



Additional Financing Appraisal Environmental and
Social Review Summary
Appraisal Stage
(AF ESRS Appraisal Stage)

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BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)
Mauritania	AFRICA WEST	Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Taazour General Delegation
Project ID	Project Name		
P175778	Additional Financing for the Social Safety Net System Project II		
Parent Project ID (if any)	Parent Project Name		
P171125	Social Safety Net System Project II		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Social Protection & Jobs	Investment Project Financing	1/18/2021	3/17/2021

Proposed Development Objective

The Project Development Objective is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the nationwide adaptive social safety net system and its coverage of poor and vulnerable households with targeted social transfers, including in refugee and host communities.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Current Financing	0.00
Proposed Additional Financing	0.00
Total Proposed Financing	0.00

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]



The project is supporting the strengthening and extension of the social safety net system in Mauritania in order to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. It builds on the outcomes of the previous Mauritania Social Safety Net System Project (P150430) which began implementation in September 2015 and which has put in place: (i) the Social Registry, which provides any government program with an effective and transparent mechanism to target poor and vulnerable households, (ii) the National Social Transfer Program, Tekavoul, which is currently supporting 59,000 households in extreme poverty through cash transfers and social promotion activities; and (iii) the Shock Responsive Social Safety Net Program, Elmaouna, which is supporting several thousand food-insecure households annually during the lean season.

The project is framed around four components. Component 1 aims to improve the efficiency of the Government's social programs (including, but not limited to Tekavoul and Elmouana) by updating the social registry and promoting its usage. This component is implemented by the Taazour General Delegation, which currently oversees the Social Registry. Component 2 is focusing on enhancing the socio-economic inclusion of poor households by strengthening and extending the Social Transfer Program, Tekavoul, supporting an adequate re-certification and exit strategy for former Tekavoul beneficiaries and facilitating their inclusion in the Civil Registry. This component is implemented by the Taazour General Delegation. Component 3 is strengthening the shock-responsive system by further developing the early warning system, the Elmaouna program and the shock-responsive financing strategy. This component will be implemented by the Food Security office (CSA). Component 4 is support the coordination and management of the project.

Furthermore, the proposed project will allow for the inclusion within the SSN of poor and vulnerable households in the refugee and host communities of the Hodh Chargui region. The priority will be to enroll the poorest households within the regular governmental safety net system, including the Social Registry, Tekavoul, and Elmaouna programs. The proposed SSN project is part of an overall program financed by the IDA 18 Refugee Sub-Window (RSW) for Mauritania. The core objective of the RSW program in Mauritania is to strengthen the capacity of the Government to provide access to basic services and infrastructure to the refugee population and host communities in the targeted areas. Apart from supporting the proposed project, the RSW funds will also support (i) the expansion of the on-going Health Support System Project (P156165, INAYA) in the Hodh Chargui (US\$ 15 million from RSW); and (ii) the provision of water supply, sanitation and urban services for host community and refugees populations through the Water and Sanitation Project (P167328, US\$ 10 million from RSW) and the Decentralization and Urban Development project (P169332, US\$ 20 million from RSW).

The first additional Financing will exclusively support the scale-up of existing activities included in the Parent Project (P171125). More specifically, it will finance the scale-up of the shock-responsive programs which are described in the component 3.2 of the Parent Project with an additional 36.000 beneficiary households : (i) the first activity supported by the grant is the scale-up of the shock-responsive safety net program Elmaouna to support an additional 27,000 vulnerable households (US\$ 9.6 million) and (ii) the second activity supported by the AF is the pilot of a vertical/horizontal expansion of the regular safety net program Tekavoul in order to support an additional 9,000 vulnerable households (US\$ 3.3 million).

D. Environmental and Social Overview



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

The Parent project and the related Additional Financing project is being implemented throughout the entire country. More specifically, the Social Registry will cover all districts in Mauritania. The Social Transfer program, Tekavoul, is also planned to cover all the poorest households in every district. The shock-responsive safety net program, Elmaouna, will be implemented annually in the areas most affected by food insecurity, as determined by the Mauritania Early Warning System. One particular focus area for the project will be the Hodh El Chargui region, given the concentration of refugees and host communities there. This includes the Mbera refugee camp, which hosts a large population of Malian refugees that have fled the neighbouring conflict. The district housing refugees already struggles with the impacts of drought and scarce resources, prior to the arrival of refugees.

The areas of intervention of this AF will be based on the outcome of the Cadre Harmonisé in coordination with WFP, UNICEF and NGO's and with priority given to the areas worst impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

The beneficiaries will be selected from the Social Registry based on food insecurity and COVID-19 related criteria (to be defined among the 60 socio-economic characteristics of households included in the Social Registry) to identify the most vulnerable people affected by the combined effects of the crises on food security and access to basic services.

D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

Currently, progress towards the PDO and Overall Implementation Progress of the Parent Project are Satisfactory. Two covenants are not met so far but are under process (the hiring of the Social and Gender Specialist and of the external auditor). The Project Coordinator has been appointed (identical to the previous project) and the Steering Committee has been established. The operational and administrative manuals have also been adopted. Some important procurement contracts are in progress, in particular the selection of payment operators. The overall disbursement is in line with the forecasted values: as of November 2020, the cumulative disbursement for IDA is US\$3.5 million out of the US\$45 million grant amount, and the ASP MDTF disbursement is US\$4.5 million out of US\$7 million. There is no overdue or unqualified external audit. The PASyFIS II project was restructured in August 2020 to support the COVID-19 safety net interventions of the Government . In June 2020, a first wave of support provided 206,000 households across the country with a cash transfer of 2,250 MRU (USD 60). This first intervention was fully financed with government's budget through the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund . The second wave of cash transfers will take place in December 2020 and will be similar to the first one. It will be jointly financed by the World Bank (through the PASyFIS II project), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Government of Mauritania. Those interventions are the first nation-wide cash transfers in Mauritania. The targeting is mainly based on households covered under the Social Registry

The WB team provided extensive and continuous technical support to strengthen the institutional capacity of the relevant implementing agencies (Taazour General Delegation Agency, the Food Security Office, and the Social Registry Directorate). These agencies demonstrated satisfactory capacity during the previous SSN project. However, as the safety net system is nascent and fragile in Mauritania, it will be necessary to continue with the provision of a strong package of TA over the course of this new operation. Moreover, sustainability will remain a challenge for two reasons: (i) fiscal space is limited for additional financing for the safety net system; and (ii) the ownership of the Adaptive Social Protection shock-responsive system is still relatively low. This is in stark contrast to the government ownership of the Tekavoul program and the social registry, which is strong.

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

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Substantial

Public Disclosure



Environmental Risk Rating

Low

The project components (including the Additional Financing activities) are expected to have limited to no impact on the environment. Since the project does not have activities that will generate any adverse impacts or risks on human population and environment, the project is classified as Low risk from environmental perspective and as defined under the Bank's ESF.

Social Risk Rating

Substantial

The social risk rating for the Additional Financing project is Substantial based on social risks that could arise as a result of project activities. These risks include: i) the exclusion and discrimination of certain categories of people, such as vulnerable refugees, from access to basic social services as education, health, etc.; ii) weak communication; iii) low integration of certain stakeholders (civil society, municipal authorities, press); iv) labor conditions; v) risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual harassment (SEA/SH), including gender-based violence, related to the distribution of cash within households (risk of disputes, risk of tensions...). While these issues could occur, they are not expected to happen on a large scale, not are they expected to be significant because of the design of the project. The project has been specifically designed to be inclusive of vulnerable groups, including the refugees.

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:

The AF project will not support any rehabilitation/renovation of infrastructure. There will therefore be no adverse risks and impacts from works on the environment. The screening has concluded that the Borrower does not need to prepare an environmental management plan to mitigate potential environmental impacts arising out of project. From a social perspective, the Project is expected to have positive social impacts on the poorest households and refugee communities. However, the challenge of protecting and empowering refugees and improving the resilience of host populations could include social risks during the implementation such as the exclusion and discrimination of certain categories of people, like vulnerable refugees, weak communication, low integration of certain actors (civil society, local authorities, press), labor conditions, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual harassment (SEA/SH) related to the distribution of cash within households). Host populations are also affected by difficult living conditions due to the pressure of refugees and their livestock on the natural resources of the host area (water, grazing, wood) causing conflicts. As the major project activities will concern cash transfers, social inclusion will be well defined. To this end, A social action plan has been prepared by the project team in November 2020 and will be implemented.. The Grievance Mechanism established for the parent project is functional for managing complaints and requests for information. Grievances can be collected through three channels: free toll numbers, field animators and social registry users. The Project has recruited sufficient social mobilization staff (experts and facilitators), strengthen the human and logistical resources of GM team, operationalize the complaints management system and optimize the deadlines for grievance redress actions . This system is complemented by the establishment of a mechanism to anticipate and manage SEA/SH, building on some of the established practices in the M'bera camp by UNHCR.

Regarding the risks of SEA/SH, the project is currently implementing a pilot on family dialog to manage domestic resources. The Government is putting in place measures to reduce the risks of SEA/SH to mitigate the negative social



impacts related to the distribution of cash within households (risk of disputes, risk of tensions...). These mitigating measures involve training for beneficiary couples aimed at a better sharing decision-making responsibility within the household, equity in gender roles for greater family harmony and a containment of domestic violence. Measures to mitigate SEA/SH will also be taken into account, both as part of the overall project and, more specifically, in the GM. To promote ownership, the project will put in place strong communication and civic engagement to receive feedback from beneficiaries, especially women and refugees.

Finally, the project has taken several measures to mitigate the risk to disseminate the Covid-19: (i) the interruption of any activity that could spread the virus such as social promotion sessions and (ii) adoption of barrier principles and actions that any social worker has to respect during project activities.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

A Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Plan (SEIDP) was prepared and disclosed in January 2020 . This plan addresses specific risks identified by stakeholders, including the exclusion of refugees and vulnerable groups in target areas, security risks affecting delivery of cash transfers etc.. Key stakeholders would include national and local government representatives, local communities, refugees and host community representatives including youth and women organizations, beneficiaries of the SSN project, religious authorities and other members of civil society. Key concerns would be related to the exclusion and discrimination, including in the access to social transfers for the refugee population and host communities in the targeted areas, protection against SEA/SH (particularly amongst vulnerables communities such as women, children and disabilities) group governance arrangements, job opportunities for host community and refugees. The objective is to establish a systematic approach for stakeholder engagement, maintain a constructive relationship with stakeholders, take into account their views, promote and provide a means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life-cycle, and ensure that appropriate project information is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible and appropriate manner. Application of ESS10 stakeholder engagement and disclosure of information is a central part of the Mauritania SSN Project that will be closely monitored through a simple SEIDP, as part of the overall ESF Management Framework. The SEIDP outlines the characteristics and interests of the relevant stakeholder groups, as well as methods for engagement throughout the life of the project..

The project has established Grievance Mechanisms (GM) for each program (Social Registry, Tekavoul and Elmaouna). Specific manuals detailing GM procedures have been developed. The mechanisms for managing complaints and requests for information are functional. Grievances are collected through three channels: toll-free numbers, field animators and social registry users. The Social Registry and the Tekavoul program each have dedicated teams to register and manage complaints. Elmaouna is using the Tekavoul GM.

The complaints are registered in the project Management Information System. The maximum delay to process grievances is 60 days for the Social Registry and 45 days for the Tekavoul program. The project will provide regular GM reports, similarly to the previous project.

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

The project labor management procedure (LMP) was prepared in January 2020 to address project-related labor issues. For the direct workers, the LMP provides measures to address the terms and conditions of employment, nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for employment, worker’s organizations, restrictions on child and forced labor, and occupational health and safety requirements. The civil servants are governed by the civil service code, which forbids child and forced labor; the LMP may include OHS measures in case they are not in the civil servants’ existing contracts. The LMP also includes measures to ensure SEA/SH risks are addressed. The country already has its national laws and regulations related to labor. Complaints received and resolved will be reviewed during the implementation support missions.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS have been screened and it has been determined that they are not relevant, given the Project’s current design.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

Any community health and safety concerns will be incorporated into project social management plan, including measures to address SEA/SH risks.

The Government is currently putting in place measures to reduce the risks of SEA/SH to mitigate the negative social impacts related to the distribution of cash within households (risk of disputes, risk of tensions...). These mitigation measures include training for beneficiary couples aimed at a better distribution of decision-making roles within the household, gender equity for greater family harmony and a containment of domestic violence.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The project will continue to screen out any possible need of land acquisition or potential restriction of access. If, for any reason, land acquisition is required then the relevance of this Standard will be reviewed accordingly.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS have been screened and determined to be not currently relevant given the Project’s current context and timing. Relevance of this ESS will be further assessed during Project preparation as part of the ESA process.

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

There are no Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities in the project area.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage



Not relevant at this stage, as the project is not expected to finance cash transfers which may have environmental and social impacts specific on cultural heritage. There are no civil works or other activities with cultural heritage impacts associated with the cash transfer activities.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

The project is not designed as a financial intermediary operation. However, the relevance of this ESS will be further assessed during Project preparation as part of the ESA process.

B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks

Governance risks on how the national implementing institutions will take into account the appropriate integration of the refugees into host communities, especially for vulnerable peoples. Other risks could be related to working conditions, health, SEA/SH and security of persons involved in the implementation of the project activities in the project area.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas

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:

Mauritania's Environmental and Social Framework will not be applied in part or in whole for this project.

IV. CONTACT POINTS

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Public Disclosure



Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Taazour General Delegation

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

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