



1. Project Data

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| Project ID P153743 | Project Name Electricity Access Expansion Project | |
| Country Niger | Practice Area(Lead) Energy & Extractives | |
| L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-57550,IDA-63050,IDA-D0980,IDA-D3650 | Closing Date (Original) 31-Dec-2021 | Total Project Cost (USD) 129,328,582.01 |
| Bank Approval Date 16-Dec-2015 | Closing Date (Actual) 31-Dec-2024 | |
| | IBRD/IDA (USD) | Grants (USD) |
| Original Commitment | 65,000,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Revised Commitment | 135,000,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Actual | 115,098,220.65 | 0.00 |

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the International Development Association (IDA) Financing Agreement (p.5) dated January 13, 2016 and the Project Appraisal Document (p.14), the project objective was “to increase access to electricity in the Recipient’s territory.” The financing agreement defines the Recipient as the Republic of Niger.



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

06-Aug-2018

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

According to the financing agreement, the project consisted of two components:

A: Extension and reinforcement of distribution systems. (*Appraisal cost: US\$52.60 million; revised cost at Additional Financing: US\$153.08 million; actual cost: see revised components below*)

This component was to finance the extension, reinforcement, densification, and rehabilitation of medium and low voltage (MV/LV) networks in targeted urban areas to increase electricity access. It was intended to support the construction of new MV and LV lines, supply higher-capacity equipment, invest in areas with saturated networks due to increased load density, and replace obsolete equipment. The component also aimed to reinforce the MV network and substations by constructing new overhead and underground MV lines, upgrading high voltage (HV) and MV transformers, and building switching substations. Additionally, it was to finance up to 60,000 electricity connections, including meters and connection equipment, and provide consultant services for construction supervision.

B. Strengthening institutional capacity in the electricity sector. (*Appraisal cost: US\$8.72 million; revised cost at Additional Financing: US\$17.2 million; actual cost: see revised components below*)

This component was to finance technical assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum (later Ministry of Energy - MoE) and to NIGELEC (Société Nigérienne d'Electricité, the public electricity utility) to support institutional development in the electricity sector. Support to MoE was intended to strengthen its capacity to develop sector policies and regulations, establish an Energy Regulator, prepare a tariff review, and develop a national electrification strategy to expand access in rural areas. Support to NIGELEC was to enhance its capacity in distribution system planning, improve system operation and fault clearing, and conduct a study for Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems for the HV and MV grid.

The component also included financing for project management activities to be carried out by NIGELEC, including the provision of goods, training, and operational costs to support implementation and the conduct of annual audits of NIGELEC's accounts.

Revised Components

The Additional Financing (AF) in August 2018 introduced significant revisions to the project components to scale up its development impact and address emerging sector needs. As summarized above, the original



project had two components. The AF revised and expanded these components and added a third component for transmission investments.

1: Upgrading and Reinforcement of Transmission Systems in the Western Grid (*AF cost: US\$49.60 million; actual cost: US\$25.28 million*)

This new component was to address transmission bottlenecks in Niamey and the Western Grid. It included: (a) Upgrading the existing 66 kV transmission loop in Niamey to 132 kV double-circuit lines; (b) reinforcing substations and constructing new ones in Niamey, Dosso, and Tillabery; (c) building a new transmission line between Dosso and Balleyara; and (d) financing an owner's engineer to supervise construction and ensure compliance with safeguards.

2: Extension, Reinforcement, and Densification of MV and LV Networks
(*AF: US\$96.80 million; actual cost including the original Component A: US\$82.60 million*)

This component was to scale up the original Component A and expand its geographic scope to include Diffa and selected rural areas. It included the following activities: (a) Implementation of Phase 1 and part of Phase 2 of Niamey's distribution master plan; (b) construction of a Distribution Network Control Center in Niamey; (c) extension and reinforcement of MV/LV networks in seven regional capitals and rural localities; (d) subsidized electricity connections for 100,000 new customers; and (e) supervision of distribution works through an owner's engineer.

3: Strengthening Institutional Capacity in the Electricity Sector and Support for Project Management
(*Cost at AF: US\$8.50 million; actual cost including the original Component B: US\$14.35 million*)

This component was to expand the original Component B and included the following: (a) Technical assistance to the MoE to support planning, solar energy development, and regulatory oversight; (b) technical assistance to NIGELEC for transmission protection planning, training, and feasibility studies; and (c) support for project management, including staffing, equipment, audits, and operational costs.

These revisions were aimed at expanding the scope of the project from a distribution-focused intervention to a more comprehensive program addressing transmission infrastructure, rural electrification, and institutional capacity building.

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

Project Cost: At appraisal in 2015, the total project cost was estimated at US\$65.00 million including US\$3.68 million for contingencies. During the 2018 AF, the cost was revised to US\$227 million to reflect the expanded scope and activities. The ICR confirms the revised cost at AF but does not report the actual total project cost at closing. In an email dated October 14, 2025, the project team confirmed that the project actual project cost was US\$122.21 million. The cost was lower than the revised cost because of the cancellation of the funds from other donors (See Financing below).

Financing: At appraisal, the IDA credit amount was estimated at US\$54.50 million and grant at US\$10.50 million. During the AF, the total IDA financing was increased by US\$70 million to US\$135 million, comprising an IDA credit of US\$56 million and a grant of US\$14.00 million. At project closing, US\$122.21 million of the IDA financing was disbursed. In addition to IDA, the project was expected to receive US\$70



million in parallel financing from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and US\$22 million in grant financing from the European Union (EU). However, the ICR (pp. 8 and 10) confirms that only the IDA financing was fully mobilized and mostly disbursed, and the EIB and the EU suspended and eventually cancelled their funding following the coup d'état and the political upheavals in its aftermath in 2023.

Borrower's contribution: At appraisal or AF, there was no borrower contribution expected for the project. The ICR does not report any materialized borrower contribution during implementation.

Project Restructuring: The project was restructured once with AF, and the project closing date was extended retroactively following the coup d'état in 2023.

- **First Project Restructuring and Additional Financing (August 31, 2018 – Level 1):** The project was restructured to include an AF consisting of a US\$56 million IDA credit and a US\$14 million grant to finance the increased project scope (see Revised Component in section 2.d). The project closing date was extended from December 31, 2021, to December 31, 2023, to allow time for the implementation of new and expanded activities. The results framework was revised to reflect increased targets, including doubling the number of people provided with electricity (from 326,400 to 736,000), increasing non-household connections (from 9,000 to 15,000), and expanding distribution line construction (from 695 km to 2,030 km) in addition to the new indicators capturing the investments in transmission.
- **Project Closing Date Extension (December 2023):** The closing date was retroactively extended from December 31, 2023, to December 31, 2024, due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the July 2023 coup d'état. Global supply chain disruptions and travel restrictions slowed construction, while regional sanctions and the suspension of parallel financing constrained government payments. The extension was to allow time to complete critical activities, including rural electrification and transmission upgrades, and to mitigate the impact of these external shocks.

Dates: The project was approved on December 16, 2015, and became effective on June 21, 2016, after a delay of over six months due to internal operational challenges, including the limited capacity of the implementing agency and delays in fulfilling effectiveness conditions (ICR, p.17). The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted on December 6, 2018 (ICR, p.7). The original project closing date was December 31, 2021, but it was extended twice—first to December 31, 2023, to accommodate the expanded scope under the AF, and then again to December 31, 2024, due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis following the July 2023 coup d'état, which triggered the application of World Bank Operational Policy 7.30 and the suspension of parallel financing (ICR, pp.17–18). The project closed on December 31, 2024.

Reason for not Undertaking a Split Assessment of the Project's Outcome

A split assessment of the project's outcome is not necessary because the project's development objective—to increase access to electricity—remained unchanged through to project closing. The project's scope and targets were expanded significantly (not reduced) in 2018, and this was matched by a proportional increase in funding through an AF. According to the World Bank guidance for Investment Project Financing ICRs (p.11), a split rating is generally not required when the project's scope is expanded making the project more ambitious. Since the revisions enhanced the project's impact without lowering its original goals, and the outcome assessment already reflects the full implementation period, a single outcome rating is appropriate.



3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

At appraisal, Niger faced a severe energy access deficit, with national electricity access at just 10 percent and rural access below 1 percent. The country's dependence on electricity imports from Nigeria—covering nearly three-quarters of consumption—posed risks due to transmission bottlenecks and supply constraints. Domestic generation was costly and insufficient, and distribution infrastructure was weak and overstretched. These challenges were compounded by limited institutional capacity and the absence of a national electrification strategy. The project originally aimed to address the development problem of insufficient access to electricity by expanding and reinforcing MV and LV distribution networks in seven major urban centers, increasing household connections by subsidies, and strengthening institutional capacity in the electricity sector. Following the expansion of the scope of the project at the AF in 2018, the project also aimed at increasing rural electrification. The project's support to the development of a National Electrification Strategy was to directly guide future investments and policy reforms in the sector to ensure continuity in addressing these development challenges.

At project closing in December 2024, the objective remained substantially aligned with the World Bank Group's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY18–22, which was still applicable. The CPF aims to accelerate Niger's development by addressing growth constraints, demographic pressures, and fragility. The project supported Focus Area 1: Increased Rural Productivity and Incomes by expanding electricity access—an essential component of improving rural infrastructure and reducing spatial inequities. This alignment strengthened after additional financing extended the scope to rural areas. The project also contributed to Focus Area III: Better Governance for Jobs, Service Delivery, and Growth by supporting institutional reforms in the energy sector, including efforts to strengthen NIGELEC and improve the regulatory framework for rural electrification. While the CPF gives limited prominence to electricity access despite Niger's very low coverage, the project's focus on underserved urban centers and its support for the World Bank's Mission 300 initiative reinforce its strategic relevance. Additionally, technical assistance and capacity building under the project advanced the CPF's goal of developing a National Electrification Strategy..

The project objective is also consistent with Niger's long-term development vision as articulated in the *Stratégie pour le Développement Durable et la Croissance Inclusive (SDDCI) – Niger 2035*, which emphasizes infrastructure development, regional equity, and improved public service delivery. It is highly aligned with the country context in Niger. However, by focusing on expanding access only and excluding the critical service delivery aspects of electricity supply (i.e., quality, reliability, and sustainability), which were identified as the expected outcomes of the project's intervention both in the PAD and AF Project Paper (Report No: PAD2615) and were essential for sustained development impact, the objective is narrowly formulated. This omission represents a shortcoming in the outcome orientation of the objective.

The project objective is appropriate for an investment operation focused on infrastructure expansion and institutional strengthening. It drew on lessons from previous World Bank engagements in Niger's energy sector, including support for the Kandadji hydropower project and the Public Investment Reform Support Program. While the objective is ambitious in terms of geographic scope and scale of connections, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the objective does not capture the reliability, quality, and sustainability aspects of electricity service delivery; hence, lowering the ambition of the project.



In sum, the objective is highly relevant to Niger's development needs and strategic priorities and was appropriately pitched for the country's development status, and especially given the FCV situation.

Overall, the Relevance of Objectives is rated High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To increase access to electricity.

Rationale

Theory of Change

The original project was to finance infrastructure investments and institutional capacity-building to increase electricity access. Infrastructure activities focused on expanding and upgrading distribution networks in key urban centers, installing new connections, and implementing a subsidized connection policy to improve affordability. In parallel, institutional support targeted the MoE and NIGELEC through technical assistance for policy and regulatory development, the establishment of an energy regulator, and the formulation of a National Electrification Strategy.

These activities were expected to produce outputs such as improved distribution infrastructure, new connections, strengthened substations, and enhanced sector strategies and tools. These outputs were to lead to outcomes including improved access, service reliability, and institutional capacity, contributing to the project's objective of expanding electricity access.

The AF deepened and broadened the original Theory of Change (ToC) by reinforcing existing activities and introducing new ones. It added a transmission component, expanded the geographic scope to rural areas, and enhanced institutional support for planning and renewable energy development. The revised ToC reflected a more integrated approach to electrification.

These changes strengthened the causal chain by addressing upstream constraints that could have limited the effectiveness of distribution investments. By improving transmission capacity and system resilience, the project was better positioned to deliver reliable electricity to more users including those in rural areas.

New outputs, such as a network control center and improved planning tools, were expected to enhance operational efficiency and system management. These were to support more sustainable outcomes, including broader and more equitable access and stronger institutional readiness for future growth.



Overall, the ToC presents a coherent and plausible results chain that links project activities to outputs and intended outcomes. The results chain is direct and valid, and the achievement of the project outcomes and objectives could be attributed to the project's intervention.

Outputs

- **Household connections provided with access to electricity under the project (Number):** **Achieved and exceeded.** 121,475 households were connected, surpassing the target of 115,000.
- **Connections provided to female-headed households (% of total household connections given above):** **Substantially achieved.** 10.5% achieved versus a target of 16% (65.63% achievement).
- **Number of total electricity connections completed in urban areas under the project (Number):** **Substantially achieved.** 121,475 connections were completed out of a target of 125,500 (97.18% achievement).
- **Number of total electricity connections completed in rural areas under the project (Number):** **Not achieved.** No verified data was available at project closing due to delays in meter acquisition, ongoing activities, and external constraints such as sanctions and contractor issues.
- **Distribution lines constructed or rehabilitated under the project (km):** **Substantially achieved.** 1,611 km completed out of 2,030 km targeted (79.36% achievement).
- **Distribution lines constructed under the project in urban areas (km):** **Substantially achieved.** 1,158 km completed out of 1,260 km targeted (91.9% achievement).
- **Distribution lines constructed under the project in rural areas (km):** **Exceeded.** 213 km completed versus a target of 135 km (158% achievement).
- **Distribution lines rehabilitated under the project (km):** **Substantially achieved.** 453.54 km were completed out of 635 km targeted (71.34% achievement).
- **Transmission lines rehabilitated under the project (km):** **Not achieved.** Only 5 km completed out of 35 km targeted (14% achievement). Remaining activities were transferred to the HASKE project due to delays and external constraints.
- **Number of times MV feeders affected by the project are cut off (Number):** **Fully achieved.** Target of reducing outages from 85 to 40 was met.
- **Substation supply capacity (MW):** **Exceeded.** Achieved 566 MW versus a target of 455 MW (124% achievement).
- **Cities with completed georeferenced electricity systems (Number):** **Exceeded.** 8 cities completed versus a target of 7.
- **National Electrification Strategy adopted by the Government (Text):** **Fully achieved.** The strategy was adopted and implemented.

Outcomes

- **People provided with new or improved electricity service:** **Achieved and exceeded.** The project reached 767,722 people, surpassing the target of 736,000 (104% achievement). Of these, 541,000 received new connections. The gender target of 49.6% female beneficiaries was also met.
- **Non-household connections provided with access to electricity under the project:** **Not achieved.** Only 773 connections were completed out of the 15,000 targeted (5.15% achievement). Logistical bottlenecks and sanctions following the 2023 coup delayed the acquisition of meters. Additionally, monitoring systems at NIGELEC could not distinguish non-household connections from residential ones showing a weakness in data collection.



- **Direct project beneficiaries:** Achieved and exceeded. The project reached 776,158 beneficiaries, exceeding the target of 751,000 (103% achievement).

On the access front, the project delivered strong results. It exceeded its targets for household connections and total beneficiaries, demonstrating that its core activities, such as subsidized connection fees and network expansion, were effective in reaching underserved populations. These outcomes are well aligned with the project's theory of change and are plausibly attributable to its interventions. However, the target for rural electrification through grid connections could not be achieved, and final data on rural connections were unavailable at project closing because of data collection issues. This gap is particularly significant given the project's emphasis on reducing energy poverty in rural areas.

The project also experienced shortcomings in expanding electricity access for productive and institutional users, as well as in reinforcing transmission infrastructure. Non-household connections—intended to support businesses, schools, and health facilities—were severely constrained by delays in equipment procurement and external disruptions, limiting the project's contribution to economic and social services. Similarly, transmission line rehabilitation was minimal, and several related activities had to be transferred to a follow-on project (HASKE) due to implementation delays. These gaps weakened the project's ability to enhance grid resilience and support broader development outcomes beyond household access.

Although not captured by the formulation of the project objective, the project also aimed to improve the reliability and quality of electricity supply. Investments such as increased substation supply capacity and the construction of a Network Control Center in Niamey and the outcome of reduced MV feeder outages suggest that system performance may have improved. Yet, this is an inferred outcome related to improved reliability rather than directly measured.

Institutional strengthening was a key component of the project, with support for the adoption of the National Electrification Strategy, development of georeferenced electricity systems, and introduction of planning and regulatory tools. These achievements are strategically important and likely to have lasting impacts on sector governance.

Finally, implementation delays—exacerbated by external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability—led to the transfer of several activities to HASKE. While this ensured continuity, it also meant that some planned outputs were not delivered within the original project's timeframe, affecting the completeness of its results.

In sum, the project demonstrated substantial efficacy in expanding electricity access and laying the groundwork for future improvements in reliability and institutional capacity. However, moderate shortcomings in non-household access, rural electrification, and the incomplete implementation of transmission activities temper the overall assessment. On balance, the project's efficacy in achieving its objective to increase access to electricity is rated as Substantial.

Rating
Substantial



OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The project exceeded its targets for household connections and total beneficiaries, indicating strong performance in expanding access. It also contributed to institutional strengthening through the adoption of the National Electrification Strategy and deployment of planning tools. However, moderate shortcomings temper this performance: the rural electrification target was not met, and several transmission-related activities were transferred to a follow-on project due to implementation delays. While these gaps limit the completeness of the results, the core objective was largely achieved, and the outcomes are plausibly attributable to project interventions. Therefore, the overall efficacy rating is assessed as Substantial.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic Analysis

The economic analysis at appraisal applied a standard “with-project vs. without-project” scenario framework over the investment’s economic life of 50 years. It appropriately excluded technical assistance and price contingencies, focusing on directly attributable benefits and costs. Economic benefits—additional electricity sales and improved electricity supply efficiency—were estimated using customers’ willingness-to-pay (WTP) for electricity services at US\$0.20 per kWh, a conservative figure compared to the high cost of diesel-generated electricity. Costs included investment, operation and maintenance, and generation costs. The methodology incorporated common elements for assessing the economic viability of a distribution network investment and access project, providing a credible basis for decision-making. The analysis yielded a Net Present Value (NPV) of US\$50.9 million at a 10 percent discount rate and an Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) of 22.6%, indicating robust economic viability above the typical benchmark for public investments.

The economic analysis conducted for the AF built upon the same core methodology used at appraisal—the “with-project vs. without-project” framework and benefits estimated using WTP for electricity services. The AF economic analysis expanded the scope to include transmission investments and rural electrification. Economic benefits from reduced greenhouse gas emissions were also included. The overall EIRR for the project was calculated at 26.2%, with an NPV of US\$263 million, though using a discount rate of 6 percent, lower than the 10 percent used at appraisal. The analyses at appraisal and AF provide a coherent and credible basis for assessing the economic viability of the project across its evolving scope.

At the time of project closing, a limited economic analysis was conducted focusing on the distribution investments, as transmission investments were not completed. Economic benefits were expanded to include socio-economic impacts such as extended working hours due to lighting availability, increased income-generating activities, positive effects of lighting on education, and the ability to use appliances like televisions, small fans, and refrigerators. Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions were also considered. Costs included



MV and LV network investments, substations, operation and maintenance, and generation and transmission. The analysis resulted in an EIRR of 19 percent with an NPV of US\$79.8 million at a 10 percent discount rate.

Overall, the project demonstrated substantial efficiency in converting resources into development outcomes. Economic analyses conducted at appraisal, AF, and project closing were methodologically sound, applying a consistent “with-project vs. without-project” framework and conservative assumptions, such as the use of willingness-to-pay (WTP) benchmarks well below the cost of diesel-generated electricity. The estimated EIRRs 22.6% at appraisal, 26.2% for the AF, and 19% at closing exceeded typical public investment benchmarks, indicating strong economic viability. While the discount rate used in the AF analysis was lower (6%) than at appraisal (10%), the resulting NPV remained robust, suggesting that the project continued to deliver value for money across its expanded scope. However, the final analysis covered only distribution investments due to incomplete transmission components, limiting the comprehensiveness of the ex-post assessment.

Operational and Administrative Efficiency

The project encountered early delays due to the limited capacity of NIGELEC’s Cellule des Grands Projets unit, which was unprepared for the scale and complexity of a multi-donor initiative. Procurement bottlenecks and a six-month delay in effectiveness further hindered progress. In response, the Government and the World Bank restructured implementation arrangements, establishing a dedicated unit and appointing a new coordinator (ICR, p.13). These changes improved oversight and helped recover momentum. Nonetheless, eight contracts worth approximately US\$11.76 million were transferred to the follow-on HASKE project, underscoring the project’s inability to complete all planned activities within its original timeframe.

Administratively, performance was mixed. Internal control and documentation issues were addressed through improved archiving and oversight. However, procurement remained a persistent challenge through to project closing. Management quality declined following the reassignment of the original coordinator, prompting competitive recruitment. Contract management and bid evaluation weaknesses led to a downgrade in procurement performance, while external shocks further delayed implementation, such as COVID-19 and the 2023 coup d’état.

Overall, economic analyses conducted at appraisal, AF, and project closing were methodologically sound and demonstrated strong economic viability, with EIRRs consistently above public investment benchmarks. However, operational and administrative inefficiencies, such as early delays, persistent procurement challenges, and the transfer of key contracts to a follow-on project, undermined the timely and cost-effective use of resources. While the project ultimately delivered value for money in terms of development outcomes, the implementation inefficiencies and incomplete transmission components limited the overall efficiency of resource utilization. The project’s efficiency in achieving the project objective is rated Modest.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

| Rate Available? | Point value (%) | *Coverage/Scope (%) |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|



| | | | |
|--------------|---|-------|--|
| Appraisal | ✓ | 22.60 | 85.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
| ICR Estimate | ✓ | 19.00 | 89.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |

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

6. Outcome

The relevance of the project objective is rated High, as it addressed a critical development challenge in Niger and aligned well with national and World Bank strategies. The efficacy of the project is rated Substantial, reflecting strong achievements in expanding household electricity access and institutional strengthening in an FCV context, despite moderate shortcomings in rural electrification, non-household connections, and transmission upgrades, which were transferred to the follow-on project. The project’s efficiency is rated Modest, due to operational delays, procurement challenges, and the incomplete implementation of transmission components, which limited the full realization of economic benefits. With substantial relevance and efficacy, and modest efficiency, the overall outcome rating is Moderately Satisfactory according to the Bank guidance.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Technical: Technical aspects present a moderate risk to sustainability due to the incomplete integration of upgraded infrastructure into the national grid. While the project successfully expanded MV/LV networks and substations, the delayed commissioning of key transmission components—such as the Niamey Loop—limits the full operationalization of these assets. Without timely completion and integration, the reliability and efficiency of electricity supply may be compromised, especially in high-demand urban centers.

Institutional: Institutional risks are significant given the fragile capacity of sector agencies to sustain reforms and manage complex infrastructure portfolios. Although the project strengthened NIGELEC and the MoE’s capacity through technical assistance and regulatory reforms, the long-term durability of these gains is uncertain. Political transitions and staff turnover threaten institutional memory, and without continued capacity-building and budgetary support, the risk of regression in sector governance remains high.

Political: Political instability stands out as a high risk to the sustainability of development outcomes. The July 2023 coup triggered OP 7.30, leading to the suspension of donor financing and regional sanctions. These events disrupted project implementation, delayed infrastructure completion, and weakened stakeholder coordination. The uncertain political climate poses ongoing risks to the continuity of reforms, donor engagement, and the operational autonomy of sector institutions.

Financial: Financial constraints pose a considerable risk due to rising generation costs, stagnant tariffs, and the suspension of parallel financing from the EU and EIB. Although NIGELEC’s revenue performance improved during the project, its financial sustainability remains vulnerable (ICR, p.43). The inability to secure



consistent funding for operations and maintenance, coupled with increased debt service obligations, could erode the reliability of electricity services and stall future expansion efforts.

Unfinished Infrastructure: Unfinished infrastructure poses a direct and immediate risk to the sustainability of outcomes. Several critical components—including transmission line upgrades, rural electrification works, and the Niamey Control Center—were not completed under the project and had to be transferred to the follow-on HASKE project. Delays in executing these activities reduce the effectiveness of the investments already made and risk leaving targeted populations underserved, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The World Bank's support was timely and relevant, addressing one of the lowest electricity access rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was of high strategic importance for Niger. The project was well-grounded in national priorities, i.e., the Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES), and aligned with the World Bank country strategy. The project design incorporated lessons from international best practices, particularly in reducing barriers to household connections through subsidized fees and flexible payment arrangements.

However, the institutional capacity of the implementing agency, NIGELEC, was overestimated. The Cellule des Grands Projets unit of NIGELEC lacked the technical and fiduciary readiness to manage a complex, multi-donor portfolio, resulting in procurement delays and weak financial oversight. These issues were flagged during preparation but not sufficiently mitigated, leading to early implementation bottlenecks and necessitating later restructuring.

Despite these challenges, the World Bank took proactive steps to embed policy reform support and institutional strengthening into the project design. Environmental and social considerations were adequately integrated through relevant safeguard policies, and the inclusion of technical assistance for regulatory development and electrification planning reflected a forward-looking approach. The Bank's decision to incorporate an owner's engineer (a common aspect of such access projects) and to support the establishment of a dedicated project implementation unit (PIU) helped address capacity gaps, albeit reactively.

Overall, while the underestimation of implementation risks and institutional constraints tempered the quality at entry, the project was strategically relevant and technically sound, and the World Bank's overall performance at entry was satisfactory to appraise the project to be implemented so that it was most likely to achieve planned development results in an FCV context. Therefore, the Bank's performance in ensuring quality at entry is rated Satisfactory.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory



b. Quality of supervision

Throughout implementation, the Bank conducted regular supervision missions—typically twice per fiscal year—and maintained a strong field presence, including a Task Team Leader stationed in Niger. This enabled close monitoring of project activities and early identification of implementation challenges. The Bank demonstrated adaptability in responding to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 coup d'état, including the activation of OP 7.30, which temporarily suspended disbursements. Despite these setbacks, the Bank sustained engagement with government counterparts and implementing agencies, ensuring continuity and alignment with development objectives. Notably, the World Bank's supervision efforts contributed to the processing of AF, which expanded the project's scope and enhanced its development impact. The World Bank also demonstrated strategic adaptability by stepping in to fill the financing gap left by other donors, mobilizing additional resources to sustain critical activities and safeguard the project's development impact.

Supervision inputs and processes were robust. The World Bank provided consistent support in fiduciary oversight, including financial management and procurement, and took corrective actions when performance declined—such as recommending a competitive recruitment process for the Project Coordinator (ICR, p.21). The World Bank also played a key role in strengthening the PIU's capacity, which improved project execution and oversight. Safeguard compliance was closely monitored, with the World Bank reviewing environmental and social documentation and supporting grievance redress mechanisms. A quick review of the ISRs showed that performance reporting was candid and detailed, which tracked progress against revised indicators. The World Bank's focus on development impact was evident in its efforts to maintain momentum and adapt to evolving circumstances, although some activities remained incomplete by project closure.

The inability to finalize certain components within the original implementation period raises questions about whether earlier strategic adjustments could have helped mitigate delays. However, given the FCV context—including political instability, health crises, and capacity constraints—the World Bank's supervision was as effective as possible under the circumstances. The decision to transfer unfinished activities to the follow-on HASKE project reflects a pragmatic approach to safeguarding development gains and ensuring continuity. Overall, the Bank's supervision was instrumental in navigating a complex implementation environment, maintaining fiduciary standards, supporting institutional capacity building, and expanding the project's reach through AF—thereby contributing significantly to the achievement of the project's development outcomes.

Overall, the quality of the Bank's supervision of the project is rated Satisfactory.

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 moderately well-conceived, with a simple project objective and a results framework that captured key infrastructure outputs and access-related outputs which were relevant given the FCV context. The indicators were generally specific, measurable, and time-bound, with appropriate targets for physical investments.

Institutional arrangements for M&E were in place, with NIGELEC designated as the lead agency and MEP contributing to specific components. While this structure provided a foundation for monitoring, the PAD acknowledges capacity constraints but did not include a robust plan for strengthening M&E systems.

b. M&E Implementation

The implementation of M&E was marked by a generally responsive and adaptive approach. The PIU, supported by a dedicated M&E specialist, ensured regular tracking of indicators and integrated tools such as geospatial mapping. The results framework was revised at the AF to reflect expanded project scope and evolving priorities, demonstrating flexibility and alignment with implementation realities. However, persistent limitations in NIGELEC's data systems—particularly the inability to distinguish between household and productive-use connections—constrained the depth of analysis. While some data were robust (such as household electricity connections and substation supply capacity), others lacked methodological rigor and quality control (such as non-household connections and rural electrification connection even at the time of this review as confirmed by the project team). The M&E system played a critical role in guiding implementation and informing decision-making. Key infrastructure indicators were closely monitored, and the M&E findings supported timely course corrections (see the M&E Utilization section below). The institutional strengthening of NIGELEC and the MoE, including the adoption of GIS tools and planning software, suggests that some M&E functions may be sustained beyond project closure. However, without further investment in data systems and staff capacity, the long-term effectiveness of M&E processes remains uncertain.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E findings contributed to adaptive project management and strategic course corrections. Ongoing performance monitoring under the M&E framework led to the processing of an AF and expanding of the project scope to increase the project's development impact. Additionally, institutional changes, including the restructuring of the PIU and appointment of a new coordinator, were responses to implementation challenges identified through M&E activities. These shifts demonstrate that M&E was not merely a reporting function but an active tool for guiding implementation and improving delivery.

Beyond implementation adjustments, M&E data were used to substantiate project achievements, particularly in expanding electricity access. Furthermore, M&E findings are expected to inform future interventions, notably the HASKE project, which inherited unfinished activities and lessons learned from the project. The adoption of geospatial identification system tools and planning software also positions sector institutions to apply M&E insights in future programming. The overall use of M&E findings to influence implementation and future planning was substantial.



Overall, the M&E system was generally sufficient to track progress and inform implementation. It supported adaptive management, revisions to the results framework, and results reporting. The M&E system as designed and implemented were sufficient to test the causal chains from project activities to project outputs and outcomes and establish attribution for the achievement of the project objective to increase access to electricity. However, moderate shortcomings persisted— particularly in data systems that limited the classification of connection types and in the underutilization of beneficiary survey findings. These limitations constrained the depth of analysis and evaluative potential but did not undermine the overall utility of the M&E system, which enabled strategic course corrections and informed future interventions in an FCV context. Therefore, the M&E Quality is rated Substantial.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

At appraisal, the project was classified as Category B under Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01) and triggered Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11) and Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12) safeguard policies.

Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01): The project triggered this safeguard policy because of the potential localized environmental impact of the physical investments in electricity distribution and transmission infrastructure finance by the project. The ICR (p. 20) reports that the project demonstrated strong environmental compliance. Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) were prepared and disclosed. An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) was implemented, and regular monitoring reports were submitted to the World Bank. The ICR (p. 20) confirms that mitigation measures were integrated into bidding documents and contractor agreements, and no major environmental issues were reported during implementation.

Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11): This safeguard policy was triggered due to the potential for chance finding of cultural heritage during excavation and construction activities, such as laying distribution lines and building substations. The PAD (p.16) indicated that chance find procedures were included in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) to mitigate such risks. The project team confirmed that the project activities did not result in any chance finds; hence, the project was compliant with this safeguard policy.

Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12): The project triggered this safeguard policy due to land acquisition and potential displacement from the construction of substations and distribution lines. The ICR (p. 21) confirms that Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs) and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) were prepared and disclosed. Of 1,669 project-affected persons (PAPs), 91% were compensated, with escrow accounts established for the remainder. Grievance Redress Committees (GRCs) were trained and operational across regions, supporting effective grievance management. The project complied with



safeguard requirements through the preparation and execution of appropriate instruments, timely compensation, and effective grievance management.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management

The financial management was anchored within the PIU under NIGELEC. Early implementation was marked by challenges stemming from NIGELEC's limited experience with large, multi-donor operations. These included weak internal controls, fragmented documentation, and delays in financial reporting, compounded by inadequate archiving systems and staffing constraints. These issues were highlighted in the audited financial statements and underscored the need for improved record-keeping and reporting practices.

To address these issues, the project team undertook targeted reforms, including restructuring the PIU, recruiting dedicated financial management specialists, and enhancing internal controls. These measures improved reporting accuracy and timeliness and strengthened coordination with the World Bank's fiduciary teams.

External shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 coup d'état further tested the financial management system, disrupting financial flows and procurement processes. Nonetheless, the project team maintained operational continuity and adapted effectively to evolving conditions (ICR, p.13).

The ICR does not report any instances of corruption or misuse of funds, and the project team verified that all project funds were fully accounted for at closing.

Overall, financial management evolved from a fragile starting point to a more resilient and responsive system, supporting the mostly successful delivery of infrastructure and institutional reforms.

Procurement

Procurement performance under the project showed early promise but was ultimately constrained by institutional weaknesses and external shocks. Within three months of effectiveness, nearly 70 percent of funds were committed, driven by timely contract signing and strong coordination. However, NIGELEC's limited experience with large, multi-donor portfolios led to delays in bid preparation, slow contract awards, and poor contract management (ICR, p.21). Leadership changes further disrupted continuity, prompting the World Bank to recommend a competitive recruitment process that helped stabilize operations.

External factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 coup, disrupted supply chains and delayed equipment deliveries. Sanctions affecting a key contractor highlighted the need for stronger geopolitical risk screening. Although the project achieved a 97 percent commitment rate by project closing and transferred unfinished activities to the HASKE project, persistent documentation lapses, delayed World Bank reviews, and limited transparency indicated that oversight mechanisms were not consistently effective (ICR, p.22). Overall, procurement was a significant implementation risk that affected efficiency and timely delivery through to project closing, despite corrective actions taken.



c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None.

d. Other

None.

11. Ratings

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

12. Lessons

This review has drawn the following lessons based on the information in the ICR.

In fragile contexts, early underestimation of implementing agency capacity can lead to significant delays, even when mitigation measures are later introduced. The initial reliance on NIGELEC’s Cellule des Grands Projets unit, which lacked the technical and fiduciary capacity to manage a complex, multi-donor operation, resulted in early procurement delays and weak financial oversight. Although the Bank and government responded by restructuring implementation arrangements and appointing a new coordinator, these corrective actions came after critical time had been lost. This experience highlights the importance of realistically assessing institutional readiness at entry in FCV settings.

In FCV contexts, external shocks can significantly disrupt implementation, requiring flexible design and adaptive management. The project faced major disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 military coup, which triggered OP 7.30 and led to the suspension of parallel financing. These events delayed infrastructure completion and necessitated the transfer of key activities to a follow-on project. The project’s ability to adapt—through retroactive extensions and reallocation of activities—helped preserve development gains but also highlighted the need for greater flexibility in project timelines and implementation arrangements in fragile settings.



13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is candid and demonstrates a generally strong quality, particularly in its use of relevant evidence and sufficient alignment with the Theory of Change. The report draws from a wide range of internal sources and annexes to substantiate its claims, and while some gaps exist—especially in rural and non-household connection data—the ICR is transparent about these limitations. The analysis is accurate and responsive to the project’s objectives, with clear links between activities and results. The ICR effectively captures the operational realities of implementation, including institutional challenges and external shocks, and translates these into meaningful lessons. These lessons are well-grounded in evidence and offer practical insights for future operations, particularly regarding co-financing risks, data systems, and contractor due diligence in an FCV setting.

The ICR maintains internal consistency and adheres mostly to the World Bank guidance. Ratings are sufficiently justified, and the narrative remains coherent across sections. Despite some data and monitoring limitations, the ICR presents a credible analysis of the project’s implementation and achievements, supporting a positive assessment of its overall quality while acknowledging its shortcomings. However, a split assessment was not necessary as explained in section 2.e. The implementation of split assessment on efficacy rating was also incorrect because split assessment must be undertaken using the outcome ratings before and after the restructuring. The ICR does not provide the correct actual component costs (which were later provided by the project team), and the outcome ratings in the data section and the text do not match.

The ICR Quality is rated Substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating Substantial