



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 03/18/2025 | Report No: ESRSC04851

**I. BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Operation Data**

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P508837	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	HeSP 3-Cent AFR	2026
Operation Name	Health Security Program in Western and Central Africa, using the Multi-Phase Approach - Phase III		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Western and Central Africa	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Republic of, Gabon	WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Health, Nutrition & Population
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, The Gabonese Republic, Republic of Cameroon	Gabon Ministry of Health, Cameroon Ministry of Public Health, Central African Republic Ministry of Health and Population, Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), Republic of Congo Ministry of Health and Population	09-Jun-2025	02-Sep-2025
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
03-Mar-2025	270,000,000.00		

Proposed Development Objective

Increase regional collaboration and health system capacities to prevent, detect and respond to health emergencies in Western and Central Africa.

B. Is the operation being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project Activities



Building from World Bank and partner efforts, the proposed Program provides a platform to strengthen critical capacities for preparedness and response to health emergencies. The Program will invest in key interconnected systems for improving health security designed with a One Health approach, capitalizing on multisectoral collaboration, and convening partner investments.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

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

The Program focuses on detecting, containing, and responding to health emergencies that have been contributing to the fragility in the Central Africa region, including ROC, Gabon, Cameroon, and CAR. Cameroon covers an area of 475,650 square kilometers with an estimated population of 29 million inhabitants with approx. 0.4% of pygmies, more than half is under 20, the under-15s account for 42.5% of the total, and the aged 65 or over is around 3.6%. The Republic of Congo covers an area of 342,000 square kilometers, with an esteemed population of 6.1 million predominantly young, with 47% under the age of 18 and about 8% of pygmies. The country is bordered to the west by Gabon, to the northeast by Cameroon, to the north by the Central African Republic, to the east and southeast by the Democratic Republic of Congo, and finally to the south by the Angolan enclave of Cabinda. Gabon has an estimated population of around 2.6 million people and a total area of approximately 270,000 square kilometers. Central African Republic forms a compact block of 623,000 square kilometers belonging to the continental zone of Equatorial Africa. Its population is estimated at nearly 5 million inhabitants, of which 0.3% are likely to be Pygmies, the proportion of women is 50.2%, and young people under 18 make up more than 50%.

The health systems in these Central African countries are marked, among other things, by vulnerabilities to climate shocks, epidemics, weak capacities to address health emergencies in a context exacerbated by conflicts and violence and significant challenges in managing hazardous medical waste.

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

The proposed HeSP-3 will be coordinated at regional and national levels with steering committees at each level. Governance of the Program will be provided through a Regional Steering Committee (RSC) convened by Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). CEMAC has no previous experience with operational policies, it has recently received WB funding to implement two projects under ESF namely Harmonization and Improvement of Statistics Project in West and Central Africa (HISWACA- P180085 – SOP2) currently under implementation with a budget of US\$ 20 million as well PPA for CEMAC - Regional MPA - Sustainable Congo Basin Forest Economies Project (P505923) currently under preparation. In the context of the HISWACA, it was agreed in the ESCP that "CEMAC has to Establish and maintain a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) with qualified staff and resources to support management of ESHS risks and impacts of the Project including a social specialist, environmental specialist, a gender-based violence (GBV) consultant, and a security risk consultant no later than 3 months after the project became effective". However, to date, which is 11 months later, this has not yet been done.

At the national level in CAR, Cameroon, Gabon, and Congo, the Program will be implemented by the existing and/or new country Project Implementation Units (PIUs) through the ministries of health (MoH).

These national PIUs will coordinate the execution of activities by ministerial departments (health, agriculture/livestock, and environment) involved in the Program at the national level, and will be responsible for the environmental and social risk management requirements. Each PIU at country level must therefore have an E&S staff, depending on the nature of



the activities and the workload. An in-depth analysis and evaluation will be carried out during project preparation to determine the profiles required.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Substantial

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Substantial

The Environmental Risk Rating is considered to be Substantial at this stage, as potential risks and impacts on the environment are not expected to be irreversible. The proposed project is expected to be implemented simultaneously in CAR, Gabon, ROC, Cameroon and CEMAC (i.e. in any other central africa country that is a member of CEMAC) encompassing multiple sub-projects that may have potential impacts related to construction, upgrades, laboratory-generated waste, and healthcare waste, all of which could pose community health risks. Potential risks and impacts can include (i) impacts on water quality, (ii) disposal and management of building/construction wastes, (iii) occupational health and safety risks and (iv) nuisances related to air and noise emissions; and (v) the management and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes. In addition, supported activities will include logistics and technical support for meetings, training, and simulations/tabletop drills to test capacities regularly. Activities present risks of traffic accidents for both project staff during the multiple field missions and even for the communities. Although many of these impacts are reversible and of low to moderate severity, the extensive scale of activities, the high volume of transactions in all countries and, insufficient material, financial and human resources mean therefore elevate the overall risk level. The environmental risk level of the project will be reassessed during the project preparation phase.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

Substantial

While some of the social risks may be significant, particularly those associated with the new civil works, most are site-specific, predictable, and medium in magnitude with regard to geographical areas. The social risk level is therefore rated as "Substantial." Potential social risks relate to: i) inadequate stakeholder engagement to properly inform design and implementation of health systems response or development of SOPs, as a broad group of stakeholders at community, national, and regional level would be present different levels of interests or influence on the program; ii) the exclusion of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups such as individuals living in remote areas, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, indigenous people or the Mbororo; iii) inadequate attention to ensure that guidelines established under the program include considerations for data protection and ethical data security protocols; iv) occupational risks and worker labor conditions and the protection of the labor force, during civil works for constructions (health centers, laboratories) and the use/administration of medical equipment, vaccines, or reagents; v) sexual abuse and exploitation and sexual harassment (SEA/SH), associated with the influx of community health workers and other project workers during health emergency response or construction works ; land acquisition impacts associated with new constructions. Moreover, the beneficiary countries (Cameroon, CAR, ROC, and Gabon) are impacted by diverse security risk concerns, including the presence of non-state armed groups particularly in CAR and Cameroon impacting institutions. Security risks at this stage of the project are assessed as significant.

B. Relevance of Standards and Policies at Concept Stage



B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards

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

Relevant

In order to address E&S risks, an Umbrella Stakeholder Engagement Plan (USEP), Umbrella Labor Management Procedures (ULMP) and umbrella Environmental and Social Management Framework (U-ESMF) will be prepared to cover all HeSP 3 countries and CEMAC. This U-ESMF will address larger goals of MPA and include CERC requirements. It will be cleared by the Bank and disclosed before project Appraisal. SEA/SH risk mitigation measures will be tailored according to each country and the RIU. Risk levels determined in the SEA/SH risk assessments will also be included in the ESMF to guide the preparation of country-specific ESMPs. The U-ESMF will also include guidance regarding the reporting of emergency incidents. As part of the Financial Agreement, the RIU and each PIU will also prepare an Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), and country specific SEP, LMP, GBV assessment and plan, SRA and SMP.

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Relevant

Project stakeholders include public health users, health care professionals, laboratory workers, workers involved in medical waste management, animal health professionals, cattle owners, community residents, as well as households. Additionally, affected stakeholders will include program workers, civil works contractors, and key suppliers (medical equipment, medicine, vaccine suppliers, IT equipment suppliers, etc.). Vulnerable stakeholders across all countries include elderly health users with mobility constraints, health users with disabilities, individuals who are chronically ill or immuno-depressed, health users living in remote, hard-to-reach areas, pregnant women, widows, and individuals living below the poverty levels in each country, including the homeless, and slum residents, Indigenous people, Mbororos, internally displaced persons and refugees. The project will prepare an USEP before project appraisal which will be followed by CEMAC and country specific SEPs.

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions

Relevant

The Program will involve direct, contracted, community, and primary supply workers, including civil servants and consultants. The key labor risks associated with the Program include occupational health and safety risks (OHS) (civil works, exposure to viruses, bacteria, and medical waste, among others). Other risks include potential sexual harassment risks. To address these risks, the project will prepare a ULMP prior appraisal. However, PIUs and CEMAC will prepare specific Labor Management Procedures (LMP), which will be disclosed before negotiations. The LMPs will include country-specific requirements in line ESS 2, such as minimum age and national laws, grievance mechanisms, and mitigation measures to address OHS, as well as SEA/SH risks. In addition to the above, the U-ESMF will include sections on OHS and guidance for the preparation of specific instruments to be prepared by the PIUs or contractors prior to the start of works including ESMPs and C-ESMPs.

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Relevant

This standard is relevant. Project activities will record a significant amount of waste, including non-hazardous solid waste, hazardous solid waste. E&S risks and impacts should be identified and mitigated as per C-ESMP prepared for each worksite before the start of work. Construction ESMPs (C-ESMP) and other plans, such as a Waste Management Plan (including hazardous and e-waste, Traffic Management Plan, Security Management Plan, OHS Plan, CHS plan,



L&FS plan, etc.), should be in line with local standards as well as GIIP and WBG General Environment, Health, and Safety Guidelines requirements. Regarding project activities, GHG accounting is not needed.

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

Community health and safety risks include those associated with civil works, such as noise, vibration, disturbances, SEA/SH, and risks associated with the operation of the infrastructures and the use of the medical and IT equipment financed under the Program. These include risks related to the communities' exposure to biohazards. Civil works are not expected to lead to a significant labor influx, as most of the works are small-scale. However, the increased presence of new health workforce, such as Community Health Workers (CHWs), nurses, midwives, and physicians, may create concerns about SEA/SH within communities. The PIUs will also prepare specific GBV: SEA/SH assessments and Plans prior to the implementation of project activities and recruit a GBV specialist. To address country specific security risks, CEMAC and country specific SRA/SMPs will be prepared and security specialists recruited based on country context.

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

Relevant

This standard is relevant given that the project plans new constructions or expansions of health care services and laboratories. However, at this stage, it is unclear which locations/countries civil works will take place. Once sites marked to accommodate works are identified, E&S site screening will inform if impacts require the preparation of Resettlement Plans. The ESMF will include procedures to screen for ESS5 impacts. A resettlement framework will not be required given that new constructions/expansions are usually carried out on existing properties of ministries of health of the client countries. Also, the E&S track record of existing health projects in CAR, Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo indicate limited ESS5 impacts. However, respective clients will prepare a Resettlement Plan in conformity with ESS5 if related ESS5 impacts are identified during E&S site-screening.

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Not Currently Relevant

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

Relevant

Indigenous Peoples communities are present in CAR, Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo and are considered vulnerable and disadvantaged. The PIUs in each country will conduct a Social Assessment to examine potential project risks, impacts, and benefits for the IPs. Using a consultative approach, the Social Assessment will identify measures to mitigate risks and ensure culturally acceptable benefits to IPs. However, no activity under this project is expected to have an adverse effect on Indigenous Peoples (displacement, land, cultural heritage, habits & behaviors). The Umbrella Stakeholder Engagement Plan will include outreach programs to ensure that Indigenous communities, especially those living in remote areas, are aware of project activities that may impact them. The potential social impacts can be adequately managed/ mitigated through developing, implementing, and monitoring appropriate measures. These measures will be detailed in country-specific Indigenous Peoples Plans (IPP).

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage

Not Currently Relevant



ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries

Not Currently Relevant

B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways

No

OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas

No

B.3 Other Salient Features

Use of Borrower Framework

In Part

CEMAC as a borrower here, does not have regulations on environmental and social plans. However, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), and Congo each have an institutional and regulatory framework for environmental and social management, which are governed in Cameroon by law n°96/12 of 5th august 1996 relating to environmental management, in CAR by Law No. 07.018 of 28 December 2007 Environmental Code of the Central African Republic, and in Congo by Law no. 33 - 2023 of 17 November 2023 on sustainable environmental management in the Republic of Congo. Each of these laws recognizes a central entity in charge of environmental issues and defines the types of environmental assessments, the process for conducting these environmental assessments, and the actors responsible for conducting these environmental assessments. The project will conduct environmental and social assessments as part of the preparation and implementation of its activities. A more detailed analysis will be conducted.

Use of Common Approach

No

C. Overview of Required Environmental and Social Risk Management Activities

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

- Prepare an Umbrella SEP, LMP, and ESMF (including guidance for security risk assessment and SEA/SH assessment risk and an assessment related to IP/SSAHUTLC within the program) to be prepared by appraisal.
- ESCP to be completed by each client (PIUs/RIU) by appraisal. CEMAC and country specific requirements to be presented in respective ESCPs.
- CEMAC and Country specific SEP, SEA/SH assessment and plan, security risk assessment and plan to be prepared, consulted upon and disclosed before the start of program activities at country level.
- CEMAC and Country specific LMPs to be prepared, consulted upon and disclosed before negotiations.
- Coordination aspects among RIU (regional implementation unit) and country implementation unit (PIU) to monitor and report on E&S issues identified or to reported to the Bank
- Measures to consult and address risks related to Indigenous Peoples to be included in the U SEP,U-ESMP and country specific SEPs and ESMPs.
- Country specific IPPs to be prepared as soon as sites of sub-projects are identified.
- Resettlement Plans to be prepared as soon as sites of sub-projects are identified.



- PIU capacity building on E&S risk management, monitoring and reporting to be provided by the Bank E&S team throughout the project life as needed.

III. CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Task Team Leader:	Andre L. Carletto	Title:	Senior Economist
Email:	acarletto@worldbank.org		
TTL Contact:	Alain-Desire Karibwami	Job Title:	Senior Health Specialist
Email:	akaribwami@worldbank.org		
TTL Contact:	Nicolas Rosemberg	Job Title:	Senior Economist, Health
Email:	nrosemberg@worldbank.org		
TTL Contact:	Djibrilla Karamoko	Job Title:	Senior Health Specialist
Email:	dkaramoko@worldbank.org		

IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>

V. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Andre L. Carletto, Alain-Desire Karibwami, Nicolas Rosemberg, Djibrilla Karamoko
ADM Environmental Specialist:	Albert Francis Atangana Ze
ADM Social Specialist:	Barbara Metuge Emade