



Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary

Appraisal Stage

(ESRS Appraisal Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 09/19/2023 | Report No: ERSRA02861



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Dominican Republic	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	P180302	
Project Name	Support For The Implementation Of The Public Administration Reform And Modernization Plan		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Governance	Investment Project Financing	9/25/2023	11/28/2023
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Dominican Republic	Ministry of Public Administration (MAP)		

Proposed Development Objective

The project development objective (PDO) is to improve the efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness of selected administrative services for citizens and businesses.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	40.00

B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project Activities

The proposed project will support implementation of the Government’s Public Administration Modernization Reform Program by building upon lessons learned from ongoing WB technical assistance and using Govtech achievements and open government principles successfully implemented by the Government. Working backwards from the goal of providing more access to and transparent services through administrative service improvements that increase the efficiency of the public administration, the proposed project is designed to develop and strengthen the cross-cutting administrative and management platforms that provide the shared and consistent management tools, supported by accompanying technological infrastructure and enabling reforms that ensure whole-of-government standardized,



reliable and secure information. Project design will follow a building blocks approach where the improved services offered to citizens and business represent the most visible place in which the results of the project will show, but in fact, they represent only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the advances in tools and data that will make these results possible.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

The Dominican Republic is well known for its abundant natural resources and biodiversity on which the economy relies. Its geographical location, beaches, and productive landscapes have enabled robust development within the agricultural and tourism sectors. However, the country is highly vulnerable to extreme natural events and other impacts of climate change. The country is highly exposed to natural hazards. Potential losses from natural disasters can damage private and public infrastructure including housing and disrupt businesses and the provision of basic services. Vulnerability is being exacerbated by climate change, rapid and unplanned urbanization, and natural resource degradation. Excluded and poor people are often disproportionately impacted by climate change impacts and disasters as they often live in the most vulnerable and risk-exposed areas. The adverse impacts of disasters may also disproportionately affect women, migrants, Afro-descendants, and persons with disabilities, who often experience higher rates of mortality, morbidity, and diminished earnings. Immigrants are more vulnerable to climate change impacts, as immigrants have less access to basic services and social protection networks.

Over the past years the country has as expressed a strong commitment to improving their environmental commitment towards the sustainable development pathway. Improvements and reforms throughout different sectors have been made. In December 2020, the Government issued updated its NDC goals, which resulted in an increase of its climate ambition by committing to reducing GHG emissions by 27 percent compared with business-as-usual by 2030. Other longstanding and recently developed initiatives include the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) and a national strategy for REDD+ xviii (ENREDD+), which aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and promote resilience and competitiveness for the forestry, agriculture, and livestock sectors. Among other milestones, the country signed in February 2021 the Electricity Pact (Pacto Eléctrico), which lays out a detailed roadmap for reforms, including commitments to improve service quality, improve efficiency and sustainability.

Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability in the Dominican Republic is well protected by its Constitution and the 176-07 Law. While the Dominican Constitution recognizes the Dominicans' rights to participate in the political decision-making process, the 176-07 Law adopted in 2007 promotes citizens' participation in overseeing municipalities' activities through their right to submit grievances, organize and participate in consultations, referendums, and participatory budget initiatives. However, migrants' rights and participation are not as well protected. Estimating the total population of immigrants in the country is difficult given the large number of undocumented migrants that reside in the country, but approximately around 5.6 per cent of the country's population is made up of foreign immigrants. Although people of Haitian origin continue to be the most represented migrant population in the DR, there has been a significant increase in the number of Venezuelans in the country in recent years. The DR receives people in increasingly vulnerable conditions (refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people



of Haitian origin or descent, forcibly displaced persons, and unaccompanied migrant children), as well as people who, due to their degree of social and economic vulnerability, cannot apply for a visa, residence permit, documentation or even some of the humanitarian statutes, harming their regularization. Sexual and gender-identity minorities are estimated to be overrepresented among the poor and migrant populations, according to the 2020 LGBTQI National Survey.

D.2 Overview of Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Managing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The Ministry of Public Administration MAP will implement the Project through a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) that will provide administrative support to project activities. The PIU will among other things prepare annual Procurement and Implementation Plans; ensure compliance with World Bank financial management and procurement regulations and implement, monitor and report on E&S risk management and the implementation of the project’s E&S instruments; manage procurement following the procurement plan; oversee technical inputs from all institutions involved in the Project; liaise with the World Bank and monitor and report on progress. The PIU will have a full-time dedicated Environmental and Social specialist in order to ensure adequate management of E&S risks, implementation, monitoring and reporting on the project’s E&S instruments meeting the requirement set out in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).

The E&S Specialist will report to the Project Coordinator. The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Reform and Modernization of the Public Sector (Comisión de Reforma y Modernización de la Administración Pública, CRMAP), chaired by the Minister of Public Administration (MAP) will serve as the project’s steering committee.

MAP’s E&S capacity assessment shows that it has limited experience overseeing World Bank-financed projects and currently no experience implementing the ESF. The capacity of the MAP to manage E&S risks of the proposed project will require further strengthening, considering in particular: (a) ensuring robust implementation of a well-functioning Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and required E&S instruments; and (b) increasing the ability of the MAP to effectively manage the implementation of multiple simultaneous activities and engage with multiple civil, private and public stakeholders, and in particular vulnerable groups. Commitments for training related to E&S risk management and E&S instruments and any other additional capacity building needs during implementation have been included in the draft ESCP.

Public Disclosure

II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

At Appraisal, the environmental risk rating for the Project is considered moderate. Project activities are not expected to generate adverse significant environmental risks and impacts. The project is focused on supporting the country’s implementation of the Government’s Public Administration Modernization Reform, as such it will support the technical, institutional, legal, and regulatory capacities to improve efficiency and access to selected administrative services for citizens and businesses. The project will finance the procurement and installation of hardware such as IT equipment to support government systems and platforms. The project will not finance any type of civil works (new infrastructure or retrofitting works). Key environmental risks and impacts are related to the potential generation



electronic waste (e-waste) in case of the replacement of old electronics and occupational health and safety hazards for the workforce. Possible negative impacts are expected to be minor, site-specific, temporary and fully reversible.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

Moderate

The social risk rating for the project is considered moderate. The project will fund the hiring of fieldwork staff and supervisors, experts, and consultants to implement low-risk activities related to capacity building (revise and adapt the technical and regulatory framework for the delivery of public services, and issue guidelines related to the Service Delivery Strategy; modernize core public administration functions (back-office operations), technical, institutional, legal, and regulatory TA that constitute an enabling environment to enhance internal administrative efficiencies and collaboration across government entities; and TA to improve the digital infrastructure). Social risks identified include (1) MAP’s limited experience to effectively manage citizen engagement and consultations with multiple civil, private and public stakeholders, and inclusion of interested parties, in particular vulnerable groups, in project activities. Additional to the social inclusion measures described in the draft SEP, the main mitigation measure is included in the project design itself as it foresees activities to assist and enable government services to effectively reach beneficiaries in remote areas and vulnerable groups and taking the needs of vulnerable groups and women into account in the design of digital skills training opportunities; and rolling out a communication strategy for these targeted groups to access training opportunities. (2) While the project will benefit many users who are currently forced to navigate through complex bureaucratic processes and physically visit different Government offices (mostly in urban centers) to access specific services, the improvement of digital services could lead to limiting access to public services for groups of population without access to Internet. Furthermore, there is an increase of demand for public services by migrants (mainly Haitian and Venezuelan) and there is a risk that irregular migrants may be (self)excluded due to fear of being expelled from the country if identified as irregular migrant. (3) Project activities involve the improvement of existing platforms, such as the unified citizen portal which requires that information security controls and protocols for the protection and controlled access and sharing with third parties of personal data are in place. Project design includes under Component 1 the development and implementation of cybersecurity standards for the digital government ecosystem and the improvement of the technological infrastructure and the deployment of more and better features such as secure authentication for public services integrating different identification methods. (4) Resistance from some stakeholders to aspects of digitalization (due to lack of familiarity or loss of control and gatekeeper opportunities) will be addressed by building collaborative partnerships, supporting change management skills and active engagement of citizens and businesses in the design of administrative services and delivery channels and feedback mechanisms.

Public Disclosure

B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards

ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

ESS1 is relevant. The project will neither finance nor support any type of civil works activities (new infrastructure or retrofitting works) so it is not expected to result in significant negative environmental or social impacts. Some equipment is expected to be procured, including electronic equipment (for the functioning of the PIU and hardware to improve the infrastructure of government platforms) that might generate e-waste in case electronics are replaced. All other project activities refer to acquisition of the technological infrastructure and technical assistance



and will fall under "Type 3: Strengthening Borrower Capacity" technical assistance (TA), therefore, a specific Environmental and Social Assessment is not needed. TA activities will consist of institutional, statistical, planning, and coordination capacity building, data collection and processing, training services, events, and awareness raising.

The terms of reference (ToRs), work plans or other documents defining the scope and outputs of the project's TA activities, including training materials, knowledge exchanges and analytical work, will be prepared so that the advice and other support provided is consistent with ESS1-10, out of which ESS1, 2, 3, 4, and 10 are relevant to the project. Activities implemented by MAP and other implementing agencies following the completion of the project that are not financed by the World Bank, or activities that are not directly related to the TA provided under the project, will not be subject to the World Bank ESSs.

To ensure a proper management of the potential E-waste generated during implementation, the project will develop, adopt and implement a stand-alone E-waste Management Plan (EWMP) that will be developed by the PIU no later than ninety (90) days of the Project Effective date (to also be included in the Project's Operation Manual). The E-waste Management Plan will build upon previous plans prepared for the other projects in the country and it will comply with national legislation, the ESF, the WBG EHS Guidelines and other applicable GIIP as applicable. Occupational Health and Safety considerations required for the safely management of potential e-waste generation will be included in the Labor Management Procedures to be prepared as detailed in ESS 2 below.

The vulnerable groups identified for this project include people without Internet access, digital illiterate, people with disabilities, and/or undocumented people; the latter group includes irregular migrants, stateless population, but also includes boys and girls between the ages of 0 and 5 who do not have their birth registered. The undocumented population is deprived of basic services and the exclusion of the other vulnerable groups could be exacerbated by further digitalization of certain services. During project implementation, these risks will be managed by: (i) ensuring that activities under all components are consistent with the ESF and in alignment with the principles of the relevant ESSs and the Bank Directive on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; (ii) applying a "multi channel approach" in order to ensure that further digitalization of government services will not lead to exclusion of access to such services by groups of the population without Internet access; (iii) ensuring that activities are widely consulted with the key stakeholders, including vulnerable groups, respecting their feedback and proposals when technically and financially feasible; (iv) specific actions for the inclusion of vulnerable groups as set out in the draft SEP; and (v) promoting transparency and ample public information disclosure. Importantly, in line with the overall capacity building nature of the project, responsible personnel in MAP will be trained to consider any E&S implications in the design and implementation of the project activities.

Areas where "Use of Borrower Framework" is being considered:

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

ESS10 is relevant. The Client has prepared, consulted, and disclosed a draft SEP. The Client will update, consult, disclose and adopt a final SEP within ninety (90) days of the project Effective date. The SEP will be updated as needed during the project lifecycle.

Public Disclosure



The draft SEP includes an exhaustive mapping of relevant stakeholders, and a stakeholder engagement strategy and plan for participation and consultations throughout the project life cycle, including potential project beneficiaries, relevant implementing agencies (Ministry of Public Administration (MAP), Ministry of the Presidency (MINPRES), Government Office of Information and Communication Technologies (OGTIC), and the National Competitiveness Council (CNC)), government institutions at the central (e.g., directly participating in the project: Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Water supply and management institutes) and local levels (specific municipalities for pilot activities will be defined early in implementation), academia, unions, and civil society organizations that represent vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups include undocumented people (irregular migrants, stateless population, Dominicans without registration), people without Internet access (resource poor and rural), digital illiterate, people with disabilities, and people who make a living informally carrying out procedures, providing unofficial services and serve as intermediaries for citizens who cannot or prefer not to carry out the procedures themselves (known in the DR as "buscones"). The strategy considers different channels and mechanisms to ensure an effective disclosure of information, and other actions to promote beneficiary feedback.

Throughout its components, the project has a pro-active communication and stakeholder engagement strategy to sensitize the population on the benefits of targeted improved administrative services and active engagement of citizens and businesses to reimagine services and delivery channels, specifically: (i) stakeholder input and feedback to reimagine service journeys, (ii) a user feedback mechanism as part of the unified citizen portal (Gob.do), (iii) service channels assessment, (iii) activities for the measurement of the access, use, and satisfaction of public services, through joint efforts with relevant agencies and strengthening the Public Administration Reform and Modernization Observatory, and (iv) awareness campaigns to promote the use of digital services by citizens. The several engagements strategies will be in line with ESS10 and the draft SEP also provides guidance for the different citizen engagement activities foreseen in project design.

The draft SEP details specific methods for stakeholder engagement and consultations for vulnerable groups using more adequate methods such as gatherings or meetings with small focus groups. Future consultations with local governmental and ministries/institutes and users of key services to be improved will be hold by MAP, as soon as the pilot municipalities have been identified and the key activities of the modernization of core public administration back-office operations (to facilitate coordination, planning and interoperability) among government agencies has been designed. The draft SEP also describes the future consultations, throughout project life, with other non-governmental organizations, different stakeholders, including vulnerable groups.

The Client carried out four (4) consultations during the project preparation phase: three consultations with stakeholder groups (affected stakeholders, other interested parties, and vulnerable groups) and a specific consultation with the National Council for People with Disability (CONADIS). The consultation with CONADIS took place on March 16, 2023, and a list of concrete actions towards their inclusion were discussed and included in the draft SEP (with budget), as well as the PAD. Actions include awareness campaigns, the translation of standard forms and contracts and satisfaction surveys into Braille, the development of informative videos to be displayed in each of the participating ministries/institutes whose services are to be improved (environment, agriculture, water supply/management, education, and health) with information their services with subtitles and explained in sign language, introduction of Apps (including WhatsApp feature) so that deaf people can access the AI-generated reading



of forms, service contracts and guides with information on how to access certain procedures and services, amongst others.

In June 2023, the Client carried out three multi-stakeholder consultations, including (i) government institutions participating in project implementation, (ii) other relevant governmental institutions, (iii) organizations that represent the vulnerable groups, (iv) civil society, (v) social and entrepreneurial organizations, (vi) unions, (vii) academy, and (viii) international community. The objectives of the consultations were to present and receive feedback on: (i) the background, objectives and scope of the project; (ii) identified environmental and social risks and impacts; and (iii) the draft SEP and its proposed communication, participation, and consultation strategy and Grievance Mechanism. The results of these multi-stakeholder consultations were positive, since they allowed a better understanding of the needs and expectations of the interested parties, as well as a clearer identification of the opportunities and challenges that the project presents.

These consultations involved 62 people, 53% women and 47% men. There were several questions regarding the scope of the Project and how this relates to the Public Administration Reform and Modernization Plan and processes that were answered by the Client who also provided participants with additional information about the project design. In this regard it was further explained that pilot municipalities still have to be identified and that the participating sectors, whose provision of services will be improved include environment, health, water, agriculture, and education. Feedback received from stakeholders about the strategies for the dissemination of information and consultation with stakeholders and vulnerable groups as proposed in the draft SEP was positive; some follow-up questions were asked and answered by the Client. There were concerns about impact of digitalization of service provision on potential exclusion of certain groups of the population to which end MAP explained that COVID-19 has increased access to and use of intelligent mobile phones, that the government will increase the number of “Gob.do” service points in the country, and importantly, that the government will maintain and further promote the use of existing non-digital channels, including in-person user service. Participants also inquired about participation of more vulnerable and minority groups, to which the Client explained that in this project in particular these groups have been identified and their interests taken into account by means of specific actions that will allow them to participate and have access to the public services without discrimination (in their answer, MAP specifically referred to elderly, women and people with disabilities). A concern with regard to project design was whether training of civil servants within the public institutions was sufficiently provided for. MAP explained that the project contemplates various training modules; amongst which training of staff involved in the provision of services for the improvement of processes/procedures, communication with users, as well digitalization. Finally, participants requested MAP’s opinion on the political risk with next years upcoming elections and eventual change of administration, to which MAP expressed that the Administration Reform and Modernization Plan is a multi-party agreed upon plan.

The project’s GRM will be based on the existing Grievance Mechanism currently used by the Client and will be adapted during implementation in order to address and respond to project related grievances in accordance with the draft SEP. The project GRM allows for anonymous grievances. The channels identified in the draft SEP include in-person at the PIU or MAP’s Office of Access to Information and a website of the soon to be established “Observatorio de la Reforma y Modernización de la Administración Pública” with a form specifically designed for Project related grievances); additionally, the PIU will establish a specific email address and phone number for project related grievances. These project specific channels would allow for accurate registration of project related grievances and will be specified in the draft SEP. The GRM allows for an appeal process in the case a complainant is not satisfied with



the response provided and includes specific considerations for addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse & Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) complaints, which include measures to ensure confidentiality and development of a database of service providers for case referrals. The draft SEP includes activities to make the GRM and its procedures known to the public as well as training of MAP personnel in charge of the GRM and the E&S specialist in the PIU as a measure for them to know how to identify and channel project related grievances and how to deal adequately with SEA/SH related grievances in accordance with the ESF. The project's GRM is available to all project stakeholders and is designed to guarantee confidentiality, accessibility.

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

ESS2 is relevant. The project activities will involve direct and contracted workers: field staff and supervisors, experts, and consultants, including trainers and facilitators. In accordance with ESS2, the Client will develop, disclose, and adopt Labor Management Procedures (LMP) within ninety (90) days of the project's effective date.

Although labor considerations will be limited to the standard aspects considering worker wellbeing and health and safety, the LMP will include a code of conduct acceptable to the World Bank to mitigate the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)/sexual harassment (SH) or misconduct in the workplace or when engaging with communities. There is no risk of potential forced or child labor in this project. The LMP will assess national labor-related laws related to public service and related human resource policies, labor law, and institutional roles related to enforcement of the laws, including recruitment, discipline, appraisals, and dismissals and identify any gaps that may exist with ESS2 requirements and define measures to overcome such gaps. Occupational health and safety considerations for all Project's workers, as well as emergency contingency measures will be included in the LMP.

Separate GRMs for work-related grievances will be provided to project staff and consultants, including necessary considerations for confidentiality and whistle-blower protection. These GRMs will be described in the LMP. The LMP will also include Occupational Health and Safety considerations in line with the WBG EHS Guidelines and national legislation to ensure health and safety of workers during the installation of equipment, management of e-waste, and throughout TA activities such as capacity building, training services, events, among others. To mitigate the risk of spread of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, the LMP will also include measures for infection control and prevention in line with national legislation and international best practices. The LMP will be applicable to direct and contracted workers of the Project.

In case members of the PIU will be civil servants assigned by MAP to the project, the limited coverage of the ESS2 for this type of workers will be described in the LMP. The need for training for project workers, including on workers' codes of conduct, SEA/SH has been included in the draft ESCP.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

ESS3 is relevant. Project activities may potentially finance the procurement of hardware to support government systems and platforms. The procurement and installation of electronics may replace already existing computers and other equipment; thus, all e-waste generated as part of the Project will need to be managed and disposed following specific guidelines, national regulations, and international best practices. Appropriate mitigation measures will be



developed in a project-level E-Waste Management Plan (EWMP) that will be developed following the WB’s EHS Guidelines and will focus on establishing e-waste management measures to be adopted and implemented throughout project implementation as needed. The EWMP will be prepared and disclosed as a stand-alone instrument within 90 days of the project effective date. However, the EWMP will also be required to be part of the POM. During implementation the EWMP will be adopted as deemed necessary.

Given that the existing capacity for ensuring proper e-waste management in the country varies and will therefore be subject of close supervision. Only reputable, legitimate, and licensed contractors will be retained for the transportation and disposal of e-wastes, and the Client must obtain chain of custody documentation to the final destination to ensure only licensed disposals sites are being used.

For all other equipment to be procured for the project, the procurement bidding documents will specify the need to meet certified energy standards, and this will also be outlined in the POM. The specific energy standard to meet will be based on the availability, cost, and utility of the item to be procured.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

ESS4 is relevant. The project activities involving public gatherings and data collection in the field will be designed taking into account relevant WB and local public health requirements in the context of contagious diseases, including COVID-19. Labor influx risks related to community health and safety, hiring of security forces are not issues in the project. The project will ensure that measures and criteria are in place to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)/sexual harassment (SH) as a part of project activities that imply community engagement (e.g., surveys, qualitative and quantitative data collection). In addition, the mismanagement of E-wastes can potentially pollute water sources and soil, thus negatively impacting on neighboring communities. The EWMP aims at preventing pollution and protecting community health and safety.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

Not relevant

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Not relevant

ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

Not relevant

ESS8 Cultural Heritage

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Not relevant

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

Not relevant

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways No

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas No

B.3. Reliance on Borrower’s policy, legal and institutional framework, relevant to the Project risks and impacts

Is this project being prepared for use of Borrower Framework? No

Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:

None

IV. CONTACT POINTS

World Bank

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Dominican Republic

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Public Administration (MAP)

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Public Disclosure



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VI. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Francesca Recanatini, Josef S. Trommer
Practice Manager (ENR/Social)	Sofia De Abreu Ferreira Cleared on 01-Aug-2023 at 21:30:28 EDT