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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 06-May-2024 | Report No: PIDIA00450

Public Disclosure Authorized

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project Beneficiary(ies)	Region	Operation ID	Operation Name
Central African Republic	WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	P502128	CAR Accelerating Results in Education
Financing Instrument	**Estimated Appraisal Date**	**Estimated Approval Date**	**Practice Area (Lead)**
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	29-Apr-2024	25-Jun-2024	Education
Borrower(s)	**Implementing Agency**		
Central African Republic	Ministry of National Education		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective is to improve access to quality basic education and strengthen capacity for sector management.

Components

Component 1: Increase access to improved learning environments
Component 2: Improve Teaching Quality
Component 3: Strengthen data systems and sector management
Component 4: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

Maximizing Finance for Development

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?	No
Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?	No

SUMMARY

Total Operation Cost	**120.95**
Total Financing	**120.95**
of which IBRD/IDA	**65.00**
Financing Gap	**0.00**

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	65.00
IDA Grant	65.00

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	55.95
Global Partnership for Education Fund	55.95

Environmental And Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country of approximately 6.1 million people, 50.4 percent of whom are aged 15 and under.** It is one of the poorest and most fragile countries in the world. The country is rich in natural resources, but its significant economic potential remains largely untapped, and has yet to translate into inclusive growth and development: (a) poverty remains extremely high especially outside the capital city; (b) human capital , gender equality[1] and human development indices[2] are among the lowest in the world; and (c) cyclical violence over the past forty years continues to hamper development. CAR's institutions are weak, citizens have limited access to basic services, and public infrastructure is inadequate with only eight percent of the population having access to electricity and only two percent outside of the capital, Bangui.[3]

[1] CAR ranks 166 out of 170 countries on the 2021 Gender Inequality Index and its 2021 fertility rate among adolescent girls ages 15-19 was an alarming 16 percent. Based on the latest available data, only 9.3 percent of girls completed lower secondary school, compared to 15.2 percent of boys, affecting women's ability to actively participate in the labor force. Also, GBV in CAR has reached alarming levels. In the first half of 2022, 11,732 GBV cases were recorded, surpassing the total cases in 2021[1]UNDP Human Development Reports. "Gender Inequality Index (GII)." https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII.

[2] 188 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index, 2022.

[3] The majority of the country, especially in the east, has limited accessibility due to lack of paved infrastructure - World Bank Data, 2020.

2. **Progress towards macroeconomic stabilization and peacebuilding continues to move slowly.** Since 2021, insecurity and conflict-related violence stemming from the post-election crisis have decreased, although the situation remains precarious. The conflicts have damaged schooling infrastructure, and security concerns have caused children to drop out of school. The situation has led to over 515,000 internally displaced populations and about 35,000 refugees in the country, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of September 8, 2023. This has contributed to the strains on the social sectors in host communities and added yet another dimension to the educational challenges facing the impacted population. On the macro-economic front, there have been some signs of improvements since 2023. Economic growth settled at 0.9 percent in 2023, a slight increase from 0.5 percent in 2022, mainly due to limited fuel imports and mixed agricultural performance. Despite rising transportation costs, inflation fell from 5.6 in 2022 to 3.2 in 2023, reaching its lowest level since 2021. Even with spending moderation efforts, the overall fiscal balance remains structurally in deficit. The fuel shortage in the last quarter of 2023 reduced fuel tax collection and dampened recent tax collection efforts. Domestic revenue mobilization (DRM) efforts, including the introduction of the new tax on electronic communications, combined with moderation in current spending and expanded external grant financing allowed for a reduction in the overall fiscal deficit from 5.3 percent in 2022 to 3.5 percent in 2023. The medium-term outlook shows a gradual improvement in economic performance but remains vulnerable to headwinds. Real GDP growth is projected to recover gradually, reaching 1.3 percent in 2024 before averaging 1.8 percent in 2025-26. Under the right conditions, the overall fiscal balance is expected to gradually improve from 2024 to 2026. The country is expected to remain at high risk of external debt and overall debt distress, although government debt is projected to remain sustainable.

3. **CAR has one of the lowest human capital indexes (HCI) in the world, scoring 0.29 on the 2022 Human Capital Index (HCI).** This means that a child born in CAR will only be 29 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. The low HCI reflects, in addition to poor health outcomes, the acute challenges in education, particularly the low completion rates and low learning outcomes. An 18-year-old in CAR is expected to complete, on average, only 4.6 years of education. If adjusted for the quality of learning, it is only equivalent to 2.7 years of schooling[4]. This places CAR lower than the average for the Sub-Saharan Africa region and among the lowest for low-income countries.

4. **CAR is also highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with direct implications on the environment, food security, education attainment and the broader economy.** Due to the combination of political, geographic, and social factors, as well as its low readiness to improve resilience through adaptation and mitigation actions, the 2020 Notre Dame GAIN Index recognized CAR as being highly vulnerable to climate change and other global challenges, ranking it 180 out of the 181 countries. Climate-related shocks disproportionally affect the most vulnerable populations, resulting in increased food insecurity, political instability, conflict, and also poorer education and health outcomes. CAR is at risk for numerous natural hazards, mostly floods, wildfires, and droughts. Vulnerability to these hazards is exacerbated by poverty and political insecurity which stymy the country's ability to recover from natural disasters. Excess rainfall is expected to be strongest felt in the central and southern areas of the country. Heavy rainfall is also expected to result in flooding, causing riverbank erosion and/or overflows, landslides and waterlogging of agricultural fields leading to likely crop failures. The agricultural sector, which accounts for about 34 percent of GDP and 69 percent of the active population, especially in rural areas, depends heavily on variability of rainfall and climate change.

[4] HCI brief: https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/64e578cbeaa522631f08f0cafba8960e-0140062023/related/HCI-AM23-CAR.pdf

5. **The impacts of climate change exacerbate existing challenges, including those posed by the macroeconomic and security situation, to educational attainment, especially for girls.** The prolonged period of violence and conflict in CAR has impacted the normal functioning of schools, leading to closures, destruction of educational infrastructure, and displacement of both students and teachers, disrupting educational attainment and perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability. This is exacerbated by climate-related shocks, such as droughts and flooding, which impede children's access to education by damaging infrastructure and forcing families to prioritize survival over schooling. The fragile state of CAR's educational facilities, many of which lack resilience to weather-related disasters, exacerbates the situation, leading to frequent school closures and a significant disruption in educational continuity. This scenario underscores a vicious cycle where climate vulnerability hampers educational attainment, further limiting the country's capacity to adapt to climate change, highlighting the critical need for integrated solutions that address both education and environmental resilience. Furthermore, climate-related migration and displacement disrupt access to education. While families with the means to migrate can move to places with better availability of resources such as food and water, often their children are forced out of school as a result, with girls at heightened risk.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. **CAR has yet to achieve universal basic education , and learning outcomes for those who do attend tend to be very low, which means that most children exit the primary school system without achieving minimum proficiency in foundational literacy and numeracy.** The system is characterized by large share of out of school children, including approximately 338,000 out of the estimated 881,000 primary school aged children (6-11 years) and about 152,000 of the estimated 528,000 lower secondary school aged children (12-15years). The system is also characterized by overcrowded classrooms, low primary completion rates, and poor transition from primary to secondary education. There are also high levels of internal inefficiencies such as high repetition and dropout rates, and delayed entry to primary school. Children from rural areas, especially girls, tend to be disproportionately affected. There is also a significant share of internally displaced school children in the system. For those enrolled, the language of instruction is French, adding yet another barrier to learning since the local language Sango , remains the primary spoken language for both children and teachers.

7. **Enrollment has steadily increased over the past decade despite the fragile country context, and the public sector remains the main service provider, particularly at the primary level.** There were over 45,000 children enrolled in 409 pre-primary schools in 2021/22, over three times more children than in 2015. Over the same period, enrollment at the primary level increased by nearly 70 percent, reaching over 1.2 million students (56 percent of whom are girls). There are more than 3500 primary schools and over 83 percent are government owned. Lastly, enrollment in secondary education increased by 56 percent between 2015 and 2022, reaching over 170,000 secondary students (38 percent of whom are girls) in 225 secondary schools (including 120 public schools).

8. **Access to pre-primary education remains very low making it a missed opportunity for children to develop the necessary cognitive and socio-emotional readiness to engage and thrive in early primary grades.** The lack of access at the pre-primary level also contributes to the delayed entry at the primary education level. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at pre-primary was only 7 percent in 2021. A closer look indicates that there are also strong disparities in access within the country, with a GER of 37 percent in Bangui compared to and the rest of the country which averages 4 percent. Participation tends to be much higher for higher income households.

9. **Enrollment at the primary level has improved over time but is still characterized by significant inefficiencies—delayed entry, large class sizes, high repetition and dropout rates, and low completion and transition to lower secondary rates.** In 2022, the GER was 102 percent at the primary level and 38 percent in lower secondary. The household survey also indicated that about 28 percent of children in primary and 60 percent in lower secondary are overaged by at least two years or more. In grade 1, 33 percent of students were 2 or more years older than the official age of entry (6yrs old), indicating some degree of delayed entry and repetition. Repetition rates averaged 13.1 percent at the primary level in 2021/22. Both of these issues contribute to the low Primary Completion Rate (PCR) which was only about 63 percent in 2021 (63% for girls, 64% for boys). The transition rates to lower secondary are low at 42 percent (38% for girls and 44% for boys). The household surveys also indicate strong disparities in access across regions—Bangui has the highest access rates in primary (130 percent) and lower secondary (82.1 percent) compared to Yade which has the lowest (85.1 percent and 20.7 percent respectively)—and across areas, especially at the lower secondary level with 61 percent in urban areas against 17 percent in rural areas.

10. **Girls lag behind boys in terms of both school enrollment and completion. Gender parity has not been achieved in basic education, with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.9 at the primary level and 0.6 at the lower secondary level.** Educational attainment for girls tends to be lower than for boys, and girls living outside Bangui are the most disadvantaged. In 2021, only 30 percent of girls ages 16–18 in CAR had completed primary education as compared to 39.5 percent of boys of the same age. Similarly, among youth aged 20 to 22, only 6 percent of girls and 9 percent of boys had completed lower secondary education. Dropout rates were also highest among adolescent girls—in 2021, 19 percent of girls aged 12-18 years old had dropped out of school compared to 16 percent among boys.

11. **There are high levels of out-of-school children, especially among girls and in rural areas.** Overall, about 38.4 percent of 6–11-year-olds and 28.7 percent of 12-15 year-olds were out of school according to the household survey, Enquête sur les Conditions de Vie des Menages Harmonisée (ECVMH) 2021. Girls and children from rural areas are disproportionately affected. The out-of-school rate for primary aged children (6-11yrs) in rural and urban areas was 47.3 versus 25.1 percent and 39.3 versus 16.4 percent for lower secondary school age children (12-15yrs). The rate among rural primary-aged girls was 49.4 percent compared to 45.3 percent for rural boys, and 45.5 percent against 32.7 percent at the lower secondary age. Evidence suggests that lack of family support, the cost of education, distance from school and parents considering the child as being too young to attend, are the main reasons mentioned for not having ever enrolled children in school, while the cost of education, examination failures, security concerns are widely cited as reasons for dropping out of school. Girls' enrollment and completion of basic education is also impeded by: (i) the lack of appropriate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools which and do not provide a safe and inclusive school environment for girls, and (ii) lack of female teachers and female role models in schools.

12. **Learning outcomes are low. CAR is facing a serious learning crisis.** The Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC) 2019 , a large-scale assessment in the Francophone countries of Africa, ranked CAR 13 out of 14 countries in language and last in mathematics. Only about 11.6 percent of pupils in grade 2 and 10.1 percent in grade 6 had achieved the desired reading levels. Similarly, only 22.7 percent of pupils in grade 2 and 1.8 percent in grade 6 had achieved the desired levels in mathematics. The analysis also indicates that girls tend to slightly underperform compared to boys. Similarly, according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6, 2019), only 4.7 percent of children aged 7-14 demonstrated the minimum reading competencies. Among children from the poorest households, only 0.5 percent had achieved that benchmark compared to 13.3 percent for the children from households in the richest quintile. Only 3 percent of children attending the grade 3 of primary education would have the fundamental reading skills, while

less than 1 percent would have the expected numeracy skills. For those who continue to attend school, results tend to improve. Overall, learning poverty , which measures the share of children unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10, is estimated at 92.6 percent.

There are core factors which underlie CAR's low education performance.

13. **CAR has an insufficient number of schools, a shortage of classrooms, and a lack of adequate sanitary facilities at the primary and secondary levels, which hinders access to education, especially in peri-urban and rural areas.** Children living in rural areas often travel long distances, between 5 to 12 km, to reach the nearest primary school. Secondary schools are even less accessible since there has not been any expansion of secondary schools since the 1960's to keep pace with the growth in primary enrollment. Existing classrooms tend to be overcrowded and in poor condition. It is estimated that only 35 percent of primary school classrooms are in good physical condition and only 11 percent of schools have separate latrines for girls. Approximately 55.5 percent of schools (mainly in urban areas) operate in double shift, averaging only about 5 hours of class time and even less time on task. The primary class sizes average 68 children but for many regions, and especially in early grades, class sizes are often over 100 and can reach over 250 in some cases. For example, in the area of Bambari, the average class size for grades 1, 2 and 3 are 203, 216 and 254. Extremely large class sizes, especially in early grades, make acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy very difficult, if not impossible.

14. **There is a lack of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials in schools.** On average there are 4 pupils per textbook at the primary level for both languages/reading and mathematics. The disparities are even wider across some regions and in some grades, for example Haute-Kotto averages 26 pupils per language textbook and 31 pupils per mathematics textbook in grade 6. Moreover, textbooks and teacher guides are usually in French although the local language Sango is the most widely used by students and teachers alike. This constitutes a constraining factor in acquisition of early literacy skills. Reforms to the language of instruction and part of the curriculum (grades 1 and 2) are underway under ongoing projects to introduce reading and numeracy in Sango and also strengthen acquisition of second language (L2), French.

15. **There is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in the system with very low participation of female teachers**. In 2021, there were about 1,100 teachers at the pre-primary level, about 14,600 at the primary education level (17 percent of whom are women), and just over 3,200 teachers at the secondary education level, (15 percent of whom are women). It bears mentioning that the Government is committed to addressing the acute shortage, but it has been difficult, given the context, for CAR to meet its commitments. The lack of teachers contributes to overcrowded classrooms which impedes effective instruction. The lack of female teachers can also be a contributing factor to low girls' enrolment and retention. In CAR, the average pupil-teacher ratio in public schools is about 94:1, although this can reach over 200:1 in some areas. The current pre-service teacher training system does not have the capacity to produce the required number of teachers. Only about one-third of primary teachers have completed pre-service training. The current World Bank projects supported the expansion of the pre-service training colleges, the Ecole Normale des Instituteurs (ENI) in Bambari and the teacher training college in Bossangoa. In addition, although the Regional Pedagogical Centers (RPCs) in the country were initially set up to support in-service teacher training, they have since been used to provide pre- service training due to the lack of training institutions. There are 10 RPCs, and each can accommodate a maximum of 50 student-teachers per year. As part of the Education Sector Plan (ESP), the Government of the CAR has committed to recruiting 16,000 additional primary school teachers by 2029 to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio to about 50:1. In 2021 and 2022, the Government onboarded

approximately 1,000 and 1,500 primary and secondary teachers respectively. Despite these efforts, the shortfall is estimated at around 13,500 teachers, not accounting for the teachers exiting the system, for example those going into retirement, who will also need to be replaced. Part of this gap can be filled from the pool of about 6,000 teachers who are either in the process of completing their training or have been previously trained but who are not yet integrated into the public service. The Government intends to strengthen the system's capacity by expanding existing RPCs and constructing new RPCs to support both pre-service and in-service teacher training, while increasing the number of trained female teachers.

16. **There is a lack of provision of in-service teacher training.** As mentioned above, the system currently relies on the ten RPCs distributed among ten academic inspections to carry out in-service teacher training in addition to the pre-service teacher training duties. In-service teacher training remains sparse and ad-hoc, largely funded by development partners through projects. As such, these tend to be limited in time and scope. Moving forward, in addition to RPCs, school-based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modalities, which provide regular school-based or cluster-based support, need to be explored to ensure all teachers are adequately supported to transform classroom instruction and ensure foundational learning goals are achieved.

17. **The share of public spending on education is low and the sector relies on non-state actors to ensure education service delivery.** According to the 2020 Public Expenditure Review (PER), CAR spent about 12 percent of total public spending on education and the equivalent of 1.8 percent of GDP- this is significantly lower than the recommended benchmarks of 15-20 percent of total public spending and between 4-6 percent of GDP. The sector relies heavily on households' contribution to finance the functioning of the system and on development partners for heavy investment such as schools' construction. The education sector is largely financed by households who contribute through school fees to cover teacher salaries and school operating costs, given that only about 33 percent of public primary school teachers are on the official payroll, and that the education sector does not have adequate funds to cover operating costs of public schools. As such, community and school level associations are very important structures in the education system, including the School Management Committees (SMCs), the Association Meres Educatrices (AME) —an association of mother educators, and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA). The latter are key stakeholders to mobilize communities at the local level and support education sector delivery. In addition, CAR has, historically, been reliant on external financing from development partners to balance its public accounts, but since 2021, budget support has significantly reduced due to concerns regarding a series of policy choices . The Government is working closely with the IMF to establish macro-fiscal adequacy with a view to returning to budget support. In the interim, two existing IPF operations, the Human Capital and Women and Girls' Empowerment (Maïngo) Project (P171158) and the Health Service Delivery and System Strengthening Project (SENI Plus) (P177003), were restructured to provide emergency financing to sustain social services, including financing of salaries and wages of civil servants covering seven ministries operating in social sectors for approximately 18 months, including about 7000 from the education sector.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The project development objective is to improve access to quality basic education[5] and strengthen capacity for sector management.

Key Results

Key results		Proposed PDO indicators
Access	1)	Number of students enrolled in newly constructed classrooms, (disaggregated by sex)
Quality:	2)	Pupil to textbook ratio in grades 1-6 in select subjects, (national)
	3)	Percentage of in-service teachers showing improved content and pedagogical skills[6]
System:	4)	Increase in share of qualified teachers integrated[7] into the civil service (disaggregated by sex)
	5)	Dissemination of results of learning assessment in reading and mathematics

D. Project Description

Component 1: Increase access to improved learning environments (US$80 million, including GPE US$28 million)

18. **The objective of this component is to increase access to quality learning environments that support students to complete their basic education with the required foundational literacy and numeracy skills**. The objectives will be achieved through four sub-components: (i) a targeted school infrastructure construction and rehabilitation program; (ii) provision of teaching and learning materials aligned with the new Sango curriculum; (iii) expand the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) and (iv) support a school grant program and a Girls' Education Initiative in targeted areas.

Subcomponent 1.1: Targeted schooling infrastructure.

19. This sub-component will finance: (i) the construction of community pre-primary classrooms, based on the model adopted under the ESPSP. The construction will prioritize rural areas (outside of Bangui) where enrollment in pre-primary is extremely low; (ii) the construction of new primary classrooms in all the twenty administrative regions, (including separate latrines for boys and girls, and with adequate WASH facilities for girls); (iii) the rehabilitation of old or dilapidated classrooms and latrines in primary schools; and (iv) the construction of secondary schools (collège de proximité) in at least five localities that register the lowest enrollment for girls.

20. The component will integrate climate adaptation and mitigation strategies- contributing to more resilient educational facilities. Here are some activities that the component will consider:

a. Sustainable Building Designs: Incorporate climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable building designs in the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms and latrines. This includes using locally sourced,

[5] Basic education refers to pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary levels.
[6] This indicator would be measured through assessments administered at baseline and endline. Classroom observations may be added to the overall assessment. Details will be further developed during project preparation with strategically placed TA that uses global best practices.
[7] Integration of teachers is defined as teachers being engaged as civil servant and being on the government payroll.

sustainable materials that are durable and have a low carbon footprint. Implementing energy-efficient designs, such as solar-powered lighting and natural ventilation, can reduce energy consumption and ensure classrooms remain functional during power outages.

b. Rainwater Harvesting Systems: Equip all new and rehabilitated buildings with rainwater harvesting systems. This will not only provide a sustainable water source for latrines and gardening activities but also prevent waterlogging around the school premises, reducing the risk of waterborne diseases.
c. Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure: Ensure that all constructions and rehabilitations are carried out with disaster-resilient techniques to withstand extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and storms. This includes elevated building foundations, reinforced roofing, and proper drainage systems.
d. Green Spaces and Tree Planting: Incorporate green spaces and tree planting within school compounds. Trees and vegetation can provide shade, reduce the heat island effect, and enhance the resilience of school infrastructure to climate impacts. Additionally, involving students in tree planting can foster environmental stewardship.
e. Gender-Sensitive Climate Adaptation: Gender-segregated latrines should be designed considering climate resilience and safety. For instance, ensure they are accessible during floods and are well-lit using solar lighting to enhance safety at night, addressing both adaptation and mitigation while promoting gender inclusivity.
f. Waste Management Systems: Implement sustainable waste management systems in schools, including composting organic waste and recycling programs. This can be used as an educational tool for students to learn about waste reduction and resource conservation.

Subcomponent 1.2: Teaching and learning materials for pre-primary and primary levels and support to remedial education programs.

21. This sub-component will: (i) support the development, production, and distribution of a pre-primary learning package, along with teacher guides and structured lesson plans. The packages will be rolled out in community pre-primary classrooms, which are located mainly in rural areas, with the objective of increasing attendance and improving pupil readiness for primary school; (ii) build on the ESPSP project which is supporting the development of a new curriculum for the first two grades of primary education, with Sango as the main language of instruction, and will extend the scope by: (a) supporting the development of the curricula for the remaining four grades of primary education (3rd to 6th grade). The new curriculum development will ensure that there are clear and coherent curricular goals for foundational learning in the primary grades; and (b) supporting the production and distribution of textbooks and supplementary materials, in Sango and French, as well as teacher guides with structured lesson plans. Training of teachers, headteachers and inspectors on new TLM will be supported under Component 2.

22. In addition to the provision of new TLM, this sub-component will also support the scale up of the remediation program developed under the EBESP in primary schools. The program has been successfully piloted in 4 out of 20 regions (7 regions are targeted by project close). It focuses on identifying pupils lagging and at risk of dropping out including students from IP communities through school-level assessments administered by the headteacher and providing tailored academic support by teachers. It also includes an outreach strategy led by the school, with the support of the AMEs and SMCs, to engage parents and guardians in monitoring the child's progression. The sub-component will finance: (i) the distribution of teaching and learning materials; (ii) training of teachers and headteachers; and (iii) support remediation and outreach activities in additional regions.

23. Integrating climate change into the component will consider the following activities:

a. Climate Education Content: The resources will integrate climate change education into the curriculum at all levels, ensuring that teaching materials include content on local and global environmental issues, adaptation strategies, and mitigation practices. This could cover topics such as sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and renewable energy sources, tailored to age-appropriate levels.
b. Energy-efficient Technology for Education: In areas where digital resources are utilized, the project will ensure that the devices and infrastructure employed are energy-efficient and, where possible, powered by renewable energy sources. This could include the use of solar-powered tablets or laptops and solar charging stations in schools.
c. Sustainable Distribution Networks: For the distribution of physical teaching and learning materials, the project will establish sustainable logistics strategies. This will involve optimizing distribution routes to minimize carbon emissions or partnering with local suppliers to reduce transportation distances.
d. Training on Environmental Sustainability: As part of the training for teachers, headteachers, and inspectors, include modules on environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and how to incorporate these topics into everyday teaching. This will empower educators to integrate climate consciousness into their classrooms effectively.
e. Community Engagement in Environmental Education: The project component will encourage the schools to engage with parents, guardians, and community members on the importance of climate resilience and environmental stewardship. This can be facilitated through community workshops, school projects involving tree planting, or local environmental clean-up days, linking educational content with real-world action.
f. Remedial Education Programs with Environmental Focus: The component will aim to tailor some aspects of the remedial education programs to focus on environmental literacy and climate-smart practices. This approach not only supports students who are lagging but also raises awareness and fosters proactive attitudes towards climate change among students at risk of dropping out.

Subcomponent 1.3: Supporting learning opportunities for out-of-school children.

24. The ALP was developed under the EBESP project and has successfully provided learning opportunities for out-of-school children (9-15 year-olds), including vulnerable children who have aged out of the system (including girls and children from indigenous people's community). The ALP enables these children to complete the equivalent of 6 years of primary education, sit for the end-of-primary examination and potentially enroll in formal lower secondary education or in a post-primary TVET program. The EBESP Project has: (i) supported the development of curricula for the three levels of the program and a policy document formally setting up the ALP; (ii) piloted the ALP in 4 out of 20 regions, benefitting nearly 8,000 out-of-school children (including over 3,700 girls) aged 9 to 15 years old (16,000 children are targeted by project close). Under the proposed Project, this sub-component would scale up the program to the remaining 13 regions[8]. It will support: (i) further finetuning the ALP curriculum based on the feedback from the pilot phase; and (ii) the printing and distribution of textbooks and instructional materials for program participants, and teacher guides tailored to the ALP. Training of teachers, headteachers and inspectors on the ALP curriculum and TLM is financed under Component 2.

[8] Given the large number of internally displaced people, the alternative learning program will concentrate as a priority in the areas of displacement and return, so as to enable 9 to 15 out-of-school aged displaced children to return to school and have a chance to complete the primary education cycle in order to continue in secondary school or benefit from training opportunities.

25. Integrating climate adaptation and mitigation activities into Subcomponent 1.3 presents a unique opportunity to incorporate environmental education into non-traditional learning environments. This initiative can significantly contribute to raising awareness and building resilience among vulnerable communities. Some of the activities include:

a. Climate-Resilient Curriculum: Refine the ALP curriculum to include specific modules on climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and renewable energy.
b. Eco-Friendly Materials: Ensure that textbooks and instructional materials for the ALP are produced using sustainable materials, such as recycled paper and eco-friendly inks.
c. Outdoor Learning and Experiential Activities: Incorporate outdoor learning activities that allow students to directly engage with their environment. This could include field trips to local ecosystems, community gardens, or renewable energy facilities, providing hands-on learning experiences that reinforce the curriculum's climate adaptation and mitigation content.
d. Community Engagement Projects: Encourage students to participate in community engagement projects focused on environmental stewardship, such as tree planting initiatives, clean-up campaigns, or community-based adaptation projects. This not only reinforces learning but also fosters a sense of responsibility and agency among students to contribute to their community's resilience.
e. Innovative Instructional Technologies: Leverage low-carbon and energy-efficient technologies to deliver the ALP curriculum, such as solar-powered learning devices or digital platforms that can be accessed without relying on grid electricity. This can help reduce the carbon footprint of the educational process while ensuring accessibility in remote areas.
f. Integration of Traditional Knowledge: Incorporate local and indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum, focusing on traditional practices that contribute to environmental conservation and climate resilience. This approach respects and revitalizes indigenous cultures while providing students with a rich, diverse understanding of environmental stewardship.

Subcomponent 1.4: School Grant and Girls' Education Initiative.

26. This sub-component will build on and expand on the ongoing school grant program which supports schools to achieve agreed objectives in terms of supporting community-teachers, teacher training, and activities around remedial education. The GEI program aims to support the schooling and retention of girls living in vulnerable areas including students girls from IP communities through specific interventions such as school kits, support of the school fees for new enrolled girls and examination fees for 6th grade girls, provide hygiene kits, and ensure latrines separated by gender; and (ii) outreach activities in the community and for parents of girls' at risk or who have dropped out of school to promote school retention. In the grant for girls, a specific portion of the grant will promote girls' resilience to climate change, and will go towards initiative for a school which can bring innovation to solve day-today climate related problem in the community.

Component 2: Improve Teaching Quality (US$36 million including GPE US$13 million)

27. **Component 2 will enhance the number of qualified teachers in the education system and strengthen classroom instruction.** This component is closely aligned with Component 1 and aims to: (i) support pre-primary and primary teachers with an ongoing, tailored, focused, and practical in-service professional development program, prioritizing foundational literacy and numeracy. The training program will focus on the new curriculum and TLM developed under Component 1 and will cover both new content and pedagogical approaches; (ii) expand the system's capacity to deliver high quality pre-service training to prepare the next cadre of teaching professionals through five additional Regional Pedagogical centers

(RPC); and (iii) support the performance-based recruitment of qualified contractual teachers. Adapted education technology solutions will be used to enhance the delivery of quality pre-service and in-service teacher training.

Subcomponent 2.1: Support teachers' in-service training in basic education.

28. This sub-component will finance: (i) the implementation of a teacher training program for community pre-primary teachers on new TLM and associated pedagogical approaches; (ii) the implementation of teacher training program for primary teachers focused on the new curriculum and TLM. The training program will also include core areas from the common modular curriculum developed under the EBESP, including the modules on conflict sensitivity training, and cross-cutting training on gender-sensitive pedagogy and reducing gender bias in the classroom; and (iii) the training of ALP teachers on the new TLM and associated pedagogical approaches. Training will be initially delivered through RPCs and will be followed-up with regular and continued training and support through a school or cluster-based modality. Headteachers and inspectors will also be trained to better support teachers and ensure new content and pedagogical approaches are accurately incorporated in classroom instruction. The use of educational technology (e-readers, tablets, radio programs) with pre-recorded pedagogical content including illustrations, and exercises to facilitate teacher training and provide access to additional resources to teachers will be explored during project preparation.

Subcomponent 2.2: Strengthen pre-service teacher training

29. This sub-component will support the increase of qualified new teachers through (i) the construction and equipment of 5 new regional pedagogical centers which could each accommodate at least 100 teacher students per year, (ii) renovation and expansion of at least one existing teacher training establishment; (iii) printing and distribution of teaching and learning materials based on the pre-service curriculum developed under the ESPSP. The curriculum will be adjusted to reflect new content introduced in the new primary curriculum developed under Component 1; and (iv) training of instructors deployed to new RPCs.

Subcomponent 2.3: Increase qualified primary teachers in the system.

30. This sub-component aims to support the Government to establish a career pathway for community teachers, including those from indigenous people's community, and support their integration into civil service. It will also support performance-based recruitment of new teachers, including those from indigenous people's community and particularly emphasize the recruitment of female teachers. This sub-component would support: (i) the establishment of a clear performance-based alternative certification program which would allow the integration of competent and qualified community-teachers into civil service; (ii) the performance-based recruitment of new teachers, with defined targets for hiring women (see proposed details below); and (iii) the development of a teacher career pathway and policy, including linking teacher training to career pathways.

31. Under the best scenario, around 2,000 of the more than 8,000 community teachers could be integrated into the public service after successfully completing the certification process. The project would also support the recruitment of around 4,350 contract teachers to be distributed between the three sub-cycles (preschool, primary and secondary education) as contract teachers, with a commitment from the Government to gradually integrate them into the public service (including issuing of pay slips) from the fourth year of the project, according to an integration plan which will be agreed on with the Ministry of Finance before the implementation of the project.

Component 3: Strengthen data systems and sector management (US$14.9 million including GPE US$9.9 million)
This component will focus on strengthening learning assessments, data management and planning, as well as reinforce regional and school level management and support the Project Coordination Unit (PCU).

Subcomponent 3.1: Learning assessments.

32. The ESPSP is currently supporting the Ministry of Education to set up a National Learning Assessment team. Building on these ongoing activities, this subcomponent will support: (i) the development and implementation of a national learning assessment in early and late primary grades which will be administered once during project life. The assessments will focus on foundational literacy and numeracy skills. The assessment will help produce system-wide evidence to support decision-making and set policy reforms; and (ii) the participation of CAR in the regional learning assessments by PASEC in 2024 and 2029. This allows for regional benchmarking and linking to the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) for regional and international comparability. Altogether, the project will enable collection of three learning assessment data points.

Subcomponent 3.2: Strengthen education planning and management.

33. The objective of this sub-component is to strengthen the Ministry of Education's capacity to produce timely and reliable data and analysis and support the use of data in decision-making and planning at the central and local levels of the education. Specifically, the sub-component will finance: (i) the timely preparation of reliable education statistics for decision making; and (ii) capacity building of decentralized ministry units to develop simple planning tools, such as school report cards, to track basic education statistics and support school level planning and resource management.

Subcomponent 3.3: Project management and capacity building.

34. The objective of this sub-component is to strengthen the capacity of the PCU to undertake the tasks required for project implementation. The project will finance project operating costs, including salaries of staff (a project manager, a project financial specialist, a procurement specialist, an accountant, a social safeguard specialist, an environmental safeguard specialist, a GBV/SEA/SH specialist, a monitoring and evaluation specialist, engineers, support staff, etc.) and PCU activities. This sub-component may also finance analytical studies to support effective policy dialogue and decision-making for education policy reforms. It will also finance pilots and impact evaluations of key activities.

Component 4: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) (US$0)

35. A no-cost CERC will be included to allow for an immediate response in the event of an eligible crisis or emergency. This will allow for rapid reallocation of project financing in the event of a natural or man-made disaster or crisis that has caused, or is likely to imminently cause, a major adverse economic and/or social impact. The reassignment of the project fund to this component including the amount will be determined at the time of eligible crisis or appearance or cross-sectoral interventions.

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

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

36. Environmental risks center on working conditions including occupational health and safety and community health and safety, resource efficiency and pollution, mainly due to disposal and management of construction waste; nuisances related to air and noise emissions; storm water runoff; land disturbance, water pollution from hydrocarbon spills. Social risks include risks of SEA/SH; limited ESF capacity and experience; exclusion of marginalized and vulnerable social groups including Mbororo Peuhls and indigenous people; security risks for project workers and beneficiaries given the high presence of non-State armed groups across the territory; and involuntary resettlement leading to physical and or economic displacement.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

37. **Institutional and implementation arrangements.** This project will complement the operations under implementation but also support the achievement of the country's education sector plan. The Ministry of Education (MoE) will have Project oversight and be the implementing agency. The World Bank funded Project Coordination Unit (PCU) under the MoE would be responsible for the day-to-day project management under the direct supervision of the Minister. The PCU would include technical, fiduciary, and safeguards (environment and social) staff under the coordination of a PCU Manager. The implementation of activities will be closely coordinated with technical teams at the MOE and supported by strategic technical assistance. The Project Operational Manual (POM) would outline the specific technical and operational roles and responsibilities of all the PCU members. During project preparation, the World Bank would assess the fiduciary and safeguards (environment and social) capacity of the MoE. The World Bank would also work with MoE to develop: (i) a citizen engagement strategy; and (ii) communication strategies during project implementation.

38. **Procurement Capacity.** Given the extensive workload of procurement activities under the two ongoing projects (EBSP & ESPSP) and two avoid delays in the implementation of procurement plans, a new Procurement Specialist (PS) will be recruited and will work conjointly with the current PS. The two Procurement Specialist will be supported by an assistant who will be fully dedicated to STEP. The capacities of the project procurement team will be enhanced particularly with procurement of works that suffered from lack of planning and weak contract management on the EBESP and ESPSP.

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