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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 08-Jul-2024 | Report No: PIDA0219

Public Disclosure Authorized

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project Beneficiary(ies)	Region	Operation ID	Operation Name
Central African Republic	WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	P178774	CAR Inclusive and Resilient Cities Project
Financing Instrument	**Estimated Appraisal Date**	**Estimated Approval Date**	**Practice Area (Lead)**
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	17-Jun-2024	30-Sept-2024	Urban, Resilience and Land
Borrower(s)	**Implementing Agency**		
Central African Republic	Ministry of Urban Development, Land Reform and Housing		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective is to improve access to climate resilience infrastructure and basic services in selected cities.

Components

Investments in Flood and Erosion Risks Reduction
Neighborhood Infrastructure and Basic Services
Project management

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

Maximizing Finance for Development

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?	No
Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?	No

SUMMARY

Total Operation Cost	**70.00**
Total Financing	**70.00**
of which IBRD/IDA	**70.00**
Financing Gap	**0.00**

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	70.00
IDA Grant	70.00

Environmental And Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the most fragile countries in the world, due to repeated cycles of conflict and political instability. Since gaining independence in 1960, CAR, a landlocked country in Central Africa with a population of 6.1 million, has endured a series of coups and armed conflicts, resulting in limited intervals of political stability. Civil unrest culminated in 2013 when armed groups from the northeastern regions overthrew the government, leading to 3,000 to 6,000 civilian casualties in the subsequent years. Despite the signing of eight peace agreements,[1] progress towards stability in CAR remains slow, with recurring instances of armed violence, particularly prevalent in the northern, central, and eastern regions. A 17,800-personnel United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission for CAR (MINUSCA) established in 2014 contributes to greater security, especially in urban centers. This state of profound fragility predominantly stems from, and consequently exacerbates, widespread discontent rooted in weak social cohesion, social and regional disparities, and persistent insecurity.[2] In addition to the civilian death toll, the 2013 crisis led to the displacement of more than 1.2 million people (25% of the population) causing a major humanitarian crisis.[3] 511,803 CAR nationals are still internally displaced as of December 2023, while 751,979 have sought refuge abroad.

2. The 2013 crisis was particularly violent with ripple effects across the country on the economic front. The GDP dropped by 36.7 percent from 2012 to 2013,[4] plummeting from USD 2.51 billion to USD 1.69 billion, and goods' import and export volumes dropped by 95 and 98 percent respectively. Over five years (2013-17) the country has experienced a cumulated loss of approximately 42.0 percent in GDP *per capita* compared to a scenario without such insecurity.[5] CAR's economy has been relatively stable in more recent years with an average growth rate of 4.1 percent between 2015 and

[1] Including the so-called Khartoum Agreement signed on February 6, 2019, in Bangui by the Central African Government and 14 armed groups following peace talks held in Sudan.
[2] Conflict and fragility are mainly driven by (a) a lack of social cohesion at every level of society; (b) centralized institutions with limited legitimacy; (c) social and regional disparities between Bangui and the periphery and between the East and the rest of the country; (d) capture of scarce natural resources; (e) lack of prosecution of criminals involved in the successive cycles of violence; and (f) a lasting state of insecurity. World Bank (2016). Central African Republic Fragility Assessment.
[3] UNHCR Africa.2021. Central African Republic situation. Link.
[4] World Bank (2022). Country Economic Memorandum. Central African Republic: From Fragility to Accelerated and Inclusive Growth
[5] Mandon et al. (2023). Stuck in a Conflict Trap: The Case of the Central African Republic Civil War. World Bank Policy Research Paper, 10624.

2019.[6] However, the country's slow economic recovery was further hampered by COVID-19, a lingering food crisis and fuel shortages exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite some successful efforts to tackle CAR's combined humanitarian and economic crises, which was made possible by the relative peace, the country then endured the local effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 Ukraine crisis. Both macro events further isolated the country and disrupted the global flows of goods and trade on which CAR depends, weakening CAR's economic recovery and leaving its population unable to cope with drastic food price surges.

3. Poverty and regional disparities are widespread. Poverty is widespread and deep in CAR, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2021, 65.7 percent of the population – 3.9 million people – were living below the international extreme poverty line (US $ 2.15 per day, 2017 PPP). The microsimulation projections that combine sectoral GDP growth forecasts with the Harmonized Household Living Conditions Survey data suggest that this situation is unlikely to change much in the next five years, with more than 65.5 percent of the population living in extreme poverty in 2022. The country ranked 188 out of 189 in the Human Development Index (0.397) in 2020,[7] and it scored 0.29 on the Human Capital Index in 2020, as compared to 0.547 and 0.40 for the sub-Saharan Africa region average over the same years. At the regional level, CAR ranks last among its CEMAC counterparts on life expectancy and social inclusion. Regional disparities between Bangui and the periphery and between the East and the rest of the country are stark: about 60 percent of CAR's population live in rural areas, which are home to about 70 percent of the country's poor. The Eastern and North-eastern regions in particular are isolated and difficult to reach, especially in the rainy season, and lag behind the rest of the country in terms of access to services and socio-economic development.

4. Climate change is increasing the risk of natural hazards. CAR is exposed to numerous natural hazards, with floods, erosions, landslides, wildfires, and droughts at the forefront.[8] Vulnerability to these hazards is exacerbated by poverty and political insecurity, as compounding shocks have affected the ability to respond and bounce back. Hydromet stations have been damaged in the repeated conflicts, affecting the quality and frequency of climate related data collection.[9] CAR ranks as the world's second most vulnerable country to climate change, after Chad.[10] Despite the lack of accurate data and modelling exercises across CAR, it is generally understood that rainfall is projected to become substantially more variable with a likely increase in frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events[11]. The country is not equipped to face intense rainfall, which have been increasingly observed since the 1970 and can lead to riverbank erosion and/or overflows as well as landslides and waterlogging of agricultural fields.[12] In 2019, an estimated 100,000 people were displaced due to floods, which is more than a 7-fold increase in impact compared to earlier floods.[13] In 2022, torrential rains displaced 22,450 people, destroyed 2,000 houses and a dozen bridges, and flooded thousands of latrines and wells.[14] Further, accelerating desertification that aggravates the disappearance of pasture and arable land in southern Chad and in northern CAR is already fueling conflict in rural CAR as herders are pushed further south, competing for water and grazing land in CAR.[15]

5. Gender disparities and gender-based violence are prevalent in CAR. Women's potential remains hindered in CAR: for gender equality, the Human Development Index ranks CAR 159 out of 162 countries. More than half of the girls do not

[6] World Bank (2022). Central African Republic: From Fragility to Accelerated and Inclusive Growth.
[7] The global economy. 2023. Human development ranking. Link.
[8] World Bank (2021). Climate Risk Country Profile: Central African Republic.
[9] SCN-RCA (2013). *Deuxième Communication Nationale de la République Centrafricaine*. Link
[10] ND-Gain. 2024. Country rankings. Link.
[11] More generally, the country's climate and economy are heavily tied to the West African Monsoon (WAM), a phenomenon dictating rainy and dry season, itself dependent on the cycles of North Atlantic Sea surface temperature and global climate cycles such as ENSO.
[12] World Bank (2022). Central African Republic: Leveraging Cities to Build Resilience and Re-establish the Social Contract
[13] More than 100,000 people left their homes in 2019, compared to only 9,300 and 15,000 in 2018 and 2020 respectively. This was the result of heavy rains that destroyed more than 10,000 homes.
[14] OCHA (2022). Situation report. Central African Republic.
[15] World Bank. 2016. Risk and Resilience Assessment for the Central African Republic. Link.

complete primary school compared to 30 percent of boys. Against the backdrop of other cultural and societal norms that do not support women's empowerment and skills development, this educational void partly contributes to early marriage and pregnancies – in CAR, 61 percent of women aged 20–24 are married before 18, while adolescent birth rate is 122 per 1,000 women aged 15-19 as of 2020, a number higher than the average of 98 per 1,000 women in Sub-Saharan Africa.[16] Maternal mortality is estimated at 882 per 100,000 life birth. Labour force participation of women is estimated at 61 percent (against 80 percent for men), and most women are engaged in agriculture (96 percent). Women also have very limited voice in CAR – for instance only 8.6 percent of parliamentary seats were held by women as of February 2021. Moreover, gender-based violence is widespread – in 2018, 20.9 percent of women aged 15-49 years reported that they had been subject to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. 80 percent of men and women believe wife beating is justified; 92 percent believe violent disciplining of children is justified.[17] Access to services and opportunities as well as vulnerability to violence is even more challenging for displaced women, who lack the resources and agency required to protect their interests.[18]

Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. CAR is experiencing rapid urban growth and economic concentration but is not yet reaping agglomeration benefits. CAR has one of the lowest population densities in the world – it ranks at the 125th position with only 8 people per km2. Urbanization has increased, slowly but steadily, between 1970 and 2020 with an average growth rate of 0.8 percent per annum.[19] CAR is now 42 percent urban and this is projected to increase to 60 percent by 2050.[20] Most of the urban population resides in Bangui (1.4 million),[21] while Berberati, the second largest city,[22] has a population exceeding 150,000 and smaller cities host fewer than 50,000 inhabitants each. A sharp increase of the urban growth rate from less than 1 percent to 3 percent between 2013 and 2019 was observed, driven by displacement due to the conflict. Urban expansion is primarily occurring through sprawl, elevating the costs associated with extending access to services and infrastructure.[23] Urbanization is not yielding sufficient economic opportunities and benefits yet, particularly in the formal sector and due to this, urban areas continue to experience high poverty rates – 30 to 60 percent – and low employment rates.[24] Also, urban GDP across CAR - both absolute and per capita - has witnessed a decline from 2000 to 2015.[25] Urban areas are hindered by unplanned urbanization, effects of past conflicts, governance deficits, and climate change.[26] Their growth and sustainability are compromised by several factors, including congestion, inadequate housing, and climate-induced risks like flooding and extreme heat.

7. CAR's cities and towns are sorely lacking in services. Around 86% of households in Bangui or 78% in other urban areas have access to safe drinking water compared to an average for Central and West Africa of 89%.[27] Access to sanitation is also very poor - around 50% in Bangui and 44% in other urban areas. These shares have declined due to destruction of infrastructure and not keeping pace with population growth, and this scarcity affects people's health and productivity.[28]

[16] World Bank Open Data.
[17] World Bank CAR SCD 2019
[18] Background paper for World Bank, *Gender and Forced Displacement in Cities*, 2023.
[19] UN DESA World Urbanization Prospects 2018
[20] World Bank data. 2024. Population estimates and projections. Central African Republic. Link.
[21] ICASSES (2021).
[22] In fact, Bimbo is the second largest city, but itis part of the Bangui agglomeration and prefecture, and included in Bangui 's scope for investments.
[23] Population growth exceeded built-up growth 2000-2015 in most cities, suggesting that development occurs without matching infrastructure extension.
[24] World Bank. 2023. Informal sector enterprise surveys: profile of cities in the Central African Republic. Link.
[25] GHS Urban Centre Database 2015
[26] World Bank (2019). CAR Country Partnership Framework. Link.
[27] Data for Bangui and other areas from UNICEF. 2021. MICS survey 2018-2019, 6th edition, MICS6RCA, Central African Republic. Link1. Link2 ; World Bank World Development Indicators 2020

[28] *World Bank. 2022. Central African Republic: Leveraging cities to build resilience and re-establish the social contract.*

Other problems include lack of access to electricity (32% on average for other urban areas compared to 60% in Bangui), solid waste management, absence of paved roads and poor housing standards. In secondary cities, the government's presence is weaker than is Bangui and has further eroded as a result of the latest conflict, with negative effects on the social contract. Urban communes often play a limited role in addressing major service deficits, due to insufficient mandates (for instance water supply and sanitation) and resources, leading CAR citizens to often rely on churches, the private sector and self-help. Municipalities are generally also poorly equipped to respond to disasters and do not have the tools for risk reduction. Basic data and climate risks assessments, early warning mechanisms are missing, as well as proper operation and maintenance (O&M) financing and capabilities to improve the resilience of infrastructure.

8. CAR cities serve as safe havens for the population and economic activities. The MINUSCA has established strongholds in Bangui and in the main secondary cities.[29] Together with the presence of governmental FACA forces, this has successfully protected urban areas and contributed to secure the population, including the displaced, and to preserve CAR's economic interests, as Bangui alone represents 70 percent of the country's GDP.[30] As safe havens, urban centers offer an opportunity for the government and local authorities to reassert their presence and provide resilient and inclusive infrastructure and services to communities. Combined with increased use of citizen engagement mechanisms and inclusive decision-making processes, this would contribute to rebuild the social contract.

9. While offering pathways to better security and economic development, cities face substantial challenges linked to the FCV context. In addition to the destruction of infrastructure by the successive conflicts, cities have been impacted by forced displacement, as most displaced migrate to neighboring towns or internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp sites in urban areas. In Bangui, urban growth observed during the 2013-2019 period (peak of the latest conflict) is 40 percent higher in comparison with the pre-crisis rate and coincides with the increased conflict-induced displacement trends. Similar patterns corroborate this trend in secondary cities, with 15 percent of the population in Berberati and Bambari estimated to be IDPs.[31] There are still 522,000 registered IDPs in CAR (94,300 in Bangui), of which 109,000 live in IDP sites (32,000 in Bangui) and the other ones in private homes or host families.[32] About 86 percent of internal displacement is driven by conflict and the remaining 14 percent is due to floods, fire and droughts.[33] Displacement is creating additional pressure on already saturated urban services and infrastructure. IDPs are often the first victims of disasters and climate change as they are more exposed (because they are more likely to settle in areas prone to disaster risks) and have lower coping capacity, with dire impacts on their health, welfare and food security.[34] Built-up area exposed to river and rainwater flooding has increased in the past decades and particularly since 2006 and a high share of these are informal (60% in Bangui).[35] This creates a vicious cycle between increased sprawl, poverty and vulnerability, complicating even further the provision of basic services. Informal areas tend to have inexpensive housing limited access to services and higher exposure to flooding.

10. Cities in CAR face multiple climate-related risks, particularly floods and erosion. In Bangui, 81 percent of the densest settlement areas are estimated to be exposed to flooding. Urban roads, markets, schools, and others related urban assets and networks are damaged, interrupted or disconnected yearly during the rainy season. In August 2021 in Bangui, 4,120 people were affected by torrential rain, of whom 2,307 children, 48 pregnant women, 172 nursing mothers

[29] World Bank 2019 CAR SCD; *World Bank 2022 Leveraging cities.*
[30] *Data on GDP from Ghosh et al. (2010). Shedding light on the global distribution of economic activity. The Open Geography Journal (3), 148-161. Link.*
[31] UNHCR data as of January 2024.
[32] OCHA data as of January 2024.
[33] IOM data as of January 2024.
[34] World Bank. 2023. Central African Republic poverty assessment 2023. Link.
[35] 60-90% of built-up area in main CAR cities are estimated to be informal (60-70% in Bangui, 80% in Berberati, 65% in Bambari and 90% in Birao); *World Bank 2022 Leveraging cities report.*; A high proportion of urban residents are seen as living in slums conditions in CAR and this share has consistently and increasingly been higher than in other comparator countries in Sub-Sahara Africa. World Bank. 2022. World Development indicators

and 23 elderly people.[36] Climate-related challenges do not act in isolation and complex interactions and compounding effects create a web of uncertainties and potential disasters. The lack of green areas and deforestation impact local air quality and exacerbate urban heat island effects. Water shortages, enhanced fire risks and wind gusts are also increasingly experienced in urban areas and risks compound and interact.[37] The impacts of disasters on agriculture, transport and power networks not only have local impacts on access to jobs, markets and essential services but also national ripple-on effects on trade, food security, and communication. The impacts of climate-related hazards are expected to become worse with climate change: preliminary evidence suggests particularly an increase in rainwater flood risk in most of CAR's main urban areas.[38] The provision of basic services is further impaired during disasters and there is a heightened risk of water-borne diseases. Urban infrastructure like roads, schools, and markets are also frequently disrupted by disasters.[39] In Bangui, 29% of schools, 46% of major roads, 33% of hospitals, and 75% of police stations are located in a flood risk zone.[40] In Berberati, which experiences a considerable rate of annual soil loss,[41] a main transport axis to and from the airport is regularly inaccessible due to a combination of erosion and flooding.

11. Hydromet services have been disrupted by internal conflicts and urban populations and public institutions are not adequately informed of potential climatic events. Almost all meteorological and hydrological observation networks have been damaged by conflict and have ceased to operate. Only three operational synoptic stations (Berbérati, Bouar and Bangui-M'Poko) remain in operation. The Bangui-M'Poko station operated by the National Aviation authorities is the only station providing data and information for civil aviation services at the Bangui airport. The hydromet network also includes two hydrological stations in Bangui operated by the Weather Service (*Direction Générale de la Météorologie*, DGM) that partially function. The Hydraulic Services (*Direction Générale des Ressources Hydrauliques*, DGRH), which is responsible for resource planning and management, intends to set up an operational hydrology service to support the national Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) program and the protection of hydraulic infrastructure against flooding and erosion. The WMO, UNDRR and the World Bank have supported hydromet services and Early Warning Systems (EWS) against background of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, which include the development of a national platform for disaster reduction, which remains to be operationalized.

12. Decentralization has recently gained momentum as a means of contributing to long-term stabilization but is still facing serious challenges hampering its operationalization. Against the background of a long history of decentralization policy in CAR (1964, 1988, and 2020 legislations) a renewed political commitment towards decentralization and local government empowerment has been incorporated into the national strategy for post-conflict state rebuilding and reconciliation with the aim to improve service delivery and bring government closer to the people.[42] It is also a key commitment from the government in the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Reconciliation* (APPR), signed by the government and 14 armed groups in February 2019. Numerous challenges remain, including the full implementation of decentralization laws,[43] holding local elections, and ensuring local staffing. Although efforts have been made to prepare municipal and regional elections, the latter have been subject to delays since the beginning of 2022.

13. In such a challenging and fragile environment, investing in cities to increase inclusion and improve their resilience to shocks and stresses (conflict, disasters and climate change) is a key priority for CAR. Cities bring the

[36] CAR floods situation report 2022. Link.
[37] Wind gusts have affected more than 20,000 people in CAR as of 2022 and has particularly damages housing (National DRM Plan SNRRC 2022).
[38] REACH. 2020. Central African Republic Flood and Susceptibility Risk. Link.
[39] IFRC (2022) Central African Republic: Floods – Final Report. Link; Floodlist (2022) Central African Republic – floods cause fatalities, hundreds of homes destroyed. Link.
[40] World Bank. 2022. Bangui City Scan – City Resilience Program.; flood risk (combined river and rainwater) zones with a minimum depth of 15 cm.
[41] World Bank. 2023. Project PROVIR: technical mission report on erosion in Berberati. (internal report, unpublished).
[42] Central African Republic: National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017–21
[43] World Bank (2022). Central African Republic: Leveraging Cities to Build Resilience and Re-establish the Social Contract

opportunity to integrate the spatial, economic, social and environmental dimensions needed to build resilient places and support resilient communities. Focusing on key urban areas that host most of the displaced people makes practical sense as they are safer and investments can be more cost-effective. The needs in secondary cities are substantial and even Bangui requires support to ensure that service delivery and resilience can keep up with population growth and the role of the capital as major economic hub and motor of the national economy. To transform CAR cities into true spaces of opportunity and motors of national development, there is an imperative for strategic, inclusive urbanization efforts that enhance resilience, improve urban planning, and manage resources effectively. Some strategic plans such as the SEACAP in Bangui, the national DRM plan and the adaptation strategy provide already the framework of action, priorities and opportunity to engage in multi-donor and multi-stakeholder dialogues for coordinated resilience investments in urban areas across the country. These measures can help mitigate climate impacts and regional disparities, paving the way for sustained growth, poverty reduction, and enhanced safety and resilience for all citizens. As highlighted in the Urbanization Review,[44] Bangui, Berberati, Birao and Bambari emerge as priority cities within that context.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

14. The project development objective is to improve access to climate resilience infrastructure and basic services in selected cities.

Key Results

15. The PDO indicators are the following:

(a) People protected from floods or erosion risks (disaggregated by gender)

(b) People provided with improved urban living conditions (disaggregated by gender)

D. Project Description

16. The project will primarily focus on the cities of Bangui and Berberati, which have been selected because of their population size, their vulnerability to climate change risks, and their lower security risks. However, the project's targeting is designed to be flexible, and open to the possibility of other cities being selected if circumstances change, particularly in terms of security, displacement, and natural disasters risks. Other secondary cities that could be considered include Birao and Bambari, *inter alia*. If local circumstances require a city to be replaced and/or added to the project's target cities, a rapid assessment will be carried out on the basis of vulnerability and feasibility criteria to select this city. Priority investments in the replacement city will be drawn from additional analysis combined with qualitative approaches relying on participatory processes and involving local authorities, civil societies, and local communities, including vulnerable groups. Further details will be provided the Project Operation Manual (POM). The project, although not designed as a Series of Project (SOP) or Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA), holds the long-term perspective of scaling up and including other cities incrementally following a sequence derived from the evolution of the spatial distribution of fragility in the country.

17. The project will encourage labor-intensive public works in the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure. Civil works' design will maximize labor-intensive public works (LIPW) opportunities and will be included in the contracts of construction firms, which will be responsible for direct payment of LIPW beneficiaries. Emphasis will be placed on selecting LIPW beneficiaries in the vicinity of civil works and, within these target areas, on the inclusion of social groups

[44] *Ibid.*

facing marginalization or barriers to participation (e.g., women, youth, refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities, people with disabilities) and ensure their access to daily wage labor opportunities.

18. Investments have been packaged and sequenced to optimize impact and avoid implementation delays. Investments under Component 2 will be financed during the first 18 months of implementation. They were designed as quick wins interventions to target vulnerable populations, notably the most vulnerable groups such as IDPs. Hazard exposure, poverty level and the presence of IDPs served as selection criteria against the background of the project's two pillars – resilience and inclusion. Investments were further prioritized through community consultations combined with flood and erosion risks analysis to ensure that the investments are inclusive and focus on the most vulnerable groups. Investments under Component 1 will be financed during year 2 and 3 of implementation. They are more complex and require sound technical studies. In Bangui, they translate into spot interventions to optimize impacts. In the case of Berberati, which is more limited in population size and urban footprint, structuring investments are included in the allocated budget. In addition to the geographical overlap between the 2 components, investments have been designed to be complementary and combine resilience with developmental objectives. The most exposed neighborhoods, and most vulnerable populations benefiting from larger resilient investments under component 1, will also benefit from improved access to basic services. This incremental approach is particularly well-suited to fragile environments, as initial investments will be implemented to visibly improve living conditions in neighborhoods while preparations are being made for structural investments in the same neighborhoods that will have a city-wide impact on resilience.

19. The component will support hybrid Operation and Maintenance (O&M) approaches – i.e., a combination of public expenditure and community-based maintenance, with a particular focus on engagement of women, IDPs and other vulnerable populations, will be pursued and tailored to specific investments. In Bangui, market-based options will also be explored in select neighborhoods where demand for services and willingness to pay is higher. To ensure accountability for government-led O&M, the project will work with national and subnational government counterparts to provide seed funding to the municipality to support the sustainability of selected climate-risk reduction investments. The emphasis will be placed on strengthening existing structures within municipalities responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of infrastructure and benefit from support in materials and equipment under Component 1. O&M needs under Component 2 will be supported mainly with self-established maintenance mechanisms complemented with technical assistance provided to strengthen the capacity of existing neighborhood development associations (e.g., CDQ).

20. Adaptation to climate change is the direct driver for intervention under both components 1 and 2. As detailed in Annex 2, the prioritization of investments, in particular roads and pedestrian pathways, drainage, and Nature-based Solutions (NbS), was aimed to support climate adaptation directly. Road resurfacing is introduced solely to increase resilience to flood risk, not for maintenance purposes, and proper drainage is essential to mitigate the exacerbating effects of climate change.

Component 1. Investments in Flood and Erosion Risks Reduction (US$45 million)

Sub-Component 1.1. Infrastructure for Flood and Erosion Risks Reduction (US$40 million)

21. The subcomponent will finance physical infrastructure for risk reduction of climate events (e.g., flood and erosion) and related technical assessments including feasibility studies, detailed engineering designs, and safeguard assessments, and contracts with international engineering supervision firms. The proposed budget allocation first considers the city population size and its economic weight. It also considers the scale of needs in basic infrastructure and finally the capacity to implement the project, particularly heavy investments. As a reminder, Bangui is a main city of the CAR with 1,4 M

population, which received a large part of the people displaced during the last conflict. Berberati is a secondary town with a 103, 541 population and a moderate project implementation capacity.

22. **Bangui (US$30 million)**. Activities will include critical spot interventions for flood risk reduction. Ongoing prefeasibility studies expected to be completed in August 2024 will inform the exact solutions, locations, and physical investments for climate-risks reduction. These include hydraulic/hydrological/geotechnical and technical analysis on flood and erosion hazards including climate projections such as future rainfall patterns, exposure of people and assets, as well as the vulnerabilities of exposed communities in at-risk neighborhoods of Bangui (i.e., exposed to natural hazards and vulnerable). Eligible investments may include urban flood control measures such as stormwater drainage, including related works for the construction and/or renovation of culverts, bridges, canal outlet, etc.; water retention basins; dredging; including whenever appropriate the use of Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

23. **Berberati (US$10 million)**. Activities will include structuring investments for flood and soil erosion management. Ongoing prefeasibility studies expected to be completed in August 2024 will inform the exact solutions, locations, and physical investments for climate-risks reduction. These include hydraulic/hydrological/geotechnical and technical analysis on flood and soil erosion hazards including climate projections such as future rainfall patterns, exposure of people and assets, as well as the vulnerabilities of exposed communities in at-risk neighborhoods of Berberati (i.e., exposed to natural hazards and vulnerable). Eligible investments may include primary road resurfacing, critical spots (culverts, bridges, canal outlet, etc.), stormwater drainage, water retention basins, dredging of primary drains, and NbS for headward gully erosion stabilization and slope stabilization (e.g., Krainer walls and slope planting).

Sub-Component 1.2. Institutional Support for Climate Risk Integrated Planning and Urban Management (US$5 million)

24. **Climate-risks informed urban planning and urban management capacities.** Main activities will include (a) integrated urban plans combining three dimensions – urban planning, drainage, and flood and erosion-risk management; and (b) related technical assistance. The integrated plan aims to help determine where and how development – including urban sprawl and forced displacement to the city – occurs under current and projected climate and urban growth dynamics. These plans will be complemented with the preparation of basic people centered flood Early Warning System (EWS) (i.e., purchasing a limited number of synoptic and hydrological stations to monitor flood and erosion susceptibility), as well as strengthening capacities of essential EWS stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Humanitarian Action, Meteorological Services, Civil Protection and Red cross, inter alia).

25. **State and municipal capacity strengthening for urban planning and disaster risk management.** Activities in focus cities will include capacity strengthening training commensurate with each city's existing capacity and prospects in terms of roles and the objectives that can be met during the timeframe of the Project. In addition, it is expected that project activities under components 1 and 2 will also have opportunities for capacity building as municipalities will play a leading role in their design and implementation. As such, capacity strengthening activities will be intricately linked to investments under those components.

Component 2. Neighborhood Infrastructure and Basic Services (US$20 million)

26. This component will support investments in community infrastructure. Pre-feasibility studies involved wide local consultations process in 13 priority neighborhoods (9 in Bangui and 4 in Berberati) (See IV Technical Analysis and Annex 4 for details on prioritization criteria linked to climate resilience and social inclusion, and maps). The process was primarily led by the Ministry of Urban Development, Land Reform, and Housing (*Ministère de l'Urbanisme, de la réforme foncière,*

de la ville et de l'habitat – MURFVH) and the Bangui and Berberati municipalities, thus building their capacity and contributing to stronger trust in institutions. The component will also finance contracts with engineering supervision firms.

27. **Investments in each city have been packaged in two main categories** – (i) roads and drainage, and (ii) building rehabilitation and public spaces – and sequenced and allotted considering budget and geographic clustering to minimize the number of contracts and to allow small and medium local firms to compete. In addition, all investments have been designed considering operational and implementation aspects, including accessibility criteria and material and machinery availability. The budget ventilation is based on the ratio of priority zones between the two cities.

28. **Bangui (US$ 15 million)**. Beneficiary neighborhoods are grouped in 9 zones as follows: Zone 1 (Quartiers Ramandji, Boulata, Cité Boeing and Cité Dameca), Zone 2 (Lipia 2, Lipia 4, Sangba, Dedengue 4 et 5), Zone 3 (Lando 2), Zone 4 (Banga 2, Ngouciment 1 et Ben-zvi centre), Zone 5 (Mpoko Bac 2, Gbanikola 1 et 2), Zone 6 (Ngaragba Gbotoro, Ngatoua, Toaka, Gbangouma 4 et Saint Paul 1), Zone 7 (Galabadja sinistrés, Galabadja 1, 2, 3 et 4), Zone 8 (Gbakassa 1, Ngou catere 1 et 2 et Kokoro canal) and Zone 9 (Cité Sato, Poto poto 1 et 2). Activities will include 4.6km of secondary road rehabilitation (resurfacing), 20.4km of tertiary roads rehabilitation and corresponding tertiary drainage, 3.4km of green drainage (bioswale), 34.8km of pedestrian pathways rehabilitation, 17 pedestrian footbridge construction, 1 crossroads rehabilitation, 1 health center building rehabilitation, 9 school buildings and courtyard rehabilitation (existing schools), 8 small market rehabilitation (e.g., warehouse, fence etc.), and 11 public spaces rehabilitation (e.g., green spaces, recreational and education spaces, taxi-moto public space, etc.). Activities have been selected in a participatory manner during preparation (see section IV Technical Analysis). All neighborhood infrastructure and basic services will adopt disaster-and-climate resilient design standards and will prioritize nature-based solutions whenever feasible (e.g., roads and pedestrian pathways including their respective drainage system (concrete and bioswale), which are critical elements to manage stormwater and prevent flooding and soil erosion, are designed and dimensioned to integrate climate change projections (SSP5). All technical and E&S studies are expected to be completed in September 2024.

29. **Berberati (US$ 5 million)**. Beneficiary neighborhoods are grouped in 4 zones as follows: Zone 1 (Poto Poto, Ngou Ciment 2, Djambala 1,2 and 8), Zone 2 (Sambanda 1 ad 3), Zone 3 (Ndao, Baba Salao and Kasai 1) and Zone 4 (City-Center). Activities will include 4.4km of secondary road rehabilitation (resurfacing), 2 crossroads rehabilitation (including drainage), 2.3km of secondary drainage infrastructure construction, 9.7km of green drainage (bioswale) construction, 16.6 km of pedestrians pathways rehabilitation, 4 school buildings and courtyard rehabilitation (existing schools), 5 market small rehabilitation (e.g., warehouse, fence etc.), and 8 open spaces rehabilitation (e.g., green spaces, recreational and education spaces, taxi-moto public space, etc.). Activities have been selected in a participatory manner during preparation (see section IV Technical Analysis). All neighborhood infrastructure and basic services will adopt disaster-and-climate resilient design standards and will prioritize nature-based solutions whenever feasible, e.g., roads and pedestrian pathways including their respective drainage system (concrete and bioswale), which are critical elements to manage stormwater and prevent flooding and soil erosion, are designed and dimensioned to integrate climate change projections (SSP5). All technical and E&S studies are expected to be completed in September 2024.

Component 3: Project Management (US$5 million)

30. This component will support activities including (i) the planning, implementation, and technical oversight of program activities, (ii) effective social and environmental risks management, and (iii) financial management and procurement. This will include the daily operation of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU). Relevant government agencies at the national, regional, and local levels will be involved in the implementation process with adequate capacity-building support. Activities will include: (i) communications and community outreach and awareness-raising campaigns, including on disaster risks, deforestation, rainwater management and run off, solid waste management and informal

housing and (ii) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) arrangements. Innovative implementation mechanisms such as digital monitoring/supervision tools, including remote-sensing and Geo-Enabling Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS) will be used in the project's M&E mechanisms.

31. The project will support the capacity building of the PIU and MURFVH more broadly, based on an assessment of their technical competencies in the areas of FM, procurement, human resource management, project planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), community engagement methods, and safeguards. The project will ensure that civil servants work closely with the technical consultants hired by the PIU to facilitate on-the-job learning. The MURFVH will be supported to lead the municipalities performance evaluation and oversight of subproject implementation.

Component 4: Contingency Emergency Response (US$ 0 million)

32. A contingency emergency response component (CERC), initially without a budget allocation, will allow for the rapid reallocation of project funds in the event of natural or man-made crisis and major disease outbreaks of public health importance during the implementation of the Project, following the World Bank Investment Project Financing (IPF) Policy, paragraphs 12 (Projects in Situations of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints). Activation of the CERC is triggered by (a) a declaration of a state of emergency by the Government and (b) a government request to the World Bank for activation of the CERC. The implementation modality and eligible activities to be financed under the CERC will be described in the Project Operations Manual (POM).

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	Yes
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

33. Environmental risks are rated as Substantial. The main potential environmental risks are related to civil works associated with the construction and rehabilitation of medium size community and climate resilient infrastructure, such as drainage and road works and public buildings such as schools, markets etc. These risks include (i) soil pollution and erosion risks due to construction and sourcing of materials (ii) water pollution from eroded land, spills and leaks of oils/chemical from vehicles and equipment; (iii) air pollution and noise due to vehicles, machinery, concrete mixing, and civil works (iv) inaccurate siting of drainage and flood-control infrastructure, water supply and sanitation facilities which could result in increased flooding, water logging and pollution; (v) occupational health and safety risks of workers ; (vi) community health and safety risks of residents, pedestrians and local inhabitants due to works in congested and crowded areas, increased vector borne diseases due to water logging or poor waste management, and provision of poor quality services including water supply due to lack of testing; (vii) risks of traffic accidents due to movement of heavy machinery and vehicles, trench and repair works; and (viii) inadequate sourcing of materials (illegal quarrying) and storage of construction materials and poor waste management, including burning and indiscriminate dumping of dredged materials and other types of waste. Most of these risks are site-specific, with standardized mitigation measures and with no expected potential long-term impacts on sensitive ecosystems or having irreversible consequences.

34. **Social risks are rated as Substantial**. They are associated with small to moderate scale civil works in Bangui and Berberati required for resilient infrastructure for flood and erosion risks reduction (sub-component 1.1), and Component 2 neighborhood infrastructure works. Involuntary ressettlement involving physical and/or economic displacement and discruption of community access to homes or social services is likely to result from sub-component 1.1 and component 2 works. In Berberati and Bangui works include primarily road resurfacing, critical spots construction (e.g., culverts, pedestrian bridges, drainage outlet, etc.), drainage and water rentention facilities, dredging, and NbS for headward gully erosion stabilization and slope stabilization. Within Component 2, with the exception of some drainage, the project will conduct mostly rehabilitation works to enhance neighborhood infrastructures and basic services. Road works will include primarily resurfacing of secondary and tertiary roads and pedestrian pathways on existing tracks. Works will also involve rehabilitation of crossroads, health center building rehabilitation, school buildings and courtyards rehabilitation, small markets rehabilitation, public spaces, secondary drainage infrastructure, and green drainage (bioswale). Moreover, there is also a limited ESF capacity of municiplities involved in supporting the sustainability of selected climate-risk reduction investments.

35. **Other relevant social risks** include small to moderate scale labor influx and risk associated STD – HIV/AIDSs community incidences, significant SEA/SH risks on project communities, and the risk of exclusion of vulnerable groups such as returnees and IDPs from participating as community workers linked to sub-comonent 1.1 community-based maintenance. Strategic targeting approaches should be developed through the SEP to ensure that there is no exclusion or marginalization of any vulnerable groups. There may be limited client capacities for effective stakeholder engagement, which is the key element for a successful citizen engagement process and in support of specific activities such as resettlement. The SEP will identify people that because of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages, may be more limited than others in their ability to participate and access to project benefits.

36. **Land acquisition risks**: The project may led to temporary disruption of economic activities, obstacles to access properties due to land taking related to the works, loss of land and other assets. A RPF will be prepared, consulted on and disclosed before appraisal according to ESS5 requirements to mitigate this risk, as the scope of resettlement and land acquisition (community and climate-risk infrastructure) is unknown at this stage, and given the unknown number of persons that will be directly or indirectly impacted physically and economically by the planned works.

37. **Substantial SEA/SH risks**: The activities of sub-component 1 and component 2 might also increase and exacerbate the risks of SEA/SH against women and young girls. The borrower will prepare a SEA/SH risk assessment to identify potential project project community SEA/SH risks, existing mechanisms to address SEA/SH incidents as well as measures to adderess SEA/SH. The assessment will be associated to a SEA/SH action plan and accountability and response plan. Moreover, to ensure timely SEA/SH interventions and resonse the project will recurit a GBV specialist, as well as a dedicated NGO for general oversight with experienced GBV staff for monitoring the implementation of the GBV Action Plan and ensuring all parties are meeting their responsibilities. The NGO will support SEA/SH case management, operationalisation of SEA/SH-GRM, community sensitisatons, field monitoring of signing of codes of conduct by project workers and training of workers involved in project works including LIPW. Further, for case management, project and worker GRMs will lean on the national GBV service mapping to develop the referal system. Also, as part of SEA/SH plan, the borrower will include funding to recruit GBV Services Providers to facilitate access to timely, safe and confidential services for survivors.

38. **Security risks**: The project intends to implement certain activities in some communes affected by conflicts. Project sites might be situated in areas where non-state army groups outside government control may be present. Therefore, the risk of attacks on project workers, assets and beneficiaries must be assessed and evaluated via project security risk assessment and security management plan to determine the level of threats and mitigation measures.

39. **Other significant risks** which may prevent sound implementation of the standard environmental and social mitigation measures may arise due to inadequate technical and institutional capacity of the PIU, poor knowledge and commitment to implement environmental and social measures, inadequate attention to inclusion of environmental and social specifications in procurement contracts for goods and supplies, poor supervision and monitoring of contractual obligations with the construction companies and suppliers.

40. **The project prepared environmental and social instruments to assess and identify all potential risks associated with the activities along with well definied mitigation measures**. These include an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). These instruments will be consulted and disclosed prior to Appraisal. In addition, a Labor Management Plan (LMP), a SEA/SH assessment and SEA/SH action plan, security risk assessment, and security management plan will be prepared no later than 2 months after effectiveness. Site-specific instruments, including Environmental and Social Impact Assessments and Management Plans (ESMP), for which prototpyes will be prepared due to the high numner of sites, and Resettlement Action Plans (RAP) for Bangui and Berberati will start to be prepared in parallel for the neighborhood infrastructure works in each city. The project also prepared an Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). Capacity building and institutional strengthening has been supported by Bank funded E&S consultants, hired under the Hands-on Implementation Support program during project preparation. The project has specific sub-components focused on capacity building in E&S management, flood and erosion management, emergency response. Supervision Consultants will be obligated to include Environmental and social expertise during supervision and monitoring of works.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

41. **Overall Project implementation responsibility is vested with a new PIU in the MURFVH.** The PIU will be responsible for day-to-day project management and include all fiduciary, safeguards, technical, and results information for transmission to the World Bank. It will also be responsible for contracting external audits of the Project and recruiting an internal auditor. The PIU will also screen and approve project investments that local institutions propose. The PIU has been formally constituted and operationalized during project preparation and already includes eight (8) key positions (Coordinator, Adjunct Coordinator, Procurement Specialist, Financial Management Specialist, Environmental Safeguards Specialist, Social Safeguards Specialist, GBV Specialist and an Administrative Assistant). Other recruitments will include an Accountant, an M&E Specialist (proficient in GEMS) and other technical experts (e.g., engineering, security, community liaison and communications).

42. **A light PIU office will be established in Berberati.** A smaller decentralized PIU office will be established in Berberati and include at least a local coordinator, a social development assistant and an environmental assistant. The light PIU office will be responsible for local coordination, planning, and monitoring of implementation of activities in Berberati. It will provide reports to the central PIU for consolidation and then for review by the technical committee and submission to the steering committee for validation. It will liaise with state deconcentrated services and local governments as well as the local civil society, including the representatives of marginalized groups. It will help prepare the meetings of the Community Coordination Committee. The mandate of the Berberati office will not include fiduciary responsibilities.

43. **Beneficiary communities will be involved in project implementation and oversights in several ways.** Community representatives will be part of the Community Coordination Committees (CCC). In addition, community representatives

have been involved in selected physical investment under components 2 and continue to be involved in the design of all investments, to optimize their utility in the local communities (for example public spaces and other green infrastructure).

44. Municipal authorities will play an important role in coordinating activities among local stakeholders and ensuring strong involvement of communities. The local authorities of Bangui and Berberati will play a leading role during implementation of investments and in citizen engagement, in close collaboration with the PIU and State services. They will not have any fiduciary role in project implementation.

45. Overseeing entities will be created at both the national and local level. The POM will provide details on the composition and mandate of these entities.

46. ***A National Steering Committee*** will be set up to oversee and strategically guide the implementation of PROVIR, as well as to ensure consistency with national strategies and coordination among national-level stakeholders. It will provide policy and general guidance, make strategic decisions, and provide overall oversight for project implementation, with alignment and complementarity with ongoing or planned projects and initiatives. It will ensure that a comprehensive, coherent approach is taken to supporting project activities. It will facilitate sectoral buy-in and coordination of activities across all relevant ministries and institutions, including with development partners. The National Steering Committee will be chaired by the MEPCI, with vice-presidency of the MURFVH, and have the participation of relevant ministries including METP, Humanitarian Action, Interior and Decentralization, Environment, Water and forests, Energy and Hydraulic Resources, *inter alia*, as well as the Municipalities of Bangui and Berberati.

47. ***Local Technical Committees*** will be set up in Bangui and Berberati and chaired by the MURFVH and co-chaired by its mayor. The committees will include representatives from relevant ministries (MURFVH, MEPCI, METP, Finance, Humanitarian Action, Social Affairs, Interior and Decentralization, Transport and Civil Aviation, Environment, Water and forests, Energy and Hydraulic Resources, Health and Education *inter alia*), the prefecture (L'Ombella Mpoko in the case of Bangui to cover Begoua and Bimbo), and the Arondissements mayors (9 in the case of Bangui, in addition to Begoua and Bimbo's mayors), and representatives from the civil society.

48. ***Community Coordination Committees (CCC)*** will be established in Bangui and Berberati and chaired by a designated community representative (e.g., the existing president of the Arrondissement committee). CCC will include local representatives from the community (e.g., Chef de Groupe, and CDQ included in the project neighborhood priority investment areas, *inter alia*), and including women, youth, IDPs, returnees, minorities and disabled persons. They will ensure operational coordination among stakeholders at the community level and be consulted during subprojects design.

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Laurent Corroyer
Disaster Risk Management Specialist

Emilie Sandrine Celine Jourdan
Senior Urban Specialist

Borrower/Client/Recipient

Central African Republic

Implementing Agencies

Ministry of Urban Development, Land Reform and Housing
Alban Bellet
Project Coordinator
bellet.23ap81@gmail.com

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

APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Laurent Corroyer, Emilie Sandrine Celine Jourdan

Approved By

Practice Manager/Manager:	Madhu Raghunath	09-May-2024
Country Director:	Cheick Fantamady Kante	08-Jul-2024