectives are to integrate DRR into long-term, sustainable development; to strengthen institutions and resources to improve community resilience; and to systematically incorporate DRR into prevention, emergency response and recovery interventions. In this regard it cites five priority actions:

1. Promoting increased **political commitment** to reducing disaster risk
2. Encouraging better **identification and assessment** of disaster risks
3. Encouraging a better management of **DRR knowledge**
4. Ensuring a reduction in the **underlying risk factors**
5. Strengthening **preparedness for response** to emergencies.

The approach of the MSPC emphasises the role of routine social protection in reducing risk and strengthening resilience, more than in providing an immediate response to a crisis. Among the strategy's key principles is an acknowledgement that the effects of a shock can persist long after the immediate manifestation of the disaster has passed, and that longer term development activities are important for an overall reduction of risks. At the national social protection conference in 2016 the MSPC observed that,

'Social protection is in perfect harmony with two of the four priorities of the Sendai Framework for Action: (2) Reducing existing risks and (3) Preventing the creation of new risks.' (DGPC, 2016)

The two main planning documents, the multi-risk contingency plan and the Plan ORSEC, focus less on resilience and more on activities to be undertaken prior to, during and immediately after a disaster:

- The contingency plan hypothesises the likelihood of different risks and states which government department will lead a response to each, as well as the focal points among UN and NGO partners according to the type of emergency. Links between DRM and humanitarian assistance are spelled out, including through the prospect of preliminary agreements between humanitarian agencies and the government before a disaster; regular interagency communication; and the possible mobilisation of funds through flash appeals or the UN's emergency fund, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).
- The Plan ORSEC lists the roles of each agency involved in different aspects of disaster response—policing, health, transport etc.—regardless of the type of shock. Here the MSAH is tasked with arranging reception centres for people needing emergency accommodation and distributing goods to resolve immediate needs, for which it can draw on the resources of a number of agencies including the DGPC and CSA, and also the Red Cross and civil society organisations.

In neither document is there any explicit reference to a role for long-term social protection programmes in a response to a crisis, though it is not excluded as there is a recognition that affected communities should be given assistance to enable them to return to their normal lives.

A feature of these DRM strategies and plans is the decentralisation of response to risks and crises to *cercles* and communes, particularly for crises affecting fewer than 500 people (Government of Mali, 2013a). This includes encouraging the design and execution of DRR activities by communities and volunteers. The strategy notes the need for coordination across three levels, namely between local actors; between national-level agencies; and between national coordinators and the international community. It is therefore possible that local authorities might consider the use of social protection measures in response to an emergency¹⁰.

A major way of managing disaster risk is through insurance. In 2015 Mali signed up to ARC, a risk-pooling mechanism in several African countries that insures governments against climate shocks—initially drought, but expected to cover floods and other events in future. Its stated aim is to, 'lower the cost of the response to disasters, before they become humanitarian crises'. Mali's has submitted an operational plan (*Plan opérationnel*) for ARC which sets out scenarios for the types of shock by which a payout might be triggered, and suggests ways the money could be spent (CSA, 2015b). Although this is a DRM mechanism it is perceived as a response to food insecurity. It is therefore managed by the CSA rather than the MSPC (see also section 4.4.3 below).

3.4 Food security and resilience

3.4.1 The CSA's mandate to respond to food security crises

Arrangements for managing risks associated with food insecurity in Mali are distinct from those for handling other types of crisis. A framework for managing food security has been in place since the major droughts of 1973–74 and 1984–85. In 2004 the government established the CSA under the

¹⁰ This has been observed elsewhere, eg. in Kenya where some decentralised government authorities at county level have proposed their own cash transfer programmes to complement those established by the national government.

office of the president, with a mandate to develop and ensure the implementation of policies and strategies for food security. The core responsibilities of the CSA are handled by three offices:

- The Office for Malian Agricultural Products (*Office des produits agricoles du Mali*, **OPAM**) manages cereal stocks, pre-positioned in regional warehouses. It makes a profit through the sale of food. At times it releases stock onto local markets to bring the price down.
- The unit that runs the early warning system (**SAP**) carries out activities such as national surveys to estimate the size of the vulnerable population in each locality, providing the geographical targeting for the food distribution down to commune level.
- The Agricultural Market Observatory (*Observatoire du Marché Agricole*, **OMA**) monitors agricultural prices and carries out research on the market for agricultural inputs and products.

Under a decree of 2007, the institutional framework comprises two components (Cherrier, 2016). First, a seasonal dimension has the objective of implementing annual emergency responses and preventing and managing food security crises. Second, a structural component aims to contribute to overcoming hunger and ensuring national food security through longer lasting interventions. Arrangements are decentralised to regional, local and commune-level food security committees, presided over by regional governors, *préfets* and *sous-préfets* respectively¹¹. The CSA contracts national NGOs to run the food distribution.

The set of institutional arrangements for food security, known in French as the *Dispositif national de sécurité alimentaire* (DNSA) had been tried and tested for many years before encountering difficulties as they attempted to adapt to the rapidly evolving socioeconomic context and climate. The field of operation of the food security sector has expanded, with the result that it now has to implement policies that can manage ever more complex, severe and frequent crises.

Recognising the new challenges, the government and its main development partners—led by the European Union and WFP—agreed to strengthen their cooperation to enable Mali to increase the capacity of organisations working on food security. In November 2015 a protocol was signed by the Government of Mali and donors¹². This provides a framework for collaboration and sets the strategic direction. It describes the remit of the CSA as being to provide support in seasonal crises to assist early recovery in the short term, while broadening its links to other mechanisms for assistance. It highlights complementarities with social protection initiatives such as the database being developed to record beneficiaries of social welfare, the 'unified social register' (*registre social unifié*, RSU—see section 5.3 below), an activity that is common to many donor-supported social protection ministries across sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Separately from this the EU also provides budget support to the government and leads technical discussions in the government's thematic advisory subgroup on food security and nutrition.

A workshop examining the new tasks for food security policy was organised by the CSA in January 2016, as one of the first stages in the reform of the DNSA. The purpose was to draw the attention of actors to the fact that Mali is now a grain producer; to reduce the automatic reliance on physical food stocks and consider alternative food security policy options such as cash transfers; to expand activities with a nutrition focus; to increase activities in urban areas, and to develop a contingency plan. A change of leadership of the CSA in February 2016 has strengthened the organisation's position towards longer term support to livelihoods and resilience. In February 2017 the text governing the reform of the DNSA was adopted by the council of ministers, and proposed revisions to the CSA were with the president's office awaiting signature.

¹¹ See Cherrier (2016) for a detailed presentation of the organisation's structure.

¹² Donor signatories were the Belgium, Canada, the EU, the FAO, Luxembourg, Swiss cooperation and WFP.

3.4.2 The role of the Ministry of Agriculture

The increase in the complexity of food security crises and in the instruments for responding to them is creating new challenges which countries cannot address alone. The interplay between short-term effects of shocks and their longer term consequences has given rise to a general interest in resilience. In 2013 Mali joined AGIR, the west Africa-wide alliance whose objective is to strengthen resilience across the region by offering a common technical approach to analysing and monitoring food security, and by promoting the exchange of knowledge (AGIR, 2014a). AGIR's institutional focal point is the Ministry of Agriculture, which is required to coordinate with relevant departments of other ministries, their deconcentrated services and local government authorities.

The Ministry of Agriculture also has a nominal role to protect agricultural producers against the consequences of climate shocks that adversely affect their livelihoods. In line with its law on agricultural development, the *Loi d'Orientation Agricole* of 2006, it laid the policy foundations for a national fund for support to agriculture (the FNAA) around 2010. This was due to have three envelopes of funding, of which one, for 'agricultural risks and disasters', was intended to offer support to households working in the agricultural sector, at their request, to reestablish their livelihoods following a major drought or other natural shock. In practice, while this has existed on paper for some years it has not been operationalised owing to a lack of funds or a mechanism with which to finance the scheme.

3.4.3 Links between food security policies and social protection

A **national food security strategy** (*Stratégie nationale de sécurité alimentaire*) was published as long ago as 2002, before the creation of the CSA. It was largely operational, containing objectives to 2015 and an action plan for their delivery for 2003 to 2007. A challenge for policymakers has been that, with the text being rather old, it did not refer to new approaches such as the use of cash transfers, the resilience agenda, complementary activities to support livelihoods etc. With this in mind the government drafted a new **national food security and nutrition policy** (*Politique nationale de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle*), which was validated in 2017. The policy is intended to provide more high-level guidance on the broader approach to food security.

Meanwhile the main document guiding the response to food security shocks is the annual **National Response Plan** (*Plan national de réponse aux difficultés alimentaires*). The CSA and its partners develop this each year in April at the start of the lean season and meet every two weeks until October to oversee implementation. The plan reviews the agricultural season and presents the number of households estimated to be in each phase of food insecurity using the data from the Cadre Harmonisé, the Sahel-wide assessment that secures consensus on the level of food insecurity in terms of approximate numbers of people and their geographical distribution, that is used to assess where assistance should be provided regionally (O'Brien *et al.*, 2017). It lists the (mostly short-term) responses planned for the year, identifying the planned provider and estimating the likely cost (CSA, 2016c). Coverage is compared with expected need. An appended table breaks down the planned response by *cercle* and *commune*, setting out the coverage proposed by each of the CSA, WFP, the Red Cross and ECHO (CSA, 2016b). This is an example of the effort to consolidate emergency and routine responses.

As for documents reflecting the regional approach to food security, Mali is one of six countries—out of the 17 members of AGIR—that, by the time of the research, had begun the process of validating their National Resilience Priorities document (Priorités Résilience Pays, PRP), which draws on the AGIR roadmap (AGIR, 2014). These priorities are intended to contribute to a sustainable reduction in structural food insecurity in Mali over the next 20 years. The PRP is structured around the four pillars of the regional AGIR initiative, namely:

1. Improving social protection for the most vulnerable households and communities in order to secure their livelihoods.
2. Strengthening the nutrition of vulnerable households.
3. Sustainably improving agricultural and food production, the incomes of vulnerable households and their access to food.
4. Strengthening governance in food and nutrition security.

The PRP is clear that social protection, DRM and emergency response are connected: vulnerability to shocks can be heightened both by chronic poverty and by insufficient attention to disaster prevention. The social protection policies cited above are noted as key texts for guiding improvements in people's livelihoods. The set of priority activities planned under pillar 1 dovetail with those listed in the national action plan then current for the expansion of social protection, often extending their coverage: they propose the extension of Jigisèmèjiri, a greater use of seasonal public works programmes (building on the experience of WFP), improvements in the distribution of food during the lean season, the expansion of mutual health insurance and school meals programmes, and an increase in grain reserves in the north.

In Mali's case the PRP had been validated at technical level in 2015 but had not yet been submitted to ministry level at the time of the research so could not yet be used to its full potential. The challenge of the PRP at that stage of the process—as for the social protection policy—is that, as an aspirational document with a 20-year time horizon, it did not specify how its 100 priority activities would be funded or implemented. It noted simply that, 'The funding necessary to implement the AGIR PRP Mali will be mobilised using public and private resources and contributions from partners' (AGIR, 2014, p.56). A budget and a governance scheme were part of the documentation needed in order to submit the document to the next, ministerial, stage for approval.

3.5 Humanitarian response¹³

3.5.1 Institutional arrangements for humanitarian response

International humanitarian actors provide extensive support to both DRM and food security responses in Mali. The drought of 1973 prompted the arrival of international aid agencies to support a humanitarian response; many of these agencies are reported to have remained in the country ever since, resulting in over 40 years of annual 'emergency' assistance. As of the end of 2015 over 150 agencies reported an operational presence, of whom half were international NGOs or UN organisations, the other half being national NGOs, government agencies and other foundations or associations; this has since declined to about 130 (OCHA, 2015a, 2016). The NGOs are often funded by the European Union's directorate for humanitarian aid (ECHO), the Swiss *Direction du Développement et de la Coopération* (DDC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The UN cluster system is functional, with eight clusters in operation and an intercluster coordination mechanism led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Other coordination mechanisms in place include the Forum for International NGOs in Mali (FONGIM) and the secretariat for aid harmonisation (*Secrétariat à l'harmonisation de l'aide*, SHA)¹⁴.

These humanitarian agencies are spread across the country but work especially in the north where the provision of deconcentrated government services is very limited; though the fragility of the

¹³ For the latest on humanitarian interventions in Mali, see <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/mali>.

¹⁴ See also section 4 below for a summary of coordination forums and regular meetings.

security situation in that region has constrained even humanitarian agencies' access (OCHA, 2015b). At times international NGOs have had to rely on national counterparts to deliver services. As national NGOs are sometimes not permitted to be contracted directly they may be subcontracted through a chain of international NGOs or UN agencies (Donini and Scalettaris, 2016). The humanitarian agencies address needs in a full range of sectors. Of those most relevant for this study, nearly 60 agencies were participating in the food security cluster as of the end of 2016, their presence being most numerous in Tombouctou and Gao regions. Activities in relation to social protection are largely focused on addressing recurrent and severe food security and nutritional needs, and on promoting free access to health care.

We noted in section 3.2.1 above that government responsibility for coordinating humanitarian action lies with the social development directorate in the MSAH, though the division has few staff and does not perceive humanitarian assistance to be significantly different in its objectives to the work of other divisions in the ministry that support longer term development. Key informants noted that the DNDS's real mandate or leverage in the sphere was limited, and that the logic of placing responsibility for humanitarian action under the social development directorate was not clear. One respondent also commented that, during the time that the major task of 'reconstruction of the north' was added to the ministry in 2015–16, its overall mandate risked becoming too large, rendering it less likely to be effective in all these areas. This may have contributed to the recent revision of its mandate and title to remove these responsibilities.

3.5.2 Main policy documents governing humanitarian assistance

For a while in the aftermath of the 2012 crisis there was a call in some quarters of government for a **national humanitarian action policy** (*Politique nationale de l'action humanitaire*). A draft was elaborated and circulated by the MSAH around 2014–15. The rationale for elaborating the policy was that the institutional and legal frameworks for managing disasters were insufficiently developed, and that national and international actors were intervening in humanitarian emergencies without a frame of reference and with little coordination. Humanitarian action was viewed as being underfunded and as having little capacity to respond rapidly to needs. Nonetheless, the policy has not been passed during the period of our research and we understand as of late 2016 that it is no longer being pursued. The approval of the national DRR strategy in 2015, followed by the national social protection policy in 2016, may have been thought to provide enough of a basis for the implementation of a state-led response to both rapid-onset shocks such as floods, and slower onset or cyclical shocks such as droughts. This may particularly be the case given that the social protection policy explicitly refers to the response to disasters as being part of its remit.

The UN organisations and other international and national humanitarian and development partners are able to collaborate with the government to respond to humanitarian needs without recourse to a humanitarian action policy. They coalesce around the annual Humanitarian Needs Overview produced by OCHA on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team, and its accompanying annual Humanitarian Response Plan covering all clusters in operation. This latter document, together with the annual national response plan for food security crises mentioned in section 3.4 above, form the main reference points for the action of international partners in response to shocks in Mali.

The Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, issued in November 2016, articulates clearly the concept that the population has a continuum of needs from long-term social protection support to immediate emergency assistance (OCHA, 2016). Drawing on the five-point scale of food insecurity used by the Cadre Harmonisé, it states that its priority for food assistance is those areas classified as in level 3 or 4 ('crisis' or 'emergency'), but that it will also aim to support those in areas classified as level 2, 'under stress', in keeping with the AGIR country priorities. The objective will be to

improve the livelihoods of households in those areas to reduce the probability of their becoming level 3 or 4 in future.

A broader platform for the response to the humanitarian emergency in the country is offered by the peace agreement (*Accord pour la paix et la réconciliation*), signed in mid-2015. This straddles long-term development and humanitarian assistance, outlining a plan for the African Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and World Bank to jointly identify both short-term (less than 24 months) and longer term (10-15 years) priorities for supporting peace in the north. The interim emergency plan which followed the agreement did not discuss social protection or the use of cash transfers. The document is reviewed regularly as and when there are new contributions.

3.5.3 Donor support for humanitarian assistance

As with the social protection sector, it is beyond the scope of this study to enumerate the activities undertaken by the 150+ humanitarian agencies working in Mali in recent years; the reader is referred to the relevant Humanitarian Response Plans and the national response plans for food security crises. Nonetheless, as an orientation for the subsequent discussion we briefly highlight two programmes.

First, ECHO has been funding an alliance of international NGOs (five in 2014, rising to six in 2016) to deliver an emergency cash transfer programme in the north. This programme, known as the Common Framework for Seasonal Social Safety Nets (*Cadre commun sur les filets sociaux saisonniers*, CCFS) in 2014 and the Common Framework for Seasonal Social Transfers (*Cadre commun sur les transferts sociaux saisonniers*, CCTS) in 2016, brings together interventions by Action Contre la Faim (ACF), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Handicap International, Oxfam, Solidarités Internationales and most recently the International Rescue Committee (IRC) under a harmonised approach. The NGOs are also carrying out many other humanitarian initiatives, but their cash transfer interventions are brought into the common framework to standardise key features such as the transfer value and frequency. This is discussed more in section 4 below.

Second, WFP has been delivering emergency interventions under its 'emergency operations' ('EMOP') programme since the 2012 crisis. This is separate from its routine activities under its country programme, though the fact that it has a dual mandate is valuable for achieving a flexible approach to humanitarian and development programming. The EMOP activities have responded to shocks varying from regional drought to the widespread migration of internally displaced people and Malian refugees, both to save lives and protect livelihoods during a crisis but also to rebuild communities afterwards. They include food distribution, cash transfers and a response to malnutrition. The emergency school meals programmes that are discussed in section 4.3 have been funded from this envelope.

WFP has been coordinating the geographical distribution of its activities closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In 2013 much of the food security assistance in the country was split between these two agencies, with WFP looking after displaced people living in non-occupied regions, and the two bodies dividing their assistance in the formerly occupied north, overlapping only in the capitals of the northern regions. In 2014 WFP and ICRC continued to lead the emergency response while the government agency, the CSA, started to return. Although geographical coordination has been thorough the scope, scale and frequency of assistance to affected populations by the two agencies has differed.

3.6 Implications of the institutional arrangements

Reflecting on this institutional and policy setup we see convergence in the approaches adopted by the state and non-state actors supporting social protection, DRM, food security, resilience and humanitarian initiatives. Social protection actors are talking more about the need to respond quickly to humanitarian emergencies and disasters, and to contribute to preparedness for such events by implementing policies that strengthen resilience. Conversely, humanitarian actors observe the importance not only of immediate life-saving interventions but also longer term development to lessen the impact of a crisis. Some humanitarian agencies also linked their remit to DRM: the UN International Organisation for Migration (IOM), for instance, stated that they would prefer to invest more in DRR initiatives—maintenance of irrigation channels, to cite one example—so that shocks were less likely to develop into a crisis, rather than go to the expense of providing food and non-food items to displaced people:

'What we need today is rigorous planning instead of near constant humanitarian emergency.' (Key informant, IOM).

Meanwhile, as we have seen, agencies working on food security in Mali and across the whole Sahel region have transformed their approach in recent years, analysing and responding to food insecurity not simply as an annual emergency but as a problem with structural causes affecting millions of people. This has led them to consider the introduction of cash transfers, aligning with the types of activities proposed by social protection actors. Of all the sectors reviewed here, the one that has been least explicit about its links to the others is that of DRM, where the relevance of social protection is acknowledged but not thoroughly explored. This broad consensus on the intersectoral nature of the problem bodes well for efforts at coordination.

The formal national 'home' for social protection and humanitarian assistance, the MSAH, is clearly stated and is perceived as such by those in that ministry. However, some of the largest social protection programmes (Jigisèmèjiri, food distribution and school meals) are implemented outside it; and the MSAH has low visibility in the international arena where many discussions about the integration of social protection and food security response take place with other ministries (eg. through AGIR, the Cadre Harmonisé and ARC). In some areas the capacity of the MSAH is promoted through technical support, while in others, such as in the coordination of humanitarian action, its influence is rather modest. Besides the MSAH with its social protection policy, other relevant government bodies have been strengthening their work in this field, the DGPC with its national DRR strategy and the CSA with its reform programme and its involvement in regionwide initiatives such as the Cadre Harmonisé (through the SAP) and the ARC insurance mechanism. With the Sahel-wide *problématique* of food insecurity having been redefined to include a calculation of those in chronic poverty, it was noted by one key informant that the greatest likelihood for competition for influence would come from the overlap in the target beneficiaries between the CSA and those providing long-term social protection.

One might reasonably ask whether it matters that shock-responsive social protection policy is being designed and delivered through parallel structures. To some extent it does not, since the field of activity is so vast. The capacity of the respective agencies that deliver interventions becomes particularly critical in a conflict, as in the crisis in the north of Mali, when it is necessary to have structures in place that can continue to operate effectively, maintaining their regular supply of essential public services as well as responding to additional needs generated by the crisis. The MSAH was less able to do this during the conflict as its commune-level representatives were sometimes obliged to withdraw to the main towns. The CSA has maintained a stronger presence by running some of its operations through contracted local NGOs who have the ability to negotiate even with parties hostile to the government to make sure that food distributions continue.

4 Social protection interventions and their responsiveness to shocks

Key points

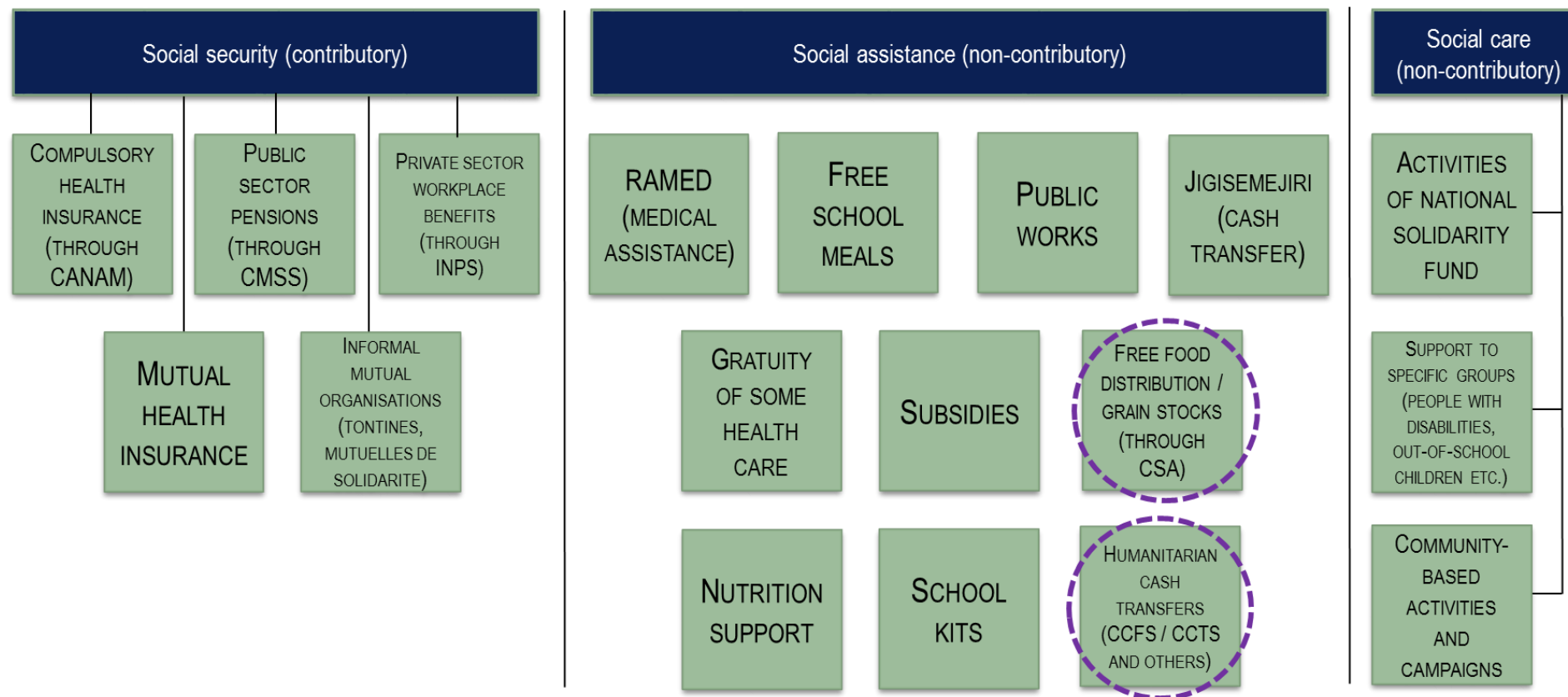
- To assess the shock-responsiveness of interventions in Mali we consider the comprehensiveness, timeliness and predictability of the responses to crises, and progress towards reducing duplication of delivery systems where appropriate.
- The CSA's food distribution programme has the capacity for horizontal and vertical expansion but its focus is on post-hoc response to food insecurity rather than prevention. It is run annually. CSA is considering moving towards cash transfers which raises questions about harmonisation with the national cash transfer Jigisèmèjiri. NGOs' programmes are not strongly aligned with the CSA.
- For the school meals programme, flexibility is provided by donor-funded components that complement the national scheme. WFP offers horizontal and vertical expansion and refocusing of its school meals intervention in accordance with need. These variations move it out of alignment with the national programme since its core programme is well aligned already.
- There is a lot of alignment between the emergency and long-term cash transfers, CCFS / CCTS and Jigisèmèjiri, and piggybacking on each other's systems. The NGOs in the CCFS alliance have aligned extensively with one another. Jigisèmèjiri is harmonising some elements of the system with the RAMED health assistance programme.
- A key question is how a future emergency scale-up of cash transfers would be funded. ARC may be part of a solution: its operational plan suggests that Jigisèmèjiri could administer part of any funds released through ARC for drought response, though it does not articulate how this would happen. There is a need to think more about other disaster risk financing measures.
- It is useful to consider flexible add-ons to Jigisèmèjiri but may be premature to be designing or introducing them at this stage while the basic programme has such low coverage (2% of households): expansion of the routine programme would be a useful next step.

4.1 Approach to analysing shock-responsiveness of interventions

We have already seen that social protection and humanitarian assistance are not strongly distinguished from one another institutionally in Mali; and that this convergence carries through into its policies, where the social protection sector is perceived as being responsible for contributing to managing disasters and humanitarian crises. The same is true operationally. Activities that might be classified as 'humanitarian assistance' by an external observer are considered by the Government of Mali as social protection interventions when they deal with direct support to households to mitigate the impact of a crisis, *ex-ante* or *ex-post*. These include the annual distribution of free food, the use of grain stocks, and emergency cash transfers, all of which fall within the scope of the national social protection policy (Figure 5). The instruments that deliver these 'humanitarian' interventions—in-kind or cash transfers—are also used in routine social protection. Sometimes even the same non-state actor responds to households in acute as well as chronic need: for example, WFP provides school meals both as a routine social protection measure and in an emergency, alongside the government's own programme.

Since the government differentiates little between the two, the question of whether 'social protection' interventions can take on some of the responsibilities of 'humanitarian interventions' does not get to the heart of the policy question. So, what does it mean to develop 'shock-responsive' social protection interventions in Mali, or a shock-responsive system? What is the difference between the way things are now, and the way actors would like it to be? From our discussions with key informants we identified a desire to make improvements in four dimensions:

Figure 5 Social protection interventions in Mali



Source: OPM. Note: (1) Interventions listed are those classified as social protection interventions in the government's National Social Protection Policy. Short-term emergency responses by non-state organisations are not included. (2) The interventions circled in purple (annual free food distribution and humanitarian cash transfers) might conventionally be classified as humanitarian assistance since they respond to emergencies. (3) 'CMSS' and 'INPS' are the two agencies responsible for managing contributory public and formal private sector pensions and benefits respectively.

1. **Comprehensiveness**—fuller coverage of those in chronic and/or acute need. Comprehensiveness can be defined in terms of the following aspects, as a proportion of those affected by the crisis:
 - Numbers
 - Geographical areas
 - Categories of the population supported
2. **Timeliness**, especially early response—assisting households before they reach a crisis point, instead of counting households already in crisis and arranging food distributions for them.
3. **Predictability**—a more predictable response, including reducing reliance on annual programme funding.
4. **Reducing duplication**—in particular, not having multiple systems to do essentially the same thing (early warning, targeting beneficiaries, managing data etc.), and improving coherence between funds and instruments.

A social protection intervention that improves its ability to be comprehensive, timely, predictable or efficient in a crisis from the perspectives outlined above, regardless of the size or cause of the shock—be it food insecurity, conflict or any other—is contributing to greater shock-responsiveness. We examine these aspects across a range of interventions. Mali delivers a large number of social protection activities, which it classifies in its social protection policy in three groups: contributory social security, non-contributory social assistance, and social care or social action programmes (Figure 5). Their scope, state of maturity and resourcing varies enormously. Interventions include:

- **Social security**—eg. health insurance, pensions, workplace benefits
- **Social assistance**—eg. cash and in-kind transfers, free or discounted access to basic health care services, subsidies, public works programmes
- **Social care (social action)**—eg. community-based activities, and support to specific groups of the population such as the elderly and those with disabilities.

To date there has not been an emphasis on adjusting social security or social care to be more sensitive to crises. We therefore focus on social assistance, in particular four programmes that either already play a significant role or that are intended to become relevant to a crisis context:

1. **Food distribution programme.** We look at the CSA's annual free food distribution (distribution alimentaire gratuite) and see how it is thinking of moving towards partly cash responses.
2. **School meals programmes.** We review the government-led and WFP-led school meals programmes and their ability to cater for increased need in the event of an emergency.
3. **'Emergency' cash transfer programmes.** We consider the two recent ECHO-funded, NGO-led cash transfer responses in northern Mali, the CCFS in 2014 and its successor, the CCTS that started in 2016, and their possible linkages with the long-term cash transfer, Jigisèmèjiri.
4. **Longer term cash transfer programme.** We also briefly review Jigisèmèjiri itself and its connections with other interventions including RAMEd.

4.2 Free food distribution programme

4.2.1 The intervention

Every year, as part of the National Response Plan, the CSA finances and distributes free food to households who are considered food insecure regardless of the reason (whether due to structural

factors, individual poverty, or shocks)¹⁵. Distributions are made from the national food security stock (*Stock National de Sécurité*). Geographical targeting is based on the analysis of the Cadre Harmonisé at *cercle* level, and on data from the early warning system, SAP, at *commune* level. These analyses are used to set a quota for the percentage of the population estimated to be in need in each targeted area (a process which, for the programme to achieve maximum impact, requires the data to be reliable: not all agencies are fully convinced that this is yet the case). The selection of eligible households is then determined by community-based targeting which identifies eligible households by name (*'ciblage nominatif'*), carried out by community committees with technical support from the local NGOs and local authorities, *collectivités territoriales*, who implement the distributions on behalf of CSA. Socioeconomic criteria, of the type used in the targeting method that draws on the 'Household Economy Approach' (HEA), are used by communities to help make their household selection, up to the quota set for the area.

Although it is based on the early warning system which was designed to predict major food crises, the free food distribution programme has become a *de facto* national social safety net, providing a 'half-ration' of food for three months of the lean season every year starting around July, even in the absence of a major covariate shock, and even within areas categorised as the most food secure by the Cadre Harmonisé (Phase 1), where there are pockets of food insecurity. In 2015, CSA distributed free food to about 650,000 beneficiaries in 33 *cercles* and 252 *communes* (36% of all the *communes* in Mali).

4.2.2 The responsiveness of the food distribution programme to shocks

The current situation of CSA operations is comparable to that in Ethiopia at the beginning of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), with the annual food aid distributions having developed into a *de facto* safety net addressing chronic needs, but tied to a shock-oriented early warning system and an annual cycle of short-term needs assessments and resourcing. The CSA and SAP, like similar systems across Africa, are fundamentally designed for *horizontal expansion and contraction*, with the number of beneficiaries revised every year depending on the number of areas classified as Phase 3—'Crisis'—or higher on the Cadre Harmonisé scale; and *refocusing*, with priorities shifting among zones and populations every year according to the food security situation and the resources available. *Vertical expansion* (i.e. increasing the ration per targeted household) is frequently implemented during the lean season. *Shadow alignment* by NGOs of the CSA's intervention (i.e. replicating features of the government's programme, though delivering it separately) is theoretically possible but is not yet in evidence. In 2016 the other agencies delivering food assistance or a cash equivalent as a response to seasonal food insecurity—WFP, the ICRC and the NGOs forming the CCTS—were delivering different values of transfer, for a different length of time, to a different percentage of households within the affected areas. In the case of the CCTS this was because it was aligning itself with Jigisèmèjiri instead (see section 4.4).

It is recognised that chronic and seasonal food insecurity are largely due to underlying poverty and livelihood characteristics, and therefore should be addressed by multi-year predictable programmes (such as social transfers) rather than annual relief. The challenge is how best to move the system in that direction. The proposed reforms to the food security set-up, the DNSA, and the formalisation of CSA's mandate are expected to clarify the role of CSA in relation to emergency response and social protection activities, and to improve its coordination with other programmes.

As part of the reform process, CSA expects to expand its scope from in-kind food assistance into cash transfers and resilience-building activities. Although this change is likely to take some years, it

¹⁵ The CSA also runs other interventions, such as price-controlled shops in urban areas, and the release of stock onto the market to reduce prices.

raises key issues about the distinction (if any) between an annual response to fluctuating but basically seasonal shortfalls in food access and a long-term safety net. Several key informants raised the question of how CSA distributions should be coordinated or combined with Jigisèmèjiri, and thus with the envisaged future national social protection system, especially if a primary rationale for the cash received under Jigisèmèjiri is to help households to buy food.

Examining progress in the four dimensions proposed above—comprehensiveness, timeliness, predictability and a reduction in duplication—we can review how the CSA's food distribution programme is developing in terms of its responsiveness to shocks.

Comprehensiveness

The CSA ensures fairly widespread geographical coverage by coordinating the work of partners through the national response plan. Since 2014 the SAP has been running a twice-yearly food security survey, the *Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle* (ENSAN), which is used to determine the level of need by commune and allows a decision as to whether support should increase or decrease in that area. It also feeds into the workshop of the Cadre Harmonisé. There are some zones which are always identified as vulnerable. Others—particularly in the south—change year to year, which permits the refocusing of support. Just over 160 communes out of the 703 were not due to receive any assistance under the National Response Plan in 2016. Partners agree the distribution of their assistance in the identified zones.

Within each commune the percentage of households assisted varies widely. In 2016 the CSA committed to distribute food assistance sufficient for between 5% and 15% of the population in almost every commune of the northern regions of Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal and Ménaka, and in two *cercles* of Mopti. In the south the proportion of the population reached in each assisted commune was much lower, at between 1% and 4%, though with the much higher population density in the south the absolute numbers assisted in a commune were often fairly similar to the north.

In 2016 WFP, the ICRC and ECHO planned to operate entirely in communes where the CSA was also present. The three agencies mostly divided up their own assistance into separate communes, except in about 18 communes (CSA, 2016b; Comité de Suivi du Plan National de Réponse, 2016). In May 2016 the CSA put forward a proposal that, where the agencies operated in the same communes as the CSA, their assistance should be used to top up the rations provided to CSA beneficiaries (vertical expansion) rather than to reach new beneficiaries (horizontal expansion), in order to strengthen the support given to the most vulnerable households (Comité de Suivi du Plan National de Réponse, 2016). A decision on this had not been reached at the time of writing.

Timeliness (early response)

The ENSAN survey takes place twice a year. The first survey is undertaken around September at the start of the growing season, to give an early picture of the likely state of food and nutrition security for the following year. The results are used in the October Cadre Harmonisé assessment which provides the first prediction of the number of people who are likely to face food insecurity. The second ENSAN survey takes place around February as the lean season approaches, and is used in the March Cadre Harmonisé which fine-tunes the estimates of the number of food insecure people. This is timely in the sense that it forms part of an established schedule: the February survey leads to the approval of the National Response Plan in April and the disbursement of assistance during the lean season which runs from April to October. The timeliness of the food distribution itself depends in part on procurement and on the location of the food stocks. The CSA is intending to initiate a plan to shift food from areas in surplus to areas in deficit (Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2016).

Nonetheless, the longstanding programme of free food distribution is *post-hoc*, not designed to help households avoid falling into food insecurity. In 2016 the CSA has attempted to address this by initiating a *Stratégie de Réponse à travers des Moyens d'Existence* (Livelihood Response Strategy) with a three-year time horizon.

Predictability

The organisation of the National Response Plan means that the overarching food distribution programme can be relied upon to take place each year. The geographical areas that are always targeted can also rely on receiving assistance. Support is less predictable at the level of individual households, since the annual selection process means that households cannot guarantee to be assisted over the medium term.

Reduction in duplication

As for reducing duplication with other interventions, the main opportunities are in targeting and subsequent monitoring rather than with the logistics of the food distribution itself, which for now differs somewhat to other social protection interventions. If the CSA moves towards distribution of cash this will give rise to additional opportunities for harmonisation of eg. payment methods.

The CSA and ECHO have coordinated during 2016 to complement each other's activities. Where ECHO had collected data to select households for its interventions, it proposed to share this information with the CSA in areas where the list existed, so that the CSA could target from within the list. In general, where the CSA and an ECHO-supported NGO have been working in the same commune, they have been doing separate exercises to target households. The CSA reports that while its target group is households who do not have enough to eat, other agencies might use additional criteria such as the possibility for recipients to use seeds or other complementary resources. In contrast, a respondent from a non-government agency perceived relatively little difference between the intended target groups of the CSA and those of other agencies supporting the National Response Plan, suggesting that closer collaboration might indeed lead to efficiency gains through the sharing of lists. In the meantime, in some cases households will receive both CSA food assistance and a CCFS cash transfer by the different exercises.

4.2.3 Capacity of the free food distribution programme to meet needs in a crisis

In order to deliver an intervention that is capable of meeting high levels of demand in a crisis—both in terms of absolute numbers and geographical areas covered—it is necessary, first, to have sufficient staff resources, as well as financial and material resources; and second, for the use of the resources not to be hampered by the shock itself (especially a conflict, as in northern Mali). As the CSA's food assistance is delivered by a network of local NGOs and targeted by community committees throughout the country, the free food distribution programme is to some extent independent of formal government infrastructure and capacities. It is notable that CSA was able to continue food distributions through these networks in the northern regions during the 2012–15 crisis, when most government structures had withdrawn their staff or were not functioning. However, humanitarian actors including WFP, the ICRC and the ECHO-funded Cadre Commun (see section 4.4 below) found it necessary to launch major assistance programmes (including food and cash distributions) in the same regions, suggesting that the CSA system's ability to expand its resources and coverage was not sufficient in the face of such a large crisis.

While increasing food distribution is one option that can contribute to meeting needs in a crisis, the question of resolving food insecurity is as much an issue for agriculture and livestock policy—or more so—as for social policy. Diversification of production, and improvements in access to markets and in the processing of agricultural products, can all contribute to reducing the level of need in the

first place. The government's medium-term strategic planning framework recognises the importance of an approach that extends across multiple sectors.

4.3 School meals programmes

4.3.1 The intervention

Mali has a year-round school meals programme managed by the CNCS in the Ministry of Education, classified as a regular social assistance programme (Figure 5). Complementary programmes in geographical areas not covered by the state are provided by partners, mainly WFP (in partnership with UNICEF) with smaller initiatives delivered by NGOs such as Catholic Relief Services and Plan International. The World Bank is funding emergency school feeding through the government system. An inter-agency coordination meeting on school feeding is held monthly: the members of this forum are CNCS, WFP, World Bank, UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services and Plan.

The government system covers 20% of primary schools, and has a long-term objective of reaching all schools. For the time being (until it has the capacity to cover 100% of schools) the CNCS programme is geographically targeted, prioritising the 166 communes considered most vulnerable to food insecurity. Within the targeted zones, the criteria for selecting schools are set out in the policy and are followed by both the state and non-state systems. Priority is given to schools with low enrolment and retention rates, especially of girls, since one of the aims of the policy is to encourage the enrolment of girls. The vulnerability and poverty of the catchment population is also considered, along with the distance of the school from pupils' homes, and the availability and willingness of local community structures to equip and run the school canteens. Once a school canteen is established, all pupils attending the school are entitled to school meals: there is no targeting or means-testing within the school.

WFP's programme targets at-risk and crisis-affected zones, and areas where the state system is not yet functioning. WFP provides take-home-rations of high-value vegetable oil, in addition to meals eaten at the school, for girls who attend regularly. Mothers who prepare the school meals are also entitled to take a set amount of cooked food home with them for the household.

4.3.2 The responsiveness of the school meals programme to shocks

The school meals programme has a number of interesting features that currently or potentially enable it to be responsive to shocks, particularly on account of its joint implementation by both the government and WFP. While the government focuses on its core objective of providing meals all year round to a consistent set of schools, WFP's intervention varies more from year to year to accommodate changing food security needs. It forms part of the annual National Response Plan.

School feeding has been part of WFP's 2008-14 Country Programme (for development activities); the 2013-14 Emergency Operation (EMOP) mainly to address the consequences of the conflict in the north; and the current three-year Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation 2015-17. Flexibility and responsiveness is delivered in several ways:

- WFP's programme can *expand and contract horizontally*—adding new beneficiaries—in line with changing needs. For example, the 2013–14 EMOP began by supporting emergency school feeding for 70,000 children aged 7 to 12 in Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal. A budget revision to the EMOP after a year of operation included the expansion of the intervention to 220,000 children by October 2014. Beneficiary estimates were based on the gradual reopening of schools in the north. In its rationale for the expanded emergency programme, WFP noted:

'Scaling-up will absorb the increased numbers of beneficiaries observed in assisted schools and also incorporate IDPs [internally displaced people] and refugee children returning to their areas of origin.' (WFP, 2013a, p.6)

- *Refocusing* of assistance is also possible, either to different geographical areas or to different schools within an area. Under the 2013–14 EMOP WFP planned to support whichever schools were operating in the three northern regions, regardless of whether they were state-run or private, urban or rural, pre-school or primary (Laanouni *et al.*, 2014).
- *Vertical expansion* (top-up) of assistance to children already benefiting from the school feeding system has been applied in three ways: by increasing the number of daily meals provided, by extending the provision of meals into the school holidays and by the addition of take-home rations (WFP, 2013a; Laanouni *et al.*, 2014).
- *Alignment* by WFP and other non-state partners with the government's policy and guidelines for school feeding supports the gradual expansion of the state system. However, achieving a close alignment between the emergency intervention and the state-run social protection programme may not always be appropriate. In this instance the provision of top-ups tailored to the crisis generated divergence, rather than convergence, between the two programmes. This is logical, since if two interventions are well aligned at their origin, then a vertical expansion to one intervention will cause it to look different from the parallel programme. The evaluators of WFP's EMOP programme recognised this and recommended reverting to harmonised school meals interventions as the crisis lessened:

'Since 2012 WFP has had an emergency school feeding programme in place in the north in the regions of Gao and Tombouctou (two meals per day), which is differentiated from the country programme's school feeding programme implemented in the southern regions (one meal per day). The harmonisation and alignment of the approaches is a desirable step. [...] While it may be desirable for the north–south geographical differentiation to continue for certain strategic purposes, the school feeding programme should speed up its efforts at convergence, since it is now appropriate to revert to a policy of a single type of support aligned with the country's national policy' (Laanouni *et al.*, 2014, p.23 and p.48; *author's own translation*).

- *Piggybacking* of other types of assistance, using the facilities and the local institutional base of the *cantines scolaires* to deliver other services, was agreed by some key informants to be possible and an interesting idea, but it has not been done so far. There was some legitimate concern that if the school canteens were borrowed for other purposes such as providing meals for out-of-school children or for adults, the education objective of the programme would be weakened as there would be less incentive for children to attend school in order to receive food. This highlights the need to consider all programme objectives, not only those related to social protection, when considering the appropriateness of building flexibility into an intervention.

The component of WFP's school meals programme that is classified as development activity has less flexibility to scale up. In Mopti region in 2013–14, where it was operating, efforts to accommodate the additional demand brought about by the crisis resulted in a refocusing of resources through reduced rations rather than horizontal expansion:

The formerly occupied *cercles* of Mopti region [were] supported by the country programme, of which the school feeding component was extended to children of the numerous families displaced, particularly within the region (a situation which, in the absence of additional

funding, led to a reduction in the rations distributed via this activity) (Laanouni *et al.*, 2014, p.12; *author's own translation*).

The government-run scheme has less scope for flexible programming than WFP's intervention. The World Bank has funded its temporary horizontal expansion: the wide-ranging Emergency Education for All project (*Projet Urgence Education pour Tous*), launched in 2013 as a response to both insecurity and the food insecurity crises, includes a component that intended to provide school meals for an additional 50,000 pre-school children for three years starting with the 2014–15 school year. However, a review after 18 months of implementation found that the project delivered only one-third of the number of meals it intended to provide during its first year, owing in part to the considerable delays in disbursement of the funds (see next subsection) (World Bank, 2016c).

4.3.3 Capacity of the school meals programme to meet needs in a crisis

By maintaining or re-establishing school attendance after a shock or crisis, school feeding not only supports the food security and nutritional status of pupils and their families, but can also assist children simply by giving them a stable social context. It protects their long-term human capital development by minimising their time out of education. In the 2012-15 crisis in northern Mali, key informants noted that the demand for school canteens had been a factor in enabling schools to re-open as soon as possible, supporting early recovery from the crisis, and also that being in school protected children from potential radicalisation by the Islamic extremists. The school feeding system is thus potentially an important base for shock-response.

However, the flexibility in the system is currently provided by WFP and its partners. It is not clear that the expanding state system will be able to maintain the flexibility. The strategy of rolling out government-funded school canteens by increasing coverage each year does not allow for geographical refocusing in response to a shock. Nor would one expect it to, since the policy of providing meals to children in school has many objectives beyond immediate food security, such as the increased enrolment of girls and improved academic performance.

Furthermore, even if the government decided that it were strategically appropriate for it to adjust its own school meals programme to respond to an emergency, it would need to be sure that it could handle two capacity requirements that this would impose: additional material resources and timely financing:

- Regarding the first, when WFP expanded its intervention in northern Mali, one of its requirements was that the schools in which it was providing emergency school feeding also had suitably qualified staff, and a secure building with safe drinking water (Laanouni *et al.*, 2014). It is reasonable to expect the same standards to apply to an equivalent government-led programme. This would mean that the provision of school meals cannot outpace the availability of basic education services, which suffered considerable disruption during the conflict.
- Second, the review of the World Bank-funded emergency expansion of the government-led school meals programme found that the government had been unable to release funds for the intervention in a timely way (World Bank, 2016c). The response therefore fell short of its intended outcomes across three of the dimensions discussed above: comprehensiveness, timeliness and predictability. By March 2016 the intervention should have delivered six quarterly payments to school management committees, via local authorities, each providing funding for 60 days of meals per pupil for 50,000 pupils. Instead it had effected only two of the six transfers to the targeted schools, and provision of meals had therefore been intermittent. Schools provided 40 rather than 60 meals, some offering fewer than five meals per week. The funding that was intended to arrive for the start of the school year in September 2014 was released by the ministry of national education two months late, at the end of October 2014, and

did not reach schools in Koulikoro region (where the evaluation took place) until February or March 2015, a further three to four months later, so at least five months after classes began. No other transfers were made during that school year. In the next school year one payment was released by the ministry in November 2015 and arrived in schools a month later. This indicates that the capacity of the routine system to absorb additional demands through timely release of funds was limited.

Part of the plan for longer term sustainability of Mali's school feeding programme is a gradual handover of WFP's programme to the government system. The crisis in the north caused that transfer to be delayed:

The crisis suspended the collaboration undertaken with the government to progressively hand over the school feeding programme: this transfer is yet to be developed today' (Laanouni et al., 2014. p.17)

This indicates that in a context such as that found in Mali, where there is strong political will and government support for social protection, and a developing social protection system but limited capacity and resources so far, there remains a need for the continuing presence of international actors. There is a particular benefit to be had from 'dual mandate' organisations that can invest in long-term development programmes but also switch to emergency mode when needed, offering not only funding but also implementation capacity.

In the meantime it is important to support relatively weak but growing social protection interventions, such as the school meals programme run by the CNCS, to deliver their routine services, which will facilitate their future shock-response capacity. The CNCS published a roadmap for the long-term sustainability of the school canteens programme in 2013, which set out the series of necessary steps from developing a policy, to resolving financing, to building staff capacity (CNCS, 2013). It recognises lack of capacity at national and deconcentrated levels, and the need to improve coordination between local government and the deconcentrated services, as some of the major challenges to be resolved in order to embed the national school meals programme more fully as a reliable and sustainable social protection activity.

4.4 Cash-based safety nets: the *Cadres communs* and *Jigisèmèjiri*

4.4.1 The interventions

The humanitarian agencies' CCFS (2014) and CCTS (2016)

Following the 2012 crisis most development NGOs left northern Mali, leaving only humanitarian and dual-mandate organisations. As noted in section 3.5 above, a group of NGOs, with ECHO funding, has been implementing a cash-based social transfer programme in the crisis-affected north since 2014 through two successive projects. These are explicitly intended as a model towards a system of predictable cash transfers that are sensitive and responsive to shocks, and that move away from a system of in-kind food distributions with needs defined annually:

The activity of the Cadre Commun [CCFS] [...] is designed with a view to a transition from emergency response to sustainable development based on pilot approaches before scale-up to an institution-wide level (Boulardot, 2014, p.7; *author's own translation*).

The goal of this programme [CCTS] is to feed into reflections on the institutionalisation of social safety nets adapted to the context of

northern Mali, in line with the social protection policy adopted by the Government of Mali (ACF, 2016, p.1; *author's own translation*).

The first intervention, starting in March 2014 and implemented by five NGOs, was the **CCFS** which provided seasonal support to just under 40,000 households in 37 communes of Tombouctou and Gao regions (roughly one-third of all households in those localities). Recipients were selected through a targeting mechanism which comprised a household listing and a community-based targeting exercise; lists of potential households from the two processes were cross-checked and validated by the community (CCFS, 2015). The cash transfer component had a total value of CFA 100,000 (about \$160) per household—estimated to be about one-third of typical household income in a normal year—delivered in three tranches over one year, with the size and timing of each tranche varying by agency (Soumaré, 2016; CCFS, 2015). This was complemented by free food distribution and nutritional support in the form of blanket supplementary feeding and nutrition education. An endline evaluation in 2015, five months after the project finished, found that the beneficiaries' situation had improved during the intervention but that by the time of the survey the key indicators had reverted to the same levels as before the transfers started (CCFS, 2015). This led the implementers to conclude that the transfers had been sufficient to feed people, but not enough in value or duration for them to build their resilience or escape from poverty.

The second project, the **CCTS** which began in 2016 and is implemented by six NGOs, was initiated by ECHO with the objective of creating a bridge with multi-year resilience funding from the EU Delegation (financed through the 11th European Development Fund and Trust Fund). This fitted with the multi-sector approach promoted by AGIR. The ECHO-funded cash transfer value was set at CFA 120,000 (\$194) per year to align with Jigisèmèjiri, and the EU delegation-funded accompanying measures (including conditional coupons and assets for income generation) are intended to double the total value of assistance per household. The project, operating in some of the same areas at the CCFS, is planned as a three-year intervention (2016-18) (ACF, 2016). The emergency-funded cash transfers had already started at the time of our research in mid-2016, while the funding and contracts for the complementary measures were not yet in place.

The *cadres communs* also have a specific objective of supporting the creation of a national social protection system through coordination, lesson-learning and advocacy. The database produced by the CCFS has been shared with the MSAH via ECHO, and the alliance members are actively involved in planning the unified beneficiary registry and eventual 'social registry', the RSU (see section 5.3 below).

Jigisèmèjiri

Meanwhile, in the south, the Government of Mali set up its unconditional poverty-targeted cash transfer programme, Jigisèmèjiri, with \$70 million of World Bank funding following a review of its social safety nets undertaken in 2009–10 (Cherrier *et al.*, 2011; World Bank, 2013). The World Bank's project, which runs from 2013 to 2019, was designed with two main objectives: primarily the design and delivery of the cash transfer programme and accompanying measures (\$57 million), but also support to establishing a government-led system of basic social assistance (\$7 million) (World Bank, 2013)¹⁶. Jigisèmèjiri was intended to be nationwide, but as its launch unfortunately coincided with the 2012 political and security crisis the first phase of implementation was limited to the south and operated in around 100 of Mali's 700 communes. The crisis also led to the postponement of the 'accompanying measures' component in order to focus on the cash transfer. To summarise briefly the activities:

¹⁶ Remaining funds are for project management.

- The **cash transfer** component delivers CFA 10,000 (\$16) a month, paid quarterly, to registered households for three years, with the first wave enrolled in early 2014. By December 2015, the programme had reached almost 44,000 poor households in the five southern regions against a target of 62,000 in the life of the project (World Bank, 2013, 2015c). Following the 2015 peace agreement, Jigisèmèjiri has been expanding into the northern region of Gao in 2016, with additional funding from DDC. As of December 2016 some 47,000 households were receiving transfers across the country. For now, donor funding for Jigisèmèjiri is available until 2019, by which time those enrolled in 2016 will have received three years of transfers.
- The planned accompanying measures include **public works programmes** and **income-generating activities** both in communes where the cash transfer is delivered and in communes where it is not present. In 2016 the prospect of introducing these interventions was revived. The intention is to provide them using additional financing of \$10 million for Jigisèmèjiri from the trust fund of the ASP programme in the Sahel. When this aspect of the programme was relaunched there was a renewed emphasis on the importance of activities to strengthen household resilience, and especially to promote climate adaptation (World Bank, 2016b).
- The **support to strengthening the government's social assistance system** consists, in particular, of establishing the unified beneficiary registry mentioned above and a management information system (MIS) for Jigisèmèjiri, with the aim of improving coordination of targeting and sharing the costs of data collection and analysis with other interventions. It aims also to strengthen institutional structures and build implementation capacities.

A project amendment by the World Bank in mid-2016 adjusted Jigisèmèjiri's development objective to state explicitly the aim of building an '*adaptive national safety net system*', in order to emphasise the importance of ensuring that the system should be resilient to shocks (World Bank, 2016b).

4.4.2 The responsiveness of the cash transfer interventions to shocks

'Shadow alignment' and 'piggybacking' between social protection and humanitarian agencies

The aim of the CCFS and CCTS has been explicitly to provide a possible model for extending Jigisèmèjiri to the north of Mali, given that the national programme was unable to operate in the north for its first several years. This provides a good example of *shadow alignment*, in the terminology of our framework, the aim being to better link the annual seasonal assistance provided by humanitarian actors to the government's long-term national social protection system, and eventually to relieve humanitarian agencies of having to provide income support as a contribution to addressing seasonal food insecurity and chronic malnutrition. We also find examples of the interventions *piggybacking* on each other's administrative systems. This can work both ways, with Jigisèmèjiri making use of systems set up by the CCFS and CCTS and *vice versa*. The humanitarian programmes have aligned themselves with the social protection programme—and also with other aspects of the social protection and DRM systems—in the following ways (see especially Boulardot, 2014 and Goldmann, 2015):

1. **Selection of geographical areas.** The actors in the CCFS selected the areas for intervention, down to commune level, on the basis of data from the ENSAN food security survey, the SAP early warning unit, the projections of the Cadre Harmonisé and a list from OCHA of priority zones for intervention¹⁷.

¹⁷ The NGOs then complemented this with fresh analysis at the local level of risks of insecurity and fraud, in order to arrive at a set of locations where implementing a cash transfer was feasible. This resulted in the exclusion of Kidal region despite the high level of need (Boulardot, 2014).

2. **Household listing.** The method for conducting the comprehensive listing of 130,000 households in the selected communes in the CCFS, including the tools for collecting data on households' assets and sources of income, was copied from Jigisèmèjiri to enable the data to be absorbed into the registry being supported by that programme. The process included a comparative analysis of variables collected by Jigisèmèjiri and by ECHO in their respective questionnaires to ascertain the extent to which the two could be combined. The database was handed to the DNPSES in 2015 so it could feed into the registry (CCFS, 2015).
3. **Household ID code.** The unique code for identifying each listed household in the CCFS also matched the system designed by Jigisèmèjiri, for the same reason.
4. **Transfer value.** The total annual transfer value for the CCTS (the 2016 programme) was set to match that for Jigisèmèjiri. This has two advantages: first, when the humanitarian agencies' assistance finishes, households that transfer onto Jigisèmèjiri—if it is still running and enrolling new beneficiaries—will not be surprised by a sudden drop in support. Second, if others in the same geographical areas are enrolled onto Jigisèmèjiri there will not be a mismatch between the benefits received by households on the different programmes. The fact that the two annual transfer values were set to be the same stems from an acknowledgement by the humanitarian organisations that the CCFS and CCTS are not dealing with exceptional crisis needs, but rather cyclical food insecurity or chronic poverty that is also an issue in the south of Mali.
5. **Selection of households.** In turn, when Jigisèmèjiri expanded into Gao region in the north in 2016 it experimented with a slightly different targeting method than its usual approach in the south. In some communes, instead of a pure proxy means test (PMT) it used what it termed 'PMT+' (World Bank, 2016d). The starting point for the selection of beneficiaries was the list of households who had benefited from the CCFS in that region in 2014, which had been compiled using a household economy approach with community validation. The PMT was then applied to those households.

Alignment among humanitarian agencies

The alignment of the interventions of the NGOs in the ECHO alliance with one another—not just with Jigisèmèjiri—is itself a useful step in an eventual transition between humanitarian assistance and social protection. It promotes stronger links between the two systems, as it is easier for government programmes to draw lessons from, and coordinate with, a harmonised programme than with many scattered interventions. This experience has been positive and well documented (Boulardot, 2014; CCFS, 2015; Goldmann, 2015; Soumaré, 2016). Aspects of programme design and implementation that were coordinated across the five NGOs (then six, in the CCTS) included:

- the logical framework;
- questionnaires (for the baseline survey, household listing, market assessment and post-distribution monitoring);
- targeting method;
- monitoring and evaluation (M&E); and
- total transfer value during the year.

A focal person for advocacy and for M&E operated on behalf of all the NGOs, and there was regular consultation within the group. The CCTS in 2016 added an activity of working on harmonisation of the intervention together with national social protection actors.

Not every aspect of cash transfer delivery was deemed to be suitable for alignment by the NGOs in the alliance. For instance, they used a variety of payment modalities (both cash and voucher) and payment service providers (microfinance institutions, mobile phone operators and local traders) to distribute the transfers in accordance with what worked best in each geographical area (Boulardot,

2014). In this respect the CCFS reverted to its aim of being a pilot for flexible delivery models rather than insisting on one approach. Moreover, the NGOs were not bound together in a formal consortium: each retained its autonomy, being contracted separately by ECHO to ensure that each was also able to align with the mandates and procedures of their own organisations.

Alignment among social protection interventions

For Jigisèmèjiri, shock-responsiveness has been further promoted by starting to make links with another long-term social protection system, the RAMED medical assistance scheme (Box 1). As part of its goal of achieving universal health coverage, Mali offers this scheme which pays for the major health care expenses of the poorest households who cannot afford medical insurance.

Box 1 The RAMED medical assistance scheme

RAMED was created in 2009 and placed under the management of a new government agency, ANAM. Its aim is eventually to cover the health care costs of the poorest 5% of the population, as a complement to compulsory health insurance (*assurance médicale obligatoire*) for civil servants and formal sector workers (17% of the population) and the system of mutual health insurance for informal and agricultural workers and their dependants (78%). As of late 2015 some 52,000 households had been enrolled. It covers consultations, laboratory services, costs of hospitalisation, maternity services and medication (Government of Mali, 2015). Treatment is meant to be free at the point of use for beneficiary households, with the costs being reclaimed from public authorities by the service provider. RAMED was expected to be funded 65% by the national government and 35% by local authorities. Local authorities experienced challenges in delivering this level of commitment, resulting in a greatly increased share of the cost being borne by at national level.

Enrolment on RAMED depends on a person being classified as very poor ('indigent'). Since both Jigisèmèjiri and RAMED collect data on the socioeconomic status and living conditions of individuals and focus their interventions on the poorest households, it was proposed that the interventions could introduce some alignment between their targeting methods, questionnaires and databases: a household benefiting from Jigisèmèjiri would therefore automatically also become a beneficiary of RAMED. This automatic enrolment could contribute to resolving the challenge of the slow expansion of RAMED scheme in two ways: first, by reducing the administrative cost of identifying households as indigent, and second, by circumventing the disincentive for local authorities to enrol households onto RAMED because they then have to contribute to any health care costs incurred out of their own budget.

The alignment began with ANAM starting to enrol some Jigisèmèjiri beneficiaries for 18 months in Sikasso and Koulikoro regions (World Bank, 2015a). By December 2016 some 30,000 households, or about 1% of the population, had been given RAMED certificates (World Bank, 2016a). Reviews of Jigisèmèjiri in 2015 and 2016 have proposed that alignment between the intervention and RAMED could be further strengthened by formalising a protocol of collaboration between the project implementation unit for Jigisèmèjiri and ANAM; harmonising the household ID code; and changing the duration of eligibility for RAMED to three years to match Jigisèmèjiri (World Bank, 2015a, 2016a). This type of harmonisation can be considered to improve the shock-responsiveness of both interventions by reducing the likely impact of a shock (idiosyncratic as well as covariate) when it strikes.

4.4.3 Capacity of the cash transfer programmes to meet needs in a crisis

We have seen that humanitarian interventions such as the *cadres communs* are used largely to respond to recurrent, predictable seasonal needs, not exceptional situations. Humanitarian donors such as ECHO would like to see a progressive transfer of this caseload to the state-run social protection system (supported by development partners) so it can focus its efforts on acute crises,

in Mali or elsewhere. Achieving this type of withdrawal requires the state system to be fully operational in the north, which is likely to take many more years. In the meantime it seems appropriate to continue with the efforts at harmonisation of humanitarian interventions, informal alignment with the emerging state system, and piggybacking on existing system components.

We have also seen that the *cadres communs*, Jigisèmèjiri and RAMED—as with the CSA and the CNCS and its partners—have taken several notable steps towards improving their shock-responsiveness. Comprehensive coverage of the population—in terms of both geographical areas reached, and absolute numbers of people supported to reduce food insecurity and meet basic needs—has been helped by the CCFS and CCTS (for cash transfers) and WFP (in the case of school meals) complementing the state-led interventions in a way that is intended to facilitate absorption of their caseload by government programmes in the long term. Non-state programmes are being explicitly aligned with government policies, and actors are contributing to efficiency improvements by making use of other agencies' data, administrative systems and procedures wherever possible. Timeliness of interventions remains a question (World Bank, 2015a).

Naturally, there remain many aspects of the humanitarian response that are not yet formally aligned with long-term social protection systems: many humanitarian agencies, for instance, continue to deliver cash or in-kind aid outside the platform of the multi-agency ECHO-funded alliances. Experience to date also reveals likely stumbling blocks in furthering the shock-responsiveness of the social protection system: for example, the fact that security concerns prevented even humanitarian agencies from operating the CCFS in Kidal region is an indication of the enormous difficulty of delivering a service when conflict is a contributing factor in the crisis.

What are the prospects for sustainable funding of shock-responsive cash transfers?

In a situation of chronic crisis it is vital to ensure sustainability of financing for social protection. For now this includes sustainability of donor financing. The European Union is working to integrate funding streams from its humanitarian and development arms (ECHO and DEVCO). ECHO is drawing on multi-year humanitarian funding to support the CCTS. It is planned that DEVCO will fund the complementary resilience activities and may provide support to the cash transfer component on a longer term basis from 2017. The multi-year funding cannot be guaranteed as humanitarian resources are still subject to annual review and prioritisation. It is difficult for the state to mobilise financial resources to take on more than the activities to which it is already committed through the CSA's food security interventions and the free school meals programme. The Government of Mali was due to contribute about \$1.5 million to Jigisèmèjiri over the project's lifetime (2013–19) to cover programme start-up and some of the ongoing salary and operational costs. In practice this has been difficult to achieve. The review of Jigisèmèjiri in 2015 observed,

'The state's contribution remains difficult to mobilise. As has been mentioned in the previous aide-memoires, it is essential for the good implementation of the project that state funds are used to cover, notably, the remuneration of certain members of the project unit, the rent of office space and also the electricity and water supply' (World Bank, 2015a, p.3).

At full scale a programme providing cash transfers to rural populations to prevent food insecurity, designed on the basis of the CCFS and Jigisèmèjiri at CFA 120,000 per household per year, would need to cover several hundred thousand households at a cost of many tens of billions of CFA (tens of millions of dollars), an amount which is not feasible in Mali in the short term given current budget estimates (Government of Mali, 2015; Cherrier, 2016). Both the emergency interventions and Jigisèmèjiri remain largely funded by international donors including the European Union, World Bank, DFID and DDC.

Mechanisms for disaster risk financing are being explored by the government and international development partners. ARC (see section 3.3 above) is one such mechanism. Its operational plan outlines three emergency responses that it intends to implement in the event of ARC funds being released after a major climate shock. These are the distribution of grains from the national food security stock; the distribution of animal fodder; and the distribution of cash transfers. Jigisèmèjiri is nominally cited as the programme through which the emergency cash transfers would be issued. However, the operational plan is unspecific about the nature of the relationship between the emergency programme and the social protection programme. It proposes to issue a different amount of support (\$5.40 per person per month) with a different frequency and duration (monthly between April and June). It states that beneficiaries would be identified through a community-based targeting exercise in areas affected by drought: there is no reference to an expectation either to top up support to existing Jigisèmèjiri beneficiaries (vertical expansion), nor to specifically extend the programme to non-beneficiaries (horizontal expansion). Moreover, the ARC operational plan describes procurement processes to find an NGO to conduct the enrolment, and also to find a payment service provider, both of which would be undertaken only at the time the funds were made available. The connection envisaged with Jigisèmèjiri is therefore minimal, consisting only of very light piggybacking on its banking infrastructure: the payout from ARC would be sent to Jigisèmèjiri's bank account, from where it would be forwarded to the payment service provider together with instructions about how much money to give each beneficiary.

Since no payouts had been issued for drought response in Mali through ARC at the time of the study, the research team was not in a position to ascertain how this relationship would work in practice, nor to understand how the proposed cash transfer would differ from any other emergency cash transfer. If a close connection proves feasible, this could be an important step forward in integrating the food security assessment and response system with DRM and social protection. For now, the team's interpretation of the proposal is that the links between the emergency response and social protection mechanism through ARC will be modest.

Meanwhile, the World Bank and the multi-donor funded Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) are exploring options for funding the possible scale-up of Jigisèmèjiri in a disaster, through a joint programme, 'Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance'. This includes consideration of ways in which Jigisèmèjiri might expand or contract flexibly—either vertically (giving top-ups) or horizontally (reaching more beneficiaries)—in accordance with seasonal needs (Nour, 2015; MSAHRN, 2016). At the time of the research the discussions in this regard were still at the diagnostic stage, with the relevant government ministries conducting a mapping exercise of their related interventions.

In our view we see the appeal of instituting such a programme, and the fact that a formal working group has been set up to examine the matter is a good prospect for encouraging the development of a rigorously thought through system (see section 7 below for details of the coordination mechanism). Nonetheless we would caution against easy comparisons with the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya, the cash transfer programme with an emergency scale-up mechanism that is sometimes held up as an example globally. In Kenya's case the long-term social protection programme already covers more than 25% of households in the four counties where it operates; its scale-up mechanism is intended to help meet basic needs when that level of demand is exceeded. In the case of Mali, Jigisèmèjiri is still at an early stage and reaches only about 2% of households, while about one-quarter of the population is chronically food insecure and 44% of the population lives below the poverty line¹⁸. It would seem reasonable, then, that the priority question in terms of financing is how to increase funding for the long-term expansion of the social protection

¹⁸ Coverage of Jigisèmèjiri estimated from the World Bank's figures of 344,000 people living in beneficiary households as of December 2016, compared with a population of around 18 million (World Bank, 2016a).

programme by an order of magnitude, before developing more sophisticated methods for temporary flexing of the system. The World Bank, recognising this concern, notes that it would make sense to start by considering using a flexible mechanism to respond to a single type of shock in just a few livelihood zones rather than attempting to use it everywhere at once (World Bank, 2015b).

Other resourcing implications for cash transfer programmes

A transition to greater government involvement in some activities previously absorbed by non-state actors requires capacity in terms of personnel, and requires those staff to operate in the areas of crisis. We have noted that the number of staff in the lead sectoral ministry, the MSAH, is relatively small at national level. This is not necessarily a problem: the ministry's mandate is to coordinate all social protection activities but this does not require it to run them all. However, it should be able to coordinate interventions. It is notable that no social protection intervention discussed in this section is overseen by the MSAH: they are run by the CSA, the CNCS and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. This has led some recent commentators to note the emergence of several parallel structures overseeing social protection services, using varying combinations of ministries, donors and implementing partners (eg. Bernard and La Rosa, 2015).

Locally there remain practical challenges about being able to deliver interventions such as a cash transfer programme. While the CCFS aimed to be a pilot demonstrating techniques that could be picked up by the state, one of the advantages of the CCFS as expressed by some community members was precisely that it was not the state (Goldmann, 2015). In the final evaluation of the CCFS, many community leaders confirmed that the government had the mandate and responsibility to deliver social assistance but felt that it was not appropriate to institutionalise the cash transfer intervention in the government system while the crisis was ongoing:

"We'd like the project to stay till the end of the crisis and then the state can take over." Community leader quoted in CCFS 2015, p. 129; *author's own translation.*

Many people felt that the state system was cumbersome and feared that the cash might not reach the intended beneficiaries or might be subjected to political objectives. There was a general sense that programmes would have greater impact for now if they were continued to be implemented by NGOs, even while bearing in mind the need for a transition to the state system once confidence in it were regained. The lack of involvement by state actors in activities such as the household listing and targeting for the CCFS was seen as a drawback by the state actors themselves.

There thus remains a question about how easily a state-run system can take on further responsibilities in a situation of extreme fragility such as that of northern Mali. Moreover, global evidence as to whether cash transfer schemes mitigate or fuel violent conflict is mixed (Beazley *et al.*, 2016). It is commonly perceived that social assistance programmes can influence individuals' decisions to participate in violence by altering the opportunity cost and changing their social status; alter information flows; and improve state legitimacy, and hence stability. In practice a mixture of positive and negative impacts are seen in all these areas, and there is the potential for unintended side-effects of corruption and insurgent attacks that target visible programmes. There is some suggestion that state legitimacy may be conferred more by the *procedures* with which it interacts with populations, rather than by the *performance* of its interventions¹⁹.

¹⁹ Beazley *et al.* (2016) provide a comprehensive assessment of the body of evidence as to how the design of cash transfers and public works programmes mitigates or promotes violent conflict.

5 Using the elements of a social protection system

Key points

- **Human resources:** There is general agreement that the government should lead the use of social protection for large-scale crises in Mali where appropriate (i.e. where it is not a party to a conflict); some capacity already exists. It is stretched and often faces material constraints. Capacity was particularly scarce in the north during the 2012 crisis.
- The human resource constraint is true even for routine social protection. For now, any 'surge capacity' to respond to crises is likely to come from a redistribution of existing resources.
- Strengthening of human resource capacity should be at local as well as national level.
- Non-government actors will continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock-response and social protection for the long term.
- **Targeting:** The preference for different targeting methods in humanitarian and development programming results in very different beneficiaries. This may be a challenge in moving between programme types. Actors in Mali are fully aware of this and undertaking research to address it.
- In the long run, changes to targeting may have less impact on households in the Sahel than might be expected because of the widespread practice of redistribution of benefits.
- Programme effectiveness also depends on geographical targeting. The SAP list of vulnerable communes is already used in the roll-out of some social protection interventions, so there are already links between DRM and social protection systems to promote shock-responsiveness.
- **Database:** The RSU is in its design phase. Design choices will have a major impact on its use in a crisis. Key questions include where future data will come from—which drives trust in data quality—and how it will be accessed.
- With the major shocks in Mali being food insecurity and conflict, if the database is to work in a shock it will have to deal with timely updates, changes to households' material circumstances, population displacement and reluctance to share personal information in conflict zones.

The previous section explored the contribution that individual *programmes* might make to achieve a better response to shocks. Beyond this, the Government of Mali is working on strengthening the elements of a social protection *system* to better coordinate interventions and achieve a more harmonised approach to aspects that are common to many programmes. The action plan 2016–18 that accompanies the national social protection policy cites several system components to be supported: these include social protection structures and services (human and material resources); tools and methods for targeting beneficiaries; data collection and research on vulnerability, and an MIS; the unified beneficiary registry, the RSU; and financing (Government of Mali, 2016a).

Activities to improve the effectiveness of these system components are already underway: the government's roadmap for reforming its food security apparatus includes many related initiatives (CSA, 2016a). Several of these also feature among the components supported by the World Bank in its technical assistance to Jigisèmèjiri (World Bank, 2013). We review here some of these main elements—human resources, targeting approaches and databases—with respect to how they are, or might be, used in response to shocks. Financing is discussed separately in section 6.

5.1 Human resources

In our interviews with key informants, as in the documentary evidence from recent policy statements, we found general agreement on five attributes of the human resourcing requirements for the use of social protection initiatives as a response to large-scale crises in Mali.

First, it was acknowledged that the government should be taking the lead where appropriate, and that other agencies should accept its leadership:

In order for the state to be able to assume real leadership in the coordination of the numerous actors involved in social transfers, it is necessary for the latter to recognise the legitimacy of the state in this field, and for the institutional and human resource capacities of national structures to be strengthened (CSA, 2016a, p.13; *author's own translation*).

This does not mean that the government itself has to provide all the staff and resources or run all the programmes, but that it should at least be able to play a coordination function for the efficient use of the resources available, and delegate to others. There are some circumstances where such leadership might not be appropriate, notably in conflict-affected areas if the government is a party to the conflict, where international humanitarian actors might be better able to negotiate access in accordance with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. Nonetheless, a reasonable starting point is to consider whether it is feasible and appropriate to deliver support through the government.

Second, some government capacity already exists: the social protection, humanitarian and DRM systems are not starting from scratch. On more than one occasion it was noted that the existing structure has some well qualified and experienced staff, and that Mali has already been able to deliver some initiatives that could serve as a model for the wider region, indicating the existence of relevant competencies. One example cited was that of the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM's) system for tracking internal displacement of the population, the Displacement Tracking Matrix, the management of which was transferred from the IOM to the MSAH in 2015; the government now leads on data collection and analysis, with technical support from IOM.

Third, this existing capacity is extremely stretched. It is not always visible or present in some of the areas most in need of support; and the staff are constrained by their limited material resources:

'Our operational plans are developed but we never have the level of resources that we'd love to have' (Key informant, government department; *author's own translation*).

The conflict in the north has made this capacity gap stark. This illustrates the challenges in keeping the social protection system running when the crisis that is being dealt with is one of violent conflict, or where that is the backdrop to a food security crisis. While the CSA continued to have some presence in the north during the conflict, including through its partner NGOs, other government agencies had few or no staff present during 2012–14. Some government staff remained in the main towns but were unable to visit the rural areas. The lack of government presence sometimes made it difficult for humanitarian actors to coordinate with the state even though they wished to. One humanitarian agency noted that whenever they approached the regional social development directorate with a request to collaborate they were told that there were not enough staff—sometimes only one staff member covering an entire *cercle*:

'They [government staff] are there, but in very insignificant numbers. We need the state to be working alongside us' (Key informant, NGO; *author's own translation*).

The constraint in numbers and capacity of personnel is true even for routine social protection programmes at national level; hence, for example, the very gradual plan for expansion of the school feeding programme. Moreover, most of the dozen staff running Jigisèmèjiri nationally, as well as their counterparts in the *cercles*, are funded by the World Bank rather than the government. There are also reported to be capacity shortages in specific technical areas such as maintenance of databases. While the government focuses on strengthening the number, skills and distribution of its staff to deliver its core social protection objectives, it is not in a position to create 'surge

capacity' through recruiting additional personnel to respond to a 'crisis' that is continually present; still less to bolster its presence in conflict zones. This means that if a shock requires a short-term increase in personnel to address it, the increase will have to come from a redistribution of existing resources; longer term support from outside the government will need to continue²⁰.

Fourth, the strengthening of human resource capacity should be taking place at local levels as well as nationally, especially as the decentralisation agenda becomes more prominent. As was recommended at the forum for reforming the institutional arrangements for food security,

'[It is necessary to] engage in reflection on the role of decentralised levels of the institutional setup (decentralised public institutions and local authorities) in managing the response (objectives, resources)' (CSA, 2016a, p.19; *author's own translation*).

This has already begun. For instance, Jigisèmèjiri has been training locally elected representatives in targeting approaches and in its concepts of complementary activities to cash transfers.

Fifth, non-government actors will continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock-response and social protection for the long term: it is unrealistic to expect the state to take over all of the functions currently being delivered by civil society, *mutuelles*, international NGOs and UN agencies. In some situations, indeed, these actors are better placed than the government to operate, especially in areas of conflict. This means that coordination of actors becomes more important than ever, including to ensure that actors working in the same geographical area are complementing one another, and that where NGOs have a high turnover of staff they strengthen their systems for retaining institutional memory. Mali's achievements in coordination of activities for response to shocks are discussed fully in section 7.

5.2 Targeting approaches

All social protection interventions, and humanitarian assistance programmes for households and individuals, have an element of 'targeting' whereby the eligibility criteria are determined and then implementers set out to enrol people or households who meet those criteria. This is necessary to maximise efficient use of resources, either by filtering out people who do not need the assistance (minimising errors of inclusion by design) or by making sure that, of all the people who might benefit, those most in need can participate (minimising errors of exclusion). While all programmes have to decide where, when and for whom they are operating, there are many different ways by which the target population is identified. It is not necessary for every programme to use the same method—nor is it desirable, since they will have different objectives—but there are some benefits in having some degree of consistency in approach, or else clarity as to why different methods are being used. This is particularly relevant where beneficiaries of different programmes are in the same geographical area, have similar levels of need or are given similar support: in these circumstances households may raise queries as to why some households are included while others are left out.

The particular consideration for shock-responsive social protection is that, for programmes that are intended to be targeted at the 'poorest' or 'most vulnerable', actors working in humanitarian assistance in the Sahel often favour an approach based on the HEA framework, while those providing longer term development support—including cash transfers—may be more likely to use a

²⁰ An example of creating a surge capacity mechanism from existing resources is seen in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, where staff outside the area affected were drafted in to assist with the response (see case study of the Philippines in Smith *et al.* (2017)). This is more feasible in response to a short-term shock than a protracted crisis.

poverty targeting approach such as a PMT. Under the approach that uses the HEA framework as applied in Mali, communities identify the general characteristics of households they consider to fall into four different wealth groups (very poor / poor / average / well off); the programme then identifies specific households that would be classified as 'very poor' by the agreed criteria, which might be done through quantitative data collection or through asking the community (see eg. European Commission and World Bank, 2016). Under the PMT approach, a national household survey dataset is used to identify a small number of common characteristics of households that are classified as poor, and a questionnaire is then administered to households to identify those that match the characteristics. While both approaches aim to identify vulnerable households, the two methods result in a very different selection of beneficiaries, with the HEA tending to be better at identifying households vulnerable to food insecurity and the second tending to better at identifying households who are chronically poor or at risk of falling into poverty (Anonymous, 2016; Schnitzer, 2016). This can be problematic where there is an intention to make a transition from a humanitarian to a social protection intervention, where this implies a change in eligibility criteria and the potential exclusion from the programme of households that were previously eligible.

Mali has faced this challenge during the research period, as Jigisèmèjiri moved into Gao region where the CCTS has been delivering cash to beneficiaries identified using the HEA framework. In four communes both interventions will be operating. While the solution had not been reached at the time of writing, all actors are fully aware of the issue and ECHO commissioned a comparative analysis of the targeting approaches of the HEA and PMT methods to see the extent of overlap of the beneficiary lists and to determine how to address it. Jigisèmèjiri also adjusted its traditional PMT method, drawing on the previous CCFS database as a starting point (European Commission and World Bank, 2016). This hybrid approach may be part of the solution.

By way of comparison, a recent study in Niger explored the relative efficiency of the PMT and HEA approaches for targeting households for adaptive social protection interventions; the lessons from that may be insightful here (Schnitzer, 2016). Schnitzer notes that households identified through the HEA, by design, might be those less able to cope with shocks, though in its implementation there may be considerable errors that may reduce its targeting efficiency. Meanwhile the targeting efficiency of the PMT is influenced, among other things, by the time of year at which it is administered: it works less well in the lean season (Schnitzer, 2016). As has been done in Mali, the study in Niger suggests that a hybrid of the two approaches may be one possible method for responding to shocks:

Combinations of PMT with methods such as HEA, PCA [principal components analysis], or a food insecurity formula may be considered to identify households suffering from chronic and seasonal food insecurity as part of an efficient and scalable ASP system. (Schnitzer, 2016, pp.32–33).

Variations in targeting methods may have less impact on households in the Sahel than the implementers might expect, because across the region there is a widespread practice of redistribution of benefits²¹. The targeting of benefits on a subset of a population runs counter to traditional informal social protection mechanisms which are founded on concepts of solidarity:

'The primary safety net in Mali is the solidarity of the family' (Key informant, government agency; *author's own translation*).

'This whole story of targeting isn't well accepted ... They [the beneficiaries] consider their neighbours to be in the same situation.

²¹ See OPM's working paper on community perspectives of social protection in the Sahel (Watson, 2016).

People feel uncomfortable.' (Researcher in northern Mali; *author's own translation*).

Nevertheless this does not mean that the HEA vs. PMT debate disappears: it has ramifications for social cohesion, and the precise methods used for each process—eg. the extent of involvement of local communities or the mayor—can either bolster or conflict with local power structures. The process of switching from one system to another, if done, has logistical implications in terms of registration of new households, and requires a system by which people can query the selection process if they wish to. In other contexts this might be called a 'grievance mechanism', but, again, respondents in Mali indicated that this would be counter to local culture— 'People are more likely to seek to compromise than to complain'—and noted that in order to complain a person must understand how the process is meant to work, so as to spot a violation; something which is difficult when considering complex targeting methods.

Beyond the targeting of specific households, programme effectiveness is also determined by the targeting of geographical areas. Here some of the systems set up as part of the early warning system become relevant. In particular, the SAP has identified a list of 166 communes, out of the 703 in Mali, that it considers most vulnerable to food insecurity (see eg. ODHD and UNDP, 2014). These are not necessarily the poorest. The list is taken into consideration in the roll-out of some social protection interventions, such as the school meals programme and the preparation of grain stocks or other food security responses (CSA, 2016a). This demonstrates that there are already some linkages between the DRM and social protection systems to promote shock-responsiveness.

5.3 Database (unified social registry)

The concept of setting up a common database for use by multiple social protection programmes, as one building-block for an eventual national social protection system in the country, was introduced by the World Bank in its planning documentation for Jigisèmèjiri in early 2013. This reflects the worldwide trend for integrated data and computerised MISs that has become prominent over the last five years or so. Since there is such diversity of understanding as to what these types of database might look like or do, we summarise briefly some key considerations from the global literature in Box 2 below before analysing the features of the system proposed in Mali and considering its likely relevance for responding to shocks²².

Mali's proposed integrated MIS, the RSU, is envisaged as a gateway for all actors working on social assistance interventions to access information about individuals and households. It is in its design phase and is expected to launch in early 2018 (Thiam, 2016). A technical unit to develop it was set up in Jigisèmèjiri. The unit is overseen by a technical committee and a steering committee, the latter having a wide membership including representatives of several government departments (including the CSA and DNPSES), donors and NGOs. An outline of the core principles of the RSU and of latest progress was presented at the national social protection conferences in 2015 and 2016.

²² Note that the authors do not presuppose that this type of database is always beneficial: there may be risks as well as advantages, so each situation should be assessed on its own merit (see eg. Barca, 2017).

Box 2 Demystifying the concept of integrated beneficiary registries and social registries

A recent 'demystification' of the concepts of systems for data and information management notes the following considerations (Barca, 2017):

- Systems generally consist of two parts, the underlying database that lists individuals or households and their characteristics, and the software that is overlaid to interrogate the database and generate information that is used for programme management.
- Databases can either record beneficiaries of a single intervention, or integrate data on beneficiaries across multiple interventions ('integrated beneficiary registry'), or provide a comprehensive record of all potential beneficiaries of social assistance ('social registries' that are then drawn upon by specific programmes to select their beneficiaries). Some countries have overlaps between these, as all serve different functions.
- Reasons to integrate MISs for use by multiple agencies may include oversight of who does what—especially to avoid gaps in coverage—or unifying part of the process for targeting beneficiaries for households or even streamlining other operations eg. payments or complaints. Integrated MISs are dependent for success as much on political and institutional factors as on technical factors.
- Decisions must be made on numerous aspects of system design, each of which results in trade-offs that will affect the system's levels of accessibility, confidentiality, cost, inclusivity and accuracy (Barca, 2017, cites several dimensions that must be considered, including ownership, the degree of decentralisation, staffing, data collection, transformation, updating and security).
- These trade-offs will determine the effectiveness of the system in a crisis or development context, as further explored in Barca and O'Brien (2017).

Table 2 summarises the key aspects of its proposed design that will affect its use in a crisis. The fact that such a database is planned does not automatically mean that it will be relevant or efficient for use in the event of all shocks, nor that it promotes shock-responsive social protection. Note that as the RSU did not yet exist at the time of the research, the eventual design may differ from proposals then in place.

Two factors favour the development of a usable and comprehensive RSU in Mali. First, there is some political support for its creation, as demonstrated by its inclusion as an output of the national social protection strategy and as a central objective of the World Bank's support to Jigisèmèjiri. A technical committee and steering committee have been set up and the government participates. A report on the reform of the institutional arrangements for food security notes the potential value in a registry at scale, and encourages experimentation with what it might look like, though cautions that it would be useful to evaluate experience from these experiments before expanding the database nationwide (CSA, 2016a). Many of our respondents also expressed enthusiasm and optimism for the scheme and felt that it had a genuine prospect of resolving some challenges of duplication in data collection and inequity in targeting (though there remain some concerns about governance arrangements and about coherence with other databases, as indicated below).

Second, the process has already been underway for over a year. Some staff have been recruited into a technical unit through Jigisèmèjiri, and the committees are meeting. Outlines for the design of the database have been prepared and are being implemented (see eg. Thiam, 2016, for details). The team responsible for the RSU has been consulting actors on the criteria they use to select beneficiaries, in order to determine which variables will be compulsory and which will be optional for entry into the database; they have also gathered some of the existing databases. This momentum is likely to continue in the immediate future.

Table 2 Proposed features of the RSU

| Feature | Proposal |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Type of database | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eventual plan is a social registry—a database of potential beneficiaries of social assistance and maybe also social insurance, used by individual programmes to select beneficiaries. (NB. It is starting from the opposite direction: programmes feed beneficiary lists <i>into</i> it rather than extracting <i>from</i> it—see below). Intention is for this to be combined with MISs for individual programmes (ie. including information on aspects other than beneficiaries) |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide socioeconomic data on individuals and households, to reduce the amount of separate targeting exercises undertaken Provide summary data on specific programmes Give overview of social protection activities in Mali to assist decision-making |
| Programmes to be covered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eventually intended to cover both contributory (social insurance) and non-contributory (social assistance) measures. Starting with non-contributory Plan to include Jigisèmèjiri, <i>Cadre Communs</i>, CSA, possibly also RAMED |
| Origin of initial data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSU will start by being populated with data already collected by programmes: from Jigisèmèjiri (122,000 households); CCFS (128,000); ANAM (RAMED) (42,000); and the government's Programme de Développement Institutionnel (105,000) (see Thiam, 2016). Key informants also indicated that the CSA could be a major contributor as it has about 80,000 households on its database This means it will start as a mix of a unified <i>beneficiary</i> registry (details of programme beneficiaries), plus some socioeconomic data on non-beneficiaries in geographical areas where a programme happens to have collected it Some data may come from the statistics office, INSTAT |
| Where future data will come from | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data will have to extend to geographical areas not yet covered, and to households not included in areas where some registration has taken place Two options; not clear yet which is to be used. (1) Programme implementers do new data collection (2) A separate organisation does main data collection, while implementers simply feed in small updates on individual households |
| Governance / ownership arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit responsible for establishing RSU is currently housed in the Jigisèmèjiri project office (provided by Ministry of Economy and Finance) Plan is to transfer the database to the MSAH once developed, as they have oversight of all regions and a local presence (some question whether this is the appropriate place and how other sectors will link to it, if at all) |
| Variables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration forms being harmonised across some programmes Variables determined by consolidating suggestions from many agencies Likely to include geographical location; household member characteristics including education, health and economic activity; housing conditions, assets, ownership of animals; income and expenditure |
| Targeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variables should allow implementers to run a PMT or community-based targeting using the HEA, among other options |
| Linking with other programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of a common identifier (beneficiary / household ID code) to be discussed—no national ID card system in Mali |
| Hardware / system accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intention is to make data available on tablets and mobile phones In principle there is network connectivity in all regions |
| Decentralisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data are expected to be accessible in the regions, cercles and communes |
| Data sharing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet determined to what extent users will be able to see data about programmes other than their own |

Source: OPM, from key informant interviews and documentary sources including Anonymous (2015), Thiam (2016), World Bank (2015a). Note: As the RSU is in its design phase, much of the detail is yet to be worked out as to its legislative basis, the way the data will be entered, reviewed, updated and accessed, data protection etc.

Nevertheless, whatever their form, integrated MISs are not without their challenges. Some challenges may be addressed with substantial resources and time, while others are intrinsic. One respondent noted that, at the time of the research, the early development of the RSU was focusing on technical aspects relating to getting and organising the data, which meant that questions about governance and accountability—who would manage the data, accountability towards beneficiary data, links with other databases and so on—had not been addressed. Even once the designers of the RSU manage to solve the fundamental problem of generating and maintaining comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date data, it will continue to face challenges that affect its use in a crisis but that are not driven by the crisis. We note the following:

- **The multisectoral nature of social protection.** It may not make sense for every intervention to be recorded on the RSU because, as in many countries, Mali's social protection activities are conducted across numerous different ministries: the school meals programme in the ministry of education, the fund to support agricultural workers in the ministry of agriculture etc. It is equally valid to suppose that, say, data on the school meals programme should be integrated into an education MIS alongside other education data. It is likely to be neither feasible nor desirable for data on all public interventions in all sectors to be melded into one database, let alone the addition of interventions from UN agencies and NGOs.
- **Trust in data quality.** If the aim of the database is to avoid duplication of data collection, agencies will have to trust the accuracy of the data collected by others. One or two of our key informants were hesitant about the quality of some data previously collected. For instance, the evaluation of the CCFS in 2015 observed,

'The speed with which this database was compiled [...] poses problems for the reliability of the data, and this database cannot be used as a definitive list. [It] should be reworked and updated systematically to avoid the problems of inclusion / exclusion of certain beneficiaries' (CCFS, 2015, p. 127).

This is especially the case if there is no central agency collecting the data. If the entire database is populated only by information fed in by implementing partners, then there will be no efficiency gain if agencies feel uncomfortable relying on data collected by others in areas where they are working, and redo it.

- **Accessibility of the data.** Information will need to be available at local levels countrywide, with staff trained and able to access it. This is indeed the intention of the RSU, but it is very difficult to achieve in a highly resource-constrained environment: the technical unit for the RSU expressed its own concerns about the possible risks that they would not have the hardware or software infrastructure to run the database (Anonymous, 2015). A recent effort to hand over management of a beneficiary database to the MSAH, for it to share with other humanitarian agencies operating in the same geographical area, ran into practical constraints—not because of any political reluctance but simply because it did not have enough staff or computer equipment to manage it. The investment in the RSU may go some way to resolve this. Any discussion about potentially broadening access to data should, of course, be mindful of the possible risks to beneficiaries, especially in situations of conflict (see below).

The desire to use the database in emergency situations—and, more so, in a conflict—adds further complexity. The additional complexities brought about by the crises in Mali, both cyclical food insecurity and the conflict, are threefold:

- **Need for timeliness.** If the RSU is to be more useful in a shock than the current method of each agency identifying its own beneficiaries—often annually—and recording them on its own database, then it will have to be able to provide relevant, comparable, up-to-date and easily

accessible information. Some form of revalidation exercise will also have to be conducted in any case (see also Barca and O'Brien, 2017).

- **Changes in household situation.** By definition, a household that is suffering because of a shock is one whose level of well-being is not the same as it was before the shock. The details of consumption patterns, assets and animals held, income sources and labour might all be different because of the shock compared with what is listed on the database, especially in a food security crisis or drought. As the RSU contains details on households that were estimated to be the poorest at the moment of data collection it will need to have a mechanism for registering people whose situation has changed, since information on wealth ranking will not reflect the current situation. The feature of cyclical food insecurity also means that the point in the year at which the original data are collected also has a major effect on the perceived wealth of the household, unless the registration form is able to reflect seasonal differences.
- **Use of database in a conflict area.** The challenges of using a database are compounded in a conflict. Displacement of households can result in thousands of vulnerable households missing the moment of registration; this can be resolved if there is a process of on-demand registration, or regular updating, but it necessarily reduces the timeliness and accuracy of the database at the moment of the crisis. Moreover, people may feel reluctant to share personal information if there is a concern that the data may be accessed by parties to the conflict. Adequate security and data privacy standards would need to be guaranteed.

It is apparent, then, that while the database has the possibility of contributing to a timely response to shocks it will not be relevant for every possible circumstance and every intervention; and the greater the impact of a shock on households, the less likely the data are to provide an accurate picture of current well-being. Developments in the database over the year ahead will help to clarify its likely effectiveness in an emergency context.

6 Funding considerations

Key points

- Mali's economy is expected to grow. Agriculture plays a central role. There is a medium risk of climate shocks that may reduce economic output while increasing demand for food assistance.
- Government spending on social protection and food security is due to increase, though not as rapidly as sectors such as education and job creation.
- Social protection is a small part of the overall budget, so any radical increases in government spending to withstand crises will have to come from across all sectors including eg. agriculture, alongside more efficient use of resources.
- The government does not distinguish between development and humanitarian aid in its reporting. Expenditure by self-declared humanitarian donors has declined since the 2014 peak; half or more of humanitarian needs are unfunded. Of the available funds, half went to food security in 2014.
- Mali is making progress in improving medium-term planning and analysis of funding needs, and in joint government–donor strategic planning. It faces greater challenges with the mobilisation and release of funds, even for routine social protection, let alone for emergencies.
- The shift to large-scale harmonised cash programming is in line with global recommendations for the future of humanitarian financing. Cost-efficiency analyses of these changes are as yet limited.

One of the most critical challenges globally in improving responsiveness to shocks is that of overhauling the model for humanitarian financing, so as to prioritise nationally led responses, to reduce the gap between funds requested and provided, to speed up the availability of funds and to maximise the amount of resources spent on beneficiaries rather than on administration. There is agreement on the direction of travel—for instance, that it is more cost-effective to use money for resilience-building and disaster prevention than to wait for a crisis and then respond—but it is extremely complex to achieve the change in practice (see eg. OPM, 2016). Funding in Mali, as in many countries, comes from a combination of government and development and humanitarian partner sources, as well as from civil society organisations and individuals, including the diaspora. We look in turn at these sources and review their contribution.

6.1 Government funding

Government expenditure on shock-responsive social protection is shaped by the overall health of the national budget, the share of that budget that is devoted to routine social protection and food security, and the availability of funds to address unexpected or particularly large shocks, as well as by its ability to disburse and use the amounts budgeted. We find that while both the economy and the government budget are expected to grow in the medium term, spending on social protection is due to rise at a slower rate than other sectors listed in the government's main strategic framework, resulting in a slight decline in its share of the framework's budget. Public spending on DRM is hard to identify because it is not classified as a sector.

6.1.1 Improvements in the overall picture for government finances

After two decades of very slow economic growth compared with other countries whose per-capita income had been on a par with Mali at the start of the 1990s, compounded by a sharp contraction around the 2012 crisis, the country's economy is now recovering (IMF, 2015a). Gross domestic product grew by some 7% in 2014 as Mali rebounded from the crisis, and it is estimated to rise by about 5% per year from 2016 to 2018 (Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2016).

This positive outlook is subject to a number of risks, particularly because agriculture plays such a central role. Climate shocks reduce agricultural output, resulting in a decline in government

revenue at the same time as causing an increase in demand for food assistance. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers that there is a medium risk of adverse weather conditions materially altering Mali's economic growth within the next few years, and that any such event could have a high negative impact (IMF, 2015b). As the experience of 2012 shows, conflict can also negatively affect the economy as business activities decline and companies hesitate to invest.

6.1.2 A mixed picture for spending on food security and social protection

The government's major spending plans—including for sustainable development, the peace and reconciliation process and the reconstruction of the north—are presented in its Strategic Framework for Economic Revival and Sustainable Development, 2016–18 (*Cadre stratégique pour le relance économique et le développement durable*, CREDD). The cost of these key activities is estimated at just over CFA 1 trillion per year, or around \$1.7–2.0 billion per year (Table 3).

Table 3 Estimated budget for economic revival and sustainable development, 2016–18, by strategic axis (CFA billion)

| Axis | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| PEACE / SECURITY / MACROECONOMY | 73 | 83 | 95 |
| STRATEGIC AXIS 1—INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH | 340 | 378 | 416 |
| <i>Rural development and food security</i> | 193 | 212 | 234 |
| Agriculture | 157 | 171 | 186 |
| Livestock | 18 | 20 | 22 |
| Fishing | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Food security | 15 | 18 | 21 |
| <i>Protection of the environment</i> | 10 | 12 | 14 |
| <i>Infrastructure development</i> | 112 | 127 | 138 |
| <i>Other growth sectors</i> | 24 | 28 | 30 |
| STRATEGIC AXIS 2—ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES | 499 | 559 | 635 |
| <i>Skills development (incl. education / jobs / professional training)</i> | 315 | 357 | 412 |
| <i>Basic social services (incl. health / water & sanitation)</i> | 135 | 151 | 171 |
| <i>Social development, humanitarian action and solidarity</i> | 48 | 51 | 53 |
| STRATEGIC AXIS 3—INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE | 106 | 121 | 134 |
| Total | 1,018 | 1,142 | 1,280 |

Source: Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances (2016). Note: This is the budget for the delivery of the programmes listed in the CREDD, which constitute the major spending areas of the government. It is not the entire state budget. It does not include eg. debt repayments.

The strategic framework, the CREDD, is clear about the importance of promoting food security:

'For the prevention and management of food security crises (for both people and livestock) the government is resolved to ensure [...] the mobilisation of financial and material resources' (Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2016, p.72; *author's own translation*).

However, it is difficult for the government to devote an increasing share of the budget for food security and social protection. Certainly, the food security budget in the CREDD is due to increase hugely, by 40% during 2016–18, though from a relatively low base (see Axis 1 in Table 3). Meanwhile, the absolute amount of funds planned for social development, while increasing slightly year on year, forms a declining share of the total expected budget during 2016–18 (see Axis 2). Enormous demographic pressures from a population that doubles every 20 years means that the

budget for social development and basic social services is devoted increasingly to education and job creation (skills development).

One might expect government spending on food security and social protection to be boosted by the AGIR process and the adoption of the national resilience priorities, the PRP (see discussion in section 3.4.3). However, as reported above, at the time of the research Mali's PRP did not yet explain how the resilience activities would be funded, nor the cost of implementation: it simply observed that funding was likely to be drawn from government and development partner sources, alongside private organisations and benefactors (AGIR, 2014). Budget estimates were due in the next stage of the process, when the PRP would be submitted to the council of ministers.

If the government wishes to cover the seasonal food security needs of its population by social protection alone it will have to make more efficient use of existing domestic resources and increase spending in the sector by an order of magnitude²³. The latter is not realistic as it struggles to fund even existing social protection programmes such as the school meals programme, Jigisèmèjiri and RAMED, and their planned expansion. So what can be done?

1. Some analysts have observed that expenditure on social protection is dwarfed by expenditure on eg. subsidies for energy and transport, and that social protection spending is not rising as fast as defence spending (Bernard and La Rosa, 2015; IMF, 2015b). There might be a case for helping the social protection sector to justify a reallocation of funds towards its activities.
2. Others, including within the ministries, are looking to 'innovative financing sources':

'Scaling up a policy of transfers targeted at the poorest has been estimated at roughly CFA 75 billion, or 4.2% of the state budget! This shows the importance of carefully measuring the macroeconomic impact of these types of social protection, that should be considered as long-term investments. Innovative financing should be sought to support its development' (CSA, 2016a, p.12; *author's own translation*).

The difficulty is that many sectors look to the same sources: the health sector, for example, ran a study on innovative financing for health in 2015–16 which looked at prospects for ringfencing revenues from a tax on eg. air travel, mobile phones, alcohol or mining revenues.

3. Within social protection there would need to be a subsequent process of advocacy for using these funds to promote the food security of the poorest households, because there are other pressing demands on the sector that are unrelated to crises, such as the deficit in the contributory social security programmes (see eg. IMF, 2015b). Even among programmes that are related to crises, many would compete for additional resources: one would need to prioritise between, say, expanding Jigisèmèjiri or the school feeding programme, or funding the Ministry of Agriculture's emergency fund, the FNAA.

These challenges highlight the extent to which improvements in households' ability to withstand crises will have to come from policies across all sectors, including in eg. agriculture, education and employment creation; a government-funded social protection sector cannot achieve it alone.

²³ Compare again the fact that about one-quarter of households face seasonal food insecurity, while, for example, about 2% of households are covered by Jigisèmèjiri; and the latter is in any case mostly externally funded (see section 4.4).

6.1.3 Difficulties identifying and securing government funding for crises

A comprehensive set of financing mechanisms for addressing disasters would include funds for the mitigation of disaster risk, as well as a pot of money or mechanism for disaster response that can be drawn on in times of emergency and that does not disappear at the end of the financial year.

The state budget has no line for DRR so it is difficult to identify financing trends for this area. A recent report on capacity for DRR in Mali recommended a mapping of DRR investments (CADRI, 2015). As for disaster response, the budget directorate in the ministry of economy and finance is reported to have a line item for response to natural disasters; but it is not distributed to any particular ministry or fully earmarked for specific shocks, so ministries wishing to use it have to apply to the Prime Minister (World Bank, 2015b). Within line ministries the picture is unclear: some respondents asserted that each had a small contingency fund for crises, while others cited ministries that had no such fund (including the MSAH) and still others reported that those that had tried creating a contingency fund found the resources tended to be used for other purposes. The confusion may arise from the lack of clarity in earmarking of funding. The general sense from key informants is that investment in DRR and disaster response is rather under-resourced, especially in view of the scale of some of the major crises (see also CADRI, 2015; World Bank, 2015b).

Since responsibility for responding to crises has now been decentralised to *cercle* and *commune* level (see section 3.3.2 above), a critical aspect of financing is whether funds are available not just centrally, but also locally. A recent evaluation of national capacity for DRR suggests that funding for crisis response has not followed the transfer of responsibility, and that this has resulted in even greater constraints such that, 'local authorities have [...] the greatest difficulty in developing and planning DRR activities in the long term' (CADRI, 2015, p.29; *author's own translation*).

Insurance is one way in which governments can smooth the cost of responding to disasters and reduce the challenge of setting up contingency funds that can hold reserves from one financial year to the next. As noted earlier (section 3.3.2), Mali signed up to ARC in 2015 with this aim in mind, and with the intention of reducing dependency on emergency appeals. As noted in section 4.4.3, ARC's operational plan for Mali cites the mechanism as a possible funding source for expanding Jigisèmèjiri in the event of a large-scale crisis that triggers a payout. The mechanism is as yet untested. Moreover, insurance mechanisms such as ARC are not designed to respond to annual food insecurity: they are intended to insure against exceptional events that might result in a payout eg. once every five to 10 years, depending on the premium paid. This means that while ARC may be one contribution to a portfolio of funding mechanisms for use in a crisis, it cannot be the only one.

For now, a major source of funding to respond to climate shocks is therefore likely to remain the one recommended by the IMF in its risk assessment for Mali: 'Seek international support' (IMF, 2015b, p.6). This international support is discussed next.

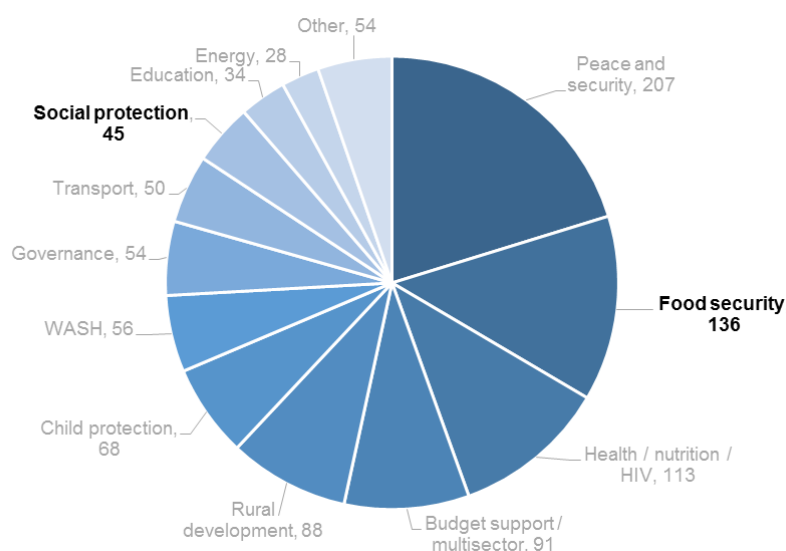
6.2 Development and humanitarian partner financing

The Secretariat for Aid Harmonisation (*Secrétariat à l'Harmonisation de l'Aide*, SHA) tracks commitments and actual expenditure by multilateral and bilateral donors across all sectors. In the most recent available figures, for 2014, 43 donors spent just over CFA 1 trillion (\$1.7 billion) in Mali. This is similar to the amount spent in 2013; both these years vastly exceeded the levels of aid contributions that were seen before the 2012 crisis. Some 55% of this total was spent 'off-budget', ie. not passing through the government's own spending channels; most of the rest was included in the government budget and designated for specific projects (SHA, 2016).

Of this total, in 2014, donors contributed more to food security than to any other single sector other than peace and security: they spent a total of CFA 136 billion (\$226 million), or 13% of all aid, on food security (Figure 6). Social protection activities constituted a further CFA 45 billion (\$75 million). This does not include expenditure by NGOs from sources other than multilateral or bilateral donors. Both sectors receive funding from multiple donors: some 10 different donors were spending money on social protection interventions in 2014, and eight on food security (SHA, 2016). Donors that had announced the greatest commitments to those sectors for the years 2016–18 were UNICEF and the World Bank for social protection, and USAID and the EU for food security.

'Humanitarian assistance' is not a sector: spending is counted within the relevant sector of operation, confirming that the distinction between humanitarian and development assistance is not considered to be significant. The government's report on aid expenditure considers 'humanitarian spending' to be simply aid disbursed by organisations that perceive themselves to be 'humanitarian agencies', such as OCHA, UNHCR and WFP. It also suggests that 'humanitarian spending' tends to distinguish itself from development spending by being most commonly provided in the form of grants rather than loans (SHA, 2016). If this distinction holds, it highlights a potential disincentive for the government to encourage a switch from humanitarian to development expenditure.

Figure 6 On- and off-budget expenditure by donors, 2014 (CFA billion)



Source: SHA (2016). Notes: (1) Some sectors listed in the report have been combined. 'Governance' includes institutional development, decentralisation and public financial management. (2) Social protection was not classified as a sector in the previous year's report so we cannot make a comparison over time.

UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service estimates funding that is classified internationally as 'humanitarian'. It aggregates self-reported humanitarian expenditure by bilateral and multilateral donors, the Red Cross, some NGOs and the private sector. This estimates that humanitarian expenditure in Mali peaked in 2014, at around \$382 million, of which nearly two-thirds (\$239 million) fed directly into the Humanitarian Response Plan for that year, the remainder being spent independently of the plan (Financial Tracking Service, 2017). However, the \$239 million spent under the Humanitarian Response Plan—half of which went to the food security cluster—was only half of the \$481 million that the international community had requested in its appeal for Mali for that year: there was an enormous gap between estimated needs and available funds. Since then, the size of the annual appeal has declined considerably (to \$377 million in 2015 and \$354 million in 2016) yet donors have been reducing their contributions even faster, such that only \$132 million (35%) of the 2015 appeal was funded, and \$136 million (38%) of the 2016 appeal (Financial Tracking Service, 2017). This illustrates the difficulty that governments face in securing funds from

international partners for early recovery activities once an immediate crisis is perceived to have passed, especially when donors have to prioritise against numerous other emergencies worldwide.

6.3 Other sources of financing

Funding of development activities by private sector organisations and by individuals—especially the Malian diaspora—is encouraged by the government. Such expenditure is not strongly visible in budgets and action plans. One option for mobilising funds is offered by the National Solidarity Fund (*Fonds National de Solidarité*). The fund aims to collect donations from these alternative sources and disburse them to Malian civil society organisations to invest locally in poverty reduction and in improving access to basic social services. The fund is not specifically intended for social protection activities, nor does it have a humanitarian remit, but provides a top-up to conventional government resources. It offered an additional channel through which funds could reach the north during the 2012 crisis. Its aim is often to start long-term development activities while others are delivering humanitarian interventions. It is also reported to have the advantage of not having to operate through government procurement systems, which can improve its speed of response.

As with other government funds, though, the *Fonds National de Solidarité* experiences challenges with countercyclical financing—donations may be lower during crises ('You can't milk a dry cow', as one respondent put it)—and, indeed, with resourcing the fund at all. While the principle of the fund therefore offers an innovative route for flexible financing of social sector activities, in practice it is not a major addition to the total funding available to respond to crises or to promote resilience.

6.4 'System upgrades'—what progress can be made in Mali?

We have seen that the government budget for social protection and food security is increasing slowly, but that the sector competes against others that also have legitimate claims for increased resources. Routine social protection is not funded to the extent desired, so it may be premature to be talking about funding flexible safety nets when even the basic programme is yet to achieve wide coverage. Meanwhile donors are making quite substantial contributions, but the component classified as humanitarian funding is dropping rapidly now that the crisis of 2012 is perceived to have passed, and agencies are struggling to realise even half of their appeals for funding.

So to what extent can current financing arrangements be considered effective for responding to shocks, and what further progress can be made without just waiting for more funds? A recent report on the future of humanitarian financing declares that, for financing mechanisms to look 'beyond the crisis', attention needs to be paid to three types of 'system upgrade': anticipation and analysis; upgrading the architecture; and improving efficiency (Poole, 2015). We conclude this section by considering Mali's progress in these areas.

6.4.1 Anticipation and analysis

The first issue is to identify funding requirements and sources, with sufficient notice. The government, development and humanitarian agencies in Mali are already making progress in improving forward planning and the commitment of financial resources for longer than just one year at a time. At a macro level the government itself has multiyear strategic frameworks, such as the CREDD, and it compiles the annually updated medium-term resource framework of donor funds (the SHA report cited earlier) that lists donor commitments for three years ahead. The CSA is planning to move from an annual response to food insecurity towards a three-year horizon by initiating its 'livelihood response strategy' (see section 4.2.2), while there are proposals for RAMED

to be offered to Jigisèmèjiri beneficiaries for the same three-year duration as the cash transfer, rather than one year (see section 4.2.2).

Humanitarian agencies have also started to overcome the constraints of annual humanitarian response plans by linking up with agencies that have a mandate for longer term funding. ECHO teamed up with DEVCO in 2016, proposing complementary financing between the humanitarian and development directorates of the EU so as to create a bridge to permit three-year funding of the CCTS in northern Mali, using one year of humanitarian funding followed by two years of development funding. Moreover, an M&E system put in place during the first year was due to enable the subsequent assessment of the impact of the medium-term programme, the results of which could be used for advocacy for similar programmes in future if found to be successful.

Anticipation and analysis is improved by seeing the whole picture at once, regardless of funding source. Progress has been made in food security, where the National Response Plan presents funding agreed from all sources—government ministries and agencies, the UN and NGOs. By combining these sources, this document shows the complementary humanitarian and development contributions to the cyclical food security crisis, which is useful for planning.

Not all relevant plans are accompanied by funding proposals, and not all relevant expenditure is yet visible. We have seen that national multi-risk contingency planning is occurring but not linked to finance, and the AGIR PRP document was also not costed. Money is spent on DRM activities but is not identified as such, so it is difficult to track whether expenditure in this area is increasing.

6.4.2 Upgrading the architecture

The next issue is to improve the mobilisation and release of funds. Here our assessment suggests that Mali faces greater challenges. The government has had difficulty in making available the funds that it has pledged to interventions such as Jigisèmèjiri (see section 4.4.3) and to the expansion of the school meals programme. It has been unable to put money into the Ministry of Agriculture's emergency fund, the FNAA, which has existed as a legal structure since 2010. There is a recognition of the need to explore instruments that do not entail leaving money sitting in a fund and being carried over from one financial year to the next: the technical working group that has been set up to explore the possible scale-up of social assistance programmes is charged with gaining an understanding of risk financing instruments. Mali's participation in ARC is also an indication of this recognition, though does not respond to the problem of annual food insecurity.

One aspect of 'upgrading the architecture' cited by Poole, in respect of global reform of humanitarian financing, is that of removing barriers to enable local actors to access international financing without being at the end of a long chain of subcontractors (Poole, 2015). We did not find this aspect to be visible on the policy agenda in Mali.

6.4.3 Improving efficiency

Overall, as the report on the future of humanitarian financing notes, 'the real potential for substantial cost-efficiency gains is likely to lie in a radical shift towards harmonised largescale cash-based responses' (Poole, 2015, p.7). We certainly find Mali moving in this direction, especially as the CSA is planning a shift from food assistance towards cash assistance. The establishment of Jigisèmèjiri is part of this shift, although it is funded almost entirely as a World Bank project so it is not yet certain whether it will be enshrined in legislation or adopted as a government-led programme. The 'harmonisation' is seen both in the planned harmonisation of aspects of targeting and information management as described in section 5 above, and in the consortium approach adopted by the NGOs in the ECHO-funded alliances for the CCFS and CCTS

cash transfers. A possible impediment is that not every funder or NGO will be able or willing to subsume its activities under a harmonised framework with other agencies: ECHO, for example, had discussions with 11 agencies when proposing the *Cadre Commun* but only five joined because the others had financing issues (Boulardot, 2014). The global drive among humanitarian agencies towards being able to *demonstrate* value for money, perversely risks reducing their ability to *deliver* value for money as agencies may have to account for their own funds as distinct from those of other organisations. This is a wider problem that is not confined to Mali.

A final component of improving efficiency is the systematic conduct of cost-efficiency analyses. Our study did not find evidence that this was being undertaken, either by the government or by humanitarian or development partners. The routine conduct of such exercises will be needed for tracking whether changes that are being made to the system are delivering value for money.

7 Coordination between social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors

Key points

- Mali is an example of good practice in having quite a comprehensive set of active bodies for agency coordination and joint planning in many relevant sectors.
- Some are led by the government; others have joint leads with international partners or are solely for international organisations. Often those with a strong international lead are country-level incarnations of Sahel-wide or global structures.
- ECHO-funded NGOs have strengthened their visibility in policy discussions by forming an alliance which makes it easier for them to collaborate with the government and others.
- While meetings are attended with varying degrees of commitment, and there were some observations of there being too many meetings, the broad sense was there are plenty of spaces nationally in which different agencies could learn of and coordinate with the activities of others.
- Ministries with responsibility for DRM and agriculture are less integrated into the policy discussions than those for social protection and food security

The drive to improve links among social protection and humanitarian actors has created many well functioning mechanisms for interagency coordination and communication (Table 4).

Table 4 Main forums for coordination and collaboration

| ACTIVITY | GROUP | SECTOR | | | | LEVEL | | | | FREQUENCY | LEADERSHIP | | | AGENCY |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|-----|---------------|--------------|----------|-------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|-----|------------------------|
| | | Social protection | DRM | Food security | Humanitarian | National | Sahel | Global | Decentralised | | Government | UN / donor | NGO | |
| DATA ANALYSIS | ENSAN | • | • | | | • | | | | 2x / year | • | | | SAP |
| | Cadre Harmonisé | • | • | | | • | • | | | 2x / year | • | | | CSA |
| WORKING GROUPS / COMMITTEES | Social Protection Group | • | | | | • | | | | Monthly | • | | | MSAH |
| | Technical Working Group for scaling up social safety nets | • | • | • | • | • | | | | Ad hoc | • | • | | MSAH / World Bank |
| | Cash Working Group | • | | | • | • | | | | Monthly | | | • | Oxfam / WFP / MSAH |
| | Clusters (esp. food security) | | | • | • | • | | | | Monthly | | • | • | OCHA / WFP / FAO / WHH |
| | ECHO alliance | | | | • | • | | | | Ad hoc | | | • | Joint |
| | Food security committee | | | • | | • | | | • | Ad hoc | • | | | CSA |
| | Cttee for monitoring National Response Plan for Food Sec. | | | • | | • | | | | 2x / mth in lean season | • | | | CSA |
| CONF. | Nat. Social Prot. Conference | • | | | | • | • | • | | Annual | • | | | MSAH |
| | RPCA | • | • | | | • | | | | 2x / year | • | | | CILSS |

Source: OPM. Notes: (1) Table shows the primary sectors and agencies participating in the group or activity; this does not preclude the possibility that individuals from other sectors, levels or agencies may sometimes attend. (2) 'Conf' = Conference. ENSAN = *Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle* (National Survey on Food and Nutrition Security). WHH = Welthungerhilfe.

The value of these links between actors—and between their respective systems—is articulated in policy discussions:

'The debate on governance leads the state to concentrate on the functionality of the global institutional architecture, and especially the prerogatives of the three component parts of "humanitarian action", "social protection" and "prevention and management of food security crises", and the operational links between the three domains of intervention' (CSA, 2016a, p.15; *author's own translation*)

Often shock-responsive social protection initiatives are either explicitly referenced in the objectives of these bodies, or relevant to their area of work.

7.1 Some of the main coordination mechanisms and their relevance

7.1.1 ENSAN workshops

The data collected twice-yearly from the ENSAN survey on food security is reviewed at a forum ('atelier de restitution des résultats') and presented in a synthesis report to achieve consensus among agencies on the current food security situation and its evolution over the last six months (SAP *et al.*, 2016b, 2016c). ENSAN figures are collected and discussed around September at the start of the growing season, and again around February-March, at the start of the lean season. Supervision of data collection is led by the government's early warning systems department, the SAP in the CSA, in partnership with WFP, FAO, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) and about a dozen international and national NGO members of the food security cluster. Findings are also reviewed by several dozen experts from all these agencies (SAP *et al.*, 2016c). The ENSAN and its use of HEA targeting represents an improvement in understanding of structural poverty and in the identification of the extent of vulnerability to food insecurity in an area, compared with the SAP's previous assessment process that had identified whole geographical areas considered 'at risk' without reference to the population affected (SAP *et al.*, 2016c).

7.1.2 Donors' Social Protection Group

The donors' Social Protection Group (*Groupe PTF de Protection Sociale*), chaired by UNICEF, the World Bank and ECHO, meets monthly to coordinate between the government and donors on social protection issues. In this forum the main donors set out to the government their plans for social protection support. The group agrees a list of priority activities annually and monitors progress. In 2016 the emphasis on links between development and humanitarian assistance is clear: priorities (besides finishing the national social protection policy) have included expanding and embedding the social safety net system to facilitate a transition from emergency food assistance to national social protection programmes; strengthening national and regional government capacity to achieve this; and conducting a study on targeting methods (*Groupe Protection Sociale*, 2016). The meetings are hosted at the DNPSES, which was considered by one of our key informants to be valuable for reaffirming the directorate's lead role in social protection policy. Nonetheless the participants at the meeting are also those that meet in several other forums, so while this group plays a role in promoting cooperation between agencies it is not the sole place to do so.

7.1.3 The Cash Working Group

Many countries have created a Cash Working Group, often with the support of CaLP and its regional focal points. These groups vary widely in the degree to which they are active, attended

and relevant for policy-making. The Mali Cash Working Group, set up in 2013, is considered by many of our respondents to be an example of an effective group. Co-chaired by Oxfam, WFP and the MSAH and hosted by members in rotation so that a single agency does not dominate, its monthly meetings are attended by government as well as NGO and UN representatives. Two dozen members might typically attend. The fact that it is embedded in the government as well as the humanitarian system is considered to be a factor in its success; so, too, is its relative flexibility in terms of leadership and agenda-setting, in comparison to the UN cluster system which is more tightly delineated (CaLP, 2016).

Cash Working Group meetings were often cited as a useful occasion for agencies to report on and coordinate their activities relating to the delivery of humanitarian cash transfers, especially in the north. Moreover, key informants advised that, given the good participation and the broad mandate of its members, the meetings served quite well for discussing wider social protection measures beyond cash. The group does not have its own resources for conducting studies, but by providing a space for agencies to come together it has helped organisations agree to pool resources for common activities such as a recent market assessment in northern Mali, which reduces duplication (CaLP, 2016). The group's strength is in promoting technical rather than strategic coordination: its role is not to give a holistic view about whether cash-based interventions should be used and by whom. This role will continue to remain relevant provided that the technical discussions fit in with any changes in strategic direction that may be discussed elsewhere, in particular the transition from emergency to longer term cash transfer programming.

Steets and Ruppert (2017) offer a typology of seven models for cash coordination worldwide, of which the Mali Cash Working Group fits option 3: an independent working group operating outside the cluster system. Steets and Ruppert note that the benefits of this type of group are their ability to build technical capacity for cash programming and their flexibility to address members' needs; typical drawbacks are that they have limited opportunity to influence strategic decisions of humanitarian actors, they do not coordinate the cash activities being undertaken within clusters, the meetings may be additional to those of closely related groups, and the lack of funding means it can be hard to sustain the momentum for the group over time.

7.1.4 Working group on scaling up social safety nets

The World Bank's GFDRR launched a case study in 2015 to explore options for scaling up Jigisèmèjiri in the event of a climate shock. Its team has supported the government to set up a 'Working group on scaling up social safety nets' (*Groupe de travail restreint pour le démarrage de processus de développement d'une stratégie de mise à échelle des filets sociaux en cas de chocs*). Established in April 2016 and chaired by the Secretary-General of the MSAH, the group brings together the key government agencies and international bodies. Government agencies comprise the MSAH, MSPC, Ministry of Economy and Finance, CSA and SAP, Fonds National de Solidarité and National Meteorological Agency (*Agence Nationale de Météorologie*); international organisations include the World Bank, WFP, ECHO, FAO, FEWS NET, and representatives of the food security cluster, Cash Working Group and Jigisèmèjiri.

The group's first task has been a mapping of existing interventions, resources and mandates in the area of shock-responsive social protection in Mali, drawing on presentations by its members. The World Bank is hosting a series of videoconferences linking the working group with GFDRR colleagues in Washington, who are working on risk financing options for Jigisèmèjiri. The existence of this group has meant that some government staff have some familiarity with the concept of using long-term social protection systems to respond to emergencies. The group's establishment appears to have been welcomed by the government and can therefore be considered to be responding to a gap that was not previously filled by other mechanisms.

7.1.5 The Humanitarian Country Team and clusters

We noted in section 3.5 above that the global UN-led humanitarian cluster system is functioning in Mali. These work under the coordination of an Intercluster Coordination Group and overseen by a Humanitarian Country Team which supervises the implementation of the annual humanitarian response plan (see eg. OCHA, 2016). The food security, nutrition and early recovery clusters are among those most pertinent for shock-responsive social protection. As of mid-2016 the food security cluster comprised over 120 representatives, of whom just under 20 were from the government and about half were from NGOs (Food Security Cluster, 2016). The clusters meet regularly and our key informants did not raise concerns about their suitability as a place for collaboration and coordination, even though there remain considerable challenges with the size of the tasks they face in comparison to the quantity of financial resources they are able to secure (see section 6.2).

7.1.6 ECHO alliance of NGOs ('Cadre Commun')

In common with several countries in the Sahel region, the NGOs who receive funding from ECHO to provide humanitarian assistance have formed a loose alliance, the 'Cadre Commun', to coordinate their interventions. As of 2016 six organisations were participating in the CCTS (see section 4.4) (Soumaré, 2016a). The Cadre Commun follows a model that was launched in the Sahel region in Niger in 2012, in which NGOs felt that by creating a coordination mechanism that was distinct from the cluster system they would be able to improve their advocacy activities, making it clearer what NGOs could offer the development and humanitarian communities in order to better respond to food insecurity. The initiative was not an initial requirement of ECHO but has been supported by them. The alliance in Mali has demonstrated the value of collaboration among NGOs as it has permitted the conduct of a joint study on targeting and provided opportunities for some coordination on perspectives for the RSU.

7.2 Perspectives on the coordination arrangements

Broadly speaking the opportunities for coordination within the social protection, humanitarian and food security sectors in Mali, especially at national level, were considered by our key informants to be sufficient. There is a diversity of leadership arrangements for the various groups, some led by government and others by development partners; and also a diversity in their composition. Inevitably some groups and meetings are better attended than others, and some respondents felt there were too many meetings, often attended by a relatively consistent group of people. Donini and Scalettaris, in a recent study of humanitarian challenges in Mali, also observed this:

'Informants expressed frustration with the time spent in coordination meetings, but few can afford not to attend, because the information shared is still valued, and participating in such meetings gives visibility to the organization' (Donini and Scalettaris, 2016, p.23).

Nonetheless, our overall impression is that these groups offer a suitable space for reflection on the activities of the sectors within Mali.

Similarly to our analysis of key policy documents in section 3, the main component of shock-responsive social protection that is somewhat detached from the rest at present is that of DRM. We are not aware of the regular involvement of the DGPC in longer established information-sharing groups such as the Cash Working Group. However, they are represented on the technical working group on scaling up social safety nets and they have participated in the national social protection conferences of 2015 and 2016; they also contribute to the national response plan on food security.

We do, therefore, see a recognition that DRM activities are connected to issues of humanitarian assistance, social protection and resilience-building.

There is also a disconnect with the Ministry of Agriculture, even though that ministry houses the country's secretariat for CILSS and represents Mali regionally in the AGIR process which has a strong emphasis on the use of social protection to promote resilience. The Ministry of Agriculture is not an invited member of the working group on scaling up social safety nets; nor do they seem to participate in the Social Protection Group or Cash Working Group, which may limit the opportunities for them to hear of the relevant activities being undertaken by other agencies. They are unconnected to the cash-based interventions described in section 4.4 above. The final evaluation of the CCFS noted that closer links could be developed through complementary measures provided to cash transfer recipients:

'It is a pity that a project that aimed to promote resilience and a transition towards development did not involve agricultural and livestock departments at national and decentralised level. [...] For possible future social safety nets that include a component of agricultural recovery, it would be good to get in contact with these departments if longer term social safety nets are planned' (CCFS, 2015, p.127; *author's own translation*).

The ministry did, however, take part in the 2016 national social protection conference, which gave them the opportunity to introduce a wide range of stakeholders to the principles of their emergency fund, the FNAA. It is to be hoped that the collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and other agencies on social protection in emergencies can continue to be strengthened, given the major role of agriculture—and agricultural workers—in the economy and the importance of agricultural policy for promoting food security.

At local level the picture is a little more fragmented. There are regional food security clusters and Cash Working Groups in a few locations in the north. However, a key informant noted that some NGOs—local and international—work at the local level without reporting what they are doing to the MSAH, which means their activities are not integrated into an overall plan. During the crisis the government reportedly allowed this as they were not in a position to provide a coordination function. Since 2014 the DNDS in the MSAH has tried to resume efforts to provide a framework for coordinating the activities of NGOs.

8 Conclusion

Key points

- A key question for Mali has been how to achieve the transition of some of the caseload of humanitarian assistance to long-term development, especially for food security.
- Mali has good political commitment for shock-responsive social protection, though less influence to secure resources for this agenda, and limited resource capacity.
- Any initiative that supports the ability of routine social protection to support DRR and resilience is beneficial; complementary measures may be useful.
- Mali already employs all the mechanisms for shock-responsive social protection in one or other of its programmes (vertical and horizontal expansion, piggybacking, shadow alignment and refocusing).
- Recommendations are made on improving integration between sectoral ministries / agencies, working with local authorities, making the best use of the RSU database, creating fiscal space for both routine and shock-responsive social protection and improving coordination by the MSAH.

8.1 Implications of the nature of the crises in Mali

To design social protection systems and interventions that work effectively to mitigate and respond to the effects of a crisis, it is essential to have a clear analysis of the nature and impacts of the crisis to be addressed. As explained in section 2, Mali's predominant risk is food insecurity which is partly structural, partly seasonal and occasionally an exceptional crisis. The caseload of food insecure people is mainly in the south, where most people live, though the intensity of food insecurity is much higher in the north (see Annex C.2). The crisis situation has been compounded recently by the effects of the 2012 conflict in the north and the resultant displacement of several hundred thousand people.

This means that a key question for Mali has been not so much about how to create flexible social protection interventions to cope with occasional rapid-onset emergencies, but rather how to achieve the transition of some of the caseload of humanitarian assistance to more predictable social protection interventions that respond to long-term development needs. The transformation is needed in both the south and the north of the country alike. As one of our key informants noted, there is no linear progression from a state of 'emergency' to 'transition' to 'development': it is hard even to say whether, nearly five years after '*la crise*', there is still an emergency in the north or whether the protracted instability is the new normal situation in which development activities will have to work. Humanitarian and development agencies are likely to be working in the same space; and if development agencies are not in the north, it may be because they do not consider the area stable enough to operate in rather than because long-term interventions are not required. At the same time the delivery of government services has been disrupted by the conflict.

We have explored how Mali has responded, or might respond, to this situation by analysing current stakeholders, power relations, partnerships and mandates (section 3); the contributions of a number of social protection interventions, and components of a social protection system including its financing arrangements (sections 4, 5 and 6); and the coordination between systems and actors (section 7). We conclude here with some reflections and recommendations in these areas.

8.2 Developing an effective social protection system

A recent concept paper that explores design challenges for social protection systems cites three prerequisites for a system to function (Samson and Taylor, 2015). These are, first, *political commitment* for the establishment of the system; second, *political influence* to secure resources; and third, *institutional capacity* to deliver the resource-intensive programme. The same framework

can be applied to a shock-responsive social protection system. Shock-responsive systems are more complex than those for routine social protection in that they draw in a much wider set of actors—which requires good coordination—and must hold firm in a crisis context. In Mali our analysis has shown that political commitment to shock-responsive social protection is present; political influence to secure resources is much harder in the light of competing priorities; and institutional capacity for shock-responsive social protection is an even greater challenge:

1. **Political commitment.** Mali is going through a similar policy debate to the one seen in Ethiopia 10-15 years ago which resulted in the establishment of the PSNP, ie. the consideration of how to replace annual emergency appeals and emergency responses with more predictable support that sustains households in the lean season and helps build their assets²⁴. This type of systematic response is politically appealing: the reduction in the loss of assets and annual food insecurity could reduce discontent and encourage stability, while improvements to the visibility of the government may have a positive impact if achieved in a manner that promotes the legitimacy of the state (see section 4.4.3). We have seen in section 3 that both the MSAH and the CSA in the Government of Mali have expressed a commitment to shock-responsive social protection, and that the donors are aligned with this political agenda. The alignment of the global and national policy environments—including, for example, through the desire to use more cash-based approaches to respond to crises—is conducive to achieving a coherent policy response.

The challenges with political commitment at present are threefold. First, there is no overriding authority who can drive the agenda forward. The MSAH approved the creation of a division for social safety nets a year before the study but had not been able to put it into practice. The Ministry of Agriculture gets involved in the relevant Sahel-wide policy discussions but appears to be somewhat removed from the debates within the country. Second, the MSPC, which has the mandate for DRM, is focused on immediate emergency response and has been less fully engaged than the MSAH and CSA as to the potential role of social protection in disaster prevention, resilience-building, short-term emergency response and longer term recovery. A broader approach to DRM may be needed to clarify this potential contribution. Third, some responsibilities, including in relation to DRM, are devolved to local authorities but we do not yet find strong political commitment to shock-responsive social protection at the subnational level.

2. **Political influence to secure resources.** It is an enormous challenge for this political will to translate into the provision of sufficient government resources required to achieve the switch from a humanitarian response with significant international partner support, to a social protection response funded mainly through government systems. This would have to happen over time, and in the short-medium term moving from humanitarian to social protection responses opens up the option of development funding, and more efficient use of resources if programmed over a longer-time frame. While Mali's population continues to grow rapidly it is understandable that other sectors such as for education and labour markets are able to make a persuasive case for an increasing share of resources, against which social protection interventions must compete. In Mali's post-conflict environment, where resources are necessarily also devoted to peacebuilding and security, the pot of resources for which the sector might wish to advocate becomes even smaller.
3. **Institutional capacity to deliver.** As section 5.1 explained, there is some capacity within the government for shock-responsive social protection, but that capacity is stretched. In respect of human resource capacity in particular, there are constraints even for routine social protection, so any surge in staff required to deal with a crisis would have to come from redistributing existing resources rather than from additional resources. There is a need to strengthen the numbers and capacities of staff at *cercle* and commune levels. Non-government actors,

²⁴ For relevant lessons from Ethiopia see eg. Lavers (2016).

including UN agencies and international NGOs, will continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock-response and social protection for the long term.

8.3 What features of social protection interventions and systems facilitate an effective response to shocks?

Given that the government in Mali does not perceive a strong distinction between its social protection and humanitarian interventions, and that the crisis being dealt with is nationwide, cyclical and affects a large proportion of the population, it is not the case that a 'shock-responsive social protection intervention' should be simply a routine social protection intervention that has some kind of add-on that is activated in an emergency. Mali's social protection interventions are currently limited and still developing in practice, though the vision for their expansion is in place. Anything that strengthens the ability of the routine social protection system to support resilience and DRR, as well as to respond to the largely predictable consequences of cyclical food insecurity, is a step in the right direction, provided that it does not prevent assistance from being delivered in accordance with humanitarian principles in the event of conflict.

We observed in section 4.1 that any social protection intervention that adjusts its design and/or implementation to **improve its comprehensiveness, timeliness and predictability, and to reduce duplication of its delivery systems** in the event of food insecurity or conflict is therefore helping the whole system to become more shock-responsive:

- Improving the coverage of routine interventions would be the major factor contributing to an increase in households' ability to withstand crises, given the 3–5 million people estimated to be at risk of food insecurity each year. Besides any schedule for routine expansion, to improve *geographical coverage* a programme would need to minimise the loss of essential government services in conflict-affected areas; to improve the coverage of *households* it might need to find a way to deal with their mobility, to meet the needs of pastoralists and migrants as well as people displaced by shocks.
- Timeliness of response is partly addressed by programmes that intervene routinely without waiting to count the number of households in difficulty (eg. the school meals programme and Jigisèmèjiri).
- Interventions are made more predictable through multi-year financing, the integration of development and humanitarian funds (eg. for the CCTS), the extension of households' eligibility for interventions to more than one year (eg. RAMED) and repeated support to geographical areas considered particularly vulnerable (eg. the CSA food distribution).
- A reduction in duplicated systems is improved through exploration of the shared use of some systems eg. for targeting.

Better shock-responsiveness may also be brought about by offering complementary interventions, not only by introducing temporary adjustments to any single intervention, as the CSA notes:

'The strategy for responding to crises should prioritise the combined use of several complementary instruments to improve the quality and impact of the response, eg. a combination of free in-kind distribution and cash transfers, or the combination between these two and nutritional support' (CSA, 2016a, p.10; *author's own translation*).

This means that, among the options in OPM's typology of ways in which social protection and humanitarian assistance interventions may adapt or collaborate to respond to shocks, the temporary horizontal or vertical expansion of programmes may not be the primary mechanism to

achieve the long-term shift from humanitarian to development activities. Evidence on the relevance of the elements of the typology are as follows:

- **Horizontal expansion.** The free food distribution programme is fundamentally designed for horizontal expansion and contraction; any funding for an increased caseload is agreed between the government and humanitarian agencies. Its limitation is more one of timeliness of support, as the programme size is only determined once communities are already classified as at risk of food insecurity. Horizontal expansion of the school meals programme has proven more feasible for humanitarian and development agencies—especially those with a dual mandate, such as WFP—than for the government, which had difficulty releasing funds for a temporary expansion of its programme. Stakeholders are considering options for temporary scale-up of Jigisèmèjiri; the discussion is merited, but their priority is to extend the routine intervention into the areas of the north not yet covered.
- **Vertical expansion.** The CSA regularly provides top-ups of free food to households, increasing rations during the lean season. WFP has offered top-ups of its school meals programme in numerous ways, by increasing the number of meals offered per day, extending the programme into the school holidays and providing take-home rations.
- **Piggybacking.** There is a concerted effort for agencies to piggyback on one another's initiatives, and it goes in both directions: humanitarian agencies can build on social protection initiatives, but also the government can build on humanitarian initiatives. The main focus of policy debate in this area is the integrated MIS, the RSU, particularly for non-contributory social assistance. Its development is still at a very early stage, so many of the features that might make it a useful tool in a shock are yet to be elaborated (see section 5.3). Piggybacking of emergency interventions onto the infrastructure for the school meals programme has not been done so far and there are some concerns of the potential negative impact of any such move on the programme's educational objectives.
- **Shadow alignment.** There have been good examples of alignment of the emergency and routine cash transfer programmes, the CCFS, CCTS and Jigisèmèjiri, including on the selection of geographical areas and the transfer value (section 4.4). Among humanitarian agencies in the ECHO alliance there has also been alignment of their logframe, questionnaires, targeting approach and M&E. WFP's routine school meals programme is well aligned with the government's own routine intervention; this means that its flexible adjustment during a crisis necessarily results in divergence, rather than closer alignment, with the government. Alignment of interventions in an emergency therefore does not always need to be a primary objective.
- **Refocusing.** The CSA refocuses part of its food distribution each year to reflect the geographical areas considered most in need; the CNCS, in contrast, does not refocus the school meals programme each year as it has other objectives unrelated to crisis response, while WFP does some refocusing of its school meals intervention.

In light of the size of the annual food security requirements compared with the current scale of social protection service provision and the prospects for increased government funding, there will be a need for financial and technical support from international partners for the long run, both for emergency response and for the expansion of social protection. It is not yet realistic to expect the resourcing of response to shocks—or the expansion of routine social protection—to be fully absorbed by the government. If the government is to increase its investment in DRM and response to shocks it will need to draw in initiatives from many sectors, including eg. agriculture, rather than relying on the social protection sector alone.

8.4 How can social protection, DRM and humanitarian systems work better together for more effective responses to shocks?

Section 7 highlighted some of the many ways in which social protection and humanitarian actors—and, to a lesser extent, DRM—are working together to improve responsiveness to shocks. There are numerous forums for coordination and communication, and constructive joint work on policy and strategy development. There is also integration of some systems across sectors, such as the use of early warning data to determine food distribution requirements. There is some disconnect between the activities taking place at local, national and regionwide level, which are conducted by different actors who do not always have a space for information exchange.

8.5 Recommendations for government and its partners

1. **Policy integration.** Strengthen the integration of the MSPC, Ministry of Agriculture and decentralised local authorities into policy debates on the transition from humanitarian to social protection responses to food insecurity.
2. **Coordination by the MSAH.** Social protection and food security are inherently multisectoral. The MSAH should be supported to deliver its mandate for strategic planning and coordination of social protection, including by addressing any blockages that are preventing the establishment of its division of social safety nets which was approved a year prior to the study.
3. **Support to routine social protection.** The government and its international partners should continue to support the delivery of routine social protection, as a core part of shock response, including through programme expansion and the transition of the chronically food insecure caseload into social protection programmes.
4. **Working with local authorities.** Strengthening of human resource capacity should be taking place at local levels as well as nationally, especially as the decentralisation agenda becomes more prominent
5. **Attention to social protection in DRM framework.** The potential role of social protection in disaster prevention, resilience-building, emergency response and early recovery is underplayed in frameworks and policy documents for DRM. Support actors working on DRM to consider how social protection interventions and systems can help them achieve their objectives.
6. **Creating an effective integrated MIS.** Take into account the factors that may promote or constrain the use of the RSU database for shock-responsive social protection, especially how to improve trust in the quality of data collected by others, maximise accessibility without compromising data privacy, and accommodate the changed circumstances of households that have been affected by food insecurity or conflict or who are internally displaced.
7. **Fiscal space for shock-responsive social protection.** Recognising that the social protection budget alone is not sufficient to deliver the step change in funding that is required to address food insecurity more fully, consider how activities relevant to shock-responsive social protection relate to—and can be funded through—other sector budgets, especially agriculture.
8. **Cost-efficiency analyses.** The systematic conduct of cost-efficiency analyses and other types of value-for-money analysis will enable the tracking of improvements in value for money brought about by amendments to social protection and humanitarian programming.

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Annex B Research method

B.1 Approach to the research

The overall research combines quantitative and qualitative data gathered through a combination of desk-based research (literature review and interviews) and six case studies, three in-depth and three light ones (document review, consultations with key informants and stakeholders). In-depth case studies provide detailed information gathered over at least three in-country research periods, accompanied by regular consultations and interactions with key stakeholders. The light case studies analyse information relevant to the main research questions, but during just one in-country research period and focusing on a specific aspect of interest. The research has three main components: normative, diagnostic and explanatory:

1. **Normative:** this component clarified key terminology and concepts for consistency across the project e.g. on the objectives of social protection and key enabling factors and constraints identified by the literature. Some of this was completed during the literature review and inception phase. The aim was to identify what qualifies as a shock-responsive social protection policy and system, their properties and the links to humanitarian interventions.
2. **Diagnostic:** this component mapped out social protection policies and systems and considered their (actual and potential) degree of responsiveness in the context of different shocks. It also provided descriptive analysis of broader processes that influence that effectiveness, such as political considerations, the budget process and the legislative framework.
3. **Explanatory:** this component addressed the question ‘why’? It examined the factors underlying the patterns and results highlighted at the diagnostic stage. Its objective was to provide information on the reasons why policy and systems have evolved and performed as outlined. Factors considered include: policy design and implementation details, administrative / operational capacity, political economy variables and financing sources and arrangements. The analysis was applied to both social protection policies, systems and to the coordination or integration (and/or lack thereof) between social protection and humanitarian shock response.

B.2 Analytical tools

Answering the research questions required the application of a broad set of analytical tools covering different themes and pursuing different objectives. These are:

1. **Mapping and analysis of stakeholders, power relations and governance:** This set of tools analyses the people and organisations who are—or might be—involved in contributing to a shock-responsive social protection system; their mandates, interest and influence, the way they organise themselves and their capacities. It consists of stakeholder analysis, institutional analysis and organisational capacity assessments.
2. **Vulnerability / poverty analysis:** This involved creating a ‘risk and vulnerability profile’ for each country, drawing on secondary quantitative and qualitative data from reputable sources.
3. **Mapping and analysis of policies and systems for social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM:** This involved reviewing and updating existing mappings and collecting information on the design of relevant policies and systems and the features of policy delivery. Following the mapping exercises, policy analysis was conducted to review explanatory factors.
4. **Budget / financial analysis:** This involved review of the macroeconomic environment and medium term outlook of key economic indicators; review of budgetary processes and rules for allocation of budgets, their use and reallocation within and across sectors or administrative entities; analysis of sources and levels of expenditure allocated to social protection, DRM, humanitarian response, and (if relevant) climate change; and financial analysis of specific social protection, DRR / DRM, or humanitarian response programmes or interventions.

Our approach paid attention to issues of conflict and fragility and their impact on the development and implementation of policies and systems that can respond to shocks. This has been linked to the questions explored under analytical tools such as the vulnerability analysis and financial analysis, since conflict and fragility may have a bearing on topics such as the assessment and mitigation of risk and issues surrounding funding cycles.

B.3 Overview of stakeholder consultations

The Mali case study has evolved a little differently from the other in-depth studies, partly because security conditions have not allowed the team to conduct any field visits outside the capital, and partly because there is so much going on that is of relevance to the research. Consequently, rather than selecting one programme for the case study, the team identified four programmes which provide examples of the different types of shock-response mechanism (as set out in the conceptual framework), across different categories of social protection.

The team attended Mali's national social protection conference in October 2015 to introduce the research to stakeholders and to define its scope. Primary research was then conducted during three visits to the capital, Bamako, between April and October 2016 (Table 5). Our national expert, Naffet Keïta, also carried out additional research outside these dates. The team was unable to travel to the regions owing to the ongoing conflict; however, our interviews in Bamako included discussions with programme implementers—including from UNICEF and Oxfam—who had recently travelled to the field and who shared their insights

Table 5 Interviews held

| Type | Organisation |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSAHRN (including DNPSES and DNDS) (4 interviews) Agence Nationale D'Assistance Medicale (ANAM) Fonds National de Solidarite CSA (including SAP) (3 interviews) MSPC (including DGPC) (2 interviews) Ministere de l'Education Cellule Technique du Cadre Strategique de Lutte Contre La Pauvrete (CT/CSLP) |
| Multilateral development partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEVCO ECHO (2 interviews) FAO IOM Mali OCHA UNICEF WFP World Bank (2 interviews) Jigisemejiri (2 interviews) |
| Bilateral development partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFID USAID |
| NGO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS NET Handicap International Mali Solidarités International Oxfam (2 interviews) |

Source: OPM.

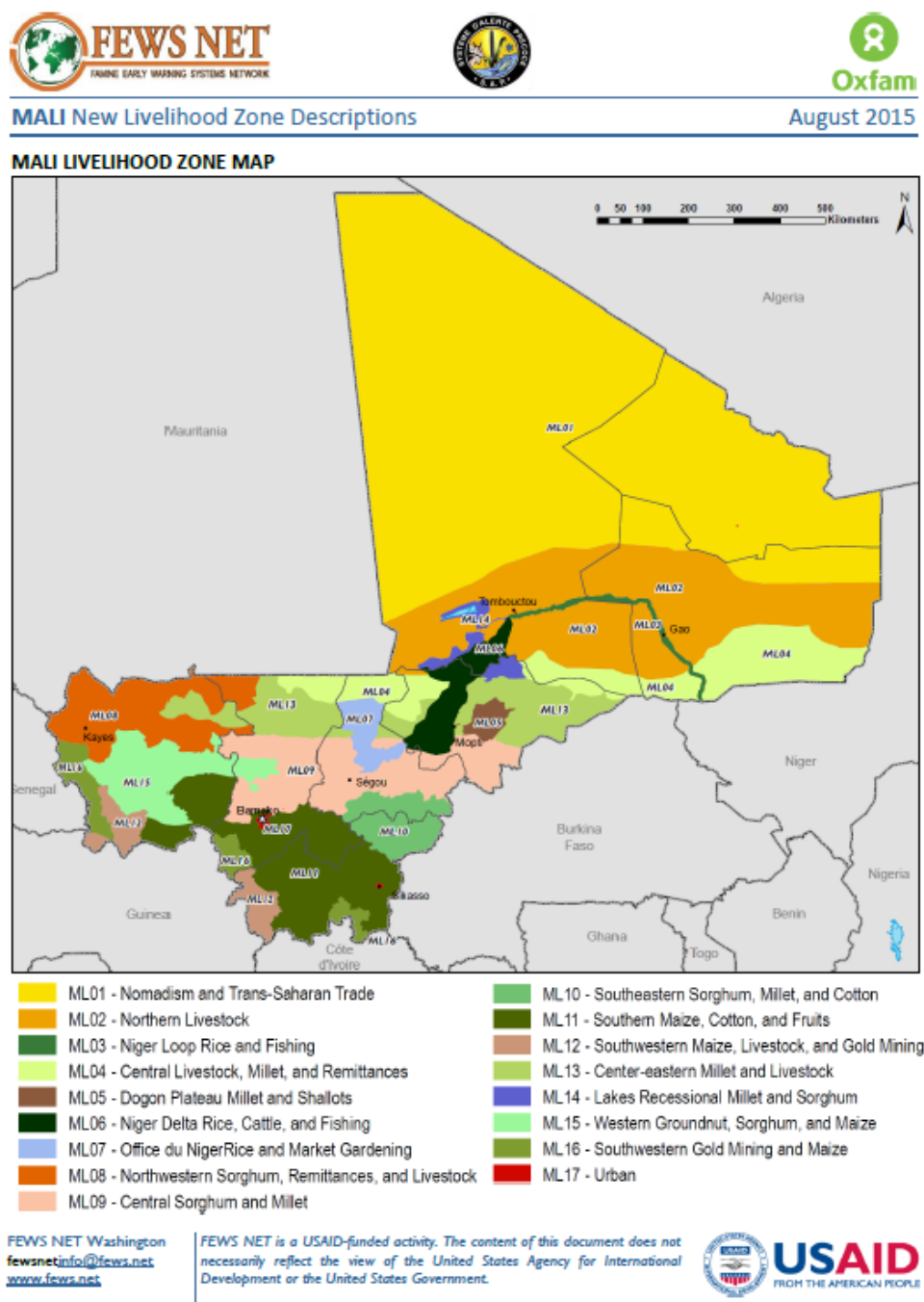
Our aim was to cover stakeholders in the government, and the major international donors and NGOs involved in programmes that could be considered as either social protection or humanitarian response. During fieldwork we held some 35 one-to-one or group interviews with just over 60 key informants from a range of government bodies, multilateral and bilateral development partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Actors from across the social protection, humanitarian, DRM and food security spheres were included. Information from respondents and secondary data from documentary sources were triangulated with one another. Qualitative data were entered into a standard template in order to facilitate analysis and cross-country comparison.

Annex C Further information—livelihoods and food security

C.1 Livelihood zones

Livelihood zones in Mali are diverse and determined predominantly by rainfall patterns. The map of zones was revised in December 2014, when 17 zones were identified (Figure 7). The zones were defined using the analytical framework of the HEA which identifies geographical areas where households tend to meet their basic needs for food and income in a similar way.

Figure 7 Livelihood zones



Source: FEWS NET (2014).

C.2 Projected levels of acute food insecurity, 2017

Table 6 Population by projected level of food insecurity, Jun–Aug 2017 (thousands)

| Region | Population | Phase of food insecurity (Cadre Harmonisé classification) | | | | | Total Phase 3–5 |
|--------------|---------------|---|--------------|------------|----------|----------|--------------------|
| | | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | Phase 5 | |
| Kayes | 2,517 | 2,108 | 385 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Koulikoro | 3,058 | 2,315 | 661 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| Sikasso | 3,337 | 2,815 | 486 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| Ségou | 2,952 | 2,465 | 456 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 31 |
| Mopti | 2,571 | 2,117 | 367 | 86 | 0 | 0 | 86 |
| Tombouctou | 852 | 601 | 164 | 78 | 9 | 0 | 87 |
| Gao | 685 | 441 | 173 | 72 | 0 | 0 | 72 |
| Kidal | 86 | 66 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Bamako | 2,285 | 1,865 | 329 | 91 | 0 | 0 | 91 |
| Total | 18,343 | 14,792 | 3,034 | 486 | 9 | 0 | 495 |

Source: SAP and FEWS NET (2016a). Note: Phase 1 = Minimal. Phase 2 = At risk. Phase 3 = Crisis. Phase 4 = Emergency. Phase 5 = Famine. The number of households estimated to be in need of food assistance is the total in Phases 3 to 5.



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