



1. Project Data

Project ID P157233	Project Name ML Reinsertion of Ex-combatants Project	
Country Mali	Practice Area(Lead) Social Sustainability and Inclusion	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-D1680	Closing Date (Original) 30-Nov-2020	Total Project Cost (USD) 14,047,700.04
Bank Approval Date 28-Feb-2017	Closing Date (Actual) 31-Dec-2023	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	15,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	13,650,853.69	0.00
Actual	14,061,353.63	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Original Project Development Objective (PDO) was “**to support the socio-economic reinsertion of demobilized ex-combatants within local communities.**” (Financing Agreement, page 6). The PDO was stated identically in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, page viii).

The PDO was not revised.



For the purposes of this ICR review, the objective will not be broken into parts but will be assessed as one PDO.

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

18-Jun-2019

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

Yes

d. Components

1. Original components

Context: The Project was part of a wider Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR) program, which was implemented in two phases: Phase 1, executed by the Government, was a pre-requisite to the Project-supported Phase 2 and included disarmament, demobilization, and registration of ex-combatants eligible for phase 2. Therefore, Phase 2 could only start once Phase 1 activities were implemented.

Component 1: *Reinsertion Support to Demobilized Ex-combatants* (cost at appraisal: US\$13.2 million; actual cost: US\$6.2 million) would span 18 months from the time when the ex-combatants return to the communities and would consist of the following sub-components:

Sub-component 1.1 *Orientation, counseling and skills training* would finance: (i) livelihoods guidance, career development and psycho-social counseling; (ii) Skills Training Package: literacy and numeracy, life skills, entrepreneurship and financial literacy, economic associations, vocational skills, and agriculture; and (iii) sports and recreational activities. In each community, an ex-combatant focal point was to support the Project through feedback and monitoring.

Sub-component 1.2: *Reinsertion Start-up Support* would finance an economic activities' start-up support kit, consistent with the vocational reinsertion training. Beneficiaries may select to: (i) form economic associations with other ex-combatants and host community members; or (ii) create individual-initiated income generating activities;

Sub-component 1.3: *Reinsertion follow-up support* would provide ex-combatants with opportunities for additional training and advice for six months after the re-insertion through: (i) outreach, and (ii) drop-in support. Outreach in relation to forming economic associations would focus on administration, financial management, leadership, and technical aspects. Drop-in support would be on specific matters of reinsertion when the beneficiaries ask for advice. In addition, for psychosocial support, drop-in referral services would be offered.



Component 2 Project Management Support to the Project Implementation Unit (cost at appraisal: US\$1.8 million; actual cost: US\$1.8 million) would finance Project management, sensitization and communication (including a bottom-up communication approach through community meetings and beneficiary outreach), and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Revised Components:

During Restructuring 1 on June 18, 2019, the components were revised, as follows:

- **Component 1 activities were scaled down, and its budget was reduced** from US\$13.2 million to US\$6.2 million. The remaining US\$7.0 million were reallocated to the newly created Component 3.
- **Component 3 Community Rehabilitation (original cost: US\$7.0 million; actual cost at closure: US\$5.67 million) was added** to support the resilience of host communities and thus facilitate the social and economic reinsertion of demobilized ex-combatants. There were two sub-components:
 - **Sub-Component 3.1 Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Socioeconomic Infrastructure** was to finance rehabilitation and/or construction of socio-economic infrastructure (including roads, schools, dispensaries, markets, storage, water facilities) and improved access to basic services in host communities;
 - **Sub-Component 3.2 Support of Income Generating Activities for youth- at-risk and vulnerable** was to finance the development of income generating activities in host communities, with a focus on youth-at-risk and members of non-signatory movements and self-defense groups, with the ultimate objective of violence reduction and social cohesion through resilience to armed conflict and violence, recovery, preventing at-risk individuals from participating in armed groups, and creating conditions for the return of demobilized combatants.

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

Project Cost: The appraisal estimate was US\$15.0 million, and the actual disbursement was US\$13.67 million. The undisbursed amount of US\$ 1.33 million was cancelled at Restructuring 6 of December 2023.

Project Financing: The Project was financed by an IDA grant. The credit approved at appraisal amounted to US\$15.0 million; and the actual disbursement at closure was US\$13.67 million.

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

Project Dates: The Project was approved on February 28, 2017, and became effective approximately seven months later, on October 4, 2017. There was no MTR review, as it was effectively replaced by Restructuring 1 in June 2019. The Project was restructured six times: (i) on June 18, 2019; (ii) on November 24, 2021; (iii) on June 30, 2022; (iv) on December 13, 2022; (v) on June 28, 2023; and (vi) on December 22, 2023. The original closing date was November 30, 2020. The Project was extended five times, for a total of six years and six months (or 78 months), to December 31, 2023, to accommodate delays primarily owing to postponements in the implementation of the national disarmament and demobilization process, which were outside of the Project's or the Bank's control.

Restructurings:



Restructuring 1 (June 18, 2019) was needed because of delays: the Project could only start once the Government-executed Phase 1 of the DDR program was advanced; however, its start was on hold, awaiting outcomes of the ongoing dialogue between the Government and armed groups on security reform (ICR, page 10). The restructuring involved the following main changes:

- In relation to the reduced scope of Component 1 (as described in Section 2.d), the target for the PDO indicator “Number of demobilized combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reinsertion” was reduced from 4,000 ex-combatants to 1,800 ex-combatants. In addition, the target for the intermediate results indicator (IRI) “Demobilized Ex-combatants are satisfied with the composition and delivery of the start-up kits, %” was reduced from 90 percent to 70 percent. The rationale to reduce the PDO target to 1,800 was driven by missing lists of ex-combatants to be reinserted owing to the sensitive overall situation.
- Six new intermediate indicators for new activities under Component 3 were added.
- The closing date was extended for 12 months, from November 30, 2020, to November 30, 2021, to allow time to implement Project activities.

Restructurings 2-5 were to extend the closing date in order to finalize Project implementation, specifically:

- **Restructuring 2 (November 24, 2021):** for seven months from November 30, 2021, to June 30, 2022;
- **Restructuring 3 (June 2022):** for 12 months from June 30, 2022, to December 31, 2022;
- **Restructuring 4 (December 13, 2022):** for six months from December 31, 2022, to June 30, 2023.
- **Restructuring 5 (June 28, 2023):** for 12 months from June 30, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Restructuring 6 (December 22, 2023) was needed for a cancellation of unused funds in the amount of US\$1.33 million, per a Government’s request, to ensure the repurposing of IDA resources to the country’s IDA allocation. The requested cancellation would not affect the achievement of the PDO, nor final project closing activities.

Split evaluation. The Project was restructured six times, but only Restructuring 1 of June 2019 necessitates a split evaluation due to the scale-down of the activities under Components 1 and the related reduction of the PDO indicator and IRI targets, as well as the addition of Component 3 to include community preparedness to receive ex-combatants, which introduced a supplementary understanding and measurement of the PDO.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Country and Sector Context. At Project appraisal in 2017, Mali was a fragile state with increasing political instability and poverty, weak governance, and limited economic growth. In 2015, Mali ranked 179 on the 2015 Human Development Index, its GDP per capita was US\$723, and 67 percent of the population lived below the poverty line of US\$1.9 per person per day. Approximately 2.5 million people (13.5 percent of the country’s population) were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The country was disrupted by an



extremist takeover of the North in 2012, but the Government re-gained control of most of the territory in 2013, and a Peace Agreement was signed in 2015 between the Government, pro-government groups, and the rebel movements. (ICR, page 6)

Relevance to Government Strategies at closure. The Project was aligned with the Government's National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR) Program Document, which was based on the 2015 Peace Agreement, and with the Security Sector Reform (SSR), which provided a legal framework for the ex-combatants' integration into the state security structures and a program to assist communities in the North. In December 2016, the Government convened a donor roundtable to introduce the National DDR Strategy in the regions of Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal, Ménaka and Taoudéni. The total cost of implementing the Strategy was US\$50 million, and the Government secured US\$10 million, while the World Bank contributed US\$15 million through the reviewed Project. (ICR, pages 6-7)

Relevance to the WBG's Assistance Strategies at closure. The Project was aligned with the WBG's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for FY2016-19. The CPF remained current at the time of Project closure. Support to the DDR process was explicitly mentioned in the CPF under *Focus Area 1: Improve Governance* (CPF, p. 29, para. 93) as a new operation to support CPF *Objective 1.1 To Improve Public Resource Management at the Central and Local Levels*. Overall, the CPF deemed essential to support the DDR program through reinsertion of ex-combatants, to address the drivers of fragility, and to set the stage for stabilization and development of the country's northern and central regions. (ICR, page 12)

Previous sector experience. Project design incorporated lessons from DDR programs in several countries, including Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and Columbia. The conclusions based on the lessons included the following: the DDR programs should (i) be designed within an overarching SSR framework; (ii) have simple implementation structure and arrangements (with activities outsourced to local organizations and close cooperation with partners on the ground); (iii) include skills transfer to national implementation agencies; and (v) align the start-up kits with training. (PAD, page 10)

The objectives were pitched at the correct level considering that the Project contributed to the DDR process, which was key to the country's stabilization and development. Based on the above and considering the alignment of Project objectives with the Government strategy and the World Bank country strategy at closure, relevance of objectives is rated as High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To support the socio-economic reinsertion of demobilized ex-combatants within local communities.



Rationale

The theory of change (ToC) for the Project was not included in the PAD but was created for the ICR. To achieve the PDO objective, the Project supported the following activities: (i) re-insertion of the ex-combatants (orientation, counseling, provision of the start-up kits, and follow-up help); and (ii) community rehabilitation (construction and rehabilitation of the infrastructure, income generating activities, community management, and civic participation), which was added with Restructuring 1. The expected outputs of these activities were: (i) ex-combatants trained in relevant skills for re-insertion, make good use of the start-up kits, and receive follow-up support; and (ii) access to basic services at community level improved, enabling environment to support income generating activities strengthened, capacity of communities to support reinsertion strengthened, and community members have good civic attitude.

The achievement of the outputs was expected to lead to the following outcomes: (i) Members of communities report social acceptance of ex-combatants; (ii) project beneficiaries report acceptance of return of ex-combatants; (iii) demobilized ex-combatants avail of income generation opportunities; and (iv) demobilized combatants have undergone socioeconomic reinsertion.

The ToC provided a detailed picture of the logic of Project interventions, listing all main inputs (activities) and outputs, and the PDO outcomes. However, the ToC has the following deficiencies: (i) the intermediate outcomes are missing, thus it is not clear from the ToC diagram how the outputs are supposed to be applied to solve the problem; and (ii) the links from one level of the ToC to another are simplified, and no links across results at the same level are presented, thus cause-effect relationships are not clear.

Rationale

IRI results:

1. "Demobilized ex-combatants completed reinsertion phase (disaggregated), %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Percentage of ex-combatants who successfully completed orientation, counseling and skills training"). The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the original target of 90 percent. The target was exceeded.
2. "Demobilized ex-combatants linked to respective projects, number". The achievement at closure was 768 people, against the original target of 700 people. The target was exceeded.
3. "Demobilized ex-combatants satisfied with reinsertion support, %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Percentage of targeted former combatants reporting satisfaction with services provided by the program"). The achievement at closure was 70 percent, against the original target of 70 percent. The target was achieved.
4. "Vulnerable demobilized ex-combatants reported to have received specialized support by the Project, %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Percentage of identified eligible former combatants who received specialized support"). The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the original target of 90 percent. The target was exceeded.
5. "Vulnerable demobilized ex-combatants satisfied with specialized project support, %". The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the original target of 60 percent. The target was exceeded.



6. "Follow-up support provided to demobilized ex-combatants, %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Percentage of ex-combatants who received, from those who requested, additional drop-in reintegration support"). The achievement at closure was 86 percent, against the original target of 90 percent. The target was 95.6 percent achieved (substantially achieved).
7. "Demobilized ex-combatants satisfied with follow-up support, %". The achievement at closure was 91 percent, against the original target of 70 percent. The target was exceeded.
8. Grievances registered related to delivery of project benefits that are addressed, %". The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the original target of 70 percent. The target was exceeded.
9. People in the project area aware of the project's beneficiary targeting criteria, %". The achievement at closure was 86 percent, against the original target of 80 percent. The target was exceeded.
10. "Demobilized ex-combatants are satisfied with the composition and delivery of the start-up kits, %". The achievement at closure was 67 percent, against the original target of 90 percent. The target was 74.4 percent achieved (partially achieved). The ICR explains that the partial achievement of this result was due to the insufficient value of the original reinsertion kit, considering the costs of initiating the income-generating activities; however, once more financing was allocated to the kits, more people were satisfied with them. (ICR, page 13-14).

PDO outcomes:

1. "Members of communities report social acceptance of ex-combatants (disaggregated by age and gender), %". The achievement at closure was 59 percent, against the original target of 60 percent. The target was 98.3 percent achieved (substantially achieved).
2. "Demobilized ex-combatants that feel socially accepted by their communities of return, %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Percentage of total project beneficiaries who report acceptance to return of demobilized ex-combatants"). The achievement at closure was 70 percent, against the original target of 70 percent. The target was achieved.
3. "Individual demobilized ex-combatants participating in an economic activity after training, %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "New: Percentage of demobilized ex-combatants availing income generation opportunities"). The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the original target of 80 percent. The target was exceeded.
4. "Number of direct project beneficiaries" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Number of demobilized combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reinsertion"). The achievement at closure was 768 people, against the original target of 4,000 people. The target was 19.2 percent achieved (barely achieved).
5. "Beneficiaries who experience a feeling of greater security attributable to the project areas, %". This indicator became an IRI at Restructuring 1 and was re-phrased as "Percentage of total beneficiaries in local communities reporting higher security and reconciliation"; its achievement at closure was 36 percent, compared to the target of 80 percent, the target was 45 percent achieved (partially achieved).

Rating. The Original Project partially achieved its objectives, and the rating is Modest. It barely achieved the target for its main PDO indicator (number of direct Project beneficiaries (i.e., number of demobilized



combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reinsertion) and partially reached the target for the PDO indicator on perceived security and reconciliation. While targets for the other two PDO indicators (on share of beneficiaries who participate in economic activities and on share of beneficiaries who feel accepted by their communities), were exceeded or significantly achieved, these are calculated as the percentage of the main PDO indicator, number of beneficiaries, which was significantly lower than the target; therefore, their achievement should also be viewed in the context of the low achievement of the main PDO indicator. The target for the PDO indicator on percentage of members of communities who report acceptance of ex-combatants was substantially achieved.

Overall, significantly less ex-combatants than expected entered the reinsertion phase, but those who did, mostly met the expectations: succeeded in participating in the economic activities, felt accepted by the communities, were mostly satisfied with the reinsertion support, and finalized the phase. However, because only 19.2 percent of the originally targeted ex-combatants entered Phase 2 and therefore participated in the reinsertion activities, the achievement of the objective is rated as Modest.

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

The Objective was not revised.

Revised Rationale

Please see the discussion of TOC under the previous section - the Original Project. The restructuring reduced original indicator targets on ex-combatants as well as introduced Component 3 on community rehabilitation to improve social cohesion in host communities by supporting community preparedness to receive ex-combatants. These changes and the associated changes in indicators contributed to a more nuanced understanding and measurement of the PDO by adding the community aspect to the initial focus on ex-combatants only. This revision also mitigated for the inclusion of fewer ex-combatants due to the limited peace process that was beyond the project's control.

The following list comprises indicators with targets that were modified at Restructuring 1 of June 2019.

IRI results:

1. "Demobilized ex-combatants that feel socially accepted by their communities of return, %" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Percentage of total project beneficiaries who report acceptance to return of demobilized ex-combatants"). The achievement at closure was 70 percent, against the revised target of 80 percent. The target was 87.5 percent achieved (substantially achieved).
2. "Vulnerable demobilized ex-combatants satisfied with specialized project support, %". The achievement at closure was 100 percent, against the revised target of 70 percent. The target was exceeded.



3. "Demobilized ex-combatants are satisfied with the composition and delivery of the start-up kits, %". The achievement at closure was 67 percent, against the revised target of 70 percent. The target was 95.7 percent achieved (substantially achieved).

PDO outcomes:

1. "Number of direct project beneficiaries" (re-phrased at Restructuring 1 as "Number of demobilized combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reinsertion"). The achievement at closure was 768 people, against the original target of 1,800 people. The target was 42.7 percent achieved (partially achieved).

PDO indicator 5 that measured beneficiaries who experience a feeling of greater security attributable to the project areas was dropped, with the Restructuring.

The following list comprises new indicators introduced at Restructuring 1 of June 2019:

1. "Number of planned small-scale socioeconomic infrastructure subprojects successfully completed (construction or rehabilitation)". The achievement at closure was 180 subprojects, against the target of 48 projects. The target was significantly exceeded.

2. "Number of beneficiaries in target communities with improved access to socioeconomic infrastructure". The achievement at closure was 145,621 beneficiaries, against the target of 24,000 beneficiaries. The target was significantly exceeded. The gender disaggregated target was exceeded: the share of female beneficiaries was 53 percent, against the target of 50 percent.

3. "Percentage of total beneficiaries in local communities reporting higher security and reconciliation". The achievement at closure was 36 percent, against the target of 80 percent. The target was 45 percent achieved (partially achieved).

4. "Number of host community's members, including at risk/ vulnerable people, involved in income-generating activities as a result of support provided by the project". The achievement at closure was 6,454 people, against the target of 2,400 people. The target was significantly exceeded.

5. "Number of host community's members, including at risk/ vulnerable people, who completed on-the-job skills training related to the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructures". The achievement at closure was 682 people, against the target of 1,920 people. The target was 35 percent achieved (partially achieved).

6. "Participants in consultation activities during project implementation (number)". The achievement at closure was 2,484 people, against the target of 3,600 people. The target was 69 percent achieved (partially achieved). The gender disaggregated target was also partially achieved: the share of female beneficiaries was 40 percent, against the target of 50 percent.

Rating. The efficacy rating for the Revised Project is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. The target for the PDO indicator measuring the number of direct Project beneficiaries (i.e., number of demobilized combatants who have undergone socioeconomic reinsertion) was partially achieved, and the new objectives introduced under Restructuring 1 were substantially achieved: all targets under the infrastructure rehabilitation



subcomponent were exceeded, while targets under the subcomponent supporting income generating activities for vulnerable population were either exceeded or partially achieved.

Overall, Restructuring 1 timely adjusted the Project - considering external political circumstances and the related delay of Phase 1 of the DDR program - towards new (Component 3) targets, which were under the Project's control, thus improving the Project's efficacy.

Revised Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

For the Original Project, the rating for efficacy is Modest: the Project partially reached its objectives, including a low (19 percent) achievement of its main PDO indicator target (the number of ex-combatants participating in the reinsertion program). At the same time, the targets related to those ex-combatants who entered the program, were mostly met.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Modest

Primary Reason

Low achievement

OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale

For the Revised Project, the efficacy rating is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. The target for the PDO indicator measuring the number of ex-combatants participating in the reinsertion program was 42.7 percent achieved (partially achieved), and the new objectives introduced under Restructuring 1 were substantially achieved. Restructuring 1 timely adjusted the Project to the external factors that had led to the delay of Phase 1 of the DDR program by introducing new (Component 3) targets, which were under Project control, thus improving Project's efficacy.

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic analysis



1. No economic analysis was conducted at appraisal.

2. At closure, the economic analysis was conducted separately for Components 1 and 3. For Component 1, the focus was on the economic activities performed by the ex-combatants, and the calculations were done by type of economic activity and the cohort of beneficiaries (first or second). The outcomes were as follows: the estimated economic internal rate of return (EIRR) ranged from 19.7 percent to 50.6 percent, while the net present value (NPV) ranged from US\$1,241.0 million to US\$7,040.0 million. Sensitivity analyses produced EIRR estimates ranging from 12.7 percent to 45.5 percent. A discount rate of 12 percent was used over 12 years (the ICR noted that private sector borrowing costs were more applicable than social costs given that benefits were accrued at the individual level (ICR, page 47)). For Component 3, the focus was on community rehabilitation (for five types of projects: boreholes, irrigation development, markets and storage facilities, schools, health care units); and the estimated EIRR was 50.4 percent, while NPV was US\$20.3 million. Sensitivity analyses produced EIRR estimates ranging from 14.7 percent to 19.6 percent. The social discount rate of 6 percent over 20 years was used.

Since the EIRRs for both components were above the opportunity cost of capital (discount rate), the Project was economically efficient.

Administrative efficiency

The Project was implemented within the original financing envelope, and the funds were used efficiently: the average cost of sub-projects compared favorably with similar operations (ICR, page 15).

However, the Project experienced significant delays and underwent five closing extensions. The original implementation timeframe was 36 months (three years), and the actual was 114 months (nine years and six months). The delays were caused by external factors: the deteriorating security in the country, with many areas not controlled by the government; the lack of consensus between the Government and the armed groups regarding the DRR strategy, which effectively placed Component 1 implementation on hold; COVID-19; and the imposition of sanctions on Mali by ECOWAS for six months in 2022, which led to the suspension of the World Bank disbursements to the country, negatively affecting Project's completion (ICR, page 18). The ICR noted that "While the political reality created a stop-and-go environment reflected in the number of project extensions, a more efficient approach may have been to extend the project once but for a longer period" (ICR, page 15).

At the same time, the Project team made many efforts to adjust to the negative external factors. The ICR noted that the team used such implementation modalities as negotiating with local leaders and armed groups, working with local contractors or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and using local material and manpower (ICR, page 15). Also, Restructuring 1 was a timely and efficient adjustment of the Project's design to the negative external factors through the introduction of new activities under Component 3, with expected results that were under Project control, and transferring the unused funds to this component.

Considering economic efficiency at closure and the efficient adjustments of the Project to the negative external factors, Project's efficiency is rated Substantial.

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	✓	19.70	88.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

	Original Project:	Revised Project:
Relevance of objectives	High	
Efficacy	Modest	Substantial
Efficiency	Substantial	
Outcome	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory
Outcome value	3	4
Amount disbursed, US\$ million	1.84	11.83
Disbursement percentage	13.46%	86.54%
Weight value	0.40	3.46
Total weight	3.87	
Overall outcome rating	Moderately Satisfactory	

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

The overall Relevance of objectives is rated as High. Original Project's efficacy is Modest, while Revised Project's efficacy is Substantial, with moderate shortcomings. Efficiency is rated as Substantial. Thus, the overall outcome is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory for the Original Project and as Moderately Satisfactory for the Revised Project. Based on the shares of the disbursed funds before and after Restructuring 1 of June 2019 (US\$1.84 million or 13.46 percent and US\$11.83 million or 86.54 percent), the overall Project outcome rating is Moderately Satisfactory* ($0.1346 * 3 + 0.8654 * 4 = 3.87$).

a. Outcome Rating
Moderately Satisfactory



7. Risk to Development Outcome

Political. The conflict, insecurity, and weak governance in the north and central Mali, as well as the stalled progress with the negotiations between the Government and the armed groups on security reform and the DDR program, prevented the Project from implementing some of the planned activities. This FCS context of the country's development creates a risk to the sustainability of the outcomes of development assistance overall and of the reviewed Project in particular.

Economic. Mali's macroeconomic fragility was exacerbated by COVID-19, and the country's economy has not recovered at the time of the ICR's preparation. There is a risk that in this situation, the economic activities undertaken by the ex-combatants with Project's support will not result in income generation.

Financial. The infrastructure built or rehabilitated under sub-component 3.1 will need regular maintenance to remain functional. The local governments, as well as the beneficiary communities, have limited financial means and capacity to support the maintenance. This risk was mitigated by selecting investments based on the availability of financial resources for maintenance, technical and operational capacity for implementation, relevance to local developmental plans, consultations with communities and local authorities, and by investing in the local authorities' capacity building. (Restructuring paper, page 7). Also, the members of the community are equipped with the skills gained during the civil works. However, the financial risk remains, and additional financial support from the development community might be needed in the future.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The Project's design was informed by two World Bank assessments – (i) on the profile, concerns and interests, and social and educational background of potential beneficiaries; and (ii) market analysis on the cost of reinsertion activities, - and by lessons from similar DDR interventions in other FCS countries, including Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda. As a result, the design of the Project and of the M&E system were simple and adjustable, which was necessary considering the volatile context and risks. The Bank team was multi-faceted, combining skills needed to prepare a DDR operation in the specific context of Mali. (ICR, pages 17, 22)

However, the risk of the stalled peace process and delayed security reforms was underestimated. The ICR noted that the team could have assessed political risks better, however, mitigating such an external risk, which was outside of Project control, would not have been possible. (ICR, page 22) Furthermore, the team's simple project design reflected the volatile context of implementation. Despite the challenges and risks, the DDR project was an important and effective response to the Government's request, as it served as a crucial tool for facilitating peace dialogue.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory



b. Quality of supervision

Based on the information provided in the ICR, the supervision was effective and adequate for the FCS operating context. The Bank team was pro-active in responding to daily requests and to a constantly changing environment. Regular supervision missions were conducted, except during the COVID-19 restrictions. Restructuring 1 of June 2019 constituted a timely and adequate Project adjustment to a difficult political situation. The initially planned reinsertion of 4,000 ex-combatants was no longer realistic, and this activity was significantly scaled down, while the freed resources were utilized to finance activities under the new Component 3 to support the resilience of host communities, which were mostly under the Project control. The restructuring was based on an in-depth evaluation mission in June 2019, and restructuring decisions were taken immediately and concluded at the end of FY19. Restructuring 1 effectively replaced the MTR review. In addition, the team was able to maintain dialogue with Government authorities in a flexible and adaptable way to address the sensitive and evolving context. (ICR, page 22)

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The M&E design was in general adequate, while the TOC had some shortcomings as mentioned in section 4. The original Results Framework (RF) reflected the logic of Project interventions in the PAD and was linked to the PDO. The objectives of the Project were clearly specified, the PDO indicators reflected all main outcomes, while the IRIs were linked to the PDO indicators, providing more details. All RF indicators had baselines, targets, and were time-bound. The M&E plan was well defined. There was no fully developed Management Information System (MIS) (as per the Operations Manual), but an innovative digital dashboard was set up at the late stages of implementation to track the reinsertion process (ICR, page 19). While during Restructuring 1, the main PDO indicator was scaled down and new IRIs were added to monitor the newly added Component 3 activities, the other indicators mostly remained unchanged during implementation, signaling a robust RF design.

b. M&E Implementation

The ICR reported that during implementation, the M&E data were collected as planned, and M&E reports were prepared on a quarterly basis, supporting Project's financial and technical management. While there was no full MIS, an innovative digital dashboard was available late into implementation to report basic beneficiary data and information on the reinsertion process. The dashboard was generating QR codes, to be used to document beneficiaries' participation in training activities, and was providing transparency, vital for this sensitive process. (ICR, page 19)



However, there were delays in collecting data; and data for several outcome indicators were missing until 2022 when a closing extension provided time to collect it. Also, no in-depth quality control of the collected data was applied: the accuracy of the data was not checked or corrected. As a result, no information was provided to the management beyond the basic numbers on input and output metrics. No quantitative analysis was undertaken of the individual sub-projects under Component 1 and community sub-projects under Component 3 to gauge their efficiency. (ICR, page 19)

c. M&E Utilization

The ICR reported that the M&E team complied with its basic mandate to inform the RF by project closure, and the creation of the dashboard was positive and provided information to stakeholders and project management on project activities. Notwithstanding the benefits of the basic data collection linked to implementation of project activities, including through the creation of the dashboard, more frequent surveys on perception and outcome indicators would have benefited project implementation. (ICR, page 20)

The M&E quality is rated as Modest. While the design of the M&E system, as well as data collection and reporting, were adequate, there were shortcomings: delays in collecting data, missing data (until 2022) for several indicators, lacking control of data accuracy, and no data or analysis beyond basic numbers on input and output metrics.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Environmental and Social Safeguards. The ICR reported that at appraisal, the Project was classified as Environmental Category C – Assessment Not Required. At Restructuring 1 of June 2019, the Project was classified as Category B due to the infrastructure activities under the new Component 3. The following policies were triggered: Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01), Physical Cultural Resources (OP 4.11), and Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12). An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Request for Proposals (RFP) were prepared, and then an ex-post environmental and social assessment was completed in December 2022, confirming that no significant economic displacement or resettlement was caused. No accidents, sexual abuse, exploitation, or harassment were recorded during implementation. There were minor environmental and social non-compliance cases, including a failure to: (i) carry out analyses of water quality in some boreholes; (ii) remove debris from construction in some worksites; (iii) provide training in health and safety, cultural and physical resource management, gender-based violence, and child protection; and (iv) correctly use protective equipment, provide adequate worksite signage, and sensitize contractors in certain work zones. These cases were adequately resolved before Project closing. A grievance redress mechanism (GRM) was created. In total, 22 complaints were received (mostly from households who felt they should have received the kits, and in relation to problems with payments), and 20 of those were resolved prior to Project closure. Meetings were also held to further discuss the complaints.



(ICR, page 20) The Safeguards ratings from September 2020 to project closing were consistently Moderately Satisfactory.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management (FM). The ICR reported that the financial management was adequate: (a) qualified FM staff was in place; (b) the accounts were set up using the appropriate software (Tom2pro); (c) financial monitoring reports were satisfactory and submitted on time; (d) internal control reports had acceptable quality; and (e) all external audit reports were submitted. The external auditor issued unmodified opinions on the project financial statements, except for the years ending December 31, 2021, and December 31, 2022. The Project took measures to address the auditor's queries and recommendations. For the closing audit year ending December 31, 2023, and the audit of the grace period, the auditor expressed an unmodified opinion. (ICR, page 21) The FM rating was Satisfactory from September 2020 to June 2022, and Moderately Satisfactory thereafter.

Procurement. The ICR reported that procurement mainly concerned sub-projects under Component 3, with 113 contracts, of which only three were terminated following extended delays. All procurement documents were duly archived in STEP. The main difficulties encountered in procurement and contract execution were: (i) lack of qualified suppliers and contractors able to participate in bidding and/or to complete work in areas occupied by armed groups; (ii) limited knowledge of Bank procurement procedures by suppliers and contractors; and (iii) remote project areas, poor road accessibility, and growing insecurity. Procurement approaches were adjusted to insecurity contexts, including resorting to local firms and labor, adjusting timelines and costs, and relocating interventions out of the insecure areas. The Procurement rating was Moderately Satisfactory from September 2020 to February 2022 and Satisfactory thereafter.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

There were no unintended impacts.

d. Other

Gender. Female ex-combatants are often excluded from reinsertion activities. The Project applied a gender sensitive approach to ensure that differentiated needs of male and female ex-combatants are reflected in their packages and accompanying measures. While this approach was applied in a limited way for the first cohort of beneficiaries (2019-20), it was introduced in full during the second phase. The National DDR Commission (CNDDR) included a gender specialist, and staff were trained on gender issues to work with female ex-combatants and women affiliated with armed groups. In addition, the government hired regional gender specialists as civil servants across all CNDDR regional antennas. Vocational training provided to women was sensitive to potential female interests and needs. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP) to addressing specific vulnerabilities of the women affiliated with armed groups. (ICR, page 16)



11. Ratings

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

12. Lessons

The following lessons were derived from the ICR (based on ICR, pages 23-24):

1. In the FCS context, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion can be successful if designed and implemented within a wider peacebuilding framework, including development programs that consider not only ex-combatants, but also communities and local ownership.

Community development was not included in the original design of the reviewed Project, and it turned out to be a shortcoming, creating difficulties for working in the Project areas. This aspect was addressed at Restructuring 1 when support to socio-economic reinsertion (a short-lived operation) was strengthened by new activities targeting long-term community development, thus promoting local ownership and sustainability of the Project outcomes.

2. Embedding Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR) program’s Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in the government structures in charge of the DDR program, rather than establishing a separate PIU entity, is likely to work best, as it ameliorates project implementation and strengthens capacity of the government structures. The reviewed Project’s PIU was fully embedded into the National DDR Commission (CNDDR) (the implementing agency for the Project) within the Ministry of Reconciliation, Peace and Social Cohesion. The PIU Coordinator was the CNDDR National Coordinator and a high-level civil servant. This helped maintain close links with the Ministry, facilitating Project implementation. Also, the PIU was knowledgeable on DDR dynamics and adequately trained to deliver and sustain the reinsertion program. In addition, extensive capacity building was provided through the PIU to the structures in charge of the DDR process, improving CNDDR’s capacity to implement the national DDR program.

3. Having an effective M&E and MIS system prior to launching project activities is especially important when local capacity is limited. In the reviewed Project, procedures for data collection were not systematic, and information sharing among implementing partners and local authorities was limited. This resulted in reduced data availability and limited data analysis. The reviewed Project would have benefited if, prior to the start of implementation, clear and practical data collection procedures, transparent and well-defined reporting requirements, and thorough data analysis processes were established. Additionally, the M&E system could have been combined with an efficient Management Information System (MIS) (beyond a dashboard), to track and consolidate the relevant data. The reviewed Project’s experience demonstrated that a pre-implementation



agreement on a comprehensive M&E and MIS framework is especially important when local capacity is limited.

4. Focusing on support to the re-insertion of female ex-combatants can be a strategic decision that contributes to the peace process. While female ex-combatants are often excluded from socio-economic reinsertion activities, the reviewed Project focused on supporting them, which was less controversial in the context of the stalled agreement on security sector reform, mainly due to their lower rank as compared to the male ex-combatants. Also, women ex-combatants had a strong interest in reinsertion. The government and signatory movements agreed to focus on the female ex-combatants as a sign of good will and commitment to reinsertion. The Project applied a gender sensitive approach to ensure that differentiated needs of male and female ex-combatants are considered. The Project experience demonstrated the importance of including a gender specialist and train the staff on gender issues when working with female ex-combatants.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provides sufficient technical details to understand the value-added of the activities and the outcomes of the Project; a good justification of the PDO relevance; comprehensive and robust evidence on most aspects of Project's evaluation; and a clear linking of evidence to findings. The ICR is technical, analytical, and has internal consistency. The lessons learned are linked to the narrative and the ratings and are useful for future lending operations in the FCS context. However, the ICR has the following shortcomings:

- (i) While a split rating was applied, as per the ICR guidelines, it was not implemented correctly. The achievements of the Original Project should have been assessed as per the results at closure and not at Restructuring 1 of June 2019.
- (ii) The presentation of Project costs is not clear: they are displayed in different units in Annex 3 (Project Cost by Component) (ICR, page 46), making the comparison of the original costs and the disbursements at closure impossible without additional calculations (currency conversion); and there is inconsistency between the costs as presented in the Data Sheet and in Annex 3.
- (iii) There are mistakes in numbers in the presentation of the Overall Outcome (Table 3): MS should be "4" but is presented as "3" (ICR, page 16).

However, overall, the ICR provides candid and analytical discussion of the Project's achievements and deficiencies, and therefore, the Quality of ICR is rated as Substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating



Substantial