



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P164353	<b>Project Name</b> IRUMP	
<b>Country</b> Sierra Leone	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Transport	
<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> IDA-D4830	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b> 30-Jun-2024	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 48,817,366.61
<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 13-Jun-2019	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 30-Jun-2025	
	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>
Original Commitment	50,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	49,218,740.00	0.00
Actual	48,774,445.66	0.00

<b>Prepared by</b> Maria Shkaratan	<b>Reviewed by</b> Chikako Miwa	<b>ICR Review Coordinator</b> Avjeet Singh	<b>Group</b> IEGSD (Unit 4)
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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

The Original Project Development Objective (PDO) was: “to improve the quality of public transport, address climate resilience, improve road safety in selected areas, and enhance institutional capacity in the transport sector” (Financing Agreement, p. 4). The PDO in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, p.1) was nearly identical, except for a minor typo (“to improve quality public transport”), which this Review treats as an error.

The PDO was not revised during implementation.



For the purposes of this Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) review, the PDO is parsed as follows:

PDO 1: To improve the quality of public transport.

PDO 2: To address climate resilience in selected areas.

PDO 3: To improve road safety in selected areas.

PDO 4: To enhance institutional capacity in the transport sector.

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

Yes

**Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?**

Yes

**Date of Board Approval**

27-Jun-2025

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**

Yes

**d. Components**

**1. Original components**

**Component 1: Modernization and Professionalization of Public Transport Services, including informal private operators (cost at appraisal: US\$13.0 million; actual cost: US\$12.62 million)** aimed to introduce reliable, high-quality bus services in selected corridors in the Western Area of Sierra Leone (including the capital and surrounding areas, population 1.5 million), leveraging US\$10 million in private investment. Activities included: (i) a bus fleet renewal scheme to incentivize private operators' participation; (ii) technical assistance (TA) to strengthen the regulatory capacity of the Sierra Leone Road Transport Corporation (SLRTC) and support formalization of private operators under a pilot public-private partnership (PPP) model; (iii) operator training, including safe driving; and (iv) measures to improve bus fleet efficiency, including integrated ticketing, fleet management and information systems, a control center, and construction of bus stops, priority lanes, terminals, and depots. It also supported strategic programs: (i) bus-to-school; (ii) digital technologies for freight and passenger services; and (iii) government fleet management.

**Component 2: Strategic Resilient Mobility Investments (cost at appraisal: US\$28.0 million; actual cost: US\$30.26 million)** aimed to finance infrastructure to improve access, climate resilience, and road safety, under two pillars: (i) *Integrated Corridor Management* and (ii) *Resilience Accessibility Improvement*. Activities included road rehabilitation; drainage and slope stabilization; traffic management, signals, and parking improvements; pedestrian infrastructure; and construction of terminals and markets.

**Component 3: Building Human Capital and Institutional Capacity (cost at appraisal: US\$6.0 million; actual cost: US\$3.07 million)** aimed to support knowledge and capacity building including in the areas of:



(i) institutional strengthening: preparing a strategic plan, regulations, related studies, and road safety database; operationalizing the agenda for sector financing; and integrating climate resilience in sector operations; (ii) academic support to local universities; (iii) women's empowerment: support to employment formalization and capacity building in gender-based violence (GBV) prevention; and (iv) citizen engagement and stakeholder communications.

**Component 4: Project Management (cost at appraisal: US\$2.0 million; actual cost: US\$4.34 million)** was to support project management, financial audits, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and operating costs.

**Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) (cost at appraisal: US\$0.0 million; actual cost: US\$0.0 million)** was to enable rapid reallocation of funds in case of emergencies; it was not activated.

**Note:** Total component cost amounted to US\$49.0 million, with US\$3.0 million unallocated, for total financing of US\$52.0 million.

## 2. Revised Components:

Components were not revised.

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

**Project Cost:** The appraisal estimate was US\$52.0 million; actual disbursement was US\$50.29 million.

**Project Financing:** The Project was financed at appraisal through an IDA grant of US\$50.0 million. Disbursement at closure amounted to US\$48.74 million (ICR, p. 3). The difference is due to exchange rate fluctuations – the grant was nominated in Special Drawing Rights (SDR).

**Borrower/Recipient contribution:** US\$2.0 million was estimated at appraisal; actual disbursement at closure was US\$1.55 million.

**Project Dates:** The Project was approved on June 13, 2019, and became effective four months later, on October 11, 2019. The mid-term review (MTR), originally planned for April 11, 2022, was completed on June 9, 2022. The Project was restructured twice: (i) on June 28, 2024; and (ii) on June 27, 2025. The original closing date of June 30, 2024, was extended once by 12 months, with final closure on June 30, 2025.

**Restructurings and MTR:** Two restructurings were undertaken, with Restructuring 2 involving scope (RF target) reduction. Although target reduction was recommended by the MTR (June 2022), the MTR did not propose revised targets and instead reiterated the original targets (Annex 3: Project Indicator Update, pp. 15-16). Revised targets were first reflected in the Implementation Status & Results Report (ISR) of December 2023 (pp. 4-6) but were only formally approved during Restructuring 2 (June 2025). In line with OPCS guidelines for ICRs (pp. 16-17), RF targets revisions are recognized only when formally approved through restructuring or Additional Financing (AF); accordingly, this Review recognizes the scope reduction, and applies a split evaluation, as of Restructuring 2.



- **MTR (June 9, 2022)** initiated reallocation of funds across components due to updated civil works costs (MTR Aide Memoire, pp. 4, 7). Specifically, the US\$3.0 million unallocated amount was assigned to expenditure categories, and funds were reallocated across categories within the allowable 15 percent threshold of a category. These changes did not require formal restructuring (ICR, p. 4).
- **Restructuring 1 (June 28, 2024)** extended the closing date from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2025 (12 months) and adjusted RF indicator timelines correspondingly. No other changes were made, including to the RF (Restructuring Paper, p. 5).
- **Restructuring 2 (June 27, 2025):**
  - Reduced Project's scope by revising three IRI targets (Restructuring Paper, pp. 4-8):
    - "Project roads with climate adaptation and resilience interventions, kilometers (km)": from 20.0 km to 7.5 km;
    - "Sidewalks improved, meters (m)": from 10,000 m to 8,200 m; and
    - "Additional financing from the private sector, US dollars", from US\$10.0 million to US\$5.0 million.
  - Introduced two new IRIs: "People benefiting from improved access to sustainable transport infrastructure and services, number" and "People with enhanced resilience to climate risks, number both disaggregated by youth and gender."

**Split evaluation.** A split evaluation is warranted due to the scope reduction under Restructuring 2.

### 3. Relevance of Objectives

#### Rationale

**Country and Sector Context.** At appraisal, transport services in Sierra Leone's Western Area (including the capital and surrounding urban and rural areas) faced challenges related to public transport quality, road safety, climate vulnerability, and weak institutional capacity, exacerbated by rapid population growth (58 percent between 2004 and 2015). Transport services were unreliable, inefficient, and unsafe, characterized by poor vehicle maintenance, lack of service standards, inadequate bus shelters and terminals, limited passenger information, and delays exacerbated by cash-based fare collection. Buses operated by SLRTC accounted for only 15 percent of transport services, while the remaining 85 percent was provided by private mini-buses, three-wheel taxis, motorcycles, and shared taxis. Road safety conditions were severe: although the Western Area represented only 17 percent of the national population, it accounted for 50 percent of traffic fatalities and serious injuries and 70 percent of collisions. Inefficient street use and poor road design, including vehicles parked on narrow sidewalks, forcing pedestrians into traffic, further increased risks. The road network was also highly vulnerable to climate events, including floods and landslides, due to rugged terrain and inadequate construction. At the same time, the transport sector faced shortages of skilled personnel and weak institutional capacity. In this context, the project was designed to support a balanced approach to improving transport services, strengthening institutional capacity, and investing in resilient infrastructure, with a focus on the Western Area. (ICR, p. 1)

**Relevance to Government Strategies at closure.** The Project aligns with the Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP, 2024–2030). One of the MTNDP's "Big 5 Game Changers", focuses on infrastructure, technology, and innovation and aims to achieve expansion of public transport



facilities in all major cities by 2030. Key policy actions include capacitating SLPTA to effectively regulate transport operators, modernizing public transportation services, and improving road safety. IRUMP interventions, such as formalized bus service, corridor improvement, and a reformed transport service regulator, support the Government in achieving these objectives. Additionally, Project-supported resilient infrastructure and mass transportation investments are consistent with the country’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP). (ICR, p. 4)

**Relevance to the WBG’s Assistance Strategies at closure.** The Project aligns with the WBG Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Sierra Leone, FY2021-26, *Focus Area 3: Economic Diversification and Competitiveness with Resilience, Objective 3.1: Build resilient infrastructure (power, mobility, technology), for enhanced competitiveness*, which aims to improve urban mobility through modernization and professionalization of public transport services, reducing travel time and traffic accidents, generating employment and benefits for women traders, and lowering carbon emissions. It also aligns with *Objective 3.3: Enhance disaster-risk management and resilient urbanization*, which seeks to enhance urban disaster risk management and resilient urbanization, including through slope stabilization at the Freetown landslide site. The Project also aligns with the CPF’s cross-cutting theme *Technology*, which promotes the digital economy, including in urban transport through data collection, digital fare systems, and mobile-based services. (CPF, pp. 29, 32, 35)

**Previous sector experience.** The World Bank had a strong track record in improving urban mobility and road safety in West Africa, including Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire, as well as global expertise in disaster risk management (DRM) and climate resilience. Project preparation coincided with consultations on the 2018 Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) and the FY2021-26 CPF for Sierra Leone, and the Project aligned with their priorities. It also incorporated findings from key 2018 World Bank analyses, including *Diagnostic of Public Transport in Freetown* and *Sierra Leone Economic Update*. The Project was coordinated with ongoing Bank operations in the country, including *Fixing Freetown (P168608)* and *Sierra Leone - Economic Diversification Project (P164212)* (PAD, pp. 7-9, 16-17; ICR, p. 1).

The relevance of objectives is rated High. The PDO was aligned with national priorities and World Bank strategies in effect at Project closure, addressed urgent development needs, and was appropriately set in light of the World Bank’s prior urban mobility operations in West Africa and its global DRM experience.

**Rating**

High

**4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)**

**OBJECTIVE 1**

**Objective**

To improve the quality of public transport.

**Rationale**



The Project's theory of change (ToC) was included in the PAD and improved in the ICR by adding an "Outputs" column (ICR, p. 2). The ICR's ToC reflected the Project logic from "Activities", to "Outputs" (including output and intermediate results), and to "Outcomes" (PDO-level results). To achieve Objective 1, the Project supported the modernization and professionalization of public transport services through activities such as developing a bus renewal scheme, building operator capacity, strengthening the enabling environment, improving infrastructure and facilities, and providing TA for bus fleet management. Expected outputs were: (i) an integrated fare collection system; (ii) female ridership and user satisfaction; (iii) improved service by the new operator Metro Transport Company (MTC); iv) constructed bus stops with shelters; (v) installed safety and accessibility features (e.g., cameras and kneelers); and (vi) new passenger information systems and a bus control center. The expected PDO outcome was improved quality of public transport. Critical assumptions were: (i) enforcement of measures put in place; (ii) rainfall levels not exceeding a 50-year return period; (iii) adequate maintenance; and (iv) sustained political support.

The ToC captured the main expected outputs and intermediate outcomes, adequately reflecting the causal links, and identified relevant assumptions. However, additional assumptions would be useful, particularly regarding the availability of a sufficient bus fleet to meet rising demand. In practice, a shortage of new buses led to the reopening of dedicated bus lanes to conventional vehicles, potentially undermining achieved service reliability and performance.

At closure, the RF under Objective 1 included one PDO indicator - "Users satisfied with public transport service at the selected corridors, %" – and three IRIs: a functioning integrated fare collection system, additional financing from the private sector, and the share of female riders who switched from informal to formal services.

While the selected RF indicators were useful and relevant, overall results monitoring under Objective 1 had deficiencies. The coverage of expected results was fragmented, with many results not monitored; the PDO indicator was subjective; and the IRIs only partially supported the PDO indicator. Specifically, such important expected results as the establishment of a bus fleet renewal scheme with private operator(s), strengthened capacity of SLRTC to regulate public transport and support private operators, and the construction of improved bus stops and a management control center, were not monitored, despite being part of the original component description. As a result, the evaluation of efficacy would be challenging without evidence provided outside the RF. Additionally, long-term outcomes are absent from the ToC.

#### **IRI results:**

1. "Integrated fare collection system functioning, Yes/No". The target was reached.
2. "Additional financing from the private sector, US dollars" (baseline: zero, target: US\$10.0 million). The target was not reached: it was later reduced, then the indicator was dropped as unachievable.
3. "Percentage of women who change from informal to formal public transport services, %" (baseline: zero, target: 10 percent). Achievement at closure was 52 percent; the target was exceeded. The indicator used survey data.

#### **PDO result:**



1. “Users satisfied with public transport service at the selected corridors, %” (baseline: 35 percent, target: 60 percent). Achievement at closure was 82 percent; the target was exceeded. The sub-target for the share of female user satisfaction (60 percent) was also exceeded, at 82 percent. The indicator used survey data.

### Overall Results:

The Project improved public transport service quality, surpassing user satisfaction targets. Evidence outside of the RF (ICR, pp. 5-6) attributes this to the transition from fragmented informal operator services to a formalized system across two corridors (20 km). A key achievement was the establishment of a public-private bus operator (MTC) in May 2023 through the merger of four informal transport operators. An innovative lease-operate-own model was piloted, under which the Project provided start-up capital and buses, and MTC operates them, with full company ownership to transfer from the Government to MTC after repayment of 50 percent of the start-up capital (over five years). Other key outcomes included procurement of 50 high-capacity buses, construction of 77 bus stop shelters, and introduction of safety features (e.g., CCTV), integrated ticketing, a passenger information system, and a bus control center. Bus services launched in February 2024, serving an average of 27,140 passengers daily on dedicated bus lanes. Travel times decreased by 30%, with fares about 30% lower than conventional services. MTC generated positive net revenue, earmarked for fleet renewal.

Challenges included: (i) in 2025, 13 MTC buses broke down due to delivery defects (later repaired or replaced); and (ii) in response to the shortage of new buses, a temporary policy allowed conventional vehicles into dedicated bus lanes effective November 5, 2025, undermining achieved service reliability and performance (ICR, p. 6). After Project closure, only 35 of the 50 buses provided were still running.

**Rating.** Efficacy is rated Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. While the PDO indicator exceeded its target, it was subjective; and although two of the three IRIs met or exceeded their targets, they provided only partial coverage of expected results. Thus, the efficacy evaluation of Objective 1 relies on evidence outside the RF, as provided in the ICR. Public transport quality improved with the launch of formalized bus services using modern high-capacity buses, better facilities, and efficient fare collection, resulting in reduced travel time and costs. However, challenges included bus breakdowns requiring repair or replacement, and an insufficient fleet that led to a temporary policy allowing conventional vehicles in dedicated bus lanes, creating risks for the sustainability of outcomes.

### Rating

Substantial

## OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

### Revised Objective

To improve the quality of public transport.

### Revised Rationale

See discussion of the ToC and RF under the Original Project.

**The following IRI target was revised downward at Restructuring 2:**



1. “Additional financing from the private sector, USD” (baseline: zero, revised target: US\$5.0 million). The indicator was ultimately dropped as unachievable; the target was not reached.

**The PDO target was not revised.**

**Overall Results:** see discussion under the Original Project.

**Rating:** Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. See discussion under the Original Project.

## Revised Rating

Substantial

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Objective

To address climate resilience in selected areas.

### Rationale

The Project’s theory of change (ToC) was included in the PAD and later refined in the ICR by adding an “Outputs” column (ICR, p. 2). The ICR’s ToC reflected the Project logic from “Activities”, to “Outputs” (containing output and intermediate level results), and to “Outcomes” (PDO-level results). To achieve Objective 2, the Project supported resilient mobility investments through activities such as improved road conditions and drainage, constructing pedestrian infrastructure, developing a traffic management system, and building an integrated market and terminal hub. Expected outputs were: (i) rehabilitated roads to resilient standards; (ii) elevated sidewalks; (iii) improved drainage; (iv) installed traffic signals; (v) pedestrian bridges; and (vi) an integrated terminal and market hub. Expected PDO outcome was enhanced road climate resilience. Critical assumptions were: (i) enforcement of measures put in place; (ii) rainfall levels not exceeding a 50-year return period; (iii) adequate maintenance; and (iv) sustained political support.

The ToC captured the main expected outputs and intermediate outcomes, adequately reflected causal links, and identified relevant assumptions.

At closure, the RF under Objective 2 included the PDO indicators “People benefiting from improved resilient roads” and four IRIs: length of improved roads, length of improved sidewalks, people benefitting from improved access to sustainable transport services, and people benefitting from improved resilience to climate risks (replicating the PDO indicator 1).

The RF indicators were useful, relevant, and objective, and the IRIs sufficiently supported the PDO indicators. In particular, the IRIs on length of improved roads and sidewalks supported the PDO indicator – number of beneficiaries of improved roads. While most of key results were monitored, the RF did not capture several outputs identified at appraisal, such as the terminal/market hub (almost 33 percent of Component 2 financing), improved drainage, pedestrian bridges, and traffic signals. It also did not include long-term outcomes.

### IRI results:



1. “Project roads with climate adaptation and resilience interventions, km (baseline: zero, target: 20 km). Achievement at closure was 7.5 km; the target was 37.5 percent (partially) achieved.

2. “Sidewalks improved, m” (baseline: zero, target: 10,000 m). Achievement at closure was 8,200 m; the target was 82.0 percent (substantially) achieved.

**PDO results:**

1. “People benefiting from improved resilient roads, number (baseline: zero; target: 50,000 people). Achievement at closure was 131,000 people; the target was exceeded. This indicator captured bus riders and pedestrians using improved infrastructure, including roads, drainage, sidewalks, traffic signals, and pedestrian bridges (PAD, pp. 37-38; ICR, p. 20). This result was affected by underestimated population growth at appraisal (ICR, page 6).

**Overall Results:**

The Project improved climate resilience of roads, benefiting 131,000 bus riders and pedestrians. The ICR noted (ICR, p. 6) that three key interventions drove this result: climate-resilient road rehabilitation, new and improved drainage facilities, and elevated sidewalks. Additional measures included traffic signals, pedestrian overpass bridges, and drainage upgrades at the Lumley market and terminal.

**Rating.** Efficacy is rated Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. Road climate resilience was improved through road rehabilitation, drainage and slope stabilization, new and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, and construction of terminals and markets. The PDO indicator target - number of people benefiting from improved resilient roads - was exceeded, but the two underlying IRI targets were not fully met – the IRI on the length of improved sidewalks was substantially met, and the IRI on the length of improved roads was partially met. Lumley market/terminal was only 90 percent completed. At the same time, several non-RF activities underpinning the PDO outcome were performed, including drainage, traffic signals, and pedestrian bridges.

**Rating**

Substantial

**OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1**

**Revised Objective**

To address climate resilience in selected areas.

**Revised Rationale**

See discussion of the ToC and RF under the Original Project.

**The following IRI targets were revised downward at Restructuring 2:**

1. “Project roads with climate adaptation and resilience interventions, km (baseline: zero, revised target: 7.5 km). Achievement at closure was 7.5 km; the target was fully achieved.



2. "Sidewalks improved, m" (baseline: zero, revised target: 8,200 m). Achievement at closure was 8,200 m; the target was fully achieved.

**The following IRI targets (Corporate Scorecard Indicators) were added at Restructuring 2:**

1. "People benefiting from improved access to sustainable transport infrastructure and services, number (baseline: zero, target: 50,000 people). Achievement at closure was 69,274 people; the target was exceeded. This indicator captured daily bus riders and users of footbridges, zebra crossings, and other pedestrian infrastructure (ICR, p. 20). The sub-targets for youth and women were also estimated to be exceeded (ICR, p. 20).

2. "People with enhanced resilience to climate risks, number" (baseline: zero, target: 50,000 people). Achievement at closure was 131,000 people; the target was exceeded. The sub-targets for youth and women were also exceeded.

**Note:** This indicator replicated PDO indicator 1 for Objective 2 (PAD, pp. 37-38; ICR, p. 20).

**The PDO indicator target was not revised.**

**Overall Results:** See discussion under the Original Project.

**Rating:** Efficacy is rated Substantial. All RF targets were met; however, the RF did not capture all expected results. While non-RF outcomes were reported in the ICR, no corresponding targets were set at appraisal, limiting the ability to assess their full achievement.

**Revised Rating**

Substantial

**OBJECTIVE 3**

**Objective**

To improve road safety in selected areas.

**Rationale**

The Project's theory of change (ToC) was included in the PAD and later refined in the ICR by adding an "Outputs" column (ICR, p. 2). The ICR's ToC reflected the Project logic from "Activities" to "Outputs" (containing output and intermediate level results), and to "Outcomes" (PDO-level results). To achieve Objective 2, the Project supported mobility investments through activities such as improved road conditions and drainage, constructing pedestrian infrastructure, developing a traffic management system, and building an integrated market and terminal hub. Expected outputs were: (i) rehabilitated roads; (ii) improved sidewalks; (iii) improved drainage; (iv) installed traffic signals; (v) pedestrian bridges; and (vi) an integrated terminal and market hub. Expected PDO outcome was enhanced road safety. Critical assumptions were: (i) enforcement of measures put in place; (ii) rainfall levels not exceeding a 50-year return period; (iii) adequate maintenance; and (iv) sustained political support.



The ToC captured the main expected outputs and intermediate outcomes, adequately reflected causal links, and identified relevant assumptions.

At closure, the RF under Objective 2 included the PDO indicator “Road traffic crashes involving vulnerable users along selected corridors” – and four IRIs: length of improved roads, length of improved sidewalks, people benefitting from improved access to sustainable transport services, and people benefitting from improved resilience to climate risks (replicating the PDO indicator 1).

The RF indicators were useful, relevant, and objective, and the IRIs sufficiently supported the PDO indicators. In particular, the IRIs on length of improved roads and sidewalks supported both PDO indicators – number of beneficiaries and reduced road crashes. While most of key results were monitored, the RF did not capture several outputs identified at appraisal, such as the terminal/market hub (almost 33 percent of Component 2 financing), improved drainage, pedestrian bridges, and traffic signals. It also did not include long-term outcomes.

#### **IRI results:**

1. “Project roads with climate adaptation and resilience interventions, km (baseline: zero, target: 20 km). Achievement at closure was 7.5 km; the target was 37.5 percent (partially) achieved.
2. “Sidewalks improved, m” (baseline: zero, target: 10,000 m). Achievement at closure was 8,200 m; the target was 82.0 percent (substantially) achieved.

#### **PDO results:**

1. “Road traffic crashes involving vulnerable users along selected corridors, number” (baseline: 120 crashes; target: 60 crashes). At closure, crashes declined to 58, slightly exceeding the target. This indicator measured the annual number of crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists, as recorded by police.

#### **Overall Results:**

The Project improved road safety, reducing serious accidents from 120 to 58. It improved walkability in Freetown by upgrading 8.2 km of sidewalks, building four pedestrian overpass bridges, installing traffic signals at seven major intersections and 150 streetlights, and adding zebra crossings. A traffic management plan was implemented, and road safety training was delivered for relevant agencies.

**Rating.** Efficacy is rated Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. Road safety was improved through road rehabilitation, drainage and slope stabilization, new and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, and construction of terminals and markets. The PDO indicator target - reduced road accidents - was exceeded, but the two underlying IRI targets were not fully met – the IRI on the length of improved sidewalks was substantially met, and the IRI on the length of improved roads was partially met. Lumley market/terminal was only 90 percent completed. At the same time, several non-RF activities underpinning PDO outcomes were performed, including drainage, traffic signals, and pedestrian bridges.



## Rating

Substantial

### **OBJECTIVE 3 REVISION 1**

#### **Revised Objective**

To improve road safety in selected areas.

#### **Revised Rationale**

See discussion of the ToC and RF under the Original Project.

**See the list of RF targets that were revised downward or added at Restructuring 2 under Objective 2, Revision 1.**

**Overall Results:** See discussion under the Original Project.

**Rating:** Efficacy is rated Substantial. All RF targets were met; however, the RF did not capture all expected results. While non-RF outcomes were reported in the ICR, no corresponding targets were set at appraisal, limiting the ability to assess their full achievement.

#### **Revised Rating**

Substantial

### **OBJECTIVE 4**

#### **Objective**

To enhance institutional capacity in the transport sector.

#### **Rationale**

The Project's theory of change (ToC) was included in the PAD and refined in the ICR by adding an "Outputs" column (ICR, p. 2). The ICR's ToC reflected the Project logic from "Activities", to "Outputs" (containing output and intermediate level results), and to "Outcomes" (containing PDO outcomes). To achieve Objective 3, the Project supported capacity building through developing a strategic plan and regulatory frameworks, improving capacity in road safety, enhancing academic capacity, supporting women's economic empowerment, and establishing a collaborative citizen engagement mechanism. Expected outputs included: (i) an urban mobility strategy; (ii) a road crash database; (iii) road safety training for agencies; and (iv) training for women in driving and entrepreneurship. The expected PDO outcome was enhanced institutional capacity in transport sector. The critical assumption was stable political support.

The ToC captured key outputs and outcomes and reflected causal links, but could have included additional assumptions, particularly regarding institutional readiness to implement policy and organizational reforms. In practice, such constraints contributed to delays in completing activities within the Project timeframe.

At closure, the RF under Objective 3 included one PDO indicator - "Development and adoption of a framework for a single regulatory body for urban transport" – and five IRIs: a developed urban mobility policy, an implemented road safety database, an established partnership between local and international



universities, provision of business tools to female market traders, and delivered training to female participants.

The RF indicators were useful, relevant, and objective, and provided sufficient coverage of expected results. The IRIs complimented, rather than directly supported, the PDO indicator, which is appropriate for TA activities.

#### **IRI results:**

1. “Strategic urban mobility policy for Greater Freetown developed, Yes/No”. The target was reached.
2. “Partnership between local and international university, Yes/No”. The target was reached.
3. “Road-safety database in place, Yes/No”. The target was reached.
4. “Market women who have been provided with technology/tools that use it weekly to conduct business transactions, %” (baseline: zero, target: 35 percent). This indicator was later dropped due to data collection issues linked to delays in implementing the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP); achievement is unknown.
5. “Person-days of training in business and entrepreneurial skills done by women, %” (baseline: zero, target: 70 percent). Reported achievement at closure was 100 percent. However, the ICR considered this figure unrealistic and likely recorded in error (ICR, page 12); the actual achievement is therefore unknown.

#### **PDO results:**

1. “Development and adoption of a framework for a single regulatory body for urban transport, Yes/No”. The target was reached. This indicator was designed to measure the development of a functioning integrated regulatory body for urban transport, with a well-defined mandate, clear organizational structure and procedures, and adequate staffing, based on institutional assessment studies conducted during the first year of implementation (PAD, p. 39)

#### **Results outside the RF:**

The Project enhanced institutional capacity in the transport sector by providing TA to develop and enact the Sierra Leone Public Transport Authority (SLPTA) Act 2023. This enabled the restructuring of the state-owned bus operating company, SLRTC, into SLPTA in April 2023, as a regulatory agency. The Project also supported SLPTA’s operationalization through the establishment of its governance structure and staffing. Since January 2024, SLPTA has been functional, issuing operator licenses and setting fares, schedules, and standards for MTC buses.

However, challenges remain: the SLPTA Board is not yet fully constituted, pending the appointment of two female representatives, and gaps in policy development, fleet management, and efficiency monitoring are still being addressed through ongoing TA. These issues are expected to be addressed in the near future, as SLPTA is receiving technical assistance under the *Connectivity and Agricultural Market Infrastructure Project (CAMIP, P178683)* to improve its regulatory and financial viability (ICR, p.7).

**Rating.** Efficacy is rated Substantial, with minor shortcomings. The PDO indicator target and three key IRI targets – on development of urban mobility policy, creation of a road safety database, and establishing of a



university partnership - were met. At the same time, two IRIs - on provision of technology and tools to female market traders and on business training for women - were not tracked due to data collection and recording issues, leaving achievement at closure unknown. Transport sector's [MS3] institutional capacity improved: the bus operating company, SLRTC, was restructured into SLPTA (now a regulatory agency), which became operational before Project closure. This was supported by adoption of a framework for a regulatory body, development of an urban mobility policy, establishment of a road safety database, and delivery of training programs.

**Rating**

Substantial

**OBJECTIVE 4 REVISION 1**

**Revised Objective**

To enhance institutional capacity in the transport sector.

**Revised Rationale**

See discussion of the ToC and RF under the Original Project.

**The following IRI target was dropped at Restructuring 2:**

"Market women who have been provided with technology/tools that use it weekly to conduct business transactions, %" (baseline: zero, target: 35 percent).

**The PDO indicator target was not revised.**

**Overall Results:** See discussion under the Original Project.

**Rating:** The rating is Substantial, as all expected RF results were met (except the IRI on business training for women), and the SLPTA was established and became operational prior to Project closure.

**Revised Rating**

Substantial

**OVERALL EFFICACY**

**Rationale**

The efficacy rating for the Original Project is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. Three of the four Objectives were rated at this level, while the third was Substantial, with minor shortcomings. Under Objective 1, a formalized bus service was launched, delivering cost and travel time savings. Improvements included high-capacity buses, a bus control center, upgraded bus stop shelters, safety features, integrated



ticketing, and a passenger information system. However, bus breakdowns required repairs/replacement, and a limited bus fleet led to a temporary policy (still in place) allowing conventional vehicles in dedicated bus lanes, creating risks to outcome sustainability. Under Objective 2, road climate resilience improved, with beneficiaries using rehabilitated infrastructure. This was supported by road rehabilitation, drainage upgrades, elevated sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, crossings, traffic signals, streetlights, terminals, markets, and a traffic management plan. However, targets for road and sidewalk improvements were not fully met. Under Objective 3, road safety improved with reduced accidents. This was supported by a set of activities listed under Objective 2, with the same shortcoming related to the incompletely accomplished road and sidewalk improvements. Under Objective 4, the bus operator SLRTC was restructured into SLPTA as a regulatory agency and became operational. This was supported by a framework for a regulatory body, an urban mobility policy, a road safety database, and training programs.

### **Overall Efficacy Rating**

Substantial

### **OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1**

#### **Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale**

Revision 1 Project efficacy is rated Substantial: Objective 1 was Substantial with moderate shortcomings, and Objectives 2 and 3 were Substantial. Under Objective 1, a formalized bus service was launched, reducing costs and travel time. Investments included high-capacity buses, a bus control center, improved bus stop shelters, safety features, integrated ticketing, and passenger information system. However, bus breakdowns required repairs/replacement, and a limited bus fleet led to a temporary policy (still in place) allowing conventional vehicles in dedicated bus lanes. Under Objectives 2 and 3, all RF targets were met (including outcomes of the number of road improvement beneficiaries and accident reduction). However, the RF did not capture all expected results, and the non-RF outcomes reported in the ICR lacked targets, limiting full assessment. Under Objective 4, all but one RF targets were met (including adoption of a framework for a single urban transport regulatory body). The SLPTA was established and became operational before Project closure.

#### **Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating**

Substantial

## **5. Efficiency**

### **a. Economic Analysis**

- **Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of road corridor improvements at appraisal and closure (ICR, pp. 7, 27):**



**Approach.** A CBA was conducted at appraisal and closure using consistent methodologies, with a 12-percent discount rate and a 25-year Project life. It covered selected civil works (construction and routine maintenance) under *Pillar 1 Integrated Corridor Management* of Component 2, which included improvements to road condition, pedestrian and traffic management infrastructure, and integrated transit terminals. Benefits included travel time savings, improved road safety, and reduced GHG emissions.

**Results.** At appraisal, the economic internal rate of return (EIRR) was 78.0 percent and the net present value (NPV) was US\$82.7 million. At closure, the EIRR was 67.0 percent and the NPV was US\$94.5 million.

**Conclusion.** Despite a decline in EIRR at closure, reflecting that implementation was not least-cost, it remained well above the opportunity cost of capital (i.e., the discount rate), confirming the economic viability of investments. The positive NPV at both stages supports the investment rationale. Higher-than-estimated capital costs were offset by stronger-than-expected traffic volumes (24 million vehicles annually versus 12 million projected).

- **Efficiency of MTC operations at closure and post-closure (ICR, pp. 8, 33-35).**

The ICR assessed MTC's operational and financial performance under Component 1 at Project closure. Bus utilization was solid (35–39 of 50 buses in service, or 70–78%), though with some room for improvement. As a new operator, MTC showed strong efficiency: low operating costs, good fuel performance, low accident rates, reliable service, and high customer satisfaction. Financially, it achieved positive and growing net income, driven by rising ridership, increased service frequency, and improved fare collection and revenue management, enabling provisions for fleet renewal. Key constraints included limited maintenance capacity, suboptimal traffic management, and technical issues to be resolved by bus suppliers; all are being addressed.

However, after Project closure, MTC's operational and financial performance deteriorated. Only 35 of 50 buses remained operational, and revenue fell by 35 percent, driven by rising maintenance costs (45 percent of expenses), a 20-percent fare reduction in August 2025, and the opening of dedicated bus lanes to conventional traffic in November 2025. As a result, the company is barely breaking even, threatening service continuity. There is also a high risk of further deterioration in maintenance standards due to declining revenues, policy changes, and gaps in contract design, including inadequate guarantees, limited access to spare parts, and insufficient technical support from the bus supplier.

#### **b. Administrative Efficiency (ICR, pp. 8-15)**

The ICR noted that Project design was based on strong technical analysis and multi-stakeholder engagement to inform intervention selection. It benefited from stable government commitment. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) was mobilized from the Transport Infrastructure Development Unit (TIDU) of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation (MTA) (the Implementing Agency), ensuring accountability; it was strengthened through substantial capacity building. A multi-stakeholder committee provided oversight. Trust Fund (TF) and Project Preparation Advance (PPA) funds enhanced readiness for implementation. Key risks identified at appraisal – political, macroeconomic, capacity, fiduciary, environmental and social (E&S), and stakeholder – were mostly Substantial, and mitigation was in place. M&E, fiduciary, and E&S safeguard systems were adequate.

During implementation, close in-country support from the Bank team enabled rapid problem-solving and guidance on emerging issues, helping improve Project performance from Moderately Unsatisfactory in late 2022 to Moderately Satisfactory by June 2023. The Project received a Vice President Unit (VPU) award for “turning around projects facing serious implementation challenges and delivering significant results.” The Project closed



with a 99-percent disbursement rate for the IDA grant and a Satisfactory procurement and Moderately Satisfactory financial management (FM) ratings.

However, the Project faced inefficiencies, including a one-year delay and cost increases requiring scope reductions. External factors, particularly a protracted legal land dispute and COVID-19, played a major role. The land dispute delayed key outputs, including Lumney market infrastructure, which was only 90 percent complete at closure, with the remainder to be financed by the Government or the *Connectivity and Agricultural Market Infrastructure Project (CAMIP, P178683)*.

Internal factors were also critical, including overambitious design, underestimated risks in bus company operations, delayed counterpart financing, and delayed training:

- The design assumed US\$10 million in private financing that did not materialize and underestimated costs for 20 km of road works, requiring scope reductions.
- Sustainability of bus operations is at risk due to breakdowns and maintenance issues, exacerbated by unclear maintenance and financial obligations in contracts between SLPTA and MTC (now addressed by *CAMIP, P178683*). Bus shortage led to a temporary policy (still in effect) allowing conventional traffic into dedicated bus lanes, further reducing operational performance. Financial outcomes are weakened by revenue loss due to gaps in fare collection, which relies on both digital and paper systems, requiring urgent digitalization – an issue that could have been addressed early on.
- Delayed counterpart financing slowed RAP compensation and postponed 20 percent of road works in the West, leading to a ratings downgrade to Moderately Unsatisfactory in late 2022; this was later resolved through a reallocation from scaled-down works.
- Delays in training women for transport jobs meant only classroom training was completed by closure, while behind-the-wheel training shifted to *CAMIP (P178683)*.

**Overall**, despite a well-informed design, solid implementation arrangements, substantial M&E, fiduciary, and E&S systems, and a problem-solving implementation approach, inefficiencies persisted. These included an overambitious design that led to scope reductions, underestimated risks in bus company operations that pose outcome sustainability concerns, and delays that shifted unfinished activities to another Bank project (*CAMIP*). Efficiency is therefore rated Modest.

### 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	✓	78.00	38.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	67.00	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable



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

## 6. Outcome

	Original Project:	Revision 1 Project:
Relevance of objectives	High	
Efficacy	Substantial	Substantial
Efficiency	Modest	
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory
Outcome value	4	4
Amount disbursed, US\$ million	45.90	2.84
Disbursement percentage	94.2%	5.8%
Weight value	3.77	0.23
Total weight	4.00	
Overall outcome rating	Moderately Satisfactory	

The relevance of objectives is High, efficacy is Substantial with moderate shortcomings for the Original Project and Substantial for Revision 1 Project, and efficiency is Modest. Based on the shares of the disbursed funds before and after Restructuring 1 (US\$45.9 million or 94.2 percent and US\$2.84 million or 5.8 percent before and after Restructuring 2), the overall Project outcome rating is Moderately Satisfactory\* ( $0.942 \times 4 + 0.058 \times 4 = 4.0$ ).

\* Based on a six-point scale, where: 1 = Highly Unsatisfactory, 2 = Unsatisfactory, 3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory, 4 = Moderately Satisfactory, 5 = Satisfactory, and 6 = Highly Satisfactory.

### a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

**Technical: MTC's sustainability.** The Project invested in a modern public transport system, with formalized service, modern buses, and a bus fleet renewal scheme. While most planned activities were completed and the new bus operator MTC launched services in May 2023, its operational and financial performance declined soon after Project closure, and service continuity is at risk. Factors include unclear maintenance and financial obligations in SLPTA-MTC contracts, bus shortages that led to allowing conventional traffic into dedicated bus lanes, affecting operational performance, and revenue losses due to gaps in fare collection, which mixes both digital and paper systems. Maintenance issues are addressed under CAMIP (P178683), including through contracts' update and operations review. However, digitalization of fare collection remains critical. (ICR, pp. 6, 8, 10, 14, and 15)



**Technical: Incomplete terminal/market construction.** The Lumley terminal/market was key to improving public transport quality and road safety, planned to serve as a safe boarding point for passengers and a secure location for traders, replacing unsafe street vending and roadside boarding. At Project closure, it was only 90 percent complete, creating the risk of accidents and likely reducing MTC's operational efficiency. This risk was mitigated by transferring completion of the task to CAMIP (P178683). (ICR, p. 15)

**Institutional capacity: SLPTA.** The Project enhanced transport sector institutional capacity by supporting the restructuring of the state-owned bus operator SLRTC into SLPTA as a regulatory agency and assisting with its governance structure and staffing, with operations starting in January 2024. However, at Project closure, the SLPTA Board was not fully set, and gaps remained in policy development, fleet management, and performance monitoring. These are being addressed under CAMIP (P178683). (ICR, pp. 4, 6-7)

**Financial: Infrastructure maintenance.** The Project improved road safety and climate resilience by financing road improvements, drainage, elevated sidewalks, traffic infrastructure, pedestrian bridges, and integrated markets and terminals. Sustaining these investments depends on proper maintenance, which faces risks from fiscal and financial constraints. Continued government commitment, effective inter-agency coordination, and adherence to maintenance standards will be essential to mitigate this risk.

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry

The Project was prepared based on solid technical analysis and stakeholder consultations, supported by TF and PPA funds. Strong technical expertise included collaboration with the World Bank IT Innovation Lab and the Sierra Leone Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation (DSTI) M&E, fiduciary arrangements, and E&S frameworks were appropriate, and the RF was generally adequate. Implementation arrangements ensured capacity and accountability, with the PIU strengthened through capacity building. Risk mitigation measures were in place.

However, the design was overambitious, assuming US\$10 million in private financing that did not materialize and underestimating road works cost, which led to scope reductions. Gaps in the design of bus operations – unclear maintenance and financial obligations in SLPTA-MTC contracts and weaknesses in fare revenue collection – jeopardized performance and service continuity. The RF had limitations: under Objective 1, fragmented results coverage and reliance on a subjective PDO indicator; and under Objective 2, insufficient output monitoring (see details in section 4 and 9).

Overall, Bank performance at Entry is Moderately Satisfactory: design and implementation arrangements were strong, but risks were not fully anticipated, and the RF had gaps.

**Quality-at-Entry Rating**  
Moderately Satisfactory



## **b. Quality of supervision**

The ICR noted that Bank supervision was consistent and proactive, with strong in-country presence enabling rapid response and a problem-solving focus. Missions averaged two per FY, and the team provided continuous guidance on emerging issues and introduced structured approaches such as systematic issue tracking and compliance-aligned action plans. Hands-on supervision helped turn the Project around after the downgrade to Moderately Unsatisfactory due to road works delays in late 2022, improving to Moderately Satisfactory by June 2023. The problem-driven approach was instrumental in addressing safety concerns on a bus route by hiring an international consultant to assess risks and recommend measures.

However, inefficiencies included a 12-month delay and scope reduction. While some factors were external, internal factors contributed. Key risks not addressed at design, particularly in MTC operations, remained unresolved. Bus shortage led to allowing conventional traffic into dedicated lanes, reducing operational performance, while financial results were weakened by gaps in fare collection. Cost overruns led to reduced road works scope, and delayed counterpart financing postponed works in the western corridor, leading to a Moderately Unsatisfactory rating in 2022. Transport job training for women was not completed by closure. (ICR, pp. 8-15)

Overall, Bank performance at Supervision is Moderately Satisfactory. The design was based on solid technical analysis, and implementation was strong and problem-oriented. However, inefficiencies included gaps in MTC's operations and financial results, cost overruns in road works, and delays in the western corridor works and in women's job training.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**

Moderately Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Moderately Satisfactory

## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The RF at design reflected the Project's logic and aligned with the PDO. The indicators were time-bound, specific, attributable to the Project, and mostly quantitative and objective. The M&E plan included hiring an M&E specialist, training, and data collection (ICR, p. 11).

However, the RF had some shortcomings. Under Objective 1, results on the bus fleet renewal scheme, SLRTC capacity, and upgrades to bus stops and the management control center were not monitored; the PDO indicator was subjective, and IRIs only partially supported it. Under Objective 2, key outputs on the terminal/market hub (33 percent of Component 2 funding), improved drainage, pedestrian bridges, and traffic signals were missing.



## **b. M&E Implementation**

The ICR reported that M&E system functioned well, employing a range of data collection methods, including surveys on usage of MTC buses, and reports on contractor' progress and road incidents. The PIU collected data semiannually and leveraged third-party expertise (such as the Civil Engineering Department of Fourah Bay College). The data informed ISRs, the MTR, the endline survey, and implementation decision-making. (ICR, p. 12)

The ICR also noted some shortcomings: (i) delayed reporting on the PDO Indicator on road crashes until after Project closure due to technical and logistical issues, and (ii) overstated achievements for the IRI on business training by women (the reported 100 percent was unrealistic). (ICR, p. 12)

## **c. M&E Utilization**

M&E data were instrumental for information sharing and targeted Project communications, such as management briefs and impact blogs, enhancing understanding of the Project in the Bank. As a result, an urban transport component was included into CAMIP (P178683). The data were also essential for Project adjustments.

The ICR also noted that the M&E system's reliance on manual processes limited the PIU's ability to share and report data in real time.

The M&E Quality is rated Substantial. Although M&E design, implementation, and utilization were adequate overall, they all had some shortcomings.

### **M&E Quality Rating**

Substantial

## **10. Other Issues**

### **a. Safeguards**

**Environmental Safeguards** (ICR, p.12). At appraisal, the Project was classified as Environmental Category B (Partial Assessment), triggering Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01) and Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11) policies. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared and disclosed, and site-specific instruments - Environmental & Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) - were developed for subprojects. A key issue arose at the Lumley terminal and market site, part of which was marshland, with ecosystem benefits. Mitigation measures included verifying proximity to the Sierra Leone River Estuary Ramsar site, conducting a biodiversity assessment, implementing a biodiversity offset, and building a storm drain. Environmental Assessment and Physical Cultural Resources ratings were Satisfactory in the last six ISRs.



**Social Safeguards** (ICR, p. 13). At appraisal, the Project triggered Involuntary Resettlement policy (OP 4.12) due to land acquisition and removal of structures, affecting 1,018 people (mostly street traders), who were compensated. An incident involving demolition of market stalls was attributed by the public to the Project, as it coincided with resettlement activities. In response, the PIU revised the RAP, shifting from full to partial resettlement which allowed some traders to continue working in newly installed spaces (vs. in the street, where they interfere with buses). Another complication was a slow RAP compensation due to delayed counterpart financing, which led to lagged road works (see details in Section 5.b). A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was established, and out of 222 grievances filed, only two were pending at closure – on monetary compensation and employment. The Involuntary Resettlement rating was Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory in the last six ISRs, and Moderately Satisfactory at closure.

#### b. Fiduciary Compliance

**Financial management (FM)** (ICR, p. 13). The ICR reported that FM and procurement were handled by the Project Financial Management Unit (PFMU) at the Ministry of Finance due to limited capacity at the MTA. FM risk was High at appraisal but was reduced to Moderate where it remained at Project closure. Some risks materialized and were mitigated by assigning experienced staff, using accounting software, and strengthening controls over funds, reporting, and assets. This led to improvements: by closure, disbursement reached 99 percent for the IDA grant and 78 percent for counterpart funding. Shortcomings included limited accounting software use due to poor connectivity and irregular internal audits due to staff shortages. FM ratings were Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory in the last six ISRs, and Moderately Satisfactory at closure.

**Procurement** (ICR, pp. 13-14). The ICR reported that the PFMU received training on updated procurement practices, followed procedures, adequately managed contracts, and uploaded documents in the Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system on time. Procurement risk was reduced from High at appraisal to Moderate at closing. A noted shortcoming was using an Expression of Interest approach for pedestrian bridges civil works instead of the Initial Selection process, recommended for non-consulting services. Although the contractor was selected based on value for money, stricter adherence to rules was advised. Procurement ratings were Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory in the last six ISRs, and Satisfactory at closure.

#### c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The biodiversity offset program restored 17 acres of mangroves and rehabilitated degraded landscapes, supporting coastal resilience and local livelihoods, though maintenance is required.

#### d. Other

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## 11. Ratings

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

## 12. Lessons

**1. Innovative public-private partnership (PPP) models, such as the lease-own-operate arrangement piloted under the Project, have potential to foster private sector participation but require strong financial and operational foundations to be sustainable.** They can enable informal operators to partner with government to build a foundation for robust PPP in high-risk and immature-capital-markets contexts, but their success depends on risk mitigation. The Project faced challenges in adopting this model, notably due to limited evidence of its financial sustainability in Sierra Leone. This experience highlights the need for in-depth feasibility assessments of financial and operational viability, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and performance-based incentives with realistic targets. Future projects would benefit from incorporating these critical success factors.

**2. Small, well-targeted operations, combined with institutional and policy reforms, can catalyze transformational change.** The Project showed that in the urban transport sector, smaller, well-designed interventions that prioritize institutional support can have a catalytic impact by enabling governments to formalize public transport services, establish an independent regulator, and build capacity for long-term sector transition, thereby laying the groundwork for modern mass transit. Future operations in similar contexts can benefit from this sequencing approach, starting with targeted institutional development and limited civil works, then scaling up or sequencing operations in line with a long-term agenda, rather than assuming larger projects are inherently more effective.

**3. Relying on government funding for Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) poses significant risks to compliance with environmental and social policies and can hinder implementation, particularly in fiscally constrained contexts.** As seen in the Project, delays in fulfilling government commitments slowed the timely implementation of RAP measures for civil works. Future projects would benefit from considering alternative approaches, such as fully utilizing IDA resources, to ensure that safeguard obligations are met without delay.



### 13. Assessment Recommended?

No

### 14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provides sufficient and credible evidence, concisely and clearly presented. It is technical, logical, and internally consistent, with sound and well-justified analysis. Key sections – relevance of objectives, efficiency, factors of performance, risks, M&E, and safeguards and fiduciary – are informative, well written, and follow the guidelines. The lessons are linked to the analysis and useful for future operations.

A shortcoming is the absence of a split efficacy evaluation, which is required when project scope or ambition is reduced. The scope of Component 2 was reduced (as noted in the ICR, p. 3) with decreased lengths of improved roads and sidewalks, while the PDO indicator (people benefiting from road improvements) was too broad to capture this change. In addition, the efficacy section gives the impression that scope reduction/target revision occurred at the MTR; however, the MTR (June 2022) did not even propose revised targets. These were informally registered in the December 2023 ISR and formally approved only during Restructuring 2 (June 27, 2025). This later date should therefore be used in split evaluation, in line with OPCS guidelines for ICRs (pp. 16-17), which recognize RF target revisions only upon formal approval through restructuring or AF.

Considering the ICR's overall strong technical, evaluative, and presentational quality, while accounting for the noted shortcomings, the rating is Substantial.

#### **a. Quality of ICR Rating** Substantial