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PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC  
**Emergency Food Crisis Response and  
Agriculture Re-Launch Project**

**Report No. 127422**

JUNE 18, 2018

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**Report No.:127422**

**PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

**EMERGENCY FOOD CRISIS RESPONSE AND AGRICULTURE RE-  
LAUNCH PROJECT**  
**(IDA-5395)**

**June 18, 2018**

*Financial, Private Sector, and Sustainable Development  
Independent Evaluation Group*

## Currency Equivalents (annual averages)

*Currency Unit = CFAF*

2014	US\$1.00	477 CFAF
2015	US\$1.00	542 CFAF
2016	US\$1.00	604 CFAF
2017	US\$1.00	621 CFAF
2018	US\$1.00	547 CFAF

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGETIP	Agence Générale d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Publics
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations)
FCV	Fragility, Conflict and Violence
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results (report)
ICRA	Central African Institute for Agricultural Research
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIRA	Multi-Sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PDO	Project Development Objective
PPAR	Project Performance Assessment Report
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

*All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.*

## Fiscal Year

Government: January 1 – December 31

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## Principal Ratings

	<i>ICR*</i>	<i>ICR Review*</i>	<i>PPAR</i>
Outcome	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Risk to Development Outcome	High	High	High
Bank Performance	Moderately unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Borrower Performance	Moderately unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

\* The Implementation Completion and Results (ICR) report is a self-evaluation by the responsible World Bank Global Practice. The ICR Review is an intermediate Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) product that seeks to independently validate the findings of the ICR.

## Key Staff Responsible

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**IEG Mission: Improving World Bank Group development results through excellence in independent evaluation.**

### About this Report

The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) assesses the programs and activities of the World Bank for two purposes: first, to ensure the integrity of the World Bank's self-evaluation process and to verify that the World Bank's work is producing the expected results, and second, to help develop improved directions, policies, and procedures through the dissemination of lessons drawn from experience. As part of this work, IEG annually assesses 20–25 percent of the World Bank's lending operations through field work. In selecting operations for assessment, preference is given to those that are innovative, large, or complex; those that are relevant to upcoming studies or country evaluations; those for which Executive Directors or Bank management have requested assessments; and those that are likely to generate important lessons.

To prepare a Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR), IEG staff examine project files and other documents, visit the borrowing country to discuss the operation with the government and other in-country stakeholders, interview World Bank staff and other donor agency staff both at headquarters and in local offices as appropriate, and apply other evaluative methods as needed.

Each PPAR is subject to technical peer review, internal IEG Panel review, and management approval. Once cleared internally, the PPAR is commented on by the responsible World Bank country management unit. The PPAR is also sent to the borrower for review. IEG incorporates both World Bank and borrower comments as appropriate, and the borrowers' comments are attached to the document that is sent to the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors. After an assessment report has been sent to the Board, it is disclosed to the public.

### About the IEG Rating System for Public Sector Evaluations

IEG's use of multiple evaluation methods offers both rigor and a necessary level of flexibility to adapt to lending instrument, project design, or sectoral approach. IEG evaluators all apply the same basic method to arrive at their project ratings. Following is the definition and rating scale used for each evaluation criterion (additional information is available on the IEG website: <http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org>).

**Outcome:** The extent to which the operation's major relevant objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, efficiently. The rating has three dimensions: relevance, efficacy, and efficiency. *Relevance* includes relevance of objectives and relevance of design. Relevance of objectives is the extent to which the project's objectives are consistent with the country's current development priorities and with current World Bank country and sectoral assistance strategies and corporate goals (expressed in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Country Assistance Strategies, Sector Strategy Papers, and Operational Policies). Relevance of design is the extent to which the project's design is consistent with the stated objectives. *Efficacy* is the extent to which the project's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. *Efficiency* is the extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, a return higher than the opportunity cost of capital and benefits at least cost compared to alternatives. The efficiency dimension is not applied to development policy operations, which provide general budget support. *Possible ratings for outcome:* highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory.

**Risk to Development Outcome:** The risk, at the time of evaluation, that development outcomes (or expected outcomes) will not be maintained (or realized). *Possible ratings for risk to development outcome:* high, significant, moderate, negligible to low, not evaluable.

**Bank Performance:** The extent to which services provided by the World Bank ensured quality at entry of the operation and supported effective implementation through appropriate supervision (including ensuring adequate transition arrangements for regular operation of supported activities after loan/credit closing), toward the achievement of development outcomes. The rating has two dimensions: quality at entry and quality of supervision. *Possible ratings for Bank performance:* highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory.

**Borrower Performance:** The extent to which the borrower (including the government and implementing agency or agencies) ensured quality of preparation and implementation, and complied with covenants and agreements, toward the achievement of development outcomes. The rating has two dimensions: government performance and implementing agency(ies) performance. *Possible ratings for borrower performance:* highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory.

## **Preface**

This is a Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) on the Emergency Food Crises and Agriculture Re-launch project in the Central African Republic, an emergency recovery operation financed by the International Development Association (IDA) implemented over a two-year period between March 2014 and 2016. The project was executed by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), under contract of the Ministry of Rural Development. Its appraised and actual costs were \$20 million. Launched after a protracted humanitarian crisis, the project aimed to protect and rebuild livelihoods, human capital, particularly of children, and to relaunch the productivity of the Central African Republic's agriculture sector.

This assessment is based on a review of World Bank project documentation, key interviews with the client, WFP, FAO, and World Bank management and staff, and is supplemented by primary and secondary data collected from several sources in M'Baiki, Bossembele, and Boali, during a field mission to the Central African Republic in December 2017.

Following standard Independent Evaluation Group procedures, a copy of the draft report was shared with the relevant government officials and agencies for their review and feedback and no comments were received.

## Summary

This is a Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) on the World Bank Emergency Food Crises and Agriculture Re-launch project designed to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable populations in the Central African Republic following a coup d'état in 2013. Because of the extent of the crisis, and the loss of government capacity in the wake of the crisis to implement emergency aid, the project was executed by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), contracted by the Ministry of Rural Development.

**Assessment Rationale.** This emergency food security operation failed to deliver on its intended objectives. The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) commissioned this PPAR to help flesh out lessons from failure to help improve the future performance of food security operations in conflict-affected settings. The PPAR exercise was timed to coincide with the launch in March 2018 of a new partnership between the World Bank and the WFP that identifies nine priority areas for strategic engagement, including increased cooperation in fragile and conflict situations, social protection, and health and nutrition programs. Data obtained by this assessment reveal that between 2006 and 2016, World Bank member countries have “passed through” about \$4 billion of International Development Association finance to multiple UN agencies through partnership agreements, of which \$220 million (or 5.5 percent) was executed by WFP and \$198 million (or 5 percent) was executed by FAO. Most of these funds have been used to enhance food security in fragile or conflict-affected settings yet IEG has never undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of UN-executed World Bank projects implemented in countries characterized by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV).

**Relevance of Objectives and Design.** The project objective of protecting and rebuilding livelihoods, human capital (particularly that of children), and of relaunching the productivity of the agriculture sector was too ambitious for an emergency recovery operation implemented over a 16-month period. The targeting of vulnerable persons, including children and pregnant and lactating women, was highly relevant and demonstrated an improvement over targeting methods in the prior World Bank food crisis project in the Central African Republic. The targeting of food aid could have been further improved by identifying additional entry points outside formal structures (e.g. schools and hospitals). FAO relied on farmer cooperatives to distribute seeds and other inputs, and thus missed reaching vulnerable farmers and households who lacked membership in the cooperatives, as corroborated in site visits and interviews carried out for the project assessment.

Project design was based on a theory developed by the United Nation's Food Security Cluster called “Seeds for Change.” The theory pairs the distribution of seeds with food aid to protect seed from being eaten or sold. In principle, the design is sensible but seed procurement in conflict-affected countries is complex. FAO managed seed procurement internationally and locally but was unable to secure a sufficient supply of seed that could be classified as fit for planting. The mantra of “provide food so they don't eat their seed” may have done a disservice by linking the activities unnecessarily—which negatively affected

targeting—and by pairing WFP with FAO at a time when FAO lacked networks on the ground. Both relevance of the objective and relevance of design are rated **modest**.

**Results.** The project *modestly* achieved its objective of protecting and rebuilding livelihoods for vulnerable populations but only *negligibly* achieved its objective of relaunching the agriculture sector. WFP achieved only a little over one-third of the targets originally planned in terms of tonnage (36 percent) and number of children reached (37 percent). However, WFP overachieved its target for general food distribution but at the expense of targeted feeding programs.

FAO supported the procurement of seed internationally, but the seed was of inferior quality and was distributed late after the planting season. It supported the local production of pre-base seed, but owing to its inferior quality, the seed was declassified and then distributed to producers for simple cultivation. Seed storage was a major failure of the project: only 12 of the 75 planned warehouses were completed, with an estimated storage capacity of 2 tons for each warehouse. Weak oversight of the contractual arrangements with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the inability of communities to hold them accountable were key determinants of the failure.

Regarding the distribution of small ruminants (sheep/goats/chickens), there were no targets established and no information provided in project documentation. Interviews with women cooperatives revealed that there was a mass distribution of small ruminants. FAO confirmed the distribution of these livestock but also spoke negatively of the operation for several reasons, including that the distribution of ruminants is not a comparative advantage of FAO as compared to livestock services (medicines or vaccines). Market gardening was the only area of observed success in the agriculture part of the project. Farmers' groups in MBaiki, Bossembele, and Boali described taking up gardening for consumption and surplus marketing, although several obstacles remain. They include inferior quality equipment, difficulties in seed storage, and lack of technical assistance. Women's groups described receiving either a livestock kit or gardening equipment but not both.

**Efficiency.** There were no data made available by the project on which to build an analysis of benefits and costs. Building a base of knowledge on what it takes to deliver food aid through a World Bank–financed, UN–executed project, including the estimation and measurement of the various cost layers between the country client, UN, and NGOs, would have been a valuable contribution. Efficiency of the project is rated **modest**.

**Overall development outcome** is rated **unsatisfactory** because of the modest ratings for relevance, efficacy, and efficiency. The project objective was too ambitious for a short emergency recovery loan. Project design included a sound articulation for WFP assistance, with some weaknesses associated with targeting, but it lacked a roadmap for how FAO would achieve its recovery goals, especially regarding seed procurement. Efficacy is rated **modest** because WFP overachieved its targets for general food distribution but significantly underdelivered for vulnerable children. FAO did not achieve its objective of relaunching the productivity of the agricultural sector. Efficiency is rated **modest** because no credible calculations were made of how costs were layered between the World Bank, government,

two UN agencies, and the several NGOs that engaged in project execution. Efficiency analysis is limited by lack of information regarding the actual unit cost of service delivery.

**Bank and Borrower Performance.** Prepared in three weeks, this emergency operation acted as a stop-gap to help deliver critically needed food aid to parts of the Central African Republic affected by conflict. It was designed to partially make up for the severe funding shortfall associated with a humanitarian appeal launched by the WFP in response to the food crisis in the Central African Republic. The short preparation cycle was justified in relation to the objective of delivering emergency food aid through WFP, but not in relation to the overall project aims. Quality at entry suffered from the absence of a rapid analysis of feasible targeting mechanisms, because much of the vulnerable population was displaced. It also suffered from a lack of analysis of risks associated with FAO's activities, including the technical, quality, and marketing issues associated with seed supply at short notice, while over-focusing on potential environmental risks more relevant for a multiyear agriculture project than an emergency response. Project supervision was negligible. The Bank consistently rated the project as "satisfactory" and the project was never flagged as being "at risk" because the funds had been fully disbursed to the UN agencies. Supervisory functions were neglected, including oversight and the use of monitoring and evaluation to make rapid course corrections and safeguard monitoring and reporting. The government showed strong interest in the operation, but the coordination role of the *Agence Générale d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Publics* (AGETIP) was undermined because all project management costs were provided to the UN agencies. At the time, funds for operating expenses in AGETIP were scarce, and many of the costs incurred in support of the project were not covered. Both Bank and Borrower performance are rated **unsatisfactory**.

## Lessons

**Standard Agreements between World Bank clients and UN executing agencies can facilitate success if they include a common vision about intended objectives, a clear and achievable results framework and related outcome indicators, and a clear articulation of how risks to the environment and social framework will be monitored, reported on, and managed.** In the Central African Republic, the World Bank over-relied on UN reporting mechanisms after the humanitarian crisis, and did not fulfill its supervision responsibility, undermining opportunities to address ongoing project implementation challenges.

**Efficient seed procurement for conflict-affected countries is complex owing to disruption of trading networks and normal supply and demand signals: the recruitment and funding of a technical team needs to be a prior condition of project effectiveness.**

The experience in the Central African Republic shows that procuring the correct seeds for specific geographic locations and their associated soil and agro-climatic conditions is technically demanding and time consuming. It also requires deep local and regional knowledge of supply and demand. Upstream diagnostic work on effective seed procurement (quality and realistic timeframe for procurement), including the availability and quality of technical support, is needed. This should involve a candid review of the World Bank's existing partnerships and ways of doing business (such as FAO execution) but also fine-grained institutional analysis and mapping of government technical services as well as capable partners in the NGO community (some NGOs are much more capable than others and they need to be identified before crisis hits). The few dispersed agricultural technical

services that remained after crisis, including many well-trained and capable agents, should have been better incorporated into the emergency response.

**Emergency food security operations do not necessarily require food agency coupling (such as WFP and FAO).** Depending on the stage of recovery, emergency operations may be better served by pairing a food agency with a social agency (such as UNICEF and the Red Cross) to achieve more effective targeting and service delivery for the most vulnerable populations.

**Post-conflict emergency assistance in highly agrarian economies should try to maximize synergies across sectoral operations to optimize the delivery of food aid while laying a foundation for growth of the agricultural sector.** In the Central African Republic, interviews with UN relief agencies and development actors revealed that opportunities were missed after the 2012 coup to link humanitarian interventions with wider development aims, for example, by identifying transport interventions that could have increased market access while achieving stabilization aims. To achieve more effective harmonization, lessons from the Central African Republic suggest that aid could have been better coordinated through a multidonor strategy and funding tool designed to support the recovery while bridging the humanitarian relief–development divide.

José Carbajo Martínez  
Director, Financial, Private Sector, and  
Sustainable Development Department



## 1. Background and Context

1.1 Since late 2012, the Central African Republic has experienced massive armed clashes and intercommunal violence, creating an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, which has unraveled the country's social fabric, displaced over 25 percent of the country's population, and resulted in a steady deterioration in the political and security environments. This has led to depressed economic activity, loss of administrative capacity, and declining social service provision.

1.2 Although it twice evacuated staff in 2012 and 2013, the World Bank stayed engaged throughout the protracted stages of crisis. The crisis triggered Operations Policy 7.30. This policy applies when a de facto government takes power in a World Bank member country. World Bank disbursement paused, and then resumed selectively in November 2013. By 2014, owing to the urgency of the post crisis needs, the government requested the cancellation of all undisbursed balances on active World Bank project accounts and the redirection of those funds toward an emergency response package, including addressing severe food shortages. In January 2014, World Bank management presented to the Executive Board a \$100 million emergency response package for the Central African Republic that was composed of restructured parts of the existing portfolio, the unallocated IDA16 balance, and the first year—with frontloading—of the IDA17 allocation. The portfolio restructuring included the cancellation of \$21 million from an ongoing Agro-Pastoral Recovery project, and the redirection of these funds toward this Emergency Response and Agriculture Re-launch project, approved on March 8, 2014.

### **Food Insecurity**

1.3 A Multi-Sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) undertaken in the Central African Republic by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in January 2014 indicated that, at the time, about 1.4 million persons were food insecure. The average number of meals had declined to a single meal a day in conflict-affected areas, and 94 percent of communities visited by the assessment team reported they would not have enough seed to plant for the next agricultural season (OCHA 2014). During the lean season—the period between planting and harvesting—food stocks dwindle and families regularly skip meals. In addition, food prices had been on the rise owing to instability in the northern part of the country, a situation that was aggravated by production taxes levied by rebels, which was discouraging market sales and reducing producers' assets. Retaliation against Muslims also compounded these long-standing economic problems because many of the Muslims who fled had been truck drivers who took goods to market and shopkeepers who left behind stores that were looted and torched.

1.4 The World Bank quickly prepared the Central African Republic Emergency Food Crisis Response and Agriculture Re-launch project, for an amount of \$20 million, with the aim of providing needed food security and agricultural assistance ahead of the sorghum and millet planting seasons, which occur in March and May, respectively. The displaced, estimated at 1 million persons or one-fifth of the country, were slow to return, and those who did found their homes and farms destroyed. Assessments conducted in 2013 and the MIRA showed that the crisis had resulted in the loss, destruction, or plundering of vast amounts of food, seed stocks, and agricultural assets. At the same time, the presence and capacity of

decentralized governmental or para-governmental technical services (mainly technical backstopping and research structures) had been eroding over time, and the conflict compounded the lack of access to technical support. For the government to respond rapidly it needed to seek substantial support from development partners and external agencies.

1.5 The WFP was already engaged in the Central African Republic. WFP had appealed for \$107 million in aid, but reported that it had received only a fraction of that amount by early 2014. WFP aimed, through a phased approach, at providing emergency assistance by scaling up an integrated food distribution and blanket supplementary feeding package for the most vulnerable, then ensuring targeted nutrition support and school meals, and then supporting an integrated food and nutrition safety net for the moderately food insecure people over the lean season, while maintaining a basic level of support for health and education services.

1.6 FAO had a strategic response plan that included the distribution of seeds and agricultural tools ahead of and during the agriculture season, and the rebuilding of storage facilities. The project appraisal document (PAD, p. 3) noted, “Saving the 2014 agricultural campaign, which will start in April, will be essential to prevent further deterioration of food insecurity.”

1.7 Thus, it was determined that the emergency recovery project would be financed by the World Bank and executed by the WFP and FAO, including subcontracting several international and national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

## 2. Objective, Design, and their Relevance

2.1 **Project Development Objectives.** The project development objectives (PDOs) were to protect and rebuild livelihoods, human capital, particularly of children, and to re-launch the productivity of the agriculture sector.

### Relevance of Objective

2.2 This report rates the relevance of the project objective as **modest**. The objective was too ambitious for an emergency recovery loan designed to bridge the humanitarian and development divide over a 16-month delivery cycle. It included language such as to rebuild livelihoods, rebuild human capital, and included references to productivity. For food aid, an objective statement should be outcome focused and based on outcomes that are attributable and measurable in a short-duration emergency intervention, including increased caloric/nutritional intake for the targeted groups and reduced mortality attributable to the intervention. Because there is a need to focus on vulnerability in emergency food aid operations, objective statements should also include target groups embedded in the statement. One of the reasons that emergency operations often have lofty objectives is that there is legal pressure in the World Bank to finesse the objective to ensure it conforms to the World Bank’s development mandate. While this alignment should be articulated as part of a higher goal, the PDO as framed in the legal agreement should be specific, attributable, and measurable, and should include a reference to the targeted population that is being served.

2.3 The second part of the objective relates to FAO's function in the project. It sweepingly referred to the re-launch of the productivity of the agriculture sector, an objective statement that wholly misrepresented the limited aim of FAO's intervention in a post-conflict environment. At the time of the intervention, the sector was devastated. A more measured and relevant statement would have referred to the immediate short-term restoration or rehabilitation of the sector within identified zones, through the distribution of inputs and tools, and through the provision of technical assistance. The rehabilitation of the sector also required an indication of *what* agricultural activities the project would support in zones of insecurity with elevated levels of displacement, where farmers' decisions to invest relied heavily on perceptions about security. For example, WFP found that stocking practices in the far southeastern market of Zemio (along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Haut Mbomou prefecture) are more robust potentially owing to chronic security concerns and worries about displacement (WFP 2011). The objective statement could have been framed in a way that referred to a conflict-informed approach to the immediate rehabilitation of agricultural activities in zones that were affected by displacement or insecurity.

## **Project Design**

2.4 The project had two main components, aligned with the two-part objective. The first objective/component was executed by WFP and the second by FAO.

2.5 **Component 1. Human capital protection and livelihood assistance** (appraisal cost: \$12.0 million; actual cost: \$12.0 million). According to the PAD, this component was designed to protect the human capital of children, including those in the "first 1,000 days" and to prevent negative coping strategies by poor households—such as selling assets, incurring debt, and sacrificing food consumption—which would compromise human capital and livelihood recovery in the longer term. It was designed to support (i) the procurement and distribution of specialized and staple foods, (ii) supplemental feeding, and (iii) school feeding programs in selected locations in the country. WFP, contracted by the Ministry of Rural Development, was requested to procure, internationally, specialized foods (unavailable locally) to be used for blanket and targeted feeding of young children, 6–59 months old, as well as for pregnant and lactating women. It would also procure staple foods (grains, legumes, oils) where possible in neighboring countries through competitive procurement, and move them by land to the Central African Republic. These foods would then be distributed to food-insecure households in the affected prefectures at numerous distribution points, with coverage increasing over time as the lean season unfolded. The total human capital protection and livelihood assistance program implemented by WFP was designed to reach more than 1.1 million people. The distribution of food would be aimed particularly at supporting those populations returning from safe havens to areas of origin and their farmland to support the impending planting season (March–May).

2.6 **Component 2. Re-launch the productivity of the agriculture sector** (appraisal cost: \$8.0 million; actual cost: \$8.0 million). This component was designed to restore food production capacity for the most affected people in post-conflict, food-insecure areas. It

would finance purchase of groundnut, maize, rice, and vegetable seeds (about 400 tons) for subsidized distribution to seed producer groups (17,400 households), and 370 women's groups (11,100 households) to restore domestic food production capacity. In addition, it would support the procurement of about 55,000 pieces of farm equipment for subsidized distribution to the same beneficiaries, as well as 740 processing units and the rehabilitation and construction of 100 post-harvest and seed storage facilities at the community and village levels for women's groups, and of the seed laboratory control for the Central African Institute for Agricultural Research (ICRA). Component 2 would also provide training to beneficiary farmers and to 50 field personnel of the Ministry of Rural Development, as well as 150 young graduates who would participate in the implementation of the project.

2.7 **Component 3.** Provided \$3.3 million for operating costs, project preparation, and physical and price contingencies. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was designed to be subsumed under the WFP and FAO component activities.

## Relevance of Project Design

2.8 **Theory of change.** The intervention was based on a theory, developed by the UN's Food Security Cluster, known as "Seeds for Change." Shown in Figure 2.1, the theory is based on the concept that, in the absence of humanitarian intervention, displaced and returning households will fully expend their remaining human and physical capital to survive, thus eroding any opportunity to restore their livelihood, including through investment on the farm. In the short term, emergency food aid delivered by WFP is proposed to "protect" distributed seeds, so that the seeds distributed by FAO are planted and not eaten, in addition to supporting enhanced nutritional outcomes. The pairing of seed and food distribution is timed to coincide with the lean season, when food stocks have been exhausted and just before planting season (in the case of the Central African Republic between March and May).

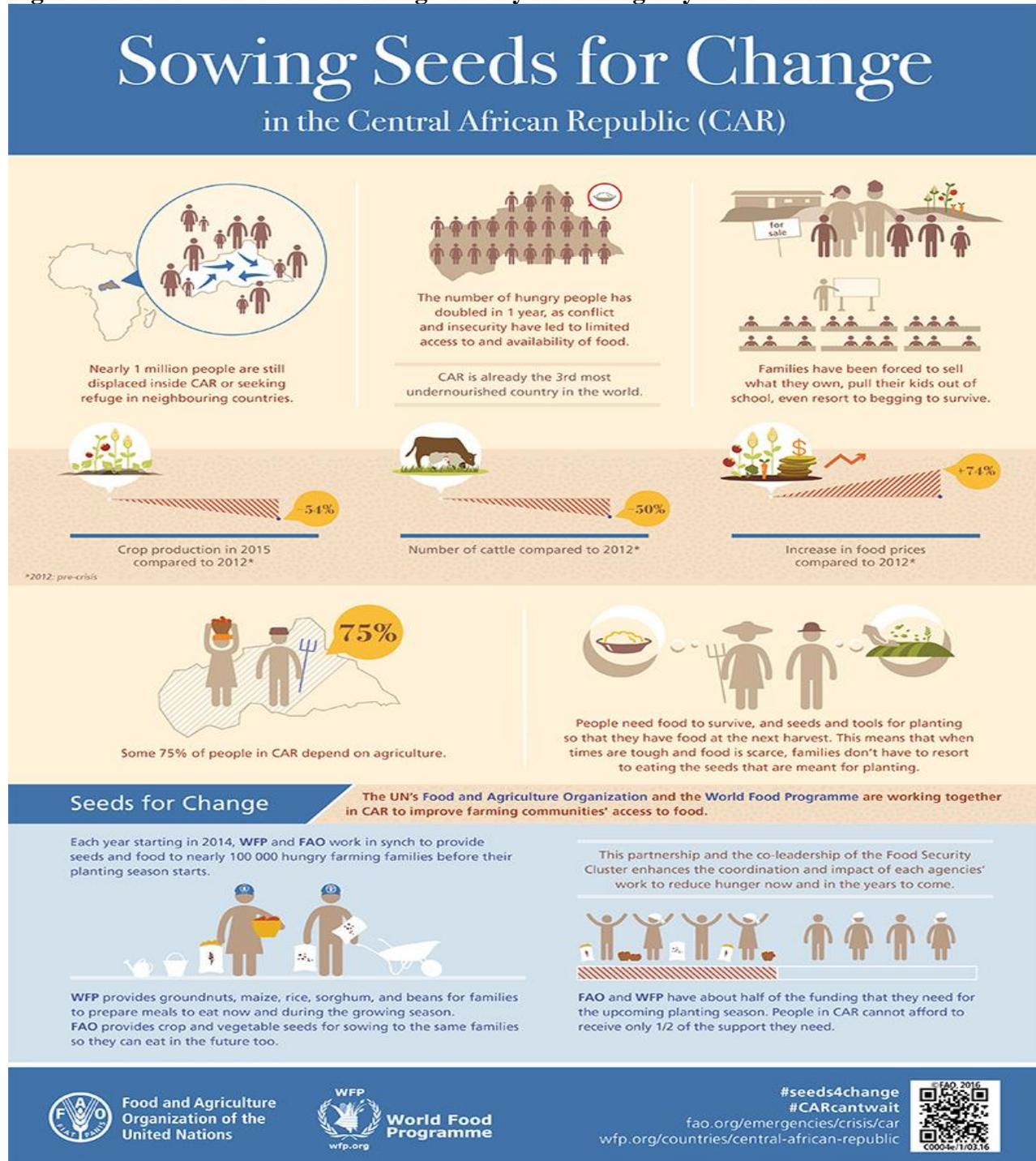
2.9 **The design of the WFP intervention in this project was partially relevant to addressing the food crisis in the Central African Republic, and grounded in assumptions that have been tested through rigorous impact evaluation.** By including nutrition interventions in its emergency response and by addressing moderate acute malnutrition through prevention and treatment programs, the intervention supported by WFP built on lessons from the 2008 *Lancet* series on Maternal and Child Undernutrition (Horton 2008). It was also in line with the 2010 Framework for Action of the Inter-Agency, Inter-Governmental Scaling Up Nutrition movement and the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition initiative. The approach builds on a base of evidence of the effectiveness of interventions, an understanding of the multicausal nature of malnutrition, and a focus on the first 1,000 days following conception as critical for a child's survival and the attainment of an individual's potential for physical and cognitive development, and hence health and income-earning capacity in the future.

2.10 A 3ie "Synthesis of impact evaluations of the World Food Programme's nutrition interventions in humanitarian settings in the Sahel" (Kaul, Husain, Tyrell and Gaarder (2018) found that in Mali, access to general food distribution led to increases in households'

nonfood and food expenditures and in micronutrient availability. Their evaluation examined the delivery of a package of multisector nutrition interventions and found that households living close to conflict and receiving at least two forms of assistance—particularly general food distribution and school feeding—showed statistically positive effects on nutrition outcomes, whereas the effects were not significant for households that received only one form of food assistance.

2.11 The intervention logic in the PAD posits that the emergency food aid, in a post-conflict situation, is foundational to securing longer-term learning outcomes. In the short term, school feeding programs encourage return to school and enrollment. School feeding programs are also expected to help stave off malnutrition. Beyond these immediate effects, and from a child developmental perspective, the increased nutrition is expected to increase focus and retention, which leads to enhanced learning outcomes. But it requires school feeding to occur over a long enough duration to have a sustained impact.

Figure 2.1. FAO/WFP Seeds of Change Theory for Emergency Interventions



2.12 The design of the FAO intervention in this project was only modestly relevant to addressing the food crisis in the Central African Republic; it lacked realism and a roadmap for procuring and distributing seed ahead of the planting season. Given the acute nature of the crisis, the organizational infrastructure needed for seed procurement and

distribution, and for supporting technical assistance, was not in place to execute the FAO strategy. The project strategy of relying on national supply chains facilitated by NGOs and FAO clearly failed based on triangulated interviews between the assessment team and the executing agents, NGOs, technical agents, and beneficiaries. The strategy for seed and tool distribution also relied on the identification of farmer cooperative groups. Focus group discussions conducted by the PPAR assessment team with farmer cooperative groups in the M’Baiki area, where a large percentage of the aid was distributed, revealed that aid was only provided to “legal” dues-paying farmer groups—so that only 10 groups out of the 36 male farmer cooperative groups in this area received FAO-supplied seed or tools. Legally recognized groups tend to be better networked and consequently better endowed. Many elderly vulnerable farmers who were not in a group, or not in a “legal” group, did not receive support.

**2.13 The timing of emergency agricultural assistance in relation to the seasonal agricultural cycle is one of the most important determinants of its effectiveness.** Seeds need to be delivered ahead of the planting season and food aid needs to be delivered during the lean season. Lack of nutrition has long-term consequences for health and cognitive functioning, particularly for pregnant women and young children. Seasonal hunger affects between 300 and 1 billion persons globally (IFAD Rural Poverty report 2011), and its effects are compounded in conflict-affected countries because many traditional coping strategies are unavailable owing to the lack of seasonal migration opportunities and dwindling numbers of livestock. World Bank credit to the Central African Republic under the Emergency Food Crisis Response and Agriculture Re-launch project was approved in March 2014 and became effective on April 2014. Although it took less than 3 months from project concept to inception, the aid was too late to reach victims ahead of the planting season. The design was weak in addressing this timing issue.

**2.14 The overall rating for relevance of design is modest.**

### **3. Efficacy**

3.1 The PDOs were to: (i) protect and rebuild livelihoods, human capital, particularly of children and (ii) to re-launch the productivity of the agriculture sector.

3.2 An emergency operation approved in March 2014, the project was restructured in February 2015 with the sole aim of adjusting downwards many of the PDO and non-PDO indicator values. The restructuring took place after all resources had been disbursed to the UN executing agencies. No change was made to the objective statement even though several implementation challenges related to its second part had been identified during the first year of supervision. Other adjustments were made to geographic scope in relation to physical accessibility owing to ongoing or resurgent conflict in some of the project areas.

**OBJECTIVE ONE: TO PROTECT AND REBUILD LIVELIHOODS, HUMAN CAPITAL, PARTICULARLY OF CHILDREN**

3.3 **The first project objective, of protecting and rebuilding livelihoods and human capital, particularly of children, was modestly achieved.** The relative emphasis placed by this assessment on the attainment of human capital results for children and other vulnerable populations is linked to the project rationale provided in the PAD. The \$12 million provided by the World Bank for component 1—intended to be a small part of the wider WFP campaign—was to ensure coverage of malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women, and school children. This emphasis was linked to the World Bank’s social protection and human development goals and was in line with findings from the 2008 Food Crises Response experience, which highlighted the neglect of these groups in prior World Bank–financed food crisis operations. This focus was also in line with the need to clearly distinguish the role of the World Bank from the role of humanitarian agencies.

3.4 **Results.** Although the project was designed to target vulnerable populations, it achieved only 36 percent and 37 percent of its original targets for vulnerable persons, for food distribution (number of tons of food), and children reached (number of children). Although most targets for number of and type of persons reached were not met, this assessment used published WFP food supplement data (amount and duration of feeding required to achieve life-saving nutritional targets) to determine the adequacy of the intervention, as a proxy for outcomes (for the limited numbers of persons that were reached).<sup>i</sup> Specifically, the following programs were implemented achieving the results indicated:

- **Children reached.** Through a blanket feeding program, the project planned to supply 220,000 children between the ages of 6 and 59 months with 2,500 tons of food. By project close, it had only provided 92,795 children with 439 tons of food (an average of 4.26 kilos per child). Although the original target for the blanket feeding program was not met, the children that were reached were provided with enough supplemental food to positively affect nutrition outcomes. WFP’s blanket supplementary feeding program is designed to prevent widespread malnutrition and to reduce mortality among those at risk by providing a food/micronutrient supplement. The project provided *plumpy doz*, a ready-to-use soy-based nutrient supplement also defined as a Lipid-based Nutrient Supplement Medium Quantity (LNS-MQ). It is recommended that 47–50 g/day of the supplement be administered for 3–6 months. The amount of food distributed, 4,260 g per child, suggests that those reached received the minimum recommended of 3 months of the supplemental feeding, to achieve enhanced nutritional impacts.
- **Children were also targeted through a school feeding program, but this program fell far short of its targets.** The project planned to provide 197,000 children through a school feeding program with 1,470 tons of food. It actually supplied 26,129 children with 602 tons of food. This was equivalent to 0.023 tons per child or 21 kg per child. If the supplemental feeding was evenly distributed across the 26,129 children, then each child would have had access to supplemental *plumpy doz* for 447 days, at a recommended ration of 47–50 g/day, meeting WFP’s duration requirements.
- **Pregnant and lactating women.** Through a targeted supplemental feeding program, the project planned to provide 7,500 pregnant and lactating women and 33,500 children aged 6–59 months who suffered from moderate to acute malnutrition with 2,000 tons of food. The

project reported supplying 31,908 pregnant and lactating women, and a total of 34,324 persons, with 1,158 tons of food under this targeted supplemental feeding program. It did not report on the number of children reached under this program. Mathematically, this program would have supplied most pregnant and lactating women with 30 kg (or 30,000 g) per person. It is not clear from the project documents what food supplement was used, but if super cereal was used for the pregnant and lactating women as recommended, then based on a requirement of 200 g per day, each woman would have received supplemental feeding for an average duration of treatment of 3–6 months, which would have provided enhanced nutritional requirements for the mother and child.

- **General food distribution.** WFP also conducted general food distribution. Against a target of supplying 1,400 tons of food to 1.1 million persons, it distributed 5,105 tons of food to 721,635 persons (6.4 kg per beneficiary). This aid was intended to be distributed to internally displaced persons and returnees who were severely food-insecure. Beyond the number of tons delivered and the number of persons reached, there is no information on “who” received the general food distribution and to whom it was allocated. This part of the project grew by five times the original amount in terms of quantity per person, while the programs targeted at children and pregnant and lactating women shrunk. More evaluation studies are needed on how to improve targeting of food aid in conflict-affected situations, with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable.
- Mathematically, the general food distribution would have supplied each person reached with the equivalent of roughly a full week’s food ration based on a 1,000 g/day diet. The cost of delivering a week’s worth of food to a general beneficiary population should be weighed against other humanitarian assistance modalities (such as cash).

## **OBJECTIVE TWO: TO RE-LAUNCH THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR**

**3.5 The second PDO, to re-launch the productivity of the agriculture sector, was negligibly achieved.** As discussed in the section on relevance of design, this was an overly ambitious objective for an emergency operation designed to be implemented over an 18-month period in precarious circumstances. The theory behind the objective is associated with the services that are offered by FAO and the partnership that has been established with WFP in emergency operations, as part of the UN’s food security cluster. The theory, as depicted in Figure 2.1, pairs seed and tool distribution with emergency supplemental food provision. The emergency food provision ensures that the distributed seed is planted rather than eaten. The complementary pairing is designed to address short-term severe food insecurity with the implements and other factors of production needed to achieve medium-term food self-sufficiency.

### ***Seed Production, Distribution, and Storage***

**3.6** To achieve this objective, FAO would have needed to—in the midst of a crisis situation and in a country bereft of seed stock—support the timely procurement and distribution of the correct seed varieties in advance of the planting season. In seed relief operations, the physical, physiological, phytosanitary, and genetic qualities of the seed in relation to the soils, rainfall, pest burden, farming practices, technical support, and food preferences, require close attention so that vulnerable farmers are provided with quality seed of the appropriate crops and varieties (FAO 2010). In 2014 in the Central African Republic,

FAO was not able to do this: it supported a significant portion of the procurement of seed internationally, but the seed was of inferior quality and was distributed late, after the planting season.

3.7 With regard to seed procurement, the FAO managed a multipronged strategy. It aimed to obtain and redistribute seeds to ICRA and seed multiplier groups (Groupement Agri-Multiplicateur) for propagation, and to vulnerable households for crop production. According to its intermediate report for March–September 2014, the FAO followed its own tender procedures so as to target regional and domestic seed suppliers. Eight private sector seed suppliers provided 275 tons of maize, peanut, and rice seeds, which represented 91 percent of the 300-ton objective. Thirty percent of these seeds are reported to have come from domestic providers. Horticulture seeds were all procured from international sources though contractor names or tonnage are not given. The report cites a distribution of seeds to 123,875 beneficiaries. However, this and other reports do not address the issue of seed quality, which was identified by the IEG field visit (December 2017) as a principal deficiency of the FAO activities.

3.8 In keeping with international standards, the project's cereal seed procurement acquisitions consisted of pre-base, base, and R1 seeds, which correspond respectively to seeds containing the highest level of purity for use in research facilities (pre-base), seeds intended for multiplication (base), and for cultivation (R1). Although adherence to these standards requires verification, the IEG team discovered during its December 2017 interviews with ICRA officials that a significant portion of procured seeds provided to the research institute were of such low quality that they declassified them. The interviewees attributed this deficiency to the project's short time frame, which led to a hasty procurement strategy. The ICRA staff's account raises the question of whether the pre-base seeds were properly evaluated and classified as FAO documentation implicitly states.

3.9 FAO procurement of base and R1 seeds were equally problematic. With regard to R1 seeds, the IEG team found during their December field visit that many men's groups around M'Baiki did in fact receive peanut and maize seeds from the FAO and they described them as being good quality. However, farmers consistently reported that the R1 seeds had arrived too late to be very useful. Some individuals did plant them either mid-way through the rainy season or the following year. Others reported a total loss and admitted to consuming the seeds they had received. A final obstacle to the efficient procurement of R1 seeds was that interviewees described only 10–12 of the 36 existing farmers groups, which formed the conduit for seed distribution, as functional. Interviewees claimed quite simply that it was difficult or impossible to benefit from the project if you were not part of a functioning group.

3.10 Seed multiplier groups were the intended recipients of base seeds, which were to form the foundation of community-based seed production in the years to come. Although 45,000 kilograms of base seed were procured for multiplier groups in 2014, the FAO reported that the no seeds were subsequently produced (FAO UTF/CAF/011/CAF). Although the FAO claimed that seed multiplication was ongoing and would be monitored, the World Bank Implementation Completion and Results (ICR) review meeting held in September 2016 indicated that seed production by multiplier groups faced numerous problems and the amount

of production could not be verified. Seed multiplier groups represent a locus of dysfunction for the project. In addition to seed procurement, seed multiplier groups were also partners in the seed storage component (World Bank Supervision Report 2016), which performed even worse and is described below in section 3.9.

3.11 Although the field team did not have time to investigate this, it seems likely that the storage and seed multiplication failures are linked. The FAO claims seed multiplier group dysfunction is related to the collapse of the country's cotton sector in recent years and the debts that their members have accrued. This seems like a feasible explanation and points to the need for careful institutional analysis before making the kinds of investment that were included in the project. The December 2017 IEG field visit to Boali, another PURCARA site, did discover that it is possible to do seed multiplication. Agents from the NGO Concern described training and certifying 4,000 seed multipliers in an ongoing project funded by Irish Aid.

3.12 FAO also supported the local production of seed. It supported the production of 316 pre-base tons of seed in 2014 at ICRA. The seeds were declassified and then distributed to producers as R1 seeds for simple cultivation.

3.13 Although no information is available in the project documentation on the yields that were achieved using these seeds, interviews by the PPAR assessment team with ICRA and multiple farmer beneficiaries revealed that production was minimal, owing to the poor seed quality. Farmers should have been informed that the seed was declassified, so they could have made better choices, including not to plant the seed. The project was extended to allow improved seed to reach farmers during a second planting season, in the spring of 2016, two years after the cessation of major conflict in the project areas.

3.14 Seed storage was one of the most egregious failures of the project. A total of 12 of the 75 planned warehouses were completed under the project, with an estimated storage capacity of 2 tons per warehouse. In general, grain storage units, or warehouses, are utilized by farmers' groups to store grain for sale, farm implements, and seed grain for their collective fields, which act as a collective risk management tool in case of harvest failure in a member's own field. Project beneficiaries in each field site visited by the PPAR assessment team described NGOs pledging to build the storage units but not following through (in MBaiki) or not even starting construction, even after beneficiaries delivered their contributions of rocks and sand (in Bossembele). This was regrettable because it undermined trust in development partners and deprived beneficiaries of much-needed capacity to participate in agricultural markets and to build their own capacity to respond to future shocks and crises.

### ***Livestock***

3.15 Before the 2013 crisis, cattle rearing represented one of the most important economic activities in the Central African Republic yet cattle production—especially through transhumance—remains a core source of friction in the ongoing conflict because of disputes over access to pasture and water for livestock. Transhumance is mostly carried out by members of the Fulani ethnic group, many of whom supported the Seleka insurgency during 2014–16. As a result, they have been largely driven out of the western part of the country.

Some armed groups (anti-ballaka) prey on herders, who have subsequently taken up arms to defend their animals. Violent encounters have undermined trust and, despite the expressed desire among interviewees consulted by the PPAR assessment team that the Fulani return to their communities, this has not happened yet except in a very small number of cases. Cattle thievery is also a source of revenue for war lords, which enables armed groups to continue occupying parts of the country. The ongoing large-scale displacement of the Fulani deprives farmers of animal products (meat, dairy) but also deprives them of the possibility of procuring draught animals to increase agricultural production. It also deprives farmers of the chance to do deals with herders who would pay them in kind to graze their herds after harvest on sorghum stubble. Sometimes farmers and herders clash, sometimes they can work out mutually beneficial deals. All of the country's major livestock markets are under the control of non-state armed groups, which deprives the government of important revenue, which prior to the crisis was used to finance livestock sector support services (e.g. vaccination, market infrastructure).

3.16 There were no targets established and no information provided in the project documentation about the distribution of small livestock. In interviews with women farmer cooperatives, this IEG assessment team learned about ruminant distribution, including chicken, pigs, and goats. Information obtained by the IEG mission differs from information that was reported in the ICR. The ICR reported that “none of the animals planned for distribution were actually distributed by the end of the project,” and also reported “the feed that was distributed was unclean and were therefore inedible by chickens.” FAO confirmed the distribution of ruminants but indicated that the activity was not appropriate, for similar reasons that small ruminant distribution programs have been unsuccessful even under nonemergency circumstances. Buying and moving goats, sheep, and cattle requires local country trading skills. For FAO, the only option would have been for it to contract with a local professional trader but this brings several risks (of unsavory practices) and requires tight supervision. This review finds that it would have been better to give cash and to let farmers themselves choose the stock for purchase, alongside veterinary assistance to ensure the stock was healthy.

### ***Market gardening***

3.17 Market gardening is an area of potential in which the project and other organizations (Tear Fund, Concern) have achieved some success since the 2013 crisis. Farmers' groups described taking up gardening for consumption and surplus marketing (MBaiki, Bossembele, Boali); however, several obstacles remain. Beneficiaries in Boali described not knowing how to store seeds of imported market varieties. Storing vegetable seeds requires them to be somewhat cool and dry and sealed from pests. Although some of the storage challenges are unclear, hybrid varieties in general do not do well if the second generation of seeds is harvested and stored because they revert to unsuitable parent lines. The availability of high-quality gardening equipment was also reported as a challenge. Extension support for intensive gardening techniques remained limited.

### **Cross-Cutting Gender Issues**

3.18 The WFP component had a strong gender impact, but the FAO activities resulted in limited impacts for female cooperatives. The WFP food distribution included targeting toward pregnant and lactating women, and this performed well. However, interviews with women’s associations supported by FAO revealed that women were reached, but that the activities had negligible impact. Women’s associations in M’Baiki indicated that most of the assistance arrived when they were still hiding in the bush, and that most of the aid was distributed in M’Baiki: “nothing got to the villages.” Women’s associations received hoes and seeds, but that, as noted earlier, the seeds were of inferior quality and the tools were either too small or broke shortly after they were delivered.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

### M&E Design and Implementation

4.1 In an emergency response project, in a conflict-affected setting, M&E needs to be designed in a manner that provides iterative access and reporting on physical assets, services, and social phenomena, and conducted by persons that can access areas that are frequently but intermittently inaccessible. In a conflict-affected setting, “getting things wrong”—in a manner that is either real or perceived—can result in increased inter- and intragroup tensions. Rapid assessment of implementation quality, feedback, and redress can reduce a project’s chance of contributing to or reigniting conflict. Grievance redress systems can double as a conflict-sensitive monitoring tool that can capture problems with implementation. A review of project documentation revealed that grievance redress does not appear to have been utilized, neither for complaints, nor for iterative feedback on implementation challenges.

4.2 Overall, the M&E system was intended to be participatory and managed by FAO and WFP. A study was planned to be undertaken by WFP and FAO to evaluate the impact of the project’s interventions, including whether the increased access to food, seeds, and equipment had the intended impact on nutrition and production levels. However, the study was not carried out. WFP had a formal monitoring system and monitored the distribution (metric tons) of emergency food aid it delivered. It provided regular reports on this to the World Bank. FAO did not have an M&E system. It was only toward the end of the project that FAO hired an international consultant to write a monitoring report but it lacked substance and accuracy because of the absence of monitoring data.

4.3 **Utilization.** There is evidence that WFP used its monitoring data to scale back its operations, lowering its targets to reach the most vulnerable populations, because of inaccessibility and the resurgence of conflict in some areas. There is no evidence that M&E was utilized by FAO during implementation.

4.4 **The overall monitoring and evaluation rating is negligible.**

## 5. Safeguards

5.1 Because this project was operated under OP/BP 10.00, paragraph 11, an Environmental and Social Screening and Assessment Framework was prepared. The project

was classified as environmental category B. Several negative effects were identified but this analysis finds that the screen that was applied was done in a standard way that may not have identified the most critical issues associated with an emergency operation. For example, many standard safeguard issues associated with agricultural interventions were identified, such as potential soil deterioration, surface water and groundwater pollution risks from increased use of pesticides, and loss of vegetation following the installation of storage facilities. All of the necessary tools were put in place—an Environmental and Social Mitigation Assessment and Environmental and Social Management Plan, and a Pest and Pesticide Management Plan. These environmental effects should be mitigated, but the more critical issues in this emergency operation pertained to the social aspects of working in a conflict-affected area. Conflict sensitivity should also have been a key area of analysis in relation to the distribution of food, seed, livestock, and tools. An Indigenous Peoples Plan for the World Bank’s Agro-Pastoral Recovery Project (P124278) prepared in 2012 was updated before the implementation of activities on the ground, but there is no evidence in the project or through interviews with the Project Management Unit and project beneficiaries that the project achieved a high degree of outreach to the Pygmy (Baka) populations living in the project areas.

5.2 Historically, the Baka are kept by Bantu “hosts” known locally as Bilo. Fieldwork conducted for this mission revealed that many Bilo were helped by the Baka when they fled to the forests. The Bilo received knowledge about what was edible or safe to eat, as well as, in some cases, shared shelter. But during design and implementation, there does not appear to have been attention paid to the pathways by which the Baka—many of whom are farm laborers—would receive aid. FAO targeted farmers and the WFP distributed emergency food aid to schools, hospitals, and within towns. Because individuals were not targeted, and aid was distributed through groups, the Baka population was likely to have been missed.

## 6. Efficiency

6.1 No financial or economic analysis was carried out at appraisal. The justification for not doing an ex ante analysis in the ICR was insufficient; data could have been obtained from WFP, based on like interventions, to estimate unit costs and benefits. The PAD suggested that the benefits from human capital protection and livelihoods assistance and the capacity building were qualitative in nature—a claim this assessment rejects. Nutrition and health outcomes could have been measured over a year’s duration. Moreover, building a base of knowledge on what it takes to deliver food aid through a World Bank–financed project, including by estimating and measuring the various cost layers (e.g. client, World Bank, UN, NGOs), would have been a valuable contribution of this project.

6.2 A unit cost analysis was conducted for WFP interventions at project end. No such analysis was conducted for FAO interventions. Rather, for FAO, the ICR noted the presence of ineligible expenditures and inadequate administrative efficiency, which negatively affected the efficiency of the FAO component of the project. For WFP, the ICR recorded cost savings—or efficiencies—associated with the procurement of supplemental foods (plumpy sup, super cereal, cereal) as compared to generic product process per metric ton. In all instances, cost savings were realized through WFP’s procurement process.

6.3 In the absence of adequate efficiency analysis provided by the project, this assessment utilizes data from the previous WFP executed Food Crisis Project in the Central African Republic to compare the costs of emergency food distribution in a non-conflict and conflict setting.

6.4 In a non-conflict situation, the previous WFP-executed Food Crisis Project delivered 5 million kg of food to 120,000 children, an equivalent of 5,512 tons, representing 80 percent of the amount projected to be delivered by the project. In the crisis setting, the WFP delivered less than half of this amount, or 2,199 tons of food to children and vulnerable persons targeted by the project. The previous Food Crisis project “underdelivered” by 20 percent compared to its total target; however, the Emergency Food Crisis and Agriculture Re-launch project achieved only 37 percent of its original target (for children and vulnerable persons), although the actual number of children and vulnerable persons reached is not reported in the project’s ICR.

6.5 The inconsistency in World Bank–financed, WFP-executed projects limits an analysis of unit costs. In the previous Food Crisis project, although the “number of tons” and “number of children” were both set as targets, the project only reported on the “number of children” reached (based on school population). In this subsequent Emergency Food Crisis and Agriculture Re-launch project, the number of tons of food targeted toward children and vulnerable persons was projected and reported, but the number of persons to be reached and those actually reached was neither projected at appraisal nor reported at project close.

6.6 Overall, this assessment concurs with the ICR that efficiency was modest, because there were no data on which to build an analysis of efficiency.

## 7. Ratings

### OUTCOME

7.1 Given the modest ratings for relevance, efficacy, and efficiency the overall outcome of this project is rated **unsatisfactory**. This rating is consistent with the ICR and was never in dispute. The assessment was undertaken to make more widely available granular lessons on World Bank–financed, UN-executed emergency operations in the agricultural sector, with a focus on conflict-affected settings.

7.2 The relevance of the project objective was **modest**; the objective was far too ambitious for an emergency recovery loan designed to bridge the humanitarian and development divide over a 16-month delivery cycle. Relevance of design was also rated **modest** because, though the WFP assistance had a clear and relevant design, FAO lacked a roadmap and strategy implementable in a conflict-affected country that had lost many public servants and capable NGOs. Efficacy was rated **modest** because WFP helped to protect and rebuild livelihoods and human capital, but underdelivered on its commitment to feed children, a commitment that was explicitly emphasized in the objective statement. Against a target of 220,000 children, WFP reached only 92,795 children because much more food aid

than planned went to general distribution, and what that general distribution achieved for children has been difficult to deduce. FAO did not achieve its objectives in re-launching the productivity of the agricultural sector. Efficiency was rated **modest** because no credible calculations were made to determine how efficient it was to use IDA funding for this World Bank-administered, UN-implemented, and NGO-executed project. Problematic for efficiency analysis has been that the actual unit cost of service delivery was not known. Efficiency was also negatively affected by ineligible expenses incurred during implementation.

## 8. Risk to Development Outcome

8.1 **Conflict and Security.** The security situation in the Central African Republic is well known and although the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is committed to remaining in the country for the foreseeable future, its forces remain largely limited to main roads and towns so it is not able to secure more remote areas, including forests. Given the high number of armed groups in the countryside and the inevitable role that valuable and moveable livestock assets play in the country's power conflict, this situation is likely to prevent a return to normalcy in the short to medium term. In terms of national authorities such as the army (FACA) and the gendarmerie, the non-state armed groups have made it clear that, even if other service providers (health, education) are allowed, government security forces are not welcome in the areas they control. Violent conflict in Kaga-Bandoro, a major market town in the north, that occurred during IEG's field work in December 2017 confirm that this is still the case.

8.2 **Household Asset Recovery.** Even within the context of the country's history of dispossession and violence, the 2013 crisis was unprecedented as it forced a sizable percentage of the population to leave their homes for a significant period (testimonies include 3 months to 1.5 years). This led to severe health and human development impacts, and total depletion of household assets in many cases (housing, capital), as was identified in IEG's field visits to M'Baiki, Bossembele, and Boali. Households are unlikely to invest in resilience-building assets if they do not feel secure for the foreseeable future. For example, the NGO Action Against Hunger uses small ruminant investment as an indicator of perceived household security and observes significant local differences between parts of the Bossongoa prefecture. In contrast, beneficiaries in M'Baiki expressed confidence in their security situation and their readiness to invest in agricultural production.

8.3 **Human and Institutional Capital.** The capacity for the affected areas to recover (i.e. resilience) is low at all levels, from the household to local to national levels. Deconcentrated crop and livestock services are nominally in place, but they are still not funded. Technical services agents have returned and are present in most parts of the country controlled by the government. Interviews with several agents conducted for this assessment revealed that they are well trained and eager to work but remain unable to carry out most basic services because of a lack of vehicles and equipment.

8.4 Postcrisis development investments must utilize these resources in a way that builds their long-term capacity. This may involve creative arrangements that ensure project funding

does not remain within ministry offices in Bangui. However, this leaves unanswered the question of the role of the national government, which, despite serious misgivings expressed by donors, remains an essential partner to the World Bank. Whether international partners continue bypassing as much as possible an institution sometimes dubbed a “phantom state” (e.g., through community-driven development programs) or seeks a new bargain with public authorities remains to be seen.

**8.5 The Role of Local Organizations.** Farmers groups are intact, functional, and offer a platform for grassroots resilience and development. A site visit to Bossembele revealed that the Union of Professional Farmers’ Cooperatives is doing a significant amount of extension and outreach, including social reconciliation work, with little to no outside funding.

**8.6** Postcrisis agricultural development in the Central African Republic could take several different pathways. The World Bank and several other partners are pursuing the rehabilitation of the cotton sector to jumpstart exports (see the strategic country diagnostic) but also to facilitate the adoption of agro-pastoralism, which would boost crop productivity and potentially improve farmer-herder relations. Beneficiaries at each field site expressed a desire to intensify their production through animal traction and other benefits of agro-pastoralism (such as access to manure). A different vision for the country’s agriculture sector was offered by other donors, including by FAO, which expressed deep skepticism that the cotton sector could be rehabilitated. This review found that a more prudent approach in the sector would be to work on staples first, including on improved seed supply, which remains the big need, while piloting the rehabilitation of the cotton sector on a small scale at the easiest site, and at the same time monitoring and evaluating both.

**8.7** The risk to development outcome is rated **high**. The ongoing civil insecurity, including the chronic conflict over grazing rights for livestock, the devastation of productive assets on farms, together with the lack of government funds for developing improved technologies and effective support services in the agricultural sector, all continue to pose substantial development challenges and hence high risks for the Central African Republic’s future agricultural and pastoral development as well as for sustained household food security in rural areas.

## 9. Bank Performance

**9.1 Quality at entry is rated moderately unsatisfactory.** The project was prepared as an emergency operation. It took less than three weeks from the project concept note approval to appraisal, about a month for its approval, and about the same time until effectiveness. For the intended aim of delivering emergency food aid, through the WFP apparatus, the short preparation cycle was justified. However, the analysis of risks was weak with regard to mitigation actions. In addition, minimal attention was paid to the known technical, quality, and marketing issues with seed supply at short notice, whereas there was a substantial focus on environmental issues (less of a priority in an 18-month emergency operation). The priorities given to environmental issues in the project design were unbalanced, leaving the seed supply issues largely unaddressed.

9.2 Targeting also suffered from the short preparation time. Other means should have been introduced early on to identify and reach school-aged children out of school. For the more complicated aspects of the project s, including the agricultural recovery envisioned by FAO, the project design was underprepared. There was a lack of built knowledge about available networks and, as identified in other project evaluations concerning FAO, inadequate provisions for seed procurement.

9.3 The emphasis on vulnerable populations, however, reflects learning from prior emergency food crises projects, which had weak targeting strategies: they targeted school “canteens” equipped with running water and latrines, rather than vulnerable persons or areas where vulnerable persons were anticipated to be during the school day (including out of school). This project corrected for this by including specific targets to reach pregnant and lactating women and malnourished children through targeted feeding programs, but the entry points were still based on existing infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals). Following the crisis in the Central African Republic, most vulnerable rural inhabitants remained in the forests to which they had fled for up to a year following the cessation of warring activities. During and following the crisis, vulnerable populations were slow to return to formal hospitals or schools. Though this was due to the situation of protracted displacement, it also had social underpinnings, related to shame. Fieldwork for this assessment revealed that a mother’s shame often led families to seek informal treatment or to hide malnutrition or illness. In these cases, the most vulnerable children would have been unidentified as the project did not target households.

9.4 Based on these observations, although the use of WFP as an executing agency for emergency school feeding was an obvious choice, the use of other child-focused agencies like UNICEF or churches could have been included in the project to augment the results of the targeted feeding programs (as opposed to general food distribution). Instead, the project linked WFP goals to FAO’s distribution strategy—a strategy that relied on local public agricultural agents and their relationship with farmer cooperatives to reach needy households. The mantra of “provide food so they don’t eat their seed” may have done a disservice by linking the activities not just conceptually but in terms of implementation agencies.

9.5 **Quality of supervision is rated unsatisfactory.** The World Bank rated the project outcome fully unsatisfactory. There were seven supervision missions over two years that rated the project fully satisfactory except for the final mission which rated the project moderately satisfactory. Also, according to the Implementation Status and Results reports the project was never at risk.

9.6 There were seven missions but only 3.5 weeks of supervision recorded over the project period. For a project such as this, with hasty preparation, most of the adjustments would have had to be made during implementation. Instead, the amount of time spent on supervision—in terms of time charged—equaled the short amount of time spent for project preparation. Altogether, the World Bank spent less than two months preparing and supervising this complex emergency operation. This issue may be linked to the disconnect between supervision ratings and ICR ratings. The take-away from the PPAR mission is that because the funds were fully dispersed, the usual triggers for a project at risk did not apply,

and additionally, with regard to supervision, the World Bank simply assumed the UN agencies would perform.

9.7 Together, these ratings lead to an overall rating of Bank performance of **unsatisfactory**.

## **Borrower Performance**

### *Government Performance*

9.8 The government showed high interest in the operation. However, *the Agence Générale d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Publics* (AGETIP), which was assigned to provide coordination and financial management on behalf of the government to make sure that the project would be implemented, failed to provide its expected role.

9.9 In view of the crisis and the low government capacity for service delivery after the crisis, the Ministry of Rural Development contracted WFP to implement component A and FAO to implement component B. AGETIP, part of the Ministry in charge of infrastructure, was assigned the coordination and financial management of the project, including by helping the UN agencies to follow World Bank procedures. But AGETIP's role was undermined because all project management costs were included in the components managed by the UN agencies. According to interviews, in the absence of separate and discrete financial support, AGETIP officials felt like they were doing the World Bank "a favor." At the time, funds for operating expenses in AGETIP were scarce, and many of the costs incurred in support of the project were not covered. An emergency operation, the World Bank project was not able to allocate funds directly to the agency; this would have required an assessment and an audit, which would have delayed project implementation. As noted in the ICR, "without any incentives to do the job it was asked to perform, AGETIP never really followed up, coordinated, or supervised WFP and FAO."

9.10 IEG's mission revealed that agricultural technical agents, for example in M'Baiki, were familiar with the project communities, and some had even returned quickly after the crisis to personally support these communities with their basic humanitarian needs. However, although IEG found that across the project areas deconcentrated crop and livestock services were in place, they are still not funded. Technical services agents with whom the evaluation team met were well trained and eager to work but remain unable to carry out most basic services owing to a lack of vehicles and equipment, which were not provided by the project because all of the project financing went to the UN.

9.11 Government performance is rated as **unsatisfactory**.

### **IMPLEMENTING AGENCY PERFORMANCE**

9.12 The implementing agencies were WFP and FAO, and the coordination of activities was supposed to be overseen by AGETIP. The WFP performed moderately well given the acuity of the crisis, but most targets were not achieved compared to the original targets, especially with regard to feeding vulnerable groups. FAO showed poor performance in

implementing activities under component 2, with very limited achievements, very significant problems with monitoring and reporting, unsatisfactory financial management, failing to provide a refund to the World Bank (with regard to ineligible expenditures), and the lack of response to World Bank requests for performance data. Finally, the AGETIP suffered from limited institutional capacity and failed to provide any role in coordinating and monitoring project implementation. Therefore, implementing agency performance is rated **unsatisfactory**.

9.13 Together, these ratings lead to an overall rating of borrower performance of **unsatisfactory**.

## 10. Lessons

10.1 **Standard agreements between World Bank clients and UN executing agencies can facilitate success if they include a common vision about intended objectives, a clear and achievable results framework and related outcome indicators, and a clear articulation of how risks to the environment and social framework will be monitored, reported on, and managed.** In the Central African Republic, the World Bank over-relied on UN reporting mechanisms after the humanitarian crisis, and did not fulfill its supervision responsibility, undermining opportunities to address ongoing project implementation challenges.

10.2 **Efficient seed procurement for conflict-affected countries is complex because trading networks and normal supply and demand signals are disrupted, and hence the recruitment and funding of a technical team needs to be a prior condition of project effectiveness.** The experience in the Central African Republic shows that procuring the correct seeds for specific geographic locations and their associated soil and agro-climatic conditions is technically demanding and time consuming. It also requires deep local and regional knowledge of supply and demand. Upstream diagnostic work on effective seed procurement (quality and realistic timeframe for procurement), including the availability and quality of technical support, is needed. This should involve a candid review of the World Bank's existing partnerships and ways of doing business (e.g. FAO execution) but also fine-grained institutional analysis and mapping of capable government technical services and partners in the NGO community (some NGOs are much more capable than others and they need to be identified before crisis hits). The few dispersed agricultural technical services that remained after the crisis, including many well-trained and capable agents, should have been better incorporated into the emergency response.

10.3 **Emergency food security operations do not necessarily require food agency coupling (such as WFP and FAO).** Depending on the stage of recovery, emergency operations may be better served by pairing a food agency with a social agency (such as UNICEF or the Red Cross) to achieve more effective targeting and service delivery for the most vulnerable populations.

10.4 **Post-conflict emergency assistance in highly agrarian economies should try to maximize synergies across sectoral operations to optimize the delivery of food aid while**

**laying a foundation for growth of the agricultural sector.** In the Central African Republic, interviews with UN relief agencies and development actors revealed that opportunities were missed after the 2012 coup to link humanitarian interventions with wider development aims, for example, by identifying transport interventions that could have increased market access while achieving stabilization aims. To achieve more effective harmonization, lessons from the Central African Republic suggest that aid could have been better coordinated through a multidonor strategy and funding tool designed to support the recovery while bridging the humanitarian relief–development divide.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp255508.pdf>

## Appendix A. Basic Data Sheet

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC EMERGENCY FOOD CRISIS RESPONSE AND AGRICULTURE RE-LAUNCH PROJECT

Key Project Data (amounts in US\$, millions)

	<i>Appraisal Estimate</i>	<i>Actual or Current Estimate</i>	<i>Actual as Percent of Appraisal Estimate</i>
Total project costs	20	20	100%
Grant amount			

#### Cumulative Estimated and Actual Disbursements

	<i>FY14</i>	<i>FY15</i>	<i>FY16</i>	<i>FY17</i>	<i>FY18</i>
Appraisal estimate (US\$ millions)	18.9	26.8	68.3	11.73	17.01
Actual (US\$ millions)	17.75	20.0	20.0	19.70	19.70
Actual as percent of appraisal	93.9%	74.6 %	29.2%	167.9 %	115%
Date of final disbursement					1/1/2019

#### Project Dates

	<i>Original</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Concept Review	01/7/2014	
Board approval	–	3/7/2014
Signing	–	3/31/2014
Effectiveness	04/2/2014	04/2/2014
Closing date	9/30/2015	3/31/2016

**Staff Time and Cost**

Stage of Project Cycle	Staff Time and Cost (Bank Budget Only)	
	No. of staff weeks	USD Thousands (including travel and consultant costs)
<b>Lending</b>		
<b>FY14</b>	20.65	81.20
<b>FY15</b>	17.55	79.10
<b>Total:</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>160.30</b>
<b>Supervision/ICR</b>		
<b>FY14</b>	0.5	9.92
<b>FY15</b>	0.45	31.76
<b>FY16</b>	2.5	71.77
<b>FY17</b>	0	0.16
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>113.61</b>

Names	Title	Unit	Responsibility/ Specialty
<b>Lending</b>			
Manievel Sene	Rural Development Specialist	AFTA2	Task Team Leader
Lynn R Brown	Consultant	AES	Food Policy Specialist
Juvenal Nzambimana	Senior Operations Officer	AFTA1	Senior Operations Officer
Lucienne M M'Baipor	Senior Social Development Specialist	AFTCS	Senior Social Development Specialist
Evelyne Huguette Madozein	Team Assistant	AFMCF	Team Assistant
Marie Jeanne Uwanyarwaya	Senior Executive Assistant	AFTA2	Operations and quality
Siobhan McInerney-Lankford	Senior Counsel	LEGAM	Senior Counsel
Aissatou Diallo	Senior Finance Officer	CTRLA	Senior Finance Officer
Kouami Hounsinou Messan	Senior Procurement Specialist	AFTPW	Senior Procurement Specialist
Emeran Serge M. Menang Evouna	Senior Environmental Specialist	AFTN1	Senior Environmental Specialist
Lova Niaina Ravaoarimino	Procurement Specialist	AFTPE	Procurement
Kolie Ousmane Maurice Megnan	Senior Financial Management Specialist	AFTMW	Financial management
Melissa C. Landes	Operations Officer	AFTSG	Safeguards

<b>Supervision/ICR</b>			
<b>Names</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Responsibility/ Specialty</b>
Nicaise Ehoué	Senior Agriculture Economist	GFA01	Task Team Leader
Théodore Mianzé	Agricultural Specialist	GGOPS	Technical aspects on production capacity
Josué Akré	Financial Management Specialist	GGO26	Financial management
Huguette Evelyne Madozein	Program Assistant	AFMCF	–
Kolie Ousmane Maurice Megnan	Senior Financial Management Specialist	GGO26	Financial management and general matters
Tchaoussala Haoussia	Senior Procurement Specialist	GGO07	Procurement
Benjamin Billard	Operations Officer	GFA01	Review of ICR
Soulemame Fofana	Senior Rural Development Specialist	GFA01	Responsible for ICR

## Appendix B. List of Persons Met

<b>Government of the Central Republic of Africa</b>		
Mr. Félix Moloua	Ministre de l'Economie du Plan et de la Coopération	Ministère de l'Economie du Plan et de la Coopération
Mr. Honoré Feizouré/ Inspecteur general	Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural
Dr. Alphonse KOTA-GUINZA	Project Manager	Ministère de l'Elevage et de la Santé Animale
Mme Aline Gisèle Pana	Ministre de la Promotion de la Femme, de la Famille et de la Protection de l'Enfant	Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme, de la Famille et de la Protection de l'Enfant
M Robert PANI	Director Cabinet	Ministère de l'Economie du Plan et de la Coopération
<b>United Nations, Bilateral and Regional Development Banks</b>		
Jean Alexandre Scaglia	Representative	FAO
Felix Bona Fogah GOMEZ	Representative	WFP
Dominique Burgeon		FAO
Mr Juneja		WFP
M. Marcel Nganassem	Directeur General	AGETIP
Rocco Leone	Deputy Director	WFP
Ibrahama Diallo	Program Unit Supervisor	WFP
Dr. Mehoundo FATON	Chief, Child Survival and Development	UNICEF
Dr. Speciose Hakizimana Ndabihore	Deputy Representative	UNICEF
M. Bonaventure MUHIMFURA	Nutrition Specialist	UNICEF
Milan Trojanovic	Director of Mission Support	MINUSCA
Bakary Cisse,	Transhumance and animal production coordinator	Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
	District director	Livestock and Animal Production Agency (ANPE)
	District director	Agency for Veterinary and Animal Health
	Director General and adjoints	AGETIP, Livestock and Animal Production Agency (ANPE)
	Inspecteur General	Livestock and Animal Production Agency (ANPE)
	Director General	Livestock and Animal Production Agency (ANPE)

NGOs		
Dr Salomon NAMKOSSERENA	Directeur Général	ICRA
	representative	Concern NGO representative
<b>World Bank</b>		
Nicaise Ehoué	TTL	WBG Washington
Robert Jaoude	Country Manager	WBG CMU
Sosthene	RM	WBG CMU
Silvio Giroud	RPBA Expert	WBG Cameroon
Luis Felipe Duchicela	Advisor on Indigenous Peoples	WBG Washington
Franck Laurent SOVIDE	Security Specialist	WBG Cameroon
<b>International NGOs</b>		
Eric Batonon	Country Director	NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council)
M. Pascal BROUILLET	Representative	Agence Francaise de Development
M Joseph TANGA KOTI	Director	Caritas
Christine Muhigana	Representative	Unicef
Joseph INGANJI	Head of Office	Ocha
	National Coordinator	Action Against Hunger (ACF)
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Astrid Jakobs de Padua	Minister counselor	Embassy of Germany
Allaramadji DJERINGA	Technical assistant	European Union
Dr. Alphonse KOTA-GUINZA	Project manager	
	director and secretary	Union of Communal Agricultural Producers
Erik Force		French Embassy, Development directorate