Niger underperforms in providing agribusinesses access to financial services. Despite its well-crafted law regulating e-money activities, Niger has no legal framework regulating agent banking activities, preventing branchless banking agents from providing services such as cash deposits and withdrawals, bill payment, or loan processing. There are, however, sound laws governing microfinance institutions and financial cooperatives that can service less urbanized and rural areas. Niger’s moveable collateral law supports an integrated framework for secured transactions, but does not call for a collateral registry for moveable assets with borrowers’ rights to access their data. Ghana has an effective collateral registry that is unified geographically and by asset type, with an electronic database indexed by debtor’s name. Niger could further improve its moveable collateral score by introducing a law regulating warehouse receipt systems such as in Cote d’Ivoire. **Score: 43/100**

Niger’s legal framework for fertilizer has many gaps that weaken quality controls and diminish consumer confidence. To begin, the law does not require new fertilizer products to be registered. Usually, a qualification for registration is evidence of product lab testing to confirm product efficacy. Niger does not require product testing before entering the market. Furthermore, relaxed labeling guidelines omit important information such as expiration date and safety instructions. The law is also silent on the sale of fertilizer from opened bags, exposing consumers to potential adulteration of fertilizer. Niger could look to Mali’s sound and efficient registration regime or Cote d’Ivoire’s quality control measures to improve its fertilizer system. **Score: 25/100**

*The distance to frontier score compares a country’s performance to the highest performing country (“frontier”). The higher the score, the more of a top performer the country is in a particular area.*
This topic evaluates the regulatory framework for tractors as a proxy for all agricultural machinery. Niger’s score falls far below the sub-Saharan regional average (42/100). Although Niger excels in tractor import scores, reflecting few regulatory barriers to the private sector’s ability to import and sell tractors, the overall low score reflects an absence of machinery registration requirements and weak safety safeguards. Without legal registration, there are few road, safety, ownership, or tax regulations. Tractor vendors are not required to obtain type approval before they are sold, bypassing consumer protections that ensure tractors are tested and evaluated for performance, quality, durability, and safety. There is also no mandatory requirement for vendors to provide after-market services and spare parts for the ongoing maintenance of these machines. By contrast, Nigeria has a much better legal framework for managing agricultural machinery.

Score: 21/100

The Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security program is a global support mechanism for Feed the Future focused and aligned Missions to address policies, as well as legal, institutional, and regulatory factors that affect food security. To learn more, please contact Gloria Kessler (COR) at gkessler@usaid.gov or Nate Kline (Chief of Party) at nkline@fintrac.com.

Data source: World Bank, Enabling the Business of Agriculture 2017