



Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary

Appraisal Stage

(ESRS Appraisal Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 05/28/2020 | Report No: ESRSA00847



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Congo, Republic of	AFRICA	P174178	
Project Name	Republic of Congo Lisungi Emergency COVID-19 Response project		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Social Protection & Jobs	Investment Project Financing	5/22/2020	6/25/2020
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Republic of Congo	Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objective is to provide emergency income support to households affected by the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, and provide safety net for recovery for poor and vulnerable beneficiaries in participating areas of the Beneficiary.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	50.00

B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

Yes

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]

The project will (i) support safety nets coverage as an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) support the expansion of safety nets post-emergency including productive inclusion for affected households to restore livelihoods; and (iii) strengthen social protection delivery systems and institutions to provide a response when shocks occur.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

Public Disclosure



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

Republic of Congo has a population of 5,367,490 and is also one of the most urbanized countries in Africa. According to the latest estimates, 61.8% of the population lives in urban areas, with a higher concentration in the two metropolises (Brazzaville and Pointe Noire).

The Lisungi Emergency COVID-19 project will provide emergency cash support to approximately 200,000 households affected by the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 during the lockdown in the following departments : Brazzaville and Kintele (100,000 households); Pointe-noire (60,000 households) ; Niari (4,890 households) ; Bouenza (8,953 households); Cuvette (5,484 households); Plateaux (5,642 households); Lekoumou (3,439 households); Cuvette– ouest (1,647 households), Pool (3,727 households; Sangha (1,706 households); Likouala (2,673 households); and Kouilou (1,839 households).

The project will have four components of which three have potential implications for environmental and social risks management:

Component 1: Emergency cash transfers for COVID-19 response: in this component the project will support the government plan aiming to compensate household’s income losses by providing one-time emergency cash transfers, at CFA50,000 per household during the lockdown period, to avoid negative coping mechanisms such as decrease consumption with long-term negative impacts on human capital accumulation. Emergency cash transfers will focus on beneficiaries in the main urban areas namely: Brazzaville, Kintélé, Pointe-Noire, Dolisie, Nkayi, Madingou, Loango, Owando, Oyo, Makoua, Djambala, Gamboma, Ngo, Sibiti, Ewo, Kinkala, Nganga Lingolo, Ouessou and Impfondo. Potential beneficiaries are vulnerable households registered with the RSU and identified during home visits and social surveys. In selected areas affected by COVID-19, all households that are interested in benefitting from the program can also apply and final eligibility determination is based on the vulnerability assessment. The project will finance also a communication and sensitization campaign to provide relevant information to poor and vulnerable households, with a focus on mitigation measures for individuals.

Component 2: Cash transfer program for recovery: this component will support households affected by the economic crisis to rebuild their assets and strengthen resilience once the acute phase of the pandemic recedes. As for the ongoing Lisungi project, this project will provide direct cash transfers targeted on poor households combined with support to Income-Generating Activities (IGA). The direct cash transfers are conditioned on compliance of beneficiary households with certain activities to promote development of their human capital. IGA support is provided to beneficiaries in addition to training on how to develop a business plan and implement it with support of the project. In addition, the conditionality will be applied variably depending on availability of supply of social services in locations to be covered by the project. As in the ongoing Lisungi project, the beneficiaries will be required also to fulfil the following (flexible depending on availability) conditions: (a) Regular health center visits including age-relevant checkups and vaccination to improve children’s health status and prenatal and postnatal exams to improve maternal health care that hinders female potential and women’s empowerment through their inclusion in the labor market; (b) a minimum of 80 percent regular school attendance per child per month.

Component 3: Strengthening delivery systems: will provide support to strengthen delivery systems with the ultimate objective of increasing coordination across programs and agencies, as well inclusion of poor and vulnerable groups. The work supported under this component aims at identifying opportunities to strengthen delivery systems with a



focus on improving their efficiency, making them more client-focused as well as shock-responsive. It will cover all the phases of the delivery chain, including: outreach; intake and registration; assessment of needs and conditions; eligibility and enrollment decisions; determination of benefits and service package; notification and onboarding; provision of benefits and/or services; beneficiaries' compliance, updating and grievances; and exit decisions, notifications and case outcomes. This component will have a particular focus on two priority areas: the social registry and the provision of cash benefits. It will build on previous work on these two areas, while strengthening and further developing these systems. It will also focus on improving the capacity of delivery systems to respond to shocks and crisis.

Component 4: Project management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E): This component will support project management. It will ensure that the PMU is operational and that it successfully and efficiently implements the project in conformity with the Financing Agreement, Project Appraisal Document, and the PIM.

Component 5: A zero-fund component will allow the Government to quickly reallocate and mobilize funds in the event of an emergency that would require immediate recovery and reconstruction needs, and are not already covered by the project, e.g. an epidemic outbreak, or a climate-related shock. The CERC can be used to respond to emergencies across the national territories, i.e. including in areas not initially covered by the project. In this project, it will ease the reallocation of funds from other components to component 1, given the uncertainty about the duration of the health emergency and lockdown period.

D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action (MASAH) of the Republic of Congo will have overall responsibility coordination of the project. The day-to-day management of this project, including the administrative, fiduciary and safeguard aspects, will be assigned to the Project Implementation Unit of the Lisungi Project. In regards to E&S capacity, the MASAH/Lisungi PIU has experience with the safeguards policies, drawing especially from the implementation of the ongoing LISUNGI Safety Nets System Project II (P166143), but lack capacity to implement the new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) requirements as the old projects were implemented under the safeguards policies. It is also expected that the project will be challenged by the scale of proposed activities, which represents a substantial increase over the current level of operations.

The PIU currently does not have adequate staffing for E&S supervision. To address the low capacity issue, the PIU will be hiring three (3) additional staffs: one environmental specialist, one social specialist, and one Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) specialist who will support the project with the implementation and monitoring of environmental and social risk management. The social specialist should have a background in stakeholder and community engagement and be familiar with gender-related programming and/or prevention of and response to SEA/SH issues and will support the SEA/SH specialist on implementation of measures to address SEA/SH risks. The E&S specialists and core implementation team will need capacity building on the Bank's ESF and SEA/SH requirements. Lisungi project has however already has established certain functions and competencies for key social aspects such as communications and grievance redress. The PIU includes a staff who is responsible for Communications & GRM, and who will support the E&S specialists in managing E&S risk management. The Project Manager will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Environmental and Social Commitment plan are met. The E&S specialists, with the support of the Communications & GRM officer will have detailed technical and historical knowledge of Lisungi work. Additional capacity building measures for Lisungi staff and



GRM team are identified in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and will be carried out under Component 4 of the project.

At the national level, the implementing agency, the Directorate General for Environment (DGE) is the main institution responsible for conducting and coordinating the environmental and social assessment process in the country. However, the DGE is facing challenges in terms of institutional capacity associated with staffing, finances and regulatory requirements. DGE has some experience with the implementation of World Bank Projects under the environmental and social safeguards instruments but has no experience with the new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) since no ESF project is being implemented in the country. The DGE also has limited capacities to monitor the implementation of E&S measures in projects, and same as the PIU, it has very limited knowledge and experience with the Bank ESF. The World Bank will provide guidance on preparing and implementing a capacity building and training program to help the Recipient manage environmental and social risks throughout the project timeline.

An E&S capacity building program and other COVID-19 related training will be provided to the PIU to increase their capacity as highlighted in the ESCP.

II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

Environmental Risk Rating.

The Environmental Risk Rating is moderate as cash transfers have minimal adverse impact on the environment. The project will neither support the procurement of any materials or equipment nor rehabilitation or construction activities or civil works. Under component 2, (as for the ongoing Lisungi project) the project will provide, direct cash transfers targeted on poor households and support to Income-Generating Activities (IGA). IGA support is provided to beneficiaries who can develop a business plan and implement it with support of the project, i.e. they have the ability to involve in economic activity. This could include activities in agriculture and animal husbandry, especially in rural areas, retail (grain, food supplies, etc.), handicrafts, services to individuals such as hairdressing or transportation. The major area of risks for this project is risks related to occupational and community health and safety including the risk of spread of the COVID-19, mainly for activities under component 2. The moderate risk classification takes also into account the large number and distributed nature of the IGA beneficiaries, as well as the limited capacity of the designed PIU, as well as all stakeholders involved in the preparation and implementation of the Lisungi Emergency COVID-19 response project to manage potential risks and impacts related to IGA in compliance with the ESF.

Social Risk Rating

Moderate

The overall social risk rating for the project is moderate. The Project will provide cash transfers to about 200,000 poor and vulnerable households affected by COVID-19. The project will be implemented by the Lisungi Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and build on existing systems, payment delivery mechanisms and processes used for Lisungi program. This program targets people of Congolese nationality or foreigners living regularly in the Congo, like



refugees. Social risks are considered to be moderate, given the limited duration of the program (until 2023) and the client’s capacity and experience in managing similar programs. The project builds on existing Lisungi Social Safety Nets program, the existing Lisungi unique social registry (RSU), national systems, payment delivery mechanisms and processes.

Social risks are related to: (i) the potential exclusion of some vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; (ii) Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Community Health and Safety Risks due to COVID-19 contagion and (iii) potential risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment within a workplace environment, including risks of IPV in RoC due to changes in gender dynamics within household associated with cash transfers offered by the project; iv) potential to create social tension between project beneficiaries and non-project beneficiaries within the same community if the targeting mechanism for who is eligible for cash grants is not transparent enough. Among the vulnerable groups the project has identified the following: (i) beneficiaries with accessibility challenges (such as the disabled, female headed households, or elderly households, population with low human capital or illiterate, or with limited digital literacy); and (ii) vulnerable households currently not captured by the existing project design. The Project specifically address such concerns by targeting vulnerable groups in the SEP and project design. Within two months of Lisungi effectiveness, the project will conduct a recertification of beneficiaries, based on the methodology and procedures satisfactory to the Bank.

In addition, the project will use Lisungi’s existing grievances redress mechanisms (GRMs) to mitigate such risks, including addressing potential SEA/SH grievances ethically and confidentially. An Environmental and Social Assessment will also be carried out within 2 months after effectiveness to evaluate the project operational processes and performance and assess whether targeted disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups have access to the project’s development benefits. The assessment will include an analysis of (i) the results of stakeholder engagement activities (ii) grievances received and (iii) direct feedback from beneficiaries through survey and/or focus groups (iv) and overall implementation performance analysis.

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

B.1. General Assessment

ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:

The interventions supported under this project will provide unconditional cash transfers to poor households (component 1) and conditional cash transfers targeted on poor households and another subcomponent providing support to Income-Generating Activities (IGA) (component 2) to poor and vulnerable households affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

The project will neither procure materials or equipment, nor support rehabilitation or construction activities or civil works, and therefore, will not result in any major negative environmental risks or impacts. The IGA component will finance small-scale activities (undertaken at the household level) and could include activities in agriculture and animal husbandry, especially in rural areas, retail (grain, food supplies, etc.), handicrafts, services to individuals such as hairdressing or transportation. The ongoing Bank’s technical assistance “Informing gender-smart social protection in Congo (P173535)” may provide information in the design of these female-headed activities with regards to: i) types of activities that the project could support where women show high level of activity or have growing opportunities; ii)



effective methods to reach out to female beneficiaries and content to be included in the communication campaigns (incl. sensitization on social norms and aspirations); iii) specific training modalities that allow for women’s enrollment in training and their regular involvement; iv) additional services that can alleviate women’s workload to allow them to participate successfully in productive and income-generating activities; v) additional activities and content to be included in the package of accompanying measures offered by the project (e.g. specific content for life skills trainings and behavioral interventions); vi) additional measures among the community to support women’s successful participation and increased productivity (e.g. interventions among local leaders, heads of household etc.); vii) efforts to address increased IPV due to changes of power dynamics through specific activities such as consultations and sensitization of local leaders. Some additional risks, would include: i) risks related to specific occupational health and safety (OHS) for field officers, project staff and other direct/indirect project workers to protect themselves and prevent infection while working (consultation, verifications, field visits, etc.); ii) risks to the wider community to be exposed to the virus, with a particular focus on high-risk individuals (elderly, individuals with underlying medical conditions, pregnant women); (iii) risks for exclusion of youth or other vulnerable groups; iv) access to less accessible areas and ensuring communication reaches all potential beneficiaries.

To mitigate these risks and impacts, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) that is currently being implemented under LISUNGI Safety Nets System Project II (P166143) will be revised and updated, as well as including measures to manage risks related with the abovementioned risks, as well as to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The updated ESMF also will outline the implementation arrangements to be put in place for environmental and social risk management, as well as training programs including measure related to COVID-19 operations.

The project’s Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) includes commitments to undertake the required assessments and development of the necessary environmental and social risk management instruments for the Project. Mitigation measures for site-specific impacts will be managed through the implementation of required environmental and social instruments, such as ESMPs, to be prepared as per the ESMF. Relevant capacity building measures will be included in the ESMF and ESCP, and the environmental, social and GBV specialists to be recruited will provide support for the project’s overall environmental aspects.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

The project recognizes the need for an effective and inclusive engagement with all relevant stakeholders and the population at large. Due to the emergency nature of the situation related to COVID19 and Government social distancing measures in place, no dedicated consultations with communities have taken place during project preparation. The MASAHA and the project team held consultations with parliament members and religious groups, other ministries have been consulted in the framework of the national coordination committee led by president and coordinated by pm. Additional consultations are ongoing as part of pre-appraisal with the Ministry of Health, the Presidency, Parliament committees, civil society, and others. Furthermore, during the preparation of Lisungi parent projects Lisungi Social Safety Nets I (P145263) and II (including Refugee window project) (P166143) program design in 2018 and 2019, the Lisungi project conducted nation-wide consultations with direct and non-direct beneficiaries, NGOs, Government, Media, and other concerned parties on the project cycle, design, implementation tools. The stakeholder engagement process included general consultations, focus groups, and individual consultations.



The preliminary SEP that was prepared for this project supports clear communication and meaningful consultation processes, considering the needs of various stakeholders and adapted to the current social distancing requirements by the national government now in effect (e.g. consulting via video platforms, email, phone calls, radio programs, etc.). The consultations will provide information on SEA/SH risks, and the identified reporting and response measures. These consultations will be oriented to understand women and girls' health and safety concerns, including their experiences and wellbeing. Whenever possible the consultations with women will be held in women only groups facilitated by a woman.

The borrower will publish and apply the preliminary SEP prepared for the emergency project to engage stakeholders as needed and for public information disclosure purposes. Within two months of project effectiveness, the Borrower will update and disclose the SEP on MASA and Lisungi websites.

B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

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

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

ESS2 is relevant to the project as the project will involve direct project workers, contracted workers including contracted NGOs, primary supply workers, security workers as well as government and community workers. To ensure recruitment and management of labor on the project is in accordance with ESS2, the Borrower will develop and implement procedures to establish and maintain a safe working environment; a project-related LMP, which will be prepared as an Annex to the updated ESMF, will be prepared covering terms and condition of employment; non-discrimination and equal opportunities; prohibition of child labor; and workers' rights for project workers and contracted workers (e.g. call centers operators), in a manner consistent with ESS2. The LMP will ensure that both the PIU and the contracted primary suppliers promote safety and health at work. The current grievance mechanism system will be adjusted to fit the "social distancing" measures for as long as they are in place and set up for all direct workers and contracted workers to raise and resolve workplace-related concerns. The project workforce includes: (i) direct workers, including PMU staff, (ii) contracted workers, including some indirect project workers, and "zone chiefs" to support the capacity of Lisungi to deliver the project. The project will also rely on a number of civil servants such as Lisungi social workers and government employees, who will be not under ESS2. The Lisungi PIU will collaborate and consult with project workers in promoting understanding, and methods for, implementation of OHS requirements, especially in relation to COVID risks, as well as in providing information to project workers, training on occupational safety and health, including SEA/SH issues, and provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) without expense to the project workers.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

ESS3 is relevant to the project as income-Generating Activities (IGA) to be supported could include activities in agriculture and animal husbandry. The project will ensure that any waste generated from project activities receiving Bank funding is well managed. Measures related to pest management will be included in the project ESMF.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety



ESS4 is considered relevant to the Project. Inappropriate implementation of activities (for instance respecting social distancing, respecting cash transfer program protocols, ensuring consultation processes are safe, etc) can expose the community to health and safety issues that could lead to further spread of the disease (COVID-19). The Borrower will take precautions in anticipating and avoiding adverse impacts on the health and safety of communities. Such risks are estimated to be reduced due to the use of digital services for beneficiary enrollment and payments. A standalone Community Health and Safety Plan will be prepared by the Lisungi project as part of the ESMF, in coordination with MOH and MASA, to keep beneficiaries updated on specific protocols for cash transfers, and minimizing risks of in-person interactions planned during the project implementation, including stakeholder engagement activities.

Evidence suggests that gender based violence may be associated with cash transfer programs, also noting that the project operates within the context of RoC which has an elevated rate of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The GBV risks associated with the project will be further assessed as part of the Social Assessment and appropriate prevention and mitigation measures will be recommended and implemented. For example, a GBV referral protocol will be reviewed and formalized and implemented.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

ESS 5 is not relevant to the project. The project will not finance the purchase of land or buildings leading to involuntary resettlement.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

ESS6 is not relevant to the project. Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS are currently not relevant given the Project scope and activities. The project interventions do not include any civil works.

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

ESS7 is currently not relevant to the project. The project will intervene in urban areas of the Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire corridor.

Nonetheless, in the event that one or more activities proposed within the framework of the project are implemented in areas where IP/SSAHUTLCs are present, as set out in ESS 7, relevant aspects of this standard will be taken into account, if necessary. The Borrower will ensure that the IP/SSAHUTLCs are properly informed and can share the benefits of the project in an inclusive and culturally appropriate way (i.e. inclusion as beneficiaries of cash transfers if they fulfill eligibility criteria) and that arrangements made for this purpose be included in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

ESS8 Cultural Heritage



ESS8 is not relevant to the project. No civil works are planned under project interventions and no tangible or untangible cultural heritage will be impacted by the project activities.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

ESS9 is not relevant to the project. There are no financial intermediaries that are part of the project.

B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks

There are no other relevant project risks.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways No

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas No

III. BORROWER’S ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT PLAN (ESCP)

Public Disclosure

DELIVERABLES against MEASURES AND ACTIONs IDENTIFIED	TIMELINE
ESS 1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	
ESMF updated and disclosed within two months of Effectiveness.	10/2020
Hire one Environmental Specialist, one Social Specialist, and one SEA/SH Specialist	10/2020
ESS 10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	
SEP prepared and disclosed prior to Appraisal, will be updated and disclosed within two months of Effectiveness.	10/2020
Community Health and Safety Plan	10/2020
ESS 2 Labor and Working Conditions	
LMP prepared, disclosed, and implemented within two months after effectiveness.	10/2020
ESS 3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management	
Develop measures related to pest management as part of the ESMF	10/2020
ESS 4 Community Health and Safety	
SEA/SH mitigation measures will be prepared and latest two months after effectiveness.	10/2020



ESS 5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement
ESS 6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources
ESS 7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities
ESS 8 Cultural Heritage
ESS 9 Financial Intermediaries

B.3. Reliance on Borrower’s policy, legal and institutional framework, relevant to the Project risks and impacts

Is this project being prepared for use of Borrower Framework? No

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

No use of borrower framework.

IV. CONTACT POINTS

World Bank

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Republic of Congo

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

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Public Disclosure



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