



Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary

Appraisal Stage

(ESRS Appraisal Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 05/26/2021 | Report No: ESRSA01511



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Mauritania	AFRICA WEST	P162916	
Project Name	Mauritania Youth Employability Project		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Social Protection & Jobs	Investment Project Financing	2/26/2020	6/18/2021
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Project Technical Coordination Unit - Ministry of Employment, Youth, and Sports, Ministry of Employment, Youth, and Sports		

Proposed Development Objective

The objective of the Project is to promote the employability of vulnerable youth in Selected Areas.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	42.00

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 will seek to improve employment outcomes for vulnerable youth in Mauritania, taking into account the main constraints faced in accessing jobs: low job creation in the formal sector; employment concentration in low-productivity economic activities; and limited access to skills, capital, and information. The project will be centered around the provision of an integrated package of services for vulnerable youth. These services will be designed to



facilitate economic inclusion and boost productivity by alleviating the most pressing constraints faced in accessing employment.

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 project will focus on urban and peri-urban youth (aged 15 to 24) who are either: (i) not in employment, education or training (NEET); or (ii) in vulnerable employment situations. The focus on this group can be justified given they have amongst the poorest employment outcomes in Mauritania. The selection of this group also aligns with the Government’s objective to increase the number of youth accessing jobs in the Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity Strategy (2017 – 2030), as well as priority target groups outline in the National Employment Strategy. As highlighted earlier, this group is also large, growing due to urbanization and underserved by the existing government and donor-financed programs. The aim will be to complement existing interventions, which are already being targeted at rural youth in Mauritania. Given the newly devised geospatial approach to development devised by the CMU, the project will focus on four urban and peri-urban areas (Nouakchott, Rosso, Kiffa, and Nema) where there is direct alignment with both new demand for goods and services, as well as other projects being financed by the World Bank under IDA18 and IDA19. The project will also aim for gender parity amongst beneficiaries (50% male youth and 50% female youth).

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Employment, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in cooperation with two semi-autonomous agencies: National Agency for Employment (l’Agence Nationale de l’Emploi - ANE), and The National Institute for the Promotion of Technical and Vocational Training (l’Institut national pour la promotion de la formation technique et professionnelle, INAP-FTP), as well as the Taazour General Delegation. The MoEYS, by law, has the mandate to develop, implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the national policies and programs related to employment and labor market insertion. The capacity assessment has included all fiduciary aspects, including provisions for ESF compliance.

Public Disclosure

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

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

Environmental Risk Rating

Low

The environment risk rating is classified as Low. The core project activities are training and coaching in the areas of life skills, technical skills, job coaching, job placement, management training, and internship support. Cash transfers will be provided to launch self-employment. Most of these activities will mitigate environmental and social risks, since they offer opportunities for both work and additional earnings, whilst screening out activities that would have a negative impact. This project does not pose any potential indirect or long-term negative impacts.

Social Risk Rating

Moderate

The social risk rating is classified as Moderate at this stage of project preparation. The major project activities will concern training, coaching and cash grants, each of which will be well defined, socially inclusive, and include beneficiaries’ consultations. As the objective of the project is to improve employability of vulnerable youth in



Mauritania, especially women, the project will pay attention to ensure that these vulnerable groups are among the project beneficiaries. The preliminary Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment (SEA/SH) risks' assessment rating is moderate. However, during the implementation, the project will prepare and implement a SEA/SH action plan that will include mitigation measures in accordance with the level of risk.

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:

Following the completion of the business training, project beneficiaries will benefit from a cash grants. These transfers will be made conditional on the beneficiary developing a plan of proposed expenditure of the funds, which could either: (i) be used as seed funding for a new income-generating activity; or (ii) used to provide a guarantee for additional funding, which could improve the productivity of an existing income-generating activity. The plans for proposed expenditure of funds will be screened against a negative list. As the cash grants will not be followed beyond the initial transfer of funds, the provisioning of these funds will include a signature page stated that the youth grantee will use the funds as states in the plan for proposed expenditure. The size of the grants is so small that potential adverse environmental and social impacts are expected to be minimal to nonexistent. However, an Environmental and Social Management Framework has been prepared as a screening tool. It includes capacity building measures and monitoring procedures such as: i) capacity building for staff and other stakeholders; ii) information/ communication/ awareness raising; iii) improvement of methodology and application of good practices; and iv) follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the ESMF.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

The beneficiaries of the project will be vulnerable youth (aged 15 – 24). This category of people are generally difficult to reach, which poses identification problems. In addition, the government has recently emphasized the importance of enhancing transparency in beneficiary selection for employment services programs. The use of the existing Social Registry can greatly enhance the targeting of employment programs for vulnerable youth. This registry was created within the Department of Development Policy and Strategy (DDPS) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance in 2016. It is a cross-cutting tool, which contains key data on vulnerable households and individuals (age, level of education, occupation etc.) and is used to assist the government in optimizing targeting and enhancing transparency for beneficiary selection in social programs. The use of the Social Registry will be particularly relevant for identifying those that are currently engaged in low productivity employment. Application of ESS10 stakeholder engagement and disclosure of information is a central part of the Mauritania Youth Employability Project that will be closely monitored through a simple Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) as part of the overall ESF Management Framework. The SEP has been prepared and it outlines the characteristics and interests of the relevant stakeholder groups and timing and methods of engagement throughout the life of the project. For the Project level Grievance Redress Mechanisms, complaints will be lodged with the Project Coordination or with the regional delegation, territorially competent, local structures of the Ministry of Employment, Youth and Sports (MoEYJS), INAP-FTP, or ANEJ, or Taazour, using one of the following means: website, green line and mail



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 PIU is expected to include civil servants and/or direct workers. The plans for proposed expenditure of cash grants are expected to include expenditures for self-employment, goods, and supplies. The small size of the grant does not allow for hiring of employees. However, Track 2 seeks to strengthen the employability of vulnerable youth (for formal or informal employment) through skills training and job placements within companies. Labor Management Procedures have been prepared and has detailed information on work terms and conditions, including explicit prohibition of child labor and relevant guidance for employment of youth through the project's job placement activities (e.g. Mauritanian national labor law regulations; applicable international regulations which Mauritania has adopted through the ILO). In additions to measures for various categories of PIU staff, the LMP describes the role of the direct workers, the primary supply workers, the contractors' workers and the roles and responsibilities for monitoring project workers. The interns that will be trained through the component 2 (technical training) are not considered as project employees – they are project beneficiaries - and will not be covered by the ESS2 requirements. A workers' GRM is presented in the LMP and will be based on national laws and regulations and refers to Article 15 of the contracts "Settlement of Disputes" which states: "Any dispute related to this Contract that the parties cannot settle amicably shall be submitted to arbitration/conciliation in accordance with Mauritanian law».

ESS2 requirements will apply to project beneficiaries that will be trained under Component 2 because of the focus on technical skills training in the formal and informal sectors. As it is not yet clear at appraisal stage the nature of 'master trades' likely to be involved in the project, particular attention will be paid to protecting beneficiaries under the age of 18, in line with the provisions of the Standard. The project will ensure that group of beneficiaries will not be engaged in any project activity that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their education or be harmful to health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These include any work likely to expose them to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; underground, underwater, working at heights or in confined spaces; use of dangerous machinery, equipment or tools, or involving handling or transport of heavy loads; working in unhealthy environments exposing children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes, or to temperatures, noise or vibration damaging to health; or under difficult conditions such as work for long hours, during the night or in confinement on the premises of the employer.

Using the Bank's GBV/ SEA risk assessment tool SEA/SH the preliminary assessment of the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment (SEAH) is moderate and was confirmed prior to negotiations. In line with this level of risk, the recommendations of the Good Practice Note on Combating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in the Context of Financing Investment Projects Involving Major Civil Works will apply, as well as those of the Mauritanian National Employment Strategy.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

The cash grants are on a scale not expected to generate pollution to water, air, or land. "Good practices" will be included as part of the microentrepreneurship training prior to the approval of the plans for proposed expenditure.



These good practice guidance will reduce risks associated with safe use of chemicals and safe discharge of used water.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

Community health and safety concerns have been incorporated into the "good practices".

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The cash transfer screening process will screen out any possible need of land acquisition or potential restriction of access. Cash grants are not expected to include land use. If the land acquisition is required then the relevance will be reviewed accordingly.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

The project is not expected to finance cash grants which may have environmental and social impacts specific to biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources, as this will be screened out through application of the negative list.

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

The project is not expected to finance activities which may have environmental and social impacts on cultural heritage, as there are to be no civil works associated with the grants transfer activities. Training activities targeted at project beneficiaries will also address the need to avoid harm to any type of Mauritanian cultural heritage.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

This standard does not apply.

B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks

Training sessions for youth will target both young men and young women, potentially in mixed groups. Suggestions for minimizing gender-based violence should be incorporated into the training plans and training-of-trainers. Low level safeguards awareness and capacity at regional levels could have an impact on the implementation of the project. Capacity building will focus on hiring a gender specialist and environmental and social safeguards specialist as part of the PCU and having one safeguards focal point at the level of each of the implementing agencies.



C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways

No

The project is on youth employability. Potential areas of job creation and/or skills training do not intersect with international waterways.

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas

No

The project is in urban and peri-urban areas of Mauritania, where there are no 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:

N/A

IV. CONTACT POINTS

World Bank

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Project Technical Coordination Unit - Ministry of Employment, Youth, and Sports

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Employment, Youth, and Sports

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Public Disclosure



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VI. APPROVAL



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