



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 01/22/2025 | Report No: ESRSC04720

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

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P509153	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	WACA+	2026
Operation Name	West Africa Coastal Areas Blue Economy and Resilience Multi-Phased Program		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Western and Central Africa			Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Fisheries and Port Infrastructures , Ministry of Environment and Transport	30-Sep-2025	05-Dec-2025
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
13-Jan-2025	360,000,000.00		

Proposed Development Objective

Develop and strengthen the resilience of select areas of the West African coast.

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

WACA+ will create better jobs in the blue economy by facilitating financing, technical assistance, and market development for blue enterprises, alongside infrastructure investments in relevant sub-sectors. It will also strengthen the health and resilience of coastal and marine assets through infrastructure investments, including nature-based solutions, ecosystem restoration, and improved management and monitoring of marine and coastal resources.



D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

The project sites located in the coastal regions of Benin and Mauritania and Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde for Phases 1 and 2, respectively. As in other West African countries, the degradation of coastal resources and ecosystems in the countries is accelerating due to population increase and climate change. The deterioration of the coast is leading to significant and potentially irreversible loss of critical ecosystems such as beaches and mangroves, which provide important coastal protective and social services (livelihoods, food, protection from storm surges, ecosystem services and timber). The physical characteristics of these coastal regions include coastal barrier systems comprising sandy or rocky shores, which are intersected by river outlets and canals, either natural or man-made, that link lagoon systems to the Atlantic Ocean. In some locations, urban developments and infrastructure, such as ports, dominate the coastline. Other key characteristics are flooding, algal bloom and pollution due to both human activity and natural forces. Land and natural resource management are of major importance for the sustainable development of the coast in Benin, while a large part of the territory is made up of marshland and farmland. In Mauritania, over 60 percent of the urban population resides in the capital, meanwhile the country is also highly exposed to floods and coastal erosion.

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

Each Borrower and Regional Organization (RO) will have a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) with overall responsibility for project management, including social and environmental aspects. All but the Cabo Verde PIU have already been established under WACA 1 and 2, with E&S staff trained in environmental and social aspects. The PIUs for Phase 1 (Benin and Mauritania) are currently implementing WACA 1, and are available to support project preparation. As for Phase 2, the PIUs for Senegal and Guinea-Bissau are also in place with E&S specialists on board for the implementation of WACA 1 and 2, respectively. An assessment of the requirements for Cabo Verde will be conducted once activities have been defined. With regards to the regional activities, the WAEMU contracted the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to establish the Regional Implementation Support Unit (RISU) to support country PIUs, coordinate regional technical activities, facilitate access to high level expertise, as well as promote exchanges in E&S best practices and lessons-learned, and the same model will continue under WACA +. The RISU E&S specialists are familiar with the ESF requirements. During preparation, the Bank's Task Team will assess if there is a need to recruit additional E&S expertise. Lessons learned from Phase 1 include the need for PIUs to improve information sharing and the management of grievances during the Resettlement Plan (RP) preparation and implementation. Affected households will need to be informed of project potential impacts, the RP process and implementation calendar, proposed compensation measures and the continuous management of complaints. The PIUs should improve the RP implementation monitoring system, with a particular focus on informing affected households on RP timelines and any change that may occur associated with the project footprint.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

High

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

High

The Program is expected to provide environmental benefits by restoring coastal ecosystems, particularly mangroves, and conserving biodiversity. This includes mitigating erosion and flooding risks, enhancing fisheries production and processing, and ensuring the sustainable management of ports. However, the initial phase of the Program is



anticipated to have significant potential impacts and is classified as high environmental risk due to: (i) the similarity of WACA+ activities to the category A WACA Resip 1 and 2 projects, which posed challenges in environmental and social management for borrowers; (ii) the project's scope, nature, and environmental sensitivity, especially component 1, which will finance various activities including civil works and sea defense. These interventions may occur in sensitive coastal areas with mangroves or result in the possible interruption of natural habitats due to the works; (iii) the risk that improperly designed or implemented interventions could exacerbate potential coastal flooding and erosion downstream; (iv) expected phase 1 activities that may also lead to residual impacts such as (a) changes in hydrodynamic conditions along the coast and (b) loss of habitats and marine species, particularly those that are non-mobile or have limited adaptability to the changes induced by the activities.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

High

Based on available information, the project social risk is rated High. Key social risks associated with the proposed activities include: (i) potential physical and economic resettlement and restriction of access to natural resources caused by the proposed infrastructures, the income-generating activities planned under Pillar 1, the fisheries and aquaculture value chain under Pillar 3 and the MSME activities under Pillar 4 - unless activities leading to these impacts are excluded from financing. Some activities, especially those related to the establishment of an Integrated Coastal Zone management (ICZM) may give rise to conflicts due to competition over the use and exploitation of coastal and marine resources, the plurality of structures involved in the management, as well as conservation or protection interests. Disadvantaged or vulnerable groups may be excluded from project benefits, because of elite capture, as well as limited information or access to project sites. Other potential risks include the potential for child or forced labor; poor labor conditions, occupational and community health and safety risks, including the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH).

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

ESS1 is relevant due to the High E&S risks and impacts, such as coastal flooding and erosion, potential loss of habitats and marine species, biodiversity, as well as occupational and community health and safety risks. Impacts from activities conducted through Financial Intermediaries are also expected and thus the project will require them to prepare Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS). Impacts from Technical Assistance (TA) activities will be managed in accordance with the World Bank ESF and OESRC's Advisory Note. Prior to appraisal, Phase 1 countries will each prepare a SEP, an LMP, the ESCP as well as advanced drafts of the ESIs for the first-movers activities that have technical design readily available. The RO will also prepare an SEP and ESCP prior to appraisal. No ESF instruments will be required at this stage for Phase 2 countries given that the subprojects have not yet been identified.

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Relevant

Key project affected stakeholders may include coastal communities and households who may be impacted by land acquisition or involuntary resettlement, MSMEs owners and workers in tourism, fisheries, and aquaculture, representatives from local and national government, environmental CSOs as well as maritime private sector and



financial sector entities. Vulnerable stakeholders may include people without rights over land, poor communities that are heavily reliant on natural resources for their livelihood, women, artisanal and small-scale fishers, disabled, elderly, migrant fishermen or minority ethnic groups. Each participating country and Regional Organizations under Phase 1 will prepare their own Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that will be disclosed prior to appraisal. Each SEP will include the description of a grievance mechanism that will build on existing structures from the ongoing WACA 1, and outline engagement tools to best interact with each stakeholder group.

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions

Relevant

Project will include direct, contracted and primary supply workers. The relevance of community workers will be assessed during project preparation. Labor risk include poor labor working conditions, grievances over recruitment processes, discrimination and exclusion of vulnerable groups. Occupational health and safety risks include health and safety risks associated with civil works, such as traffic safety, injuries or falls, and exposure to dust and noise. Outdoor workers, especially those working in mangroves may be expose to common biological hazards as well high temperatures and strenuous working conditions. Workers involved in the construction of coastal infrastructure may also be exposed to drowning hazards. To manage these risks, Benin and Mauritania PIUs will prepare Labor Management Procedures (LMP), based on the template prepared by the Bank prior to appraisal. Requirements for labor related issues management for the Regional Organizations will be integrated into the ESCP.

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Relevant

The implementation of certain planned activities, including large-scale infrastructure located in or near sensitive areas, the development of fisheries and aquaculture could be sources of air pollution by odors, dust, exhaust gases from equipment, pollution of soil and water and their resources by various wastes (solid waste, pesticides, used oil, etc.); not to mention coastal protection works which could also be a source of various pollutions. Therefore, for all activities that could be a source of pollution, assessment of risks and impacts and proposed mitigation measures related to relevant requirements of ESS3 will be included within scope of the ESCP, ESIA's and ESMPs as relevant. During preparation, relevant domestic regulations as well as emission/pollution standards or guidelines and their enforcement will be reviewed against the requirements of ESS3 and the World Bank's applicable Environmental, Safety Guidelines during all the phases of the program.

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

The project is anticipated to have health and safety impacts on the community in the project area, including exposure to dust, noise, and vibration, as well as accidents related to vehicle, truck, and heavy machinery traffic during the construction of infrastructure projects (e.g., roads, wave breakers, small jetties). Improper management of aquaculture projects could also affect local community health and safety. Additionally, misuse of grants by local beneficiaries for community development projects may negatively impact the local community and lead to Sexual Abuse and Exploitation/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH). These risks will be evaluated during the screening process of each subprojects, the preparation of the ESIA's, and appropriate measures will be proposed in the ESMPs.

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

Relevant

Project activities may lead to physical and economic resettlement, including temporary restriction of access to natural resources. During project implementation, Phase 1 countries will prepare Resettlement Plans (RPs) based on the



technical design of the infrastructures financed under the project. The RPs will include provisions on eligibility criteria, procedures and standards for compensation, arrangements for consultations, and grievances management. They will have to be approved by the Bank, disclosed and the affected households compensated before the start of civil works in a given section. The requirement to prepare an RP will also apply to Phase 2 countries and included in their ESCPs. Moreover, the need to request country clients to prepare a Process Framework for households impacted by the creation of Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) will be assessed during project preparation.

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Relevant

The activities under the proposed program could potentially alter the natural habitat specially at the mangrove areas and also in the sea during coastal protection works. Habitat restoration and enhancement measures are suggested to include in the program design to avoid, minimize, mitigate and or compensate any adverse impacts on the natural habitat. This will be reviewed during initial stage of implementation, once location-specific information for the proposed project activities is available. Furthermore, the program will also promote activities of primary production and harvesting of living natural resources such as fishes and other sea products, the overall sustainability of these activities will be assessed, as well as their potential impacts on local, nearby or ecologically linked habitats, biodiversity and communities. Prior appraisal, a rapid critical habitats assessment which will determine relevant actions to be included in the ESCP will be realized.

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

Not Currently Relevant

This standard is currently not considered relevant but will be further assessed during project preparation.

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage

Relevant

Some program activities may occur in areas where cultural heritage exist. Local communities maintain shrines, deities and their temples along the coast, as well as intangible cultural heritage linked to water bodies, especially in Benin. In application of the mitigation hierarchy, the program will avoid when possible, using such locations. Once the areas for implantation of infrastructures are identified, the site specific ESIA will include a section on cultural heritage to ensure that there is no pre-existing or known cultural heritage sites that could be affected. When impact is unavoidable, adequate mitigation measures will be outlined in the environmental and social assessment instruments. Where appropriate, a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be prepared and consulted upon with stakeholders. The ESMPs will include 'chance find' procedures for any archaeological heritage likely to be encountered during program activities.

ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries

Relevant

ESS9 is relevant for the program as it will provide access to financing to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) under Pillar 4 through traditional instruments (e.g., loans, guarantees, including through financial intermediaries) and innovative mechanisms like blue bonds. An assessment of the capacity of the participating FIs involved in pillar 4 against ESS9 will be carried out they will be required to develop and implement an Environmental



and Social Management System (ESMS) to ensure the risks and impacts related to the implementation of the proposed program are adequately managed.

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

No

The program is High risk, and the use of borrower framework is not planned for in the 3 countries.

Use of Common Approach

TBD

The program will be co-financed with IFC. The project will apply the ESF.

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?

Each country will prepare and disclose by appraisal:

- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- For subprojects with available technical design: Advanced draft of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
- Labor Management Procedures (LMP)
- High-level analysis of biodiversity impact assessment

The regional entities will prepare and disclose by appraisal:

- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)

Each country will prepare and disclose during implementation and prior to the implementation of the relevant civil works/activities:

- ESIA/ESMP
- RAP
- ESMS



III. CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Task Team Leader: Veruschka Schmidt Title: Senior Environmental Specialist

Email: vschmidt@worldbank.org

TTL Contact: Berengere P. C. Prince Job Title: Lead Natural Resources Management Specialist, Program leader

Email: bprince@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): Veruschka Schmidt, Berengere P. C. Prince

ADM Environmental Specialist: Alphonse Emadak

ADM Social Specialist: Eloise Sophie Fluet