Public Disclosure Authorized

# Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 12-Dec-2021 | Report No: PIDC33271

## BASIC INFORMATION

### A. Basic Project Data

| Country | Project ID | Parent Project ID (if any) | Project Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cote d'Ivoire | P178362 | | Northern Cote d'Ivoire Inclusive Connectivity and Rural Infrastructure Project (P178362) |
| **Region** | **Estimated Appraisal Date** | **Estimated Board Date** | **Practice Area (Lead)** |
| AFRICA WEST | Oct 10, 2022 | Dec 08, 2022 | Transport |
| **Financing Instrument** | **Borrower(s)** | **Implementing Agency** | |
| Investment Project Financing | Ministry Of Economy and Finance | Cellule de Coordination du PRICI (CC-PRICI) | |

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

The project development objective (PDO) is to enhance inclusive, safe, climate resilient and sustainable rural road connectivity in Northern Cote d'Ivoire, to improve access to basic social services and economic opportunities

## PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

### SUMMARY

| | |
|---|---|
| **Total Project Cost** | 350.00 |
| **Total Financing** | 350.00 |
| **of which IBRD/IDA** | 300.00 |
| **Financing Gap** | 0.00 |

### DETAILS

**World Bank Group Financing**

| | |
|---|---|
| International Development Association (IDA) | 300.00 |
| IDA Credit | 300.00 |

**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

| | |
|---|---|
| Counterpart Funding | 50.00 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Borrower/Recipient | 40.00 |
| Local Beneficiaries | 10.00 |

| Environmental and Social Risk Classification | Concept Review Decision |
|---|---|
| Substantial | Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue |

Other Decision (as needed)

## B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

**1. Since the end of the 2011 crisis, Cote d'Ivoire experienced a period of exceptional economic growth**. The Ivorian economy grew at an average rate of around 8 percent per annum, among the fastest-growing economies in the world. This growth performance was mainly due to higher productivity. This high growth has been accompanied by macroeconomic stability, and the Ivorian economy has demonstrated its resilience to external and internal shocks.

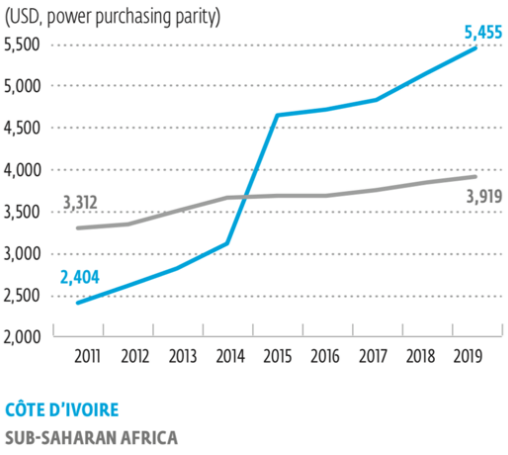


Figure 1. GDP per capita, 2011-2019. *Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook database*

**2. Cote d'Ivoire's economy is on a recovery path.** Côte d'Ivoire has enjoyed vibrant, robust, and stable economic growth since 2012, but experienced a slowdown in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 crisis. The economy has been relatively resilient throughout the pandemic. While economic growth fell from average of around 6.9 percent during 2017-2019 to 2 percent in 2020 (a real capita decline of 0.6 percent), Cote d'Ivoire was among the best performing economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Agriculture, particularly cocoa product, held up well during the crisis and manufacturing and services both supported the recovery during the second half of 2020. The World Bank projects the economy to grow by 5.7 percent in 2021, gradually increasing to 6.5 percent in 2023. In the short term, the economic recovery will be supported by Government investment in 2021 as well as strong recovery of private sector investment and consumption. The fiscal

deficit is high (mainly because of government COVID-19 response measures) but expected to remain stable at 5.6 percent of GDP in 2021 and continued structural reforms are needed to achieve the government's more ambitious targets set out in the Government's National Development Plan 2021-25 (NDP).

**3. The National Development Plan 2021-2025 (*Plan National de Développement* (*PND) 2021-2025*), outlines the Government's ambition to double GDP per capita by 2030 from US$1,736 in 2020.** It seeks to accelerate economic transformation, reduce poverty and inequality, and improve governance. To achieve its growth ambitions, Cote d'Ivoire will have to improve domestic resource mobilization, its business environment, as well as the efficiency and allocation of public spending in education, healthcare, and rural development to make growth more inclusive and equitable.

**4. Poverty fell sharply from 46.3% in 2015 to 39.4% in 2020, but this decline was confined to urban areas as rural poverty levels rose by 2.4% over the same period.** As one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Greater Abidjan Area (GAA) is the country's engine of growth. More than half—56 percent—of Côte d'Ivoire's population lives in urban centers, with urbanization increasing at 5 percent yearly, with high spatial disparity between the GAA and other cities. While the GAA continues to experience rapid urbanization and significant economic development, secondary cities lag behind, particularly those in the North of the country.

**5. The northern regions[1] of Cote d'Ivoire are among the most lagging in terms of human capital indicators, and with a higher incidence of poverty.** The region has lower population density, but poverty levels are among the highest in the country. The region consists of approximately 4.8 million people, or about one fifth of the country's population. 68 percent of the population in the North lives in rural areas, with only two cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. 10 out of the 11 northern regions have a poverty rate higher than the national average (39 percent). Like other parts of the country, the urban/rural divide persists, and poverty levels are higher in rural areas with the poverty rate reaching 57 percent in the rural North, compared to a poverty level of 40 percent the urban North. Figure 2 below displays income poverty levels in Cote d'Ivoire.

**6. Beyond monetary aspects, the North displays high levels of deprivation in the non-monetary dimensions of poverty, especially in education and health.** Multidimensional poverty rates by region show that, on average, households living in the north of Cote d'Ivoire are poorer than others (see Figure 3 below). Multidimensional poverty not only includes household expenditures but also deprivations in terms of access to education and health.

[1] In the context of this project, the northern part of Cote d'Ivoire is considered as made up of 11 regions, including Bafing, Worodougou, Béré, Hambol, Gontougo, Kabadougou, Folon, Bagoue, Poro, Tchologo, and Bounkani. There are a total of 33 regions in the country.

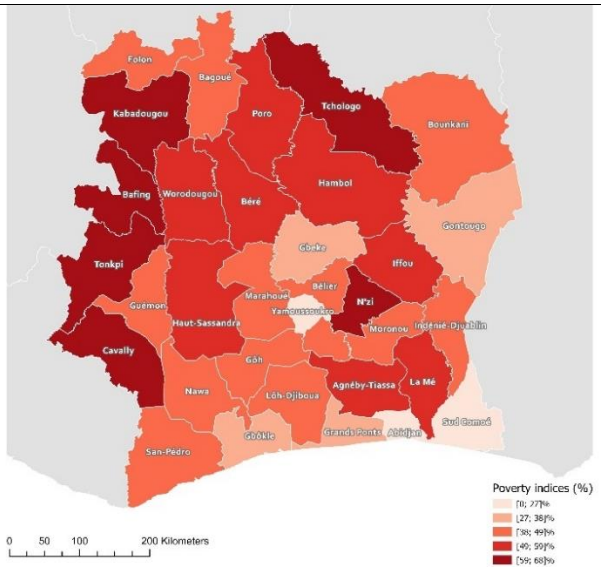


*Figure 2. Regional income poverty rates in Cote d'Ivoire.*[2]

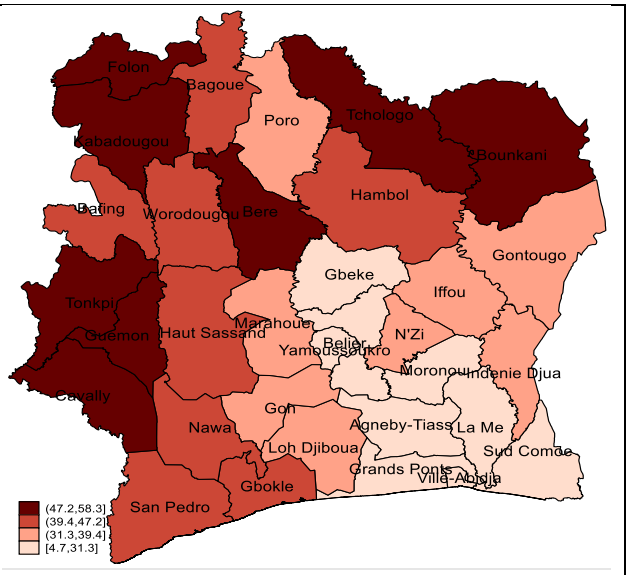


*Figure 3. Regional multidimensional poverty rates in Cote d'Ivoire.*[3]

**7. Maternal health is weak, and conditions of pregnancy are inadequate in the 11 regions[4]:** high dropout rates for antenatal consultations (65 percent, against a national average of 57 percent), very low prevention of malaria for pregnant women (43 percent, far from the target of 80 percent) and about 16 percent of deliveries are out from a health center. This situation could partly be explained by the distance of households from health centers. Data shows that distance is one of the main reasons for women not to access health facilities.[5]

**8.** School enrolment is below the national average and there are high dropouts especially at secondary schools and for girls. Primary school gross enrolment level (90 percent) is well below the national average (101 percent)[6], with significant differences between regions, some ranking among the lowest at the national level. On average, in these regions, only one out of two children go to college, compared to two out of three at the national level. Girls' enrolment in secondary education appears to be a specific concern. The girls-boys gap in secondary school enrolment is about 20 points in the regions of Bafing, Bounkani and Worodougou compared to a national gap of 10 points.

**9. The poorest rural regions in the north of the country also have the highest employment rates.** In 2018, the employment to working-age population ratio was about 86 percent in rural areas at national level and 90 percent in the rural northern regions. The working-age population is predominantly self-employed in the agricultural sector.

[2] World Bank staff estimates based on EHCVM2018/2019
[3] World Bank staff estimates based on EHCVM2018/2019
[44] These developments come from the Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) *Rural Connectivity in Northern Cote d'Ivoire (P174829).*
[5] Demographic and Health Survey: https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR272/FR272.pdf
[6] Number of students enrolled in each level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population of the theoretical age group corresponding to that level of education (6-11 years for primary school and 12-16 years for the first cycle of secondary school). A percentage of more than 100 percent reflects the fact that there are students who are outside the relevant age range.

**10.** The poorer northern regions are more involved in traditional food crops whereas the cash crops are produced in the richer southern regions, benefiting from higher and more reliable rainfall and better soils. The food crop subsector in northern regions consists primarily of yams, maize, and rice. It is characterized by traditional practices and receives little support from both the public and private sectors (except for rice and maize). The main cash crops are cotton and cashew-nuts, and there are good prospects for mangoes.

**11. The social and economic gap between the North and South is further aggravated by external fragility and conflict, with a higher concentration of conflict in the North compared to the rest of the country.** These external fragilities include the attacks from Jihadist affiliated groups and clashes between farmers and herders from the Sahel. Sikasso in Mali, as well as Boucle du Mouhoun, Hauts-Bassins and Cascades in Burkina Faso are experiencing structural fragilities, which heighten the risk of contagion to the northernmost part of Cote d'Ivoire. The destabilization of Burkina Faso is leading to a regrouping of the jihadist movements in northern Cote d'Ivoire, particularly in the North-East, in the Comoé forest between Bouna and Ferkessédougou. Other vulnerable areas include Tengréla, near the border with Mali, Ouangolodougou along the border with Burkina Faso, but also Boundiali and Korhogo. The number of conflicts along the northern border with Mali and Burkina Faso have increased significantly.

## Sectoral and Institutional Context

**12. Rural connectivity is a major factor in explaining the persistent disparities between and within regions in Cote-D'Ivoire.** There are significant disparities in physical connectivity across the 11 northern regions of the country. The Rural Access Index (RAI), which measures the share of the rural population located less than 2 km from a passable road, varies from 37 percent in Gontougo to 84 percent in Poro, and a regional average of the northern region of 64 percent. On average, connectivity is lower in the six regions bordering Burkina Faso and Mali, with the lowest in Tchologo. In gross terms, this corresponds to about 1.5 million people who would be isolated in the rural areas of the 11 regions, of which nearly 3/5 are in three regions: Gontougo (24 percent), Tchologo (16 percent) and Béré (14 percent). About 0.6 million are in the six border regions to the north. With a Modified Rural Access Index (MRAI - considering a 5-km buffer zone), the regional average is 83%, corresponding to about 500,000 people who would be in a situation of acute isolation, of which 25 percent are in the Tchologo region alone, and half are grouped in three regions (Tchologo, Hambol and Gontougo). The 6 border regions account for about 260,000 concerned people, with almost half in the Tchologo region. These populations appear to be particularly vulnerable to fragility and poverty, given that access to goods, services and equipment would require more effort for them. In terms of multidimensional poverty, i.e. not only household expenditures but also deprivation in terms of access to education and health, the North is characterized by higher levels of **deprivation** and lower rates of access to education and healthcare.

**13. Despite a rural road density well above that of Sub-Saharan Africa (and 31km per 100km$^2$ and 38km per 10,000 inhabitants, compared to and 11 km per 100 km$^2$ and 37km per 10,000 inhabitants in Sub-Saharan Africa), rural connectivity remains challenging** due to the conditions of the road, which suffer seasonal and even permanent disruptions, and regional disparities in accessibility. The current road network comprises of 82,000km of classified roads, which includes 6,500km of paved roads and 75,000 of earth roads. There are around 100,000km in rural tracks.

**14. The rural roads strategy adopted earlier is only partially being implemented.** In Cote d'Ivoire, the current strategy guiding rural roads management and maintenance was prepared in 2015, and revised in 2018, as part of the Agricultural Investment Project (*Projet d'Appui au Secteur Agricole, PSAC, P119308),* has not been formally approved and is only partially being implemented. The framework for rural roads investments' programming is not comprehensive, because the needs are not fully known due to a lack of routine inventory of the entire network.

**15. Rural connectivity is negatively impacted by a combination of factors such as sector governance arrangements, options for high technical standards for the construction and maintenance and limitation of available resources.** While the country has a Road Maintenance Fund with significant financial resources (87.2 billion CFA francs in 2018) [7], those are mainly for capital investments in the core network and no source of funding is clearly defined for the rural road network, which nevertheless accounts for almost 55% of total linear and serves half of the population. Despite important efforts, a significant part of the rural network (estimated at 53% in 2018) has thus not been subject to effective maintenance in recent years. Significant rehabilitation works have been undertaken without a clear programming strategy. The financial resources have mainly been deployed for the rehabilitation works. Furthermore, the standards adopted refer to high levels of service for rural roads, with unit costs that are difficult to sustain for the country's finances[8]. The current technical, economic, and financial approach for rural roads is not sustainable and thus leading to the neglect of part of the network.

**16. Addressing Cote d'Ivoire's rural connectivity challenges requires stronger coordination between the multiple actors involved, across sectors and spatially.** There are multiple actors involved in the management of rural roads, with some overlap in responsibilities. Since 2018, AGEROUTE (the Road Management Agency) has significantly rehabilitated rural village rounds using funding from the Road Fund (FER) and donors. AGEROUTE's programming strategy is based on road surveys resulting in a priority classification of villages. Under the patronage of the Ministry of Rural Development (MINADER, in charge of agriculture) the cotton and cashew sectors have also been implementing rehabilitation and maintenance programs of their own using their own funds along with various donor contributions. Regional councils also carry out some activities using their own resources. In terms of coordination, regional committees have been set up but there appears to be some overlap in the programs carried out by the various actors. On the technical side, there is no explicit reference to service levels, but it does state that works usually make the concerned roads passable all-year round. There is a serious lack of integrated planning, leading sometimes to competition between various entities (MEER/AGEROUTE, MINADER/Agriculture producers' professions and regional councils), and in some cases two works contracts awarded for the same road section.

**17. Relatively poor rural connectivity is exacerbated as the road network is exposed to climate related events, particularly heavy rainfall, which can cause significant and recurrent road damage and disruptions across the network.** This occurs in a context where adaptation to climate change has not yet been fully explored. The National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change foresees a reduction in rainfall for the "sudanian" agro-ecological zone, to which the northern regions belong, but above all, a resurgence of extreme phenomena (droughts/floods) which should have a negative impact on connectivity, with the risk of aggravating poverty, insecurity, and conflicts for land use between herders and farmers and damage to connectivity infrastructure with a risk of traffic disruptions. Analysis from the ASA on rural connectivity shows that a significant portion of the road network is in the 20-year flood zone, with the region of Bagoue most exposed, and a relatively homogeneous exposure across regions.

**18. Rural connectivity is essential to improving rural accessibility and to reducing the rural/urban divide by:** (i) correcting the significant disparities between regions that are factors of fragility and internal conflicts, (ii) contributing to resilience to security hazards (bridging physical and digital gaps), (iii) enhancing socio-economic conditions in rural areas, especially as they relate to education and health access, and (iv) increasing access to markets for agricultural products. Indeed, improved physical accessibility is critical for conflict and violence prevention and would be a key contributor to social resilience in the northern regions. As a matter of fact, it facilitates the movement of defense forces fighting armed groups. It also helps building/consolidating social cohesion through the provision of basic services. Finally, and it breaks

[7] Rural Mobility Program (2020-2025), Road Management Agency, April 2020.

[8] The FER is in a financial delicate situation, with payment arrears to contractors and various service providers (mainly those who performed the 2018-2020 rural road program), for a total amount of more than 350 million USD.

isolation, which is the main element of feeling insecure. A better road condition leads to improved and more affordable transport of crops, in this part of the country where distances to markets are much longer than in other regions given the low density of urban centers. A better physical connectivity would be essential for many categories of rural dwellers: (i) for women who would access to care during the critical perinatal and ante-natal periods; (ii) for healthcare staff, who usually live in cities; (iii) for the distribution of drugs and other supplies; (iv) for patients' transfers to higher-level hospitals; and (v) for mobility of teachers, with better coverage of schools in rural zones. In addition to the poor road network, there is a lack of adequate marketing/logistics infrastructure in production areas, which results in high post-harvest losses, especially for perishable agricultural products.

**19. The implementation of current rural roads works is also marked by some difficulties relating to the local private sector insufficient capacities for both contractors and engineering firms.** Records from AGEROUTE (ageroutemarche.ci - platform for road works follow-up) show poor performance on most of small works contacts. Moreover, experience from ongoing World Bank financed projects highlight many issues in contract management by AGEROUTE and other specialized implementing agencies.

### Relationship to CPF

**20. The proposed project is aligned with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Côte d'Ivoire for FY16–FY19, its 2021 update, and the country's 2020 private sector diagnostic.** The CPF has three focus areas of intervention: (a) accelerating sustainable private sector-led growth; (b) building human capital for economic development and social cohesion; and (c) strengthening public financial management and accountability, as well as two cross-cutting themes: (a) governance and (b) spatial inequality. Governance and spatial inequality are two cross-cutting themes. The project is linked to the first focus area and will directly contribute to objective 2 (strengthen economic infrastructure) by financing investments on infrastructure and services supporting rural economic development, including rural roads and agriculture logistics chain, as well as improving the quality of life of populations living in small cities (local connectors). The project also aims to reduce inequalities in general and those of spatial nature in particular (Cross-cutting area 2), given that there are regional disparities in public infrastructure, investments and services which can exacerbate tensions and resentment. The project will also indirectly contribute to the second focus area, with investments to improve education services delivery (Objective 5) and delivery of quality health and water services (Objective 7). The first focus area is concerned through the contribution to REDD+. Despite the acceleration in public investment, which has helped reduce the infrastructure gap, poor rural infrastructure remains one of the major constraints to the agricultural value chains competitiveness in Cote d'Ivoire.

**21. The project will contribute to the World Bank's twin goals to eliminate extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity.** The project will directly and significantly improve living standards in rural areas through better access to basic services and economic opportunities. It will boost local economic development and improve access to non-agricultural job opportunities.

**22. The project is also in line with the World Bank's Western and Central Africa priorities for 2021-2025 outlined in the "Africa ACT, Adapt, Connect and Transform" report.** It contributes to its four transformational goals: (a) Create a new social contract, trough activities to reinforce trust between citizens and State by improving service delivery and security, strengthening local authorities and citizen engagement at community level; (b) Remove bottlenecks that prevent from creating more and better jobs through investments in economic infrastructure to support rural urban value chains; (c) Strengthen human capital, through interventions to improving reception conditions in health and education facilities, with a focus on women and girls; and (d) Ramp up climate resilience, by increasing ability to (i) absorb climate

shocks through a better water resources management and (ii) adapt to climate change through tree planting and better rainwater manager ("Green Roads For Water), including related capacity building.

**23. The project is also aligned with many targets of the Sustainable Development Goals:** mainly through infrastructure for economic growth (9.1), Urban-rural links (11.a), access to public spaces (11.7) and Climate change measures (13.2), as well as Water use efficiency (6.4), Equal access to basic services (1.4), Rural infrastructure (2.a), Prevention of distortions (2.b), Access to essential healthcare facilities (3.1), and Equitable primary and secondary education (4.1).

**24. The project is fully aligned with Cote d'Ivoire's NDP** (*"Cote d'Ivoire Solidaire")* and particularly Pillar 1 (competitive economic clusters, infrastructure to support growth, environment, fight against climate change), but it also supports Pillar 2 (Human capital), Pillar 3 (Inclusion) and Pilar 5 (Governance and State's modernization).

## C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective (PDO) is to enhance inclusive, safe, climate resilient and sustainable rural road connectivity in Northern Cote d'Ivoire, to improve access to basic social services and economic opportunities

Key Results (From PCN)

**25.** The expected results are the improvement of populations access to basic socio-economic infrastructure (schools, health centers, and markets), as well as reducing climate change effects. The project will also contribute to reducing gender imbalances and the spatial inequalities between the North and the South, and between northern regions.

**26.** The proposed PDO indicators to measure the different dimensions of the inclusive, sustainable, safe and climate resilient transport connectivity included in the PDO are the following:

- "Inclusive connectivity": (i) People with access to an all-season road, of which female (percentage); (ii) Improvement in Modified Road Access Index (percentage of people with access to an all-weather passable road within five kilometers) and (iii) Reduction in number of isolated villages (cut-off from the rest of the country).
- "Sustainable connectivity": Increase in linear of roads receiving adequate levels of routine maintenance (kilometers)
- "Safe connectivity": Number of villages with road safety measures (Number).
- "Climate resilient connectivity": Roads upgraded with climate resilience measures (Kilometers).

## D. Concept Description

**27. The proposed project builds upon the findings of the Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) *Rural Connectivity in Northern Cote d'Ivoire (P174829),* which proposes a new approach for enhancing human capital and economic development through inclusive, equitable and sustainable connectivity.** It contains a set of key recommendations to reduce the rural/urban divide by: (i) correcting the significant disparities between regions that are factors of fragility and internal conflicts, (ii) contributing to resilience to security hazards (bridging physical and digital gaps), (iii) enhancing social conditions in rural areas, especial as they relate to education and health access, and (iv) increase access to markets for agricultural products. This would fundamentally entail improving the programming process for rural roads management; systematizing maintenance and protection of assets; and revising the institutional framework.

**28. Based on the study's findings and the current situation, the proposed framework for prioritizing investments would focus on the following guiding principles:**

a) **"No one should be left behind" i.e., ensuring greater inclusivity and equity by guaranteeing a minimum service level for the greatest number of people:** This means given the limited resources available, interventions across the network will prioritize eliminating cut-off points to guarantee a minimum level of road practicability/accessibility for the entire population. The focus would be on attaining accessibility and ensuring sustainability rather than focusing on comfort and speed.

b) **Strategic selection to improve access to basic socio-economic infrastructures:** Interventions would target strategic roads which facilitate access to basic **socio-economic infrastructures** (schools and health facilities, and agricultural production collection points) and cities (enabling movement of agricultural products to markets, schools and health professionals to their duty station and ambulances from health District hospitals to rural health centers). For agriculture, the objective should be to achieve 100 percent for the Modified Rural Access Index (MRAI), to allow trucks to reach collection points, at a maximum distance of 5 kilometers from production areas[9]. Regarding health and education, the objective would be to have all the related facilities connected to cities by an all-weather passable road.

c) **Two-stage programming:** To correct disparities between regions, it is proposed to first allocate resources between regions. The criteria which would be used in this exercise is: (i) level of rural connectivity (MRAI); (ii) rural road density; (iii) rural population density; and (iv) incidence of poverty. Priority interventions (strategic roads) will be determined at a second stage, at the regional level, based on the road's connection to school and health facilities and contribution du MRAI (population within a 5-km buffer zone) to support economic development.

d) **Mandatory financing and implementation of maintenance and protection of assets:** With the goal of ensuring that newly constructed and rehabilitated roads reach their normal lifespan, the study also provides guidelines for establishing a more sustainable framework focused on: (i) ensuring proper road maintenance and (ii) taking measures to avoid their premature degradation. It is essential to make the maintenance of rehabilitated and upgraded roads mandatory and to allocate a share of the road maintenance fund's (FER) current annual revenues to the maintenance of rural roads. Roads should also be protected against premature degradation, with traffic restrictions during and following rainfall events. In view of the above, it is important to set up a coordination mechanism for planning and implementation, bringing together the national (central directorates of the ministries in charge of roads and agriculture, AGEROUTE) and local (regional councils) levels, as well as the private sector (agricultural professions) and local populations[10].

e) **Given that transport is an intermediate activity and not an objective, it could serve as an enabler for increased access to markets for agriculture production and to social services (*health facilities and schools*) and a platform for synergies with other sectors (*digital, energy, environment…*)**. Also, given its catalytic role, the road could serve a cross-sectoral strategy by offering a unique platform to group investments in a holistic approach. As a matter of fact, works along the roads should be used to improve the situation the following sectors:

   i. Education: improve access to school (primary and secondary education), to achieve greater inclusion and equity and reduce regional and gender disparities, particularly in secondary schools, through: (i) better reception condition (toilets, handwashing points and water, electricity furniture and classrooms including solar panels when appropriate), but also digital connectivity and additional classes if justified.

   ii. Health: improve patients' attendance and staff's retention, through upgrading health centers' equipment (on-call accommodation for staff, toilets, electricity and water provision) and the construction of additional facilities when necessary.

[9] This is because the main crops are small scale production, which could be transported using IMTs up to collection points.

[10] The project will support some of these reforms, in coordination with those planned under the Development Policy Lending operation under preparation.

iii. Rural water supply: small extensions of water pipes and construction or rehabilitation of boreholes. This is gender sensitive, given that in rural areas, fetching water is usually done by women/girls.

iv. Agriculture: strengthen the logistics chain to reduce post-harvest losses, with facilities provided for the conservation of products, possibly including cold storage when appropriate, as well as small markets and rural groupage points (with a gender perspective to identify entry points where women's participation can be enhanced to promote their economic empowerment).

v. Digital: create incentives for private operators by taking advantage of investments in other networks (roads and electricity) to support the deployment of digital connectivity towards these areas that would be otherwise less profitable/less attractive for operators (development of passive infrastructures - chambers, sheaths / cells, pipes - allowing the deployment of optical fiber by operators).

vi. Energy: schools and health facilities, markets and public lighting equipped with solar panels in off-grid areas.

vii. Resilience to conflict and violence, by (i) reinforcing the link between the State and local populations, and (ii) strengthening social cohesion, through: a support for community development initiatives, including income-generation activities, and the provision of public facilities in small urban centers and villages, development of leisure areas for young people and support to women's groups in small businesses, as well as infrastructure to enable tertiary cities (less than 10,000 inhabitants) to play a more effective role as buffers between rural areas and large cities.

viii. Climate change: in addition to the "Green Roads for Water" approach to improve the sustainability of water resources, contribute to the national REDD+ Program by planting trees along roads and in schools, health facilities and public spaces in villages, to contribute fighting climate change effects.

**29. The project will use this framework to target selected regions and departments to be identified with the Central and Local Governments (Regional Councils…) of Cote d'Ivoire during Project preparation.** However, priority would be given to influence zone of cities targeted by the Côte d'Ivoire Sustainable and Inclusive Northern Cities Project (P177062).

**30. Project design will also reflect the lessons learned from recent investment projects to create growth and inclusion in fragile and low-capacity environments.** World Bank experience with recent projects in Sub-Saharan Africa[11] shows that: (i) a spatially driven multi sectoral approach (i.e., that combine investments in infrastructure, basic services, economic development, governance, community engagement, and security) is key to achieving inclusive development; (ii) ensuring that communities are genuinely involved in the selection of the project activities fosters social cohesion and ensures greater ownership and sustainability of investments; (iii) it is critical to ensure that vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and minorities, actively participate in the decision-making process.

**31. Furthermore, adopting a territorial lens will allow project investments to be coordinated to better tackle spatial inequalities in underserved and poorly connected regions.** By integrating both a regional- and community-centered approach, the operation allows for a coordinated territorial development approach that can amplify place-based sector-specific investment (synchronized with complementary sector investments and strategic sequencing) and can be tailored to local endowments, opportunities, and constraints. Learning from ongoing activities on the territorial approach,[12] the

[11] These operations include the Cote d'Ivoire - Emergency Infrastructure Renewal Project Additional Financing (P24715).

[12] This includes (a) the WB's North and Northeastern Development Initiative (NEDI) US$1 billion multisectoral program in Kenya launched in 2018, with investments spatially coordinated across transport, water, energy, agriculture, livelihoods, and social protection; (b) the WB's territorial analytical work in Democratic Republic of Congo, that is, the territorial review "Why Connecting Congolese Counts"; as well as (c) the Sahel Alliance's integrated territorial approach.

operation will seek leverage complementarities with development interventions and sector/development plans to support spatially coordinated multisectoral investments, with the final goal of strengthening the rural-urban interface.

**32. The project will help reduce (i) gender gaps and (ii) barriers to women's participation in the local economy.** By doing so, the project will contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5: gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. According to the World Bank's Gender Strategy for 2016-2023, women lag behind in most cases of economic opportunities. The project contributes to bridge this gap by supporting economic opportunities where women are the most engaged. The project will give a voice to women through its citizen engagement process. The project will support the organization of focus groups with a balanced participation of women and men, but also dedicated consultation session attended by women only, to collect their needs and aspirations and ensure their active participation in the project design and implementation. The project will also try to foster a more balanced distribution of power within local government authorities as well as formal and informal institutions by developing women's capacity and strengthening their knowledge.

**33. Gender-based violence**. The project will set-up a dedicated Grievance Redress Mechanism with a channel to address Gender Based Violence complaints. The project will fund a variety of activities to improve the safety and security of communities and especially women, using the new technologies.

**34. It is proposed to structure the project around the following components, based on discussion with the Client during the ASA preparation (*to be reviewed/updated during project preparation*):**

**Component 1: Inclusive and Resilient Rural Connectivity Infrastructure**

**35.** The objective of this component is to ensure universal physical connectivity in selected regions/departments, to enhance access to basic socio-economic infrastructures in rural areas. It therefore aims to (i) improve the strategic unpaved roads; (i) remove all cut-off points (mainly river crossings) on non-strategic roads; and (iii) support the deployment of digital connectivity. The regions will be selected through a multicriteria analysis based on the current regional rural accessibility index, the population and road density, the income poverty rate, delivery rates in health centers, and 1$^{st}$ level secondary completion rate for girls. The planned civil works will entail constructing or rehabilitating paved/unpaved roads and rivers crossings to: (a) prevent road closures during the rainy season; (b) improve all-weather passability; (c) improve road safety; (d) enhance resilience to climate change and (e) development of passive infrastructures (chambers, sheaths / cells, pipes) during road works on the main axes, to allow the deployment of optical fiber by operators. Works will therefore include climate resilient activities such as "Green Roads For Water" elements (small storm-water basins and catchments to capture runoff water and thus reduce damage to the road, while helping for recharge, seepage and storage; conversion of borrow pits for storage, seepage, or recharge). Road safety measures will also be implemented to mitigate the negative effects on road user safety of the increase in traffic and speed caused by the improvement of road conditions. This component will also finance rehabilitation works on selected inter-urban road sections linking regional secondary cities to each other. IDA financing will support planning, design, civil works, works supervision, contract management, social and environmental studies, knowledge sharing as well as any activities related to ensuring the quality of the proposed approach.

a) **Sub-component 1.1: This sub-component will finance the rehabilitation of select inter-urban paved road sections.** Targeted roads will be selected based on an assessment of the condition of existing roads connecting the secondary cities concerned by the Côte d'Ivoire Sustainable and Inclusive Northern Cities Project (P177062). Works will consist of full or localized road rehabilitation, including roadways, rivers crossings, climate change mitigation measures ("Green Roads For Water"), safety features and construction of weighing stations to prevent premature degradation. These activities will use Output- and Performance-Based Road Contracts (OPRCs) under a Design, Build and Transfer (DBT), with maintenance activities financed by the Government.

b) **Sub-component 1.2: This sub-component will finance the upgrading of strategic unpaved rural roads, to ensure better access to schools, markets, health centers and towns within targeted areas.** The selection of roads will be carried out through a prioritization process at regional level, based on their level of connection of health centers and schools to cities, and population within a 5-km buffer zone. Works will consist of full road rehabilitation, including roadways, rivers crossings, climate change mitigation measures, using the "Green Roads For Water" concept, safety features and rain barriers to prevent premature degradation. For the most strategic roads, the project will use Output- and Performance-Based Road Contracts (OPRCs) under a Design, Build and Transfer (DBT).

c) **Sub-component 1.3: This sub-component will finance the construction/rehabilitation of rivers crossings, to ensure minimal access at localities along the non-strategic roads.** River crossings include causeways, fords, box culverts as well as small bridges. Works will also include basic interventions on the concerned road sections (opening, light reprofiling and creation of drainage).

**Component 2: Support to Sustainable Rural Road Maintenance Strategy**

**36.** This component aims to support the implementation of a sustainable strategy for the maintenance and preservation of rural roads. It will finance multi-annual maintenance works on rural roads, including the installation and management of rain barriers to protect the roads against premature degradation, with traffic restrictions during and following rainfalls. The roads concerned will be those rehabilitated/constructed within the framework of the project, or sections of adjacent unpaved roads providing a connection to urban centers. The planned civil works will also entail measures to: (a) improve road safety and (b) enhance resilience of rural transport infrastructure to climate change ("Green Roads For Water"). Maintenance contracts would be financed by the Central Government (Road Maintenance Fund – Fonds d'Entretien Routier, FER), Regional Councils and cotton and cashew nuts operators (Intercoton and Conseil Coton-Anacarde), co-financed by IDA following a decreasing contribution, in order to build up sustainability. Financing from World Bank (100%) will also go to engineering studies and works supervision, social and environmental studies as well as any activities related to ensuring the quality of the proposed approach.

**Component 3. Rural Infrastructure**

**37.** This component aims to improve resilience and address fragility by strengthening the local spillover effects of improved connectivity through: (a) improving the agricultural logistics chain, (b) enhancing social cohesion, (c) increasing resilience to climate change and (d) a support to the use of Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs). Activities will include: rehabilitation of classrooms and health centers; provision of equipment (benches, furniture) to schools; electricity connections (or solar kits in off-grid areas) for schools and health centers; water connections, boreholes, handwashing points and toilets for schools and health centers; street lighting and public places in tertiary cities. Women's safety will be considered for the design of rural infrastructure for which safety audits will be conducted to inform the designs as needed. These activities will be carried out in the localities along the roads to be rehabilitated/constructed/maintained under components 1 and 2 (including in tertiary cities).

a) **Subcomponent 3.1: Support to the agricultural logistics chain.** This sub-component aims to support the reduction of post-harvest losses and an improvement in meeting conditions between producers/sellers and buyers. The subcomponent will finance the modernization of existing markets in rural areas, with construction of: (i) sheds and small storage and processing facilities; and (ii) basic infrastructure such as internal pathways, water and sanitation facilities, drainage infrastructure, as well as selected facilities for specialized handling of agricultural produce. The technical specifications of these markets will be determined, based on consultations with the stakeholders (including business operators, with a strong focus on women) and would be supported by a clear management and maintenance plan. A gender analysis in value chains will be conducted to identify the entry points where women's participation can be enhanced to propose solutions to target them as key agents for the modernization of the agricultural logistics chain. Works will incorporate design standards that will ensure

resilience to climate change, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (energy efficient material for the storage facilities and renewable energy systems).

b) **Subcomponent 3.2: Provision of social services and support to small businesses.** This subcomponent is designed for strengthening the relationship and consolidate confidence between populations and public authorities, improve the security and help prevent conflicts in rural areas as well as providing services to rural populations, unleashing the potential of local economies and contributing to spatial and territorial integration. This will be done through: (a) improving schools and rural health facilities including with the construction/rehabilitation of water/handwashing points and toilets, fences, energy connection (solar for off-grid areas), rehabilitation of buildings and provision of small equipment (including digital); (b) construction and rehabilitation of public amenities that contribute to social cohesion and reduce insecurity feeling (recreation spaces, spot lighting etc.); (c) small water pipe and electricity extensions as well as (d) support to community development activities by the provision of small infrastructure and equipment for small economic activities (shea butter production etc.). Investments will be identified following a gender responsive participatory approach at the level of villages and tertiary cities. Activities will incorporate design standards that will ensure resilience to climate change, including the reduction of green gas emissions (energy efficient material for the storage facilities and renewable energy systems) and storm-water reduction facilities.

c) **Subcomponent 3.3: Improving climate change resilience.** In addition to storm-water management activities planned under components 1 and 2 along with road works, this subcomponent is a contribution to the REDD+ Program and the enhancement of food security. Planned activities include: (a) tree planting in schools and villages; as well as (b) additional storm water works in or around the villages (small storm-water basins and ponds) to increase water resources for livestock and agriculture, rise groundwater levels and increase soil moisture.

d) **Subcomponent 3.4: support to the use of Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs)**. Studies will be conducted to analyze the needs and set up a financing mechanism to support the expansion of IMTs. A pilot operation will be conducted to support selected communities through subgrants to acquire IMTs. The focus will be on women groups.

**Component 4: Support to Institutional framework, sector strategy and Project Management**

a) **Sub-component 4.1:** Support to improve institutional framework and sector strategy, including climate adaptation measures and gender considerations. This sub-component is intended to support efforts to finalize the strategy to manage and finance the construction and maintenance of rural roads, based on recommendations made through the ASA. This will be made through: (a) defining technical standards for rural roads, (b) reviewing the institutional set up for streamlining interventions in the rural road sector, with the involvement of all stakeholders including Regional councils and the private sector (Agriculture professions, Forestry and Mining sectors); (c) exploring different mechanisms to improve financing of the construction and maintenance of rural roads within the governing framework; and (d) understanding the barriers and facilitators for women to participate in road maintenance and define a Gender Action Plan with specific actions to address identified constraints. The project will also finance the preparation of a land transport Climate change adaptation/mitigation plan, providing a detailed sectoral action plan derived from the National Climate Change Program.

b) **Sub-component 4.2: Capacity building.** This sub-component will finance activities to support various stakeholders (AGEROUTE, Regional Councils, private sector including contractors and supervision Engineers), both in terms of their current capacities and the innovative nature of certain activities. Activities will be determined following an assessment of the capacities of all stakeholders during the preparation.

c) **Sub-component 4.3: Technical Assistance (TA) and Audits.** This subcomponent will finance: (a) TA to the PCU for project preparation including elaboration of several documents (Project Implementation Manual etc.); (b)

monitoring and evaluation (M&E) surveys and studies (mid-term review, completion report, and impact evaluation); (c) TA of a non-governmental organization (NGO) specialized in the prevention and management of SEA/SH risks; (d) TA for the preparation and management of works contracts; and (e) external financial, technical, road safety, environmental and social audits (including gender).

d) **Sub-component 4.4: Project Management.** Activities to be financed under this subcomponent include: (a) salaries and travelling expenses of the staff of the PCU and other associated implementing agencies not covered by counterpart funding; (b) public information, citizen engagement, communication and (c)) operating costs and equipment of the PCU, including the Decentralized Unit in the Northern regions.

**Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)**

**38.** This component with initially no funds allocated, is in line with guidance provided under paragraph 12 of World Bank Policy on Investment Project Financing (IPF), to enable an immediate response if an eligible crisis or emergency arises. The mechanism for triggering the CERC will be included in the Credit Agreement and a Manual will be prepared, detailing the applicable fiduciary, environmental and social, monitoring, reporting, and any other implementation arrangements necessary.

| Legal Operational Policies | Triggered? |
|---|---|
| Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50 | No |
| Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60 | No |

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The overall Environmental and Social Risk Classification is Substantial.

The environmental risks are related to: (i) impacts related among others to construction works on constructing or rehabilitating paved/unpaved roads, rivers crossings and public facilities, (ii) downstream impacts from TA type of activities, and (iii) the limited experience of the Project Coordination Unit with the new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).

The main social potential significant issues related to: (i) land acquisition and resettlement of Project Affected Persons (PAPs) resulting from works; (ii) temporary restriction of access to livelihoods, resources and/or income generating activities of people living in and around the project area during civil works; (iii) risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) that may arise with the influx of workers and interactions between workers and the community, (iv) health or safety impacts on communities due to the civil works or social tensions generated by the project, and (v) operational and health labor risks.

The preparation and implementation of the project would be led by the existing Project Coordination Unit (PCU) in charge of World Bank-funded transport projects (known as PRICI-PCU), which reports to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Road Maintenance (MEER). The PRICI-PCU is currently satisfactorily managing several projects and is fully staffed including, among others, an environmental safeguards specialist, a social safeguards specialist and E&S assistants. However, these specialists and their assistants are used to implementing projects under the World Bank Operational Policies, and this will be the first project that the PCU will prepare and implement under the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). Considering the geographic distance from Abidjan and the need for close and direct support, the PCU will be strengthened with additional local safeguard's specialists in a decentralized unit of the PCU, headed by the deputy-coordinator. The decentralized Unit will be based in the Northern region to help to facilitate day to day operations and for a close follow-up of the environmental and social risk management of the numerous project activities. The PRICI-PCU will sign with Specialized Implementation Agencies (SIAs) delegated management contracts that will include environmental and social

risk management provisions. The contracts will define the scope of roles and responsibilities regarding the safeguards for the agencies involved in the project implementation. The type of technical assistance to SIAs that would need to be mobilized to support contracts management, including environmental and social provisions, will be identified during project preparation.

The overall supervision will be done by the National Agency of Environment (ANDE, Agence Nationale de l'Environnement), which is in charge of safeguards compliance for all projects in the country.

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## APPROVAL

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**Approved By**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Country Director: | Coralie Gevers | 22-Dec-2021 |

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