



# Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary

## Appraisal Stage

### **(ESRS Appraisal Stage)**

Date Prepared/Updated: 12/22/2020 | Report No: ESRSA01227



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Liberia	AFRICA WEST	P174417	
Project Name	Recovery of Economic Activity for Liberian Informal Sector Employment		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Social Protection & Jobs	Investment Project Financing	12/14/2020	2/26/2021
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Republic of Liberia	Ministry of Youth and Sports, Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment		

Proposed Development Objective

The objective is to increase access to income earning opportunities for the vulnerable in the informal sector in response to the COVID-19 crisis in Liberia.

For the purpose of this PDO, “vulnerable” refers to individuals belonging to households that are poor or are at risk of falling into poverty due to the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. These are defined as households in the three poorest quintiles of national consumption distribution.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>10.00</b>

**B. Is the project 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 [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]**

Poverty remains widespread in Liberia, and is now on the rise. With a gross national income per capita of just US\$600 in 2018, Liberia is among the ten poorest countries in the world. According to the 2016 household survey data, more than half of the population (50.9 percent) was living in poverty. Poverty was more than twice as high in rural areas



(71.6 percent) as in urban areas (31.5 percent). The national headcount poverty rate increased to an estimated 55.5 percent in 2019, reflecting negative per capita GDP growth rates and rising inflation. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts, poverty rates are projected to increase by as much as 10 to 13 percentage points as per capita income contracts and food prices rise. An additional 335,000 to 526,000 Liberians are now at risk of falling into poverty. The country is especially vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 due to fragility, weak public health and social protection systems and high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.

The COVID-19 pandemic and government-imposed containment measures hit urban informal sector enterprises and workers particularly hard. As in other countries, urban areas are the epicenter of COVID-19 infections, with a majority of cases recorded in Montserrado country, which hosts the capital city of Monrovia. The urban informal non-farm sector is heavily impacted by social distancing rules and curfews imposed by the Government of Liberia (GoL) to prevent the spread of the disease. As a majority of the informal workers rely on daily economic activities such as street selling, and other casual labor activities to make ends meet, the imposition of curfews and social distancing as well as spillover effects from reduced economic activity overall are likely to have significantly impacted their livelihoods.

The project development objective is to increase access to income earning opportunities for the vulnerable in the informal sector in response to the COVID-19 crisis in Liberia. For the purpose of this PDO, “vulnerable” refers to individuals belonging to households that are poor or are at risk of falling into poverty due to the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. These are defined as households in the three poorest quintiles of national consumption distribution.

The project will have the following four components: 1. Grant Support to Vulnerable Households to Revive or Start Small Businesses; 2. Temporary Employment Support and Employability Development for Vulnerable Workers; including labor-intensive public works and life skills and employability training; 3. Program Implementation, Capacity Building and Coordination; and 4. Contingency Emergency Response Component.

**Component 1: Grant Support to Vulnerable Households to Revive or Start Small Businesses.** Component 1 will protect livelihoods by providing support to small businesses that would likely have survived had COVID-19 not struck, and that could be expected to continue to provide livelihoods once the pandemic has passed. Thus, Component 1 will help sustain – or limit reductions in – livings standards of vulnerable households who rely on these small businesses as their main source of income. For operational purposes, small businesses are defined as non-farm enterprises with five workers or less. Specifically, it will provide: i) business maintenance and recovery/development grants, and ii) business skills training to existing informal non-farm enterprises. In a second stage (at a time when COVID-19 may have waned and the economy is on the recovery track), the project will expand to providing technical support and grants to start new enterprises in the informal sector in urban area as well as rural areas.

**Component 2: Temporary Employment Support and Employability Development for Vulnerable Workers.** Component 2 will provide temporary employment and employability development for vulnerable workers struggling to find gainful employment and opportunities during and after the COVID-19 crisis through labor-intensive public works (LIPW) in urban areas. Project-financed activities will be small-scale, quickly executable, labor intensive, suited to low skill individuals and sustainable in terms of use, maintenance, and environmental concerns. Life Skills and Employability training will be offered to all beneficiaries that take part in the LIPW program. The curriculum will build on life skills curriculum delivered to reflect COVID-compliant protocols for functioning in the labor market and



conducting business in a safe manner. It would cover personal initiative, leadership, self-efficacy, confidence, time management, basic financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment at the workplace, and COVID-19 related material

Component 3: Capacity Building and Project Implementation and Coordination. This objective of this component is to support: i) capacity building at all levels for Government and other actors for the coordination, design, and implementation of the project; ii) the administrative, technical, and financial management of the project by Project Implementation Unit (PIU); iii) the coordination among all institutional partners to ensure the efficient flow of information among all actors and coordination with the private sector; iv) the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the project's results and impact; and v) the development of communication activities to publicize and disseminate project results, best practices, and success stories. This component will have two sub-components: Sub-component 3a: Capacity Building and Project Implementation and Coordination for MYS; and Sub-component 3b: Capacity Building and Project Implementation and Coordination for LACE.

Component 4 would be a Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC). This is a provisional zero amount component to allow for rapid reallocation of loan proceeds from other project components during an emergency.

The project is fully aligned with the Liberia Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY2019-2024. In particular, the proposed project will contribute to several CPF pillars and objectives, such as Pillar II on Building Human Capital to Seize New Economic Opportunities, via contributing to the objective of Improved Earnings Generation Opportunities for Youth and Women (Objective 5). While the project will not specifically target youth, given the country's youthful demographics it is expected by and large to benefit young people working in the informal sector. Owing to strong gender disparities in the labor market, the project will prioritize and adapt interventions to benefit women. At least 50 percent of the beneficiaries will be female.

This project falls under Pillars 2 and 3 of the WBG COVID-19 Crisis Response Approach. Pillar 2 of the approach is focused on protecting the poor and vulnerable. The proposed project will directly support with the objective of supporting employment and productivity for vulnerable households, informal businesses and micro-enterprises by supporting the immediate consumption needs of informal sector workers from low-income households through availing them with temporary employment opportunities. LIPW projects using proper safety precautions can support livelihoods, while providing community small-scale infrastructure and resilience. The proposed project's activities will also aim to improve employability and productivity by fulfilling the putting people back to work objective of the Resilient Recovery Stage of the WBG response. Finally, by focusing on informal sector micro-enterprises, the project will also contribute to Pillar 3 which aims at ensuring sustainable business growth and job creation.

#### **D. Environmental and Social Overview**

D.1. Detailed project location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

One-quarter of the country's 4.8 million people lives in the capital city, Monrovia, and in surrounding Montserrado County. Greater Monrovia with its geographical features and socio-economic characteristics (fragility, poverty and informality) is extremely vulnerable to floods, which are predicted to become more frequent and intense with climate change. In Monrovia, existing critical infrastructure and assets, such as 30 km of major roads, 35 percent of schools and 14 percent of hospitals are currently located in a flood risk zone. As of 2014, 104 sq.km of built-up area in the



metropolitan region was located in the flood risk zone, increasing at an average annual rate of 0.37 percent between the years 1975 and 2014. It is projected that a one-meter rise in sea level by end of century, will place almost 230,000 people at risk and cause the loss of 2,150 square kilometers of coastal land, including the infrastructure and much of Monrovia, valued at US\$250 million for the country.

Liberia's government and population have been ill-equipped to face the economic crisis brought on by COVID-19. Liberia's population, 90 percent of which works in the informal sector, suffers from high levels of poverty, food insecurity, and has high levels of illiteracy. In rural areas 70 percent, while in urban areas 43 percent, live below the poverty line. Around 83 percent live on less than \$1.25 per day. This leaves Liberians very vulnerable to even minor economic shocks. Low agricultural output, combined with high poverty prevalence, contributes to food insecurity. The majority of the food-poor live in urban areas. Chronic malnutrition stands at 32 percent, one of the highest rates in the world. The economic shocks households experience and will continue to experience for a long time coupled with what is already a high risk for women and girls. People with disabilities account for 14 percent of the population and are said to live in extreme poverty. These populations face cultural, logistic, and physical barriers in accessing economic, social, cultural, medical, and educational services and opportunities. COVID-19 gives rise to problems for persons in this group. Liberia, a post-conflict country, is particularly vulnerable to unrest and instability. Already before the COVID-19 crisis, the economy was under strain as a result of difficult macroeconomic situation.

Liberia is rich in biodiversity and living natural resources on one hand and on the other hand it is highly vulnerable to environmental degradation and the effects of climate change. Coastal flooding, erosion and sea-level rise pose high risks. The coastline includes many of its most densely populated and economically vibrant areas (e.g. the capital city of Monrovia and major port city of Buchanan), as well as numerous informal settlements composed of extremely poor households with little ability to either minimize their exposure to natural disasters or cope with the effects of environmental shocks (e.g. West Point in Monrovia). The communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are also the ones the most prone to suffer from economic impacts of COVID-19 (high density, high informality, lack of access to WASH and other services), thus exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

#### D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) and Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE). MYS will be responsible for overall project coordination and implementation of Component 2 (Temporary Employment Support and Employability Development for Vulnerable Workers ) while LACE will be primarily responsible for implementation of Component 1 (Grant Support to Vulnerable Households to Revive or Start Small Businesses).

MYS has experience of implementing public works project in Greater Monrovia under the Liberia Youth Employment Program (LYEP) and its Beach and Waterways Cleaning Program. MYS will take the lead on inter-ministerial coordination with other government agencies relevant to the enterprise and job creation agenda. This will be necessary to ensure that small businesses supported by the project have an enabling environment to operate and do not face constraints related to excessive regulation at their stage of development.



LACE has an established track record of delivering employment focused programs in Liberia. LACE is a not-for-profit and autonomous agency, established by the Government of Liberia in 2004 and is accountable to the Executive Branch of the government. LACE’s mandate is to improve living standards of poor communities while promoting community-inclusive development processes. LACE has a history of implementing a series of employment generation projects financed by the World Bank, including the Community Empowerment Projects (CEP) I and II, the Youth Employment Support Project (YES), and Cash for Work Temporary Employment Project (CfWTEP). More recently, LACE has been implementing SBS and CLAS under YOP.

Both MYS and LACE have dealt with safeguards issues in the past in World Bank financed projects and are currently implementing Youth Opportunities Project (P146827). It is under WB’s Safeguard Policy (category B) and, therefore, both implementing agencies have experience in WB policies to assess and manage E&S issues, however they lack experience in implementing project under ESF. The project implementation unit (Project Management Team) will be established under the project, and the PMT will recruit E&S specialists before the start of project implementation. Therefore, the PMT will need additional training on ESF to enhance their capacity in implementation and knowledge in ESF/ESS.

## II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

### A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Substantial

#### Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

The Environmental risk is rated Moderate. The project is expected to achieve beneficial environmental impacts. Component 2, labor-intensive public works, will focus on community activities that improve the local urban environment such as solid waste management (including through street and beach cleaning), building sanitation facilities, drainage clearance, painting of public buildings, and rehabilitation of public spaces. These activities are expected to improve air and water quality as well as aesthetics of the urban environment. Improved environmental health and sanitation structures will improve water quality, help reduce the prevalence of water- and insect borne diseases which are major causes of ill health and morbidity in urban areas. Improved solid waste management reduces the need for burning of solid waste, which carries serious health hazards. Rehabilitated green spaces could contribute to bio-diversity improvement by careful selection and organization of planting activities. Urban parks are an effective tool for mitigating noise and air pollution. Life skills training may include information related to environmental protection and climate change. Component 1, supporting small businesses, will seek to identify small businesses (and, at a later stage, business plans for start-up) whose activities are expected to have positive impacts on environment.

Conversely, there is a risk for negative environmental impact if environmental aspects are not weighed into the choice of activities. The project does not involve activities with a high potential for harming the environment. Environmental problems could nonetheless arise if activities supported in component 1 or encompassed in public works activities under component 2 in fact contribute to pollution of land, ground, surface water (including ocean), or air pollution. These risks will be mitigated as follows (i) The Bank team will work with the implementation agencies to



prepare a negative/exclusion list to avoid substantial to high risk activities supported under Component 1 (small businesses) or Component 2 (public works) (ii) the project will consider assigning priority to those enterprises which are likely to have a positive impact on the environment or contribute to climate risk mitigation (iii) The project will work with communities to foster community owned activities with environmental benefits by raising awareness on environmental protection. Considering potential risks and Borrower’s capacity, the environmental risk of the project is considered Moderate.

**Social Risk Rating**

Substantial

The social risk for the project is rated Substantial based on the country’s FCV context and lack of experience of project preparation and implementation under the ESF by the Borrower. In addition, the nature of the project and associated risks may also increase women’s vulnerability and further widen the inequality/gap between men and women; possibility of the project resource being exploited by the local elite; and the differential treatment in benefiting targeted people may create social unrest and conflicts, if identified social risks could not be managed accordingly. The likely associated risks include: (i) low uptake/participation among women due to social norms regarding family responsibilities such as taking care of siblings and handling household tasks; (ii) low uptake of the most vulnerable households and individuals (including disabled and elderly) because of health risks associated with economic activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, because of limited access to the project, or because of insufficiently precise targeting of the project; (iii) lack of community engagement; (iv) “elite capture” of resources for public works through inadequate or non-representative community organization/engagement; (v) resentment from applicants not approved by the project or communities not selected and emergence of social conflict resulting from favoritism and lack of transparency; (vi) increased vulnerability of women to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)/Sexual Harassment (SH) by the authorities or by co-workers in public works.

The majority of people in Liberia are employed in the informal sectors with many limitations, insecurities and challenges. The vulnerable people with uncertain employment and poor living conditions which poses challenges at various level to stable and sustainable development as the workforce are unregulated, unrecognized and of low productivity in nature. Due to COVID-19 related imposed physical distancing, mass isolation and quarantine need for informal sector centric initiatives, the supply chain has been severely affected. Jobs and earnings of especially low-income urban and rural workers are at unprecedentedly distressing levels, which not only have created an intra-family stress and social tension but will also have cascading effects in terms of post COVID-19 restoration and social stability. Gender disparities in labor market participation, disproportionate responsibility for caregiving and household work, low technical skills and gender-based discrimination in the labor market are among the key barriers to women’s access to the quality jobs, which has worsened due to the present pandemic, requiring extreme mitigation efforts from all stakeholders. Selection of beneficiaries (including ensuring reduction in gender gap, inclusion of the vulnerable) would be a major challenge given the high number of potential candidates and subsequently may give rise to elite capture. Social norms and barriers to female labor force participation (especially in the post COVID-19 phase) would also pose challenges. The access to training and job opportunities as well as support to restore the lost business and regain jobs may potentially be very limited due to the high demand and lower supply, hence many may be excluded and this may potentially give rise to social conflict and psychological trauma. Under the current COVID-19 circumstances, people in the urban areas are desperate to find a job and put food on the table. Vulnerable groups may also face challenges in securing benefits from the project intervention leading to unintended

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exclusion. This is mitigated by the use of the lottery system, which is already in-use, familiar to and accepted by Liberians.

## B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

### B.1. General Assessment

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

##### **Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:**

This ESS is relevant to the Project and clarifies the Borrower's responsibilities in identifying and managing the E&S risks of the project. The project is designed to support small-scale public work interventions which would encompass the following areas: (i) urban greenery (e.g. rehabilitation of recreational spaces, painting of public buildings, street walls and cross-walks), (ii) waste management (e.g. street sweeping and cleaning, drainage clearance), and service-oriented public works (e.g. providing basic care/services to the vulnerable, such as elderly or disabled, in the communities).

The environmental risks could arise from activities that may use environmentally damaging technologies and resources for mainly the activities involved in component 2, it may affect the environment adversely. The risks emerging from these activities (including public work, livelihood and value-addition activities in the agriculture sector) are likely to range from pollution of land, ground and surface water (if wastes are improperly disposed of), air pollution/climate contamination (burning of disposed wastes/GHG emission from decomposing waste at waste disposal sites) and harm towards animal and marine life through contamination of the food chain. Given the scale at which these activities will be implemented, the potential adverse risks and impacts on the environment are unlikely to be significant. The project will aim to minimize risks which could arise from supporting types of activities that may use environmentally damaging technologies and/or Component 1 beneficiaries potentially starting or expanding businesses that may affect the environment. The Bank team will work with the implementation agencies to prepare a negative/exclusion list to avoid substantial to high risk activities supported under Component 1 that aims to Support Vulnerable Households to Revive or Start Small Businesses. On the other hand, the project will also consider assigning priority to those enterprises which are likely to have a positive impact on the environment or contribute to climate risk mitigation (e.g. solar panels or other innovative solutions).

The project will build a case management system to support potential beneficiaries and will also arrange training and resources for targeted unemployed/underemployed, less educated and poor in urban areas to facilitate in transition to productive employment. The project will also provide direct financial support. The eligibility criteria exclusion list as well as additional negative list to screen out activities with the related environment and social risks and impacts need attentions. The exclusion list will form part of the Project Operations Manual (POM). Key stakeholders, including less educated young females, single young mothers, vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, will be identified and consulted upon to understand their concerns and requirements, which will be included in the design of the interventions to strengthen greater support through preparation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) has been developed by the Borrower detailing material measures and action to manage E&S issues in a time-bound fashion. POM will be prepared for the Project which will include actions and measures to be adopted to identify and address E&S risks and impacts. The manual will also include an exclusion list, which will set out interventions that will not be funded by the Project. Project Management Team





(PMT) will update the Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) prepared for YOP aligned with specific criteria for the Project, which will include a Labor Management Procedure (LMP) including potential mitigation measures to address community safety risks and OHS issues, a GRM that is specific for addressing Community Workers complaints different from the project level GRM, among others. RPF will be updated based on the one used for YOP. The SEP, ESCP and other E&S documents will be disclosed prior to Appraisal.

### **ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure**

The government has held consultations with different stakeholders, including proposed project beneficiaries, to identify gaps and solutions for inclusive employment programs. Through activities under the Youth Opportunities Project (YOP), as well as part of the development of Bank-financed Liberia Youth Employability and Empowerment Platform, the team held consultations meetings/consultations with targeted beneficiaries including people of vulnerable groups in Greater Monrovia. Consultations were also held with Government counterparts including CSOs & NGOs working in the field of social protections and safety net. The consultations focused specifically on employment outcomes and aspirations, with a focus on their constraints for improving productivity, benefits and drawbacks of existing programs that they had participated in, their perception on constraints to starting self-employment, staying in business, and growing.

Given the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic situation and the need for physical distancing and other measures, future stakeholder engagements need to follow COVID-19 protocols and instead of face-to-face contact use of technology and media (online meetings, radio and local TV broadcasts, web-based information sharing, mobile platform and SMS) will be used. If face-to-face interaction is necessary for consultation, required distancing protocols will be followed. The updated POM will include the protocol for physical distancing and measures related to COVID. Various channels of communication will be used and broadcast so that maximum beneficiaries can come under the purview of information sharing and raising of concerns.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed by MYS/LACE for stakeholder engagement and disclosure of information plans/actions, which is a living document and will be updated throughout the project implementation. The SEP outlines the characteristics and interests of the relevant stakeholder groups (such as the unemployed, women, small businesses, relevant government agencies, relevant CSOs) and timing and methods of engagement. Project level Grievance Mechanisms (GM) have been prepared under the SEP through which issues and concerns can be raised about the project. The GMs have provisions for SGBV/Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) related complaints (survivor-centric approach, confidentiality, staffed by people with appropriate special training). Upon Project effectiveness, specific staff members will be designated to handle SGBV/SEA/SH related issues. The project GMs use various channels (including Internet, SMS, Web-based forms, email, etc.) for submission of complaints and concerns. Grievance Redress Committees (GRC) will be setup who will receive, record, address, communicate and advice on issues raised by anyone in a timely manner. Periodic reports on GM issues will be updated to WB Task team.

### **B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts**



**A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Project.**

**ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions**

Based on the project related information, there will be no civil construction/works, hence the scope for labor influx and associated risks are unlikely. Component 2 will support temporary employment support and employability development for vulnerable workers struggling to find gainful employment and opportunities. The component will involve labor-intensive public works and mostly community workers selected from the local communities will be involved. Besides several administrative and operational level staffs will be employed by the MYS & PMT (Direct workers) for project implementation at field levels, community workers shall also be employed. Given the need for close physical proximity in providing services to the poor beneficiaries who have very limited access to technology, existing COVID-19 situation could pose obstacles. Guidelines for physical distancing, use of protective equipment/sanitation/hygiene practice will need to be given priority. In this situation, the young project beneficiaries are less likely to follow the Protocol / protective provisions and will need continuous monitoring, training, motivation and enforcement to ensure protocols are abided by. Equal opportunity for potential females, vulnerable and the disadvantaged should be given access to opportunities for employment. Provisions of this will be included in the POM. A Grievance Mechanism (GM) specifically addressing labor needs for raising concerns about the project will be developed and implemented throughout the project. The project will also required to prepare a Labor Management Procedure (LMP) as well as a GM that is specific for addressing Community Workers complaints that is different from the project level GM.

**ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management**

Given the nature of the project comprising grants, training/employability development and provision of temporary jobs, it is likely that some of the project beneficiaries including funded small businesses could generate pollution (air, water, land, human, construction and medical wastes). To mitigate these risks, a screening criteria and eligibility mechanism will be developed to ensure that no businesses are funded by the Project that may potentially have negative impacts on the environment. The updated POM will include a negative list of interventions/businesses that will not be approved for funding. Potential environmental risks associated with the project will be further assessed and mitigation measures will be included in the updated ESMF. GHG emission estimation is not relevant for the project. Waste management will be addressed through a waste management system that addresses issues linked to waste minimization, generation, transport, disposal, and monitoring. The project will ensure that waste collected from the street sweeping, drainage cleaning and beach litter follow the waste mitigation hierarchy, and after implementation of feasible waste prevention, reduction, reuse, recovery and recycling measures, waste materials will be treated and disposed of, and all measures would be taken to avoid potential impacts to human health and the environment. Selected management approaches will be consistent with the characteristics of the waste and national regulations, and may include on-site or off-site biological, chemical, or physical treatment of the waste material to render it nonhazardous prior to final disposal, treatment or disposal at permitted facilities specially designed to receive the waste.

**ESS4 Community Health and Safety**

The GBV/SEA/SH risk assessment of the project indicates Moderate Risk. The project plans to reduce gender gap and provide opportunities for women for training and work in close proximity of males therefore raising concerns for GBV/SEA. These activities are likely to expose women to authorities and project’s worker who have higher propensity



to exploit women Furthermore, the projects activities are likely to bring people into close proximity and are likely to increase in person interactions. Female beneficiaries may be targeted for GBV/SEA/SH by the implementing staffs and public authorities. They may be kept away from selection, their inherent disproportionate risks and impacts because of their physical vulnerability which would require differentiated mitigation measures.

In addition, GBV/SEA/SH risks will be managed by: i) increasing awareness on SEA/SH issues, ii) requiring the signing and adhering to Code of Conduct (CoC) as mandatory for implementation staffs and public authorities associated with the project, iii) regularly sensitizing, briefings/training/workshop to educate people about consequences/disciplinary action for violating the CoC and committing GBV/SEA/SH. To avoid any such happening, the MYS/LACE shall develop mitigation measures/management plan and hire a Social Safeguards Officer with GBV expertise and work with specialized organizations to manage risks, i.e. GBV service providers as required and recommended. Project GRM will include specific provisions to address issues related to SEA/SH. All Project workers including beneficiaries will undergo sensitization building measures as well as training related to GBV/SEA/SH. Further information on project interventions, plan, locations, etc. will be required to conduct comprehensive GBV risks assessment and develop a GBV action plan, if required.

The project will require training and protocol to avoid spread of COVID-19 cases. MYS shall update POM including COVID protocol. These risks will be mitigated by adhering to physical distancing, mask wearing, and hand washing practices; consistent awareness raising on COVID-19 issues, and maintenance of WHO guidelines during project preparation and implementation phases.

#### **ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement**

The project is not likely to require any land acquisition, cause any restrictions to the land use and involuntary resettlement. However, the project may cause restrictions to the land use under component 2. Given the nature of informality of many settlements in urban areas, the project shall screen the related risks and impacts and develop and implement the mitigation and management plan.

#### **ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources**

The project may affect biodiversity and/or living natural resources in case project funds businesses/natural resource-based enterprises that uses timber/wood-based fuel, farming etc. The ESMF will put provisions not to adversely affect biodiversity, habitats as well as promote sustainable management of living natural resources by natural resource-based enterprises. Besides, potential activities affecting biodiversity will be included in the negative list.

#### **ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities**

The project area does not have population of Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities/ ethnic minority meeting the criteria mentioned in ESS 7, who will be affected by the project.



**ESS8 Cultural Heritage**

Liberia has very rich cultural resources and heritage. Most Liberians have great respect for their cultural properties, and cultural properties may be found at any place, so ESS8 is relevant in case the project finances activities that may potentially use tangible and non-tangible cultural heritage for commercial purposes. If a subproject intends to use cultural heritage of any project affected parties (including individuals and communities) for commercial purposes, it will inform the project affected parties of: (a) their rights under national law; (b) the scope and nature of the commercial development and the potential impacts; and (c) the potential consequences of such development and impacts. The subproject will not proceed with such commercial use unless it: (a) carries out meaningful consultation with stakeholders; (b) provides for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from commercial use of such cultural heritage, consistent with customs and traditions of the project affected parties; and (c) identifies mitigation measures according to the mitigation hierarchy. The project will be require to develop and adapt chance find procedures as and when needed.

**ESS9 Financial Intermediaries**

It is not relevant to the project at this stage.

**B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks**

The project is likely to be implemented where COVID-19 pandemic situation will exist. Thus, there is a need for the project to be implemented under specific protocols. Physical / Social distancing has been implemented by the government though given the adverse impact on national economy, the government has recently opened offices, markets and malls, and public transport system urging everyone to follow COVID-19 protocols. The pandemic has already given rise to the price hike of essentials, travel restriction, social tension etc. In this emerged situations, training and skill development interventions need to be designed keeping WHO and Government guidelines in mind.

**C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply**

**OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways** No

**OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas** No

**B.3. Reliance on Borrower’s policy, legal and institutional framework, relevant to the Project risks and impacts**

**Is this project being prepared for use of Borrower Framework?** No

**Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:**

Borrower’s Framework will not be used for the project.

Public Disclosure



**IV. CONTACT POINTS**

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**Borrower/Client/Recipient**

Borrower: Republic of Liberia

**Implementing Agency(ies)**

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Youth and Sports

Implementing Agency: Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment

**V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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**VI. APPROVAL**

Task Team Leader(s): Mack Capehart Mulbah, Victoria Strokova

Practice Manager (ENR/Social) Sanjay Srivastava Cleared on 21-Dec-2020 at 12:20:2 GMT-05:00