



1. Project Data

Project ID P151324	Project Name CI-Infrastruc for Urb Dev and Compet-SUF	
Country Cote d'Ivoire	Practice Area(Lead) Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-60620	Closing Date (Original) 30-Jul-2022	Total Project Cost (USD) 119,625,613.20
Bank Approval Date 02-Jun-2017	Closing Date (Actual) 30-Apr-2024	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	120,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	117,999,136.10	0.00
Actual	118,294,680.64	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

As per the Financial Agreement (FA) on page 6, "the proposed Project Development Objective (PDO) is to create conditions for improved competitiveness in the targeted secondary cities in the territory of the Recipient". More specifically, the FA indicates on pages 6-7 that (i) Component 1 aimed to strengthen infrastructure in the cities of Bouaké and San Pedro to improve the competitiveness of these two cities, (ii) Component 2 intended to be facilitating the growth of micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) in Bouaké and San Pedro with a special focus on agri-business and trade logistics value chains, and (iii)



Component 3 aimed to strengthening the service delivery capacity of the cities of Bouaké and San Pedro with respect to managing urban development and providing administrative services.

The statement of the PDO in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) on page 7 was similar to the one in the FA and was unchanged throughout the period of project implementation. For both the FA and the PAD, the conditions for improved competitiveness were defined as better urban mobility, improved revenue of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and improved administrative services of the municipalities.

Assessment methodology. The ICR validation will apply the 2021 World Bank guidelines which specify that “compound PDOs with multiple outcomes linked together in a single sentence are unpacked and each outcome assessed separately”. Therefore, echoing the ICR approach, project efficacy will be assessed toward the achievement of the three following specific objectives which are summarized in the PDOs stated both in the FA and the PAD:

- PDO-1: To enhance the performance of economic infrastructure (better urban mobility),
- PDO-2: To support private sector development (improved revenues of MSMEs), and
- PDO-3: To improve institutions, regulations, and urban management (improved administrative services of the municipalities).

While there were changes in the results framework, there will be no split assessment, because the key performance indicators remained unchanged throughout the period of project implementation.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

- **Component 1: Enhancing the Performance of Economic Infrastructure (US\$63.4 million at appraisal, US\$68.4 million at completion).** This component aimed to strengthen key economic infrastructure in Bouaké and San Pedro, focusing on enhancing urban mobility and improving trade and logistics infrastructure. The first sub-component was to finance the rehabilitation of the Marché de Gros de Bouaké (MGB) and construction of major infrastructure. The second sub-component aimed to rehabilitate infrastructure to decongest Bouake traffic and improve accessibility to the key city’s economic zones.
- **Component 2: Supporting Private Sector Development (US\$25.6 million at appraisal, US\$31.5 million at completion).** This component was designed to facilitate MSME growth in Bouaké and San Pedro through capacity building, access to finance, and formalization support. The first subcomponent aimed to finance an entrepreneurship program to support MSMEs through capacity building, mentoring, matching grants, and seed grants for promising business ideas. The second subcomponent aimed at strengthening local business development services, including technical assistance to the Ministry of Commerce and capacity building for SME promotion and service providers, The third subcomponent, added during the first restructuring, aimed to capitalize



and operationalize a new partial portfolio credit guarantee (PPCG) fund to stimulate access to finance for Small and Medium Enterprises.

- **Component 3: Improving Institutions, Regulations, and Urban Management (US\$24.2 million at appraisal, US\$13 million at completion).** This component aimed to strengthen the service delivery capacity of municipalities in Bouaké and San Pedro by supporting urban master plans and improving municipal services. The first subcomponent was to finance the preparation and implementation of detailed urban plans, focusing on land use optimization, city amenities, and waste management; included the rehabilitation of the Bouaké City Hall. The second subcomponent was to support the modernization of municipal services through capacity-building, including on land regularization, citizen engagement, and transparency
- **Component 4: Project Management (US\$14.8 million at appraisal, US\$13.8 million at completion).** This component was to cover the cost of project management, including procurement, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguards management.

e. **Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates**

Cost: The total project cost was estimated at US\$120 million equivalent at appraisal. The actual disbursement amount totaled US\$119.6 million equivalent, or 99.7 percent of the original project commitments.

Project Financing: The project was financed entirely through an IBRD loan.

Borrower Contribution: There was no planned contribution from the borrower at appraisal, and there was none during implementation.

Dates: The project was approved on June 02, 2017, and made effective on September 11, 2017. The Project was restructured twice as follows:

(i) the first restructuring, approved in June 2021, aimed to mitigate the effects of the COVID19 on private sector development, and a new subcomponent was introduced to create the Partial Portfolio Credit Guarantee (PPCG) Fund, aimed at improving access to finance for MSMEs. This restructuring primarily shifted resources toward supporting MSMEs while extending the project's closing date by 12 months to ensure that critical activities could be implemented. Moreover, this restructuring revised the Results Framework, by adding new intermediate indicators, deleting others, and modifying certain targets; (ii) the second restructuring, approved in February 2023, aimed to ensure the completion of roadworks and other infrastructure investments. The restructuring reallocated remaining uncommitted funds to further capitalize the PPCG. While some intermediate indicators were adjusted to match the revised implementation scope, the restructuring maintained the focus on MSME access.

The project closed on April 30, 2014, 27 months after the original closing date of July 30, 2022.

3. Relevance of Objectives



Rationale

The validation of the relevance of objectives draws from the ICR discussion presented on pages 2-3 of the ICR.

- **Country context:** The cities of San Pedro and Bouaké play a critical role as country's trade hubs and regional connectors. The Côte d'Ivoire Urbanization Review found that strategic investments in infrastructure and services were needed to enhance competitiveness, boost job creation, and reduce poverty in regional cities. San Pedro and Bouaké were identified as priority cities for such interventions. Moreover, the project rationale was underpinned by key studies and frameworks that emphasized urban competitiveness as a driver of growth. Technical studies included urban audits and market assessments, and provided further evidence that investing in infrastructure, improving land use, and supporting MSMEs would lead to stronger economic outcomes for both cities.
- **Alignment with Government strategy:** The project supported key goals in the National Development Plan (2016–2020), which prioritized reducing regional disparities and empowering secondary cities to drive economic growth. Through strengthening municipal capacities and improving infrastructure, the project aimed to support decentralization and strengthen MSME growth outside of Abidjan. The project aimed to address the infrastructure and institutional gaps that were hindering economic growth and private sector development in San Pedro and Bouaké. By focusing on improving urban infrastructure and municipal services, the project aimed to create a conducive business environment for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), fostering job creation and inclusive economic growth.
- **Alignment with Bank strategy.** The PDO remained closely aligned with the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Côte d'Ivoire FY2023-2027. Through investments in urban mobility and infrastructure in Bouaké and San Pedro, the project was aligned with the CPF Objective 6 "Support Development of Sustainable Cities for Inclusive Growth" and Objective 4 "Expand Connectivity through Quality Climate-Resilient Infrastructure". Additionally, its support for MSMEs through entrepreneurship programs and the Partial Credit Guarantee Fund (SGPME) directly contributes to CPF Objective 9 "Improve Business Environment and Access to Finance", promoting private sector growth and job creation in secondary cities. The PDO directly supports the CPF High-Level Outcomes (HLO) 2 "Reduced Spatial Disparities and Strengthened Resilience", and HLO 3 "Jobs Created through Private Sector-Led Growth". Moreover, the PDO was aligned with the World Bank's Western & Central Africa Region Priorities (2021-2025), particularly as the project's focus on improving urban mobility, supporting MSMEs, and enhancing local administrative services contributed to removing bottlenecks to economic activity and promoting better job creation, while rebuilding trust between citizens and local governments through enhanced service delivery.
- Based on the country context, the project alignment with the Government priorities and the World Bank strategy as discussed hereabove, the relevance of objectives is rated as High.

Rating

High



4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To enhance the performance of economic infrastructure (better urban mobility),

Rationale

Theory of change:

- There was no explicit theory of change in the PAD or in the restructuring papers outlining the linkage between the project activities and the PDO. The ICR reconstructed a theory of change (Annex 4 on page 37), which summarized the causal logic linking the project's interventions and the PDO. This review draws from the ICR Annex 4 to present the results chain underlying the process of achieving the three project development objectives.
- Toward enhancing the performance of economic infrastructure (better urban mobility), the key activities for Bouake included (i) the rehabilitation of the urban section of the A3 road, (ii) the construction of a truck parking and rest area, and (iii) the upgrade of the urban access roads. Key activities for San Pedro were; (i) the rehabilitation of the main access to the Port of San Pedro and the Route des Grumiers, (ii) the upgrading of the urban access road to the Port of San Pedro and the access road to the San Pedro Airport, (iii) the rehabilitation of access roads to the commercial zone along the coast; and (iv) the construction of a truck parking and rest area.
- Expected outputs included (i) roads upgraded or rehabilitated in both cities, (ii) areas of parking or rest stops built or rehabilitated in both cities, and (iii) the signing of an operating contract for the newly built parking and rest stop area in San Pedro. Expected outcome was the reduction of the travel time on all the project's built or rehabilitated infrastructure.
- The results framework discussed under Section 9 showed how identified activities would enhance urban infrastructure and mobility. Overall, there was a logical chain between the identified activities, the expected outputs and outcome in both cities. In the hindsight, there was room for selecting better and achievable PDO indicators as discussed under the M&E section.
- However, the ICR neither discussed the assumptions underpinning the theory of change nor the attribution of achieved outcome.

Based on the ICR material on pages 8-10 and the Annex 4, achieved outputs and outcomes are summarized below:

Outputs:

- The target for the length of roads upgraded or rehabilitated was largely exceeded, reaching 28.882 kilometers, largely exceeding the target of 25 kilometers, including (i) the construction of 5.724 km of new roads and the rehabilitation of 10.120 km of roads in Bouaké, and (ii) the construction of 5.640 km, and the rehabilitation of 7.398 km in San Pedro.
- The target for the area of parking or rest stops built or rehabilitated was practically achieved, as 97.8% of the targeted 4 hectares was completed.



- The target for the sensitive areas benefiting from physical measures to prevent accidents was exceeded, reaching 108.4 percent of the target, and data were related to the six (6) upgraded or rehabilitated roads under the first indicator.
- While an operating contract for the newly built parking and rest stop area in San Pedro was signed, and a firm was recruited, an operating contract for the newly built parking and rest stop area in San Pedro has yet to be signed, because the stakeholders decided to ensure efficient and sustainable management of this infrastructure, and this process is still under way.
- The target for the percentage of citizens consulted who consider that their views have been taken into account in detailed urban plan elaboration process in Bouake was partially achieved, reaching 63.82% against a target of 75 percent. However, the target for the women participation was exceeded, reaching 53.49 percent against a target of 50 percent.
- The target for the percentage of citizens consulted who consider that their views have been taken into account in detailed urban plan elaboration process in San Pedro was also only partially achieved, reaching 62.65 percent against a target of 75%. However, the target for the women participation was again exceeded, reaching 55.06 percent against a target of 50 percent.
- Other outputs are as follows:
 - Acquisition and installation of 2 weighbridges, development of a washing station, rehabilitation of public lighting, building painting, and the renovation of sanitary facilities at the Wholesale Market of Bouaké.
 - Development of a Wholesale Market of Bouaké business plan, an internal control framework, and a procedures manual.

Outcomes:

- The target for the travel time on all the project's built or rehabilitated infrastructure was partially achieved, as it decreased from 44.83 min to 33.86 min on average, a reduction of 24.47% against a target of 50%.

Overall, roads, parking and rest stop areas, and other urban infrastructure in San Pedro and Bouake were either rehabilitated or newly constructed, sometimes beyond the targeted levels. As a consequence, the travel time on the built or rehabilitated infrastructure decreased significantly, but at a lower than the targets set.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To support private sector development (improved revenues of MSMEs)

Rationale

Theory of change:

- Toward supporting private sector development (improved revenues of MSMEs), the key activities included (i) the funding of an entrepreneurship program to support MSMEs, (ii) the strengthening of



local business development services, and (iii) the operationalization of a new partial portfolio credit guarantee (PPCG) fund. The expected outputs included (i) the operationalization of the PPCG, (ii) increased technical capacity in both Government and firms, and (iii) the operationalization of the MSMEs database. Expected outcome included enhanced competitiveness of MSMEs, and an increased access to credit by MSMEs.

- The results framework discussed under Section 9 was robust and showed how identified activities would generate improved competitiveness and revenues for firms operating in the two cities. Overall, there was a logical chain between the identified activities, the expected outputs and the outcome of enhanced private sector development.
- However, the ICR neither discussed the assumptions underpinning the theory of change nor the outcome attribution. In respect of attribution, there were also activities at national level undertaken by the Government and its entities and other partners toward the promotion and growth of firms.

Based on the ICR material on pages 10-12 and the Annex 4, achieved outputs and outcomes are summarized below:

Outputs:

- The target for the number of MSMEs supported was practically achieved, reaching 249 against a target of 250. The target for those that are still in operation was exceeded, as 100 percent of them remain active against a target of 70 percent. However, the number of those led by women is unknown.
- The number of new businesses formally created was exceeded and reached 45, largely exceeding the target of 30. All supported businesses are still in operation, exceeding the target of 50 percent. Specifically, the project supported 249 MSMEs, and the survival rate of supported businesses was 100 percent, exceeding the target of 70 percent, and 45 new firms were formally created, with 51 percent led by women.
- The target for the number of financial institutions participating in the Partial Portfolio Credit Guarantee (PPCG) was exceeded, as 6 conventions with Partner Financial Institutions were signed against a target of five (5).

Outcomes:

- The target for the number of loans introduced in the PPCG by participating financial institutions was partially achieved as a cumulative total of 940 loan operations were introduced against a target of 1000, with a cumulative volume of loans guaranteed of FCFA 24,7 billion (US\$41.8 million equivalent) as of August 2024.
- The target for the guaranteed loans default was largely exceeded, because there were only 2 calls about underlying operations, representing less than 0.01 percent of the guaranteed portfolio, against a target of 4.5 percent.
- The target for the increase in annual sales revenue of firms directly supported through the project was not fully established in the ICR. The data, drawn from 43 firms participating in the Cost Sharing Fund, revealed that 33 firms successfully increased turnover while 10 firms did not. The equipment financed through the matching grants was delivered in late 2023, giving firms less than a year to record gains, suggesting that further productivity gains and revenue increases are likely to emerge over time.



Overall, achieved outcome was mixed. Several MSMEs were supported by the project, a PPCG was made operational and MSMEs loans were successfully guaranteed. While there was some increase in annual sales revenue for a number of firms, equipment was delivered to firms with delay, and its impact is expected to emerge over time.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3

Objective

To improve administrative services of the municipalities (institutions, regulations, and urban management)

Rationale

Theory of change:

- Toward improving administrative services of the municipalities (institutions, regulations, and urban management), the key activities aimed to strengthen the service delivery capacity of municipalities in Bouaké and San Pedro and to finance the preparation and implementation of detailed urban plans, and the modernization of municipal services through capacity-building.
- Expected outputs included the following: (i) masterplans were delivered and selected urban interventions completed, (ii) the Bouake City Hall became operational, (iii) the website for the two cities became operational, and (iv) municipal staff were trained. The expected outcome was more efficient services of the municipal administrations of the two cities.
- The results framework discussed under Section 9 was robust and showed how identified activities would underpin an improvement of the quality of services of the municipal administrations of the two cities. Overall, there was a logical chain between the identified activities, the expected outputs and outcome of improving administrative services in the two cities.
- However, the ICR neither discussed the assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change nor the outcome attribution. Particularly regarding attribution, there were also activities at national level undertaken by the Government and its entities and other partners toward the modernization of municipal administrations.

Based on the ICR material on pages 12-13 and the Annex 4, achieved outputs and outcomes are summarized below:

Outputs:

- The Bouaké City Hall was fully rehabilitated.
- The cadastral plans and detailed urban masterplans for Bouaké and San Pedro were updated through a participatory process.
- The number of people trained reached 517 substantially exceeding the target of 400. However, the share of trained women was not provided.



- The target for the number of users of Bouake's website reached 35,554, substantially exceeding the target of 10,000, and illustrating the level of interest by investors and individuals in the city of Bouaké.
- The target for the number of users of San Pedro's website reached 9,779, falling a little short of the target of 10,000.

Outcome:

- The target for the land for which the usage and ownership rights are recognized was partially achieved, as the data transmitted by the Land Registry services as of December 2023 gave a completion rate of 58.5% of the taxed plots against a target of 80 percent by the end of March 2024. However, the Land Directorate is working toward streamlined procedures which will increase the coverage ratio.

Overall, cadastral plans and detailed urban masterplans for Bouaké and San Pedro were updated through a participatory process, and some municipal services were improved in the two cities. However, the strengthening of the Land Directorate in both cities is still under way to ensure that the land usage and ownership rights are appropriate.

Rating
Modest

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

On balance, the project efficacy was substantial with moderate shortcomings, based on the following performance: (i) toward improved urban mobility, urban infrastructure in San Pedro and Bouake was both rehabilitated and newly constructed, sometimes beyond the target levels and leading to a reduction in the travel time on the upgraded infrastructure, although at a lower than the targeted level, (ii) toward improved revenues of MSMEs in the two cities, several MSMEs were supported, and a PPCG provided loan guarantees to some of them, thereby contributing to an increase in annual sales revenue for a number of supported firms, and (iii) toward improved administrative services of the municipalities of San Pedro and Bouake, the cadastral plans and detailed urban masterplans for the two cities were updated through a participatory process, and the Land Directorate is continuing to be strengthened in both cities to ensure that the land usage and ownership rights are appropriate.

Overall Efficacy Rating



Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic and financial efficiency

Applying the methodology used at project appraisal, the ex-post economic analysis assessed the benefits from the transport investments and those arising from the entrepreneurship program, while excluding interventions under the urban management component due to the intangible nature of the associated benefits. The ex-post analysis of the transport investments resulted in a net present value (NPV) of 47.15 CFA billion and an economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 35.1 percent, reflecting the benefits of reduced vehicle operating costs, travel time savings, and improved road safety.

The ICR economic analysis for the MSME support component calculated an NPV of 2,033.9 CFA billion and an EIRR of 29 percent, reflecting the program's impact on MSME growth and job creation, as opposed to an ex-ante EIRR of 18 percent.

The financial sustainability assessment of the Partial Portfolio Credit Guarantee (PPCG) relied on projections of key variables such as approved guarantees, loan volumes, equity, and provisions. A simulation of the fund's financial sustainability was conducted for the next ten years based on key relevant assumptions. The analysis projected that, by Year 5, the fund will have achieved an outstanding guarantee portfolio of CFAF 45.1 billion, and by Year 10, it is expected to achieve CFAF 80 billion, with the leverage ratio achieving a robust level of 5 while roughly preserving the fund's original equity.

Overall, the updated analyses confirm that the project represented substantial return and value-for-money, although below the level calculated at appraisal, because of an unweighted average ex-post EIRR of 32 percent against an ex-ante of 75 percent.

Operational efficiency

While disbursement was maximal, the project suffered from severe delays and its scope was significantly scaled down. Delays were largely due to procurement challenges but also because of the need for additional feasibility studies. The entrepreneurship program had to be scaled down, and the support to cooperatives under component 2 was ultimately canceled due to limited capacity. Furthermore, the redesign of the A3 Road in Bouaké had to be modified to ensure road safety and better flow in high-density urban areas (ICR, para 53). Low technical capacity of certain contractors led to incomplete works at project closing. These factors (ICR, para 54) delayed disbursements and affected the timely achievement of outcomes. Nevertheless, the project almost disbursed all resources despite early implementation delays. The project was extended twice for a total additional implementation time of 21 months and this allowed for the successful completion of several critical activities that would not have been achieved within the original timeframe. While the extensions reflect the project team's ability to adapt to changing conditions and to overcome design weaknesses, both the design challenges and implementation delays were a source of operational inefficiency.

Overall, the project's efficiency is rated Modest. While economic and financial analysis suggest significant value for money, the achievement levels were lower than estimates at appraisal, worsened by the reduced scope of the MSME program and late operationalization of the project, leaving resources idle for extended periods.



The procurement challenges, contract cancellations, ineffective monitoring, and multiple project extensions are further evidence of these inefficiencies.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal	✓	75.00	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	32.00	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

The project relevance was high, based on PDO alignment with the Government priorities and the World Bank strategy and interventions at closure. The project efficacy was substantial with moderate shortcomings, because of substantial achievements toward improved urban mobility, and a reduction in the travel times on the upgraded infrastructure, some increase in annual sales revenue for a number of supported firms, and some improvement in administrative services of the municipalities of San Pedro and Bouake. Efficiency was modest, resulting in a Moderately Satisfactory rating of the project outcome.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Technical risk: The primary risk to sustaining development outcomes is related to the maintenance of physical infrastructure, particularly the roads and urban amenities delivered by the project. Additionally, urban facilities such as the Hotel de Ville and landscaped areas rely heavily on municipalities' financial and logistical ability to maintain them. There are concerns as regards to the effectiveness of public administration in maintaining and managing the constructed facilities.

Governance and institutional risks: As there is a significant turnover in local government personnel and shifts in political priorities, the sustainability of achievements hinges on sustained capacity-building efforts and knowledge management systems. The World Bank's ongoing engagement through follow-up



projects, such as the Competitive Value Chains for Jobs and Economic Transformation Project (CVJET, P172425) and potential urban development initiatives, provides some mitigation against these risks.

Measures were identified to mitigate technical capacity risk: The sustainability of private sector development outcomes is subject to the typical challenges faced by MSMEs, such as market fluctuations and firm survival. However, the project's focus on building local capacity and strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem mitigates many of these risks. The project ensured that SGPME developed key systems and procedures, including its Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), reporting protocols, and contractual agreements with FIs. Ongoing technical assistance under the CVJET program further enhances SGPME's capacity.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The Bank helped in the design of a project addressing critical gaps in urban infrastructure, institutional capacity, and support to MSMEs in the secondary cities of Bouake and San Pedro. The project's design faced challenges, mainly because of multiple sectors covered by the project and the over ambitious objectives. Project implementation readiness at entry was an issue, as activities under the private sector development component were not adequately prepared. The Results Framework was unrealistic as the PDO indicators like travel time reductions proved difficult to measure and hard to achieve in the urban environment. Similarly, MSME revenue growth targets also faced challenges, notably when attributing results to project interventions.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Through regular supervision missions, the Bank team worked with the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and local stakeholders, and provided critical oversight on technical, fiduciary, environmental, and social safeguards. The Bank team was effective in addressing implementation challenges and adjusted the project scope during the midterm restructuring. This adjustment allowed the repurposing of project resources to better performing activities, but the Results Framework was not revised to account for the changed project scope.

While the Bank team demonstrated flexibility in addressing external shocks like COVID-19, a more proactive approach in solving early procurement and contract management issues could have reduced implementation delays. Notwithstanding, the Bank's proactive supervision, especially during critical junctures, was pivotal to the project's eventual achievement of its development outcomes.



Quality of Supervision Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The theory of change and the results framework was well aligned. The TOC discussed the linkage between infrastructure improvements, private sector support, and urban governance to better economic outcomes in Bouaké and San Pedro. The Project RF targeted lower-level outcomes such as better urban mobility, MSME revenue growth, and improvement in urban services, and the causal chain from project activities to targeted outcomes was generally clear and robust.

However, the RF had weaknesses. The definition of some targeted outcomes was vague and difficult to achieve in the short term. To monitor PDO-1, the RF prioritized travel time reduction as a key outcome, but the target was unrealistic. In respect of PDO-2, the MSME revenue indicator was adequate to capture performance of project-supported firms, including key dimensions of private sector development, such as firm creation, survival, and capacity-building efforts. Regarding PDO-3, indicators focused primarily on land cadaster coverage and website usage, but missed the broader impact on municipal services, public spaces, and urban governance. Moreover, the project restructuring was a missed opportunity to align the RF with the revised project activities, particularly at the PDO level.

The M&E arrangements were sound with clear roles and responsibilities assigned to capable entities. The Project Coordinating Unit was well staffed, and the M&E specialist was tasked to systematically record the data needed for the Results Framework. Collaboration with municipalities was key for collecting data on civil works progress, traffic surveys, and urban masterplans. Overall, while the design ensured a well-coordinated monitoring plan, some data collection challenges were identified and eventually addressed through project restructuring.

b. M&E Implementation

There were some delays and challenges in the collection and analysis of M&E data. Delays in the implementation of key project activities hindered the quality of M&E implementation. For instance, there was limited time to assess the firm performance in response to grants' execution, and the ability of the PPCG fund to ramp-up operations. This limitation in the implementation stage reduced the robustness of the MSME outcome data. Data related to SGPME were sourced from the fund's administrators via monthly reports, ensuring consistency and quality control. For the urban component, municipalities provided data through the PCU, with website and land cadaster data being automatically generated and reliably collected.



c. M&E Utilization

M&E data were used to inform key decisions, particularly the midterm restructuring, where lack of progress in PDO-level and intermediate indicators flagged underperformance across all components. This led to the introduction of the PPCG fund, addressing some gaps in MSME finance, and a reallocation of resources to focus on achievable outcomes. The project team's use of M&E data allowed for course corrections, notably as regards to urban service delivery. Regular progress reporting ensured that the project remained flexible and responsive to the challenges encountered during implementation.

Overall, the M&E quality was modest. Key strengths of the M&E assessment included (i) the consistency between the theory of change, and the results framework, (ii) the appropriateness of the M&E arrangements, and (iii) the good utilization of the M&E. However, the M&E quality had weaknesses, including (i) the inadequacy of some of the PDO and intermediate indicators, and (ii) delays and gaps in the discussion of the MTR and the role of restructuring operations during project implementation.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The Project was classified as a Category B operation and safeguard policies were triggered as follows: (i) OP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment) and (ii) OP 4.09 (Pest Management), (iii) OP 4.11 (Physical Cultural Resources), and (iv) OP 4.12 (Involuntary Resettlement). An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) were prepared and disclosed for key infrastructure sites in Bouaké and San Pedro.

Throughout implementation, environmental compliance was generally satisfactory, with mitigation measures effectively applied, despite some minor issues related to construction waste management. Contractors followed the ESMP guidelines, including dust control, noise management, and safe materials handling. Regular environmental audits ensured compliance, and the project contributed to building local capacity for environmental oversight, though post-construction site restoration remains an area for improvement.

A Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and specific Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs) were prepared for investments such as the A3 road in Bouaké and the Rue des Grumiers in San Pedro. The GRM (Grievance Redress Mechanism) was fully operational, collecting and processing 59 complaints across various project sites, including complaints from roadwork beneficiaries and business plan competition participants. Overall, the project managed social impacts effectively but faced challenges in ensuring long-term resettlement outcomes in the area of the Rue des Grumiers.

Overall safeguard compliance was rated as Moderately Satisfactory at project closure.



b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management: The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) had strong FM capacity, benefiting from previous experience with urban projects, and utilized the Syscohada accounting system, which met project requirements. Interim financial reports (IFRs) were all submitted in a timely manner, with no significant financial management issues raised. Additionally, 6 annual audit reports were submitted, all acceptable to the World Bank, delivered on time and receiving unmodified opinions from external auditors. The final audit report is due by June 30, 2025.

Procurement. Procurement performance fell short of expectations throughout the project, especially when it came to contract management. While procurement procedures mostly adhered to World Bank guidelines, with no major complaints or appeals, the project faced significant delays due to lengthy procurement processes, performance issues with certain contractors, and a reluctance to initiate contract cancellation procedures when contractors underperformed. Additionally, the procurement process for the entrepreneurship program faced challenges such as understaffing, difficulties with technical specifications, and beneficiaries’ limited understanding of procurement rules. Despite these setbacks, procurement risks were mitigated, and the project ultimately complied with World Bank procurement standards.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

d. Other

The ICR did not identify any other impacts.

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Modest	Modest	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR identified thoughtful lessons and recommendations arising from the implementation of this project, and this review highlights three lessons, which are summarized below:

When a project covers multiple sectors, achieving the best desired outcome requires enhanced preparation and supervision, notably through a larger program approach. The



Project was multisectoral and aimed at regional competitiveness. This multisectoral approach was a key strength, aimed at boosting economic activity outside the capital. However, the complexity of coordinating interventions across multiple domains, such as infrastructure and private sector support, highlighted the importance of aligning ambitions with local implementation capacity and strengthening inter-agency coordination. The adequacy of a multisectoral design under a single IPF operation needs to be carefully considered with respect to whether implementation synergies are sufficiently strong. A series of sequenced interventions planned as an integrated urban development and economic growth program could be considered.

The importance of continued local and national buy-in, including citizen engagement is key to implementing multisector projects. Project implementation relied on both national authorities and local stakeholders, which were essential for overcoming project complexity. Close collaboration with local governments in Bouaké and San Pedro and the participatory approach to infrastructure planning fostered client ownership, although the Project had difficulties sustaining local ownership over time. The strong focus on citizen engagement in the development of urban masterplans contributed to community buy-in, which partly mitigated implementation challenges.

New financing instruments supporting MSMEs require expertise and time to achieve the desired outcome. The matching grant scheme faced difficulties, as many MSMEs were unable to provide their financial contribution, resulting in dropped sub-projects. Future interventions should better screen firms for financial capacity during selection and tailor matching requirements to the firm's capabilities. Furthermore, the introduction of the Partial Credit Guarantee Fund (PPCG) was an important innovation in creating sustainable access to finance for MSMEs in Côte d'Ivoire. By redirecting IDA resources into capitalizing a mechanism that was designed following international best practices and coupled with strong capacity-building, the Project was able to revert stalled implementation of some activities while promoting sustainability and scaling that is expected to endure long after project closing. These two financing instruments generated results, but achieving the desired outcome still required expertise to ensure oversight and achieve results.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is a candid account of the project design, implementation and achieved results, and is generally consistent with OPCS guidelines. The quality of analysis is broadly evidence-based, and the results orientation of the project was a key feature of the document. The ICR is internally consistent, and its assessment of efficacy provides contextual information about the project's outputs and outcomes. Photographic records showing selected roads before and after project implementation provide a glimpse of the achieved results on the ground. The ICR identified several thoughtful lessons learned from the project, which mostly reflect the experience of project design and implementation. There were moderate deficiencies in the ICR namely: (i)



insufficient analysis of the quality-at-entry, and (ii) the overall safeguards compliance was not adequately assessed.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial