PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)

CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: 100442

Project Name	MA-Large Scale Irrigation Modernization Project (P150930)
Region	MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
Country	Morocco
Sector(s)	Agricultural extension and research (3%), Irrigation and drainage (80%), Public administration- Agriculture, fishing and forestry (1 7%)
Theme(s)	Rural services and infrastructure (67%), Water resource management (33%)
Project ID	P150930
Borrower(s)	Government of Morocco
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fishery
Environmental Category	B-Partial Assessment
Date PID Prepared/Updated	18-Nov-2014
Estimated Date of Board Approval	08-Jul-2015

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. Morocco has been on a steady path of growth in the past decades, which has proved relatively resilient in the face of the recent global economic slowdown. Growth averaged 4.8 percent over 2001-12 compared to 2.8 percent in the 1990s, GDP per capita doubled from 2001 to 2012 reaching US$2,951, unemployment declined from 13.6 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2012, and absolute poverty decreased from 15.3 percent in 2001 to 8.8 percent in 2008.

2. The Arab Spring in early 2011 spurred a peaceful political transformation in Morocco. Despite a steadily improving economic situation, Morocco has been affected by the wave of protests that has swept the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Morocco had already engaged on a wide-ranging reform program to strengthen the roles of the regions and promote social solidarity and inclusion. A new constitution was adopted through a popular referendum on July 1, 2011 and was promulgated. The new constitution provides mechanisms for the construction of a modern state of law and institutions. It lays the foundation for extended regionalization as a democratic and decentralized system of governance. The constitution also contributes to improving the status of women in Morocco through the adoption of the principle of equality between men and women and through provisions on increasing the participation of women in decision-making bodies. In November 2011, parliamentary elections followed the promulgation of the constitution, leading to the formation of a four-party coalition government that has embraced the constitution's principles and called for more social solidarity and inclusion. This experience has shown that Moroccans are inclined to seek evolution within the system - gradual change continuous with the country's history and religious values.

3. Inequality, poverty, and vulnerability remain important challenges. A quarter of the population is still economically vulnerable (near-poverty). There are persistent disparities as 70 percent of poverty is still rural, and most development indicators in rural areas lag behind urban areas, largely as a result of difficult geography, deteriorating infrastructure, poor access to basic services, and limited capital investments to improve labor value added and hence returns to self-employment and contract labor. Ten percent of Morocco's 13.4 million rural residents lived below the poverty line in 2011. Rural poverty exacerbates gender disparity with relatively higher illiteracy and primary school dropout rates for rural women, and higher infant and maternal mortality.

4. Morocco has engaged in a dynamic process towards strengthening economic opportunities and social inclusion. Several high profile development programs (e.g. the second phase of the National Human Development Initiative, INDH) and new sectoral strategies in the areas of education, employment, and youth have been initiated. Nonetheless, additional efforts are needed to support the country-led reforms. The movements associated with the political transition and constitutional changes represent real pressure on the Moroccan State for credible and faster reforms, notably in the areas of job creation and improvement of the quality of public services delivered.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. Agriculture is central to Morocco's economy, as evidenced by the strong correlation among GDP and agriculture GDP. Over the last agricultural campaign, thanks to favorable weather, the sector represented 15.6 percent of GDP, contributing the most to the country's overall growth. The 20 percent increase in agricultural production allowed Morocco's GDP to jump from 2.7 percent in 2012 to 4.4 percent in 2013. In addition to its contribution to the economy, the agricultural sector represents a critical element in the country's demographic and socio-economic situation, generating 40 percent of the jobs nationwide, mostly in rural areas where the majority of the poor are concentrated. The sector is largely composed of small farmers mostly dedicated to low-value agriculture (67 percent of the farmers own only 26 percent of the land as indicated by the last available agricultural census in 1996), but also counts a small group of dynamic and well-performing large farmers adopting state-of-the-art techniques and well integrated into the national and international markets (less than 1 percent of the farmers own 14 percent of the land). The agricultural sector employs both men and women, but it exhibits great gender disparities. Women's work typically is unpaid (in 2003-04, 58 percent of cases; in 2008, 91 percent); or seasonal and unstable when it is done for remuneration, especially outside of agriculture (59 percent of cases in 2003-04; 84 percent in 2008).

6. Irrigation is important both in terms of increasing the level and stability of incomes in rural areas. Despite representing only 16 percent of the cultivated land, irrigated agriculture contributes to about half of the agriculture GDP, 75 percent of agricultural exports, and 15 percent of overall merchandise exports. High-value horticulture exports, mainly towards Western Europe, include strawberries, tomatoes, melons, grapes, and peppers. The country has 1.46 million ha of permanently irrigated land, 682,600 ha of which are part of nine Large Scale Irrigation (LSI) perimeters operated by nine public agricultural development agencies (Office régional de mise en valeur agricole, ORMVA). ORMVAs are autonomous agencies under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries (MAPM), with the responsibility of constructing new irrigation schemes, rehabilitating and modernizing existing ones, ensuring Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of irrigation and drainage facilities, and providing extension services to farmers. The remaining area is shared between small and medium scale traditional irrigation schemes managed by Water Users Associations, WUA (334,000 ha) and private irrigation (441,000 ha). Morocco is ahead of the curve with its irrigation Public-Private Partnership (PPP) experience. In 2004, it launched the first successful irrigation PPP in the world, in the citrus-production perimeter of Guerdane. Other PPP are at various stages of preparation (Azemmour Bir Jdid, Dar Khrofa, Chtouka).

7. The ability of the agricultural sector to continue to drive shared prosperity in Morocco is threatened by increasing water scarcity. Reduced rainfall, increased rainfall variability, reduced run off, and degradation of water resources have reached alarming levels. Annual renewable water resources total 22 billion m3, corresponding to 730 m3/inhabitant, which is below the threshold for water stress (1,000 m3/inhabitant). The water deficit is estimated at around 2 billion m3, which drives overexploitation of groundwater. Climate change is expected to worsen this situation. Impacts of climate change are already visible in Morocco: the proportion of dry years increased by four times and surface water availability decreased by 35 percent between the period 1977-2006 and 1947-1976. This, in conjunction with increased demand for domestic, industrial, and environmental uses, puts pressure on how irrigated agriculture makes use of the scarce resource.

8. Water scarcity impacts irrigated agriculture in different ways. In areas with private irrigation, which largely rely on groundwater, reduced and more variable rainfall translates into groundwater overexploitation. The majority of the wells is not declared nor monitored, and improvement in water pumping technologies and butane subsidy facilitates overextraction. Decreasing gro undwater levels have a specific equity dimension, impacting first smallholders with less capacity for drilling and pumping deeper. In LSI perimeters, which rely on surface water, water scarcity translates into reduced allocated volumes and consequent limitations to summer crops production. While agriculture remains the primary user of surface water, accounting for 85 percent of the withdrawals, severe restrictions in irrigation have been common in the last 15 years. LSI perimeters in the Oum Er Rbia basin received, on average, only 60 percent of the water volumes they were designed for. Such volumes were consistently lower than the water allocation stated in the Regional Masterplans for Integrated Water Resources Management (Plans Directeurs d'Aménagement et de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau, PDAIRE). Wherever possible, farmers in LSI schemes have been making up for this shortfall by complementing water allocated by the ORMVAs with groundwater, bearing the extra pumping costs and further aggravating groundwater depletion.

9. In addition to water scarcity, farmers in LSI perimeters suffer from other chronic constraints that limit the productive use of the scarce resource. Contrary to farmers in private irrigation who can access water as needed by switching on their pump, farmers in LSI perimeters are subject to rigid water distribution rules, with gravity networks managed so to provide water on rotation. Rotation was suitable when the state had strong influence on crop choices and practices, but does not allow for individual farming choices in the current socio-economic environment. Farmers suffer from uncertainty of access to water, with risk of interruption of service. Also, each farmer is dependent on the neighbors within each block, as they are jointly responsible for the maintenance of quaternary canals and sprinkler mobile equipment, which results in poor on-farm performance. Finally, small farmers face land tenure issues (including land fragmentation), and limited access to markets and credit. All of these constraints lock farmers in LSI schemes into a low-risk and low-return equilibrium in which they carry out low input cost extensive farming focused on low value crops, rather than more capital intensive but higher return high value products which are more at risk in case of water deficiencies.

10. The ORMVAs struggle to improve the performance of LSI perimeters, with aging off-farm infrastructure and poor operation and maintenance (O&M). Volumetric tariffs are insufficient to cover O&M costs (recovery rates in 2010 varied between 68 and 100 percent). Tariffs in LSI perimeters range between 0.27 and 0.77DH/m3 in function of the perimeters and the associated energy bill, compared to 1.30 to 1.80DH/m3 in perimeters managed through PPP. The tariff increase plan for LSI perimeters laid out in 2011 sparked protests by farmers, which led the Government of Morocco (GoM) to postpone the measure. Collection rates are lower than targeted in some ORMVAs (Gharb and Loukkos), generating important arrears. Collective management at the level of the block makes it difficult to persecute one

single farmer who is not paying for the water. Water revenues are not exclusively allocated to the water service, undermining linkages between tariff increase and service improvement. Indeed, a political economy analysis carried out in 2012 with support from the World Bank and other donors in the LSI perimeters of Loukkos, Gharb, and Tadla revealed that resistance was due to the fact that farmers could not see direct improvements in service quality associated with tariff increases.

11. The Government of Morocco is committed to ensure greater returns at the farm and overall economy levels in the face of increasingly restricted water resource. Two synergetic Government strategies are putting in place incentives, investments, and institutional reforms to improve agricultural water productivity in both LSI perimeters and private irrigation and thereby reduce the pressure on water resources while seeking to maintain the sector's contribution to economic growth and employment.

12. The agricultural strategy of the Morocco Green Plan (Plan Maroc Vert, PMV) aims to double the agriculture sector's value-added and create 1.5 million jobs by 2020, thus transforming the sector into a stable source of growth, competitiveness and broad-based economic development. In addition to its overall institutional and policy reforms in the sector, the PMV comprises two Pillars reflecting the dualistic nature of Moroccan agriculture: Pillar I targets commercial farmers and their integration into the national and international markets, while Pillar II targets small subsistence farmers in marginal areas. Under both pillars, technology and organizational support is provided to implement an agri-food chain approach linking farmers to market. The Agricultural Development Fund (Fonds de développement agricole, FDA), the GoM's principal agricultural subsidy instrument, has been reformed and support measures aligned with the strategic directions of the PMV. Impacts of the PMV are already visible. Over the period 2008-2012, production has increased by 45 percent, agricultural exports have risen by 18 percent, and 77,000 permanent jobs have been created.

13. The National Plan for Saving Water in Irrigation (Plan national d'économie de l'eau d'irrigation, PNEEI) promotes more productive water use by introducing efficient irrigation technologies (mainly drip irrigation) over 555,000 ha of the country's irrigated land by 2020, of which 335,000 ha in private farms and 220,000 ha in LSI perimeters. Since its launch in 2008, the adoption of drip irrigation has been proceeding at a fast pace for the privately developed irrigation areas, with over 200,000 ha completed (60 percent of the 2020 target). In LSI perimeters, only 57,000 ha are in the process of being converted due to the need for prior investments in the off-farm conveyance networks. The figure is expected to increase steadily in the coming future, considering that pre-feasibility studies in LSI perimeters have been completed for 100,000 ha. This conversion is expected to have huge impacts: field experiments in Tadla demonstrated that agricultural water productivity (defined as value of produce per unit of water used) could be doubled by switching from the traditional surface irrigation to improved management under drip irrigation.

14. In parallel, the GoM is implementing an institutional reform of the ORMVAs to improve their performance. The reform aims to regroup all deconcentrated services of MAPM at the regional level under an umbrella institution named Regional Agriculture and Rural Development Offices (Offices régionaux de développement agricole et rural, ORDAR), and to isolate irrigation water service delivery from the other mandates and to establish this service into regional subsidiary companies to ORDARs. The regional irrigation companies would function as real Irrigation Utilities with principles of transparency and financial and managerial autonomy. Each ORDAR will serve as a common platform for local delivery of all regional services (extension, food safety, irrigation, investment, and research) associated with MAPM. The creation of ORDARs represents a major initiative by MAPM to make service delivery more responsive and accountable to regional stakeholders and clients.

15. The proposed Large Scale Irrigation Modernization project (LSIMP; Projet de Modernisation de la

Grande Irrigation, PMGI) would support the comprehensive reform process put in place by the GoM, to ensure the provision of better service by the ORMVAs so to create the conditions for farmers in LSI perimeters to adopt more performing irrigation techniques. In the long term, farmers, freed up from the traditional constraints, would be in the position of improving farming practices and take better advantage of marketing opportunities. This would translate into crop switching and intensification, increase in agricultural water productivity with better return per unit of water used, and higher farmers' income. The improvement of the quality of water delivery service would also reduce the need of farmers to tap into groundwater, contributing to more sustainable water management.

Relationship to CAS

16. The proposed project is fully consistent with the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Morocco (FY14-17) (Report No. 86518-MA). It would contribute to Strategic Outcome 1.3, Increase the productivity and value-added of the agri-food sector under Result Area 1, Promoting Competitive and Inclusive Growth.

17. The proposed project would contribute to the achievement of the twin goals in Morocco, by creating the underlying conditions for small farmers to increase their incomes, thereby boosting prosperity and reducing poverty in rural areas. The majority of the farmers targeted by the project would be small farmers, on average with farms of less than three ha. As stated in the CPS, improving the prospects of the rural poor requires sustainable farming practices, higher incomes, and more diverse income opportunities. Increased value added from irrigation water and crops produced, improved agriculture value chain management and commercialization practices, reform of extension services, and promotion of local transformation through agroindustry would ensure that better sector performance translates into higher incomes for all. By reducing reliance on groundwater, the proposed project would also reduce disparity in the access to a scarce resource among wealthier and poorer farmers.

18. Women do contribute to agricultural activity in the project area. This usually takes the form of support to the male head of the family during specific phases of the agriculture campaign (for example, harvesting), or complementary activities (for example, livestock) to enhance household revenue. While women in Morocco are increasingly taking a decision role in non-irrigated agriculture in marginal areas, where male urban migration is occurring, men remain the main interlocutor in irrigated agriculture. Thus, it is expected that only a limited number of women will be among the direct target population for the proposed project. Instead, a larger number of women is expected to be among the indirect beneficiaries of the project along the agricultural value chain. The assessment of the market opportunities under the proposed project will give specific attention to the development of agri-food chains where women and women's organizations can take a leadership role. The proposed project will collect gender-disaggregated data and will ensure that services are provided in a fair, just and un-biased manner and no preference is given to one gender. Morocco has indeed remarkable examples of rural women demonstrating leadership skills and effectively enhancing the income levels of their families.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)

19. The proposed project development objectives (PDOs) are for participating farmers: (i) to receive a good quality irrigation water service delivery, and (ii) to adopt drip irrigation.

Key Results (From PCN)

20. The proposed PDO aims to create the conditions for participating farmers to increase agriculture water productivity and thus value added of agriculture. It is based on the assumptions that quality of irrigation water service delivery (defined as water available to individual farmers in an on-demand,

reliable, and equitable way) will allow and lead to the introduction of more efficient on-farm irrigation techniques (mainly drip, but also microsprinkler and sprinkler) compared to traditional irrigation practices. These irrigation techniques, combined with improved agronomic practices, would allow to produce more with the same amount or less water, and justify switching to higher value crops.

21. The project results chain is presented in Annex 3, along side a proposed list of intermediate indicators. During project preparation, this list will be refined in discussion with the client, based on the SMART criteria, as well as data availability, in order to have a comprehensive but manageable Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system during implementation. Proposed PDO level indicators are the following:

- Number of beneficiaries, of which female (core sector indicator)
- Water users provided with new/improved irrigation and drainage service (core sector indicator)
- Quality of the service: Index combining characteristics of the service (individual, on-demand, reliable, and equitable access)
- Clients who have adopted an improved agricultural technology promoted by the project (core sector indicator): Tracks the same information as the indicator "percentage of participating farmers using drip irrigation" in the PROMER

22. Note that indicators "Water users provided with new/improved irrigation and drainage service" and "Number of beneficiaries, of which female" track the same information, but they are both retained due to World Bank corporate requirements.

23. The proposed project will also build on the capacity of the client to monitor higher level objectives, including:

- Number of complaints (citizens engagement)
- Farmers' satisfaction (citizens engagement)
- Number of partnership agreements with agribusinesses
- Water productivity per unit of irrigation water delivered
- Water productivity per unit of irrigation water consumed
- Percentage of agricultural production increase per farm
- Area in hectares of high value-added crops in project area
- Number of participating farmers having applied for groundwater abstraction authorization
- Area of high-value added crops

24. To track agricultural water productivity and groundwater abstraction, the proposed project will use innovative remote sensing techniques on an experimental basis. The ORMVAs will be responsible for all analyses and on-site data collection and monitoring necessary to assess the outputs, intermediate and final results of the proposed project. All indicators will be tracked disaggregated by ORMVA.

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

25. The proposed project will finance the conversion of gravity networks and the modernization of pressurized networks and the institutional strengthening of the service providers to make water available to individual farmers in an on-demand, reliable, and equitable way. This will allow participating farmers to switch to high-performing on-farm irrigation, mainly (but not limited to) drip irrigation. Farmers will themselves make the investments for the on-farm equipment, benefitting from subsidies from the Agricultural Development Fund (Fond pour le Développement Agricole, FDA). The proposed project

will finance technical assistance to help farmers adopt these more performing irrigation techniques, as well as access the market for high-value production. The proposed project will be implemented using the same implementation framework of the on-going PROMER.

26. The proposed project will be implemented in specific irrigation sectors of the Tadla, Doukkala, and Haouz irrigated perimeters in the Oum Er Rbia basin, and of the Gharb irrigated perimeter in the Sebou basin. Establishment of a list of sectors was done on the basis of pre-feasibility studies carried out by the ORMVAs, and including a preliminary design of equipment, consultations with farmers, and financial and economic analysis. Criteria for the selection included: (i) economic and financial viability of the project, with an Economic Rate of Return (ERR) higher than 12 percent; (ii) farmers participation (quantified in terms of areas for which farmers have committed to the project in writing) higher than 70 percent; (iii) no requirement of additional pumping; and (iv) network in need of rehabilitation. The proposed sectors sum up to an approximately area of 30,000 ha.

27. The proposed project includes 3 components: (1) Improving off-farm infrastructure; (2) Supporting farmers' access to technology, financing, and markets; and (3) Supporting implementing agencies in project management and monitoring.

Component 1: Improving off-farm infrastructure

28. Component 1 will construct pressurized networks to replace existing gravity networks, and modernize existing pressurized networks, so that each individual farmer receives water in an on-demand, reliable, and equitable way. The new off-farm infrastructure will allow farmers to receive irrigation water on demand (rather than on the basis of a periodic rotation), with optimal pressure to ensure good performance of on-farm pressurized irrigation technologies (mainly drip, but also microsprinkler and sprinkler), and with reduced risk of system shuts-down. Component 1 activities will include: (i) detailed studies including topographic works and laboratory tests; (ii) technical assistance for works monitoring and control; (iii) upgrading some main canals and constructing tanks to install flow-regulation systems necessary for on-demand irrigation; (iv) constructing feeder pipes for areas which benefit from gravity pressurization and pumping stations for those areas that need artificial pressurization; (v) constructing filtration stations; (vi) constructing distribution piped networks to replace existing canals or to extend existing piped networks and (vii) constructing outlet devices at the block and farm levels to regulate, measure and control water delivered to farmers. This component will be executed by the ORMVAs.

Component 2: Supporting farmers' access to technology, financing, and markets

29. Component 2 will support farmers in the adoption of more efficient on-farm irrigation techniques. Farmers will themselves finance investments in on-farm equipment, benefitting from subsidy under the FDA. In line with the PNEEI, the proposed project will promote the adoption of drip irrigation, which typically allows more efficient water use in high-value crops planted in rows. Farmers are eligible for a 100 percent subsidy under the FDA for the purchase and installation of drip irrigation equipment. In parallel, the proposed project will promote microsprinkler and sprinkler irrigation techniques for those farmers who will keep producing crops on part of the farm for which microsprinkler and sprinkler irrigation are more or equally suitable (for example, sprinkler irrigation for supplemental irrigation of extensive crops like cereals), or for those farmers who do not show the willingness to convert to drip irrigation. Farmers are eligible for a 100 percent and 70 percent subsidy under the FDA for the purchase and installation of microsprinkler and sprinkler equipment, respectively. Component 2 will provide demonstration activities, applied research and agricultural advisory services, and improvement of water application and technical control of on-farm irrigation. Also, it will support participating farmers to gain

better knowledge of market opportunities for high-value agricultural production and the inputs needed to successfully sell on those markets, to promote crop switching and intensification. It will also help them develop better knowledge of their groundwater, where appropriate. Component 2 activities will include: (i) provision of technical assistance to help farmers to use the new irrigation equipment and to improve their agricultural practices; (ii) provision of mobile laboratory equipment to monitor performance of new irrigation systems; (iii) provision of technical assistance to establish a farmer irrigation alert system; (iv) provision of technical assistance to support the farmers and agro industries to develop and enter into partnership agreements aimed at securing markets for high value crops; (v) provision of technical assistance and equipment to help the implementation of the Market Information System; and (vi) provision of technical assistance to raise awareness for sustainable use of groundwater. This component will be executed by the ORMVAs.

Component 3: Supporting implementing agencies in project management and monitoring

30. Component 3 will provide effective support to the executing agencies to strengthen their capacity in using the new off-farm infrastructure to provide high-quality service to farmers, as well as to design and carry out optimal O&M to ensure sustainability of the off-farm investment over time. It will also support executing agencies in managing, monitoring, and evaluating the proposed project. The project will finance limited logistical goods and services including vehicles, computer, and software resources and measures to improve connections between the ORMVAs and the DIAEA. Component 3 activities will include: (i) provision of training, technical assistance, and computer equipment to MAPM for designing and implementing technical management tools, to be used by the four ORMVAs; (ii) provision of training and technical assistance to ORMVAs, for improving project management tools, project M&E and implementation of the project in general, including the EMPs and LAPs; (iii) provision of technical assistance to ORMVAs for reviewing on-farm irrigation projects to be submitted by farmers; (iv) provision of vehicles and computer equipment for ORMVAs; and (v) rehabilitation and provision of equipment for field extension offices. This component will be executed by the ORMVAs and the DIAEA. DIAEA will be responsible for all the activities that require a coordinated approach across the four ORMVAs – training on general themes, design of common systems for the four ORMVAs, services and expertise that are identical in all four. These horizontal services will be carried out through a framework contract with the FAO which will allow the DIAEA to hire the best local and international consultants.

IV. Safeguard Policies that Might Apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	**X**		
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		**X**	
Forests OP/BP 4.36		**X**	
Pest Management OP 4.09		**X**	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		**X**	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		**X**	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	**X**		
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		**X**	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		**X**	

Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		**X**	

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	187.50	Total Bank Financing:	150.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		

Financing Source	**Amount**
Borrower	37.50
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	150.00
Total	187.50

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