



# Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

## Concept Stage

### ( **ESRS Concept Stage** )

Date Prepared/Updated: 11/28/2023 | Report No: ESRSC03980



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Operation Data

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P179211	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	APSNR	2025
Operation Name	Adaptive and Productive Social Safety Nets for Resilience Project		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Central African Republic	Central African Republic	WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Social Protection & Jobs
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Central African Republic	Ministry of Humanitarian Action, Solidarity and National Reconciliation	05-Feb-2024	09-Sep-2024
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
09-Nov-2023	30,000,000.00		

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Proposed Development Objective

The development objective of the project is to : (a) expand access to productive social safety nets for poor and vulnerable households in targeted areas; and (b) strengthen the efficiency and shock-responsiveness of the delivery system.

B. Is the operation 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

[Description imported from the Concept Data Sheet in the Portal providing information about the key aspects and components/sub-components of the project]

The project will build on the experience of the PACAD project to strengthen targeting and delivery of safety nets interventions in CAR. while also supporting economic inclusion and response to shocks, especially among the vulnerable youth in targeted areas. Specifically, the operations aims to: (a) expand social safety nets and accompanying measures to the poorest households in targeted areas by promoting the transition to “classic” safety nets in selected areas aligned



with the government's core vision to promote economic and social inclusion. As such, the project envisages to provide cash transfers to poorest households and economic inclusion through accompanying measures and links to other services for complementarity; (b) social safety nets delivery systems strengthening by supporting the government in developing a unified social registry and payment systems; and (c) capacity building and project management and monitoring and evaluation.

## D. Environmental and Social Overview

### D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

*[Description of key features relevant to the operation's environmental and social risks and opportunities (e.g., whether the project is nationwide or regional in scope, urban/rural, in an FCV context, presence of Indigenous Peoples or other minorities, involves associated facilities, high-biodiversity settings, etc.) – Max. character limit 2,000]*

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country of approximately 6.1 million people with a low population density.

Despite being rich in natural resources, the country is one of the poorest in the world and recurrent conflicts have caused many people to become refugees or internally displaced. The country possesses significant agricultural potential and is rich in forests and minerals, which has yet to translate into equal growth and development. Human development indices are among the lowest in the world, with low literacy rates and limited access to healthcare. Despite the latest peace agreement, signed in 2019, the country suffers from insecurity and violence. Considering that the project will have a national coverage focusing on the poorest and most food insecure regions it is likely that the project will be implemented in areas where there are limited presence of civil servants and where there is conflict.

There is a lack of infrastructure in the country, including roads, making access to the rural areas difficult. During the rainy season a large part of the country becomes inaccessible which might affect the possibility of reaching more remote areas. Internet coverage is low, and almost nonexistent outside the capital.

Marginalized populations include women, youth, people with disability and IDPs. The country has one of the highest gender disparities in the world with a high social and cultural acceptance of Gender based violence (GBV) and intimate partner violence. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) are also frequent, and there is widespread impunity for these type of crimes. There is presence of Indigenous Peoples (Ba-Aka) in four prefectures (Mbomou, Lobaye, Sanga-Mbaere and Ombella-Mpoko). There is also discrimination based on ethnicity and religion such as between herders that are usually Muslims and farmers that are mainly Christians. People with disability constitute around 12 percent of the population.

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

*[Description of Borrower's capacity (i.e., prior performance under the Safeguard Policies or ESF, experience applying E&S policies of IFIs, Environmental and social unit/staff already in place) and willingness to manage risks and impacts and of provisions planned or required to have capabilities in place, along with the needs for enhanced support to the Borrower – Max. character limit 2,000]*

The PACAD project, which this new operation builds upon, has been implemented by the Ministry of Humanitarian Action, Solidarity and National Reconciliation (MAHSRN) with the support of UNOPS. The PACAD project has been guided by the former safeguard policy.



UNOPS will not be involved in the new project. Instead, the implementing agency for the project will be with MAHSRN and its Technical Unit which has been closely involved in the PACAD activities. The Technical Unit is expected to be strengthened into a Project Implementation Unit (PIU). An Interministerial Safety Nets Coordination was created in 2018 to coordinate PACAD and humanitarian interventions and strengthen MAHSRN capacity. Although, MAHSRN has co-led the implementation of safety nets activities and project management together with UNOPS, it has never implemented a World Bank financed operation on its own and has no experience in ESF. Considering that the project will be dealing directly with poor and marginalized people (that are the primary target group), this increases the safeguard risks of the project. It is anticipated that implementation capacity will need to be considerably strengthened, and that some third-party monitoring arrangement might need to be put in place (especially regarding SEA/SH).

The Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Vocational Training will be a partner for the project. Given its role in coordinating the preparation of the national social protection strategy and chairing the Social Protection Coordination Committee, the ministry will be a key partner for the conceptualization and coordination of project activities.

At the national level, the Directorate General for Environment is the main institution hosted in the Ministry of Environment that is responsible for conducting and coordinating the E&S assessment process in CAR (validation of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), inspection etc.).

## II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

### A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Substantial

#### A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

*[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]*

At this stage of project preparation, the environmental risk is judged to be "moderate". The project will not finance civil engineering works that are likely to entail risks and/or negative impacts on the environment. However, under component 2, economic inclusion and skills development are foreseen to increase the productivity of the household. Depending on what the skills training will entail, there might be negative effects on the environment. The capacity within MAHSRN to handle environmental risks is assessed as low. These risks will be re-assessed once the skills training activities have been further developed. Depending on the skills training activities involved, a generic ESMP might need to be developed.

#### A.2 Social Risk Rating

Substantial

*[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]*

The main social risks are related to elite capture and the exclusion of marginalized groups from registering to receive the cash transfer payments and the skills training. Exclusion might lead to social tensions in the communities if the selection criteria are not fully understood or the process is not being implemented fairly and transparently. The risk of discrimination based on ethnicity and religion or the exclusion of, for example, internally displaced people (IDPs), people with disabilities and indigenous peoples (IPs) is considered substantial. Social cash transfers and access to skills development might also increase the risk of domestic violence if the husband is not accepting that the transfer is made to the woman in the household. This has been noted during the implementation of the PACAD project. The

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project will operate in areas with limited security, raising security risks for the project workers and beneficiaries. The extremely high illiteracy rates (in rural areas over 90 percent of the women and 70 percent of men) pose risks that operators of mobile payments, or other people in the community, take advantage of people’s illiteracy for their own benefit. As has been noted in other social protection projects there is also the risk of increased sexual exploitation and abuse related to project activities. For example, people in charge of doing the targeting might demand sexual favors for putting people on the beneficiary list. The development of a unified social registry (Registre Social Unique - RSU) and payment system foreseen by the project might lead to the exclusion of vulnerable groups if the targeting is not done properly. A unified registry might also lead to violation of privacy if the data is not properly protected. During the continued preparations of the project, the activities related to skills training will be further developed. Based on the options chosen, these might have different social risks.

*[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating. This attribute is only for the internal version of the download document and not a part of the disclosable version – Max. character limit 2,000]*

**B. Relevance of Standards and Policies at Concept Stage**

**B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards**

**ESS1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts**

Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

The project will not finance civil engineering works, which reduces the risks that the project has negative environmental impacts. The social risks are higher and direct impacts might include the potential exclusion of marginalized and poor beneficiaries, exclusion of marginalized groups living in high level security risks, and the risk of SEA/SH both during targeting and during skills training. There are also indirect project risks with an increase in GBV and intimate partner violence. A generic ESMP covering all project’s activities will be prepared if the skills trainings provided are likely to lead to environmental risks. In case a generic ESMP is required, it will need to be developed before the approval of the project.

**ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure**

Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

In fulfillment of ESS10 requirements, the project will prepare and disclose a SEP by project appraisal. The SEP will be proportional to the project’s E&S risks and will be culturally appropriate. Stakeholders will be identified and categorized by their interest in, and influence on the project. The project will need to undertake consultations with a range of stakeholders including government officials, people working in municipalities, civil society organizations and communities. The SEP will include a communication strategy. The SEP will identify any marginalized and vulnerable groups who need to be consulted and included in project activities (for example, people with disabilities, female-headed households, IDPs and people from different ethnic and religious groups). Stakeholders/community consultations that are related to GBV/SEA/SH risk mitigation will be conducted in safe and enabling environments, such as in sex-segregated groups and with female facilitators.

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**ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions**

Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

The project activities will require the recruitment and employment of direct workers, consultants and contract workers, including among local communities (both full time and part time). It will also engage project volunteers such as the Community Workers (Relais Communautaires), and with organizations and institutions that are providing life skills and vocational training. Hence, ESS2 is relevant, and the government will need to prepare a LMP prior to effectiveness to establish the terms and conditions of employment, as well as guidelines for non-discrimination and equality of opportunity and the freedom to associate with workers' organizations. The LMP will include measures to ensure that labor is provided on a voluntary basis and will further ensure the health and safety of workers, including prevention of SEA/SH risks among workers. The LMP will provide details on grievance mechanisms for workers and the roles and responsibilities of contractors and implementing entities.

**ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management**

Not Currently Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

Not currently relevant as there will be no construction work and civil works. This might be reconsidered depending on the livelihood and vocational training options offered to beneficiaries.

**ESS4 - Community Health and Safety**

Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

Although the project will not finance activities that involve construction and civil works, ESS4 is relevant because of: (i) security conditions; (ii) the risk of GBV/SEA/SH; and the (iii) risks of transmission and spread of COVID-19 and sexually transmitted and communicable diseases. Accordingly, health and safety measures will be reflected in the ESMP. Given the high levels of SEA/SH in CAR, the nature of the project activities, the project will need to assess GBV risks as well as the risks related to SEA/SH. A SEA/SH risk assessment has been carried out and will inform the SEA/SH mitigation action plan. The plan will include measures to minimize the risks of sexually transmitted and communicable diseases. Considering that the project might be implemented in areas where there are conflicts, the government will prepare and disclose, prior to effectiveness, a draft SRA and a SMP. The development of a registry might lead to data privacy risks that needs to be addressed.

**ESS5 - Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement**

Not Currently Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

Not currently relevant as there will be no construction work and civil works.

**ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources**

Not Currently Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

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Not currently relevant as there will be no construction work and civil works.

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

Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

The project is expected to be implemented nationwide in regions where IPs (Ba-Aka) would be present. There is a risk that IPs will be excluded from participating in consultations carried out by the project or that consultations are not undertaken in an accessible and culturally sensitive manner. The SEP will include outreach activities to ensure that indigenous communities are aware of: (i) the availability of the project benefits in their locations; and (ii) how to apply for becoming a beneficiary. The project will proactively engage with IPs and IP organizations to ensure their ownership of and participation in project design, implementation and M&E. Once project specific sites and activities are determined, the government will prepare an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) acceptable to the Bank before the start of project activities in areas where there are indigenous peoples. In case the specific interest of IPs are integrated into the project design, an IPP will not be necessary.

**ESS8 - Cultural Heritage**

Not Currently Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

Not currently relevant. The project will not finance physical activities and is not expected to affect neither tangible nor intangible cultural heritage.

**ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries**

Not Currently Relevant

*[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]*

**B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply**

**OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways**

No

**OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas**

No

**B.3 Other Salient Features**

**Use of Borrower Framework**

No

*[Optional explanation – Max. character limit 1,000]*

Project will not rely on the government’s framework, but will comply with national environmental and social laws, policies and regulations.

**Use of Common Approach**

No

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*[Optional Explanation including list of possible financing partners – Max. character limit 1,000]*

#### **B.4 Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts**

*[Description provided will not be disclosed but will flow as a one time flow to the Concept Stage PID – Max. character limit 5,000]*

The environmental risks are considered as moderate at this stage of project preparations but might increase depending on the livelihood options and vocational trainings that will be offered.

The social risks are estimated as substantial, mainly due to security concerns, the risk of an increase in domestic violence, and the risk of SEA/SH - particularly when the list of beneficiaries is being developed - and also during training activities. There is also the risk of social tension in the communities if selection criteria are not easily understood or seen as unfair. In relation to the support for the establishment of a unified social registry and payment system, there is the risk that marginalized groups will be excluded due to discrimination, corruption and elite capture. Finally, there is also the risk that data captured in the RSU will not be kept confidential.

Proven mitigation measures used in other similar projects will be used to preclude and manage these risks. As the preparations for the project progress and activities becomes clearer, the social risk classification might be reconsidered.

The ESF team will work closely with the TTL and task team to ensure that issues related to the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including IPs are taken into account during project design, and that there are control measures in place to ensure that the poor and vulnerable are being reached. The team will also work with the TTL to ensure that data protection measures are integrated into component 3 (Social Registry).

#### **C. Overview of Required Environmental and Social Risk Management Activities**

##### **C.1 What Borrower environmental and social analyses, instruments, plans and/or frameworks are planned or required by Appraisal?**

*[Description of expectations in terms of documents to be prepared to assess and manage the project's environmental and social risks and by when (i.e., prior to Effectiveness, or during implementation), highlighted features of ESA documents, other project documents where environmental and social measures are to be included, and the related due diligence process planned to be carried out by the World Bank, including sources of information for the due diligence - Max. character limit 3,000]*

- Preparation and disclosure of a draft Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) by appraisal.
- Preparation, consultation on, and disclosure of the generic ESMP prior to approval (depending on whether the skills training activities are likely to have environmental impacts).
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of a SEP that includes a GRM (including for sensitive cases) before appraisal.
- Preparation of a SEA/SH Action Plan before appraisal.
- Preparation, consultation, and disclosure of a draft LMP before effectiveness.





- Preparation, consultation, and disclosure of a draft IPP before project implementation (in case the project will be implemented in areas where there are indigenous peoples and if the inclusion of indigenous peoples are not taken into account in the project design).
- Preparation, consultation, and disclosure of a draft SRA/SMP before effectiveness.

### III. CONTACT POINT

#### Contact Point

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### IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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### V. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s): Gbetoho Joachim Boko  
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