



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P178989	<b>Project Name</b> Sudan Emergency Safety Nets Project	
<b>Country</b> Sudan	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Social Protection & Jobs	
<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> TF-B9071	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b> 30-Jun-2023	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 100,000,000.00
<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 15-Jul-2022	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 30-Sep-2023	
	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>
Original Commitment	100,000,000.00	100,000,000.00
Revised Commitment	100,000,000.00	100,000,000.00
Actual	100,000,000.00	100,000,000.00

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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (p.1) and the Financing Agreement of July 21, 2022 (p. 6) the objective of the project was “to provide cash transfers and food support to food insecure households in selected project areas of Sudan”.

The operation was an emergency intervention designed for a 1-year implementation period from mid-2022 to mid-2023. Area targeting was based on the severity of food insecurity and on World Food Program (WFP) field presence (PAD, p. 26). The design was informed by existing data of the WFP, including the most recent



data collected in the first quarter of 2022. WFP was responsible for project implementation and its M&E and WFP was the recipient of the grant.

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

No

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

No

**d. Components**

The project included two components:

**Component 1: Safety Net Transfers (appraisal estimate US\$76.40 million, actual US\$81.40 million):**

This component was to finance two sub-components:

Sub-component 1.1: Unconditional Cash Transfers: This sub-component was to finance the following activities: i) unconditional cash transfers to the most food insecure people (based on the WFP food insecurity assessment findings) covering about two million beneficiaries (50 percent female) and a cash transfer amount of US\$7 per individual in 12 target states.; ii) fees for payment service providers supporting digital cash transfer implementation, mostly two mobile network providers and two banking institutions.

Sub-component 1.2: Unconditional Food Transfers: This sub-component was to finance in kind food transfers to food insecure households in Gadararf, Red Sea and Blue Nile states. These states were selected due to their poorly functioning food markets. The sub-component was also to finance food-transfer related costs and targeted 100,000 beneficiaries (50 percent female).

**Component 2: Delivery Systems, Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning, and Project Management (appraisal estimate US\$23.6 million, actual US\$18.6 million):** This component was to finance three sub-components:

Sub-component 2.1: Delivery Systems: This sub-component was to finance costs associated with project delivery systems including outreach and communication, targeting, enrollment, payments, management information system (MIS), M&E, Grievance redress, and social accountability.

Sub-component 2.2: M&E and Learning: This sub-component was to finance: i) informing the operational plan for project rollout; ii) improving efficiency and effectiveness of the project, and iii) undertaking process evaluation and beneficiary satisfaction surveys to learn future lessons.

Sub-component 2.3: Project Management: This sub-component was to finance costs incurred by the recipient in implementing the project including WFP staff costs, logistics, vehicles, fuels, and computers.

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

**Project Cost:** The project was estimated to cost US\$100 million which was also the actual cost.



**Financing:** The project was financed by a World Bank grant in the amount of US\$100 million, which completely disbursed.

**Borrower Contribution:** It was not planned for the Client to make any contribution.

**Dates:** The project was approved on July 15, 2022, and became effective on July 21, 2022. The project's original closing date was June 30, 2023, and the actual closing date was September 30, 2023. The project was briefly suspended on April 16, 2023, due to the armed conflict.

On June 29, 2023 the project was restructured to: i) change the closing date from June 30, 2023 to September 30, 2023 to allow for the completion of project activities which had been delayed due to the armed conflict; ii) increase the target for PDO indicator "number of beneficiaries of safety net programs, in-kind transfers" from 100,000 beneficiaries to 300,000 beneficiaries (due to more funding being available for certain project states since the number of project states had to be reduced due to the security situation); and iii) adapt the implementation schedule to reflect these changes.

### 3. Relevance of Objectives

#### Rationale

**Country and sector context.** After a 30-year rule, the government of President Omar al-Bashir was deposed in April 2019 and a transitional government came into power. The transition government aimed to stabilize the pressing macroeconomic and fiscal deficit challenges by developing an ambitious plan to tackle inflation, reform energy and commodity subsidies, and adopt policies to ease doing business and incentivize foreign direct investment. These measures resulted in an exchange rate liberalization in February 2021 and to some extent reallocation of public resources away from commodity subsidies and tax exemptions toward social and development needs. However, in October 2021, the military took over the government, and brought the transition to a sudden end and a de facto government, by a new Sovereign Council with contested legitimacy by the public, and an acting Council of Ministers was in power. As a result, the World Bank triggered Operational Policy (OP) 7.30 (Dealings with De Facto Governments), which paused disbursements to the government in all its operations in Sudan and stopped processing new operations. The military takeover resulted in an economic and security crisis as well as a political deadlock between stakeholders that continued until April 2023, when an armed conflict broke out.

As a result of the conflict within the country, a poor 2020/2021 harvest together with substantial declines in national cereal production, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the war in the Ukraine (and a reduction in global wheat production), Sudan's socioeconomic situation deteriorated even further. The increase in food prices had negative food security implications, pushing many households deeper into poverty. According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2022, 14.3 million people required humanitarian assistance, which was the highest number in the past decade. Furthermore, according to the ICR (para. 8) the World Bank High Frequency Survey showed that nearly 40 percent of households were not able to access essential food items during June to August 2022 and 60 percent of households that experienced price increases for food and non-food items decided to reduce consumption of these items, which was a notable increase compared to the previous year.



Therefore, through the support of donors under the World Bank administered Sudan Transition and Recovery Support Trust Fund (STARS), a grant of US\$100 million was provided through the Sudan Emergency Safety Nets Project (SESNP) to help address the immediate food security needs of the most vulnerable Sudanese population. The World Food Program (WFP) was the direct recipient of the World Bank's grant funding and acted as a third-party implementing agency given its experience in delivering cash and food assistance in fragile contexts. The WFP had also been supporting previous social protection interventions financed by the World Bank and Developing Partners and had staff on the ground.

**Alignment with the government strategy.** The objective of the project was in line with the transition government's "Sudan Economic Revival Program, 2019-2021" (SERP), which was developed before the military takeover. The SERP was to undertake reforms in ten priority areas such as improving welfare and expanding social protection.

**Alignment with the World Bank strategy.** The objective of the project was in line with the World Bank's Country Engagement Note for Sudan (FY21-FY22) and its objective 1.2. "mitigating the impact of economic reforms and Covid-19", and objective 2.1 "strengthening the government's institutional capacity and accountability". Furthermore, the objective of the project was in line with the STARS' focus areas 1 "social protection" and the STARS' overall objective of supporting Sudan's economic and peacebuilding transition. Finally, the objective of the project was in line with the World Bank's Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FVC) (2020-2025) which emphasizes the importance to remain engaged during conflict and crisis situations to preserve hard-won development gains and mitigate the spillovers of FCV to support countries and the most vulnerable population.

The objective of the project was pitched at an appropriate level to address a critical development problem.

## Rating

High

## 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

### OBJECTIVE 1

#### Objective

To provide cash transfers and food support to food insecure households in selected project areas of Sudan

#### Rationale

**Theory of change:** The project's theory of change stated that project inputs/activities, including delivering unconditional cash and food transfers to population with food insecurity, developing and implementing communications strategy and outreach activities, and building local capacity in implementing digital and/or cash payments systems were to result in the following outputs: beneficiaries receiving cash or food support, communication campaigns being implemented as well as digital and/or cash payments systems being in



place. These outputs would plausibly contribute to food insecure households in selected areas in Sudan being provided with cash transfers and food support.

The project states were selected based on existing food security data indicating that they experienced high levels of food insecurity as well as on WFP local presence. The most food insecure states included West, Darfur, Central Darfur, North Darfur and North Kordofan. Those states hosted 67 percent of cash transfer beneficiaries. The remaining balance was allocated to eight states with a moderate prevalence of food insecurity including Blue Nile, South Darfur, Red Sea, South Kordofan, East Darfur, Gadarif, West Kordofan, and Kassala.

### **Outputs:**

#### **Cash transfers:**

- On average, it took two days for funds to reach beneficiaries paid by commercial banks, better than the target of 15 days.
- 99 percent of enrolled beneficiaries were paid by commercial banks, exceeding the target of 20 percent of enrolled beneficiaries being paid by commercial banks.
- The number of days between generation of payroll and fund transfer to payment service providers was reduced from eight days to three days, better than the target of five days.
- Six percent of beneficiaries were enrolled in mobile money, not achieving the target of 10 percent.

Six percent of beneficiaries enrolled in mobile money, not achieving the target of 10 percent.

#### **Food transfers:**

- On average it took seven days for food transfers to reach beneficiaries from Cooperating Partner Warehouses, better than the target of 15 days.

#### **Delivery system:**

- 1,377,101 newly registered/verified beneficiaries were enrolled by the WFP using biometric registration, not achieving the target of 1.5 million beneficiaries.
- A hybrid system for tracking enquiries, complaints, and grievances (GRM) was established, achieving the target of such a system being implemented.
- 84 percent of complaints were resolved in 30 days or less through the GRM, exceeding the target of 80 percent of complaints being resolved in 30 days.
- A Monitoring Evaluation and Learning impact evaluation baseline and follow-up survey was conducted which focused on: i) informing the operational plan of project roll-out; ii) improving efficiency and effectiveness of the project; and iii) measuring beneficiary satisfaction of the project.
- A report was developed that contained lessons drawn from the project.
- According to the World Bank team (May 30, 2024), communication campaigns, stakeholders' consultations, and sensitization sessions were conducted. Over 85 focus group discussions and direct dialogues with local authorities and community leaders were held, around 237 sensitization sessions (reaching over 140,000 people in over 20 localities) were conducted, and 25,000 information,



education, and communication (IEC) materials developed, translated, and distributed in strategic locations. These outputs did not have a target.

**Reported outcomes:**

**Cash transfers:**

- 1,984,759 beneficiaries received unconditional cash transfers, exceeding the target of 1.9 million beneficiaries receiving these transfers.
- 62 percent of those beneficiaries were female heads of households, exceeding the target of 50 percent.

**Food transfers:**

- 672,679 beneficiaries received in kind/food support, exceeding the target of 300,000 beneficiaries. According to the ICR (para. 29) food transfers were provided to beneficiaries in targeted states with poorly functioning food markets: Blue Nile (50 percent of total beneficiaries), Gadarif (30 percent) and Red Sea (20 percent). These food insecurity prevalence rates (varying between 28 percent and 47 percent) with poorly functioning food markets.
- 57 percent of those beneficiaries were female heads of households, exceeding the target of 50 percent.

**Social safety nets (cash and food transfers):**

- 2,657,438 beneficiaries benefited from social safety net programs, exceeding the target of 2.2 million beneficiaries.
- 1,457,642 beneficiaries were female, exceeding the target of 1 million being female.
- 94 percent of beneficiaries were satisfied with the delivery of cash/food transfers, exceeding the target of 80 percent.
- 92.5 percent of female heads of beneficiaries' households were satisfied with the delivery of cash/food transfers, exceeding the target of 80 percent.

The project was able to achieve and exceed the majority of its targets, reflecting the intended provision of cash transfers and food support to food insecure households in selected project areas of Sudan. It was not able to achieve the target for newly registered/verified beneficiaries being enrolled by the WFP using biometric registration, and the target of beneficiaries enrolled in mobile money. Overall, the achievement of the objective was Substantial with the caveat that the effectiveness of cash transfers and food support is not known.

**Rating**  
Substantial



## OVERALL EFFICACY

### Rationale

The achievement of the objective was Substantial but marginally so achieving and exceeding a majority of its targets, reflecting the intended provision of cash transfers and food support to food insecure households in selected project areas of Sudan. The project was not able to achieve the target for newly registered/verified beneficiaries being enrolled by the WFP using biometric registration, and the target of beneficiaries enrolled in mobile money. The extent to which the food support had an impact on household welfare in terms of maintaining a minimal acceptable diet and income is also unknown.

### Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

## 5. Efficiency

### Economic efficiency:

Both the PAD and the ICR did not include traditional measures of efficiency due to data collection constraints given the country's highly volatile security situation and the pressing need, during project preparation, to provide assistance quickly.

### Operational efficiency:

According to the ICR (para. 40), the World Bank team negotiated a lower rate for WFP services fees (6.5 percent). The project's overall administrative costs (10 percent of total financing) were comparable to similar projects in the region. The project's implementation period was extended once by three months as a result of the escalating security situation in Sudan. Furthermore, the project did not experience a high turnover of World Bank staff with the same co-Task Team Leaders (TTLs) throughout project preparation and implementation, allowing for continuity.

Given the volatile security situation in the country and since the project was able to achieve its stated objective within the defined budget, the project's efficiency is rated Substantial in view of the efficient harnessing and use of WFP capacities and processes.

### Efficiency Rating

Substantial

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 the objective was High given its alignment with the World Bank’s most recent Country Engagement Note for Sudan (FY21-22) and its responsiveness to a significant emergency in the country. Efficacy and efficiency were Substantial. The overall outcome rating of the project is Satisfactory.

### a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

**Political/Financing:** Long-term political instability and the ongoing conflict resulted in a worsening economic, security and social situation with millions of people being at risk of catastrophic hunger. Without financing from development partners, Sudan, which also experienced five years of recession, will not be able to maintain the achieved project results. According to the ICR (para. 70), there is a chance that the project supported systems such as biometric registration, Management Information System, and the Grievance Redress Mechanism might be used in the future once the conflict has been resolved.

According to the World Bank team (May 30, 2024), the World Bank is currently preparing a follow-on project (Sudan Emergency Crisis Response Safety Net Project (P505963); financing amount US\$100 million) which aims to provide Emergency Safety Nets support to vulnerable and food insecure populations in selected areas of Sudan.

Also, a regional communication on 12 September, 2024, highlighted the efforts being undertaken by the World Bank Team with partners to address the significant challenges facing M&E and supervision in the fragile context of Sudan. Building on the experience of SESNP, the Task Team is working to hire an expert to carry out robust supervision for the operation under preparation. The regional communication also noted that efforts are being made not only to further address important compliance issues and operational processes, but also to promote learning and assessment aspects through surveys where possible.

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry





The World Bank team prepared the project within five weeks to address the food emergency in Sudan. According to the ICR (para. 64) the World Bank closely cooperated with the Sudan Transition and Recovery Support (STARS) development partners (Canada, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the State and Peace-Building Trust Fund of the World Bank, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) and the WFP as the third-party implementing agency.

The project design was kept appropriately simple and only included one component to allow for a rapid response. Also, the project design was built on the WFP's extensive experience in implementing emergency food transfer programs within Sudan and other countries around the world.

According to the PAD (para. 90) the World Bank team identified relevant risks with the political and governance risks rated High due to military takeovers, political instability, and civil unrest in the country. To mitigate these risks the WFP and its implementing partners were to ensure that the project was apolitical in form, content, and practice. Also mitigation measures included conducting communication campaigns and education on project eligibility criteria, expected benefits, benefits access mechanisms, transparency and accountability and dispute handling mechanisms. In addition, the macroeconomic risk was rated High due to the country's weak economic performance as well as the sector strategies and policies risk as a result of an unstable policy environment for social matters. The World Bank mitigated these risks by providing continuous policy dialogue. While the mitigation measures were appropriate, project implementation was suspended for two weeks in April 2023 due to the armed conflict and the death of three WFP employees and four staff of the Blue Nile Mashreg Bank working on the project.

### **Quality-at-Entry Rating**

Satisfactory

#### **b. Quality of supervision**

According to the ICR (para. 67) the World Bank team, in cooperation with the WFP, conducted two in-country and one virtual support mission throughout the project's 18 months implementation period. The Implementation Support Reports were sufficiently candid and identified key implementation challenges and solutions to move implementation ahead. Data in the Results Framework were updated appropriately and the World Bank team provided continuous technical assistance to the WFP in key areas including fiduciary, safeguards, MIS, beneficiaries verification etc.

During the armed conflict in April 2023, the World Bank team ensured that it continued project supervision despite the evacuation of the World Bank office in Khartoum. The World Bank team restructured the implementation period to allow for the completion of project activities and focus on targets states that were accessible given the security situation.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**



Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Satisfactory

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

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

The objective of the project was clearly specified and the selected indicators encompassed the elements of the PDO statement. They were sufficiently specific, measurable, relevant, and had baselines and targets. Overall, the Results Framework was simple and consistent with the FCV environment and limited local capacity. However, the project would have benefitted from including better indicators to measure implementation efficiency.

Due to the emergency nature of the project and the lack of data, the Results Framework did not measure interim level outcomes of project interventions. The ICR (para. 19-20) stated that this was mainly due to the emergency nature and the imperative for swift action during project inception, coupled with the uncertainty surrounding feasible ground-level data collection, conveying that it was difficult to gauge from the results framework indicators the extent to which the project had an impact on household welfare in terms of maintaining a minimal acceptable diet/income over the project period. Feedback gathered from beneficiaries highlighted the issue of insufficiency of support and minimal living standards improvement due to the low cash transfer value given the rising prices of basic needs, acute food shortages, and massive displacement amid escalating conflict. At appraisal the cash transfer amount was set at US\$7 per individual household member and was expected to provide a half ration of the caloric requirements per day per person (that is 1,000 kilocalories).

The M&E function was implemented by WFP by leveraging their current systems, processes, and staff.

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

According to the ICR (para. 55) the WFP had an M&E specialist who implemented the M&E plan for regular data collection, monitoring and reporting on project activities and indicators. The project conducted a beneficiary survey to assess project results. Also, the project used the project's call center, GPS enabled devices, geo-tagging of project sites, and social media platforms to obtain data and real time updates on implementation challenges and to monitor non-compliance by service providers. This allowed for a fast identification of implementation bottlenecks.

The project's M&E system built on the already existing MIS and was able to strengthen it by avoiding fragmentation of data collection and allow for consolidation of the system. The WFP verified and monitored project activities on a quarterly basis. Also, according to the World Bank team (May 30, 2024) the monitoring system entailed frequent data collection from the field, with the use of digital technology when possible, collecting and reporting on stories from the field and, establishing grievance redress procedures, and through regular visits by the WFP.



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

According to the ICR (para. 56) M&E data were used to inform project planning and resource distribution as well as decision making such as the project restructuring in 2023. The project also collected information from beneficiaries which allowed the project team to address payment delays, long lines at registration and payment sites, and challenges to access payments by vulnerable beneficiaries.

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

Substantial

## **10. Other Issues**

### **a. Safeguards**

The project did not trigger any of the World Bank's safeguard policies and overall Safeguard compliance was Blank (not rated in the ISRs).

### **b. Fiduciary Compliance**

#### **Procurement:**

The project was implemented by the WFP and followed its procurement procedures as Alternative Procurement Arrangements allowed by the World Bank's Procurement Policy under Section III.F. According to the ICR (para. 62) the World Bank team assessed the project's procurement arrangements during project appraisal and rated the procurement risk as High due to the country's security situation. The World Bank team and the WFP discussed risk mitigation measures before the start of project implementation. Measures included detailed procurement and contract monitoring as part of the quarterly progress reporting by the WFP, and continuous World Bank supervision and assistance from the World Bank procurement team. The Implementation Status Report (ISR) ratings for Procurement were Satisfactory.

#### **Financial Management:**

According to the ICR (para. 22) the WFP maintained appropriate accounting capacity, systems, and procedures. Quarterly Interim Financial Reports were submitted on a timely basis and were of adequate quality. The World Bank grant was fully disbursed, and the project did not face any significant financial management related issues. Minor issues such as documenting expenses were corrected. The ISR ratings for Financial Management were Satisfactory.

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

NA



d. Other

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**11. Ratings**

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	High	Substantial	Intended project outcomes such as the effectiveness of cash transfers and targeting of food support to food insecure households were not assessed.
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

**12. Lessons**

The ICR (p. 24-25) included several lessons learned, which were adapted by IEG:

- **Taking advantage of operational flexibilities such as third-party implementation allows the World Bank to remain engaged in the FCV contexts and ensure continued support to vulnerable populations.** In this project, the World Bank stayed engaged in Sudan despite operating under OP 7.30, which allowed for providing financing to the most vulnerable population in Sudan during particularly challenging times.
- **A simple and flexible project design can positively impact project implementation in a FCV environment.** This project was able to shift its financing from states that were impacted by the outbreak of an armed conflict in April 2023 that resulted in vast displacement of vulnerable people to other states.
- **Providing a platform for coordinated efforts to respond to the urgent needs of a country’s vulnerable population while also building a foundation for a more strategic approach can facilitate sustainable development.**

**13. Assessment Recommended?**

No

**14. Comments on Quality of ICR**



The ICR provided an adequate overview of project preparation and implementation. Also, it was sufficiently results driven, internally consistent, and concise. Furthermore, the ICR provided useful lessons learned that can be applied to future World Bank-assisted operations in this area. The overall quality of the ICR is Substantial.

**a. Quality of ICR Rating**  
Substantial