

Niger

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Overview

Niger has a population of 27 467 109 in 2023, growing at a rate of 3.8% per year.¹ It covers an area of 1 267 000km², 80% of which is part of the Sahara Desert. Niger's overall population growth rate is 4.6%, with 17% of the population living in urban areas.^{2,3}

The development of its cities is a consequence of the large flows of rural populations toward urban centres resulting in the inadequacy of sanitation, health, and education infrastructures. With increasing poverty and a lack of support for young people, this rapid urbanisation poses safety problems. In addition, a shortage of housing encourages self-construction and the growth of shanty towns resulting in 70% of the urban population living in shanty towns.⁴

Niger is currently facing a security crisis on the border areas with Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Mali, where armed groups are continuing their attacks on security forces and civilians. As a result, the country faces an influx of refugees seeking to escape the conflicts in these countries. In August 2022, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimated 294 467 refugees and nearly 350 000 displaced persons in Niger.⁵

Niger is experiencing yet another crisis following the coup d'état on 26 July 2023. Since then, the military junta has been in control of the country, subject to economic sanctions imposed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).⁶ The people of Niger are suffering the consequences of these sanctions, including inflation and food shortages. The closure of the borders with Nigeria and Benin is also a source of suffering for producers since it limits their agricultural exports to these countries.⁷ The World Bank has suspended disbursements for all its operations in Niger until further notice, except for partnerships with the private sector, which will "continue with caution".⁸

Representing 6.8% of gross domestic product (GDP), the country's budget deficit will remain high in 2022.⁹ GDP growth jumped in 2022, from 1.4% in 2021 to 11.5%. Thanks to a better-than-average rainy season and the expansion of irrigated production, agricultural output has risen by 27%. Given the government's ambitious goal of increasing the country's oil production, Niger's economic growth rate should reach 6.9% in 2023, rising to 12.5% in 2024. Average annual inflation has risen from 3.8% in 2021 to 4.2% in 2022. Although lower than in the other countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), it nevertheless remains above the Union's norm of 3%. This rise in inflation is due to ongoing pressure on the domestic food market and the world prices of certain commodities. Inflation is expected to fall to 3.2% in 2023.¹⁰

Extreme poverty in Niger is expected to fall by 6.4% between 2021 and 2022, reducing the number of people classified as "poor" from 13.5 million to 12.3 million. This drop in 2022 can be explained by the strong agricultural recovery made possible by abundant rainfall.¹¹

KEY FIGURES

Main urban centres	Niamey
Exchange rate (1 July 2023): 1 USD = [a] 1 PPP\$ = (2022) [b]	601.19 CFA Franc (XOF) 220.88 CFA Franc (XOF)
Total population [b] Urban population [b] Population growth rate [b] Urbanisation rate [b] Percentage of urban population living in slums (2018) [c] Percentage of female-headed households (2018) [c] Unemployment rate (% of total labour force, national estimate) (2021) [b] Percentage of women participating in the labour market formally (2021) [b] Gini coefficient HDI country ranking (2021) [d] HDI country score (2021) [d]	26 207 977 4 427 576 3.71% 4.56% 58.8% 15.9% 0.8% 62% n/a 189 0.40
GDP per capita (Current US\$) [b] GDP (Current US\$) [b] GDP growth rate [b] Inflation rate [b] Lending interest rate (2018) [b] Proportion of adult population that borrowed formally (2021) [b]	US\$533 US\$13 969 million 11.50% 4.23% 5.14% 52%
Number of residential mortgages outstanding (2014) [e] Value of residential mortgages outstanding (USD) (2020) [e] Prevailing residential mortgage rate Term [f] Maximum LTV on a residential mortgage [g] Ratio of mortgages to GDP (2019) Number of residential mortgage providers [e] Percentage of women who own a house alone and/or jointly (2018) [e] Number of microfinance loans outstanding (2020) [e] Value of microfinance loans (USD) [e] Number of microfinance providers [e]	1 439 US\$72.38 million 6-13% 30 years 100% 0.26% 14 39.1% 136 328 US\$22.43 million 37
Total number of residential properties with a title deed (2014) [h] Number of formal dwellings completed annually (2021) [i] Number of residential projects certified by EDGE Price of the cheapest, newly built house by a formal developer or contractor in an urban area in local currency units (2021) [i] Size of cheapest, newly built house by a formal developer or contractor in an urban area (2021) [i] Typical monthly rental for the cheapest, newly built house (2021) [i] Cost of standard 50kg bag of cement in local currency units [h] Type of deeds registry: digital, scanned or paper (2020) [j] World Bank Ease of Doing Business index rank (2020) [j] Time to register property (days) Cost to register property (2020) [j] World Bank DBI Quality of Land Administration index score (0-30) (2020) [j]	2 419 116 667 n/a CFA 8 900 000 57m ² CFA 50 000 CFA 5 200 (US\$8.65) Paper 132 44 days 7.4% 4.0

NB: Figures are for 2023 unless stated otherwise.

[a] Xe.com	[e] Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO)
[b] World Bank World Development Indicators (as at end 2022)	[f] BIA Niger
[c] Demographic and Health Surveys, USAID	[g] BoA Nige
[d] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)	[h] National Institute of Statistics
	[i] Dbimmoniger.com
	[j] World Bank Ease of Doing Business Indicators

According to the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management, the floods of 31 December 2022 affected 365 438 people – 195 people were killed, 211 injured and 41 820 houses and 126 classrooms collapsed.¹²

To provide affordable and decent housing for more Nigeriens, the government committed to building 25 000 social housing units over the period 2016-2021. Construction of these homes is underway in 2023.¹³ In September 2023, to better support economic activity, the key rate at which the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) lends its resources to banks in Niger was raised from 3% to 3.25%.¹⁴ The average annual exchange rate fell from CFA630 to US\$1 on 1 July 2022 to CFA601 to US\$1 on 1 July 2023.¹⁵

Access to finance

Niger has 20 credit institutions, including 14 banks and six financial institutions.¹⁶ Four banks account for two-thirds of deposits and 61% of total credit.¹⁷ There are 37 microfinance institutions (MFIs), not including those affiliated with networks.¹⁸ Financial inclusion remains low: only 13.04% of the adult population (people aged over 15) held a deposit or credit account in banks, postal services, savings banks, the Treasury, or decentralised financial services in 2021. Only 6.73% of the adult population has a bank account and 4.64% has an account in microfinance institutions. There is limited access to banking services (with 37 points of service), microfinance (with 12 points of service), and electronic money (with 1 900 points of service for one million adults).¹⁹

The average lending rate fell from 8.15% in 2020 to 6.34% in 2022.²⁰ The Banque de l'habitat du Niger (BHN) and the Société Nigérienne de Banque (SONIBANK) offer the lowest interest rates on home loans, at 6%, over 30 years²¹ and 15 years²² respectively. The real estate credit set up in the country rose from CFA16.2 billion (US\$26.95 million) in 2019 to CFA22.1 billion (US\$36.76 million) in 2022, with a peak of CFA45.6 billion in 2020 (US\$75.86 million).²³

Orabank Niger supports its customers' property projects with loans of between CFA3 million (US\$4.99) and CFA100 million (US\$166.34) over 15 years, at an interest rate of 7.75%. The maximum portion of salary that can be assigned by a customer to cover the periodic repayments of a loan is 60%, taking all commitments together. A customer becomes eligible if they have a mortgage guarantee; take out insurance; have their salary or credible income domiciled during the repayment period; are the holder of a contract; make a mortgage registration; produce an architect's plan; and present an estimate and description of the work.²⁴ The Bank of Africa - Niger (BOA Niger) offers medium and long-term mortgages (20 years). The amount of the loan is determined according to the customer's transferable share and can be as much as 80% to 100% of the value of the property or the total cost of construction. To be eligible for a BOA Niger loan, customers must be over the age of majority and no more than 60 years old at the end of the loan period. They must also have a regular salary, have their salary irrevocably domiciled with the bank, and pay the cost of compulsory insurance.²⁵

Recourse to the WAMEU's Caisse régionale de refinancement hypothécaire (CRRH) enables long-term financial resources to be raised for housing. The long-term resources available in the banking system take the form of equity capital and term deposits.²⁶

On 27 April 2023, Niger's Treasury raised CFA41.069 billion (US\$68.32 million) on the West African Monetary Union (WAMU) financial market to cover its budget financing requirements.²⁷ On 14 April 2023, Niger also raised CFA33 billion (US\$54.89 million) on the EU financial market.²⁸

The level of outstanding loans granted by MFIs in Niger fell from CFA19.4 billion (US\$32.27 million) at the end of March 2022 to CFA13.5 billion (US\$22.44 million) at the end of March 2023, a fall of 30.5%. The number of overdue receivables fell from CFA8.13 billion (US\$13.52 million) in 2022 to CFA1.28 billion (US\$2.13 million) in 2023.²⁹

Persistent gender inequality and low levels of human capital are also major obstacles for households in Niger. In addition, non-agricultural businesses owned by women make 61% less profit than those owned by men.³⁰

Affordability

Niger's population is growing rapidly, leading to an annual increase in demand for housing. According to the National Statistics Institute (INS), this demand amounts to 40 000 for the country, including 5 000 for the main city, Niamey.³¹

The government of Niger is making efforts to provide low-cost housing. The BHN has been set up with the Fonds National de l'Habitat (FNH) to finance affordable housing. However, there has been a lack of construction of affordable housing by the government (due to the lack of funding for this type of housing) and an increase in shanty towns.

According to projections, the poverty rate will fall to 38.4% in 2023. In 2022, four people in ten (41%) were living below the national poverty line.³² In 2023, Niger will rank eighth among the countries producing the least wealth in the world, with

a GDP per capita of CFA344 481 (US\$573).³³ There is also inequality in the distribution of spending and income between different strata of the population, with a Gini index of 37.3% in 2018.³⁴ The informal sector accounts for 57.0% of GDP.³⁵ More than three-quarters (76%) of jobs are vulnerable or are held by self-employed people and family workers.³⁶ As a result, loans remain inaccessible to a large proportion of the population. In addition, the average net salary after tax for a civil servant is around CFA182 000 (US\$302) per month.³⁷

To access housing through a mortgage loan, Ecobank offers a ratio of monthly payment to a household income of 50%, and Orabank Niger a ratio of up to 60%. Households still need a guarantee to access bank loans to finance affordable housing. This is why the government's social housing construction project is so important. As part of the review (2019-2023) of the National Strategy for Inclusive Finance (SNFI) and its action plan, the Financial Inclusion Development Fund (FDIF) was created in 2020. In July 2021, development partners and the government of Niger pledged more than CFA90.2 billion (US\$150 million) to support the implementation of the SNFI strategy and the structuring of microfinance.³⁸

The consumer spending of Niger households reveals the low standard of living of this society. In 2018, the bulk of household expenditure (61.1%) was allocated to food. The ability of households to meet expenditure on housing, water, and electricity (which gives an idea of income levels) remains low, even though it has almost doubled, rising from 9.2% in 2011 to 18.1% in 2018.³⁹

Housing supply

Between 2011 and 2020, 2 021 social housing units were built for military personnel and other government employees by the Société d'Etat de promotion immobilière (SONUCI) and several private property developers. New subdivisions of 15 789 plots have been built to extend the supply of serviced plots. In addition, a project was drawn up for 2020 to make 15 000 serviced and fenced plots available in the rural municipality of Karma, for the benefit of low-income earners.⁴⁰

In 2012, urban areas accounted for 17.9% of the housing stock. In the city, mainly traditional buildings (made of banco) accounted for 54.7% of housing types, while 34% of buildings are modern (villas, blocks of flats, bachelor-type dwellings) and 11% of buildings are traditional and precarious.⁴¹

As part of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), Niger has committed to providing legal access to land for housing to 40 000 refugees through social plots. By the end of 2022, 32 000 refugees had benefited from this commitment in the regions of Tillabéry and Diffa, thanks to the servicing of 7 922 social plots and the construction of 5 703 social housing units.⁴²

Between 2014 and 2019, more than 667 270 people in urban areas benefited from the construction of major hydraulic works.⁴³ By 2020, 49% of the urban population had access to an optimal drinking water service, compared with 2% of the rural population.⁴⁴ Nearly two-thirds (65.9%) of the urban population has access to electricity.⁴⁵ Despite investment efforts, access to basic infrastructure is still very inadequate and uneven. Access to sanitation is still very low in Niger, with major disparities between urban and rural areas, and between regions. Only 13% of the population has access to basic sanitation services.⁴⁶

In addition, the price of a 50kg bag of cement will be CFA5 200 (US\$8.65) in 2023 (as in 2022), or CFA104 000 (US\$173) per tonne of cement. The profiled steel sheet used for housing roofs costs CFA2 600 (US\$4.33) per m², and the price per square metre of porcelain stoneware tiles (5cm x 5cm) is CFA6 700 (US\$11.15).⁴⁷

Property markets

Despite Law N°2018-25 of 27 April 2018 on the fundamental principle of construction and housing, which authorises private real estate companies to support the State, the housing issue continues to preoccupy the inhabitants of urban centres, particularly those of Niamey.⁴⁸ In 2020, Niger amended this law to improve the business climate in the construction and housing sectors. The amendments also strengthen the obligations of builders, provide for quality assurance, and ensure the safety of property, people, and businesses.⁴⁹

PRICE OF BUILDING MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION COST INFLATION – NIGER

The high cost of construction is often cited as a key factor undermining housing affordability. The need to import materials instead of purchasing those produced locally, the shortage of and high cost of local skills, and the absence of financial mechanisms that allow for materials to be bought in bulk – all these factors impact on construction costs and may create cost overruns.

Strikes or fuel shortages also increase the price of building supplies, by driving up transport costs. High inflation rates, as are being seen across the continent in 2023, also undermine affordability. As a result, low-income households may not be able to afford the price of construction materials in order to build their own home incrementally.

CAHF has been collecting a few basic housing cost indicators for the past decade, including the price of key building materials, the price of the cheapest, newly-built house in an urban area by a private developer and the average size of this house (see Key Figures section).

Wholesale price of a standard 50kg bag of OPC cement (strength class 32.5N)
CFA 5 200 (US\$8.65)



Price of ceramic floor tiling (per sq metre)
CFA 6 700 (US\$11.14)



Price of steel profiled roof sheeting per sq metre
n/a



Price of roof tiling (per sq metre)
n/a



Price of cheapest, newly-built house by a private developer in an urban area
CFA 8 900 000 (US\$14 804)



Cautionary notes

This data was collected by Yearbook authors as part of their research. Authors were asked to contact three building material supply stores and ask for the price of the product, and then, based on the responses received, estimate the typical cost of the material. The figures given are therefore not formal averages but informed estimates, based on the canvassing of a handful of suppliers in urban areas.

The property market is marked by a social housing financing context weakened by the State's inability to mobilise the necessary funds and by the reluctance of financial players to participate in housing financing. There are two main types of land tenure system: the formal written law system, established by the State, and customary systems. According to Ordinance No. 93-015 of 2 March 1993, which sets out the guiding principles of the Rural Land Code, all Nigeriens have access to land, without any discrimination based on gender or social origin.⁵⁰ However, according to Niger's Harmonised Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), only 4.5% of the population have legally authenticated documents for their agricultural land, including 1.2% land titles, 2.3% sales agreements, 0.1% farming permits, and 0.6% official reports. However, 72.3% of people in Niger are recognised as owners of their land without having to hold a title deed or property deed.⁵¹ In urban areas, only 43.2% of households own their homes, over 30% rent, and 10.9% live in family accommodation. Nearly 8.7% live in rent-free accommodation and almost 2% of households live in company accommodation.⁵²

The median price per square metre of undeveloped residential land in Niamey is CFA22 500 (US\$37) per square metre, with some disparities.⁵³ The rent for a three-room flat in the city centre ranges from CFA150 000 (US\$250) to CFA800 000 (US\$1 331), with an average of CFA412 500 (US\$686). This is still unaffordable for the average civil servant. Informal developers and SONUCI remain the main suppliers of rental accommodation.

As for the ease of obtaining a building permit, the World Bank's "Doing Business 2020" report ranks Niger (with its 19 procedures over 98 days) 180th out of all the countries in the world. What's more, the cost of building permits, at 32.4% of the value of the property, remains clearly high in Niger.⁵⁴

According to the High Commission for State Modernisation and Ordinance No. 59-113/PCN of 11 July 1959 (and its implementing Decree No. 64-113/MTP/M of 4 July 1964), a building permit in Niamey costs CFA200 (US\$0.33) per square metre for a banco dwelling; CFA250 (US\$0.37) per square metre for a simple dwelling built of semi-hard materials; CFA300 (US\$0.50) per square metre for a collective dwelling; and CFA400 (US\$0.67) per square metre for a dwelling built of hard materials. The delivery deadline for the building permit is 45 days from the date of submission of a complete building file.⁵⁵

Policy and legislation

The national housing policy is based on Law No. 98-54 of 29 December 1998.⁵⁶ In order to efficiently implement the government's desire to improve living conditions for the population, a national urban development strategy was drawn up and adopted in 2004. An Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES) was implemented for the period 2017-2021. Decree No. 2022-488/PRN/MP of 10 June 2022 adopted the PDES for the period 2022-2026. This decree represents the second five-year phase of the Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy Niger 2035 (SDDCIN 2035).⁵⁷

Law No. 2001-32 of 31 December 2001 sets out the legal framework for all actions taken by the State and other stakeholders to structure, occupy, and use the national territory and its resources. Law No. 2008-03 of 30 April 2008, which sets out the basic rules and procedures for urban and operational planning, as well as for controlling urban land use in Niger.⁵⁸

As already indicated, the BHN started its activities in 2018 with the aim of providing a solution to the problem of housing finance in Niger. To enable BHN to accomplish its mission, a national housing fund was created through Decree No. 2017-933/PRN/MDH of 5 December 2017.⁵⁹

Regulatory and legal reforms have been adopted to provide a framework for urban expansion in the context of accelerated urbanisation. Law N°2017-20 of 12 April 2020 lays down the fundamental principles of town planning and urban development, and Law N°2018-25 of 17 April 2018 lays down the fundamental principles of construction and housing as well as its amending texts. Following the production of suitable media, the land register is being updated. With the creation and digitisation of 60 000 land titles, the number of property titles increased between 2011 and 2020.⁶⁰

Ordinance No. 93-015 of 2 March 1993 on the guiding principles of the Rural Code emphasises equal access to land without discrimination. The National Rural Land Policy (PFRN), adopted in 2021, reaffirms the principle of gender equality in land tenure. It also introduces the possibility for spouses to apply for a deed of possession or ownership of land if they have acquired land jointly. According to custom, women generally gain access to land through loans on family land. The other customary means of accessing land is through inheritance. Men administer the family or lineage's land holdings.⁶¹

Opportunities

Niger enjoys a natural advantage given its strategic position and population. Major construction projects to build new infrastructure have been launched in Niger, including the Kandadji dam; roads to open up the country; a rail network that will eventually include a line running from Abidjan to Cotonou via Niamey; a gas pipeline linking Nigeria to Algeria via Niger; and the installation of fibre optics. Niger is keen to attract investors to promote agricultural reorganisation and increase the area farmed to boost production capacity. With its growing population, the country needs a large workforce. Economic growth is expected to accelerate to 12.5% in 2023 and 2024.⁶²

Demand for housing is becoming ever more pressing. The volume of housing loans has increased, and average lending rates have fallen steadily. The regulatory framework for housing has led to an increase in the number of property developers. Despite the vagaries of the weather; COVID-19, and security instability, the housing sector and its financing are showing resilience.

Niger should become self-sufficient in cement products, producing 1.2 million tonnes a year, and should even be able to export these products. In July 2023, the country acquired an industrial complex at Badaguichiri in the Tahoua region, worth CFA259 billion (US\$430.86 million) and with a production capacity of one million tonnes. The complex will generate 800 direct and indirect jobs.⁶³ It should be noted that this cement plant will complement the Malbaza plant, being built in 2019 at a cost of CFA50 billion (US\$83.18 million), with the intention of producing more than 650 000 tonnes per year.⁶⁴

Niger became an oil producer in 2011 and will be producing 200 000 barrels a day by 2026. More than 600km of pipes (or 51.5% of the completion rate) have already been laid, and it is possible that Niger will be selling its crude oil on the

international market as early as the second half of 2023. Oil generated a quarter of the country's GDP in 2020, and almost 50% of Niger's tax revenues.⁶⁵ This development would give the State more resources to finance social housing. Private players could create banking services in partnership with the State to facilitate access to affordable housing. Social conditions should improve with the economic upturn and the strengthening of resilience measures contained in the new PDES 2022-2026.⁶⁶

Availability of data on housing finance

The National Statistics Institute (INS) regularly produces data on the demographic situation and living conditions of households. In 2023, the INS is gearing up for two major data collection operations: the fifth General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH) and the complementary phase of the General Census of Enterprises (RGE). Niger has adopted the improved General Data Dissemination System (SGDD-a), to facilitate access to data in real-time and to increase data transparency.⁶⁷

The Harmonised Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM) and the RGPH currently being carried out by the INS provide information on housing but not on its financing. INS reports are generally available online. The BCEAO provides information on bank financing conditions for housing. Niger's updated biennial report provides information on climate change.⁶⁸

On the other hand, data on housing and the housing finance market (which would serve as a basis for formulating well-founded policies) should be collected on a regular basis. The lack of reliable, detailed, and up-to-date data on the housing market is a brake on housing finance.

Websites

- INS: <https://www.stat-niger.org>
- SONIBANK: <https://www.sonibank.com/>
- BHNI: <https://www.bhn.ne/>
- Orabank Niger: <https://www.orabank.net/fr/filiale/niger/>
- BOA Niger: <https://www.boaniger.com/>

Examples of innovation: Social housing in a smart city

A major innovative project to improve the quality of life for the people of Niamey will result in the modernisation of the city through six industrial and infrastructure projects.

On 3 July 2021, Niger signed a CFAI 983.92 billion (US\$3.3 billion) financing agreement with the Moroccan group Ymmy Finance Holding for these projects, which are expected to reshape Niamey by 2029.

The projects involve the construction of an agri-food complex, and the construction, for record funding, of 36 960 social housing units and a shopping centre covering 1 050 hectares. Other projects include the creation of an "ecological, sustainable and attractive" smart city along the river Niger; the construction of an industrial zone for export, and the installation of 20 000 solar-powered streetlamps.^{69,70}

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¹⁹ BCEAO (2022). Evolution des indicateurs de suivi de l'inclusion financière dans l'UEMOA au titre de l'année 2021. Juillet 2022. Pg. 19-20.

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