

# Annual Report Horticulture Hub Niger 2023 – 2024



Netherlands Enterprise Agency



*Harvest of cucumbers, April 2024*

November 2024

This report is a cooperation of the cluster partners:



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*Agripreneurs on HortiHub Land, working with the trays 'alveoles'.*

## Preface

This report reflects the last year of the Impact Cluster HortiCulture Hub Niger, called HortiHub Niger for short. It was an adventure when we started it. On the one hand with the partners, on the other hand as part of the Impact Cluster pilot. Implementing an Impact Cluster is a challenge in countries that are attractive to Dutch business. In a country like Niger, it is more than that. But looking back, I dare say here: a lot has been achieved! And also: a lot has been achieved under not easy, indeed difficult and sometimes even seemingly impossible circumstances. Let me mention a few facts. The loss of partner UASTM in 2022, the coup in July 2023, illness of the project leader, loss of partner aQysta in 2024, the death of a Lead Farmer, the floodings of 2024. It also became clear that partner Holland Greentech could not set up its own entity in Niger.

Together, we found great solutions. Which can safely be called very sustainable because they anticipate the future - from project to business. With the team that started working on behalf of HGT from 2022 onwards, a good cooperation has developed with the remaining partners Rivulis, Partners for Innovation and Synergos Communications. In particular, the synergy between Partners for Innovation and the HGT Team has grown and in this last year has developed into a very fruitful collaboration. In which field work in particular is a time-consuming but important aspect that the teams have shared well. An almost ultimate achievement is the establishment of Consulting FHG by the HGT Team in Niger. One of the goals is to grow from project to business. The establishment of Consulting FHG has created a new shareholder for the future company.

Financially, we are on track. The year 2022-2023 has more or less forced us to apply for an adjustment. With the large amount of changes, we started making an amendment in November 2023. The final version was approved by RVO in January 2024. With the new budget allocation, we worked and achieved the results we wanted to achieve as a cooperation team. And more. The coup has extended the duration of the project by three months. As a result, we approached a new cohort of lead farmers with whom we will work as a company. Budgets were insufficient to give them 'the same treat' as the first cohort

I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their cooperation that led to the results as described in this annual report. In particular, I would like to mention the following people because they were and still are the backbone of the implementation on the ground: Idrissa Guissi Maïga Djibril and Ahmed Ibrahim Ali from Partners for Innovation. And Bounia Yahaya Habibou and Tafrij Ousseini from formerly the HGT-Niger team, now Consulting FHG.

I look forward to going on a follow-up journey together. Niger can use good projects, the current partners are keen to follow up and new parties have already come forward. With this core, we dare to take the next step. Never change a winning team - complementing is possible.

November 2024

Baud Schoenmaeckers – Synergos Communicatie

Project Leader



# 1: Background

## 1.1 The instrument

The instrument we use for the project is the Impact Cluster. This is a subsidy programme that supports companies seeking long-term investments in growing the private sector in a specific country. Knowledge institutes, trade organisations - in cooperation with companies - and NGOs can apply for this subsidy. So it is meant for at least 5 entrepreneurs / companies of which 4 are based in the Netherlands who want to start a project in a developing country with other companies and at least one local partner. These companies want to invest in the sustainable development of specific sectors in a country because they see commercial opportunities for themselves. For example, to sell more products in a country in the future or to establish operations there.

The moment we started, the Impact Cluster instrument was still in an experimental phase. We started with 6 partners and some of the guidelines were not yet clear – like the division of the percentage for lead partners (40% own contribution at that time, 30% now). Or the percentage of costs for administration (no guidelines at that time, 2,8% of the total grant now).

The rationale behind the instrument is a good one. But for a country like Niger, it should be adjusted a bit. One of the reasons is that not many Dutch companies want to work in or with Niger. Especially not now, after the coup of July 2023.



*A group of female Farmers of which a few are Lead Farmer*

## 1.2 Objectives

By bringing Dutch best practices, know-how and technology into Niger, which we integrate as much as possible with local knowledge, HortiHub Niger aims to help increase horticultural productivity and

climate resilience for local food and nutrition security and encourage youth employment by promoting economic perspective for youth in horticulture. Through the HortiHub Niger the cluster wants to train over 25 young aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs per year of whom at least 35% are woman (agripreneurs) and 325 vegetable farmers. The HortiHub will help farmers improve their business operations by trainings, means of new techniques and knowledge transfer, focussing on five horticulture crops, tomatoes, hot peppers, onions, cabbages, eggplants.

This will foster:

- a stronger agripreneurship Education ecosystem
- improved knowledge and collaboration among current and future vegetable farmers
- increased awareness regarding Dutch horti solutions (inputs, irrigation, agritech, know-how) among farmers and
- an assessment of the sales market and a network for the four Dutch cluster partners.

In the end, the cluster aims to contribute to increased local vegetable production in amount and quality, more employment opportunities by more agribusiness, better nutrition and food safety, and a bigger market for Dutch enterprises that contribute to the horticulture solutions (e.g. via quality inputs and technology). Also, at the end there will be a sustainable organisation to continue the work that has been done in the project: from project to enterprise.



*SDG 2: Zero Hunger by improving the local production of vegetables, using innovations and sustainable solutions.*

### 1.3 The impact cluster and the SDG's

The impact cluster also strives to contribute to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. At least six SDGs can be contributed to

- SDG 02 | Zero Hunger: We guide the local community in improving the local production of vegetables, using innovations and sustainable solutions;
- SDG 03 | Good Health and Well-being: The aim of the impact cluster is to increase the availability of fresh, healthy and locally produced food in Niger;
- SDG 04 | Quality education: The aim of the impact cluster is to transfer knowledge of horticultural production and technology through its trainings;
- SDG 08 | Decent Work and Economic Growth: Encouraging work opportunities and involvement of the local community should promote economic growth;
- SDG 11 | Sustainable Cities and Communities: The impact cluster stimulates local and sustainable production through Dutch technology and knowledge transfer;
- SDG 17 | Partnerships for the goals: Partnerships between the private and public sector are key for success. By working together, we can accelerate the transition to more sustainable horticulture and increased food safety and food security in Niger.



*Lead Farmers and the Horti Hub team after a training at the HortiHub, office of Agrifocus*



## 2: Activities and results

The third year has seen a number of milestones and achievements. The process we went through as a team is one of them; we learned a lot to work as a consortium. Ok, smaller than when we started, but it worked. As can be seen as a milestone as well is that we managed to survive after the coup in July 2023. In this chapter, we mention some of the results following the modules. The next chapter focuses in detail on what's been done and achieved.

### 2.1 Coordination Module

There has been a lot of coordination work. First because we had to change the budget. After the first two years of the project (and especially after the second year) we discovered that there was a need to change the budget. This took a lot of time. Not only the changes that had to be made, also all the talks that needed to be done. The major changes can be seen in the merging of some activities. This was done because in the description of the original activities, it often proved impossible to write off the hours spent on them. Rates were also inconsistent; different rates were charged for the same activities. The details of this can be read in chapter 4, Finances.

Besides this, also the withdrawing of partner aQysta at the beginning of 2024 gave a lot of extra work. It is a result, but not a real positive one

Expressed in hours, Synergos spend 1250 hours on coordination and reporting (about 175 days). In the period we held 14 monthly meetings with the team, 12 meetings in between, more than 30 bilateral meetings. In several WhatsApp and WhatsApp groups, we exchanged information – hundreds of times.

### 2.2 Study module:

There is no news on this module in year 3 of the project. Initially, the market study was delivered March 2022. A number of conclusions were drawn, recommendations made and questions asked. The questions were all answered and the updated version of the study was delivered early 2023.

### 2.3 Demonstration Project Module

This module was, like coordination, subject to change, shifting budgets or parts of them to other activities and sometimes to other partners. Looking at the performance indicators, we see that: The 12 selected lead farmers started. After two years their fields are in a perfect shape for continuation. As they were hesitating in the beginning, the eager they are now to join next phases. They all experiment with different irrigation tools and facilities and want to expand their land to use more hybrid seeds. Let's have a look at the numbers

- 1 HortiHub land, functioning, flourishing, attracting people to have a look at the experiments.
  - The HGT Team went on the land almost daily. Average: 200 times.
- 1 HortiHub physical space, the incubator. This is more and more often used, also by agripreneurs, just to work and gather.
- 232 agripreneurs signed in to follow the courses. 54 candidates were selected
  - Although the project's objective is to have 50% female entrepreneurs, we managed to achieve 32%.
- 84 Lead farmers and the two HortiHub farmers received training in 7 study days
- 182 farmers were sensitised.
- To prevent the farmers travelling too much, Partners for Innovation and HGT teams went at least 5 times to the farmers. Each time there were about 157 farmers.

- 1 sales network, called Consulting FHG is set up as outcome of working with cluster member Holland Greentech.
- A permanent framework for sharing between Lead farmers via the WhatsApp platform known as the Platform HortiHub Niger. Many exchange is in local language. And it is used on a daily basis.



*Agripreneurs and staff at the HubLand in 2023*

#### 2.4 Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building module

Also in this module Knowledge Transfer there has been some shifting in lines of activities. For the work that has been done, this was not an issue. With the shifting of budgets, the work could be done easily. In general, relevant Dutch knowledge is aimed at governments, knowledge institutions and the local private sector (NGOs where appropriate) – like the local farmers, the lead farmers, but also the teams themselves. They absorbed the new knowledge and were able to put it in trainings to feed the lead farmers, their apprentices, and the agripreneurs with their knowledge. Which has been transferred in different forms: physical on the land, by WhatsApp, in discussions, at the HortiHub incubator.

We also want to specifically mention here that it is not only a transfer of knowledge from the Netherlands to Niger; the Hub needs the knowledge of local farmers. They know how to deal with nature, the changes. It is exactly this knowledge that has to be used in the transfer of specific Dutch knowledge. This is exactly what happened during the meetings and the visits. Capacity building is a specific form of knowledge transfer. Education and training are central to these activities. Some facts:

- The establishment, furnishing and staffing of the physical Hub, the incubator.
- Setting up and furnishing Hub Land. With a special basin and two youngsters that are permanently on the field. With irrigation systems, pumps, different seeds and use of new techniques. Where many Farmers and agripreneurs come to gain knowledge from the Hub staff.
- The comprehensive training programme was ready but improved during the time. Seven modular courses for agripreneurs were given (which indeed was the aim). Several certificate ceremonies were held to mark the end of the cohorts of Agripreneurs.



- Six modular courses for farmers were given at the Hub, and the Hub Land. Also five courses and trainings were given at the respective twelve fields of the Lead farmers. Making a total of 60 courses .
- In total 350 Agripreneurs and 72 Lead Farmers followed the training.

In these two tables you can read the numbers. First table show that in seven training sessions (of which some where more than one day) 50 agripreneurs were trained, making a total of 350 trained agripreneurs.

***Seven times a training for agripreneurs***

<b>Trainings</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Number of agripreneurs</b>
1.	Entrepreneurial Culture	50
2.	Market garden production techniques	50
3.	Business model Outline and making of a business plan	50
4.	Vegetable processing techniques	50
5.	Mobilising resources	50
6.	Financial management and how to pitch	50
7.	Capitalising on the trajectory	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>350</b>

***Six times a training for farmers***

<b>Trainings</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Number of Lead farmers</b>
1	Market garden production techniques	12
2	Planning market garden crops	12
3	Methods of choosing vegetable seeds	12
4	Market gardening in the rainy and intermediate seasons	12
5	Integrated pest management for vegetable crops	12
6	Management advice for vegetable farming (market garden)	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>72</b>

## 2.5 Communication Module

Hard work has been done on internal communication. Numerous videos were made on an individual basis and shared. Mutual communication ran smoothly. For external communication, we waited until Year 3. Work was done on a new website that is used a lot in communicating the results – [www.hortihubniger.com](http://www.hortihubniger.com)

What else was delivered:

- Coordination meetings to discuss activities and take corrective action where necessary.
- Improving public awareness of the hub's services.
- A new, active website
- Several banners are made and every team member in the field has a 'gilet'.
- Leaflets and presentation notes on the project are developed, notebooks and stickers were created to hand over to Lead Farmers and agripreneurs.
- A Facebook page will be created to be used to disseminate the results and attract new partners.



*The gilet*



*Making films of lead farmers for the website and to disseminate results*

### 3. Activities along the timeline

In this chapter we follow the steps all members of the teams made. It gives a good overview of the activities and results.

#### 3.1. September 2023 up to December 2023

- **21 September:** submission of annual report to RVO.
- **21 September - January 2024:** aQysta and Synergos worked on the budget amendment. Several meetings were held with RVO, and many versions of the amendment were adopted. This (and the disease) had an effect on cooperation in the cluster.
- **28 September:** A call to action from the HGT team: the solar panels delivered are fine, but we need at least three, but better still four panels instead of two to get enough energy to irrigate the main farmers' land (and Horti Hub Land).
- **5 October:** Partners for Innovation (Pfi) informs all partners of the progress of the selection of the second and third cohorts of agripreneurs and the selection procedure. Although there were a large number of applications (232, 216 of which were valid), only 54 candidates achieved a minimum score of 80 out of 100, and although the project's objective is to have 50% female entrepreneurs, we managed to achieve 32%.

Designation	Online filing	Physical deposit	Invalid	Total
Application	198	18	16	232
Women	34	2	0	36
Licence level	64	10	0	74
Female undergraduate	14	2	0	16
Masters level	60	4	0	64
Women at master's level	14	0	0	14
Rural Development Technician level	22	2	0	24
Female Rural Development Technician	2	0	0	2
Other levels	32	8	0	40
Female other levels	4	0	0	4

- **9 October:** online meeting on the coordination of project activities. The meeting lasted over two hours because there was a lot of misunderstanding and unease about the way things were going. *See attachment 9 October - reactions Minutes of the PfiSynergosDG+ Pfi Niger coordination meeting*
- **17 October:** the first version of the amended budget was delivered. It was not the right one. But it clearly showed that many budget lines needed to be re-examined. Internal relocation and reallocation of certain budget lines.
- **20 October:** a request for financing of the third tranche was disapproved. We wanted this because of the coup d'état; the banks didn't work as they should. No one in Niger was able to take more than €140 at a time.



- **26 October:** Monthly meeting to discuss the development of HortiHub land, the situation of lead farmers and general operations, also in light of the difficulties encountered after the coup. *See attachment 26 Oct 2023 Meeting minutes Pfi Niger HGT Nigervd*
- **28 October - 31 December.** Illness and a major operation forced the project manager to work at half speed. This had a direct influence on the progress of the modification process.
- **1 November:** Discussion on the next selection phase for the third cohort of agripreneurs. 186 very good candidates applied. *See attachment Applications for 3rd cohort of agripreneurs*
- **6 and 7 November:** Setting up of nurseries for HGT Burkina purple onions and cross cabbage at Hub Land



*Setting up an onion nursery at Hub Land.*



*The HGT team during the installation of the drip irrigation system at lead farmer Mariama Tinni.*

- **8 and 9 November:** Training days for agripreneurs on financing - how to mobilise resources and management - entrepreneurial leadership.
- **10 to 13 November:** Monitoring the installation of irrigation kits and solar pumps at lead farmers' sites
- **10- 20 November:** monitoring of the evolution of the onion nursery with a student supervised by Partners for Innovation for his Master 2 thesis on the subject Evaluation of the effectiveness of Bokashi compost and NPK on market garden crops - *Case of the Galmi purple onion.*
- **21 November:** After training on entrepreneurial leadership and fundraising, the first cohort of *agripreneurs* will receive their final training on *Capitalising on the Agripreneurs-Résautage trajectory.*
- **22 November to 04 December:** Monitoring the development of crops on Hub Land and the installation of a drip irrigation system on a lead farmer's farm by the HGT Team Niger.
- **5 December:** Letter from Partners for Innovation to all the agripreneurs selected for the second and third cohorts (over 60 possible participants).
  - The 2024 programme will be available on 24<sup>th</sup> in January.
- **6 December:** Discussions with RVO on the budget.
- **7 to 9 December:** Horti Hub team visits lead farmers in the field.
- **10 December:** A "Wijzigingsvoorstel" was written to RVO, the official request to amend the budget;



*After the training of the agripreneurs, a field visit was organised to Agri Innov'Inspire.*

- **11 to 19 December:** Installation of the Rivulis drip irrigation system and transplanting of crops at the Lead Farmers. Followed by transplanting of HGT Burkina *Galmi purple onions* at the home of lead farmer Abdoulaye Diallo in Karel by the HGT Niger team. Guidance by Synergos (virtual)
- **20 to 24 December:** Follow-up mission to all lead farmers to see if the irrigation systems and solar pumps are working well
- **26 to 27 December:** cabbage transplanting at Hub Land
- **28 to 30 December:** onion transplanting at Hub Land

### 3RD YEAR OF THE PROGRAMME, JANUARY 2024 – DECEMBER 2024

- **02 to 06 January:** Monitoring of cabbage and onion crops on Hub Land. Discussions with team and project leader
- **7 January:** Discussions between Pfi management and Synergos on how to deal with the "silent" partnership between aQysta and UASTM and the project.
- **8 January:** Alisha sends an email to all the partners asking them to send all the administrative documents, timesheets and invoices.
  - Responses didn't come quickly because this is the third system that all the partners have to work with.
- **9 January:** Online meeting with all partners in the field and Laurent Niyonkuru, our PSD-Coach from RVO.
- **10 January:** announcement of the finalisation of the quarterly reports. Idrissa Guisso Djibril (local coordinator of the project) said that the collaboration was becoming increasingly excellent. Quote:
  - "For the coordination of activities on the ground, we have a very good collaboration with Tafrij, Ali and Habibou, each with areas, basins and Lead Farmers to follow. We are currently working together to discuss activities and planning. We hope to be more efficient in collecting and using data in the field".
- **11 to 23 January:** Monitoring crop development at Hub Land and lead farmers' sites. Discussions about next phase with project leader



- **24 January:** submission of Pfl's quarterly reports. *See annex Report 3<sup>ème</sup> quarterly 2023 and Report 4<sup>ème</sup> quarterly 2023*
- **31 January:** online meeting with Laurent Niyonkuru de RVO with the local/executing partners (Partners for Innovation, Holland Greentech and Synergos) and their management teams.
- **8 February:** approval of the amendment. The grant was paid the following week.
- **9 February:** HortiHub Niger held its regular monthly meeting to review the progress of activities and provide an appropriate response to the project's technical challenges. *See attached CR workshop monthly meeting HH2024(1)*
- **29 February:** online meeting with partners to discuss the current situation, the status of the project itself, the new budget, the status of agripreneurs and the division of tasks. *See attachment Minutes of the coordination meeting 29022024*



*The rainy season has caused a lot of inconvenience throughout the Sahel region. On the land of one of the lead farmers, this is the result. Many crops have been lost.*



- **29 February to 18 March:** Monitoring of onion and cabbage crops on Hub Land and treatment with sanitary plant protection products and amendment with NPK fertiliser. HortiHub Team
- **19 March:** Online meeting with implementing partners and aQysta. One of the issues discussed is the role of aQysta and how the company can meet its obligations over the past year.
  - The idea of teaching irrigation and soil treatment to lead farmers and agripreneurs was one that could work. But the real work, the execution, rested on the shoulders of Partners for Innovation and the Nigerien partners from Holland Greentech. After all, 90% of farmers don't speak French and aQysta doesn't know enough about Niger's soil and treatment situation.
  - The result is that it seems impossible for aQysta to do the work.
- **20 to 25 March:** KK cross cabbage harvest at Hub Land
- **26 March:** Idrissa presented an overview of urgent activities. Tafrij and Habibou (HGT) presented an overview of HGT's activities for the coming year, as did Idrissa. The document is specifically intended for Rivulis and aQysta, as it is not yet clear what role they will play until the end of the project. *See attachments: Holland Green Tech Planned Activities and Horti Hub 2024vd Urgent Activities*
  - Baud has spoken with Simon Lenoir from Rivulis and Rivulis can add information if required. They carried out their work for the project in March 2023.
- **28 March:** Online meeting with all partners. A very positive meeting where we discussed how to deal with aQysta and its proposal, how HGT will deal with the next three Lead Farmer courses. If so, how we will identify the next group of Lead Farmers and how we can continue after this phase of the project. *See attachment : CR coordination meeting 28 March 2024*
- **22 - 24 April:** RVO meeting in Abidjan for RVO partners working in West Africa. Three participants from Partners for Innovation and one from Synergos attended the meeting. Content: "Round tables, workshops and a field visit on the themes of food security, private sector development and partnerships in West Africa. With ample opportunities for networking and interactive sessions. Participants include NGOs, companies and public partners involved in RVO programmes.
- **21 - 29 April:** Follow-up of activities and harvesting at lead farmers land using solar pumps and Rivulis irrigation systems as well as F1 RZ tomato and pepper seed varieties. Continued work on crop development on Hub Land by the HubTeam.
- **02- 08 May:** Onion harvest at Hub Land
- **9 May:** Meeting with the two new groups of agripreneurs. This is a meeting to get to know each other. *See attachment: Presentation of HortiHub and Pfi*
- **10 - 14 May:** Preparation of Hub Land and lead farmers land for the winter campaign
- **16 May:** Lessons for lead farmers on how to produce during the rainy season and between the rainy and dry seasons. *See attachment: 16 May Lead farmers training report*
- **3 May:** a disagreement between aQysta and Synergos led aQysta to withdraw. Administration was therefore handed over to Synergos.



Pepper and tomato harvest by lead farmer Yacouba Bourbour Kabey



Weighing the cabbage

- **18 May:** Training for Lead Farmers on market gardening in the rainy season; training sponsored by HGT and facilitated by Partners for Innovation.
- **29 May:** As a step forward (bearing in mind the changing political situation in Holland), Synergos took the initiative of making a follow-up proposal. The proposal was supported by Partners for Innovation, Holland Greentech Benin and a possible new partner, UPAT. The RVO rules did not allow us to take the first steps in this follow-up. We had to complete the impact cluster first - which we are doing now.
- **2 June:** Meeting with members of the Partners for innovation and HGT team. The subject is continuing lessons for lead farmers.
- **5 - 11 June:** Setting up nurseries at the land of all lead farmers
- **14 - 25 June:** transplanting of Gambo, Cucumber and Maize at Hub Land
- **30 June:** Training session for Lead Farmers leaders on how to handle pesticides and fertilisers. *See attachment June: Tdrs Formation Lead Farmers sur les techniques de protection phytosanitaire des exploitations maraîchères*
- **01 - 09 July:** monitoring of crop development activities at Hub Land
- **04 - 10 July:** Training of Lead Farmers in vegetable crop protection techniques; training sponsored by HGT and facilitated by Partners for Innovation.
  - Each Lead Farmer passed on the knowledge received to at least 10 apprentices producers, i.e. at least 120 beneficiaries are reached per training session.
- **17 July:** Partners for Innovation welcomes independent consultant Sabine (NOM), who carries out gender research on all projects.
- **15 July:** start of the project manager's first trip to Niger
- **18 July:** Site visit to HortiHub and discussion on how to proceed with the HGT team.
- **19 July:** Discussions on the final report and finances with all team members from Pfl, and HGT.
- **24 – 25 July:** Training for agripreneurs (cohorts 2 and 3) on entrepreneurial culture. This training involved two cohorts, i.e. 50 agripreneurs.
- **26 - 27 July:** Report on the Social Inclusive Management study by Sabine, the RVO auditor visiting the project.
- **28 - 31 July:** Monitoring the evolution of crops at Hub Land and at the land of all lead farmers.
- **01 August:** Training for the survey on Inclusive and Social Management on Agripreneurs and lead farmers on behalf of Horti Hub and the project ChainBooster Arachid

- **02 - 04 August:** Start of questionnaires for the survey of three lead farmers and three Agripreneurs



*The Horti Hub team and the Lead Farmers have been trained*

- **08 - 10 August:** Survey of the ChainBooster Arachid chain in Dosso for the focus group on Social Inclusive Management
- **13 - 20 August:** Monitoring of the development of okra, cucumber and maize crops on Hub Land and monitoring of the first harvest of Mydas F1 RZ cucumber.
- **22 August;** Training for the second cohort of agripreneurs in market garden production techniques, combined with a training trip to the Agri'Innov' Inspire farm.
- **23 - 31 August:** First okra harvest at Hub Land
- **02 - 06 September:** Follow-up of activities at Lead Farmers level for the observation of flooding in localities
- **4 and 5 September:** Training for agripreneurs in market garden production techniques. This training was combined with a visit to the agri-business to show the 50 young entrepreneurs the basics of market garden production.
- **09 - 13 September:** Harvest of maize and third harvest of cucumber and okra in Hub Land
- **16 - 20 September:** Follow-up of activities on Hub Land and training of Agripreneurs on the Marketing of Agricultural Products
- **23 - 27 September:** Monitoring of lead farmer activities for rainy season harvests and preparation for the cold dry season
- **30 September - 04 October:** Preparation of the cold, dry season and training of Agripreneurs on the techniques and opportunities for processing agricultural products.
- **31 September:** Training for Lead Farmers on management advice for vegetable farms.
- **07 - 11 October:** Collection of data on innovation for the remaining farmers
- **14 - 18 October:** Meeting and exchange with women's groups as part of the new lead farmer programme





*The HortiHub Niger coordination team. From left to right: Tafrij Ousseini, Habibou Bounia (working on behalf of Holland Greentech Niger), Ibrahim Beidou Issoufou, Ali Ahmed Ibrahim and Idrissa Guisso Maïga (all three Partners for Innovation).*

- **16 and 17 October:** Training for agripreneurs on techniques for processing market garden produce for 50 young agripreneurs.
- **21 - 25 October:** Exchange and Networking Meeting on Innovation in the Qu Burkina Faso Mali and Niger Horticulture Sectors Led by Agri Boost Mali.
- **24 and 25 October:** Training for agripreneurs on mobilising resources.
- **28 - 31 October:** Training for Farmer Leaders on management advice for vegetable farms
- **28 October – 30 November:** Finalising year report, accounting report and Final report
- **6 November - 7 November:** Setting up of conventional nurseries for galmi HGT Burkina purple onions and kk cross cabbage at Hub Land.
- **8 and 9 November:** Training days for agripreneurs on financing - how to mobilise resources and management, and entrepreneurial leadership.
- **10 to 20 November:** monitoring the evolution of the onion nursery with a student supervised by Pfl for his Master 2 thesis on the subject Evaluation of the effectiveness of Bokashi compost and NPK on market garden crops - the case of Galmi purple onion.
- **19 and 20 November:** Training for agripreneurs on pitching and financial management.
- **21 and 22 November:** Capitalisation of the training path for the 50 agripreneurs.
  - After training on entrepreneurial leadership and fundraising, the first cohort of agripreneurs will receive their final training on Capitalising on the Agripreneurs-Résautage trajectory. - After the training, a field trip will be organised to Agri'Innov'Inspire.
- **22 November to 04 December:** Monitoring the development of crops on Hub Land and the installation of a drip irrigation system on a lead farmer's farm.
- **29 and 30 November:** Certificate award ceremony for the 50 agripreneurs trained.

## 4: Finances

### Preface

By the close of Year 2 (October 2022 - September 2023), it became apparent that budget reallocations were essential across various activity groups and implementation partners. Unexpected expenses emerged, such as the doubled import costs for solar pumps from India, which exceeded initial projections. Additionally, solar panels—necessary for these pumps—were not accounted for in the initial budget.

Role shifts among partners also influenced budget distribution. Following UASTM's exit, Partners for Innovation assumed a major portion of the tasks, while Synergos took on a smaller role in specific module implementations. Holland Greentech, meanwhile, received guidance and partial funding support from both Partners for Innovation and Synergos.

These adjustments were communicated with RVO, leading to a budget modification request that better reflects current needs and allocations.

During the activity and budget revision process, Synergos Communications collaborated with aQysta, the financial management partner, hired by Synergos. By January 2024, the amended budget was finalized and approved. Implementation of these changes, however, was delayed due to the project leader's medical leave in November. Notably, despite adjustments, the module budgets remained within the 25% allowable variation threshold.

As Year 3 concluded, it became clear that some of the January 2024 budget modifications were not required. Additionally, aQysta's withdrawal from the project, prompted by its inability to meet project management and technical training responsibilities, led to a reassignment of tasks to local partners. Language barriers further complicated training delivery, as local farmers primarily speak indigenous languages rather than French or English. Synergos appointed a project manager to assume some of aQysta's duties, ensuring continued project management.

The revised timesheets from the implementing partners reveal a significant increase in coordination efforts, beyond what was initially budgeted. Synergos, for instance, contributed approximately 195 days over the past year, prioritizing project success over compensatory funding. Similarly, Holland Greentech's team dedicated around 3,300 hours (about 470 days) to the project, emphasizing their commitment and the project's potential as a model for future Horti Hub initiatives. Partners for Innovation also took on additional responsibilities without extra funding, validating the project's value for long-term prospects.

In the subsequent sections, module-specific changes and their rationale will be detailed. Notably, the Studies modules remain unchanged and will not be covered here.

### 4.1 Module Coordination

The coordination responsibilities primarily fell to Synergos Communications, organized initially around activities such as Preparing annual work plans, conducting monthly meetings, monitoring implementation, creating annual progress reports, and managing cluster activities both in the Netherlands and Niger (the latter handled by Partners for Innovation).

As implementation progressed, distinguishing these tasks became challenging, with many of Synergos' efforts covering activities in both the Netherlands and Niger. To streamline reporting and improve accountability, the decision was made to consolidate these efforts under a new category, "*Consortium*

*Coordination.*" This category now includes the preparation of annual plans, monthly meeting organization, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination of cluster activities for both regions. Additionally, "*Periodic Reporting*" was separated as an independent activity due to the significant time spent preparing both annual and final project reports in the final year.

A discrepancy in hourly rates across similar tasks also presented an inefficiency. To address this, a standard rate was introduced: €454.64 for Synergos and €400 for Partners for Innovation, based on budget considerations. This change streamlined the budget by averaging rates and applying them consistently across the project timeline.

As a result, the first amendment was an increase in the budget of €12,831.52. At the end of Year 3 it was clear that there was less spent than expected. This means the total budget for the coordination module decreased by €23,868, representing a 17% reduction within the permissible 25% adjustment limit. This freed-up budget was reallocated primarily to the Demonstration Module.



<b>Coordination Module</b>								
	Revised Project Budget End Year 2			Revised Budget End Year 3			Deviation	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>WD Rate</b>	<b>No of WD</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>WD Rate</b>	<b>No of WD</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Preparation of Annual Work Plans</i>	€ 454.64	218	€ 99,111.52	€ 454.64	165.5	€ 75,242.92	-€ 23,868.60	
<i>Organization of the Monthly Meetings</i>								
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation of the Implementation</i>								
<b>Consortium Coordination</b>								
<i>Preparation of Annual Project Progress Reports</i>								
<i>Coordination of Cluster Activities in NL</i>								
Coordination of Cluster Activities in Niger	€ 400.00	36	€ 14,400.00	€ 400.00	32	€ 12,800.00	-€ 1600	
<b>Subtotal 1</b>			<b>€ 113,511.52</b>			<b>€ 89,642.92</b>	<b>-€ 25,468.60</b>	<b>- 19%</b>
Route								
Amsterdam - Niamey Flights	€ 1,150.00	5	€ 5,750.00	€ 1,150.00	5	€ 5,750.00	€ -	
<b>Subtotal 2</b>			<b>€ 5,750.00</b>			<b>€ 5,750.00</b>	<b>€ -</b>	<b>0%</b>
Place								
Niamey	€ 261.00	70	€ 18,270.00	€ 261.00	70	€ 18,270.00	€ -	
<b>Subtotal 3</b>			<b>€ 18,270.00</b>			<b>€ 18,270.00</b>	<b>€ -</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>€ 137,531.52</b>			<b>€ 112,062.92</b>	<b>-€ 25,468.60</b>	<b>- 19%</b>



## 4.2 Demonstration Module

Following Year 2, several updates were made to the *Demonstration Module*, largely due to additional work undertaken by Holland Greentech and Synergos. Though more work was initially planned for aQysta in Year 3, their inability to fulfil these duties for security reasons necessitated adjustments. To improve clarity, several activities were renamed or consolidated, addressing minor discrepancies in task descriptions that had previously complicated reporting. Standardized rates were also applied to harmonize compensation across similar tasks. The total deviation of this module is 20%. Key changes include:

### Holland Greentech

- **Activity Consolidation:**

In the revised budget, "*Innovative Vegetable Production*," "*Presentation of Vegetable Yield*," and "*Installation and Setup Service of Vegetable Production*" were combined under "*Training Farmers on Vegetable Production*," resulting in a total of €28,240. In the initial amendment, the budgeted days were increased by 73 at a rate of €670, leading to a budget of €48,910. In Year 3, 76 days were budgeted, making a total of €50,920. Meaning this line remained within the 25% budgetary flexibility.

Additionally, "*Providing Seeds and Fertilizer Starter Package for Lead Farmers*" with a initial budget of €1,598 was renamed to "*Agricultural Inputs for Lead Farmers*." The rate was adjusted from €1,500 to €483.87 per day, with an increase in allocated days from 10 to 36. This change reflects the actual time and costs for this activity, including efforts that aQysta was unable to complete in Year 3. Making a total of €17,419.

- **Introduction of New Activity: Farm Tools and Materials**

A new activity, "Farm Tools and Materials," was introduced to separate these tasks from those related to irrigation. The budget of €4,860 came from reallocating funds initially set for flights (€1,550) and accommodation (€2,625), given Holland Greentech's Niamey-based team, which reduced travel needs. An additional €685 was reassigned from Rivulis's budget for "Shipping and Import of Irrigation Material".

- **Budget Reallocation for Rivulis Representation**

For "Providing Microirrigation Starter Package for Lead Farmers," the budget increased from €2,237 to €3,729 and was transferred to Holland Greentech, acting as Rivulis's representative. Unspent funds from Year 2 (€1,281) facilitated full expenditure of €9,322 in Year 3.

### Synergos Communications

- **Renaming Climate Communication:**

Originally titled "*Climate Communication and Business Practices*," budgeted at €4,800. This activity was combined post-Year 2 with "*Installation and Setup Service of Irrigation Equipment*" with a budget of initially €2,250. They were merged under "*Training Stakeholders on Climate-Friendly Business*"

*Practices.*” 42 additional days were added in Year 3 to reflect increased involvement. Making a total of incurred costs of €35.723,80

## **aQysta**

- **Budget Adjustments and Reduction, and Activity Mergers**

" The "*Water pump usage*" activity was merged with "*Showcasing sustainable irrigation*",. In the accounting we kept them apart because the activity '*Showcasing sustainable irrigation*' was reduced to zero. The budget of *Water pump usage* was increased in Year 2 with €1.488. aQysta worked on the search for the right pumps in Year 2. In Year 3 nothing happened, leaving the total cost incurred at €2.400.

The activity "*Showcasing sustainable irrigation*," was originally budgeted at € 1.350. The budget did not change at the end of Year 2 with the assumption that the work would've been done in Year 3. The work was not done in Year 2 nor in Year 3 as aQysta was unable to fulfil its responsibilities in Niger for various reasons (safety, language). Which brought the total in the Total cost incurred column to zero. Because of several reasons, the work wasn't performed in Year 3.

- **Renaming and consolidating of activities:  
Equipment Choice and Knowledge Transfer Adjustments**

Initially, Barsha Pumps were planned for use, but they proved ineffective for the Niger River. Consequently, solar-powered pumps were chosen, and the budget line was renamed "Providing renewable energy irrigation pumps." In Year 2, aQysta delivered 13 pumps from India at a total cost of €4,737, and a budget increase of €729.05 was made to account for changes in daily rates and increased project days anticipated for Year 3, though these plans did not materialize. The remaining €3,158, initially designated for knowledge transfer by aQysta, was reallocated to Holland Greentech within the Knowledge Transfer module.

Another reallocation to Holland Greentech was made for the "*Agricultural Inputs for Lead Farmers*" activity. The number of allocated days increased from 10 to 36, reflecting the actual time and costs Holland Greentech dedicated to this activity, including work that aQysta could not complete in Year 3 (6 days). These days were reallocated from aQysta's "*Water pump usage*" activity. The initial budget of €912 was increased to €2,400 after Year 2, with the expectation that aQysta would handle these activities in Year 3, which did not occur.

- **Reallocation of Travel Budget**

As aQysta did not travel to Niger, the allocated budgets for "Flights" (€1,550) and "Accommodation" (€1,050) were reassigned to Synergos's travel budget. All budget adjustments remained within the 25% allowable deviation.

These changes were implemented to enhance project efficiency and optimize the budget, ensuring compliance with allowable budget adjustments.

Demonstration Module													
	Revised Project Budget End Year 2				Revised Budget End Year 3				Deviation				
<b>Organizing Farmer Field Days with thematic focus</b>													
Training Farmers on vegetable Production	€	670.00	73	€	48,910.00	€	670.00	76	€	50,920.00	€	-	
Farming techniques	€	400.55	26	€	10,414.00	€	400.55	26	€	10,414.00	€	-	
Water pump usage	€	400.00	6	€	2,400.00	€	400.00	6	€	2,400.00	€	0	
Training stakeholders & Setting up Irrigation Services	€	452.20	37	€	16,731.00	€	452.20	79	€	35,723,80	€	18.992,80	
Practical component of ASEP training	€	296.55	11	€	3,262.05	€	296.55	9	€	2,668.95	€	-593.10	
Logistical and event arrangement (inviting, communicating etc)	€	452.20	10	€	4,522.00	€	452.20	10.5	€	4,748.10	€	226.10	
<b>Organizing Demonstration Days at demo farm / Horti hub-land</b>													
Presentation of vegetable yield	€	-		€	-	€	-	0	€	-	€	-	
Showcasing sustainable irrigation	€	-		€	-	€	-		€	-	€	-	
Installation and setup service of irrigation equipment	€	-		€	-	€	-		€	-	€	-	
Installation and setup service of vegetable production	€	-		€	-	€	-		€	-	€	-	
				€	<b>88,057.00</b>				€	<b>106,864,86</b>	€	<b>19,285.64</b>	<b>22%</b>
				€	<b>88,057.00</b>				€	<b>106,864,86</b>	€	<b>19,285.64</b>	<b>22%</b>
Agricultural inputs for lead farmers	€	1,500.00	10	€	15,000.00	€	483,87	36,5	€	17,419.36	€	2,419.36	
<b>Farm Tools &amp; Materials</b>	€	486.00	10	€	4,860.00	€	486.00	10	€	4,860.00	€	-	
Shipping and import of starter packages	€	3,194.40	2	€	6,389.00	€	3,194.40	2	€	6,389.00	€	-	
Amsterdam - Niamey flight for FFD's and DD's	€	276.00	1	€	276.00	€	276.00	1	€	276.00	€	-	
Accommodation (in Niger)	€	-		€	-	€	-		€	-	€	-	
Providing renewable energy irrigation pumps	€	526,55	15	€	7,894.95	€	526,33	15	€	7,894.95	€	-	
Providing water pump accessories (pipes, connectors, tools etc.)	€	90.08	100	€	9,008.00	€	90.08	100	€	9,008.00	€	-	
Shipping and import of water pump equipment	€	2,950.00	1	€	2,950.00	€	2,950.00	1	€	2,950.00	€	-	
Providing micro irrigation starter package for lead farmers	€	372.89	10	€	3,729.00	€	372.89	10	€	8,739.00	€	5.010,00	
Shipping and import of irrigation equipment	€	250.00	9	€	2,250.00	€	250.00	9	€	2,250.00	€	-	
Amsterdam - Niamey flight for FFD's and DD's				€	-				€	-	€	-	
Accommodation (in Niger)				€	-				€	-	€	-	
				€	<b>52,357.00</b>				€	<b>60,369.61</b>	€	<b>8,012.66</b>	<b>15%</b>
				€	<b>52,357.00</b>				€	<b>60,369.61</b>	€	<b>8,012.66</b>	<b>15%</b>
				€	<b>139,936.17</b>				€	<b>167,234.47</b>	€	<b>2,7298.30</b>	<b>20%</b>
				€	<b>139,936.17</b>				€	<b>167,234.47</b>	€	<b>2,7298.30</b>	<b>20%</b>



## 4.3 Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building Module

This module saw significant adjustments, primarily for Partners for Innovation and Holland Greentech, following the first amendment at the end of Year 2. Budget allocations were reassigned to better reflect the project's evolving needs. Unspent budgets, such as €19,500 initially allocated for internships, €15,500 for an annual Horti Hub scholarship for a Bachelor's student, and €13,500 for a business startup competition, were redirected to additional tasks taken on by Partners for Innovation and Holland Greentech. The total deviation percentage in this module is -0.4%. Key changes in this module include:

### Partners for Innovation

- **Budget Reallocations and Activity Adjustments**

The budget for "*Printing material*," initially set at €3,675, was increased by €319 in the first revision but reduced by €845.89 in Year 3, as fewer printed materials were required. Additionally, planned "*Handbooks for hub staff*" were not produced.

Budgets for roles such as the "*HortiHub Manager*" increased by €5,778 in Year 3 due to a three-month project extension resulting from the regional coup (resulting in a total of €65,175). Similarly, funding for the "*Financial Officer*" role was increased by €6,440 to cover the extension, resulting in a total of €22,440.

In terms of activity names and descriptions, "*Local trainers on thematic modules*," initially budgeted at €22,000, was redefined as "*Training of Agripreneurs*," with an adjusted budget of €96,933. The daily rate increased from €220 to €400.55 in Year 2, effectively covering almost the activities planned for Year 3 with a total budget of €40,600.35. Making a total of €96,821,49

- **Merging Travel and Security Activities**

Three lines for "*Local travel (car rental for hub staff)*," "*National flights Niger*," and "*Security costs*" were consolidated under "*Local travel*." After the Year 2 amendment, €5,760 from these lines was reallocated to other areas, leaving a total travel budget of €8,750. An additional €1,050 was added in Year 3 due to the project extension.

### Holland Greentech

- **Merging Activities and Budget Adjustments**

At the end of Year 2, Holland Greentech's tasks under several lines were streamlined into "*Giving local lead farmers training and conducting site visits*." This new line combined "*Local lead farm coordinators giving trainings and conducting site visits*," "*Dutch & local trainers on thematic modules*," and "*HGT Trainers to train hub staff*," with a total budget remaining at €54,672. Of this amount, €29,558 was used in Year 2. In Year 3, almost 6 days more were spent on this activity. €28,732 was spent totalling €58,290.83. The increase in the amount of days also has to do with the extension of the project.

Funds originally designated for "*National flights*" (€3,500) and "*Security costs*" (€5,760) were also reassigned to support the "*Training of Agripreneurs*" activity. Holland Greentech's consolidated activities now reflect the comprehensive training and site visits required, maximizing efficiency in budget use.

## Synergos Communications

- **Activity Name and Budget Adjustments**

The activity “*Dutch trainers on thematic modules*” was redefined as “*Training of Agripreneurs on setting up new businesses*” to better capture the work conducted. Budget adjustments at the end of Year 2 included a €6,232 increase, anticipating sufficient coverage for these tasks. However, by the end of Year 3, the budget was reduced by €2,713, largely due to travel limitations imposed by the coup, which shifted some interactions to virtual work – albeit less effectively than in-person sessions.

- **Budget Increase for Amsterdam-Niamey Flights**

With increased flight costs and additional travel in Year 2, the flight budget for Amsterdam-Niamey routes was raised by €1,150 to €8,050 in Year 3. The project’s growing needs and extra support required for successful execution underscored the importance of these trips, although the coup in Year 3 reduced travel frequency. In Year three two trips were made, making the total of €20.452.

## aQysta

- **Budget Reductions in Year 3**

In Year 3, budget reductions continued for aQysta’s “*Dutch trainers on thematic modules*” and “*Engineering training team aQysta,*” amounting to a €13,600 decrease. Despite initial adjustments at the end of Year 2, aQysta was unable to fulfil the activities due to security and logistical constraints. Ultimately, the combined 50% and 47% reductions in these budget lines were offset by positive adjustments for Partners for Innovation and Synergos, keeping overall deviation at zero.



## Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building

Activity	Revised Project Budget End of Year 2			Revised Budget end of Year 3			Deviation	
	WD Rate	No of WD	Total	WD Rate	No of WD	Total		
Devising operational plan for hub			€ -			€ -	€ -	
Preparation of comprehensive training programme for agripreneurs	€ 300.00	8	€ 2,400.00	€ 300.00	8	€ 2,400.00	€ -	
Preparation of comprehensive training programme for farmers	€ 300.00	8	€ 2,400.00	€ 300.00	8	€ 2,400.00	€ -	
Selection of the participants, scheduling trainings	€ 400.55	16	€ 6,409.00	€ 400.55	16	€ 6,409.00	€ -	
Training plan for hub staff	€ 400.55	25	€ 10,014.00	€ 400.55	25	€ 10,014.00	€ -	
<b>Subtotal 1</b>			<b>€ 21,223.00</b>			<b>€ 21,223.00</b>	<b>€ 0</b>	
Printing of training material for agripreneurs and farmers	€ 7.05	566.6	€ 3,994.00	€ 7.05	446.6	€ 3,148.11	-€ 845.89	
Printing of handbooks for hub staff								
<b>Subtotal 2</b>			<b>€ 3,994.00</b>			<b>€ 3,148.11</b>	<b>-€ 845.89</b>	<b>-21%</b>
Horti-Hub manager	€ 82.50	720	€ 59,400.00	€ 82.50	790	€ 65,175.00	€ 7,920.00	
Financial officer	€ 25.00	640	€ 16,000.00	€ 34.00	660	€ 22,440.00	€ 6,440.00	
Communication officer (Liaison office)	€ 32.50	408	€ 13,260.00	€ 32.50	518	€ 16,835.00	€ 3,575.00	
Local trainers to train hub staff	€ 250.00	17	€ 4,250.00	€ 250.00	17	€ 4,250.00		
Local lead farm coordinators giving trainings and conducting site visits	€ 670.00	81.6	€ 54,672.00	€ 670.00	87	€ 58,290.00	€ 3,618	
Dutch trainers on thematic modules	€ 400.00	50	€ 20,000.00	€ 400.00	25	€ 10,000.00	€ -10,000.00	
Engineering training team aQysta	€ 400.00	19	€ 7,600.00	€ 400.00	10	€ 4,000.00	€ -3,600.00	
Training of the farmers / modules	€ 200.00	56	€ 11,200.00	€ 200.00	47	€ 9,400.00	€ -1,800.00	
Training of the agripreneurs / modules	€ 200.00	46	€ 9,200.00	€ 200.00	0	€ -	€ -9,200.00	
Training of Agripreneurs	€ 400.55	242	€ 96,933.00	€ 400.55	243	€ 97,333.65	€ 400.65	
Training of Agripreneurs on setting up new businesses	€ 452.20	60	€ 27,132.00	€ 452.20	54	€ 24,418.80	-€ 2,713.20	
Rivulis trainers on thematic modules	€ 700.00	15	€ 10,500.00	€ 700.00	15	€ 10,500.00	€ -	
Virtual webinars/trainings w. Dutch university							€ -	
<b>Subtotal 3</b>			<b>€ 330,147.00</b>			<b>€ 322,642.45</b>	<b>-€ 7,504.55</b>	<b>-2%</b>



Local travel	€ 175.00	50	€ 8,750.00	€ 175.00	56	€ 9,800.00	€ 1,050.00	
Amsterdam - Niamey flight for trainings	€ 1,150.00	6	€ 6,900.00	€ 1,150.00	7	€ 8,050.00	€ 1,150.00	
Transportation cost for FFD's and DD's	€ 47.62	105	€ 5,000.00	€ 47.62	105	€ 5,000.00	-	
<b>Subtotal 4</b>			<b>€ 20,650.00</b>			<b>€ 22,586.10</b>	<b>€ 1,936.00</b>	<b>9%</b>
Niamey, Niger	€ 261.00	73	€ 19,053.00	€ 261.00	92	€ 24,012.00	€ 4,959.00	<b>26%</b>
<b>Subtotal 5</b>			<b>€ 19,053.00</b>			<b>€ 24,012.00</b>	<b>€ 4,959.00</b>	<b>26%</b>
Centre Equipment: i.e. Staff Desks, Laptops, Office Material	€ 100.00	5	€ 500.00	€ 100.00	5	€ 500.00	-	
Centre Equipment: i.e. Staff Desks, Laptops, Office Material	€ 100.00	2	€ 200.00	€ 100.00	2	€ 200.00	-	
Centre Equipment: i.e. Staff Desks, Laptops, Office Material	€ 3,196.20	1	€ 3,196.20	€ 3,196.20	1	€ 3,196.20	-	
Lunch break/refreshment for trainees	€ 320.60	25	€ 8,015.00	€ 320.60	25	€ 8,015.00	-	
<b>Subtotal 6</b>			<b>€ 11,911.20</b>			<b>€ 11,911.20</b>	-	<b>0%</b>
Dissemination of results and impact generated	€ 452.20	10	€ 4,522.00	€ 452.20	10	€ 4,522.00	-	
<b>Subtotal 7</b>			<b>€ 4,522.00</b>			<b>€ 4,522.00</b>	-	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>€ 411,100.20</b>			<b>€ 409,538.33</b>	<b>-€ 1,561.87</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

## 4.4 Communication Module

The Communication Module experienced significant adjustments, particularly for Synergos’s activity “*Stakeholder Management and Networking Meetings*.” This activity was subdivided into two categories: “*Stakeholder Management, Networking Meetings, and Internal Communication*” and “*Making the Hub Sustainable (exploring new business, creating an ecosystem, and scaling up)*.” The original budget of €9,000 was increased to €28,642 in Year 2, with a reassignment of hours across these categories to reflect the actual work. For instance, time dedicated to “*Stakeholder Management*” decreased from 44 to 24 days, while “*Making the Hub Sustainable*” increased to 38 days, better representing the evolving focus of the project. The budget shift did not affect the overall budget for this module or its total deviation.

### **Network Meetings and Gatherings**

Initially budgeted at €17,197, “*Networking Meetings/Gatherings*” encountered less activity than anticipated by the end of Year 2. This trend continued into Year 3, with only minimal expenditures in this area.

### **Web Portal and Promotional Activities**

Other Communication Module activities, including the development of a web portal, marketing hub and cluster products, and creating promotional materials, were executed within the original budget allocation. The “*Web Portal*” and “*Promotional Materials*” lines were maintained, and the original allocations remained sufficient. No further budget adjustments were required.

### **Revised Communication Budget Summary**

In Year 3, Synergos focused more heavily on sustaining the Hub as a viable entity, with increased time allocated to ecosystem development and business exploration. These activities required no additional funds but redirected the focus toward long-term project impact. Budget allocation within the module stayed within the established limits, ensuring all planned communication and sustainability efforts continued without disruption.





## Horticulture Hub Niger

Communication Module								
Activity	Revised Project Budget in January 2024			Revised Budget in October 2024			Deviation	
	WD Rate	No of WD	Total	WD Rate	No of WD	Total	Amount	%
Stakeholder management, networking meetings and internal communication	€ 454.64	44	€ 20,004.00	€ 454.64	24	€ 10,911.31	€ -9,092.69	
Making the Hub sustainable (looking for (new) business, creating a (new) ecosystem, looking how to scale up)	€ 454.64	19	€ 8,638.00	€ 454.64	38	€ 17,276.24	€ 8,638.24	
<b>Subtotal 1</b>			<b>€ 28,642.00</b>			<b>€ 28,187.56</b>	€ -	<b>-2%</b>
Web-portal	€ 200.00	1	€ 200.00	€ 200.00	1	€ 200.00	€ -	
Marketing of hub and cluster products	€ 200.00	7	€ 1,400.00	€ 200.00	7	€ 1,400.00	€ -	
Promotional materials	€ 120.00	12	€ 1,440.00	€ 120.00	12	€ 1,440.00	€ -	
Promotion activities to attract students to become agripreneurs		-	€	€ 0		€	€	
Networking meetings/gatherings - hub	€ 1,000.00	8	€ 8,000.00	€ 571.00	14	€ 8,000.02	€ 22	
<b>Subtotal 2</b>			<b>€ 11,040.00</b>			<b>€ 11,040.02</b>	<b>-€ 0,02</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>€ 39,682.00</b>			<b>€ 39,227.58</b>	<b>-€ 452.42</b>	<b>-1%</b>





## 5: Suggestions for a good continuation

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF HORTIHUB DEUX

#### Introduction

The HortiHub Niger project, initially launched in 2021 with six consortium partners, is to be finished in December 2024. Currently, the project operates with three active partners, successfully achieving its objectives despite recent political challenges. HortiHub Niger uses the Impact Cluster (IC) approach, in which five partners—including at least one local partner—collaborate to achieve the project goals, with 60% of costs covered by subsidies and 40% by partner contributions. Initially focused on evolving "from project to company," the project's approach identified several key collaboration partners. However, the political coup in Niger in July 2023 has complicated this approach, with some Dutch companies and two consortium partners now hesitant to establish operations in Niger. Nonetheless, there is widespread support among current partners, local farmers, agripreneurs, and other stakeholders to continue and expand the HortiHub Niger project, which is seen as both beneficial and essential for the region's horticultural sector. As a result, the consortium is proposing a two-year new project under the title "HortiHub-Deux."

#### Justification for HortiHub-Deux

Niger faces numerous socio-economic and environmental challenges, including high unemployment, a struggling agricultural and horticultural sector, and severe climate-related impacts. Women are significantly underrepresented in the agribusiness sector, and food waste is extensive, with one-third of harvests rotting due to inadequate storage. Limited access to climate-resilient infrastructure and renewable energy further exacerbates these issues. Climate change poses additional challenges, with extreme temperatures reaching up to 47°C and periods of torrential rain that result in destructive floods, damaging roads and crops.

The HortiHub Niger project has made significant progress toward establishing a robust agricultural support network, creating a well-recognized brand, and engaging an increasing number of participants. Extending the project would allow HortiHub-Deux to build on this solid foundation by promoting sustainability, enhancing training in horticulture and entrepreneurship, increasing the involvement of women, and supporting climate adaptation. A new initiative will target primary school children to install environmental and agricultural awareness early on. HortiHub-Deux aims to expand activities into the regions of Niamey, Dosso, Tillabéri, and Maradi, where agricultural potential and youth engagement are strong. Partners for Innovation has existing projects in these areas and has observed a significant need for an agribusiness incubator where young people can gain agripreneurship skills and explore collaborative opportunities to add value to their agricultural products.

#### Core Themes and Objectives of HortiHub-Deux

The extended project, HortiHub-Deux, will focus on several key themes:

1. **Employment and Entrepreneurship:** By training and supporting agripreneurs, the project aims to create employment opportunities within the agricultural sector, helping reduce unemployment and drive economic growth.
2. **Women as Entrepreneurs:** Increasing the participation of women in agriculture and entrepreneurship is a core goal, offering them the resources, training, and support needed to succeed.



3. **Climate Change and Adaptation:** Given Niger's extreme weather patterns, climate resilience is essential. HortiHub-Deux will emphasize climate-smart agricultural practices and renewable energy solutions.
4. **Access to Renewable Energy and Finance:** Facilitating access to solar-powered systems and irrigation technology, as well as improving financial inclusion, will be essential for sustainable growth.
5. **Food Security and Waste Reduction:** The project will focus on reducing post-harvest losses through better storage facilities and by training farmers in efficient processing techniques.
6. **Circular Economy and Waste Recovery:** By transforming agricultural by-products into usable resources, HortiHub-Deux promotes a circular economy, adding value and minimizing waste.

### Specific Project Goals for HortiHub-Deux

1. **Expanding Agripreneurship:** Train four groups of young agripreneurs (160 individuals in total, 80% women) over two years, with two groups each in Niamey and other regions. Agripreneurs will receive training in financial management to make their business plans "bankable," with a goal of securing financing for 60% of plans.

This initiative includes a pilot in the last classes of two primary schools (one in Niamey and one in another region) that integrates a horticulture curriculum for young pupils, aiming to introduce 100 children to go into the field of agriculture within two years; they will be taught on many aspects of the value chain of horticulture, *Maraichage*.

2. **Developing Lead Farmers:** Recruit 40 lead farmers who will transfer knowledge to an estimated 500 apprentices, enhancing crop quality, yield, and resilience to climate variability. Farmers will participate in a staggered payment plan to acquire necessary equipment such as solar pumps and irrigation systems, with local village leaders involved in implementation. The physical HortiHub incubator in Niamey will be expanded and potentially replicated in other project regions, providing a space where 80 to 200 young people can access agripreneur training, connect with experts, and present projects to funders.
3. **Reducing Food Waste:** Conduct a study to identify the primary causes of food waste, evaluate existing storage methods, and identify key products most affected by spoilage. Over two years, train 60 of the 160 agripreneurs in processing techniques to reduce food waste. Each year, 20 existing entrepreneurs will receive on-the-job training, exposure to new processing techniques, and support to make their business plans financeable. Large storage facilities will be established in Maradi and Niamey to enhance food preservation capabilities.

### Consortium Partners and Their Roles

1. **Partners for Innovation (Pfl) Niger:** Coordinating partner responsible for coordination, agripreneur training, day-to-day operations, and hub management in collaboration with the local Holland Greentech (HGT) team.
2. **Holland Greentech (HGT) Benin:** In charge of training agripreneurs and lead farmers on-site, providing seeds and irrigation equipment, and supporting practical training at the HortiHub and on HortiHub Land sites.
3. **AgriFocus Niger:** Responsible for training on product processing and certification, professional development for women in agribusiness, and facilitating public-private partnerships.



## Horticulture Hub Niger

4. **Synergos Communications:** Project leader, overseeing reporting, ensuring compliance with RVO administrative and financial requirements, and participating in communication and agripreneur training.
5. **Job-Booster Enterprise:** Potential partner with experience in financing agribusiness startups in West Africa, providing access to local financial institutions and impact investors for funding HortiHub agripreneurs. Working with Synergos in Chad.
6. **UPAT (Union Patronale des Agriculteurs et Transformateurs du Niger):** Engaged in reducing food waste through training and sustainable storage practices, focusing on women processors and agripreneurs. UPAT is a union with 550 members of which 400 are women!
7. **Fondation PetitPouss Niger (with OpenEdu):** Responsible for implementing a primary school horticulture curriculum in collaboration with Pfl and HGT, providing early agricultural education and managing an educational platform developed by OpenEdu.

### Conclusion

The HortiHub-Deux extension will build on the foundation established by the HortiHub Niger project, aiming to improve the livelihoods of hundreds of Nigerien farmers and agripreneurs. By expanding the reach of agribusiness training, increasing female participation, reducing food waste, and implementing sustainable practices, the project will contribute to job creation, income security, educational advancement, and greater equality. HortiHub-Deux positions the consortium to make a lasting impact on Niger's agricultural sector, empowering local communities to address socio-economic challenges with sustainable, climate-resilient solutions.

