



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 08-Jul-2019 | Report No: PIDC26996

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Benin	Project ID P170425	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Youth Inclusion Project (P170425)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Jan 20, 2020	Estimated Board Date Mar 09, 2020	Practice Area (Lead) Social Protection & Jobs
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Benin	Implementing Agency Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Employment Promotion	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Development objective is to increase the economic and social inclusion of vulnerable youth in selected zones in Benin

For the purpose of this PDO, “vulnerable” is defined as living in an area threatened by destabilization, or being underemployed with low levels of education.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	40.00
Total Financing	40.00
of which IBRD/IDA	40.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	40.00
IDA Credit	40.00



Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Concept Review Decision

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

- 1. Benin is a small West-African coastal country with a growing and younger-dominated population.** Estimated¹ at 11.80 million in 2019, up from the 2013 census population of 9.98 million, the population is growing at a rapid rate of nearly 3 percent annually. The population is young, with a median age at 18.4 years. With about 43 percent aged less than 15, Benin is in the top 15 countries of the world with the largest percentage of young people². This proportion rises to 63 percent for the under-25. The labor market is also under extreme pressure as approximately 200,000 young reach working age each year³.
- 2. Despite significant economic growth, poverty is still rife in the country.** Real gross domestic product (GDP) has increased at an average rate of 4.2 percent annually over the 2000-2016 period. Recently, real GDP growth rate accelerated from 4.0 percent in 2016 to 5.6 percent in 2017. It is expected to reach at least 6.0 percent per annum over the period 2018-2020⁴. Despite this steady growth, Benin remains a low-income country with a per capita income of US\$8565 in 2017 owing to the rapid population growth rate. According to the National Statistical Institute (INSAE), over four-tenths of households (40.1 percent in 2015) have incomes below the relevant poverty line⁵, corresponding to a total of 5.3 million individuals living in absolute poverty. Benin is in the bottom countries in terms of human development and human capital outcomes. At 0.41, Benin's human capital index⁷ is close to the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) average of 0.40, ranking 127 out of 157.
- 3. Spatial inequalities⁸ in income and access to basic services persist, leaving the northern regions behind.** The lowest human development levels are in the remote departments in the north. Human development index (HDI) tends to decrease from south to north, albeit not uniformly. The northern departments (Alibori: 0.355, Atacora: 0.381, Donga:

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision.

² Benin ranks 14 out of 228 in terms of percentage of the population with an age under 15 (CIA World Factbook (2017-01-10)).

³ INSAE, State of Employment in Benin (August 2017).

⁴ IMF Country Report No. 18/364, Dec. 2018

⁵ WDI, The World Bank.

⁶ The national headcount poverty rates have slightly increased over the past decade, moving from 37.5 percent in 2006, to 35.2 percent in 2010 and 40.1 percent in 2015. Bank estimates of the \$1.90 per day poverty rate indicates rates of 61.4 percent in 2006, 48.5 percent in 2010 and 49.5 percent in 2015.

⁷ World Bank Development Report, 2019.

⁸ The findings and data presented here are drawn from the report «Enquête Modulaire Intégrée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages» (EMICoV 2015, INSAE 2016), the 2015 national report on human development (UNDP), the systematic country diagnostic report (The World Bank 2017) and the 2016 statistical yearbook on education sector. A more thorough and detailed description of poverty, human development and education outcomes in Benin is available in these reports



0.400, Borgou: 0.438) HDI levels are lower than the national average (0.485), but some departments in the south also have relatively low HDI levels, such as Couffo (0.400). Likewise, poverty rates based on the official consumption aggregate are highest in the northern-most communes. Several factors are likely to contribute to these outcomes, including distance to the capital and the coast, agglomeration effects, livelihood patterns based on agro-ecological conditions, and informal trade with Nigeria. Employment opportunities in industry and service sectors are concentrated in the southern coastal areas.

4. **The country is experiencing growing threats of destabilization by extremist groups.** Benin is generally considered an island of stability in West Africa. But the country's proximity with Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Mali⁹ – all of which are experiencing violent extremism – and the porosity of its borders make it vulnerable to criminal activities. In early May 2019, the situation took a turn for the worse as two French tourists were kidnapped, and their local guide was killed in the Pendjari National Park, near the border with Burkina Faso. However, the risks are not only related to terrorist attacks from neighboring countries. Recent research conducted¹⁰ by the Institute for Security Studies in the Sahel (ISS) and the European Union points out internal risks associated with the radicalization of young people in northern border regions where the lack of economic opportunities and the absence of State services fuel a feeling of exclusion that may be exploited by extremist groups¹¹.

5. **Local competition over resources also provides ground for destabilization and the emergence of violence.** Competition over land have long fueled tension between agricultural communities and the Peuls, a traditionally nomadic ethnic group predominantly engaged in livestock farming. In the northern departments of Alibori, Borgou and Donga they represent between 15 and 33 percent of the population¹². The stigmatization of the Peuls has aggravated in the recent past due to their cross-border travels and the deterioration of land quality that increases pressure on fertile land. The easy availability of weapons caused by the turmoil in Libya and the involvement of extremist groups have raised the level of violence to unprecedented levels¹³, and neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso or Mali already experience increasing retaliatory violence between communities. Also, climate change accelerates desertification in the North which results in increase local competition over resources. Northern regions are especially threatened by encroaching deserts, the borderline of which gradually shifts to the lower latitudes, while the agricultural production capacity in the intensively cultivated south is endangered by nutrient mining. Under climate change, this situation is most likely to worsen, with accelerated desertification in the North, more frequent occurrence of torrential rains and floods in the South, but much less in the Middle Belt.

6. **Youth inclusion is a big challenge for Benin.** The World Bank Group¹⁴ defines social inclusion as: i) the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and ii) the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society. Youth inclusion in particular can be assessed through: i) participation, voice, and active citizenship, ii) economic opportunities, and iii) access to specific services including health, life skills training, peer mentoring and sport¹⁵. The country performance for these three dimensions of youth inclusion is low according to the Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Development Index (YDI).

⁹ Benin is bordered by Togo to the west, Nigeria to the east, and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north. These three latter countries are grappling with violent extremism as well as Mali, located in the vicinity of Benin, bordering both Niger and Burkina Faso.

¹⁰ ISS: "Can Benin protect itself from terrorism in the region?" (March 2019), "The dynamics of youth radicalization in Africa" (Aug. 2016);

¹¹ UE: "Exploratory qualitative study on the risks and potential factors of radicalization and violent extremism in Benin" (Program for the Prevention of Violent Extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin PPREV-EU II), Sept. 2018.

¹² RGPH 2016.

¹³ UE: "Exploratory qualitative study on the risks and potential factors of radicalization and violent extremism in Benin" (Program for the Prevention of Violent Extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin PPREV-EU II), Sept. 2018.

¹⁴ World Bank. 2013. Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0010-8.

¹⁵ World Bank. 2014. Tunisia: Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion. Washington, DC: World Bank



Benin is in the 15 bottom countries in terms of youth development with an index at 0.429, ranking 173 out of 183 (Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016¹⁶). Young Beninese also display a widespread distrust in political institutions. Most of them (63 percent of young women and 61 percent of young men) are convinced that political parties act in their own interest or that of their families to the detriment of the general interest. Consistently, most do not want to get involved in political affairs except voting¹⁷.

7. **School enrollment rates have improved, but learning outcomes are low and income, gender and geographic disparities persist.** Gross enrollment rate (GER) for primary school increased from 122.7 percent in 2011 to 126.6 percent in 2016 (WDI). Similarly, GER for secondary school improved from 49.1 to 59 percent. Compared to similar countries, Benin is doing relatively well, with higher enrollment rates than the SSA averages. However, over half¹⁸ of those with access to higher education come from the richest quintile, while young people from the poorest quintile account for only five percent of the student body in higher education, and between eight percent and 11 percent of enrollment in secondary education. Youth literacy rate (percent of people ages 15-24) is very low (52.5 percent), specifically for women (40.9 percent) compared to men (63.9 percent). Evaluations indicate a stagnation in education quality since 2005, and most students lack the minimum knowledge requirements in French and mathematics. The northern departments have the lowest education outcomes. Geographic and economic disparities are reflected in educational outcomes from preschool on up. These disparities severely constrain inclusion and job opportunities for the less well-off (Benin SCD report, 2017).

8. **Economic opportunities are limited to informal employment.** The public and formal private sectors are very narrow in Benin, both representing only 9.5 percent of the job offer. In addition, as set out above, access to formal professional training remains limited for youth as they often lack basic educational qualifications and literacy skills needed to undergo formal training. As a result, youth often lack adequate skills to enter the labor market and to find good quality employment. Many youths have no other option than to engage in precarious informal activities that provide low income and little security.

9. **Underemployment is pervasive, especially for the youth.** Underemployment is defined as i) involuntarily working part time (underemployment by hours); or ii) working full-time but earning less than a minimal salary, such as the minimum wage or poverty line (underemployment by earnings); or iii) a mismatch between one's job and education, training and experience (underemployment by mismatch). While the unemployment rate is very low in Benin standing at only 0.7 percent of the population (EMICoV 2015), under-employment affects 72 percent of Beninese with employment, and fully 92 percent of 15-24 age group. The vast majority is underemployed by earnings, but underemployment by hours is also pervasive and affects women predominantly. Underemployed workers are disproportionately young, female, rural, self-employed, with low levels of education, and engaged mainly in agriculture, livestock, fishing and forestry.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

10. **The current Government, in office since April 2016, is showing strong commitment to economic reforms and developing a new and more inclusive growth model as stated in its action program for the period 2016-2021.** The full-term ambition of the government is to make the economy less reliant on the informal re-export and transit trade with Nigeria (approximately 20 percent of GDP), to develop new commodity chains in addition to cotton and to promote

¹⁶ The country performs poorly in all the five dimensions covered by the YDI that are i) levels of education (0.385 ranking 172), ii) health and well-being (0.495 ranking 141), iii) employment and opportunity (0.434 ranking 153), iv) civic participation (0.173 ranking 178), and v) political participation (0.456 ranking 131). For more details: <https://www.thecommonwealth-healthhub.net/global-youth-development-index-ydi/>

¹⁷ IREEP- Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, 2014

¹⁸ The findings and data presented here are drawn from the systematic country diagnostic report (The World Bank 2017).



emerging sectors such as digital economy and tourism as well as artisanal trades. Regarding poverty alleviation and human development, the authorities laid out 49 priority targets among the 169 targets of the UN 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These priority targets aim at increasing social and economic inclusion and are related to social protection, quality of education, entrepreneurship, decent jobs, gender equality among others. The government is also willing to go further and develop a "leave no one behind" strategy¹⁹ that will focus on reaching groups excluded from development gains which are particularly vulnerable in an increasingly risky environment.

11. **The Benin Youth Employment Project (PEJ) (P132667), a USD 35m IDA-funded operation closing on June 30, 2019, has helped to improve economic and social inclusion of youth.** The project's objective has been to improve access to employment skills and employment opportunities for underemployed youth in all the 77 communes of Benin by supporting the apprenticeship system (component 1), providing comprehensive business and socio-emotional skills training (component 2) as well as a start-up grant for about 17,000 beneficiaries across the country, including at least 50 percent of young women (component 3).

12. **Apprenticeship remains the primary source of skills development for vulnerable youth.** The apprenticeship system has traditionally been widespread in Benin. Youth out of school are placed with a master craftsman who trains them on a certain trade during several years against an apprenticeship fee paid by the youth's family. There has been an important movement to develop nationally-recognized certificates to recognize skills gained in apprenticeships, which remain one of the most common and effective mechanisms for vocational training in Benin. The Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle (CQP) is a dual program that combines classroom training with traditional apprenticeship under the supervision of a master artisan. Apprentices can access this stream after a competitive national test reserved for students who have at least completed primary school. The Certificat de Qualification aux Métiers (CQM) was conceptualized as a way to provide a nationally-recognized certification to youth who successfully complete their apprenticeship, irrespective of their level of education. Although they are meant to cover 210 recognized occupational trades in Benin, they were organized only for 13 of them in 2017. The system faces two main issues. First, the development of list of competencies for each trade and skills tests is a complex exercise and requires the involvement of the private sector. Secondly, the government funding commitment does not cover the needs of funding dual apprenticeships programs and organizing the certification processes.

13. **Short-term technical training is used to build specific skills in certain trades but remains marginal.** As part of the PEJ, youths without any technical background were offered 6-week training courses in formal training centers. To promote the inclusion of girls in non-traditional sectors, a pilot was carried out wherein 500 girls were trained on profitable but male-dominated occupations such as metal work or masonry. Additional support was provided in the form of life-skills training, networking and a start-up grant. The Government had previously set up a similar short-term technical training program under the supervision of the Department for Youth Retraining and Insertion (DRIJ). The Department was disbanded in 2016 and since then technical high schools and training centers have gradually taken short-term technical trainings out of their curricula. Short term trainings are now overseen by the Direction de l'Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle (DETFP). Youths above 25 years old can get a nationally recognized certificate of Aptitude de Qualification Professionnelle (AQP) after the completion of a short-term training.

14. **Benin invested significantly to increase access to employment services by remote and vulnerable populations.** Over the past 6 years the ANPE, with support from the Bank-financed PEJ, created municipal employment services with dedicated agents over the entire territory. It also delivered entrepreneurship support packages consisting of training courses and productive cash grants to 17,000 little to non-educated youths, of which 50 percent are female. A large-scale

¹⁹ Announced by the Ministry of Planning and Development, this strategy aims to accelerate the implementation of the government's highly inclusive flagship programs



impact evaluation of the entrepreneurship support packages showed a significant reduction in under-employment, significant job creation beyond the direct beneficiaries, investments in productive capital and higher individual expenditures by beneficiaries. The program also had large effects on women's socio-emotional well-being with a decrease in depression levels, greater control over their own resources and greater decision-making power for women within their households.

15. **The gender gap in Benin is large and women hold secondary role on all dimensions.** Gender-based obstacles result in inequality of opportunity between women and men. Many of these obstacles are interrelated and are underpinned by pervasive social norms: young women drop out of school early to have children and/or get married, which impedes their education, resulting in women occupying jobs that pay them half the wage of men. This reduces their ability to save for investments in businesses or other productive activities and reduces their bargaining power with their relationships, such as over decisions about how many children to have and obtaining health care in a timely fashion and makes them more likely to experience intimate partner violence. Social norms also undermine any statutory legal protections for gender equality, with customary practices meaning that women typically only obtain secondary land use rights through a male spouse or relative, leading them to underinvest in their land, with likely negative impacts on their agricultural productivity. Such gender gaps in resource access and control, asset development, and human capital accumulation increase women's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. This is due in part to women's disproportionate reliance on natural resource-based livelihoods, weak income diversification, and gender-based time poverty that make recovery from climate shocks that much more difficult.

16. **The Government's new strategy for technical training, currently under preparation, puts a strong emphasis on linking training to employment for a better inclusion of youth.** Technical training is small and inadequate to the needs of the labor market. The number of students in technical and vocational training institutions (public and private) in 2018 was 3.3 per 100 pupils at the general secondary education level. Girls are under-represented at 30 percent of students, and administrative and management fields make up 50 percent of enrollment. In this context the government has set three strategic orientations for the reform of technical training: i) aligning training with labor market skill demands; ii) strengthening coordination in the sector and iii) promoting strong linkages and partnerships with the firms and other stakeholders. The strategy focuses on the 6 priority sectors with high job creation potential (digital economy, agriculture, tourism and culture, transport, energy and mines, artisanal trades) which are currently very poorly covered by existing curricula. The authorities also intend to expand training curricula to include life skills and entrepreneurial skills training programs successfully experienced under the PEJ Project.

17. **The Government's flagship social protection project (ARCH) includes technical training for poor workers in the informal sector.** The ARCH program consists of a package of four services: health insurance, training, pensions and microcredit. The training subprogram focuses on poor workers of the sectors of agriculture, trade, transportation, artisanal and artistic trades - sectors that require little education or training and where most of the skills are acquired on the job. Training programs have yet to be detailed. However, the ARCH project document suggests that this subprogram would also assist beneficiaries to develop skills related to establishing and managing a small business, like those developed under the PEJ Project, to enable them to access the microcredit window of ARCH.

18. **The Beninese Government considers Sports as a tool for human, social and economic development.** The government is eager to realize the potential of sport for development as stated in its action program (PAG 2016-2021) and in the National Development Plan (PND 2018-2025). The Government decided to introduce sports classes²⁰ in the secondary school curriculum to enroll students who are willing to develop their skills in athletics, basketball, handball,

²⁰ Municipal sports associations and sports classes were established respectively by Decree No. 2018-376 and No. 2018-377 of August 22, 2018



football and martial arts. In addition to this in-school program, the government has also set up communal sports associations open to all young people aged under 20, attending school or not. The Government's commitment to the development of sports activities offers the opportunity to exploit sports as a vehicle to improve social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations.

19. **The proposed project will coordinate closely with other World Bank operations.** The Sahel Women Empowered and Demographics project (SWED) (P166813) is providing life skills training to adolescent girls and women in northern regions of Benin. It also developed activities (husband schools) to include young men into the question of women empowerment. The proposed project will capitalize on their experience of reaching out to vulnerable women in these regions and including young men on gender conversations.

Relationship to CPF

20. **Link to Country Partnership Framework.** The CPF, covering the FY19 – FY23 time horizon, identifies three focus areas for reducing extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity: i) achieving the structural transformation for competitiveness and productivity; ii) investing in human capital, particularly for the poorest and the youth, including improving access to employment, skills, and opportunities for underemployed youth who have not completed formal basic education; and iii) increasing resilience and reducing climate-related vulnerability. The proposed operation strongly supports the second CPF focus area. It will contribute significantly to achieving the CPF's goal of improving relevance of education and professional training for strengthened job creation. The operation is a key instrument towards fostering skills for a more modern economy and promoting social inclusion of vulnerable youth.

21. **Also, the proposed operation is in line with the National Development Plan (PND 2018-2025) where youth inclusion issues are a policy priority for the Government of Benin.** New initiatives are being introduced to address youth exclusion mainly through skills development, social protection and social services. The National Development Plan (PND 2018-2025), recently adopted by the government, sets out new guidelines for youth inclusion. The Government intends to streamline youth interventions through better coordination and by focusing on the identified priority issues that are training (PND §152, 513-514), social protection (PND §152,) and social services (PND §156-160). In this regard, the main initiatives envisaged by the Government include: i) a new technical training strategy, ii) the implementation of the flagship social protection project called Insurance for Strengthening Human Capital (Assurance pour le Renforcement du Capital Humain – ARCH) and iii) the development of sports and cultural activities.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

The objective of the project is to increase the economic and social inclusion of vulnerable youths in Benin

For the purpose of this PDO, “vulnerable” is defined as living in an area threatened by destabilization, or being underemployed with low levels of education.

Key Results (From PCN)

- Total number of direct project beneficiaries,
 - the percentage of direct beneficiaries who are women;
 - the percentage of direct beneficiaries in Benin's Northern regions of regions.
- Percentage of youths whose sense of social inclusion increased (social inclusion index)



- Percentage of youths who have increased earnings at the end of the program – and then 6 months after program completion.
- Percentage of community level perception on social cohesion increased at the end of the program

Intermediary results indicators are:

- Number of CQP and CQM sessions organized in the country
- Number of new curricula developed for trades within the six growth sectors
- Number of youths trained in these new trades
- Number of youths completing small business and life skills training under the project;
- Number of youths starting or expanding microenterprises with support from the project

D. Concept Description

22. **The proposed project** will support the Government's efforts to increase the economic and social inclusion of vulnerable youths by supporting the development of technical, non-cognitive and behavioral skills as well as providing access to social and financial capital. It will aim to enhance the youth's participation in the economic and social interactions within their communities. The project will place a particular emphasis on the regions that are particularly exposed to threats of destabilization and directly contribute to conflict prevention efforts in these areas following the conclusions of the country partnership exercise and the country context evolution since the PEJ was designed.

23. **Beneficiaries.** The project beneficiaries will be vulnerable men and women aged 15 to 35. For the purposes of the project, vulnerability is defined as : i) living in an area marked by threats of destabilization, or ii) being underemployed with a low level of education. Specific factors associated with exclusion and vulnerability will also be considered for targeting, including: i) belonging to marginalized groups; and ii) living in remote and poorer regions. The project design will strive to reflect the diversity of situations and activities may be tailored to the specific needs of sub-groups. The project will aim to include 50 percent of female beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries will be disaggregated by gender in the project monitoring framework. Beneficiaries will be identified through large communication campaigns, with specific communication campaigns designed to reach the most vulnerable youth. These communication campaigns will integrate operational and analytical lessons learned from the communication campaigns of the PEJ.

24. **Geographical targeting.** The project will have a national coverage and will be implemented in each commune of the country for a total of 77 communes. However, a geographical targeting methodology will be defined to allocate more resources to regions where poverty level is the highest, basic services are scarce, and local populations' feelings of neglect and marginalization is high. As a result, northern and border regions will receive more resources proportionally to their population. The Indicator on access to basic services developed by the National Institute for Statistics could be used in the targeting methodology.

25. **Climate change.** The design of the proposed operation takes into consideration the impact climate change can have on social cohesion at community level. The acceleration of desertification in the North increases local competition over resources, which constitutes a driver of violence in some communities. While the project does not adopt mitigation or adaptation measures to address climate change, it will contribute to preventing violence that could occur due to competition over resources by providing economic and social opportunities to communities and groups affected by climate change.

Component 1: Promotion social and economic inclusion through the development of technical skills for vulnerable youths (\$12 million)



26. **This component will support improved access to technical skills through the apprenticeship system and short-term technical trainings.** The core objective is to keep supporting the Government in its efforts to strengthen the apprenticeship and training systems and ensure their inclusiveness. Trades will be chosen for their potential of income generation and economic inclusion, including in target areas such as northern and remote regions. The training providers will include master artisans and public training centers. The team will explore the possibility to also leverage technical high schools across the country, an objective of the Government. The lead agencies under this component will be the Funds for technical training and Apprenticeship (Fonds de Développement de la Formation Professionnelle Continue et de l'Apprentissage - FODEFCA) and the Ministry of Education and Technical training (METFP) through its Training Directorate (Direction de l'Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle, DETFP).

27. **This component will strengthen the skills development system for vulnerable youths by**

- (i) expanding apprenticeship certification and short-term training to new trades. Standardized lists of competences will be developed in collaboration with the private sector, artisanal trade associations, key Ministries, and local governments. The new trades will be identified within the six priority growth sectors of the government (digital economy, agriculture, tourism and culture, transport, energy and mines, artisanal trades) and in value chains with high potential and accessible to youths with low level of literacy. A value chain study will be conducted to prioritize these new trades. The curricula for 20 new trades will be developed;
- (ii) providing institutional support to the FODEFCA and the DETFP to organize certification exams for apprentices and short-term trainees: i.e: the CQP, CQM and AQP.

28. **The component will also improve access to dual training and short-term training in selected trades.** The project will provide financial support, in addition to Government's own resources, to enable a greater number of qualified apprentices to participate in the CQP classroom trainings and complement on-the-job training. It will also offer short-term training in sectors where the skills requirement is less high. Trade-specific training modules recently developed with support from the PEJ, and those to be developed under the proposed project, will receive particular support. In order to ensure that distance from training centers is not a barrier for youths living in remote areas, the project will support the organization of residential trainings capitalizing on the PEJ project experience.

29. **The component will strive to reduce gender gaps in technical training.** As the newly incorporated trades are traditionally dominated by men, the project will tailor the support package to support girls in those new trades by building on the experience the PEJ developed in training young women in male-dominated trades. To further address gender gaps, the project will provide gender sensitive amenities such as childcare facilities, separate wash facilities, safe gender-sensitive transportation whenever appropriate and needs have been identified, and will train training centers and technical high school personnel, master craftsmen and beneficiaries on gender-based violence (GBV) and anti-harassment awareness, prevention and mitigation to ensure all measures are in place to prevent GBV risks from happening.

30. **Specific support will go toward improving the quality of apprenticeships and short-term technical training:** The project will support improving the quality of apprenticeships and short-term technical training through (i) equipping training centers and technical high schools in the necessary equipment to offer the trainings in the new trades, and (ii) supporting master artisans training to update their technical and pedagogical skills. Pedagogical training will include gender, socio-emotional skills, and positive, inclusive and non-violent pedagogy. No support to construction or civil works would be eligible under the project.



Component 2: Promoting social and economic inclusion by empowering the youth through socio-emotional development, entrepreneurship and networking (IDA \$15 million)

31. This component would support the government in developing vulnerable youths non-cognitive and behavioral skills as well as social and professional network to enhance their income generating capacity (economic inclusion) and their participation in decision-making in their communities (social inclusion). This component will focus on (i) increasing access of vulnerable youths to socio-emotional learning and micro-entrepreneurship training; (ii) increasing access of vulnerable youths to social and professional networks and (iii) developing activities to increase non-cognitive skills through sports and social cohesion activities.

32. **The project will provide access to life skills and entrepreneurship trainings for vulnerable youths.** The materials developed under the PEJ will be reviewed and used under this component. They include modules on life skills, business, and business plan preparation for beneficiaries of low level of literacy. Other training modules promoting socio-emotional learning, gender equality and GBV awareness, mediation and conflict resolution will be developed to enhance youth's resilience to violence and mitigate most salient social risk factors. The modules will be adapted to the Northern and border regions context, their socio-economic dynamics and drivers for fragility and violence. All apprentices and beneficiaries of the short-term trainings supported in component 1 will be eligible to receive these modules during their training, in that case, the trainings will be delivered by the training centers personnel. Other beneficiaries will be identified through large communication campaigns, with specific communication campaigns designed to reach the most vulnerable youth (girls and youths from marginalized groups). A quota will be determined by communes based on the resources available in the project and beneficiaries will be identified through a lottery amongst the ones meeting the eligibility criteria (50 percent of which will be girls). These trainings will be delivered by the National Employment Agency (ANPE).

33. **The component will also support the development of social and professional networks for vulnerable youths:** the project will support the insertion of beneficiaries from the life skills and entrepreneurship trainings under this component to develop their social capital. Some of the activities that will be offered will be: (i) mentoring and youth leadership program to identify positive role models, mentors and youth leaders in the community and provide peer to peer support to youth to develop their life projects (for instance peer to peer exchange with PEJ beneficiaries will be facilitated); ii) networking events with high potential value chains stakeholders in the area; iii) working with employers to lessen stigma, in particular for most vulnerable and excluded youths (Peuls and females) to ensure fair opportunities for labor insertion; and iv) community-based activities to strengthen community relations and influence norms condoning exclusion and violence in the Northern and border regions. Such activities could include community movies, theatre, games, etc. These activities will be implemented by the ANPE through the Employment Agents (ACE – Agent Communal d'Emploi) present in each commune. In the Northern regions, a participatory planning process will be undertaken to prioritize activities, identify community leaders and develop an action plan for implementation of social capital activities. This will help give voice to the youth and other stakeholders in the community and develop youth network or community network that could survive after the end of the project.

34. **Sports activities will be used to further develop non-cognitive, social and behavior skills.** The component will support the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture to offer sports activities to the most vulnerable youths through youth sports associations. A focus will be made on activities that can develop skills such as team work, conflict resolution skills, solidarity and self-confidence to enhance social inclusion, social cohesion and gender equality. The activities design will be gender sensitive to ensure a high adhesion of girls into the activities. For instance, female coaches will be recruited, all sports coaches will be trained on socio-emotional learning, gender equality and GBV awareness. Youth sports associations will be selected through a call for proposal organized at local level on the basis of their capacity to



mobilize the target group and their management capacities. These activities will be organized in priority where the prevalence of the risks of violence is high. Experience from Latin America and the United States will be capitalized to develop the sports activities.

35. **The component will have specific linkages with Component 1.** It will support the adoption of life skills and entrepreneurship trainings as a key tool for social and economic inclusion of youths benefiting from the dual apprenticeship training and short-term trainings curricula. The preliminary results of the impact evaluation of the PEJ project show significant impact of life skills training on women's agency score, driven by impacts on depression, locus of control and self-esteem as well as on women's personal expenditures, which suggests higher control on resources and on business practices. The project will support the efforts of the DETFP to systematically integrate life skills and entrepreneurship modules in the development of new CQP and AQP curricula. It will also test the integration of sports activities in the dual apprenticeship training and short-term trainings curricula to measure the impact of such activities on learning outcomes and social and economic inclusion when coupled with technical trainings.

36. **Activities may be adapted to address specific context-specific needs.** In the Northern and border regions where the risk for violence are higher, the intensity of those interventions will be increased (frequency, number of participants) to obtain enough saturation at the community level. A specific diagnostic in these regions looking at risk factors for violence could lead to include other evidence-informed interventions to mitigate risk factors not covered by the project (for instance parenting workshops to increase bonding within the family, positive communication and positive discipline; alcohol consumption; sexual and health reproductive training or campaigns; community-based intervention focusing on gender norms, etc.).

Component 3: Promoting social and economic inclusion by increasing access to financial services and financial capital of vulnerable youths (\$10 million)

37. **Financial constraints remain a key component to social and economic exclusion as they preclude the youths from realizing their ideas and skills and so participating fully.** The skills developed under components 1 and 2 will not be enough by themselves to increase the economic and social inclusion of youths. Most vulnerable youths do not have access to financial capital and services, which constitute a major constraint to their professional insertion and social inclusion. This creates the need for the Government to support beneficiaries as they transition into productive self-employment. The project will help beneficiaries to address capital constraints and access to financial services through two windows:

- (i) A grant window funded by the project which will provide non-reimbursable start-up funds (of around USD 400) for individuals and groups for the initial phase of their activities. Beneficiaries of the grant window will have an account opened (mobile money or in a financial institution) in order to ensure their long-term inclusion in the financial system.
- (ii) Providing a link to a loan window funded by the Government through the Fonds National de Micro-Finance (FNM) to provide larger amounts than under the grant window at a below market interest rate. Technical support will be provided to the FNM to develop a financial product adapted to the target group.

Specific modalities under each window will be refined during project preparation.

38. The main actor for implementing these activities will be the FNM, which is a fund established by the Government to support financial inclusion initiatives and strengthen financial and technical capacities of microfinance institutions. The FNM serves as a relay to facilitate access to microcredit for beneficiaries of several donor-supported public programs and will pilot the microcredit component of the Government's flagship social protection program "ARCH".



39. **Beneficiaries of component 3.** Beneficiaries who have completed their life skills and entrepreneurship trainings under component will benefit from the cash grants. As the PEJ showed good results in providing cash grants to beneficiaries of entrepreneurship and life skills who had not gone through the technical training, the propose project will continue doing so. In addition, the loan window services will be opened to all youths trained under the PEJ project in order to support them in the growth of their micro-enterprise.

Component 4: Institutional Capacity Building and Project Management (IDA \$3 million)

40. Under this component the project will support: (i) Government and other actors capacity strengthening for the coordination, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies increasing social and economic inclusion of youths ; (ii) the administrative, technical, and financial management of the project by the Implementation Coordination Unit under the oversight of a Steering Committee; (iii) the coordination among all institutional partners to ensure the efficient flow of information among all actors; (iv) the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the project's results and impact; (v) the development of communication activities to publicize and disseminate project results, best practices, and success stories; (vi) the collection of data on social inclusion initiatives to improve the knowledge base on effective youth employment policies and their impact on youth resilience/violence prevention in the North.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

- Impacts on environment
- GBV/SEA and communicable diseases
- labor conflicts

Note To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Concept Stage ESRS Document.

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