

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS DATA SHEET

CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: ISDSC1044

Date ISDS Prepared/Updated: 17-Sep-2014

Date ISDS Approved/Disclosed: 06-Oct-2014

I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Country: | Mauritania | Project ID: | P150430 |
| Project Name: | Mauritania Social Safety Net System (P150430) | | |
| Task Team Leader: | Aline Coudouel | | |
| Estimated Appraisal Date: | 09-Mar-2015 | Estimated Board Date: | 14-May-2015 |
| Managing Unit: | GSPDR | Lending Instrument: | Investment Project Financing |
| Sector(s): | Other social services (100%) | | |
| Theme(s): | Social safety nets (100%) | | |
| Financing (In USD Million) | | | |
| Total Project Cost: | 29.00 | Total Bank Financing: | 25.00 |
| Financing Gap: | 0.00 | | |
| Financing Source | | | Amount |
| BORROWER/RECIPIENT | | | 0.00 |
| International Development Association (IDA) | | | 25.00 |
| Free-standing TFs AFR Human Development | | | 4.00 |
| Total | | | 29.00 |
| Environmental Category: | C - Not Required | | |
| Is this a Repeater project? | No | | |

B. Project Objectives

The objectives of the proposed Project are to provide targeted cash transfers to extreme poor households and to support the establishment of some building blocks of the national social safety net system.

C. Project Description

The Government of Mauritania has decided to complement its food-based emergency programs with

a more sustainable long-term strategy for poverty reduction. The national social protection strategy highlights the need for a national social safety net program, a need expressed by key social sector stakeholders, from civil society to the highest levels of the national administration, and technical and financial partners. The national social safety net program responds directly to the desire to better channel resources to the poor and vulnerable and have a greater impact on poverty than untargeted programs have had to date. The program also responds to the government's wish to gradually replace existing untargeted programs with a more effective, targeted, alternative. Furthermore, the national social protection strategy establishes the rationale for the development of core instruments for the social protection sector – including strong coordination mechanisms and a national social registry to better target the poorest households and coordinate interventions.

Accordingly, the proposed Project is organized around two components: a first component that supports the development and implementation of the national social safety net program and a second component supporting the development of the building blocks of Mauritania's national social protection system.

Component 1 – Support to the national social safety net program (US\$ 22 million)

The first component will support the development and implementation of a national social safety net program, targeted towards Mauritania's poorest households. Ultimately, the national program aims to reach all the poorest households (estimated at about 100,000 households, with 600,000 members) across Mauritania. The national social safety net program will be built around three core elements: (1) predictable and regular cash payments, (2) promotion, broadly understood as the set of information, communication and education measures designed to encourage the adoption of positive behaviors among beneficiary households and communities, and (3) reinforced provision of basic social services (demand for which is stimulated via the increase in purchasing power of beneficiary households, the conditionalities, and the promotion activities).

The program will be implemented in phases, with a goal of national coverage. The program will prioritize the poorest regions (in terms of extreme poverty rate and absolute number of extreme poor). Identification and targeting will be undertaken through the National Social Registry, which will ensure data collection and beneficiary identification through community targeting and PMT verification (see component 2). A grievance and redress mechanism will be implemented to handle potential inclusion/exclusion errors and guard against possible fraud or malpractice.

The proposed social safety net program focuses on chronic poverty, and so is designed with a long-term vision. The duration of inclusion of a beneficiary household is planned to be five years. After this period, a re-certification process will be put in place to re-assess the eligibility of beneficiary households (as well as that of new potentially eligible households). Should a beneficiary be found to be above the threshold, they will be considered to have graduated from the program, and may be referred to other social services, such as micro-credit.

The level of transfer will be finalized in the coming months, but is currently estimated between MRO30,000 and MRO60,000 per household per year (US\$100-200). This corresponds to between 7-13 percent of extreme poor households' annual consumption (the mean consumption of extreme poor households in Mauritania is estimated at MRO448,900/hh/year, or USD1,500/hh/year [EPCV 2008]). The Government is currently undertaking economic and impact simulation analyses to provide a precise picture of the costs and expected benefits (in terms of reductions in poverty, extreme poverty, local economic activity etc.) from different levels of transfers.

In terms of implementation, the program would be implemented under the direction of the Steering Committee for the National Social Protection Strategy and the associated Technical Committee and Social Protection Unit, which ensures the daily coordination of activities for the Strategy's implementation. The program will identify its beneficiaries from the Social Registry implemented by Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development (MAED) and Ministry of Social Affairs, children and families (MASEF) (see component 2).

The core activities of the national program would be implemented by the Agence Nationale Tadamoun. Promotion activities to promote behavioral changes will be defined and implemented by the relevant government agencies (MASEF, Ministry of Health, Ministry of education, etc.). These institutions will also be responsible, as part of their regular activities, for the supply of basic services. Finally, decentralized administrative structures will coordinate locally and supervise the program's implementation; while local actors will mobilize the population, ensure training and promotion, and contribute to the monitoring of the program.

The proposed Project would finance monetary transfers for a selected number of beneficiary households, the promotion activities implemented by the sectoral institutions, the development of core program instruments, as well as core operational costs of the program.

Component 2 – Support to the National Social Protection System (US\$ 7 million)

The second component will support the central government's capacity for the establishment and coordination of the national social protection system.

Mauritania adopted a National Social Protection Strategy (SNPS) in 2013. The strategy was developed under the joint leadership of the MAED and the MASEF, with technical support from UNICEF. The strategy offers a long-term vision for the country and a roadmap for creating a coherent and integrated national social protection system. The strategy has five main pillars: (i) food security and nutrition, (ii) access to health and education, (iii) social security and employment, (iv) improving the living environment, and (v) social assistance and support to vulnerable populations.

This component will be led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development and the MASEF, in their role as leaders of the Steering Committee of the national social protection strategy and its Technical Committee. However, the implementation of the component will involve other actors who are central to the implementation of the strategy – including, among others, the Food Security Agency (CSA, Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, and development partners.

One of the instruments central to the implementation of the national social protection strategy is a registry of vulnerable households. The Social Registry will be initially developed with a view to provide beneficiary identification, selection and tracking for the national social safety net program. However, it will be developed with a view to serve as a common database of vulnerable households open to all other targeted social programs in Mauritania. The construction of a national social registry is critical to ensure transparency in the selection of beneficiaries, especially since Mauritania holds significant divisions between lines that are both tribal/ethnic and socio-economic (pastoral, pastoral-nomadic, rural-agricultural, urban, etc.).

The national registry will rely on a targeting methodology, which has been developed and consulted

among government and the Technical Committee, and was approved by the Government Steering Committee in March 2014. For this reason, the national targeting methodology relies on national data (EPCV 2008, soon 2014) and follows Mauritania's official poverty thresholds and definitions.

This component will support the development of the various instruments for the social registry, including its management information system (MIS), equipment, software and hardware. It will also support the implementation of the social registry – the definition of quotas and proxy-means test, the organization of the various committees to prepare lists of potentially eligible households, the implementation of the questionnaires and their processing, as well as the preparation of lists of eligible households. Finally, it will support potential additional activities required to ensure identity cards are provided to all registered households.

Other instruments for the implementation of the national social protection agency that will be supported by component 2 include the central coordination mechanisms, analytical inputs to strategy and program design. This component will contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of the central actors responsible for spearheading the national social protection system and implementing the national strategy.

A first set of activities will reinforce central coordination mechanisms and the capacity of the government institutions designated to coordinate the implementation of the national social protection strategy, including the Steering and Technical Committees and the Social Protection Unit (Cellule Protection Sociale). Training and technical support will be provided, as well as assistance with coordination and management costs.

A second set of activities will focus on analytical services to help the various actors involved in the implementation of the national strategy plan their investments and design their programs in the most effective way. These will likely include analysis of options for targeting of potential beneficiaries, analysis of the supply of basic services to identify gaps in supply, and analysis of patterns of vulnerability to better design responses.

The NSPS also calls for Mauritania's to strengthen its response to shocks and crises, through (i) the development of a multi-risk Early Warning System and (ii) the development and operationalization of a national contingency plan. A third set of activities will therefore support the design of an early-warning mechanism, which would flag crises and trigger the response from programs. This mechanism would build on existing early-warning systems, expanding them to capture more fully the vulnerability of the population in particular areas (beyond the traditional measures mostly based on agricultural production). This will require a review of existing regional, national and local warning systems. It will be implemented in coordination with teams supporting the pastoralists and working on disaster-risk management and the strengthening of early warning systems at the regional and national levels. The proposed Project, through its DFID funded grant, will also finance the implementation of the activities needed to broaden the existing early warning system to make it relevant for the triggering of adaptive social assistance activities. This would include data collection, capacity building for data analysis and the production of the different types of warnings, and purchase of software or hardware as needed.

A fourth set of activities would, through the DFID-funded grant, support the design of the contingency plan, which would specify the response that the safety net system would provide in case of crises. The contingency plan could include scaling up or down some programs, modifying some of existing programs' characteristics (e.g. to simplify procedures, to increase amounts, to increase

coverage, to kick in particular programs, etc.), or implement temporary additional programs. In this context, the project would also support the design of a mechanism for the financing of the contingency-triggered activities. The mechanism would define the amounts to be mobilized, the rules for their release, and their financing.

D. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

E. Borrowers Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

F. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Zarafshan H. Khawaja (GSURR)

Hocine Chalal (GENDR)

II. SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

| Safeguard Policies | Triggered? | Explanation (Optional) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Environmental Assessment OP/ BP 4.01 | No | |
| Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04 | No | |
| Forests OP/BP 4.36 | No | |
| Pest Management OP 4.09 | No | |
| Physical Cultural Resources OP/ BP 4.11 | No | |
| Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10 | No | |
| Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12 | No | |
| Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37 | No | |
| Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50 | No | |
| Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60 | No | |

III. SAFEGUARD PREPARATION PLAN

A. Tentative target date for preparing the PAD Stage ISDS: 23-Oct-2014

B. Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed.

The specific studies and their timing¹ should be specified in the PAD-stage ISDS:

TBD in consultation with the safeguards specialists

IV. APPROVALS

¹ Reminder: The Bank's Disclosure Policy requires that safeguard-related documents be disclosed before appraisal (i) at the InfoShop and (ii) in country, at publicly accessible locations and in a form and language that are accessible to potentially affected persons.

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| Task Team Leader: | Name: Aline Coudouel | |
| <i>Approved By:</i> | | |
| Regional Safeguards Coordinator: | Name: Alexandra C. Bezeredi (RSA) | Date: 06-Oct-2014 |
| Practice Manager/ Manager: | Name: Stefano Paternostro (PMGR) | Date: 06-Oct-2014 |