



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(**ESRS Concept Stage**)

Date Prepared/Updated: 11/21/2023 | Report No: ESRSC03952



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Operation Data

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P500409	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	SPEAR	2025
Operation Name	Solar Procurement and Electricity Access Recovery Project		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	Energy & Extractives
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	Ministry of Energy and Power Development		31-Jul-2024
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
29-Feb-2024	5,000,000.00		

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Proposed Development Objective

The Objective of the proposed project is to support the increase of solar electricity generation and off-grid electricity access in Zimbabwe. The Project Development Objective (PDO) would be delivered through three recipient executed project components: (a) transaction advisory services for a credible, transparent, and competitive solar IPP procurement process, (b) subsidies for expanding off-grid electricity access to public institutions and (c) capacity building provided for the broader energy sector planning. Key Design Principles entail: (i) initially focusing on the proposed sites identified in the Rural Electrification Masterplan and the REF-UNDP Energy agreement, (ii) balancing capacity building needs across the Ministry of Energy and Power Development (MoEPD), Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZETDC) and the Rural Electrification Fund (REF).

B. Is the operation being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project Activities



[Description imported from the Concept Data Sheet in the Portal providing information about the key aspects and components/sub-components of the project]

The proposed operation is to support (i) transaction advisory services for a credible, transparent and competitive solar IPP procurement process (ii) subsidies for expansion of off-grid electricity access; and (iii) capacity building and advisory services in support of the ongoing sector restructuring. The project intends to provide subsidies to electrify public institutions (schools and clinics) in rural areas. The project will target provinces and districts in the rural areas who will benefit from getting their schools and clinics electrified and the location is rural areas (provinces and districts) around the country. The PDO would be delivered through three recipient executed project components: (a) transaction advisory services for a credible, transparent, and competitive solar IPP procurement process, (b) subsidies for expanding off-grid electricity access to public institutions and (c) capacity building provided for the broader energy sector planning.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

[Description of key features relevant to the operation's environmental and social risks and opportunities (e.g., whether the project is nationwide or regional in scope, urban/rural, in an FCV context, presence of Indigenous Peoples or other minorities, involves associated facilities, high-biodiversity settings, etc.) – Max. character limit 2,000]

Based on the information available at this stage, the project will be implemented in 5-10 selected districts across the country, and there are no conflict-affected areas that might have an impact on the project's implementation. The exact project sites are unknown at this stage, but the activities will be implemented in existing public institutions such as health centers and schools in rural areas. Hence, the project is not anticipated to have an impact on natural habitats and biodiversity. The project activities are also not anticipated to be implemented in areas inhabited by indigenous communities. The exact project site will be identified at the appraisal stage.

D.2 Overview of Borrower's Institutional Capacity for Managing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

[Description of Borrower's capacity (i.e., prior performance under the Safeguard Policies or ESF, experience applying E&S policies of IFIs, Environmental and social unit/staff already in place) and willingness to manage risks and impacts and of provisions planned or required to have capabilities in place, along with the needs for enhanced support to the Borrower – Max. character limit 2,000]

The Rural Electrification Fund (REF) and the Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZETDC) are proposed as implementing entities for the project. ZETDC has experience in environmental and social (ES) safeguards through the implementation of the African Development Bank funded Alaska-Karoi Power Transmission Project. However, both entities lack experience in assessing and managing environmental and social risks under the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).

To address this, the project will hire or designate an environmental specialist and a social safeguards specialist under the Project Implementation Unit (PIU). Their role will be to ensure that the required environmental and social mitigation measures are properly and timely implemented. Additionally, the project implementing agencies will receive guidance from environmental and social development experts from the World Bank on addressing relevant issues that may arise during project implementation.

Furthermore, the World Bank team will provide hands-on capacity-building training to the PIU in the management of environmental and social safeguards risks and impacts. These trainings will cover various aspects, including risk



assessment, e-waste handling, occupational health and safety/community health and safety (OHS/CHS) training, as well as grievance redressal.

All these staffing requirements and training activities will be outlined in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]

The project will have positive impact due to promotion of green energy which will reduce carbon foot print for Zimbabwe and contribute positively to lowering carbon emissions. However, there are anticipated risks especially with e-waste of solar equipment such as batteries, inverters and panels during operation. Other industry general wastes include wire cuttings, plastics and cardboards or packaging materials for the solar equipment. Unfortunately, there are no legal framework nor formal facilities to address e-wastes specifically hence increasing risk of exposure of e-waste hazards to informal recyclers and users if improperly handled. The activities should therefore consider ESS1 and ESS3 and apply relevant EHS to manage risks emanating from e-wastes. ESCP that includes commitments in management of environmental risks will be prepared and agreed upon. Since the identified sites are not known, an ESMF will be prepared in accordance with requirements of ESS 1 to manage technical advisory activities. An E-waste management plan and OHS plan will be prepared to guide handling, storage, use and disposal of equipment that produce e-waste and will be included in the ESMF. Stakeholder engagement, grievances and feedback of environmental issues, risks and management will be managed through preparation and implementation of SEP and GRM. Though there is no legal framework and institutional capacity to management of e-wastes, no activities with high potential for harming people or environment are expected in proximity with sensitive areas. The project scope is small, and the hazard impact magnitude is expected to be moderate and reversible. Though the activities are spread nation wide, it may be one site for mini-grids in a district etc and homestead solar systems. The Environmental Risk is therefore rated moderate.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

Moderate

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]

Based on the available information, the social risk rating of the project is moderate. The project will be implemented in 5-10 selected district across the country, and there are no conflict-affected areas that might have an impact on the project's implementation. The project activities are expected to have a net positive impact on the population by increasing access to renewable energy and building the institutional capacities of Zimbabwe's energy sector. However, there are some potential risks associated with the project that need to be addressed. These risk include, exclusion or discrimination in the selection of beneficiary public institutions, the risk of land acquisition and involuntary resettlement and economic disruption, labor and working conditions risks, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) among project workers, stakeholders, and/or local communities, and challenges in

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organizing or obtaining access to grievance redress and referral processes. To address these social risks, the Borrower will develop ESF instruments such as the Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which includes the GRM, and the Labor Management Procedures (LMP) as part of the ESMF. The ESMF will also include details on how to respond to SEA/SH allegations and guidance on how to screen for any land acquisition and resettlement.

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating. This attribute is only for the internal version of the download document and not a part of the disclosable version – Max. character limit 2,000]

B. Relevance of Standards and Policies at Concept Stage

B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards

ESS1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The project will review all environmental and waste management legislation to prepare risk management instruments. Since the 10 identified sites are not final, ESMF that detail screening process, analysis of alternatives process and exclusion list and guides preparation of ESMPs will be prepared by appraisal. Initial assessment consumerate with the risks will be conducted. Other instruments to be prepared by appraisal include stakeholder engagement plan; labor management procedures, Occupational Health and Safety plans and e-waste management plans that will be part of ESMF; and the ESCP. ESMP/s that includes site specific e-waste and OHS management plans, EHSG will be prepared prior contractor bidding process. Since the project will support technical- assistance activities, the terms of reference, work plans or other documents defining the scope and outputs of technical assistance activities will be drafted so that the advice and other support provided is consistent with ESSs 1-10.

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be developed, reviewed, approved, and disclosed. The SEP will include the following; (i) a description of the project stakeholders, distinguishing between those directly affected by the project and other interested parties, (ii) a description of the timing and methods of engagement with key stakeholders throughout the project's life cycle, as well as local-level consultations once the locations of subproject activities are known, (iii) a description of the type of information that will be provided to stakeholders and how feedback from stakeholders will be solicited and recorded, (iii) differentiated measures, where necessary, to remove obstacles to participation and enable the effective participation of those identified as disadvantaged or vulnerable and (iv) a description of the project-level Grievance Mechanism to be developed by the borrower in accordance with the requirements of ESS10.

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

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To manage labor risks, the Borrower will develop a Labor Management Plan (LMP) as part of the ESMF. The LMP will outline requirements related to working conditions, management of worker relationships, occupational health and safety, code of conduct, age of employment, non-discrimination, provision of safe working conditions, grievance redress arrangements for employees, and contractor management. Additionally, there is a risk of forced labor in the global supply chain for solar panels and solar components. To support forced labor risk mitigation, the Bank will require the Borrower to strengthen solar-related procurement processes. This will involve including forced labor bidder declarations, qualification requirements, and strengthened contractual provisions in procurements that involve the financing of solar panels and solar components.

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The activity is a response to energy efficiency and an example of green economy hence commendable. However, e-waste storage, transportation, disposal and recycling pose risk of exposure to beneficiaries, informal recyclers and waste collectors. A detailed e-waste management plan will be developed and included in the ESMF. Workers may be exposed to emissions from damaged batteries and broken panels hence ESMF/ESMPs will identify all OHS risks associated with activity and develop appropriate mitigation measures. There could be potential for existing EHS liabilities (eg. PCBs, mercury, soil and ground water contamination) and will be managed using relevant EHSG. Resource efficiency principles will be applied in accordance with ESF and relevant EHSGs requirements. All general wastes produced during installation of home solar systems, mini-grid and all accessories will be managed as general wastes and detailed procedures will be outlined in the ESMF.

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The project poses potential risks to community health and safety, including the lack of security at some subproject sites where renewable energy equipment is installed, inappropriate disposal of e-wastes, traffic management and road safety risks and Response and SEA/SH. To address these risks and impacts, the ESMF will outline proposed mitigation measures such as security measures to prevent theft of the solar equipment and ancillaries at sub-projects, appropriate waste management plans that adhere to the standards and management procedures set out in the WB ESHGs, traffic management and road safety plans and agreed GIIP where appropriate, and appropriate SEA/SH mitigation measures. Site-specific and detailed mitigation measures will be developed through appropriate plans once the project locations are fully identified. The ESMF will include Emergency Preparedness plans to guide any emergencies that may happen including fire.

ESS5 - Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

This standard is not currently relevant to the project as the expected magnitude of resettlement impacts is not significant, given that the works are small-scale in nature. To minimize the risk of land acquisition and involuntary resettlement, the Borrower will prioritize sites that are already owned by the government and free of leaseholders and squatters. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) will provide guidance on how to screen



for potential land acquisition and resettlement issues and how to avoid them as much as possible. Additionally, the ESMF will include provisions to accommodate voluntary land donations for the installation of solar infrastructure, if and where needed.

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The ESMF shall provide procedures to screen out subprojects with potentially significant biodiversity risks and prioritize brownfield/modified habitats or anthropized areas.

ESS7 - Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

Though the project does not have heavy construction activities and none in sites of indigenous people, mini grids may include a few excavations hence the standard applies. The ESMF will include chance find procedures to guide handling of cultural heritage that may be identified during project activities implementation.

ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways No

OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas No

B.3 Other Salient Features

Use of Borrower Framework No

[Optional explanation – Max. character limit 1,000]

None

Use of Common Approach No

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[Optional Explanation including list of possible financing partners – Max. character limit 1,000]

B.4 Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

[Description provided will not be disclosed but will flow as a one time flow to the Concept Stage PID – Max. character limit 5,000]

Based on the available information, the environmental and social risk associated with the project is rated as moderate. The project aims to increase access to renewable energy and build institutional capacities in Zimbabwe's energy sector, which will have a net positive impact on the population and reduce the country's carbon footprint. However, there are potential risks associated with the project, such as e-waste from solar equipment, traffic and road safety risks, OHS, potentially existing EHS liabilities (eg. PCBs, mercury, soil and ground water contamination) exclusion or discrimination in the selection of beneficiary public institutions (schools and clinics), land acquisition and involuntary resettlement, interaction with cultural heritage, labor and working conditions risks, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) among project workers, stakeholders, and/or local communities, challenges in organizing or obtaining access to grievance redress and referral processes, and lack of security at some subproject sites where renewable energy equipment is installed.

To address these risks, the Borrower will develop Environment and Social Framework (ESF) instruments, including the Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), and Labor Management Procedures (LMP). The ESMF will also include guidance on how to respond to sexual exploitation and abuse allegations, screen for land acquisition and resettlement, manage e-waste and occupational health and safety, management of potential environmental liabilities, emergency preparedness plans, chance find procedures and security measures to prevent theft of the solar equipment and ancillaries at sub-projects.

The project's capacity building and advisory services may also have downstream environmental and social impacts. Therefore, the terms of reference, work plans, or other documents defining the scope and outputs of technical assistance activities will be drafted so that the advice and other support provided is consistent with ESSs 1-10.

C. Overview of Required Environmental and Social Risk Management Activities

C.1 What Borrower environmental and social analyses, instruments, plans and/or frameworks are planned or required by Appraisal?

[Description of expectations in terms of documents to be prepared to assess and manage the project's environmental and social risks and by when (i.e., prior to Effectiveness, or during implementation), highlighted features of ESA documents, other project documents where environmental and social measures are to be included, and the related due diligence process planned to be carried out by the World Bank, including sources of information for the due diligence - Max. character limit 3,000]

The Borrower will develop Environment and Social Framework (ESF) instruments, including the Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), prior to appraisal. The labor management procedures (LMP), Occupational Health and Safety plans, and e-



waste management plans will also be part of the ESMF. The ESMF will also include details on how to respond to SEA/SH allegations, guidance on how to screen for any land acquisition and resettlement issues, and provisions to accommodate voluntary land donations for the installation of solar infrastructure, if and where needed.

III. CONTACT POINT

Contact Point

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IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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