



Project Information Document/ Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (PID/ISDS)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 27-Jun-2016 | Report No: PIDISDSC19219



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Central African Republic	Project ID P160717	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Data for Decision Making (P160717)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Jan 18, 2017	Estimated Board Date Feb 15, 2017	Practice Area (Lead) Poverty and Equity
Lending Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Economy, Planning, and International Cooperation	Implementing Agency ICASEES	

Financing (in USD Million)

Financing Source	Amount
IDA Grant	10.00
Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building	0.49
Total Project Cost	10.49

Environmental Assessment Category

C-Not Required

Concept Review Decision

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

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B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a large landlocked, scarcely populated country with a population of approximately five million. CAR is located at the crossroads of the African continent and is bordered to the north by Chad, to the northeast by Sudan, to the east by South Sudan, to the south by the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo and to the west by Cameroon. The country has ample natural resources (arable land, water, lumber, gold, diamonds and many other minerals), is barely urbanized and has known political instability ever since Independence in 1960.

The latest bout of insecurity started late 2012 with a Séléka insurrection in the north of the country. It led to three years of violence, destruction of property and great human suffering and left an estimated one fifth of the population displaced. In May 2015 the “Bangui Forum” was organized. It discussed the country’s peace-building program and paved the way for elections. After



another major outbreak of violence in September 2015, the conflict came to an end with the Presidential and legislative elections which were successfully concluded early 2016.

CAR already was one of the poorest countries in the world before the 2012 conflict, with poverty rates reaching 62 percent in 2008¹. In 2014, the GNI per capita of US\$ 600 (PPP) was the lowest in the world. The State's absence and chronically low revenue have resulted in the vast majority of the population lacking access to public services, including security, justice and social services. The maternal mortality ratio is amongst the highest in the world, estimated at 882 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015. An estimated 68 percent of 15-24 year olds did not complete primary education. The public sector is riddled with clientelist practices.

In 2014 the World Bank supported an early crisis response with a US\$100 million package in emergency operations. This support was provided through the restructuring of the existing portfolio and the frontloading of IDA-17 lending, and was presented in an update to the Board of Executive Directors on January 21, 2014. A Country Engagement Note (CEN) was presented to the Board of Executive Directors in July 2015, presenting the need for a continuation of the crisis response and next steps for recovery and development over an 18-month period (July 2015 - end 2016). This strategy comprises two phases: (i) support to stabilization in order to assist international efforts to break the cycle of violence and maintain confidence in the fragile transition; and (ii) preliminary support to recovery and development. Following the successful elections, the World Bank is seeking additional support from the Turn Around Facility to help break the cycle of violence.

The conflict has left the statistical system, which was reasonably developed prior to 2012, in poor shape. Many staff of the statistical institute disappeared, and its offices were pillaged wiping out much of the country's statistical memory. The proposed project is part of the Turn Around Facility Package. It aims to rebuild the statistical system by preserving what remains in the scattered archives and different computers and by generating new data to inform decision makers and monitor the Peace Building Process. The proposed project will also invest in institutional development to put the statistical system on a robust footing for the future.

This project is accompanied by a TFSCB grant (approved June 2016) which contributes to the rebasing of the CPI and the dissemination of publications. In addition, through a trust fund that accompanies the Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) the Bank will collaborate with ICASEES in the fielding of a baseline for the *Monographies Communales*, a monitoring system that will cover the entire territory and collect, on a monthly basis, opinions and perception on the Peace Agreement and information on the status of public infrastructure and services. Both activities will provide valuable insights into the capacities and constraints of ICASEES.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

The Central African Institute of Statistics and Socio Economic Studies (*Institut Centrafricain des Statistiques, des Etudes Economiques et Sociales, ICASEES*) operates under the 'tutelle' of the Ministry of Economie, despite its autonomous legal status.

The institute comprises about 75 staff, 60 of whom are trained as statisticians, demographers, sociologist and economists etc. Never the less, statistical production is limited –largely as a result of the crisis. Most data bases are old, or very old and in urgent need of revision. The CPI was last rebased in 1981 using 1975 data to establish weights, the last agricultural census dates from 1985, the last census was carried out in 2003, the last welfare survey dates from 2008 as do the latest validated national accounts

¹ Figures based on the last nationally representative household survey (ECASEB)



data. As the crisis has profoundly changed the demographic characteristics of the country – entire villages have been destroyed, none of these data bases reflects the reality of the country accurately.

Pillaging of the offices has affected much of the statistical infrastructure: the physical archive –while largely saved, is in disarray; the digital cartography of the 2003 census –needed to draw samples for surveys has been lost (paper maps have been recovered though), and servers with data have disappeared. It has resulted in a situation where data sets have either been completely lost, or are only available on personal computers and laptops. Lack of resources hinders the production of statistics. Internet connectivity is only possible with personal USB internet keys, there is no website, no inflation numbers are published for May and June 2016 because ICASEES lacks the means (less than US\$1,000 per month) to purchase goods on the market. Buying goods on the market and weighting them at the office to determine the unit cost is critical aspect of data collection for the CPI. Some publications are being prepared, but without website and paper for printing they are barely disseminated.

Staff who remain at ICASEES while discouraged by the present situation, are generally motivated. With appropriate support and incentives there is scope to rebuild the statistical system rapidly. Doing so requires a three pronged approach: recovery (archiving, rehabilitation); institutional development (institutional autonomy, staffing and staff incentives, coordination); and data production and dissemination. All these elements will need to be accompanied by capacity building, but as staff are competent capacity building should focus on updating technical skills in selected areas.

Relationship to CPF

The Country Engagement Note (CEN) presented to the Board of Executive Directors in July 2015 describes the need to continue with crisis response and potential next steps for recovery and development over an 18-month period (July 2015 - end 2016). The strategy identifies two phases: (i) support to stabilization in order to assist international efforts to break the cycle of violence and maintain confidence in the fragile transition; and (ii) preliminary support to recovery and development. The main focus has been on the first phase of the strategy thus far; through the Turn Around Facility attention starts shifting towards the second phase of the strategy.

In the second phase the emphasis remains on stabilization, reconstruction and economic recovery, but improving the planning capacity of the state –including though the production of data relevant to decision makers, is recognized as foundational to successful prioritization. To this end, a statistics project has been programmed for delivery in FY17 with the aim of informing the design of pipeline projects, various strategic exercises (RPBA, SCD) and to create a basis for monitoring and follow up.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To increase the capacity of the national statistical institute (ICASEES) to produce and publicly disseminate statistics through data recovery, institutional development and support to data production.

Key Results (From PCN)

Project Beneficiaries



The main beneficiary of the project is the *Institut Centrafricain des Statistiques, des Etudes Economiques et Sociales, ICASEES*. Other entities producing official statistics, particularly in line ministries (agriculture; health; education) will also benefit. In addition, the project supports various stakeholders in the government, donor, academia, NGOs, and civil society to facilitate data use.

PDO Level Results Indicators

The project development objective will be assessed by the relevance and quality of the output/outcome obtained by ICASEES. The main expected outcomes of the project are the following:

- (i) An electronic data archive exists and is accessible through the internet
- (ii) ICASEES is staffed in accordance with its revised organogram
- (iii) Core statistical data sets (*) have been produced and publicly disseminated

(*) This includes: CPI; production index; data on agricultural production; welfare survey; MICS survey and census cartography.

D. Concept Description

The project comprises two components (a) statistical recovery, institutional development and data production and (b) project management, quality control and support to analysis. The project has a total cost of US\$10 million equivalent provided through an IDA grant. Capacity building is an integral aspect of the project. Evaluations of past capacity building activities (e.g. Thomas K. Morrisson. 2005. *Statistical Capacity Building. Case Studies and Lessons Learned*. Washington, DC: IMF) have found that workshops or short-term training inputs were useful in introducing new ideas improved skills, but did little in improving skills. To avoid similar pitfalls this project will address capacity building not through training, or workshops per se, but by focusing on the generation of well-defined outputs and the skills needed to produce these outputs. Where possible regional collaboration and twinning with well functional statistical institutes will be explored.

Component 1. Statistical recovery, institutional development and data production (US\$ 9.2 million)

Subcomponent 1.1. Statistical recovery (US\$1.0 million equivalent)

This subcomponent comprises all aspects associated to restoring, digitizing and archiving (to the degree possible) lost data bases and making them publicly accessible through the ICASEES website. It includes documenting and digitizing the physical archive which has largely been preserved but which is in disarray; digitizing the census maps (whose digital representations have been lost); identifying and recovering remaining digital data bases from different storage devices (computers, laptops, CDs etc.). Once digitized all these data bases will be archived and made accessible online, implying investments in archiving, web design, secure digital data storage etc.

This subcomponent will also invest in physical recovery, by investing in computing hardware, software, office network, rehabilitation of physical infrastructure and means of transportation.

Subcomponent 1.2. Institutional development (US\$1.5 million equivalent)

Management autonomy is critical for a statistical agency to ensure insulate data production from political pressures and to create a conducive work environment (statistical offices tend to compete with Central and commercial banks for staff and need



to be able to offer competitive remuneration packages). The 2001 Statistics Act (Loi 01/008) envisages an autonomous agency that operates under the oversight of a Statistics Board with responsibilities for the entire national statistical system.

Management autonomy is not realized in practice. The relevant decrees have not been adopted by the Authorities, or if adopted are not implemented. De facto ICASEES operates under the guidance of the Ministry of Economy. As a consequence it lacks budget autonomy, and is unable to hire own staff or to manage them in a performance based manner.

This component will support the move towards management autonomy. Adoption of the necessary decrees and appointment of the Statistics Board will be conditions for negotiations. Through the project preparation advance the project will support revision of the relevant decrees, while the project will support the definition of a performance based contract between ICASEES and the Government, the preparation of personnel and operational manuals and procedures, design and adoption of function description, revision of the organograms, re-staffing, management support, development of financial and HR capacity.

The project will facilitate the functioning of the Statistics Board and offer bridge funding to facilitate the transition to a new salary structure (which will gradually need to be financed out of state budget). The project will also invest in coordination of the National Statistical System, offering ICASEES the means to manage all statisticians in the national statistical system, support the development of methods and standards in line ministries and to oversee their statistical production, as well as to coordinate donor support.

Subcomponent 1.3. Data production (US\$6.7 million equivalent)

Most of the support to ICASEES will go to data production. Urgent data needs which have been identified include the revision of the CPI (last rebased in 1975 – US\$150k); a new welfare survey (last done in 2008, US\$ 1.7mln); communal monographies (to update 2003 census data and monitor progress on service provision, US\$500k), industrial production data (US\$100k), national accounts revision (US\$500k) and collection of data on agriculture and livestock (which makes up an estimated 50 percent of GDP, US\$ 2mln). In addition a number of demand driven, topical surveys will be supported, for instance on IDPs, forestry etc. (US\$750k). Resources permitting the project will also contribute to a new MICS survey (US\$500k) and cartography –including to update the sampling frame (US\$500k).

Component 2. Project management, quality control and support to analysis (US\$0.8 million equivalent)

The second component of the project focuses on project execution. It covers support to those implementing the project at ICASEES (financial management; procurement; project management: US\$500k), offers means to carry out independent quality control (to inform the performance management but also the Statistics Board, US\$ 100k) and to stimulate the use of data produced by local analysts (US\$ 200k).

SAFEGUARDS

A. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

B. Borrower's Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team



Johanna van Tilburg

D. Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	No	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	
Pest Management OP 4.09	No	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	No	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	

E. Safeguard Preparation Plan

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing should be specified in the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

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APPROVAL

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