



1. Project Data

Project ID
P126744

Project Name
HT Relaunching Agriculture: RESEPAG II

Country
Haiti

Practice Area(Lead)
Agriculture and Food

L/C/TF Number(s)
IDA-D2100,IDA-H7410,TF-11396

Closing Date (Original)
30-Nov-2016

Total Project Cost (USD)
78,651,574.10

Bank Approval Date
01-Dec-2011

Closing Date (Actual)
31-Mar-2022

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	40,000,000.00	10,000,000.00
Revised Commitment	83,998,848.37	8,998,848.37
Actual	78,651,574.10	8,998,848.37

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Project Development Objectives (PDOs) as stated in the Financing Agreement (Schedule 1, page 4) and in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, page 5):

- (a) strengthen the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development's (MARNDR) capacity to define and implement the National Agriculture Extension Strategy;



(b) to increase access of small farmers to agriculture extension services and training on animal and plant health in priority regions; and

(c) to provide financial assistance in the case of an agriculture sector emergency.

The PDOs were revised with the Level 1 restructuring on July 2, 2015 (discussed below). The revised PDOs as stated in the Program Document:

(a) reinforce the capacity of MARNDR to provide or facilitate access to services in the agricultural sector;

(b) increase market access to small producers and food security in selected areas;

(c) improve livelihood in areas affected by Hurricane Matthew; and

(d) enable the recipient to respond properly and effectively to an eligible emergency.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?

Yes

Date of Board Approval

02-Jul-2015

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

There were three original components (PAD, pages 7 - 9).

1. Strengthening the role of MARNDR in providing agricultural extension services. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$10.00 million. With Additional Financing (AF), the estimate was US\$11.00 million. The actual cost was US\$9.00 million. This component aimed to strengthen MARNDR's capacity to implement the National Agriculture Extension Strategy (PDVA) through institutional and organizational reforms at the national, departmental and local levels. The activities in this component included: (i) planning and coordination of agricultural extension and training services; (ii) developing sector information to increase the availability and quality of price and agro-climatic data; and (iii) strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) capacity.

This component was renamed "**Agricultural Support Services**" through the project restructuring in 2015 (discussed below). The scope of this component was expanded to significantly shift emphasis from agricultural extension services to broader agricultural support services.

2. Providing support for local agricultural extension and innovation services. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$36.00 million. The estimate with AF was US\$54.03 million. The actual cost was



US\$56.96 million. This component planned to provide agricultural support services through: (i) establishing a Market Support Facility (MSF) to be managed by MARNDR, in coordination with *Tables de Concertation Agricole Departmentale* (refers to Department-Level Roundtables for Consultations on Agriculture, chaired by MARNDR and comprising non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Farmer Organizations and public and private organizations in Haiti's ten departments), to co-finance on a matching-grant basis productive activities, such as adopting priority technologies and applied research, strengthening producer organizations and improving post-harvest and agribusiness technology.

This component was renamed "**Direct Support to Producers and Associations**" through the project restructuring in June 2015. The scope of this component was expanded with sub-components added to the MSF support for (i) expanding the voucher-based Farmer Subsidy Scheme (FSS) for subsidizing farmers adopting improved agricultural technologies. This component was expanded with the AF for providing subsidies to agroforestry activities for climate resilience. With AF, two sub-components were added: subsidies for animal husbandry, irrigation rehabilitation and micro-catchment protection.

3. Agricultural Risk and Emergency Response Contingent Reserve. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$1.00 million. The actual cost was US\$0.37 million. This component planned to provide support for sector emergencies through: (i) emergency recovery subprojects and (ii) subsidy scheme for eligible farmers. The ICR (page 45) noted that the relatively low actual cost for this component was that although the emergency component was triggered three times (in 2012, 2016 and 2021), a large share of the costs of interventions were registered under component two activities. This component was renamed "**Emergency Response Contingency**" in the 2019 Level 2 restructuring.

4. Project Administration and Coordination. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$3.00 million. The estimate with AF was US\$13.62 million. The actual cost was US\$14.23 million. This component planned to support MARNDR in its day-to-day management. This component was renamed "**Institutional Strengthening, Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Management and Studies**", with the 2019 restructuring.

A new component was added with the AF for the project.

5. Improve livelihoods in areas affected by Hurricane Mathew. No estimates of project cost or actual project cost. This component aimed to help the households affected by Hurricane Mathew receive support from the Crisis Response Window.

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

Project cost. The estimated cost at appraisal was US\$50.00 million. With AF, the estimate was US\$79.40 million. The actual cost was US\$80.56 million. The difference between the estimated cost and actual cost was mainly due to exchange rate changes during implementation.

Financing. The project was financed by an IDA Grant of US\$40.00 million. There was co-financing of US\$10.00 million from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). AF of US\$35.00 was approved on June 14, 2017. With this, the total Bank financing for the project increased to US\$85.00 million. The ICR (page 5) notes that although the AF was for US\$35.00 million, in effect it increased



financing only by US\$29.40 million due to exchange rate changes between the US\$ and SDR between 2011 - 2017. The final amount disbursed was US\$80.56 million. About US\$2.40 million was undisbursed.

Recipient contribution. Recipient contribution was not planned at appraisal. The ICR (page 45) noted that there was counterpart funding of US\$3.70 million under the MSF (component two activity).

Dates. The project was approved on December 1, 2011, became effective on April 3, 2012, and was scheduled to close on November 30, 2016. However, the project closed on March 31, 2022.

Other changes. There was one Level 1 restructuring and two Level 2 restructurings. AF was approved for the project. The changes made during the project lifetime are listed sequentially as follows:

The main changes made through the **Level 1 restructuring on July 2, 2015** are: (Restructuring Paper):

- The results framework was revised and as discussed above, activities in components one and two were expanded substantially.
- The PDO was broadened to emphasize that project aimed to improve the farmers access to final markets rather than the narrower goal of improving extension services.
- Key performance indicators were introduced that were more closely linked to the revised activities and the number of PDO indicators were increased from three to five.
- The activity associated with hydro-meteorology, as this activity was financed by a Canadian-funded operation. As the information systems of MARNDR had limited capacity for developing agricultural vocational schools, the targets for this indicator was reduced from three to one. Focus on SPS measures was expanded, as this was a priority for the country.
- The closing date was extended by 19 months to June 30, 2018 for completing the activities that were subject to delays in the initial years.

AF was approved on June 14, 2017 in response to the damage and losses caused by Hurricane Mathew in October 2016. The main changes made **through the AF** are as follows:

- Two new subcomponents were expanded to emphasize longer-term climate resilience (via the agro-forestry and other technologies supported by the Farmer Subsidy Scheme (FSS)).
- A sub-component activity on irrigation rehabilitation was added. With this activity, safeguards on Involuntary Resettlement was triggered.
- The closing date was extended to December 31, 2019.

The following changes were made with the **first level 2 restructuring on June 2, 2019**.

- The closing date was extended by two years to December 31, 2021 completing the irrigation rehabilitation works that were delayed.
- Measurement of three PDO indicators was adjusted to better capture the outcomes.

The following changes were made **through the second level 2 restructuring on December 21, 2021**.

- The closing date was extended by three more months to March 31, 2022 for completing the remaining ongoing activities.



Split rating. The PDO was modified even before AF was approved to reflect the increase in project scope and ambition. With AF the scope was expanded further. While the original project was confined to interventions in the Nord/Nord-East and Sud departments, with AF interventions the geographical reach of the project was expanded to the Centre and Grand Anse departments. Given the increase in level of ambition, this review is not based on a split rating of objectives.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Country context. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 78% of its population living on less than US\$2 per day. This situation is due to a combination of factors such as history of political instability, weak institutional capacity of the state and the frequency of natural disasters. As a result, the World Bank classifies Haiti as a fragile state, due to its institutions' weaknesses and their vulnerability to instability, conflict and violence.

Sector context Agriculture plays a dominant role in Haiti, with 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) coming from, and 50% of the population employed in the sector. However, farmers in Haiti lacked access to technologies to increase production. The vast majority of Haitian farmers did not use improved planting materials such as pest control. Increasing agricultural production was hence important to the government's strategy of sustaining growth.

Government strategy. At appraisal, the Government's agricultural strategy was articulated in the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) for 2011 - 2016. The NAIP focused on three components: (i) developing rural infrastructure; (ii) raising production and productivity of agricultural sub-sectors; and (iii) providing institutional support to the sector. The PDO was well-aligned with the three key axes of the Government's 2016- 2021 strategy, adopted shortly before the AF was approved for the project: (i) focus on agriculture infrastructure, especially for water management; (ii) increasing production along value chains; and (iii) strengthening agricultural services and institutional capacity.

Bank strategy. The PDOs are highly relevant to the Bank strategy for Haiti. At appraisal, the PDOs were consistent with the three pillars of the Bank's Interim Strategy Note (ISN) for 2012 - 2013: (i) building capacity at the sector level to respond to future crises and emergencies; (ii) improving education at the vocational level in the agriculture sector; and (iii) improving the growth and competitiveness of the sector.

The PDO is well-aligned with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for 2015- 2019 which was extended to 2021 and with the 2018 Performance and Learning Review. The CPF highlighted the need for inclusive growth (through enhancing income opportunities in the agricultural sector) and resilience (through strengthening climate resilience) and strengthening governance (through improving capacity for delivering agricultural support services). The Bank's recent Country Diagnostic Update (2022) identified agriculture and food security as Haiti's priorities.

Bank experience. When the Bank was preparing this project, the Bank had two ongoing projects in the agricultural sector in Haiti. The first - the Strengthening Agricultural Public Services Project, focused on core institutional strengthening for formulating agricultural policies. The second, the project for the prevention



and control of Avian Flu focused on health. The Bank had also funded a Community Driven Development Project.

Given the fragile context, this project focused on capacity building at the national and local level for agriculture extension services (later expanded to agricultural support services), and strengthening farmer groups for increasing agriculture competitiveness through improved technologies. Unlike other Bank-financed projects in Haiti, this project had the following features: (i) it was part of a comprehensive sector investment plan (NAIP) agreed to by the Government and other Development Partners; (ii) it built upon the strengths of existing agriculture extension and services approaches; (iii) it leveraged private sector and donor investments in the sector; and (iv) it addressed the pressing need for improving public sector capacity for providing basic agriculture public goods and services.

With the AF for the project approved in June 2017, in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Mathew on October 4, 2016, the project scope was expanded significantly to promote animal husbandry and more resilient water management infrastructure. The project scope also scaled up subsidies to farmers in southern Haiti to relaunch agricultural production following the hurricane.

Given the fragile context, building institutional capacity in a sector that was important for sustainable growth was highly relevant in the country context. The PDO was highly relevant to the Government strategy and the Bank strategy. Therefore, the relevance of the PDO is rated as High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

Reinforce the capacity of MARNDR to provide or facilitate access to services in the agricultural sector.

Rationale

Theory of change. Given the fragile context, Haiti lacked the capacity to formulate and implement agricultural policies. Therefore, the project interventions sought to strengthen the capacities at the central, departmental and municipal levels to deliver agricultural extension services to small farmers. The links between activities, outputs and intended outcomes were logical. Activities such as strengthening MARNDR's capacity for planning and coordinating, providing information systems with price and climatic data and strengthening SPS capacity, were likely to aid in strengthening the capacities at the central, departmental and municipal levels to provide agricultural extension services for farmers. With the project restructuring, scope was expanded (beyond a focus on agricultural extension), to access agricultural services and markets. The expected outcomes were likely to aid in the long-term development outcomes of increasing agricultural production and competitiveness. The intended outcomes are predicated on the assumptions that service and



input providers are available in Haiti to support the Government's delivery of services to farmers and that achievement of development outcomes is not undermined by natural disasters.

Outputs (ICR. pages 36 - 37).

These activities were completed as targeted.

- The agricultural strategy and master plan was adopted, disseminated and publicly disclosed on MARNDR's website.
- 115 farmer field schools were established for disseminating best practices. Farmers and municipal agricultural staff were trained in these schools.
- 220 facilitators were trained in agriculture extension techniques. Two MARNDR staff were trained for two weeks at the Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD) in France on raising of natural predators and integrated control.
- 3,368 private and public staff were trained in surveillance and vaccination.
- 1,208,015 animals were vaccinated against rabies. 2,430,000 vaccinations were administered against anthrax (primarily for bovines).
- The sanitary protection unit's (UPS) fully equipped central building was built and the unit's quarantine policy was developed.
- 14,560 client days of training related to SPS measures were provided to epidemiological volunteers and private veterinarians, far exceeding the target of 6,600 client days.
- 317,364 cattle were identified by the project and included in the information system, far exceeding the target of 250,000.
- The National Food Security Commission (CNSA) collected market price information in all four departments as targeted. This information was made available by SMS and publications to the Departmental Agricultural Directorates (DDAs) and the three agriculture Committee offices (BACs).
- 30 farmers were trained in collecting specimens, and 578 were trained in mealybugs control in the Northeast. 500 farmers were using fruit fly traps, with 40,000 traps purchased under the project.

The following activities were not completed as targeted.

- Some SPS activities that could not be completed by December 2019 for security reasons were dropped.
- The activity associated with the upgrading of the Agricultural Middle School was not completed, due to security issues at the site.

Outcomes.

The outputs described above were expected to reinforce the capacity of MARNDR to facilitate access to services. This outcome was measured by the percentage of key elements of the National Agricultural Extension Strategy (PDVA) implemented to strengthen MARNDR's institutional capacity.

- 81.25% of the key elements of the PDVA were implemented to strengthen MARNDR's institutional capacity, exceeding the revised target of 80%. The elements ranged from developing key strategies such as the quarantine strategy, the strategy to fight the mealybug infestation, enhancing capacity through training of facilitators in extension techniques, training of private and public officials in animal



health surveillance and vaccination to farm level outcomes such as the application of fruit fly traps by farmers and protecting animals against rabies and anthrax.

Given that the outcomes were exceeded, efficacy of this PDO is rated as substantial.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

Increase market access to small producers and food security in selected areas;

Rationale

Theory of change. As the small farmers in Haiti lacked the technical know-how and resources for adopting improved technologies to increase agricultural production, the project interventions sought to provide support for increasing access to improved agricultural technologies. The causal links between activities, outputs and intended outcomes were logical. Activities such as establishing a Market Support Facility (MSF) to promote adoption of improved technology and undertake applied research, strengthen producer organizations and improve post-harvest and agri-business technology, were likely to aid in the intended outcomes of strengthening the farmer organizations to apply new technology for upgrading production and post-harvest practices. The intended outcomes are likely to be reinforced by the activities added with the AF for the project (such as voucher-based farmer subsidy scheme, subsidies for agroforestry to enhance climate resilience and irrigation rehabilitation). These activities were likely to contribute to the long-term development outcomes of increasing agricultural production and reducing food insecurity in the population. The theory of change assumes that small farmers have adequate absorptive capacity to adopt new technologies.

Outputs (ICR, pages 37 - 38).

- The project provided 21,739 farmers with incentives under the Farmer Subsidy Scheme (FSS). 44% of the beneficiaries were women.
- 132 Rural Producer Organizations received direct support for implementing investment sub-projects. 7,452 households benefitted from these sub-projects. 80% of the producer organizations had an operational investment at least twelve months after its completion, exceeding the target of 75%.
- 78% of producers adopted improved agricultural technologies promoted by the project, exceeding the target of 70%.
- 7,452 people (85% women) benefitted from the technical packages for goats and poultry in the South and Grand'Anse Departments. Additional support was provided to 280 beekeepers.
- 3,800 farmers benefitted from irrigation rehabilitation in four irrigated perimeters (Dory, Dubreuil, Les Anglais and Menon).
- 6,013 hectares of land were converted to agroforestry productions under the project, far exceeding the target of 2,500 hectares.
- 37,552 client days of extension services were provided to producers, members of producer organizations, exceeding the target of 21,500. 90.62% of the participants expressed satisfaction with



the farmer field schools, exceeding the target of 75%. 82.8% of the sub-projects were sensitive to gender, environment and nutrition, exceeding the target of 60%.

- 2,244 hectares were provided with improved irrigation services, exceeding the target of 2,000 hectares.
- 224,905 agricultural producers were registered in the MARNDR registry, exceeding the target of 150,000.

Outcomes.

The outputs described above were expected to have four outcomes: (i) increase in the value of production generated by the farmer subsidy scheme; (ii) increase in sales of the supported producer organizations; (iii) increase in the number of direct project beneficiaries; and (iv) increase in the number of women beneficiaries.

- Value of production generated by the farmer subsidy scheme increased to US\$32.50 million, exceeding the target of US\$24.00 million.
- The sales of the supported producer organizations increased by 172%, far exceeding the target of 50%.
- 78,242 people directly benefitted from the project activities, exceeding the original and revised targets of 50,000 and 60,000 respectively. 47.03% of the beneficiaries were women, exceeding the original and revised targets of 20% and 40% respectively.

Given that the outcomes were either realized or exceeded, efficacy of this PDO is rated as substantial.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3

Objective

To improve livelihoods in areas affected by Hurricane Matthew.

Rationale

Theory of change. With the AF for the project, this activity was added in the wake of the Hurricane Mathew. This activity aimed to help households receive support from the Crisis Response Window and sought to build on the existing distribution platforms that had been established through the existing project.

Outputs. (ICR, page 38)

The outputs described above under the previous PDO were relevant to this objective. The activities were aligned and consistent with the intended impact of the first two objectives.

Outcomes.

- 27,958 households affected by Hurricane Matthew received support from the Crisis Response Window, slightly short of the target of 28,000.



- 50, 888 households in the affected Southern region received support, exceeding the target of 50,000.

Efficacy of this objective is rated as substantial.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 4

Objective

To enable the Recipient to respond properly and effectively to an eligible emergency.

Rationale

Theory of change. As the farmers faced high risks of adverse natural disasters and animal and plant health emergencies, the project interventions sought to provide support for emergency assistance when such disasters occur. The causal links between activities, outputs and intended outcomes were logical. Activities such as reallocating funds to support reconstruction, implementing emergency recovery and rehabilitation sub-projects and farmer subsidy scheme for eligible farmers were likely to ensure that farm households are able to recover quickly in the wake of natural disasters.

Outputs (ICR, page 39).

In response to the August 14, 2021 earthquake and Tropical Storm Grace, which struck three days later, the Bank provided its no objection on September 18, 2021, triggering the almost immediate release (within two days) of US\$2.24 million to respond to the emergency. The primary outputs supported were the repair and dredging of irrigation channels in the irrigated perimeters supported under the project and repairs to infrastructure and equipment of Rural Producers Organizations (RPOs) supported with the Market Support Facility (MSF).

Outcomes.

This indicator measured the time taken by the Bank to disburse funds requested by the Government in the wake of a natural disaster.

- The time taken by the Bank to disburse funds in the wake of the natural disasters described above was less than a week, as compared to the target of four weeks.
- The ICR (page 39) notes that the emergency component was also triggered following the 2012 pest infestation and the 2016 Hurricane Mathew, but since this indicator was only introduced with the 2017 AF, the emergency outputs and activities supported prior to 2017 (such as the provision of seeds, fertilizers and plowing services to about 3,060 producers after the hurricane, in addition to basic repairs of irrigation systems and cash for work programs) were not disbursed within a week. Given the late addition of relevant indicators and the limited information on the importance of various policy measures, the efficacy of this indicator is Substantial.



Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Given that the intended outcomes were either realized or exceeded for the most part, overall efficacy is rated as Substantial.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic analysis. A cost-benefit analysis was conducted for component two activities. This component accounted for 72% of the appraisal estimate and 70% of the actual cost. The quantifiable benefits were assumed to come from: (i) incremental agricultural production due to the farmer subsidy scheme; (ii) incremental cash flows from agricultural diversification, processing and value chain enhancement sub-projects; and (iii) incremental animal production improvements due to the livestock recapitalization scheme. The Net Present Value (NPV) at project closure was US\$25.00 million and the ex-post Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) was 15%. The ex-ante EIRR was over 40%. The difference between the ex-post and ex-ante EIRR was partly due to the overly optimistic assumptions on both the speed and the overall adoption rates of improved agricultural technologies. The other benefits that were not factored into the economic analysis included: (i) restored production capacity and incomes derived from the emergency support to 5,500 farmers in the south who were hit by the August 2021 earthquake, and (ii) benefits from the rehabilitation of 2,244 hectares of small-scale irrigation schemes.

Administrative and Operational issues during implementation. There were no cost overruns. The AF provided for the project funded a broader range of expanded activities and provided support for people impacted by Hurricane Mathew. Given that institutional capacity had to be built up over time in Haiti's fragile context, the project faced delays and disbursements were slow during the first two years. However, capacity was built up over time through training both the existing ministerial staff and hiring young consultants on a contractual basis, which offered them career opportunities to be hired as staff. This contributed to improved implementation in the latter years of the project. The initial delays were exacerbated by a diverse range of adverse external shocks, such as two powerful hurricanes, coffee rusk and by an unprecedented infestation of cochineal (white mealybug in the project areas in North/ North-East Haiti, political crisis with large demonstrations against fuel shortages, a sharp spike in gang violence and the COVID 19 pandemic. These factors partly contributed to the extension of the closing date.

The project demonstrated good value for money, given the challenging operational environment. The original projection of 50,000 beneficiaries was reduced to 19,000 at the time of 2017 project restructuring, due to a combination of factors including, poor project performance and adverse exchange rate changes. With the AF,



the target for the number of beneficiaries was raised to 60,000. By project closure, 78,242 people benefitted from the project (30% increase relative to the AF target). Although the actual cost of component four activities (Project Administration and Coordination) at US\$14.23 million was 4% higher than the revised estimate with AF, it still represented reasonable cost given the limited capacity and operational constraints.

In sum, efficiency is rated as substantial, given that most of the outcomes were realized, despite the fragile conditions in Haiti which continued throughout the implementation period and continues to do so to date.

Efficiency Rating

Substantial

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

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal	✓	40.00	72.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	15.00	70.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

Relevance of the PDO to the Government strategy and the Bank strategy for Haiti is High. Both efficacy and efficiency are rated as substantial. This review concludes that there were only minor shortcomings in the project's achievement of its objectives or in its efficiency. Thus, the project's overall outcome is satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

There is a substantial risk to the sustainability of development outcomes due to the political environment, macroeconomic conditions, and environmental risks.

Political risk. There is a substantial risk to the sustainability of development outcomes due to political volatility. The ICR (para 65) notes that political and gang violence continue to hinder the ability of farmers and local suppliers in the project areas to access inputs and reach final markets in Port-au-Prince, due to blockages of key roads into and out of the capital (ICR, para 65).



Macroeconomic risk. There is a substantial risk to the sustainability of development outcomes due to the macroeconomic challenges facing the country. These include inflation and a devaluation of the Haitian Gourde, which affects fuel and access to inputs (ICR, para 65).

Exposure to Natural Disasters. There is a substantial risk to the sustainability of the development outcomes, given that Haiti is one of the most vulnerable countries to natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, and droughts, especially as most agriculture is rainfed.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The Bank prepared this project based on the experiences of the previous Bank-financed Strengthening of Public Services Project (RESEPAG 1) and the Community Driven Development Project. Lessons incorporated at design included: (i) Given the fragile context, focus on capacity building; (ii) Given that experience with donor-financed project units in the sector had shown that they do not ensure timely execution of activities, this project aimed at institutional strengthening and capacity building through working with existing MARNDR departments, rather than creating a free-standing project unit; (iii) designing farmer support mechanisms through working with existing private and civil society sector service providers. Unlike the RESEPAG 1 project, this project appropriately included an emergency response component, given the devastating consequences of the earthquake of January 2010.

In addition, the Bank prepared this project in close collaboration with other donors financing complementary projects (especially the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to avoid duplication of project activities. The analytical underpinnings of the project were sound and based on the recent Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostic for Haiti.

The implementation arrangements were appropriate, with the MARNDR responsible for implementing the project. MARNDR was already implementing the ongoing RESEPAG 1 project, and hence was familiar with the Bank's fiduciary requirements.

The Bank identified several risks at appraisal including environmental risks and social and political instability risks. With mitigation measures, the overall project risk was rated as medium (PAD, para 38 and 39). The arrangements made at appraisal for safeguards and fiduciary compliance were appropriate (discussed in section 10).

There were minor shortcomings at quality-at-entry. As the ICR (para 61) notes, there were some project readiness issues, as key technical consultant resources and certain procedures for M&E were not in place at approval. The EIRR calculations at appraisal proved to be overly optimistic.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory



b. Quality of supervision

Twenty two Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs) were filed over the project lifetime of approximately eleven years (implying on average twice a year supervision missions. There were multiple field visits by a locally-based Task Team Leader (TTL) with relevant skills (Agricultural Specialist) who was associated with the project for almost the entire life of the project. As mobility restrictions due to the political violence and COVID-19 impeded movement into and out of Port-Au-Prince, the Bank ensured that the coordinating team had multiple internet service providers and technology tools to be able to engage with and monitor local implementation (ICR, para 62).

The supervision team responded flexibly through four project restructurings to the implementation challenges and shocks in the external context, as well as changing priorities, for instance, by refocusing on SPS issues and expanding support through the Farmer Subsidy Scheme through the first project restructuring in 2015 and by the AF in 2017 in response to the damages provoked by Hurricane Matthew, which not only provided additional resources to improve livelihoods in the short term, but also a greater focus on long-term solutions (via agroforestry and water management systems) to enhance resilience. According to the Recipient's Completion Report (ICR, Annex 6), the recommendations of the Bank team during the supervision missions helped implement the project and make the necessary adjustments.

In sum, overall Bank performance is rated as Satisfactory.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The results framework was clear and the key original outcome indicators (discussed in section four) were appropriate for monitoring project performance. The outcomes were attributable to the project activities.

The M&E system was designed to be housed in MARNDR's Directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation (DSE). A full-time DSE manager was responsible for M&E coordination. The design of the indicators and the results framework had to be revised to reflect changing priorities under components one and two activities. With the AF for the project, a new indicator was added for monitoring the performance of the added activity.

b. M&E Implementation

The data for assessing the outcomes was drawn from the project's M&E system, using the Kobo Toolbox. The ICR (page 9) noted that this toolbox is a free and open-source platform for the collection,



management and visualization of data used by thousands of organizations worldwide, including development actors, education and research organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The ICR (para 53) noted that MARNDR's unit lacked capacity at the start of the project. The absence of adequate consultant support and baseline data at approval constrained M&E in the early years. However, these issues were rectified during implementation and MARNDR's departments were able to closely monitor project outcomes. The ICR also noted that data had been gathered on key performance indicators by project closure, despite the extremely fragile and volatile context. However data on beneficiary impacts were not collected during implementation and had to be obtained via ex-post surveys.

c. M&E Utilization

The ICR (para 54) observed that the M&E system was generally sufficient to assess the achievement of the objectives. The ICR also notes that the M&E system was used to prepare a new Haiti project. The ICR (para 24) noted that the effective use of the Kobo Toolbox was particularly useful for enhancing the monitoring of the emergency campaigns and to monitor the progress achieved in all indicators.

Overall, M&E is rated as substantial, given the minor shortcomings in design and implementation.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as a Category B (partial assessment) under the World Bank Safeguard Policies. Four safeguard policies were triggered at appraisal: Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01); Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04); Forests (OP/BP 4.36); and Pest Management (Op 4.09) (PAD, page 6). In addition to these safeguards, the safeguards on Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12) were triggered with the AF for the project.

Environmental Assessment, Natural Habitats, Forests and Pest Management. The PAD (para 51) noted that the project did not support any activities with large-scale, significant or irreversible adverse impacts on the environment. Because exact investments were to be identified during implementation, the project updated and expanded the existing Environmental and Social Impact Framework (ESMF) prepared for the Bank-financed Strengthening Of Agricultural Public Service (RESEPAG 1) and the Prevention and Control of Avian Flu and other Zoonoses (PRECONIA) projects. The ESMF was publicly disclosed at appraisal (PAD, para 52).

The ICR (para 57) observed that compliance with the environmental safeguards was rated moderately satisfactory or satisfactory throughout implementation. Environmental and Social Management plans (ESMPs) and an Integrated Pest Management Plan (ESMP) were approved as part of the ESMF to ensure



compliance with the safeguards on Pest Management. There was compliance with the safeguards on environmental assessment, pest management, forests, and natural habitats.

Involuntary Resettlement The project complied with the social safeguards. A resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) was prepared by MARNDR (ICR, para 56), and a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) was prepared for the affected eight persons. The affected people were duly compensated.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management. The Bank conducted an assessment of the financial management arrangements of MARNDR at appraisal (PAD, para 48). MARNDR had implemented previous Bank-financed projects in Haiti and was familiar with Bank procedures. Despite this, the key risk was the weak financial management capacity given the fragile context, and that coordination between several stakeholders including the non governmental organizations (NGOs) and the farmers was required to implement component two activities. Even with mitigation measures, the project risk was rated as substantial (PAD, page 36).

The ICR (para 58) notes that overall financial management was rated as satisfactory. Although there were some delays, the project eventually complied with the legal covenants. There were also delays in submitting interim financial reports. There were no reports of ineligible expenditures.

Procurement Management . The Bank conducted a procurement assessment of MARNDR at appraisal (PAD, page 41). MARNDR had experience with implementing Bank-financed projects. However, Haiti's overall public procurement system was relatively weak and lacked skilled personnel with knowledge of international norms. Despite mitigation measures, procurement risk was rated high at appraisal (PAD, page 30).

The ICR (para 59) noted that procurement management was rated satisfactory by December 2019, more than two years before the project closing. However, there were delays in procurement due to capacity constraints in the early years. The ICR does not report any case of mis-procurement.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

There were no unintended impacts.

d. Other

11. Ratings

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

12. Lessons

The ICR draws the following main lessons from the experience of implementing this project, with some adaptation of language.

1. Building institutional capacity is important in fragile settings and while capacity-building activities can slow the initial pace of implementation, they can yield significant long-term benefits. This project sought to build the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR) by placing the responsibility for coordination on the MARNDR, rather than having a parallel Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and relying on relevant departments for the technical supervision of project-supported activities in their areas of purview. While this approach contributed to delays in the initial years, it resulted in significant improvements in how the Ministry performed its mandate, as lines of responsibility were clear and capacities were reinforced.

2. The use of locally-based operators in delivering services and locally-based project coordination staff can help in integrating local communities. In this project when restrictions on mobility due to gang violence and the COVID-19 pandemic impeded close field-level follow-up by the Central Project Coordination Unit, project implementation was able to continue, due to the decentralized operators in the project areas and supervision by locally based teams of the Project Coordination Unit. Such an approach can also help in building capacity in a fragile context.

3. Strengthening community capacity and facilitating civil engagement can help improve results and reduce social risks. In this project, close collaboration between the Departmental Agriculture Consultation Table, irrigators associations, rural producers organizations and other local institutions helped prioritize and define interventions that yielded major dividends in terms of commitment.

4. Adapting flexibly and responding rapidly to changing circumstances is especially important in a fragile country context. The implementation of this project was undermined by large and diverse external shocks (political, macroeconomic, climate-related, animal and plant-related and by a global pandemic). The project's strong grounding in strategic priorities established by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development and its flexibility in responding to changing priorities and emerging challenges and the Bank's help through project restructuring proved invaluable for its success.

13. Assessment Recommended?



No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is well-written and clear. The theory of change provided in the ICR articulates a clear storyline, from project activities to outputs to short, medium and long-term outcomes and finally impact. The theory of change explicitly states the underlying assumptions of the results framework. The ICR candidly discusses the challenges faced by the project, given the fragile context. The evidence and analysis provided in the text is adequate for assessing project performance. The ICR draws good lessons from the experience of implementing this project. The Recipient's completion report in Annex 6 provides useful information.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
High