



1. Project Data

Project ID
P160272

Project Name
CAR Reintegration Project

Country
Central African Republic

Practice Area(Lead)
Social Sustainability and Inclusion

L/C/TF Number(s)
IDA-D1800

Closing Date (Original)
31-Dec-2020

Total Project Cost (USD)
29,526,442.15

Bank Approval Date
13-Apr-2017

Closing Date (Actual)
30-Jun-2023

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	30,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	30,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	30,476,184.30	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Original Project Development Objective (PDO) was “to support the social and economic reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants and improve access to socio-economic infrastructure and economic opportunities for host communities” (Financing Agreement, page 5). The PDO was stated identically in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (PAD, page 4).

The PDO was not revised.



For the purposes of this Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) review, the objective will be assessed as follows:

PDO 1: To support the social and economic reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants.

PDO 2: To improve access to socio-economic infrastructure and economic opportunities for host communities.

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

08-Oct-2020

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

Yes

d. Components

1. Original components

Component 1 *Social and Economic Reintegration Support* (cost at appraisal: US\$16.94 million; actual cost: 13.6 million) financed support to ex-combatants through the following subcomponents: (i) orientation, counseling and skills training (6 months) (livelihood guidance and career counseling; training on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and management; formation of economic associations); (ii) start-up reintegration support (one-time event) (provision of start-up kits to launch an economic activity); (iii) follow-up reintegration support (24 months) (follow-up training, and information, advisory, and referral services); and (iv) support to vulnerable ex-combatants (entire Project) (female and those with physical and psychosocial disabilities).

Note: Definition of the term “ex-combatant”. According to the UN Integrated DDR Standards, an ex-combatant is a person who has assumed any of the responsibilities or carried out any of the activities mentioned in the definition of “combatant” and has laid down or surrendered his/her arms with a view to entering a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process. (PAD, page 10)

Component 2 *Support to Host Communities* (cost at appraisal: US\$9.0 million; actual cost: 12.0 million) financed of the following subcomponents: (i) improvement of socio-economic infrastructure (rehabilitation of connective infrastructure, water sources, schools, dispensaries, markets, training centers; provision of training for teachers; and supporting linkages to microfinance); and (ii) capacity building for host communities (establishment and capacity building of community councils, and training on social cohesion and conflict prevention).

Component 3 *Project Management* (cost at appraisal: US\$4.06 million; actual cost: US\$4.4 million) was to support administration and management of Project activities, technical and implementation capacity



building at the central and local government levels, sensitization activities (public information to build trust in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)), communications activities, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

2. Changes in components and indicators during implementation

The Project was restructured three times, with changes to components and indicators at the first and second restructurings that had no impact on the Project's overall scope or ambition.

At the first restructuring of October 2018, at government request, the following activity was added as subcomponent 2(iii): on-the-job skills training for members of host communities (cost US\$1.0 million). In line with this change, the target for the intermediate results indicator (IRI) "Number of host community members participating in community-based decision making/participatory planning exercises" was increased from 1,500 people to 2,500 people, and three new indicators were added to monitor Project activities in greater detail. To finance the new subcomponent, funds were reallocated across the subcomponents of component 2 as follows (while the total component 2 financing did not change): from subcomponent 2(i) *Improvement of Socio-economic Infrastructure* to both subcomponent 2(ii) *Capacity Building for Host Communities* (US\$0.5 million) and the new subcomponent 2(iii) (US\$1.0 million). The targets for subcomponent 2(ii) were not modified despite the reduced financing. The restructuring also involved re-phrasing most of the RF indicators, mainly to clarify their meaning and with no changes to their core substance or units of measurement.

At the second restructuring of October 2020, at government request, the following activity was added to subcomponent 2(iii): support to the youth-at-risk through social, life skills and vocational training, including providing them with start-up support kits and livelihoods guidance. The scope of component 1 was reduced accordingly, so that the overall scope of the Project remained the same. A related IRI was added: "Number of youth-at-risk expected to receive basic and vocational trainings", target 1,000 people. At the same time, the target for the component 1 PDO indicator "Number of demobilized ex-combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reintegration" was reduced from 5,000 people to 4,000 people. In line with this change, funds were transferred from component 1 to both component 2 (US\$3.0 million) and component 3 (US\$0.34 million).

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

Project Cost: The appraisal estimate was US\$30.0 million, and the actual disbursement was US\$30.0 million.

Project Financing: The Project was fully financed by an IDA grant.

Borrower/Recipient contribution: There was no Borrower's contribution.

Project Dates: The Project was approved on April 13, 2017 and became effective on December 21, 2017. The MTR review was on July 19, 2019. The Project was restructured three times: (i) on October 26, 2018; (ii) on October 8, 2020; (iii) on February 16, 2022. The original closing date was December 31, 2020. The Project was extended twice, for a total of two years and six months (or 30 months), to June 30, 2023, which was the date of the Project's actual closure.



Split evaluation.

The project was revised three times, and neither of the restructurings involved a change in the Project's scope or ambition; therefore, a split evaluation is not required. However, the first two restructurings aimed at improving Component 2 implementation, and in relation to it, one IRI target was increased at the first restructuring of October 2018, two targets were lowered at the second restructuring of October 2020 (for a PDO indicator and for an IRI), and several indicators were added at both the first and second restructurings. Therefore, a split evaluation, with the split at the second restructuring, will be conducted to provide more clarity.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Country and Sector Context. The Central African Republic (CAR) is a country characterized by a Fragile and Conflict-affected Situation (FCS); it has been experiencing recurrent conflicts, political volatility, and extreme poverty for decades. At appraisal, due to a violent civil conflict lasting since 2013, the country was suffering from a severe humanitarian crisis, including the displacement of one-quarter of the population, a high poverty rate (estimated at 76 percent), chronic food insecurity, and limited employment and income generating opportunities. The economically marginalized population was highly vulnerable to exploitation by criminal or armed factions, as both victims and recruits. In 2016, the newly formed government started reforms aiming at peace, stability, and growth. However, the situation was very challenging. Violent incidents were increasing, and many displaced people were not returning home in fear of retaliation, insecurity, and lacking economic opportunities. Disarmament was necessary, and the top three reasons to leave the armed groups were job opportunities, inclusion in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) process, and integration into the armed forces/police/gendarmerie. A new Security Sector Reform (SSR) program, which would include, along with a reform of defense and security institutions, social and economic re-integration of eligible ex-combatants was needed. (PAD, pages 9-12)

Relevance to Government Strategies at approval. By Project appraisal, the newly elected (in 2016) government has identified its main priorities as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), SSR, and National Reconciliation (NR). At the Bangui Forum in May 2015, the framework documents for the transition to peace and stability - Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction, as well as an Accord on the Principles of DDRR - were signed. In July 2016, the government established two committees - one strategic and one technical - for the DDRR, SSR, and NR and developed a set of documents guiding the DDRR implementation. These documents represented the basis for the development of the reviewed Project. As stated in the government letter requesting Bank assistance (May 12, 2016), the DDRR program was a top government priority. (PAD, pages 9-12)

Relevance to Government Strategies during implementation and at closure. Despite the implementation of the DDRR, fighting continued. In February 2019, the Khartoum Peace Accord was signed by 14 major armed groups and the government. However, violence was still preventing development and democratic processes: for example, only 35 percent of the voters participated in the December 2020 elections, due to insecurity. The 2021 "Luanda Road map", backed by Rwanda and Angola, stated the need for negotiations with the armed groups, as well as for the DDR, SSR, and the repatriation of the ex-combatants from foreign countries. At the end of 2023, while some rebel groups had disarmed, violent



attacks by armed groups were still a reality. The SSR process had been stalled, and an estimated 3,000 ex-combatants remained to be integrated. The World Bank had been the only institution financing the socio-economic reintegration process, which the government still considered critical, as it provided a way out for the combatants in the armed groups. (ICR, pages 5-6)

Relevance to the World Bank Group's (WBG's) Assistance Strategies at approval. The Project was aligned with all three objectives of the Country Engagement Note (CEN) FY2016-17: (i) restoration of core public sector institutions (which included the restoration of authority and of basic service delivery); (ii) basic support to livelihoods (which included creation of jobs and return of the displaced population); and (iii) support to basic social service delivery (which included improvement of social infrastructure). The Project was also aligned with the post-conflict resilience priorities highlighted in the 2016 CAR Policy Synthesis Note: (i) reconciliation through extensive dialogue, community-driven development, and transitional justice to avoid relapse into conflict; and (ii) sustained economic recovery marked by expanded employment opportunities as a powerful alternative to crime, violence and exploitation.

Relevance to the WBG's Assistance Strategies at closure. The Project was aligned with the 2019 CAR Economic Update (EU), which emphasized the importance of building a social contract and of a "progressive appropriation of institutions by communities and society"; it also stated that these processes were "constrained by a low level of security" (EU, page 48). The Project was also aligned with the two focus areas of the WBG's CPF FY2021-25, specifically, with Focus Area 1 *Human Capital and Connectivity to Boost Stabilization, Inclusion and Resilience* (Strategic Objectives 1.1. *Support Stabilization Efforts for Improved Resilience* and 1.5. *Build Resilient Infrastructure (power, mobility, water) for Improved Connectivity*) and Focus Area 2 *Economic Management and Improved Governance to Build State Legitimacy and Foster Growth* (Strategic Objective 2.3 *Enhance the Business Environment and Support Job Creation*).

Related World Bank operations. Prior to the reviewed Project's preparation, in 2017, the World Bank and United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) supported the preparation of the strategic documents for the DDDR program. The reviewed Project was designed as an immediate follow-up (PAD, page 10). The Project also complimented the CAR LONDO ("Stand-up" in Sango, the official language in CAR) Project (P152512, approved in 2016, ongoing), whose PDO is "to provide temporary employment to vulnerable people and to facilitate access to basic services throughout the entire territory of the Recipient, and to provide a response in the case of an eligible crisis or emergency", and the CAR Service Delivery and Support to Communities Affected by Displacement Project (P161591, approved in FY2017, ongoing), whose PDO is "to increase access to basic services, infrastructure and safety nets for communities affected by crises, including forced displacement and COVID-19". The design of the reintegration activities in the reviewed Project was based on the prior analysis and piloting, including by the CAR Community Reintegration Project (P122099). Following the reviewed Project's, a follow-up operation was designed: the CAR Local Governance and Community Resilience Project (P178699, approved in September 2023), which followed the same theory of change and aimed at improved service delivery, access to basic infrastructure, and socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. Using the lessons learned from the reviewed Project, it expanded vocational training duration, included a follow-up guidance for six months after training, involved local authorities more, encouraged income-generating groups involving both the ex-combatants and a wider community.

Overall, the relevance of objectives is rated High since it was aligned with the country and Bank strategy, and pitched at an appropriate level of ambition given the country context.



Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

PDO 1: To support the social and economic reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants.

Rationale

The theory of change (ToC) for the Project was not included in the PAD but was developed for the ICR. It showed direct, logical causal links from inputs (activities) to outputs, and to the two PDO outcomes of the Project. To achieve the two PDO objectives, the Project supported the following activities: (i) orientation, counseling and training, and the start-up and the follow-up reintegration support; and (ii) improvement of socio-economic infrastructure, capacity building of the host communities (in governance and conflict prevention), and training of the youth-at-risk. The expected outputs of these activities were: (i) accomplished training and provided start-up and follow-up reintegration support; and (ii) improved infrastructure and provided support to strengthen community capacities in governance and conflict prevention and to train youth-at-risk. The achievement of the outputs was expected to lead to the following intermediate outcomes: (i) social cohesion between the ex-combatants and the host communities increased, ex-combatants start income generation activities, and ex-combatants take advantage of the follow-up reintegration support; and (ii) access to services improved, infrastructure maintenance skills are acquired by the communities, and the capacity of the youth-at-risk to take advantage of economic opportunities is increased. The achievement of the intermediate outcomes would ultimately result in the following PDO outcomes: (i) social and economic reintegration of the demobilized ex-combatants and (ii) improved access to socio-economic infrastructure and economic opportunities for host communities.

The ToC provided a comprehensive picture of the logic of Project interventions, listing all main inputs and outputs, and the PDO outcomes, and illustrating links from inputs to outputs and to the PDO outcomes. However, the critical assumptions were not listed.

The efficacy of the Original Project under Objective 1 was assessed using the following indicators:

Outputs/Intermediate results:

Objective 1 outputs were measured by the Original Project using the following IRI indicators:

1. "Percentage of ex-combatants who successfully completed orientation, counseling and skills training (Percentage)" (result of phase 1 of component 1). The achievement at closure was 78.3 percent, against the target of 90 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was 87 percent achieved.



2. “Percentage of identified eligible former combatants who received specialized support” (output of phase 3 of component 1). The achievement at closure was zero percent, against the target of 100 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was zero percent achieved. The ICR noted that this target was not achieved because the implementation of phase 3 of component 1 barely started prior to Project closure due to significant delays with the previous two phases of component 1 activities. (ICR, page 15)

3. “Percentage of ex-combatants who received, from those who requested, additional drop-in reintegration support” (output of phase 3 of component 1). The achievement at closure was zero percent, against the target of 100 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was zero percent achieved. The ICR noted that this target was not achieved because the implementation of phase 3 of component 1 activities barely started before Project closure due to significant delays with the previous two phases. (ICR, page 15)

4. “Percentage of targeted former combatants reporting satisfaction with services provided by this program”. The achievement at closure was 94.64 percent, against the target of 95 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was 99.6 percent achieved.

5. “Percentage of ex-combatants who are satisfied with the start-up reintegration support”. The achievement at closure was 90.7 percent, against the target of 90 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was exceeded.

PDO outcomes:

1. “Number of demobilized ex-combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reintegration” (phase 2 result: completed orientation and received reintegration start-up support). The achievement at closure was 2,819 people, against the target of 5,000 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 56.4 percent achieved. The ICR explained that the target could not be achieved because only 4,389 ex-combatants were interested in demobilization, out of whom 804 opted for joining the Defense and Security Forces or the Special Mixed Security Units. The Project worked with the remaining 3,585 eligible ex-combatants, and, as a result, 3,494 of them (including 207 women) were enrolled into the socio-economic reintegration program and 2,819 (including 173 women) completed it. (ICR, page 13)

2. “Percentage of demobilized ex-combatants availing income generation opportunities”. The achievement at closure was 70.5 percent, against the target of 75 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was 94 percent achieved. However, this is an input indicator, and the outcomes of the related activity are likely significantly lower for the following reasons. The ICR noted that this indicator measured the share of program trainees who received kits containing tools and materials to start own income generating activities (ICR, page 19), which is an input indicator. At the same time, there were no indicator to measure the actual outcome of this activity, which was socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants (ICR, page 19) or, as phrased in the PAD: “In addition to acquiring a civilian mindset, ex-combatants will need to generate a sustainable income by the end of the reintegration project” (PAD, page 46). Further, only 39 percent of surveyed beneficiaries were satisfied with the kits they received, which was attributed to poor quality of materials, insufficient quantities, or failure to account for the beneficiaries’ choices with regards to the type of kits. (ICR, page 14).

3. “Percentage of total project beneficiaries who report acceptance to return of demobilized ex-combatants”. The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the target of 65 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was exceeded.



4. “Percentage of total beneficiaries in local communities reporting higher security and reconciliation”. The achievement at closure was 95.54 percent, against the target of 80 percent and the baseline of zero. The target was exceeded.

Rating. The Original Project partially achieved its intended Objective 1 results, and its efficacy rating is Modest. While the targets that measured social cohesion and beneficiary satisfaction with the program were mostly achieved, the socio-economic reintegration program was only partially achieved, with the first phase largely completed, the second phase partially completed, and the third phase barely started.

Rating

Modest

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

PDO 1: To support the social and economic reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants.

Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of the ToC under Objective 1, Original Project.

The following target (reflecting the phase 2 reintegration result) was revised at the second restructuring of October 2020:

A PDO indicator “Number of demobilized ex-combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reintegration”. The achievement at closure was 2,819 people, against the revised target of 4,000 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 70 percent achieved.

Rating. The Revised Project partially achieved its intended Objective 1 results, and its efficacy rating is Modest. The reduced targets were only 70 percent achieved, and the Project still only partially reached its objectives.

Revised Rating

Modest

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

PDO 2: To improve access to socio-economic infrastructure and economic opportunities for host communities.

Rationale

Please see the discussion of the ToC under Objective 1, Original Project.



The efficacy of the Original Project under Objective 2 was assessed using the following indicators:

IRI outputs:

1. “Number of host community members participating in community-based decision making/ participatory planning exercises”. The achievement at closure was 908 people, against the target of 1,500 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 60.5 percent achieved. The ICR provided the following details: to facilitate the planned small-scale socioeconomic infrastructure subprojects, 51 Local Community Councils (LCCs) were established, comprising 20 members each, out of which 908 members benefited from participatory planning and decision-making exercises. However, other community members did not opt to use these opportunities, and this explains the level of target achievement.

2. “Number of host community members participating in capacity building activities”. The achievement at closure was 3,920 people, against the target of 6,000 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 65.3 percent achieved.

PDO outcomes:

1. “Number of beneficiaries in target communities with improved access to socioeconomic infrastructure”. The achievement at closure was 72,613 people, against the target of 30,000 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 2.4 times overachieved. The team clarified, at IEG’s request, that the significant overachievement of the target was due to the cancelation of other infrastructure development projects and the subsequent wider utilization of the infrastructure financed by the reviewed Project.

Note: The ICR reported the result for this indicator at closure as 436,052 people. At IEG’s request, the team clarified that this was the number of indirect beneficiaries (all people in the area who could benefit from the new/improved infrastructure), while the ICR should have reported the number of direct beneficiaries, 72,613 people (both direct and indirect beneficiary data were monitored).

2. “Number of planned small-scale socioeconomic infrastructure subprojects successfully completed”. The achievement at closure was 69 subprojects, against the target of 76 subprojects and the baseline of zero. The target was 90.8 percent achieved.

Rating. The Original Project significantly achieved its Objective 2 intended results, and its efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. While the objectives related to the improvement of socio-economic infrastructure were almost fully achieved, the objectives related to community participation in capacity building and decision making were 60-65 percent achieved.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

PDO 2: To improve access to socio-economic infrastructure and economic opportunities for host communities.



Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of the TOC under Objective 1, Original Project.

The efficacy of the Revised Project under Objective 2 was assessed using the following indicators (this is the full indicator list):

IRI outputs:

1. "Number of host community members participating in capacity building activities". The achievement at closure was 3,920 people, against the target of 6,000 people and the baseline of zero (the target was not revised). The target was 65.3 percent achieved.
2. "Number of host community members participating in community-based decision making/ participatory planning exercises". The achievement at closure was 908 people, against the revised (at the first restructuring of October 2018) target of 2,500 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 36.3 percent achieved.

The following IRIs were added at the first restructuring of October 2018:

3. "Number of host community members, including at risk/ vulnerable peoples, who completed skills training related to the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructures". The achievement at closure was 908 people, against the target of 5,200 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 17.5 percent achieved.
4. "Number of members of host communities, including at-risk and vulnerable peoples, employed and paid by the project". The achievement at closure was 4,646 people, against the target of 5,200 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 89.3 percent achieved.
5. "Number of host communities' (local committees/ community councils) members trained in conflict mediation, social cohesion and technical aspects related to the maintenance of infrastructures". The achievement at closure was 30,920 people, against the target of 1,012 people and the baseline of zero. The target was significantly overachieved.

The following IRI was added at the second restructuring of October 2020:

6. "Number of youth-at-risk who received basic and vocational trainings". The achievement at closure was 1,000 people, against the target of 1,000 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 100 percent achieved.

PDO outcomes:

1. "Number of beneficiaries in target communities with improved access to socioeconomic infrastructure". The achievement at closure was 72,613 people, against the target of 30,000 people and the baseline of zero. The target was 2.4 times overachieved. The team clarified, at IEG's request, that the significant overachievement of the target was due to the cancelation of other infrastructure development projects and the subsequent wider utilization of the infrastructure financed by the reviewed Project.



Note: The ICR reported the result for this indicator at closure as 436,052 people. At IEG’s request, the team clarified that this was the number of indirect beneficiaries (all people in the area who could benefit from the new/improved infrastructure), while the ICR should have reported the number of direct beneficiaries, 72,613 people (both direct and indirect beneficiary data were monitored).

2. “Number of planned small-scale socioeconomic infrastructure subprojects successfully completed”. The achievement at closure was 69 subprojects, against the target of 76 subprojects and the baseline of zero. The target was 90.8 percent achieved.

Rating. The Revised Project significantly achieved its Objective 2 intended results, and its efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. The objectives related to the improvement of socio-economic infrastructure, the youth-at-risk training, and the community members’ training were almost fully achieved. At the same time, the objectives related to community participation in capacity building and decision making, as well as to the completion of training in construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructures, were partially achieved.

Revised Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Original Project:

For the Original Project, the rating for efficacy is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. Many of the targets were reached, or largely reached, or exceeded. This includes targets related to such important Project objectives as social cohesion and improvement of socio-economic infrastructure, as well as to beneficiary satisfaction with the Project overall and with the ex-combatants’ training program in particular. However, other targets were partially reached, including those related to community participation in capacity building and decision making (60-65 percent achieved) and to the socio-economic reintegration program (results ranged from the largely achieved for the first phase, to the partially achieved for the second phase, to the barely achieved for the third phase).

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale

Revised Project:



For the Revised Project, the efficacy rating is Substantial with moderate shortcomings. The reduction of targets under Objective 1 led to improved performance: the modified targets were 70 percent reached. Under Objective 2, the targets were almost fully achieved in relation to the objectives of improving socio-economic infrastructure, training the at-risk youth, and training the community members. At the same time, the objectives related to community participation in capacity building and decision making, as well as to infrastructure-related training, were partially achieved.

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic analysis

No economic analysis was conducted at appraisal or at closure. The ICR noted the following: "In light of the inadequacy of available information to facilitate a comprehensive assessment of input and output metrics, encompassing the entire spectrum of project components and their associated delivery costs in relation to specified deliverables, which include considerations of deliverable quality, beneficiary satisfaction, and delivery timelines, a thorough efficiency analysis could not be conducted."

Administrative efficiency

The ICR pointed out that Project efficiency was negatively affected by difficult circumstances of implementation, in particular, by the highly volatile political and social context and recurring cycles of violence (ICR, page 19). During 2021-2023, there was also high inflation. In addition, many of the intervention sites were located in isolated areas with almost non-existent infrastructure, limiting access to the sites (ICR, page 18). The Project was also affected by the uncertainties during the initiation and execution of the national DRR process. Also, the Project initially experienced significant staff turnover due to the difficulty in sourcing adequate in-country expertise; and engaging local authorities in Project activities presented recurring challenges (ICR, page 22). In addition, the Project's institutional arrangements led to inefficiencies: technical implementation responsibilities were placed under the DRR's PIU and fiduciary aspects under the Fiduciary Project Implementation Unit PIU, while coordination between the two entities was cumbersome. This issue was resolved during the first restructuring of October 2018 when fiduciary responsibilities were transferred to the DRR PIU.

Despite the challenging circumstances, most of the activities were accomplished, the Project was implemented within the original financing envelope, and the three restructurings did not involve a reduction in Project scope. Also, the Project was able to use its first two restructurings to adjust the design in reaction to the changing external factors outside of its control. However, delays amounted to two years and six months, which is a relatively long time considering the expected length of the Project of three years and eight months (from approval to the originally expected closure); and even with these significant extensions, component 2, phase 3 activities (follow-up reintegration support and specialized support) were barely started at the time of closure.

On balance, considering the difficult circumstances of Project implementation and the ability of the team to adapt the design to the changing external factors of implementation, but also the lack of information about Project's



economic efficiency and taking into account closing extensions and the failure to implement component 2 phase 3 activities by closure, Project’s efficiency rating is 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		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The relevance of objectives was rated as High. The Efficacy was rated as Substantial with moderate shortcomings both pre-and post-restructuring due to shortcomings in achievement of the objective related to supporting the social and economic reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants. Efficiency is rated as Modest. Overall, the outcome is rated as Moderately Satisfactory both pre-and post restructuring. Thus, the overall outcome rating is Moderately Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Financial. The socio-economic infrastructure, which was constructed or renovated by the Project, will need to be maintained. There is a risk that local governments, as well as the beneficiary communities, have insufficient capacity and limited financial means to support the maintenance. However, this risk was partially mitigated by the training the Project provided to the local and infrastructure management committees on rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure (ICR, page 47). Also, the members of the community are equipped with the skills gained during the civil works aimed at infrastructure improvement. However, the financial risk remains, and additional financial support from the development community might be needed in the future.

Social. Life skills provided to Project beneficiaries are likely to significantly contribute to their wellbeing, social integration and employability. However, the vocational skills activities were not fully implemented by



the Project, and the follow-up reintegration activities barely started at Project closure. This creates the risk that the longer-term objective of economic integration activities will not be achieved. However, the Bank has initiated a follow-up project—the Local Governance and Community Resilience Project (P178699) – which is to continue the reintegration activities of the reviewed Project, thus mitigating this risk. The new project aims at building state and citizen capacity for local service delivery, improving access to basic socio-economic climate adaptive infrastructure, and providing socio-economic support to the reintegration of ex-combatants. (ICR, page 26)

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The ICR reported that the World Bank's Project team responded quickly to the request from the government to support its reintegration efforts and mitigated the identified risks, notably those of the inadequate capacity of the central and local governments, through Project design. The Project design comprised the mutually synergetic elements of both individual support provided to ex-combatants and support to their families and the communities. A deficiency of the Project design was that the activities within the first component (reintegration of the ex-combatants) were planned as a sequence, and when the first stage (the Disarmament and Demobilization (DD)), which was conducted independently of the Project, was delayed, postponements of the rest of component 2 activities followed, and the Project had to be restructured twice. A synchronized design of the DD and Rehabilitation and Reintegration (RR) activities (e.g., using three intake periods per year, coordinating the initiation dates for the RR program, and ensuring the referral of ex-combatants from DD into RR on time), as opposed to designing the DD and RR as independent phases, would have helped to avoid the inefficiencies. (ICR, page 25, pages 27-28). The Project's institutional arrangements originally placed technical implementation responsibilities with DDRR-PIU and fiduciary aspects with F-PIU. However, coordination between the two entities was cumbersome, and the issue was addressed during the 1st restructuring, as fiduciary responsibilities were transferred to DDRR-PIU as well. There were M&E shortcomings discussed under section 9.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The ICR reported that the Project operated in a difficult security and political context of the CAR, drawing on a close working relationship between the government, the Bank, and the UN agency MINUSCA. The Bank provided effective supervision and continuous support to the Borrower and was able to accommodate the significantly tightened implementation timeline, affected by the initial delays. The task team also extensively supported the newly established DDRR-PIU, especially on financial management and procurement issues, which were challenging for the Borrower. The Bank carried out regular supervision missions to the CAR (three or four times per year in the early stages of implementation and three times a year afterwards), with the participation of relevant technical specialists to oversee all aspects of the Project. The task team was able to adjust during COVID-19 and supported the PIU through regular virtual meetings



to resolve the issues and identify solutions. By financing technical specialists, the Bank provided enhanced supervision over the life of the Project. The Bank team was able to accurately assess fiduciary and safeguard aspects, development outcomes, and to report candidly on issues identified.

There were initial delays related to the DD program and to difficulties in engaging skilled staff to supervise various components of the program, as well as to difficulties in coordinating the RR programming with the DD program. However, the team was able to adapt the Project to both internal and external circumstances of the implementation through the restructurings. (ICR, page 28)

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The original RF reflected the logic of Project interventions in the PAD, was sufficiently linked to the PDO and the ToC, and was comprehensive yet manageable. The PDO outcome indicators reflected all expected Project outcomes. The intermediate indicators were linked to the PDO indicators, providing more details. The indicators measured both objective results and beneficiary satisfaction with different aspects of the Project. All of the RF indicators were quantitative, time-bound, and attributable to the Project. However, there were deficiencies in the RF, including the inadequacy of measuring the PDO indicator “Percentage of demobilized ex-combatants availing income generation opportunities”, which was estimated as a share of program trainees who received kits with tools and materials to start own income generating activities (ICR, page 19), an input indicator. There was no indicator to measure the actual outcome of this activity, which was socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. There were also errors in the estimation of targets for the following PDO indicators: “Number of demobilized ex-combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reintegration” (an overestimate) and “Number of beneficiaries in target communities with improved access to socioeconomic infrastructure” (an underestimate). The ICR noted that an M&E manual was prepared as part of the Project Operational Manual and included the approach to data collection, both for monitoring project activities and evaluating the project impact; it also noted that a Management Information System (MIS) was designed, but no functional dashboard was created (ICR, page 23).

b. M&E Implementation

The ICR reported that during implementation, data collection and analysis were inadequate. The information sharing among project stakeholders, which included DDRR-PIU, MINUSCA, ACTED, IOM, local implementing partners, and local authorities, was deficient. Field data collection lacked systematic procedures and was primarily reliant on a single implementing partner (ACTED). Moreover, the participation of local authorities in the data collection process was limited, and there was a lack of regular and consistent reporting from implementing partners to DDRR-PIU. Further, no baseline survey or end-



line survey was conducted. COVID was a complicating factor, however, the Project should have initiated a survey immediately after COVID restrictions were lifted, which did not happen. A survey was undertaken in 2020 but was deemed problematic and was not accepted. A number of studies and largely qualitative surveys were undertaken during the implementation. In addition, ACTED and IOM each undertook a quantitative completion survey. Three quantitative surveys of ex-combatants, youth and beneficiary communities were undertaken in 2023 at the request of the ICR team. The functionality of the MIS was limited. MIS was only utilized to store data, which could only be retrieved on request. The design of the MIS consisted of a simple SQL database with a file for each beneficiary, and it served no purpose beyond a depository of data. There were no data presentation (dashboard), or analysis and reporting procedure embedded in it. (ICR, page 23-24)

c. M&E Utilization

The ICR reported that M&E reports were compiled regularly and sent to senior management and further notes that no evidence is available of whether and how these reports were utilized to inform Project activities. The lack of an MIS dashboard also meant that operational details of the RR process were unavailable beyond the reports sent to senior management. Given the limitations of both data collection and the MIS, the resulting data analysis by the team was constrained in its scope and provided minimum insights to guide Project activities in terms of informing the RF. The utilization of the M&E as a management tool was therefore weak, albeit it did serve the function of informing Project stakeholders. This challenge hindered the assessment of Project results, both during Project implementation and during the ICR preparation. (ICR, page 24)

Given the shortcomings in M&E design and implementation, the overall M&E quality is rated as Modest.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Environmental and Social Safeguards. At appraisal, the Project was classified as Environmental Category B (Partial Assessment) in relation to the infrastructure improvement subprojects under component 2 and agricultural activities during training on pilot farms. An Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESSAP) was developed, but the preparation of safeguards instruments was deferred into the implementation period as per paragraph 12(a) of Operational Policies for Investment Project Financing (OP 10.00) for projects in situations of urgent need for assistance or capacity constraints. Three environmental safeguards policies were triggered, namely: Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01), Pest Management (OP 4.09), and Physical and Cultural Resources (OP 4.11). (PAD, pages 30-31 and pages 77-78) The Borrower prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). In line with the ESMF, Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) were finalized, approved, and disclosed in accordance with the World Bank procedures for all infrastructure subprojects that involve civil works (ICR, page 24). The Pest Management Plan prepared during the CAR Emergency Food Crisis Response and Agriculture Relaunch Project (P149512) was updated, applied to the Project, and disclosed. During implementation, the overall



safeguard rating was consistently Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory; and at closure, the rating was Satisfactory.

The Project created a functional grievance redress mechanism (GRM). Grievances management committees were set up in all Project locations. Sensitization and trainings were organized on handling complaints and on participation in community-driven Project activities. In total, 340 complaints were received, mostly expressing gratitude, suggestions, or questions (241). The GRM process was rated Moderately Satisfactory. (ICR, page 23-24)

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management (FM) and procurement. The ICR reported that the Project complied with all fiduciary requirements during implementation, despite some contracting and financial management hurdles, as follows. First, there were issues in relation to contracting the International Organization for Migration (IOM), since as a UN Agency, it had already had a Memorandum of Understanding with the WBG regarding a number of protocols. In addition, IOM had a preference for using their own financial reporting system versus that of the Bank. Second, the annual work plan validation process was notably time-consuming, causing significant delays in contracting. Third, the verification of demobilized ex-combatants entering the reintegration program encountered challenges with providing accurate lists. Fourth, both implementing partners (IOM and Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)) often struggled to produce timely and accurate budgets, complicating the annual audit process. Fifth, difficulties arose with respect to IOM’s reimbursement for its expenses, since it was using its own trust fund money, which could not be easily earmarked. Despite these challenges, internal control arrangements were in place and adequate financial management, procurement, and disbursement systems were maintained. The ICR reported that the Project’s financial and procurement controls contributed to keeping the costs within the budget, despite the difficult implementation conditions in the country. (ICR, pages 19, 24) During implementation, FM rating was mostly Moderately Satisfactory; it was upgraded to Satisfactory in 2022 and sustained this rating at closure. The procurement rating was mostly Satisfactory; this rating was sustained at closure.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	



Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Shortcomings in quality at entry
Quality of M&E	Modest	Modest	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The following lessons were derived from the ICR (ICR, pages 26-30):

1. Local capacity building, aimed both at local governments and communities, can be critical for the long-term sustainability of community-based projects, and investing in such efforts may increase projects' net benefits, especially in low income FCS countries. The reviewed Project provided capacity building to the DDRR-PIU - the government unit responsible for the national DDRR program, - thus increasing the sustainability of Project outcomes. However, institutional strengthening at the local level, which would have been even more important for results sustainability, was less successful due to such challenges as the fragility of local governance, volatile security conditions, and COVID-19 travel restrictions. The Project could have made more efforts in this area: engage local council members more systematically in a range of Project activities, from data collection to the implementation of socio-economic infrastructure subprojects; and provide more encouragement to community members to participate in the Project's capacity building activities.

2. The DDRR process requires continued multi-dimensional interventions over a long period of time. Such an approach proved to be a constructive solution for the reviewed Project, especially considering the FCS circumstances in the CAR. The Project addressed socio-economic reintegration, social cohesion, and community infrastructure rehabilitation. It was designed as an immediate follow-up on the Bank's (and UN's) advisory work, which built the foundation for Project implementation, and was followed up by a new operation, which used the same ToC and continued its efforts. The Project was also supported by parallel operations in other sectors, with such objectives as improved service delivery and infrastructure, created employment opportunities, and established social safety nets.

3. A synchronized (parallel) implementation of the DD and RR activities, versus their sequential completion, can be more effective, especially considering multiple FCS risks. The Project experienced delays with the implementation of the RR activities under component 1 and, as a result, the third phase of these activities barely started by Project closure. This also resulted in Project restructurings, reallocation of funds, and the need to add new activities. The delays could have been avoided if the DD activities (which were implemented outside of the Project) and RR activities were designed not as a sequence, in which the RR stage could not start until the DD stage is completed, but in a synchronized way. This could have been done, for example, by using three intake periods per year, ensuring precise initiation dates for the RR program, and enabling a prompt referral of ex-combatants from DD into RR.

4. More substantial efforts to conduct verification and monitoring of training activities might be needed in FCS countries than in other situations. Project beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the life skills training, emphasizing its role in fostering their reintegration and enhancing their



resilience against challenges, but were unsatisfied with the vocational training due to its brevity and the lack of resources and equipment. This could have been prevented if the Project had adequate mechanisms for verifying and monitoring the vocational training activities to ensure the adequacy of training duration, daily hours of learning, access to essential equipment, and the quality and value of the post-training kits. Closer monitoring of the implementation partners and training organizations to ensure they are adequately resourced and have the right teaching/training modules would also be beneficial.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provides relevant technical details to understand the logic of the Project, the factors of Project performance, the outcomes, and various aspects of implementation. It delivers a good quality efficacy analysis, which is based on comprehensive information and was well-supported and candid, with evidence linked to findings; relevant information on other aspects of project performance; and suggests lessons that are useful for future lending operations in FCS countries.

However, the ICR has some shortcomings. The PDO relevance section is lacking information on Project's relevance to the WBG strategies. The Bank performance and M&E sections could have been more candid regarding the shortcomings. Annex 1.B. *Key Outputs by Component* is not filled out at all; and Annex 3 *Project Costs* is missing data in the "at appraisal" column.

On balance, considering that the ICR provides detailed data and sufficient analysis (importantly, of Project's efficacy), these omissions are considered to be moderate, and the quality of the ICR is evaluated as Substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating Substantial

