Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 15-Jun-2023 | Report No: PIDA35501

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Project ID	Project Name	Parent Project ID (if any)
Western and Central Africa	P180085	Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West and Central Africa (HISWACA) - SOP 2	
Region	**Estimated Appraisal Date**	**Estimated Board Date**	**Practice Area (Lead)**
WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	12-Jun-2023	31-Aug-2023	Poverty and Equity
Financing Instrument	**Borrower(s)**	**Implementing Agency**	
Investment Project Financing	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), The Republic of Chad, The Republic of Gabon, The Central African Republic, The Republic of Congo, The Republic of Cameroon	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) Commission, Ministère du Plan, de la statistique et de l'Intégration Régionale | Rep. of Congo, Institut Centrafricain des Statistiques et des Etudes Economiques et Sociales (ICASEES) | CAR, Institut National de la Statistique (INS) | Rep. of Cameroon, Institut National de la Statistique, des Études Économiques et Démographiques (INSEED) | Rep.of Chad, Comm. National des Travaux d'Intérêt Public pour la Prom. de l'Entrep. et de l'Emploi (CN-TIPPEE)	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objective is to improve country statistical performance, regional harmonization, data access and use, and to enhance modernization of the statistical system in participating countries.

Components

Component 1: Harmonization and Production of Core Statistics using International Data Quality Standards
Component 2: Statistical Modernization, Institutional Reform, Human Capital, Data Accessibility and Use
Component 3: Construction, Upgrading and Modernization of Physical Infrastructure
Component 4: Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	440.00
Total Financing	440.00
of which IBRD/IDA	440.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	90.00
International Development Association (IDA)	350.00
IDA Credit	165.00
IDA Grant	185.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

B. Introduction and Context

Regional and Country Context

1. **The COVID-19 pandemic-triggered recession in 2020 was followed by a partial recovery in 2021, but growth in Sub-Saharan Africa slowed again in 2022 as the region faced new economic challenges, with further slowdown projected for 2023.** In 2020, for the first time in 27 years, Sub-Saharan Africa

recorded a negative real economic growth rate of −2 percent[1]. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global supply chains, commodity prices, and transport and the implementation of stringent control measures by governments across the world led to a global economic slowdown. Following the introduction of vaccines and the lifting of restrictions in many countries, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Sub-Saharan Africa recovered to 4.1 percent in 2021, but with significant variation across countries[2]. However, growth is estimated to have declined to 3.6 percent in 2022[3] driven by several short-term headwinds including a global economic slowdown, continued impacts of the pandemic including supply disruptions, high inflation, and increased financial risks owing to high public debts. In 2023, notwithstanding recent improvements, growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to decelerate to 3.1 percent. There are significant downside risks to the economic outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa due to persistent sluggishness of the global economy, high inflation, and challenging global and domestic financial conditions amid high levels of debt. Growth is projected to be 3.4 percent for Western and Central Africa, with relatively robust growth projected for West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)[4] countries and non-resource-rich countries, continuing a pattern seen in 2022.

2. **The modest economic performance in the region translates into a slower path of poverty reduction and inclusive growth.** The economic slowdown and COVID-19 pandemic increased poverty incidence in 2020 and set back progress made in Western and Central Africa by almost half a decade. Following a decade of steady poverty reduction, the extreme poverty rate of the region increased by nearly 0.9 percentage points in 2020, pushing an additional 7.4 million people into poverty.[5] The slow recovery of the per capita income growth rate, projected at 1.2 percent in 2024 and 1.4 percent in 2025, falls short of putting the continent back on the pre-pandemic path of poverty reduction. Recovery in the region is further hampered by low vaccination rates, fiscal constraints to continue providing financial assistance to vulnerable households and firms, and the continuing threat to food security. There is wide variation in the incidence of poverty across the countries in the subregion. More than half of the extreme poor population of the region lives in Nigeria, while one-fifth are in the Sahel countries. The extreme poverty rate in the subregion for 2030 is projected to be about 1 percent higher than the pre-COVID-19 projections. With just 7 percent of the global population, at the current projected economic growth trajectory, nearly 24 percent of the global extreme poor population will live in the Western and Central Africa region in 2030.

3. **Sustaining equitable growth and poverty reduction during a global crisis of development is challenging, especially in Western and Central Africa which is disproportionally affected by pandemic risks, climate change, and rising fragility and conflict.** Disasters triggered by natural hazard events have increased in occurrence and severity in the region, particularly the Sahelian zone, in the last three decades.[6] The majority of loss of life and economic losses in the region are caused by hydrometeorological events.[7] Desertification and climatic and disaster hazards are projected to worsen, and risk undermining subregional food production through land degradation and declines in oceanic productivity, with negative

1 World Bank, Africa Pulse, April 2023
2 World Bank, Africa Pulse, April 2023
3 World Bank, Africa Pulse, April 2023
4 Also known in French as the *Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine* (UEMOA).
5 Using the recently updated International Poverty Line of US$2.15 per person per day at 2017 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).
6 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2006.
7 Including floods, droughts, tropical cyclones and strong winds, storm surges, extreme temperatures, forest fires, sand and dust storms, and landslides (DARA https://daraint.org/).

repercussions for food security, human health, and employment.[8] The subregion also continues to experience political and security challenges, leading to fragility and violence in several countries. Presently, 11 countries (home to 73 percent of the population in the region) are experiencing some level of Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV). Of these, six countries have more than 20 percent of their poor population living in conflict areas. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) reached over 5 million in 2019 representing a 30 percent increase over a 12-month period. This upward trend was mainly due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in Burkina Faso, Mali, and western Niger, and the situation has worsened further since. By October 2022, the UNHCR reported 12.9 million persons of concern across 21 countries in the subregion—an 8 percent increase from the previous year.[9]

4. **To accelerate progress, development policies and programs aim to address the underlying constraints in Western and Central Africa including those related to demography, economic structure and productivity, institutions, gender, and human capital.** Despite steadily declining poverty rates to pre-COVID-19 levels, the share of the global poor living in the region rose from 8.5 percent in 2000 to 18.8 percent in 2019. The population of 121.6 million living in extreme poverty in the region is projected to increase by an additional 18.7 million by 2030. This is driven in part by rapid (projected) population growth that would have increased the poor population in 2030 even without COVID-19. The Western and Central African economies must grow both faster and more inclusively so that poverty reduction becomes more responsive to growth. Economic growth in many countries has been driven by high commodity prices for oil, minerals, and rainfed agricultural products. Accelerating inclusive growth requires economic diversification and regional integration by addressing low levels of infrastructure, governance, and productivity in the agriculture sector that employs most of the population, particularly in rural areas. During a time of crisis, strategies, policies, and programs that place people first help safeguard hard-won gains and can catalyze the required transformation by building human capital and promoting equality of opportunities, including for women and girls. This requires improving basic services, including access to electricity, adequate sanitation, education, and health services (notably maternal care and early childhood development.

5. **The availability of good-quality data and statistics in Western and Central Africa is critical for informing policies to support adaptation to and mitigation of risks and to foster sustainable and equitable economic growth.** Accurate, timely, and reliable data and statistics are instrumental for designing, implementing, and monitoring effective development policies and programs to accelerate poverty reduction, promote equitable growth, and address climate change. The National Statistical Systems (NSSs) in countries along with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are the primary producers of these core data and official statistics, which in a well-functioning Integrated National Data System are complemented with information produced by many stakeholders in the private sector—including satellite and remote sensing data or by-products such as Call Detailed Record (CDR) in the telecommunications sector—and by academia, civil society organizations, and citizens.

6. **The COVID-19 pandemic slowed progress in many statistical operations such as population and housing censuses (PHCs), economic censuses, and household surveys, but some progress has been made in the production of statistics.** Several countries are conducting PHCs in line with international

[8] Serdeczny, Olivia, et al. 2017. "Climate Change Impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Physical Changes to Their Social Repercussions." *Regional Environmental Change* 17: 1585–1600.

[9] UNHCR Standing Committee, Update - West and Central Africa (February 24, 2020, and October 31, 2022).

recommendations and are making more frequent revisions to their National Accounts. The geographic coverage, timeliness, and base year of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) have also improved. External trade statistics are harmonized in many countries, and most of the countries use the same software, EUROTRACE.[10] With the World Bank's support, the number of countries conducting regular surveys that collect data to estimate poverty has increased. The quality (including timeliness) of social indicators has also improved with the support of donor-funded programs such as the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). Innovative approaches based on satellite data and High Frequency Phone Surveys (HFPS) are now incorporated in the statistics offices' tools.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

7. **For decades, many African countries have experienced a vicious cycle of under-funding, under-provision, low capacity, and under-utilization of data for monitoring and policy purposes, to provide better living conditions for African peoples.** In this regard, building capacity for the production and use of statistics has been one of the recurrent development themes in Africa over the years. Since the 2000s, many development initiatives were undertaken to improve the African statistical landscape, at the continental, regional and country levels, taking advantage of the many opportunities that have been presented by the changing policy environment, including the focus by national governments and the international community on management for development results. These initiatives include the following:

- Development of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in many countries since 2005.
- Improved legislation on statistics with more countries making the National Statistics Office (NSO) more autonomous.
- Development of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF) which was adopted by the Conference of African Ministers responsible for development in 2007.
- Development in 2009 of the African Charter on Statistics.
- Development in 2011 of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA), later renewed in 2017 as the second SHaSA (SHaSA2)

8. **Even though COVID-19 has pushed backward some progress in many statistical areas such as population census, economic and household surveys, substantial progress has been made in producing statistics in the continent** Several countries are conducting population censuses in line with international recommendations and are making more frequent revisions to their national accounts. The geographic coverage, timeliness, and base year of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) have also improved. External trade statistics are harmonized in many countries, and most of the countries use the same software, EUROTRACE. Thanks to the World Bank's support, the number of countries conducting regular surveys that collect data to estimate poverty has increased. The quality (including timeliness) of social indicators

[10] EUROTRACE is a data management and processing application for the collection, compilation, and dissemination of external trade data at the national and regional levels.

has also improved with the support of donor-funded programs such as the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

9. **The increase in the World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI)[11] illustrates this progress in statistical capacity building in Africa over the past sixteen years, though the progress made is still modest.** The SCI provides a grade for every country in the world on the methodology, data sources, periodicity, and timeliness of core economic and social statistics. The SCI for SSA countries (excluding high income[12]) increased from 55.2 in 2004 to 57.0 in 2020 (an increase of 1.8 score points), with progress in two of the three dimensions of the SCI: methodology and periodicity. SSA's score for periodicity is close to those of the rest of the world, but it does poorly in source data (worse than all except the Middle East/North Africa and not improving between 2004 and 2020).

10. However, despite these gains in the frequency and quality of censuses and household surveys, African Statistical Systems are far from meeting the user needs. The SCI for Africa is still the lowest among developing regions and is masked by wide disparities across countries, particularly in AFW. The weaknesses of the Statistical Systems in SSA are also reflected in the overall score of the continent for the Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) produced by the World Bank since 2019, as a replacement to the SCI. For 2020, the World Bank SPI score for SSA was 52.4, compared to a global average of 62.3. This indicator provides a measure of the degree to which NSS contribute to better decisions and strong accountability by meeting user needs for statistics. It assesses countries on five pillars of statistical performance: (i) data use – extent to which data produced by the NSS are used widely and frequently by different stakeholders; (ii) data services – extent to which services connect data users to producers through data releases, online access and data access services such as secure microdata access; (iii) data products – availability and quality of key NSS data products to produce indicators needed to measure progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), (iv) data sources – the extent to which a country collects key data sources (e.g. population census, agricultural census, business establishment census, household survey to measure poverty, labor force survey, health survey, vital registration system coverage, and geospatial data); (v) data infrastructure – availability and quality of institutional infrastructure (legislation, governance, standards) and the financial resources needed to deliver useful and widely used data products and services. Countries are scored against 51 indicators in these pillars, using publicly available information. The overall Statistical Performance score is then calculated as a simple average of all five pillar scores on a scale of 0-100.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The Project Development Objective is to improve country statistical performance, regional harmonization, data access and use, and to enhance modernization of the statistical system in participating countries.

[11] The World Bank's SCI is a composite score assessing a country's statistical system based on a diagnostic framework assessing methodology, data sources, periodicity, and timeliness. Countries are scored on 25 criteria in these areas using publicly available information and country input. The overall SCI score is calculated as the average of all three area scores on a scale of 0 to 100.

[12] Mauritius and Seychelles

Key Results

11. **The key aspects of the Project Development Objective (PDO) are the improvements of (i) the statistical performance of the NSSs; (ii) quality of data access and use; (iii) harmonization of statistics and (iv) modernization of NSOs.** The project also aims to support the modernization process of the regional statistical systems. The focus area of the statistical performance component of the NSSs relates to their ability to generate data based on international standards, in a timely manner, and their wide availability and use. The harmonization component of the PDO aims to enhance statistical cooperation in the region to produce comparable and quality statistics which means that the NSOs (a) are provided with common regional guidelines and (b) have trained staff with adequate skills to implement them. Another requirement to produce these harmonized statistics is the availability of financial resources at country levels to undertake statistics operations needed to implement the provided regional guidelines. The data access component focuses on making widely available statistical products and reports and micro-data to users.

12. The project will use the following PDO indicators to monitor progress toward achieving the PDO.

(a) **Improved SPI of project participating countries in variables the project influence:**
   (i) Increase in statistical performance indicators of project participating countries tailored on variables the project will influence *(percentage)* – disaggregated by participating countries.

(b) **Improved quality of data access and use:**
   (ii) Increase in users who are satisfied with the accessibility of statistical products as determined by the user satisfaction survey (percentage) - disaggregated by participating countries.
   (iii) Reports produced using statistics/datasets/indicators supported by the project and new data sources *(number)* - disaggregated by participating countries.

(c) **Improved regional harmonization and comparability of core statistics:**
   (iv) Harmonized core economic and social statistics produced according to the applicable regional standards and made publicly available on national or regional websites and prints (number) - disaggregated by participating countries.

(d) **Enhanced modernization of NSOs:**
   (v) New statistical products are produced through project financing using improved data collection and computerized data checking methods *(number)* - disaggregated by participating countries.

13. **The strategic objective on the *statistical performance* of the NSSs relates to their ability to generate data based on international standards, on time, and their wide availability and use.** The strategic objective on *harmonization* involves harmonization of statistical methodologies, key data collection instruments, and tools in line with international standards and Western and Central African realities, to produce comparable, accurate, and up-to-date statistics to inform both national development and regional integration agendas. This will enhance statistical cooperation in the region to produce comparable and quality statistics, which requires (a) availability common regional statistical guidelines and tools in line with international standards and (b) trained staff with adequate skills to implement them. Another requirement to produce these harmonized statistics is the availability of financial resources at the country levels to undertake statistical activities needed to implement the regional guidelines provided. *The data access and use* focus on making statistical products and reports widely available, tailored to

users' needs. *The strategic objective on modernization* aims at building a stable and sustainable statistical system with adequate institutions and using innovative solutions and alternative data sources required for production of quality statistics, along with modern equipment and buildings.

D. Project Description

14. **The proposed series of projects aims to improve the performance of national and regional statistical systems in Western and Central Africa.** It is proposed, to implement this program into two series, with countries grouped in alignment with sub-regional organizations: ECOWAS: Benin, Gambia (The), Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal; and CEMAC: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon, and Republic of Congo.

15. **The current project will be the second sequence of the series with Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon, and Republic of Congo, as participating countries.** This series of project – 2 (SOP2) will also support the Economic and monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) in its coordination and advocacy roles to improve comparability and harmonization of statistics in the region.

16. **In line with the project's main objective, activities of this SOP - 2 were selected as they are essential inputs for improving the statistical performance index of the country's NSS, as well as for implementing regional policies.** In particular, the program includes all the specific indicators highlighted above in the sectoral context where participating countries share common performance weaknesses as well as country specific weaknesses. However, the selection criteria for activities are not only based on whether the country is not well performing on a dimension, but also on the potential impact of the said activity on other SPI indicators. That is for instance the cases for the population census, poverty survey, labor force survey (LFS) and DHS/MICS, the availability of which, not only account for the pillars 4 (data sources) and 5 (data infrastructure), but also has significant impact on the pillar 3 (data products related to availability of SDGs' indicators).

17. The project's activities are grouped into four components.

Component 1: Harmonization and Production of Core Statistics using International Data Quality Standards

18. **Activities under this first component relate to supporting the regional statistical harmonization process and the production of quality core statistics to improve data sources and data infrastructure pillars of the SPI, where participating countries in the region are severely doing poorly in terms of statistical performance.** Harmonization of statistics requires adoption of international standards, and the production of a core set of economic, social, and demographic statistics will improve data availability to meet users' demand for statistics, especially regarding indicators needed to monitor most of the SDGs (Pillar 3 of the SPI). Activities under this component will improve Pillars 4 (data sources) and 5 (data infrastructure) of the SPI where participating countries in the region are doing poorly in terms of statistical performance. Harmonization will help in the adoption of international standards and the production of a

core set of economic, social, and demographic statistics will make data available to meet users' demand for statistics.

Component 2: Statistical Modernization, Institutional Reform, Human Capital, Data Accessibility and Use

19. **The second component aims to support statistical modernization; institutional reforms; improvement to data access, dissemination, and use; and human resources development.** In today's fast-changing world, NSOs need to transform and modernize to respond better to emerging and increasing demand for timely and accurate data, to meet the twenty-first century development data requirements and challenges. These require NSOs to (a) consider the data revolution, (b) become more user-centric, and (c) modernize their methods and organization to provide data in new ways and use new methods to complement traditional statistics. Big Data has shown the potential to be used to complement official statistics in many areas to enable NSOs to be more resilient in executing their mandate of providing users with the necessary information. In this context, this component aims to support NSOs of participating countries to prepare themselves in moving toward what the 2021 WDR called an Integrated National Data System, by supporting them to harness the potential of new data sources. The project will support the participating countries' NSOs to use advanced technologies and develop new, cost-effective methods to integrate data from a variety of sources. In addition, this component will support efforts to improve data access, dissemination, and use. Furthermore, it will invest in human capital, academic training in statistics, and on-the-job training of staff to help address the shortage of statisticians with expertise and skills in specialized areas faced by countries in both regions, such as in National Accounts, agricultural statistics, household surveys, trade statistics, financial statistics, and price statistics. Finally, it supports one of the key principles of institutional reforms in the form of TA to the participating countries seeking to update their Statistics Act or regulations to include provisions for sustainable funding of statistical activities and to finance TA to improve data protection frameworks applicable to statistical activities in participating countries.

Component 3: Construction, Upgrading and Modernization of Physical Infrastructure

20. **The working environment and the availability of suitable equipment are important pillars for strengthening statistical capacity.** The NSOs in the participating countries are the leading official statistical agencies within the NSS in data production, which means that the government will play a critical role to enable value creation in the data produced. They are a key factor in the productivity of any NSS institution and its performance. For example, power shortages and low internet bandwidth can severely limit productivity. Similarly, data statistical software for analysis and/or data science—such as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Stata and so on—which are basic data manipulation tools (process of organizing information to make it readable and understandable) and allow data sharing and accessibility of statistical production. In many countries, these tools are not readily available, and some staff use their own private resources for official business. This component aims to strengthen the capacity of NSOs and statistical schools with the equipment and tools needed to adequately fulfill their mandates. Under this component, the project will support the construction of a new building or rehabilitation of physical and ICT infrastructure for NSOs and schools of statistics. Needs assessment will be conducted country by country with the NSOs, and for select countries without good infrastructure, they will be rebuilt.

Component 4: Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation

21. The goal of this component is to support project management and monitor project results and user satisfaction.

Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

22. The project environmental and social risk rating is Moderate at appraisal stage for both environmental and social risks. Key environmental concerns are related to the implementation of activities under Component 3 (Construction, Upgrading and Modernization of Physical Infrastructure). Under this component the project will support the modernization of NSOs buildings and statistical schools by building or upgrading office complexes with modern facilities and providing needed office furniture and equipment for the entire statistical cycle from production through dissemination in CAR (Bangui), Chad (N'Djamena), Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon (Libreville), and Cameroon (only renovation of existing building and technical studies for future buildings). Although potential risks and impacts might differ for each country as per scope of activities that will be undertaken, typical environmental risks and impacts during construction and/or rehabilitation activities include but not limited to noise and vibration, soil erosion, dust and air quality deterioration, solid waste (including asbestos, construction debris, and e-waste), hazardous materials and waste, land contamination, occupational health and safety (including injury and accidents during construction and installation of furniture and equipment), and community health and safety. Main sources of impacts during operations and maintenance are: labor management, national censuses and surveys, which entail risks of traffic-related accidents; and injuries to workers and local communities due to discarding old equipment; improper disposal of electronic waste and others; management of other wastes and wastewater.

23. Key social concerns for all project activities relate to: (i) ensuring that any statistical guidelines and frameworks established under the project include considerations of digital data protection and security both within the country and the region, including requisite ethical and data security protocols for the collection of physical specimens (sampling populations for HIV surveillance for example); (ii) possible exclusion risks related to inadequate stakeholder engagement at the regional and national level with all stakeholders, including civil society and vulnerable groups (such as internally displaced persons, refugees, persons with disabilities, women, the elderly) in a manner that is culturally appropriate, accessible and transparent and sufficiently explains the benefits and impacts of the activities; (iii) exclusion risks for Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

(IP/SSAHUTLCs) if surveys/census do not take into consideration their social, economic, and cultural institutions and norms; (iv) some SEA/SH risks during implementation depending on the scale and scope of the construction and census/surveys; and (v) security/fragility risks for activities that will be implemented in FCV contexts such as CAR, Chad, and RoC; (vi) and risks to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women/girls, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities in conflict prone areas internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees, sexual and gender minorities, and IP/SSAHUTLCs may be placed at risk (including exclusion from school, subject to prosecution under the law, conflict and violence, stigmatization due to cultural norms or exclusion from benefits) if data is collected or shared inappropriately. Moreover, IP/SSAHUTLCS and other communities practicing traditional livelihoods such as transhumance pastoralism (including those who may move cross-borders) may also be at risk from exclusion from the project in the census/survey activities due to seasonal migration and movement as a result of their seasonal livelihood activities, lack of access to electricity and information technology to receive notifications through electronic media such as radio, television and the internet, low literacy rates, and census questions which may not recognize their identities, livelihoods, lands, among others.

24. The overall project risk level for SEA/SH is substantial with the country specific risks varying from substantial for Cameroon, CAR, Chad and Republic of Congo, moderate for Gabon, and low for the regional CEMAC PIU. The risk levels and based on GBV prevalence and acceptance in each country, the legal framework and capacity of national actors to address GBV as well as risks related to project activities (especially surveys and construction) and capacity of the clients to identify and mitigate those risks.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

25. **The HISWACA -SOP 2 entails implementation of activities at regional and country levels within a coordinated regional framework**. The activities financed through the regional IDA grant will be implemented through the regional Project Implementation Unit (PIU) at the CEMAC. National-level PIUs will implement activities financed through the national and regional IDA Credits and Grants and IBRD Loan to the Republic of Gabon. Periodic meetings will be held between the national and regional PIUs and technical experts for knowledge exchange and coordination during the project's implementation. The project's activities will also be implemented through a strong partnership and collaboration with many technical institutions with significant comparative advantage on relevant topics, to leverage from their expertise. These include IMF, UNFPA, AFRISTAT among others.

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