

**COMBINED PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENTS / INTEGRATED
SAFEGUARDS DATA SHEET (PID/ISDS)
CONCEPT STAGE**

Report No.: PIDISDSC17378

Date Prepared/Updated: 15-Sep-2016

I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country:	Gabon	Project ID:	P157473
		Parent Project ID (if any):	
Project Name:	Gabon Statistical Development Project (P157473)		
Region:	AFRICA		
Estimated Appraisal Date:	03-Oct-2016	Estimated Board Date:	15-Dec-2016
Practice Area (Lead):	Poverty and Equity	Lending Instrument:	Investment Project Financing
Borrower(s):	Gabonese Republic		
Implementing Agency:	CN-TIPPEE		
Financing (in USD Million)			
Financing Source			Amount
Borrower			0.00
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development			50.00
Total Project Cost			50.00
Environmental Category:	C - Not Required		
Concept Review Decision:	Track I - The review did authorize the preparation to continue		
Is this a Repeater project?	No		
Other Decision (as needed):			

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Gabon is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's few Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMIC), has

benefited from a decade of steady economic growth, but is now facing headwinds from low oil prices. The population is estimated to number about 1.8 million and over 85 percent live in urban areas—Libreville, the capital, accounts for 45 percent. Half of the Gabonese population is under the age of nineteen and 85 percent of the country is covered by equatorial rainforest. Gabon is the fifth largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest exporter of manganese. Real economic growth averaged an impressive 5-6 percent per annum from 2008-2013, but the recent decline in oil prices and subsequent loss of revenue has led to a slow-down, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth falling from 5.6 percent to 4.3 percent between 2013-2014. With a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita estimated at US\$ 9,450 in 2014, it is one of only six UMICs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

High per capita income levels and economic growth did not result in rapid poverty reduction, shared prosperity, and improved human development outcomes. Poverty and inequality levels in Gabon remain high, but data are outdated—the most recent baselines are over a decade old—and precise levels are unknown. The population living on less than US\$3.10 per day (in 2011 PPP terms) was last measured as 24 percent in 2005. Gabon is ranked a dismal 112th (out of 187 countries) in the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI) report, which is far below countries with similar GDP per capita. In the absence of an integrated program of economic and household surveys to produce relevant and timely data, there has been a lost opportunity to inform economic policy, understand and maximize the development impact of economic growth, and mitigate the adverse effects of shocks—including the recent decline in oil prices.

In 2010, the Government commenced implementation of the Plan Stratégique Gabon Émergent (PSGE) which articulates the need to strengthen the National Statistical System (NSS). The PSGE aims to reduce the country's reliance on natural resource extraction and position the country as a top emerging market globally by 2025. The PSGE recognizes that infrequently collected data and untimely disseminated statistics are not conducive to design and implement an evidence-based economic policy agenda. Accordingly, among the objectives of the PSGE are to: (i) consolidate the legal and institutional framework of the NSS; and (ii) strengthen its capacity to generate and disseminate good quality—timely, frequent and policy relevant—data and statistics.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) to improve statistical capacity was prepared, but only partially implemented due to a 70 percent financing gap. The Government endorsed National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) for the period 2011-15 was prepared with support from PARIS21. Achievements include successfully implementing the 2012 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and undertaking the 2013 population census. However, most of the statistical activities in the NSDS—including a conducting a household expenditure and poverty survey, an agricultural census, an enterprise survey, an informal sector survey—were not implemented due to lack of financial resources. During this period, only 30 percent (US \$11.6m) of the US\$38.2m total cost to fully implement the NSDS was made available. Other areas identified in the NSDS which lacked financing include addressing the staffing and skills gaps, the infrastructural shortages, and the inadequate working environment.

Statistical capacity in Gabon is aberrantly weak for a UMIC and has deteriorated over the past decade. In 2014, Gabon's overall Statistical Capacity Index (SCI) score was 42, which is the 12th lowest among 147 developing countries and is well below the global, Sub-Saharan African and IBRD countries' average scores of 66, 59 and 74 respectively (see Figure 1). The declining trend in Gabon's overall SCI score over the past decade is in sharp contrast to statistical developments

in some Sub-Saharan African countries—including both low and middle-income and both fast and slow growing economies (see Figure 2).

The low and declining SCI for Gabon reflects deepening gaps in source data and the lagging, low volume and poor quality of official statistical production. The source data—a household income and expenditure survey—for measuring poverty and inequality, weighting the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket, and informing development policy is over a decade old. A new survey was planned to take place in 2014, but the resources needed to carry out the activity were not made available. The National Accounts (NA) are outdated and quality is low: the base year is 2001; the last measures produced date back to 2009; and the most recent estimates produced were for 2012. Similarly deep gaps in source data, from both sample survey and administrative sources, are pervasive in the key sectoral statistics including agriculture, trade, education, health and in the business register.

Dissemination and coordination practices in the NSS require strengthening. Dissemination of statistical products lags substantially behind data collection. During the past five years only a handful of statistical products were disseminated and household survey microdata is generally not available. The annual statistical yearbook was last published in 2011. The 2013 population census provisional results were not released until April 2015 and the final results have yet to be disseminated. Administrative health data for 2008 and 2011 were collected and compiled but never disseminated. The health statistical yearbook was last published in 2005. Only a handful of staff are able to use statistical software tools used to compute and produce statistical outputs from raw household survey, census and administrative data.

In addition to source data gaps, statistical production process is constrained by the lack of analytically qualified staff, poor infrastructure and an inadequate working environment. Only a handful of NSS staff are skilled in using statistical software packages (such as SPSS and STATA) required to compute and generate statistics from sample survey data. The 2012 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) report, for example, was produced largely by international experts. In addition to lacking expertise and software, operations are severely constrained by a shortage of IT hardware and physical infrastructure. Internet access is unreliable. The ratio of computers to staff is 1:3 and half of the computers in use were acquired in 2007. There is an acute office furniture shortage—including desks and chairs—and the vast majority of staff are sharing (in groups of four to six) cramped and dilapidated office spaces.

A new Statistics Act was adopted in 2015 and an institutional reform process is underway to establish the autonomous National Statistical Agency (NSA) at the apex of the NSS. The 2015 Statistics Act seeks to establish an institutional environment that will be more conducive towards efforts to strengthen the capacity of Gabon's NSS to generate better, timelier and more accessible data and statistics to inform policy-makers and monitor progress. This new law, consistent with the principles of the African Charter of Statistics and in line with the UN's 1994 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, transforms the General Directorate of Statistics (currently a Ministerial Department) into the National Statistical Agency (NSA)—an autonomous entity with the mandate to: coordinate the NSS; conduct the decennial population census and the major nationally representative surveys; and produce and disseminate official economic, demographic and social statistics. The decree to implement the law is expected to be adopted this year.

The government is currently receiving support through a Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS)

agreement with the Bank. The RAS covers two broad areas. Firstly, targeted technical assistance is being provided to help design the forthcoming household income, expenditure and living standards survey—Enquête Gabonaise pour l’Evaluation de la Pauvreté (EGEP II). Secondly, technical assistance is being provided to help inform the implementation of the NSDS and to offer strategic guidance during the ongoing institutional reform process.

The proposed project is fully in line with the objectives of the NSDS and will support the ongoing institutional reform process. The proposed project aims to sustain the ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of the NSS and is structured into three components to: (1) Improve Data Collection, Statistical Production and Dissemination; (2) Strengthen Analytical Capacity and Modernize Infrastructure; and (3) Support NSS Institutional Reform and Project Management Capacity Building.

Relationship to CAS/CPS/CPF

The proposed project is fully aligned with the World Bank Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) FY12–16 and the Government’s “Plan Stratégique Gabon Émergent” (PSGE). A key action in the PSGE is the development of an NSDS which was accomplished and supported by the Bank. The proposed project is designed to support the implementation of the NSDS and particularly the key activities therein that are prioritized in the CPS and the PSGE. The CPS supports the PSGE in two strategic thematic areas: (i) increasing Gabon’s competitiveness and employment, and (ii) reducing vulnerability and supporting resilience.

Cross cutting themes of governance and gender equity compliment the strategic thematic areas and are strongly reflected in the project design through closing critical data gaps—including gender indicators—and improving access and dissemination of statistics through an open-data approach. The CPS specifically proposed to undertake a new household survey to update key indicators last measured in 2005 on poverty, gender, youth, health and social protection. These data, complemented by better macroeconomic and sector statistics, are necessary inputs to build a knowledge base and conduct applied economic analysis to inform and assess Bank support and the design of government policies in the two strategic thematic areas. Data and statistics are a key input to design, manage and monitor effective development strategies, policies and programs. By strengthening the capacity to produce better statistics and open data, the proposed project will help improve evidence-based decision making and foster good governance, which will in turn improve development outcomes.

The proposed project will generate the currently missing data that is necessary to inform the results focus of the WBG on the twin goals of eradicating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. The operation is also aligned with the WBGs strategic priorities in the Africa Region which include helping countries generate more and better-quality poverty and shared prosperity data; develop a model for collaborating with the International Monetary Fund, which has the lead role on National Accounts; and, more broadly, build capacity to promote greater use of statistics.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)

The proposed development objective of this project is “to strengthen the capacity of the National Statistical System to fill data gaps, improve statistical production and enhance statistical dissemination practices”.

Key Results (From PCN)

The key aspects of the PDO are the strengthening of NSS' capacity, filling data gaps, improve statistical production and enhancing dissemination practices. Progress towards to PDO will be measured and monitored through the following indicators:

- a. Increase in the SCI score;
- b. Number of priority data collection (surveys and censuses) exercises conducted;
- c. National Accounts, Macroeconomic, Poverty, Gender-Disaggregated Welfare Monitoring, and Agricultural Statistics produced and released on time (vis-à-vis release dates published in an advance release calendar); and
- d. Number of survey and census microdata files freely available on-line.

The key outputs of the project that will be monitored include:

- a. NSS reform milestones achieved;
- b. Number of staff with improved skills;
- c. Ratio of computers to technical staff; and
- d. Number of statistical reports available on-line.

D. Concept Description

The proposed project is structured into three components to: (1) Improve Data Collection, Statistical Production and Dissemination; (2) Strengthen Analytical Capacity and Modernize Infrastructure; and (3) Support NSS Institutional Reform and Project Management Capacity Building.

Component 1: Improve Data Collection, Statistical Production and Dissemination (US\$ 33.3 million)

This output and outcome-oriented component is the first pillar of the proposed project. It aims to fill critical data gaps, expand and improve statistical production, and enhance data accessibility and dissemination practices. The focus areas under this component are identified in the NSDS. The focus areas selected for support under the proposed project are policy-driven and prioritize data collection and statistical products identified as most pressing in the government PSGE. The three focus areas identified in which to improve data collection, statistical production and dissemination practices are: National Accounts (NA) and real sector statistics, welfare monitoring statistics, and agricultural statistics.

(1.1) National Accounts (NA) and real sector statistics

The current capacity and staffing levels in the DGS unit responsible for the compilation of National Accounts (NA) are insufficient. The project proposes to provide in-house technical assistance through a resident lead NA expert and three high-level statisticians to work alongside and build the skillset and capacity of the existing cadre of staff. The objective will be to: (i) eliminate the four year backlog in producing NA estimates; (ii) bring the production and dissemination cycle of NA statistics up-to-date; (iii) develop capacity to produce quarterly NA estimates; (iv) develop an action plan and work towards compliance with the 2008 SNA standards; (v) undertake a 2017 census of establishments and economic activities; (vi) re-base the NA using new source data collected through the population census and the planned household,

agricultural and establishment surveys; and (vii) develop a new macroeconomic projection model.

The project will also strengthen price statistics and aims to: (i) update the CPI base year from 2003 to 2016 using the EGEP II data; and (ii) enhance the monthly price data collection operations from 2017 onwards by refining the list of products and services and expand the geographical market coverage beyond Libreville to three additional cities— Franceville, Port-Gentil and Oyem. A technical study will be financed to determine whether a potential shift to Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) to collect the market price data would be feasible and cost-effective. The project further proposes to finance technical assistance by CPI experts as well as data collection costs, including equipment and software.

The project also proposes to provide support to regularly—based on an advance release calendar—produce and disseminate macroeconomic statistics and leading indicators to enable timely monitoring of the economy. The production of regular flagship annual statistical publications will also be supported (e.g., the statistical yearbook and annual wage rate statements). Finally, technical assistance will be supported to design a data collection approach that is able to cost-effectively produce regular labor force indicators to complete the suite of statistics required to monitor the real sector of the economy.

(1.2) Welfare Monitoring Statistics

The project proposes to finance data collection for two household income, expenditure and living standards surveys—the Enquête Gabonaise pour l’Evaluation de la Pauvreté (EGEP II and III)—respectively to be conducted in 2016 and 2019. The 2016 survey will contain also a module on the informal sector. The core methodology of the surveys related to household consumption data collection will be based on current best practice and follow the World Bank endorsed approach adopted by the WAEMU countries. These surveys will be conducted using a CAPI methodology. In accordance with the General Data Dissemination Standard (GDDS) guidelines, publically and freely available reports with poverty numbers will be published within 9-12 months following the end of data collection. The project will finance technical assistance to implement these surveys, conduct poverty analysis workshops and help produce and peer review the reports. Additional technical assistance will be financed to produce a thematic socio-economic atlas for Gabon based on the 2013 Population Census and generate a small-area poverty map using the 2016 EGEP II. Finally, to provide update data to monitor welfare statistics from a demographic and health perspective and to provide important gender indicators, the project will finance the implementation of a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) in 2017.

(1.3) Agricultural Statistics

To fill data gaps and enable the production of agriculture statistics, the project proposes to support two main data collection activities: (i) an agriculture census in 2017 and; (ii) at least one annual agricultural production survey, to be conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. The study will be financed to analyze the 2013 Population Census data to determine which peri-urban areas of the country should be included in these data collection exercises. The project proposes to finance the hiring of a seasoned agriculture statistics specialist to support the Ministry of agriculture with the design, implementation and the analysis of this census and these surveys. Publically and freely available reports detailing the findings from each will be produced and published within 9-12 months following the end of data collection.

(1.4) Improve Data Access and Dissemination

Filling critical data gaps is not just about enabling the measurement of gender disparities or changes in poverty or in employment levels. When these data and statistics are disseminated freely and widely, they do not just inform policy-makers. Open-data and timely statistics will also inform development partners, the private sector and the Gabonese public in general. That in turn unleashes the potential to inspire and catalyze broader based efforts to reduce poverty, create jobs and foster gender equality.

The objective of this focus area is to improve data access and dissemination by financing: (i) the redesign of NSS agency and line-ministry department websites in line with open-data principles; (ii) the formulation and adoption of data dissemination and a microdata access policies; (iii) technical assistance and training to roll-out the “Accelerated Data Program” (ADP) initiative and provide free on-line access to anonymized census and household survey microdata. This activities will be supported in collaboration with the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21). In addition, the project proposes to finance the establishment of a small-scale printing and publishing unit at the new NSA to enhance the dissemination capacity of the NSS.

Component 2: Build Analytical Capacity and Modernize Infrastructure (US\$ 13.5 million)

(2.1) Build Analytical Capacity

Through this component, the project will invest in: (i) strengthening the Human Resource profile of the NSS; (ii) implementing a training and skill enhancement program for existing staff; and (iii) providing scholarships to successful temporary contract staff and candidates in statistics. The training program will be conducted primarily in-house; will be designed by experts to fit the precise needs; and will focus on specific statistical skills that linked directly to data collection or statistical production activities supported by the project.

(2.2) Modernize Infrastructure

The project proposes to finance the renovation and refurbishment of the dilapidated building used by the DGS and which the government has officially allocated as the building that will host the headquarters of new Statistical Agency. The activities to be financed include work to undertake interior renovations of the building, procurement of office furniture, and enhancement of the electrical and IT system. Equipment for data collection (vehicles), for data processing and analysis (computers and laptops) as well as for data dissemination (web server, printing and scanning equipment) are also needed to implement the statistical reform and to enable the data collection, production and dissemination activities.

Component 3: NSS Institutional Reform, Project Management Capacity Building (US\$ 3.2 million)

(3.1) NSS Institutional Reform

The aim of this sub-component is to support the implementation of the ongoing NSS institutional reform in accordance with the 2015 Statistics Act. Technical assistance will be provided to

prepare the legal documents required to establish, and the policy manuals to operationalize, the National Statistics Agency (NSA) and the National Commission for Statistical Information (NCSI). In supporting the preparation of the NSA policy manual, an area of particular focus will be to put in place human resource management policies that enable attracting and retaining highly qualified and skilled professional statisticians.

This sub-component will also support: (i) the design of the next NSDS and finance technical assistance to develop, implement and monitor annual business plans; (ii) the recruitment of a Senior Statistics Advisor; and (iii) finance technical assistance to develop a results-based management system. The Senior Statistics Advisor will be based at the NSA and provide guidance to the DG and senior management team to support implementation of the institutional reforms and change process of the NSS. The objective of developing a results-based management system is to establish a staff evaluation and monitoring approach that provides incentives and career development opportunities to well-performing staff.

(3.2) Project Management

This sub-component will finance the National Commission for Public Infrastructure Works and Promotion of Small-Scale Enterprises (CN-TIPPEE) to manage all non-technical aspects of the project activities including: procurement, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguards support. Some of the project management costs will be shared with the other Bank-funded projects managed by CN-TIPPEE, but a dedicated project management team headed by a Deputy Coordinator will be recruited and wholly funded by the Project, and will report to the Permanent Secretary and the DG of the DGS. The CN-TIPPEE project management team will also build capacity of the administrative and project management staff to be hired by the NSA.

II. SAFEGUARDS

A. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

The data collection activities will be conducted across the entire country. The statistical production and analytical activities will be primarily undertaken in Libreville. The project will benefit the entire population.

B. Borrower's Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

There are no potential social and environmental safeguard risks triggered by this project. No EA studies required for this operation.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Albert Francis Atangana Ze (GEN07)

D. POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	No	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	

Pest Management OP 4.09	No	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	No	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	

E. Safeguard Preparation Plan

1. Tentative target date for preparing the PAD Stage ISDS

15-Sep-2016

2. Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing should be specified in the PAD-stage ISDS.

The Project is based on data collection activities that will be conducted across the entire country no safeguards policies are triggered. However, the project proposes to finance the renovation and refurbishment of the dilapidated building used by the DGS and in order to ensure environmental sustainability, guidance is provided to ensure that basic hygiene and worker health and safety rules are observed during the rehabilitation.

III. Contact point

World Bank

Contact: Abdoullahi Beidou

Title: Senior Economist/Statistician

Borrower/Client/Recipient

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Title:

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IV. For more information contact:

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V. Approval

Task Team Leader(s):	Name: Abdoullahi Beidou	
<i>Approved By</i>		
Safeguards Advisor:	Name: Maman-Sani Issa (SA)	Date: 15-Sep-2016
Practice Manager/ Manager:	Name: Andrew L. Dabalen (PMGR)	Date: 22-Sep-2016
Country Director:	Name: Elisabeth Huybens (CD)	Date: 26-Sep-2016

1 Reminder: The Bank's Disclosure Policy requires that safeguard-related documents be disclosed before appraisal (i) at the InfoShop and (ii) in country, at publicly accessible locations and in a form and language that are accessible to potentially affected persons.