Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

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BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Central African Republic	AFRICA WEST	P176683	
Project Name	CAR-Electricity Sector Strengthening and Access Project		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Energy & Extractives	Investment Project Financing	1/10/2022	5/10/2022
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Central African Republic	Ministry of Economy, Planning, and International Corporation, Ministry of Development of Energy and Water Resources (MDEWR)		

Proposed Development Objective

Increase supply and access to clean electricity services in Central African Republic

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	83.00

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

No

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

The proposed project is the first phase of Multi-Phase-Programmatic-Approach (MPA) in support of the Government of CAR in increasing access to cleaner, affordable, reliable and sustainable electricity access through grid connected, decentralized mini-grid and off-grid renewable energy solutions focused on electrifying health and education facilities, and promoting productive uses of electricity such as solar water pumping in the agriculture sector.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

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

The project aims to accelerate access to electricity in CAR and support the implementation of the NES by financing the construction of various electricity infrastructure to support human capital development (HCD). Its objective is to Increase electricity generation and access for households, micro-small-medium enterprises (MSMEs), health facilities, education facilities and farmers (including areas which are not connected to the national grid).

As energy is one of the drivers of HCD, off-grid renewable energy should strengthen public health and education services and develop productive household activities in urban and rural areas. In addition to Component 1, which will target 96,553 households, the project will provide access to electricity for approximately 25,210 households, 17 health centers and 46 education centers under Component 2 by electrification through mini grids, and will target 200 villages through the financing of off-grid solar systems for health centers and educational institutions in Component 3 across the country.

Specific sites (provincial cities where urgent and sustainable access to electricity is needed) will be selected using an ongoing GIS-based study, which will assess suitability depending on population size and density, estimates of demand and large anchor loads, distance to the existing and planned national electricity network and renewable energy resources and complement existing WBG operations under health and education facilities (especially those impacted by COVID-19). It should be noted that in the CAR, there are several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and Protected Areas (PA). Among the protected areasin the southern region of the country are the Dzanga-Sangha special reserve, the Mbaere Bondigue National Park and the Dzanga Ndoki National Park. The rest of the protected areas, 9 in total, are located in the north-east. The project aims to be implemented throughout the country and the northern region remains less populated. It follows that the project activities will be concentrated in areas of higher human density and therefore in areas where the human footprint is already significant.

The project is capital intensive which cannot be funded directly by local communities due to low income per capita. Through the partial WB funding, economic constraints can be addressed to accelerate the growth of the off-grid solar energy market and take advantage of mechanisms that will be put in place to enable the private sector participation. The beneficiaries such as households and businesses can be involved in operation and maintenance of these solar solutions. This could build a precedence for inclusion of community in their energy supply that can eventually simulate solar energy market, making the services more affordable, hence encouraging the productive use of renewable energy.

In reference to the refugee integration approach promoted by the GoCAR, the project will also support energy needs of the most vulnerable households, by enabling the provision of electricity to girls and women leading households, people living with disabilities, (Indigenous Peoples if they are present in the zones), displaced people, returnees, refugees and their hosts, etc. through all technologies supported by the project including grid electrification, mini-grids, off-grids solar and solar water pumps.

The first phase of the project is focused on providing energy access to prioritized towns and households for better livelihoods and deployment of the initial phase of on-grid solar that will induce conditions for private sector participation. At this stage, the specific locations of implementation have yet to be identified and will be determined during project appraisal and refined after project effectiveness. However, a preliminary assessment has been undertaken by the internal GIS team, in which elaborate analysis of the National Electrification Strategy is conducted.

D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

The Government of CAR has overall considerable experience in managing E&S risks and impacts with WB Projects implemented under the Safeguard Policies. The country can also rely on an appropriate legal framework and established institutions for E&S management. However, there is limited experience implementing projects under the

ESF and experience from other Bank financed projects highlight that the capacity to manage E&S risks and impacts still requires considerable improvement in areas of supervision, monitoring and reporting. The implementation of the grid side of the project's component will be handled through the existing PCU of Water and Electricity Upgrading Project (P162245) and CAR Emergency Electricity Access Project (P164885) which was identified to be the most suitable, reliable and quick-responding PCU in CAR in the areas of Grid to be supported by this new CAR-Electricity Sector Strengthening and Access Project. While the mini-Grid project's component will be handle by a new PCU. Both PCUs will be lead by Ministère du Développement de l'Energie et des Ressources Hydraulique – MDEWR under (Direction Générale de l'Energie – DGE) which is the main project counterpart. These two PCUs will be in charge of the project implementation, fiduciary management and E&S risks management of the project. While the new PCU (for mini-Grid component) will do a new recruitment for its E&S team, the current existing PCU (for Grid component) is already equipped with 1 environmental specialist, 1 social specialist and 1 GBV/SEA/SH specialist. The Project will ensure that both PCUs will be equipped with enough resources to handle management (prepare, monitor, supervise, etc.) of E&S risks and impacts of several projects, especially in challenging contextual environment. However, the key energy institutional stakeholders for this project are the Ministère du Développement de l'Energie et des Ressources Hydraulique – MDEWR/the Direction Générale de l'Energie (DGE), and Agence Autonome de Régulation du Secteur de l'Électricité – ARSEC). The regulator (Agence Autonome de Régulation du Secteur de l'Électricité - ARSEC) will benefit from technical assistance support under the project.

Therefore, the Ministère du Développement de l'Energie et des Ressources Hydraulique – MDEWR is well placed to coordinate the project as this project will incorporate multiple agencies. Thus, the Steering Committee will be chaired by the MDEWR and will likely comprise other relevant ministries and institutions. The project activities will comply with national environmental laws, regulations and procedures. The regulatory agency is the Ministry of Environment. Also, it is expected that private sector entities will be involved in the implementation of the subprojects under components 1, 2,3,4 and 5. The implementation agencies, involved institutions and the private sector are not familiar with the new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) of the World Bank that guides the preparation and implementation of the project in accordance with ESSs requirements. Implementation capacity will need to be strengthened at all levels, especially given limited knowledge and experience in implementing WB ESF requirements. Furthermore, although one of the two PCUs already established at the MDEWR has experience in implementing WB safeguards policies, both will need capacity building as mentioned above due to the size of the current project as well as need capacity increase regarding WB ESF. At the national level, the Director General for Environment (DGE) is the main institution in the Ministry of Environment (MEDD) that is responsible for conducting and coordinating the E&S assessment process in CAR. At the departmental level, the DGE works in collaboration with local structures of the MEDD. However, implementing capacity is low, especially as the DGE lacks financial and technical resources.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC) — Substantial

Environmental Risk Rating — Moderate

The various components of the project, with the exception of component 6: Utility operational improvement, Training, Institutional strengthening, TA and implementation support, will support civil works. These will include the installation of household lines and cabling in components 1 and 3, the construction of solar power plant, the construction of maintenance and circulation tracks, the construction of buildings for technical services and the

construction of distribution lines to connect households to the mini-grids and health and education facilities in components 2 and 4, and the drilling of water points and water storage points and the installation of solar pumps. The Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) defined for rapid response to natural disasters or health crises to protect the livelihoods of the population, if necessary, as part of the World Bank's project portfolio contributions to the mobilization of financial resources to support the government's contingency plan will also include activities that will involve some civil works. The magnitude of Environmental impacts of a solar power plant may vary during the various stages such as construction, operation, and decommissioning. Solar plants are land intensive as they require large chunk of land to accommodate the solar panels. Large scale utilization of the land may also affect the thermal balance of the area as the site would absorb more energy as compared to other areas. For ensuring water requirements, solar farms may tap into local water bodies, thus affecting surface & ground water and also the water availability to the local community. This may result in conflicting situation with the nearby communities residing in vicinity of the project site. The solar farm could potentially affect the local biodiversity in many ways. The vegetation is cleared off during the construction phase or the natural habitat is disturbed because of the physical barriers created by solar farm. It may cause linear fragmentation of the habitat and disturb the free movement of wildlife in the area. The project will result in the generation of various wastes, such as electronic, metal, plastic and hazardous wastes, which will be treated and disposed of in accordance with national requirements and the GIIP. HWMPs will be prepared as part of the ESMF. Project activities might also result in potential risks and hazards to worker health and safety (e.g., working at height, proximity to live power lines, electric and magnetic fields, etc.). Many of these risks and impacts will be site specific and manageable through appropriate mitigation measures. The Borrower has an appropriate legal framework to address E&S risks and impacts. The project implementing agencies have experience in implementing World Bank-financed projects and are familiar with the Bank's safeguard policies. However, the implementing agencies do not have experience in implementing projects under the World Bank ESF under which this project is prepared. Therefore, the Borrower's capacity to implement ESF requirements will need to be strengthened. Based on the nature of the potentially adverse environmental impacts that are likely to be moderate, site-specific and manageable with appropriate mitigation measures in place, and the Borrower's capacity to implement mitigation measures, the environmental risk of the project is assessed and rated as moderate.

Social Risk Rating Substantial

The social risk rating is Substantial at this stage of project development. The project will involve many workers on multi subprojects across the country by the private sectors and will also involve civil works (in Solar PV component especially the foundation works) which are likely to put additional pressure on the already very noticeable social issues such as involuntary resettlement & SEA/SH. The scope of involuntary land acquisition and resettlement is unknown at this stage, but it is expected that a significant number of persons will be directly impacted by the planned works. In addition, a significant influx of labor is also expected in some of the project areas which host a wide range of PAPs, including vulnerable people & IPDs. However, while the overall social benefits are expected to be positive, the anticipated social risks and impacts include: SEA/SH: The project will recruit many workers for construction grid, mini-grid, water pumps system which will affect the risks of SEA/SH on women and young girls; and will provide solar micro systems for health and education facilities with (limited) exposure of SEA/SH risks to school-age children and vulnerable community members. Recent experiences in other Bank-financed projects have shown that despite the improved project capacity to address SEA/SH, risks remain in infrastructures projects. Therefore, to mitigate this risk, procedures such as an SEA/HS assessment and action plan will be required. Insecurity risks: The project is intending to be implemented in some specific districts in the country. Unfortunately, there are presence of non-state armed groups who are not under control. This means that the risks of attacks on

project workers as well as workers' living quarters, machinery and beneficiaries should be considered. As part of the project ESIA, a preliminary SRA will be undertaken and general guidance will be provide following the Bank's Good Practice Note on Assessing and Managing the Risks and Impacts of the Use of Security Personnel, in line with Good Practice Handbook - Use of Security Forces: Assessing and Managing Risks and Impacts; Guidance for the Private Sector in Emerging Markets, IFC Feb. 2019. Therefore, a preliminary project SRA and management plan should be developed to define the mitigation measures. However, it can already be noted that on the basis of SRA carried out on other World Bank-financed projects in CAR, MINUSCA and the public security forces have been identified as stakeholders in security risk mitigation options. This project will be able to build on and capitalize on existing security management experiences. Regarding inadequate compensation processes, in principle the funds to compensate PAPs will come from which means that it should be ensured that they are available in time. In addition, stakeholders may suffer from insecurity, and some may be forgotten as a result. Furthermore, the district compensation rates for crops may not be adequate, as they do not always reflect market rates. The social risk classification also considered the following aspects: (i) Risks of exclusion of vulnerable groups, as this electricity project foresees the recruitment of local workers and the compensation of PAPs where vulnerable groups exist, strategic approaches should be developed through SEP to ensure that there is no exclusion or marginalization of any vulnerable groups.(ii) New wave of COVID-19 risks: Current COVID-19 related risks of dissemination, and uncertainties on new waves, in relation with community mobilization activities. (iii) Community and workers risks to increase HIV/AIDS transmission: Labor influx in different cities may lead to the spreading of communicable diseases; and (iv) a number of other safety and health risks to communities, especially risk of transmission of STI and HIV/AIDS cases. The client should incorporate awareness raising sessions and preventive materials into the workers' health and safety plan and the ESMP.

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 various components of the project, with the exception of component 6: Utility operational improvement, Training, Institutional strengthening, TA and implementation support, will support civil works. The environmental impacts during construction phase will include construction site waste generation, soil erosion and sediment control from materials sourcing areas and site preparation activities, fugitive dust and other emissions (e.g., from vehicle traffic, land clearing activities, and materials stockpiles), noise from heavy equipment and truck traffic, potential for hazardous materials and oil spills associated with heavy equipment operation and fueling activities, and heavy traffic among others that are typical to medium-scale civil works.

During rehabilitation and operation phase, handling and disposal of hazardous chemicals used in transformers such as mineral insulating oils might also pose environmental risks. There is also potential health and safety risks and hazards to workers (e.g., working at heights, close to live power lines, electric and magnetic fields, etc.) as well as to community. Many of these risks and impacts are site-specific and manageable with appropriate mitigation measures. Component 2 includes support to off-grid solar systems (OGS), this will include the conversion to solar energy to produce electricity by mounting the modules on rooftops or mount them on poles next to the users' homes or buildings, which will reduce the fossil fuel-based energy production dependency. While the Battery Storage System

for the OGS is not complex and would have a small installation footprint, there are several environmental risks associated with this activity that need to be managed. In particular, potential fire and explosion risks and environmental risks and hazards related to the disposal of end-of-life batteries containing hazardous materials. Proper disposal or recycling of spent battery at the end of their life, which is usually 3-5 years, is the main concern. The off-grid solar systems (OGS) intervention will lead to improvements of energy resilience and efficiency and the decrease of CO2 emission through the integration of more clean electricity from renewable sources. Overall, the project will have significant positive benefits at the household, public and national level.

Despite these potential positive benefits of the project, there are several potential E&S risks and impacts associated with the project that will need to be mitigated. The specific beneficiary health and education facilities would be determined during project preparation. Therefore, the Borrower will prepare an ESMF and RPF before appraisal, which will then guide preparation of subsequent ESIA and ESMPs according to ESF, GIIP and WB EHS Guidelines. The ESMF will: i) include general E&S baseline information relevant to the project; ii) assess anticipated E&S risks and impacts based on the relevant ESSs; iii) describe how subprojects will be reviewed and screened, including the type and timing of any subproject E&S assessment instruments; and iv) detail the institutional arrangements for E&S assessment, management, supervision and reporting. The ESMF will also provide measures for ESMP and Project Operational Manual (POM) to be prepared by the Borrower.

Furthermore, the Borrower will prepare a security risk assessment specific to the project and an associated security management plan that describes appropriate measures to mitigate security risks for project workers and beneficiaries. As this is a Substantial-risk project and the security risk is expected to be significant, a draft security assessment and management plan will be prepared prior to appraisal to inform the Board on level of risk and proposed management strategy.
In addition, the Borrower is required to develop a SEP, Labor Management Procedure (LMP), SEA/SH Action Plan, Resettlement Policy Framework/Resettlement Action Plan (RPF/RAP) and other documents outlined in the Environmental Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).

Areas where "Use of Borrower Framework" is being considered:

The Borrower has a relevant legal and regulatory framework for addressing environmental and social risks and impacts. However, its capacity through policies and institutional arrangements is limited, particularly as it will require the oversight of multiple implementing agencies from the public to private sector. The use of Borrower's Framework is not endorsed, and the Borrower's Framework will not be used in whole or in part for this project.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

In fulfillment of ESS10 requirement, the project will prepare and disclose a SEP by project appraisal. The SEP will be proportional to the project's E&S risks and will be culturally appropriate. Stakeholders will be identified and categorized by their interest to and influence on the project. The Project will need to undertake consultations with a range of stakeholders including private businesses, government departments, small businesses and people working in electricity industry. This will include developing mechanisms for information sharing, citizen engagement and beneficiary feedback. The SEP will include a communication Strategy which will be used to enhance communication between project beneficiaries and the project. Measures will be put in place to prevent or minimize the spread of the infectious disease/COVID-19 while conducting consultation with stakeholders. These measures will include, among others, respecting social distancing measures as stated by the government in its press release of March 13, 2020 as

well as WHO and WBG health and safety guidance. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be prepared by appraisal and updated throughout the project cycle. The SEP will identify any marginalized and vulnerable groups who need to be consulted and included in Project activities.

Stakeholders/community consultations that are related to SEA/SH risk mitigation will be conducted in safe and enabling environments, such as in sex-segregated groups and with female facilitators. The project will need to identify and consult with relevant stakeholders who could promote increased enrolment and encourage retention of women among workers, beneficiaries, etc.. Such consultations will be focused on understanding women's risks and vulnerabilities, understand women's enrolment experience in (PURACEL-P164885 & PASEEL-P162245) activities, their wellbeing, safety and security concerns in relation to the project. Furthermore, the consultations will need to include the disabled groups, disadvantaged groups and minorities within project's targeted communities, and be carried out in an accessible and appropriate manner, with information provided in accessible formats.

Further, the SEP will include the design and operationalization of a Grievance Redress mechanism, sensitive to SEA/SH issues, and the ethical treatment and resolution of such complaints that is proportionate of the potential risks and impacts of the project. The GRM will also serve as a platform for continuous feedback from project-affected communities, other interested stakeholders and implementing partners. The project specific GRM will be outlined in the SEP for people to report concerns or complaints.

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 in the project is relevant to direct workers employed or engaged by the project implementing agencies, contracted workers, and primary supply service workers for the solar panel equipment. These include construction workers hired for the anticipated civil works, and trained technicians for the installation and maintenance of the solar panels and mini-grids, as specified in the requirements of ESS2 on Labor Management Procedures. CAR's Labor Law, n°09.004 in its various articles determines that all workers have the right to healthy conditions and protection equipment, among other measures. The Project will also ensure that staff hired for Technical Assistance (TA) will be provided with good working conditions in line with local laws and consistent with ESS2. Furthermore, ESS2 requires that clear information on the terms and conditions of employment, the principles regarding non-discrimination and equal opportunity, the establishment of workers' organizations, the rules regarding child labor and forced labor, and occupational health and safety measures be known to the workers and observed at all times at project interventions sites. In addition, Workers/Labor camps are anticipated. The ESIA will assess major labor risks including risks of child labor and forced labor, labor influx and gender-based violence, in particular Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH), OHS risks, possible accidents or emergencies considering the sensitive project context.

Should the hiring of workers from outside the local area be required (especially for purposes of the installation of specialized technical equipment), worker accommodation and influx will need to be managed in line with ESS2 (and ESS4); any labor influx would be limited in time and scale. To ensure health and safety of workers during the construction and operational phases of the project, a Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) plan in line with Good International Industry Practice (GIIP) shall be appropriately prepared and tailored to each subproject ESMP. School

and health center personnel of the facilities in which the solar panels are installed are not subject to the requirements of ESS2 other than for the HSE plan.

All training sessions and awareness raising activities at the partners and community level will be carried out by project workers and/or contractors workers. Communication materials/kits needed by workers/trainers will be provided to the project by providers. All of these categories of workers will be exposed to health and safety risks, i.e., the risk of COVID-19 transmission during face to face training and sensitization activities due to non-compliance with barrier measures. For suppliers and project staff, these will be the risks of road accidents, aggression and even contamination with COVID-19.

Labor Management Procedures (LMP) will be developed and disclosed prior to project effectiveness and a standalone worker specific grievance mechanism (for direct and contracted workers) established, so that they have an official way to communicate grievances or other concerns to the management. The LMP will be focused in ensuring good labor and working conditions. This include good practice to avoid injury, illness, or impacts associated with exposure to hazards encountered in the workplace or while working as well as from discriminatory hiring and compensation practices. The LMP will also identify main labor requirements (how different categories of workers will be managed, in accordance with the requirements of national laws and ESS2) and labor risks associated with the project and determine the resources necessary to address labor issues, including risks of SEA/SH for female workers. To ensure Health & Safety of workers during the construction and operational phases of the project, Client will require contractors to prepare and implement their Occupational Health & Safety Plan (OHSP) following the World Bank Group Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines (for construction activities) and Industry Sector Guidelines for Construction Materials Extraction, as part of OHSP. The OHSP will include specific instruments, such as EHS checklists, Codes of Conduct and any other relevant measures to prevent SEA/H risks that will be included in a specific SEA/SH Action Plan, safety training materials. It will also include: procedures for protection of workers in relation to infection control precautions and ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) (particularly face masks, gowns, gloves, handwashing soap and sanitizer); procedures on incident investigation and reporting in line with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Incident Response Toolkit (ESIRT), recording and reporting of non-conformances, emergency preparedness and response procedures and continuous worker training/awareness.

The project will commit (through the ESCP) to develop Labor Management Procedures (LMP), which will outline the Borrower’s responsibilities for enforcing ESS2 requirements, applicable to the entire project prior to project effectiveness.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

ESS3 is relevant for the project regarding energy and water use, air pollution and noise impacts during construction phases, construction waste, handling and disposal of hazardous chemicals and waste, and the disposal of end-of-life batteries containing hazardous materials during operation phase. The land requirement for the installation of the solar panels is estimated at 15 hectares for the 15 MW and 16,000,000 litters of water for the beneficiaries per day. Water use will be monitored and it is expected that the project water use will not cause stress on the local water resources. The environmental impacts during construction phase will include construction site waste generation, soil

erosion and sediment control from materials sourcing areas and site preparation activities, fugitive dust and other emissions (e.g., from vehicle traffic, land clearing activities, and materials stockpiles), noise from heavy equipment and truck traffic, potential for hazardous materials and oil spills associated with heavy equipment operation and fueling activities, and heavy traffic among others that are typical to medium-scale civil works. During rehabilitation and operation phase, handling and disposal of hazardous chemicals used in transformers and substations, such as mineral insulating oils, polychlorinated biphenlys (PCBs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) might also pose environmental risks. components 2 and 3 of the project will include the use of Battery Energy Storage System that have the potential to pollute the environment if not disposed of properly. Assessment of ESS3 related risks and impacts will be undertaken according to WBG General and sector specific ESH Guidelines (i.e., EHS Guidelines for Electric Power Transmission and Distribution) and GIIP. A mitigation hierarchy will be applied. The ESMF will be prepared during appraisal. The Project is not expected to emit significant Greenhouse Gases (GHG). Therefore, GHG accounting is not needed for the project as per existing knowledge at this stage of the project.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

The Borrower will evaluate the risks and impacts of the project on the health and safety of the affected communities that are living in the project affected areas during construction and operation, including impacts on the operation of education and health centers. This will include adverse social impacts such as labor influx that disrupts communities, gender-based violence (in particular SEA/SH), and the transmission of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and STDs as well as Covid-19, and security issues local communities may face.

Various activities (in the grid and mini-grid components) and the installation of solar PV systems undertaken by the PCU may expose communities (hosts and others such as IDPs, returnees, refugees and workers) to health and safety risks during construction and operation in the vincinity of physical sites along transport routes. While the civil works to be financed are limited in scale and scope, to ensure the health and safety of communities during the construction and operation phases of the project, the project will develop and implement a Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Plan in line with World Bank Group Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines for construction activities.

In particular, extraction and excavation of building materials may pose risks to the structure of houses and the safety of communities; the influx of labour may lead to the spread of communicable diseases and a number of other risks to the safety and health of communities; road safety is a major concern (see below). In addition, communities' access to social services (e.g., schools, hospitals) will be affected. This disruption in movement would cause some inconvenience to local communities, albeit temporary. The ESIA will thoroughly assess these risks to community health and safety during construction and operation, taking into account the project context and vulnerable groups. The technical design of the project should adequately integrate safety considerations.

Mini-grid activities will prioritize hybrid solar schemes; should mini-hydro facilities be included in the project, they will be limited to run-of-the-river type schemes requiring no water impoundment/reservoir formation known for causing significant safety risks, retention of toxic materials or potential for significant downstream impacts.

For all the construction work and sites, the ESMP will require contractors to install a safety system around the project sites (fences and safety guards) during the entire construction period. When works take place on open roads, equipment and vehicles will be brought together to one single well-secured area during the night to ensure both

community and worker's safety. In addition, the road design will also consider improving accessibility for people with disabilities. However, construction companies will actively collaborate and consult with communities in promoting the understanding and methods for the implementation of community health and safety, including HIV and other STDs prevention, and informing communities about the requirements of workers' codes of conduct. Contractors will also provide project workers with training on respectful relations with communities, including on health and safety practices

A Community Health & Safety Plan will be required from contractors, which will also include procedures on incident investigation and reporting, recording and reporting of non-conformances, emergency preparedness and response procedures and community awareness raising activities, for attention by the project.

SEA/SH: Communities (Host, IDPs and other vulnerable groups) will also be exposed to risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Violence and Against Children (VAC) associated with the anticipated influx of labor. A SEA/SH Risk Assessment of this new project will be carried out as part of the ESIA and will inform a final SEA/SH Action Plan detailing specific measures to be implemented as part of the project and prior to contractor's deployment into the project area. A preliminary /SEA/SH risks assessment and Action Plan will be prepared prior to appraisal. It is also worth noting that the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism will consider /SEA/SH related complaints process.

Security Personnel: In relation to the level of security in the project area, the Contractor is likely to employ the services of MUNISCA where necessary or other security companies with (non-armed) personnel to ensure the safety of its personnel, equipment and facilities. The management of risks and impacts associated with the use of these security personnel will be assessed during project implementation and a security management plan drafted and implemented prior to their deployment. As part of the project ESIA, a preliminary Security Risk Assessment shall be undertaken and general guidance provided following the Bank's Good Practice Note on Assessing and Managing the Risks and Impacts of the Use of Security Personnel, in line with Good Practice Handbook - Use of Security Forces: Assessing and Managing Risks and Impacts; Guidance for the Private Sector in Emerging Markets, IFC Feb. 2019. This will require development of project specific Security Risk Management Plan prior to appraisal. The preliminary assessment will include engagement with stakeholders, considerations of the project contextual factors, requirements for procurement of the security personnel, which will consider management aspects such as use of code of conduct, training and monitoring of security personnel), grievance mechanism and SEA/SH issues, etc.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

This project involves construction of 3 solar mini-grids in selected provincial cities, and installation of solar water pumps as well as construction of grid-connected PV solar power plant with battery storage at Danzi site near Bangui. These constructions will certainly require spaces and/or widening of corridors in some areas and will therefore require land acquisition.

The main impacts depending on the nature of the works will be on built structures, mainly in the cities, and encroachment on agricultural land in rural areas. Pastureland and cropland for cassava, maize, beans, peanuts, sweet potatoes, fruit trees, etc., will be converted into corridors for high voltage lines or for the foundations of solar PV investments. The loss of agricultural land is likely to have a significant negative impact as most of the population

depends on subsistence farming as their main source of income. At this stage of project development, the land for the constructions of some infrastructures can be made available by the municipalities. In principle, this will be unoccupied land. A voluntary donation of land is foreseen in rural areas, but the risk of land being taken from indigenous people is not envisaged.

Some mentioned activities would involve land acquisition that would lead to the involuntary resettlement, loss or the disruption of income or livelihood activities for individuals or groups of people. However, the sites of these expected realizations are not known with certainties to date, as we still at the preparation phase. Therefore, a social risks assessment will be conducted and RPF will be developed, consulted, and will be disclosed along with other project's ESF instruments prior to appraisal. In addition, it's important to mention that a screening tool will be developed as part of the ESMF, and there will be a requirement to screen all sites/facilities to ensure economic or physical displacement does not occur once the site-specific activities are identified; this will especially apply in cases where decision is taken for an infrastructure to be built.
Then, once sites-specific and type of investments are known with precision, RAPs will be prepared, consulted upon, cleared by the Bank and publicly disclosed prior to start of works. This will be reflected in the ESCP.

However, the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), which will include a Vulnerability Assessment and will propose specific measures to support eligible PAPs during RAP implementation, will be developed in reference to ESS5 and by project effectiveness. Taking into account that project preparation timelines are relatively short, there will be particular attention to ensure adequate quality of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) especially in terms of (i) designing Livelihood Restoration Plans, (ii) appropriate measures to support PAPs from vulnerable groups and those with disabilities, and (iii) carrying out a comprehensive census. Project Affected Persons (PAPs) will continue to be engaged throughout the RAP processes and particularly during its implementation to address any issues that might have been missed out in earlier studies. Additional measures may include thorough screening at project preparation, the project proponent's commitment to monitoring, implementing agreed measures and institutional strengthening measures. All affected properties will be subjected to a transparent valuation process and will be promptly and adequately compensated. A Livelihood Restoration Plan will be developed as part of the RAP, implemented and monitored throughout the project cycle. Additionally, a Grievance Redress Mechanism will be put in place to record and solve grievances associated with land acquisition.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

This standard recognizes the importance of maintaining core ecological functions of habitats including forests and the diversity they support. In this sense ESS 6 is relevant to the implementation of the project. The project activities are likely to result in the loss, avoidance and increase in bird mortality, degradation and linear fragmentation of the habitat and disturb the free movement of wildlife in the area, particularly with regard to the construction of the solar panel field and the traffic and maintenance tracks. Bird disturbance through mirroring and glare are possible impacts on birds. In addition, the solar panels as a mirror to concentrate heat and increase the temperature which can carbonize birds and insects.
It should be noted that in the Central African Republic, there are several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and Protected Areas (PA). Among the protected areasin the southern region of the country are the Dzanga-Sangha special reserve, the Mbaere Bondigue National Park and the Dzanga Ndoki National Park. The rest of the protected areas, 9 in total, are located in the northern region of the country, particularly in the north-east. It is important to note that although

the project aims to be implemented throughout the country, the northern region remains less populated and is also under the influence of armed groups. It follows that the project activities will be concentrated in areas of higher human density and therefore in areas where the human footprint is already significant. The project will avoid primary forests and other Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and protected areas (PAs) for the location of the solar panel fields, so the distribution lines would be constructed along existing ROW of the roads, streets, avenues, etc. within the communities. In this context, the construction and maintenance of the lines may only involve occasional brushings/trimmings/cuttings of tree and branches within 2 meters of the lines. . The ESMF will be prepared prior to the assessment, but the ESIA to be prepared prior to the construction and operation phases will assess potential risks and impacts where appropriate. All such potential risks and impacts will be avoided, minimized or mitigated in accordance with the ESIA and ESMP.

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

Indigenous Peoples (Ba-Aka communities) in CAR fulfill the four criteria by which ESS7 defines Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities, and are among vulnerable groups. The project will ensure that the Batwa are not disproportionally affected by adverse impacts of project activities and experience that their share into project's various benefits – particularly as regards access to energy. Selection of subprojects that would otherwise result in adverse impacts on land or natural resources traditionally owned or used by Ba-Aka, relocation of Ba-Aka communities, or impacts on Ba-Aka cultural heritage, will not be eligible for financing. An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) will be developed, consulted, and will be disclosed along with other project's ESF instruments prior to appraisal to guide project implementation. IPP will be prepared once the sites and impacts on IPs are known and prior to start of works. The project also ensures that the Grievance Redress Mechanism developed under ESS10 is appropriate and accessible to the Batwa communities.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage

ESS8 is considered relevant to the Project at this level of preparation. The project intervention involves civil works, particularly in construction of grid and mini grid that could affect cultural heritage. A complete inventory of cultural heritage within the ROW of (construction of solar mini-grids, Installation of Solar water pumps as well as Construction of grid-connected PV solar power) will be conducted as part of the ESIAs and the mitigation hierarchy will be applied on the management of the project's potential risks and impacts.

However, the borrower will avoid impacts on cultural heritage. When avoidance of impacts is not possible, the Borrower will identify and implement measures to address impacts on culture heritage in accordance with mitigation hierarchy.

While it is not expected that the project will deliberately intervene cultural heritage-prone areas, but given that cultural heritage is tangible and intangible in nature, a chance-find Graves structures and other cultural heritage along the ROW of (construction of solar mini-grids, Installation of Solar water pumps as well as Construction of grid-connected PV solar power), which may be affected and have to be relocated and will be included in the RAP to be prepared for the project. "Chance Find Procedures" will be included in the ESMF/ESMP in the event contractors stumble on such chance finds during implementation. And chance find clause will be included in works contracts requiring contractors to stop construction if cultural heritage is encountered during construction and to notify and

closely coordinate with relevant mandated country authority for the salvaging and restoration of such cultural heritage. Where appropriate, the client will develop a cultural heritage management Plan.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

ESS 9 is not relevant for this project.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

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

III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE

A. Is a common approach being considered? No

Financing Partners

N/A

B. Proposed Measures, Actions and Timing (Borrower's commitments)

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

Documents and actions prepared and completed prior to Appraisal:
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) including GRM;
- Preparation and disclosure of Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).
- Preparation and disclosure of Security Risk Assessment (SRA) and Security Management Plan (SMP).
- Preparation of a SEA/SH/SEA/SH risk assessment and Action Plan (to be updated from parent project)
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMF) including waste management plan and LMP;
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of an Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF);
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) including orientation of Livelihood Restoration Plan;

Possible issues to be addressed in the Borrower Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP):

Documents and actions prepared and completed prior to project effectiveness:
- Preparation and disclosure of Labor Management Procedures (LMP) including GRM for workers;
- Preparation of communication strategy (To be included in the SEP);

Documents and actions prepared and completed prior to works for each specific site:
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of RAP (including Livelihood Restoration Plan);
- Preparation, consultation and disclosure of an Indigenous People Plan (IPP);
-Preparation, consultation and disclosure of site specific E&S instruments such as ESIA/ESMP as per ESMF screening and requirement. This will include SEA/SH action plans based on the Project SEA/SH action plan and taking into account the findings of the ESIA.

C. Timing

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS 01-Nov-2021

IV. CONTACT POINTS

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Central African Republic

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Economy, Planning, and International Corporation

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Development of Energy and Water Resources (MDEWR)

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Nash Fiifi Eyison, Anas Benbarka
Practice Manager (ENR/Social)	Senait Nigiru Assefa Recommended on 03-Sep-2021 at 10:14:18 GMT-04:00
Safeguards Advisor ESSA	Nathalie S. Munzberg (SAESSA) Cleared on 27-Sep-2021 at 17:00:29 GMT-04:00