



# Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

## Concept Stage

### **(ESRS Concept Stage)**

Date Prepared/Updated: 12/10/2021 | Report No: ESRSC02217



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
South Africa	AFRICA EAST	P177439	
Project Name	Accelerating Genomics-based Surveillance for COVID-19 Response in South Africa		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Health, Nutrition & Population	Investment Project Financing		12/10/2021
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
National Treasury	Stellenbosch University		

Proposed Development Objective

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>5.00</b>

**B. Is the project 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 [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]**

**D. Environmental and Social Overview**

D.1. Detailed project location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

The proposed project development objective (PDO) is to improve the capacity for genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in South Africa and the rest of the African region. The activities that will be funded under the RETF project includes: Activity 1) Upgrading CERi and ACEGID genomics laboratories and training sequencing staff and scientists; Activity 2) Establishing an effective system to evaluate diagnostics and vaccine effectiveness against the variants in Africa which



will include the provision of additional equipment, test essays and appointment of additional analytical staff; and Activity 3) Strengthening of the data systems to share and analyze sequencing data in near-real-time. The project will be implemented through laboratories located at Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa (Centre for Epidemic Response Innovation) and the Redeemer’s University in Ede, Nigeria (African Centre of Excellence for Genomics in Infectious Diseases). All project activities will be carried out at already established facilities, therefore, the project is considered to have a minimal to no physical footprint.

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

This project will be executed by the Centre for Epidemic Response Innovation (CERI) at Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa, and the African Centre of Excellence for Genomics in Infectious Diseases (ACEGID) at Redeemer's University in Ede, Nigeria. The borrowing country of the Project is South Africa, and the primary implementing agency of the project is CERI at Stellenbosch University, which will be subcontracting the ACEGID located at the Redeemer's University, Nigeria. A steering committee will be set up by CERI and ACEGID which will meet on a monthly basis to prepare and implement the project.

Stellenbosch University, a research-intensive university, manages over US\$ 1 billion of research funding per year and their relevant E&S risks and impacts. Stellenbosch University oversees environmental, health, and safety aspects of its operations and activities through an Environmental Sustainability Manager and a Senior Occupational Health and Safety Officer. The South Africa Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 is embedded in all activities held within the university.

The core implementation team for this project will be situated at Stellenbosch University. The core implementation team will be led by the Principal Investigators at Stellenbosch University. A project implementation support plan and a measuring and evaluation system will be set up at the start of the project that will set out the specific implementation arrangements for the project including how environmental and social risks will be communicated and managed. The core implementation team will hire an Environmental and Social Consultant to manage the E&S risks associated with the project activities at both CERI and ACEGID. The E&S Consultant will be supervised by the Principal Investigator of the Stellenbosch University.

Neither CERI nor ACEGID have experience with implementing projects under the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework. However, South Africa has a strong environmental and health, and safety legislative framework for managing environmental and occupational health and safety risks in particular how medical waste should be managed. CERI at Stellenbosch University is under the jurisdiction of South Africa legislation.

The focal point for E&S risk management, for this project, will undergo training on the relevant standards of the ESF; applicable to this project; prior to commencement of project activities. Ongoing training and support will be provided by the Bank’s E&S team throughout project implementation to ensure appropriate identification and management of environmental and social risks and relevant plans, as may be deemed necessary.

**II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS**

**A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)**

Low

**Environmental Risk Rating**

Low

The environmental risk classification for the project is considered to be low at this stage. The project will have minimal to no physical footprint as it supports (i) purchasing and installing laboratory equipment at established existing genomic laboratories, (ii) hiring and training of existing and additional sequencing staff, and (iii) strengthening of the data systems for sharing and analyze is of sequencing information. The project will include no

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physical works and anticipated risks and impacts related to staff health and safety are expected to be negligible. The environmental risks related to this project include (a) occupational and community environment, health, and safety risks due to the generation of biohazard/health care wastes emanating from (i) increased capacity in the handling, transporting, processing, and disposal of COVID-19 samples, and (ii) increased exposure to potential infections samples and chemical or hazardous materials during sample processing, and (iii) hazardous waste management from biohazards produced from the laboratory activities. Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with the activities of the project are considered to be minimal, predictable, and short in duration with a low to no probability of having any adverse impact on the environment.

**Social Risk Rating**

Low

The social risk classification for the project is low considering the nature of the activities which mainly involves capacity building and procurement of equipment to strengthen CERI laboratory in South Africa; there are limited to no social risks and impacts that could result through the project’s life cycle. The Project will not include any civil works. Infrastructure upgrades involved only refer to the purchase of new equipment. No renovations/refurbishments are planned. Data privacy is not relevant to the particular scope of this project. It may become relevant down the line in terms of how data is used and will be governed by the implementation agency- CERI at Stellenbosch University’s data privacy regulation. The social risk is thus minimal and could include occupational health and safety (OHS) related risks and SEA/SH risks to health and laboratory workers.

**B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered**

**B.1. General Assessment**

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

**Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:**

This standard is considered relevant to the project. This standard is relevant as the project includes (i) procurement and installation of laboratory equipment in existing genomic laboratories under Activity 1 and 2, (ii) training of existing and hiring of new sequencing staff under Activity 2, and (iii) upgrading of the existing electronic data systems under Activity 3. Negligible or limited environmental and social impacts are expected as a result of the project activities described above. All project activities will take place within already established laboratories, therefore, minimal to no additional new physical footprint is expected from the project activities. Given the short duration of the project, no long-term or irreversible adverse impacts related to environmental or social risk are anticipated. This project will not finance any construction of physical infrastructure facilities or develop policies/regulations/approaches that may cause, from its implementation, significant adverse environmental and social impacts.

The anticipated environmental and social risks and impacts that have been identified are environmental, health, and safety risks due to the generation of biohazard/health care wastes emanating from increased capacity in the handling, transporting, processing, and disposal of COVID-19 samples, and health and safety risks to staff due to exposure to potential infections samples and chemical or hazardous materials during sample processing and potential SEA/SK risks Other labor risks anticipated are (1) safety while traveling for the project (on-road or via air), and (2) exposure to COVID-19 through activities requiring face-to-face interactions such as stakeholder engagement activities, physical meetings. The environmental impacts are considered minimal as it is not foreseen that large

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quantities of additional electronic equipment or energy usages will be required as a result of a strengthened data system and increased genome sequencing capacity.

The social risks are also considered to be minimal and the ESCP will include measures to ensure that E&S risks and impacts are managed in accordance with the requirements of the relevant ESS in WB ESF. Furthermore, ESCP will articulate specific requirements and measures related to labor standards, stakeholder engagement, information disclosure, institutional arrangements, training needs, and reporting requirements. Measures included in the ESCP will be related to (i) biohazard/medical waste management including emergency responses in the event of an accident/loss of samples; (ii) occupational health and safety in the handling of the infectious samples; (iii) emergency responses and incident reporting; (iv) details on an accessible GRM (including whether the implementing agencies existing system meets ESF requirements and how it will be adapted to meet ESF requirements); (v) possible SEA/SH risk mitigation measures (informed by results of SEA/SH tool findings that emerge at appraisal stage).

**Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:**

None

**ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure**

Engagement will be required with other professional agencies including the NIH, WHO, African CDC to ensure successful implementation of the project. The nature and scale of the workforce issues related to labor and working conditions that are anticipated are negligible and will be addressed through the requirement of the national law and requirements as will be outlined under the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). In the case of the GRM, applying proportionality to and given the low potential risks and impacts of the project and number of staff hired to work on the project, the implementing agencies' internal procedures governing grievance redressal could govern. The implementing agencies' internal policies and procedures will be further assessed during the preparation stage. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be prepared as a standalone document and will be disclosed prior to Project Appraisal. The SEP will identify all key existing and potential stakeholders and will describe, among others, their level of interest, influence, and support to the Project and in its planning and implementation. It will describe means, timelines, and frequency of communication with each stakeholder/stakeholder group, grievance mechanisms to be deployed, monitoring, and reporting.

**B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts**

**A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Project.**

**ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions**

ESS2 is considered relevant to the Project activities at this stage. It is anticipated that the project will require the engagement of direct workers under Activity 1, 2, and 3 which will consist of sequencing staff and scientists at CERI and ACEGID, and staff for managing and upgrading of the data system.

Potential ESS2 related risks are (i) occupational health and safety risks related to the transportation and handling of infectious samples and exposure to chemical and hazardous substances during the processing of samples, transportation, and disposal of hazardous and infectious health care waste,; (ii) exposure to COVID-19 through activities requiring face-to-face interactions such as stakeholder engagement activities and physical meetings; (iii) safety while traveling for the project (on-road or via air) including travel for the monthly steering committee meeting; (iv) SEA/SH;

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For the direct workers at CERI and ACEGID, the application of ESS2 is limited to child labor, forced labor, and occupational health and safety requirements.

The steering committee and the core implementation team will be responsible to ensure all basic workplace occupational health and safety requirements, including travel safety precautions and COVID-19 protocols as required by the ESS2 are strictly adhered to.

The project will appoint an environmental and social focal point to provide oversight and technical support to ensure compliance and adherence to the project's environmental and social risk management and OHS protocols, SEA/SH risk mitigation measures, and to ensure that these are incorporated in all terms of references for employment. A Labor Management Procedures will be prepared in the ESCP. Appropriate training on the environmental and social risk management procedures including OHS measures will be provided by the project's environmental and social focal points to all workers involved in the project to ensure they fully understand the COVID-19 protocols and principles for face-to-face events and safe handling and disposal of the infectious samples.

### **ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management**

ESS3 is considered relevant to the Project activities at this stage.

It is anticipated that the number of samples received for genomic sequencing will increase as a result of the upgrading of genomics laboratories under Activity 1 and increased capacity and resources under Activity 2. Potential ESS3 related risks are related to biohazardous/ healthcare and chemical wastes management related to the handling, transportation, and disposal of infectious/biohazardous samples and processing of samples in the laboratory.

The management of biohazardous/ healthcare and laboratory (chemical waste) waste will be implemented through infection control and waste management plan that will be prepared for this project as part of the ESCP. The ESCP will include requirements for electronic waste disposal and procurement of energy-efficient electronic equipment when required.

### **ESS4 Community Health and Safety**

ESS4 is considered relevant to the Project activities at this stage.

Activities 1 and 2 under this project will contribute to the increase in infectious samples being transported, handled, processed, and disposed of by the laboratories. The project also plans for activities such as stakeholder engagement that may require face-to-face interaction with the communities.

Potential ESS4 related risks are related to community health and safety issues associated with potentially inappropriate handling, transportation, and disposal of potentially infectious samples and biohazardous/ healthcare waste to which community members may be exposed. Additionally, exposure to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases to communities may be caused through activities requiring face-to-face interactions such as stakeholder engagement activities.

Any potential GBV/SEA/SH risks associated will project activities will also be further examined during project appraisal and reflected in the ESCP and updated A-ESRS.

Appropriate proper training on the environmental and social risk management procedures will be provided by the project's environmental and social focal points for the project workers to ensure they fully understand (i) the appropriate methods of biohazard handling, transportation, and disposal; (ii) the COVID-19 protocols and principles for face-to-face events with the communities; (iii) any SEA/SH risk mitigation measures.



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

ESS5 is considered not relevant to the Project activities at this stage. This project is not expected to involve any land acquisition or restrictions to land use. Renovation required at the designated laboratories to accommodate additional capacity for genomic sequencing will be done within existing structures and facilities.

**ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources**

ESS6 is considered not relevant to the Project activities at this stage. The activities directly supported by the project do not have a physical footprint and will not affect any biodiversity or living natural resources.

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

ESS7 is considered not relevant to the Project activities at this stage. The activities supported by the project do not have a physical footprint and are therefore not likely to have Indigenous People/ Sub-Saharan African Historically underserved Traditionally Local Communities.

**ESS8 Cultural Heritage**

ESS8 is considered not relevant to the Project activities at this stage. The activities supported by the project do not have a physical footprint and are therefore not likely to have an impact on any cultural heritage.

**ESS9 Financial Intermediaries**

ESS9 is considered not relevant to the Project activities at this stage. The project will not make use of a financial intermediary to lend funds to sub-projects at this stage.

**B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks**

None

**C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply**

<b>OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways</b>	No
<b>OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas</b>	No

**III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE**

**A. Is a common approach being considered?** No

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**Financing Partners**

None

**B. Proposed Measures, Actions and Timing (Borrower’s commitments)**

**Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:**

Finalize the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Finalize the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan

**Possible issues to be addressed in the Borrower Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP):**

Measures included in the ESCP will be related to (i) biohazard/medical waste management including emergency responses in the event of an accident/loss of samples; (ii) occupational health and safety in the handling of the infectious samples; (iii) emergency responses and incident reporting; (iv) Set up of GRM; (v) SEA/SH risk mitigation measures

**C. Timing**

**Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS**

30-Nov-2021

**IV. CONTACT POINTS**

**World Bank**

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**Borrower/Client/Recipient**

Borrower: National Treasury

**Implementing Agency(ies)**

Implementing Agency: Stellenbosch University

**V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**





## **The World Bank**

Accelerating Genomics-based Surveillance for COVID-19 Response in South Africa (P177439)

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**VI. APPROVAL**



Task Team Leader(s): Thulani Clement Matsebula

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