Early Warning System

AFDB-P-ST-AAF-001

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE - Project Appraisal Report Blue Economy and Fisheries Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Maintenance (BEFIRM) Project

Quick Facts

Countries	Sao Tome and Principe
Financial Institutions	African Development Bank (AFDB)
Status	Approved
Bank Risk Rating	A
Voting Date	2025-12-04
Borrower	Government of Sao Tome and Principe - Ministry of Economy and Finance
Sectors	Agriculture and Forestry, Infrastructure
Investment Type(s)	Grant
Investment Amount (USD)	$ 22.40 million

Project Description

According to the Bank’s website, the project's development objective is to improve food security and national economies and transform coastal infrastructure for fish value chains and maritime connectivity. The specific project objectives include: (i) To rehabilitate key port infrastructure (cabotage) and fish landing sites in Sao Tome and Principe ; (ii) to support small-scale fishers with fibreglass vessels and strengthen the capacities of actors in the fish value chain, and (iii) to foster conservation, ecotourism and social resilience. These combined efforts will enhance economic resilience, reduce socio-economic regional inequalities, and mitigate risks that directly contribute to greater national stability and the prevention of further fragility in STP.

The project will support: i) an increase in entrepreneurial initiatives for women SMEs, youths, and cooperatives; ii) integrated management of fisheries, eco-tourism, and biodiversity conservation; iii) increasing fish production and productivity through the use of appropriate climate proof technologies; (iv) incorporating nutrition value addition within the fish value chain for improved diet quality and nourishment; (vi) the reduction of climate vulnerability and the strengthening of resilience through nature-based solutions. The project will consist of the following four components : i) rehabilitation of multipurpose fish landing wharves and port cabotage, ii) improvement of small-scale fishing boats and value chain activities, iii) increasing conservation, ecotourism and climate resilience and iv) project management and coordination.

The project is national in scope on both islands (São Tomé and Príncipe) and targets key cabotage port and fishing districts with priority to blue economy activities. The project is expected to directly impact or indirectly benefit all fishing and related value chain actors in the blue economy sectors (fisheries, ports, tourism, agribusiness, biodiversity and natural resources, etc.). The total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries expected from the program is estimated at 30,000 actors along the fish value chain, mostly men in the harvesting sector and women in processing and retail, as well as 100,000 others who consume fish and depend on fish value chains for their livelihoods and jobs. Stakeholders will include municipal and regional governments, ecotourism firms, maritime transport, industrial fishing, artisanal fishermen, fishmongers, fish processors and traders, and fish farmers. Other stakeholders are the managers and agents of various ministries including Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development; Ministry of Infrastructure and Natural Resources; Ministry of Environment and Tourism; Ministry of Youth and Entrepreneurship, and many others. This is in addition to partner institutions such as ENAPORT, IMAP, APCI, etc.

Early Warning System Project Analysis

Environmental Category: [1] High Risk

The project was validated as a Category 1 on November 8, 2023, in accordance with national Decree No. 37/1999 of November 30, which governs the Environmental Impact Assessment Process. The national classification aligns with Category 1 in accordance with the Bank’s Integrated Safeguards System, as the project activities may generate significant environmental and social impacts and risks.

The major adverse impacts identified in project are related to Porto Alegre site and are associated to the rehabilitation phase: changes in the composition and structure of marine habitats resulting from excavations of the pier foundation, disturbance of sediment along the Malanza River mouth approximately 2 km2.

The major perceived risks include: (i) disturbance of terrestrial and marine fauna (turtles, birds) by noise; (ii) improper waste disposal resulting in groundwater and rivers pollution; (ii) air and soil pollution resulting from the release of particles and CO2 from the use of machinery and construction materials; (iii) potential effects on cultural heritage during soil excavation; (iv) traffic disruption and consequent increased risk of accidents to community and (v) inadequate construction management practices may result in occupational health and safety risks leading to vehicle accidents.

The adverse impacts during the operational phase are expected to be minimal, as the technical design at the three sites includes modular floating docks made of plastic or metal instead of concrete, specifically to reduce erosion and limit interference with the natural coastal dynamics.

The rehabilitation of Porto Alegre will induce both physical and economic displacement. (see details in disclosed RAP): (i) 24 houses to be affected and relocated to the resettlement area; (ii) 1 food stall infrastructure to be affected, of which the owner does not live in the project area; (iii) 7 families losing their crops; (iv) total demolition of 27 fence walls; (v) 7 banana trees to be removed; (vi) 2 lemon trees to be removed; (vii) 2 commercial stores to be removed; (viii) 1 restaurant to be removed; (ix) 1 fountain (water source) to be removed; (x) 1 laundromat to be removed; (xi) 7 pigpens to be removed; (xii) 7 artisanal fish dryers to be removed; (xiii) 1 outboard motor workshop to be removed; and the limitation of access to the sea within the project area during the construction period, whether for fishermen or tourists. The project will impact in total 32 heads of household, represented 118 people living in the affected households.

Investment Description

- African Development Bank (AFDB)

Financial Instrument: Project Cycle Grant

Commitments (UA): 16,500,000

Conversion Rate USD (2026-02-08): 1,35728

Commitments (USD): 22,395,120

Contact Information

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You can submit an information request for project information at: https://www.afdb.org/en/disclosure-and-access-to-information/request-for-documents. Under the AfDBs Disclosure and Access to Information policy, if you feel the Bank has omitted to publish information or your request for information is unreasonably denied, you can file an appeal at https://www.afdb.org/en/disclosure-and-access-to-information/appeals-process.

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM OF AfDB

The Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), which is administered by the Compliance Review and Mediation Unit (CRMU), is the independent complaint mechanism and fact-finding body for people who have been or are likely to be adversely affected by an African Development Bank (AfDB)-financed project. If you submit a complaint to the IRM, it may assist you by either seeking to address your problems by facilitating a dispute resolution dialogue between you and those implementing the project and/or investigating whether the AfDB complied with its policies to prevent environmental and social harms. You can submit a complaint electronically by emailing crmuinfo@afdb.org, b.kargougou@afdb.org, b.fall@afdb.org, and/or s.toure@afdb.org. You can learn more about the IRM and how to file a complaint at: https://www.afdb.org/en/independent-review-mechanism/

Bank Documents

- Appraisal Report (EN)
- Appraisal Report (FR)
- Environmental Study (EN)