



1. Project Data

Project ID P174014	Project Name COVID-19 Emergency Income Support		
Country Maldives	Practice Area(Lead) Social Protection & Jobs		
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-66930,IDA-D6650,IDA-D7660	Closing Date (Original) 30-Jun-2022	Total Project Cost (USD) 34,013,812.20	
Bank Approval Date 09-Jun-2020	Closing Date (Actual) 31-Dec-2023		
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)	
Original Commitment	12,800,000.00	0.00	
Revised Commitment	33,839,985.71	0.00	
Actual	34,013,812.20	0.00	
Prepared by Sarveshwari Singh	Reviewed by Salim J. Habayeb	ICR Review Coordinator Susan Ann Caceres	Group IEGHC (Unit 2)

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The development objective of the project was to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on workers and their families, and to increase the capacity of social protection programs to respond to future emergencies, as stated in the Financing Agreement for IDA Grant D665-MV and Credit 6693-MV, the Financing Agreement for Additional Financing Grant, and Project Appraisal Document (PAD). (Financing Agreement for Grant and Credit, June 13, 2020, p. 4).



Targets for PDO indicators 1 and 2 were revised upward. With the Additional Financing, two new PDO indicators were added to reflect the increased scope of the project. The target for PDO indicator 6 was marginally revised downward and was exceeded, while the original target was essentially achieved. The PDO remained the same through the duration of the project. Therefore, this ICRR does not apply a split rating.

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

Yes

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

Component 1: Temporary assistance to workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Appraisal: US\$12 million; Actual: US\$33.95 million)

This component provided financing for the temporary Income Support Allowance (ISA) program for individuals who lost a job or income because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It supported data collection and storage in the National Social Protection Agency's (NSPA) Social Protection Information System (SPIS). Media outreach was conducted to inform the public about the program and how to apply for income support.

Component 2: Strengthening social protection delivery systems and institutions (Appraisal: US\$0.8 million; Actual: US\$0.45 million)

This component aimed to strengthen the Government's social protection system to better respond to future crises and disasters by:

- a. Strengthening NSPA's Delivery and Targeting Systems by expanding and improving the SPIS, reviewing the Government's social protection programs and eligibility criteria, and testing and rolling out new systems in major population centers in each atoll.
- b. Developing a Fiscally Sustainable Unemployment Insurance Program financed in part with employer/employee contributions and covering both formal and informal sector workers.
- c. Improving Retirement Pension Programs by developing a plan to improve fiscal sustainability, coverage, and benefits of government-financed pension schemes and other social pension programs.
- d. Developing a National Social Protection Framework including a gender gap analysis to ensure that adequate actions are taken to strengthen gender-sensitive programming.
- e. Project Implementation, management and reporting. This subcomponent aimed to finance incremental operating costs, project implementation staff and consultants, monitoring and evaluation, communication and relevant trainings.



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

Costs and Financing: The total project cost at appraisal was US\$12.8 million consisting of an IDA Credit of US\$6.4 million and an IDA Grant of US\$6.4 million. An Additional Financing (AF) Grant of US\$21.6 million was provided. The revised commitment was US\$33.8 million consisting of a revised IDA Credit of US\$6.2 million, a revised IDA Grant of US\$6.0 million, and the AF grant amount of US\$21.6 million. Actual project cost was US\$34.0 million as noted in the ICR and the ICR (Annex 3).

Dates: The project was approved June 9, 2020 and became effective June 26, 2020. A Mid-Term Review was conducted on February 1, 2022. The original credit and grant closed on June 30, 2022 as planned. The Additional Financing Grant was approved in January 2021. The AF closing date was extended twice. During the second restructuring it was extended by six months to December 31, 2022, and in the third restructuring it was extended by one year to December 31, 2023.

Restructuring: The project was adjusted four times with three restructurings and Additional Financing.

Restructuring 1, December 5, 2020: This restructuring extended payments for the Income Support Allowance program for an additional three months from July 2020 through September 2020. The extension would allow more Maldivians to apply as the employment situation was deteriorating and COVID-19 cases were rising. An estimated US\$6 million of the funding for the ISA program had not been spent and the PAD noted that any surplus funds could finance an extension of the program if needed. (Restructuring Paper, RES44042).

Additional Financing Grant, January 25, 2021: An AF grant of US\$21.6 million extended support payments to Income Support Allowance beneficiaries through December 2020. The target for PDO 1 increased from 10,000 to 15,000 beneficiaries of the social safety net program. For PDO 2, the target increased from 3,000 to 4,500 female beneficiaries. Also, two new PDO indicators were added to capture the number of female self-employed beneficiaries (PDO 5) and the number of person-months of support provided (PDO 6).

Restructuring 2, December 13, 2021: This restructuring added three subcomponents to Component 1 to enable workers to generate sustainable income at the end of the crisis. The subcomponents were: (a) a short vocational training program for upskilling of job seekers in priority trades; (b) an apprenticeship program to create a pathway for permanent job opportunities; and (c) an entrepreneurship program to support self-employed workers. To allow sufficient time for the subcomponents to be implemented, the AF closing date was extended by six months to December 31, 2022. (Restructuring Paper, RES47642). Changes were made to the Results Framework:

The targets for PDO indicator 1, number of beneficiaries of safety net programs, increased from 15,000 to 24,000; and the target for female beneficiaries for PDO indicator 2 increased from 4,500 to 9,400.

The target for PDO indicator 5, number of beneficiaries of safety net programs, self-employed female, was revised from 1,100 to 6,500.

The targets for PDO indicator 6, number of cash transfers paid to eligible beneficiaries during the pandemic (person months), were increased from 80,000 to 100,000 beneficiaries, and female beneficiary targets were increased from 24,000 to 33,000.



Restructuring 3, December 12, 2022: This restructuring extended the closing date for the AF by 12 months to December 31, 2023 to allow additional time for completion of the skills development entrepreneurship programs, and to allow the PMU to conduct a feedback survey and program evaluation including tracer surveys of beneficiaries. (Restructuring Paper, RES53848). The target for PDO indicator 6, cash transfers paid to eligible beneficiaries during the pandemic (person months), was revised downward from 100,000 to 95,000 persons as fewer beneficiaries would receive the cash transfers associated with the training and apprenticeship programs.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The Government projected that 15,000 to 20,000 people would lose their jobs and incomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and many Maldivians would struggle to meet their daily needs without financial support, posing a threat to human capital and social stability. The aim of the project was to provide temporary emergency income support to people most affected by income loss due to the pandemic, and to strengthen social protection delivery systems and institutions to respond better in future emergencies.

The project was well-aligned with the emergency needs in the country and the Bank's COVID-19 crisis response program. The operation was aligned with the World Bank Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Maldives for FY2016-FY2019 (Report No.103724-MV) and its objectives to enhance employability and economic opportunities.

The AF scaled up the temporary income support program to increase the number of beneficiaries and to improve the employability of workers after the pandemic emergency. The project complemented the Maldives COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Project (P173801) that aimed to prevent further spread of the disease.

The PDO continued to be fully aligned with the country's needs and the World Bank's assistance priorities as described in the CPF for the Republic of Maldives for the Period FY2023-2027 (Report no. 177788-MV), specifically the Higher-Level Objective (HLO) 3, Improved Human Capital Outcomes. The CPF addressed the need to better target pensions and social safety nets, and address unemployment insurance programs and limited vocational training. The AF and restructuring strengthened relevance with the focus on vocational training and linkages with the labor market. The PDO remained relevant as a follow-on project, Sustainable and Integrated Labor Services Project (SAILS, P177240), is ongoing and aims to establish an unemployment insurance scheme and an employment services scheme.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)



OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on workers and their families.

Rationale

A theory of change (TOC) and results chain were included in the PAD. The ICR updated the TOC with the Additional Financing. By providing temporary income support to eligible Maldivians and offering apprenticeships, vocational training, and support to entrepreneurs to enhance the employability of workers after the pandemic, the project aimed to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic.

Outputs and intermediate results

The time to receive the first payment after application for financial support was 4 weeks, achieving the target of 4 weeks. (IRI 1) Financial support was available to eligible individuals who had either lost a job since the beginning of the pandemic or had a total loss of income because of the crisis. The National Social Protection Agency provided assistance to individuals in preparing their application.

All grievances (100 percent) under the ISA program were addressed within two weeks, surpassing the target of 80 percent. (IRI 2) A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was established and 45,728 grievances were received, of which 45,698 were resolved within a two-week period. Sixty-five percent of the grievances were related to requests for guidance on the application process. The GRM was extended to the skills development and entrepreneurship activities. The ICR notes that all the inquiries were resolved.

All beneficiary records (100 percent) were stored and accessible in the Social Protection Information System (IRI 3), exceeding the target of 90 percent. The information system securely collected and maintained applicants' information, served as a management information system, and was used to determine eligibility.

Ninety-two percent of beneficiaries reported being satisfied with the COVID-19 Support Allowance enrollment and payment processes (IRI 4), surpassing the target of 75 percent.

The total number of beneficiaries enrolled in apprenticeships (IRI 9) was 153, which met the revised target of 150 beneficiaries. The original target was 400 beneficiaries. Income Support Assistance beneficiaries were selected competitively for apprenticeships in local firms and state-owned enterprises for six months and received on-the-job training. Ninety-seven applicants successfully completed the program and 25 percent were female.

The total number of beneficiaries enrolled and trained in the vocational program (IRI 10) was 3,508, exceeding the target of 2,000 beneficiaries. The vocational training program provided upskilling for job seekers in priority trades including diving, accounting, ICT, and tourism. Eighty six percent of enrolled beneficiaries completed the training programs and received industry designated certifications. A tracer study found that 49 percent of beneficiaries were employed six months after completing the training, and others pursued further studies and were looking for more flexible job opportunities.

Outcomes



There were 27,104 beneficiaries of social safety net programs, exceeding the revised target of 24,000 and original target of 10,000. (PDO 1) Of these beneficiaries 10,742 were female, exceeding the original and revised targets of 3,000 and 9,400, respectively. (PDO 2)

There were 8,064 self-employed female beneficiaries of social safety net programs, surpassing the original and revised targets of 1,100 and 6,500, respectively. (PDO 5).

The number of cash transfers paid to eligible beneficiaries during the pandemic (person months) was 97,344 exceeding the final revised target (2022) of 95,000 and original target of 80,000, falling slightly short of the second revised target (2021) of 100,000 cash transfers (person months). Of these, 35,180 cash transfers were paid to eligible female beneficiaries during the pandemic (person months), surpassing the revised target of 33,000. The indicator aimed to measure the scale of support to eligible beneficiaries.

The PDO indicators were largely output-oriented, given the emergency setting. The evidence demonstrated substantial attainment of the objective. In addition, the expanded eligibility and relaxed criteria for financial support diverted from the stated objective that was directly linked to the impact of COVID-19.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To increase the capacity of social protection programs to respond to future emergencies.

Rationale

Objective 2 aimed to strengthen the Government's social protection system to better respond to future crises. By strengthening the National Social Protection Agency's (NSPA) delivery and targeting systems, developing a fiscally sustainable unemployment insurance program, improving retirement pension programs, and developing a national social protection framework, the capacity of social protection programs to respond to future emergencies would be increased.

Outputs and intermediate results

A proposal for reforms for the retirement pension programs was drafted and presented to the competent authorities (IRI 7) and the target was met. The aim was to increase coverage and benefits of the Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme and other government-financed pension schemes and social pension programs. The plan included strategies for improving compliance with the Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme and maximizing retirement savings and worker coverage.

Improvements to the Social Protection Information System (SPIS) of Maldives were completed and tested (IRI 8) and the target was met. The aim was to improve the SPIS to address the NSPA's needs to expand the scope and coverage of its programs, thereby strengthening the capacity of its social protection system to respond to future shocks.



Outcomes

Eighty-five percent of island councils received access to NSPA's information system to view and update beneficiary records (PDO 3), exceeding the target of 50 percent. The aim was to improve connectivity with island councils and enable them to submit applications online rather than mailing them to the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS) headquarters to be manually entered. Island councils assisted vulnerable groups in the application process. The engagement of island councils increased knowledge of local needs as well as coordination with the NSPA, thereby contributing to strengthening the ability to manage future emergencies.

The National Social Protection Framework was prepared and presented to the competent authorities and the target was met (IRI 5). The unemployment insurance program was designed and presented to the competent authorities (IRI 6) and the target was met. It included an assessment of options for an unemployment insurance program and contributed to the design of the new World Bank supported Sustainable and Integrated Labor Services (SAILS) Project which is supporting an unemployment insurance program. The framework was officially adopted by the NSPA and Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services in January 2023. The Framework included a detailed assessment of the sector's structure, current programs, their financing and impact, and laying out a multi-stakeholder action plan for the sector's future direction. (ICR, p. 9). The ICR did not report if, and how, the framework was used to improve social protection.

Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Objective 1, to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on workers and their families, was substantially achieved by increasing the number of beneficiaries in social protection and employability programs. Objective 2, to increase the capacity of social protection programs to respond to future emergencies, was also achieved with the strengthened role of island councils, the design of an unemployment insurance program, and the development of a framework for social protection. The aggregate achievement is indicative of a Substantial rating for overall Efficacy.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted at appraisal to quantify the benefit of the project and compare it with the program cost of US\$12.8 million at approval. The analysis examined the impact of temporary income support on



lifetime earnings, and the net benefit was calculated by comparing it with projected earnings if no income support was provided. The analysis added a multiplier of 1.2 on lifetime earnings to account for externalities from income support such as improving nutrition, health, and education. The net gain in lifetime earnings per person, and the economy-wide gain in earnings, assumed that at least 20,000 persons would benefit. The savings on administration of social protection programs that would accrue to future costs of the social protection programs were calculated. The analysis assumed that the project would save 3.5 percent of total annual spending discounted for 10 years. In sum, the analysis concluded a cost-benefit ratio of 3.4 which is indicative of high cost-effectiveness.

While the ICR noted that the cost-benefit calculation at appraisal likely underestimated the economic effect, it did not conduct its own analysis or repeat the calculations of the appraisal estimates based on information available at the time of closing. It noted that children of parents who received income support likely benefited from protection of their nutritional status and well-being, thereby protecting human capital. Also, AF-funded activities for vocational training, apprenticeships, and support to entrepreneurs likely yielded increased employability and annual earnings of beneficiaries.

With regard to implementation efficiency, at appraisal the PMU was fully established. The second restructuring in December 2021 added three new subcomponents for the vocational training, apprenticeships, and the entrepreneurship programs for an expected 2,400 beneficiaries. An 18-month total extension was reasonable to design and implement these programs and conduct evaluation activities including a beneficiary survey and tracer study.

There were some shortcomings in implementation aspects and financial management which moderately reduced project efficiency. The initial high volume of applications caused backlogs that were ultimately addressed and processing time improved. (ISR No.1, September 2020). The relaxation of eligibility that was initially associated with the impact of COVID-19 resulted in benefits extending beyond the intended purpose of Objective 1 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The roll out of training and apprenticeship activities in support of unemployed workers was delayed. The 2022 restructuring allowed additional time for training and for more outreach to promote the participation of applicants from atolls outside of Male. On balance, overall efficiency is assessed as Substantial as it reflected what would be expected in the operation’s sector.

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

Relevance of objectives is rated High as they were responsive to the economic impact of the pandemic on workers and their families and laid the foundation for improving the social protection system. Efficacy is rated Substantial as the project substantially achieved its objectives. Efficiency is rated Substantial. The overall Outcome is rated Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The project's activities to design an unemployment insurance program provided the foundation for continued focus on social protection. A follow-on World Bank-supported project, Sustainable and Integrated Labor Services (SAILS), will enable the provision of unemployment benefits and insurance, and employment services with job search assistance and training. These activities aim to formalize the protection of workers in future emergencies.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project was highly relevant and appropriately focused on responding to immediate needs by providing temporary income support to workers and families while strengthening the social protection system to respond to future emergencies. Project design drew on existing National Social Protection Agency delivery systems which had been used for the successful provision of prior social assistance programs. The project was well-designed to enable the likelihood of achievement of its development outcomes.

The Ministry of Economic Development established the Project Management Unit and all positions were filled at the time of appraisal. Implementation arrangements for monitoring and evaluation were in place. The results framework was straightforward and the indicators were output-oriented due to the short implementation timeframe for an emergency project. Institutional capacity risk was rated Substantial given the expected steep learning curve for the PMU. MoED did not have prior experience in managing World Bank-financed projects and some positions in the PMU were jointly supporting other projects. (PAD, para 33). To mitigate potential challenges as much as possible, Bank staff aimed to provide close implementation support.



Quality-at-Entry Rating

Highly Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The World Bank team prepared seven Implementation Status and Results Reports that were candid and documented progress, challenges, and action plans. The Bank team was timely and responsive in the context of an emergency financing project. The team was proactive in responding to the Government's request for AF and working to support the additional activities to improve workers' employability. The team coordinated with the World Bank-financed Enhancing Employability and Resilience of Youth Project (P163818) to ensure activities were complementary and not duplicative.

The project team provided support when project restructuring added additional components. The Bank team was responsive to fiduciary compliance issues including delays in the submission of financial reports and accuracy issues, and delays in the submission of audit reports. These issues were addressed by staffing the PMU with qualified and dedicated full-time experts.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Highly Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Highly Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The theory of change was reflected in the results framework. The indicators captured the contribution of activities toward achievement of the project's objectives. Indicators measured the number of beneficiaries who received temporary income support, timeliness of payments and grievances addressed, while also measuring achievement of milestones for the country's social protection system including the design and drafting of an employment insurance program. The causal link between all the indicators and their respective objectives was clear, although the subsequent loosening of eligibility for financial support diminished the direct linkage with the impact of COVID-10 as was intended by the stated objective. The outcome indicators were mostly outputs or intermediate results indicators given the project's emergency nature and two-year implementation period.

b. M&E Implementation

The PMU collected and maintained data and prepared quarterly reports on progress on achieving results. Beneficiary surveys were conducted to assess satisfaction with enrollment and payment processes following each of three phases: April to June 2020, July to September 2020, and October to December 2020. The initial surveys revealed the need to expedite application processing. For the vocational training program, a satisfaction survey of beneficiaries in the training program found that a majority were satisfied



with the program, the GRM, and financial support. For individuals who received a self-employment support grant, a phone survey tracked individuals and found that more young women than men applied to the program, and young women preferred to be self-employed and in control of their own time.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E data were used to improve implementation for the Income Support Assistance Program. Findings from the satisfaction surveys on the application process for the income support assistance program were used to expedite the process. Applicants needed to provide documentation electronically to MoED including a national identity card and documents to support employment or income loss. Many claims required clarification and follow-up with applicants. The PMU made system improvements and increased staffing. By July 2020, application processing time was reduced from 41 days to 27 days. In October 2020, an additional 30 claims processing staff were hired to accommodate a surge in applications from July through September 2020.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

At appraisal, the environmental and social risk was moderate. The project did not finance construction of civil works or procurement of materials that would have adverse environmental impacts, and environmental risks were considered low. Social risks were considered moderate due to factors including: (a) potential beneficiaries especially vulnerable groups lacking access to information about applying for the Income Support Allowance and other benefits; (b) the lack of adequate consultations with relevant stakeholders during preparation of the National Social Protection Framework and plans for pension reforms and an unemployment insurance program; and (c) occupational and community health and safety risks due to the spread of COVID-19.

Because the project was prepared under emergency procedures, it was not subject to full safeguards and environmental policies. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), a Labor Management Procedure, and an Environmental Social Management Framework were prepared, along with Occupational Health and Safety standards for workers to prevent the spread of infection and a hotline for support when submitting applications and registering grievances.

According to the ICR, Environmental and Social (E&S) compliance was Satisfactory. The PMU was staffed with appropriate focal persons. A media campaign was undertaken to raise awareness of the Income Support Allowance. The Project's GRM functioned well and all inquiries were resolved in a timely manner.

b. Fiduciary Compliance



Financial management was revised downward from Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory in April 2021 due to the delay in appointing an internal auditor, issues in accuracy in financial reports, and delays in submitting financial reports and audit reports. It was downgraded to Moderately Unsatisfactory in October 2021 due to persistent delays in submission of financial reports, issues in the accuracy of the reports, delays in the audit process and submission of audit reports, delays in the internal audit process, and weaknesses in FM staffing capacity. With the recruitment of a dedicated full-time FM expert and no overdue audits or IUFs, performance improved to Moderately Satisfactory in June 2022 and then to Satisfactory in November 2022 which remained so until project closing.

Procurement performance was rated Satisfactory in September 2020 and revised to Moderately Satisfactory in April 2021 and December 2021 due to contracting delays owing to staffing changes (ISR #2, April 2021 and ISR#3, December 15, 2021). Performance was upgraded to Satisfactory in June 2022 when the PMU confirmed that the staffing arrangement was in place and this rating remained the same through project closing.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None reported.

d. Other

N/A

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Minor shortcomings in Efficacy and Efficiency.
Bank Performance	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	High	Substantial	M&E was generally sufficient to assess the achievement of the objectives, but there was moderate weaknesses that did not allow full demonstration of efficacy.
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR (p. 16-17) offered lessons, including the following:



Simple project design and use of existing social protection delivery systems enable timely and effective emergency support. Project design with straightforward outputs and intermediate results that are tailored to the country and emergency context are a key factor for effective implementation. Using existing social protection delivery systems that have demonstrated prior success, albeit on a smaller scale, coupled with support to increase delivery system capacity, contributes to the strengthening and growth of the social protection system. Also, investments at the local level in supporting registration and supporting applicants contribute to building capacity that is conducive to scale up in a future emergency.

Strengthening workforce skills in addition to providing temporary income support enables workers to be better prepared to join the labor market when a crisis subsides. By offering skills training, certifications, apprenticeships, and support for entrepreneurs in occupations with high employment potential, workers will be better equipped to generate a sustainable income when they re-enter the labor market. Also, this can enhance the prospects and pace of economic recovery.

A crisis period can create the opportunity to strengthen the social protection system for the longer-term. During a crisis when attention is focused on meeting immediate income support needs, the importance of a social protection system becomes more visible and paramount. This period may open up the opportunity for dialogue and action to identify gaps in social protection and actions steps to fill those gaps. More broadly, the timing may create the will to rethink the existing social protection system at a higher level and how it can be improved.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provided a concise description of the project and was internally consistent. The theory of change was well-articulated. The report included detailed information on the restructurings, AF, adjustments to the results framework, and the Grievance Redress Mechanism which was well-utilized. The project was output-oriented due to the emergency nature of the operation and the short implementation period.

The ICR provided evidence that project activities contributed to mitigation of the economic impact of the pandemic on workers and families and strengthened social protection for future emergencies. Valuable lessons were drawn from project experience. In addition to reporting that the National Social Protection Framework was approved, it would have been welcome for the ICR to note if, and how, the framework was used to improve social protection and prepare for future emergencies.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial

