Report Number: ICRR0022066

1. Project Data

Project ID P148114	**Project Name** Guinea National Agricultural	
Country Guinea	**Practice Area(Lead)** Agriculture and Food	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-H9880	**Closing Date (Original)** 31-Jan-2019	**Total Project Cost (USD)** 13,536,740.49
Bank Approval Date 30-Sep-2014	**Closing Date (Actual)** 28-Jun-2019	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	15,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	15,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	13,536,740.49	0.00

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The formulations of the project development objectives (PDO) for the Guinea Agriculture Sector Support Project were the same in the Project Appraisal Document (page 4) and in the Financing Agreement (page 4), which were: "***to strengthen the capacity of selected sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the Recipient's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (PNIASA)***".

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

Yes

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

Yes

d. Components

The project had three components:

1. Strengthening Sector Management Capacities (Original Amount: US$6.3 million, Actual: US$6.3 million).

This component aimed at building the capacity of the sector ministries, as well as the capacity of the Chamber of Agriculture and other sector entities, so as to establish a sound institutional environment in support to PNIASA implementation. The component included three sub-components: (i) Strengthening of sector management capacities that comprised a review of the organizational structure of the Sector Ministries, the Chamber of Agriculture, a review of the legal and regulatory framework and of sector codes; (ii) Establishing a Management and Information System (MIS) and (iii) Capacity development of the sector ministries and the National Chamber of Agriculture (NCA) in planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of results and impact, sectoral analysis, procurement, environment and social aspects. The component also included the preparation of the PNIASA's Results Framework and the implementation of a Results-Based Management and Accountability System (R-BMAS) for all sector activities.

2. Analytical Support for PNIASA Implementation (Original Amount: US$6.9 million, Actual: US$6.8 million).

The component aimed to provide technical assistance to ministries' Development Strategy to prepare detailed content for each subprogram and projects of the PNIASA through: (i) the preparation of feasibility studies for selected investments including master plans / detailed design plans for irrigated agriculture, roads and livestock rangelands; and (ii) carrying out sub-sector/value chain analyses including impact assessment of PNIASA programs, economic and sector work on rural finance and rural subsidies, preparatory activities for the Agricultural and Livestock Census, etc.

3. Project Management and Coordination (Original Amount: US$1.8 million, Actual: US$1.7 million).

Project coordination activities carried out by project coordination unit known as Coordination Opérationnelle Déléguée (COD). The COD was to be assisted by a competitively hired international firm, which would provide technical assistance to enhance the targeted sectoral ministries' capacity to plan, execute and monitor the implementation of the PNIASA. Project funding covered the COD's logistics and operating expenses, hired firm's contract.

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

Project Cost: Total project costs estimated at appraisal was US$15 million, and actual project costs at closing were slightly lower with US$13.5 million.

Financing: The project was financed by IDA credit (IDA-IDA-H9880) of US$15.0 million and at project closing disbursement under IDA credit was US$13.5 million (92 percent of the original amount).

Borrower Contribution: There was no borrower contribution.

Dates: The project was approved on September 30, 2014; and project effectiveness took about six months to achieve (March 31, 2015). The project planned to be closed on Jan 31, 2019 but closed six months later earlier on June 8, 2019. The reason for the extension was to complete the master plans and studies.

Restructurings: Two level II restructurings that would not require Board approval were made on March 22, 2018 and October 31, 2018. The first restructuring included revision of the results framework and the second restructuring included extension of the closing date. Since the revision of the results framework included substantial changes in project outcome indicators (PDOs), a split rating is conducted by this review; i.e. the original PDO indicators on improved budget execution rate and increased operational expenses for sector agencies were dropped and replaced by a less ambitious output level indicator, namely the number of ministry MTEFs prepared.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The Project development objectives were highly relevant to the World Bank, and to the government's country strategies at appraisal and closing. While the agriculture sector was one of the key drivers of the economy accounting for about 20 percent of the country 's GDP at the time of appraisal (ICR page 1), the agricultural sector had suffered from decade of poor management and institutional instability due to several occurrences of merging and then splitting of key ministries (Ministries of Agriculture (MA), Livestock and Animal Production (MEPA), Fisheries and Aquaculture (MPA), and Environment, Waters and Forests (MEEFs)). Thus, according to the ICR (para 3), the sector ministries had lost their core basic management expertise and they lacked qualified personnel, operating resources, and organizational systems. This situation had led to a lack of transparency in investment decisions and jeopardized the efficient and effective implementation of national agricultural development programs and projects. Particularly, poor long-term strategic planning with ministries operating in an isolated manner without having a sector-wide integrated approach was an issue. There were also capacity building needs for sectoral institutions in planning, budgeting, sectoral analysis, procurement, environment and social aspects, monitoring of physical and financial performance of supported programs and activities, and a need to align the organizational structures of those institutions in the light of the management reforms initiative that was already underway. These institutional deficiencies affected the implementation performance of the development programs.

The ICR (paras 2 and 39) noted that the five-year National Plan for Agricultural Investment and Food Security (PNIASA, 2013- 2017) required an annual outlay of about US$200 million for a total cost of US$1.07 billion (to be financed from internal resources, donor contributions and private sector investments). Its overall objective was to increase agricultural production and contribute to food and nutrition security while safeguarding social protection and employment in rural areas. Yet due to inadequate sectoral institutional capacity, the implementation of PNIASA was challenging. Thus, this project was designed to support the country's agricultural sector through the effective implementation of PNIASA.

The PDO was also fully consistent with the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF 2018-2023) particularly with regards to CPF Pillar 1 "Improved Public Fiscal and Financial Management." Increased capacities in financial management, procurement and increasing the efficiency and the effectiveness of public spending through enhanced implementation of the PNIASA are at the core of the project. The PDO was also aligned with CPF Pillar 3 "Agricultural Productivity and Economic growth", including CPF objective 6 "Increased Agricultural Productivity and Access to Markets." It recognizes that without stronger public and private sector institutions, capable of managing the rural sector, the potential for increased agricultural productivity, job creation, income generation, social wellbeing and poverty alleviation will not be realized (ICR para 19).

While the relevance of the project's objectives to both government and Bank strategic objectives in general terms was high, the PDO lacked clarity on what was meant by "strengthen the capacity of selected sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the Recipient's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan". In cases where the meaning of the PDO is not clear, the PDO indicators can usually clarify the core intentions. According to the ICR (para 39), however, the original PDO indicators were relevant but weak because their achievement could not plausibly be attributed to the project interventions and they did not define the specific capacity building outcome and the institutional behavior change intended by the project (see Section 4 for details). Therefore, despite the high alignment of the project's objectives to government and Bank strategic objectives, this review rates the relevance of the project's objectives when the project closed as substantial.

Rating

Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the Recipient's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan.

Rationale

Theory of Change (TOC)

According to the TOC presented by the ICR (page 4), the project capacity building support to sector agencies in terms of training on planning budgeting, legal and regulatory framework, M&E feasibility and sub-sector studies would lead to the outcomes of improved program quality, improved planning and budgeting process and improved sector institutions. This would contribute to the long-term impacts of improved implementation of PNIASA, sustained investment to agriculture sector. The assumptions were related to government's willingness to implement various reforms and activities including laying down a sector wide approach to the management of and investment in the agriculture sector.

The project initially included the following outcome indicators to measure the achievement of the objective, mostly focusing on budgeting process:

- The sector ministries' budget execution is improved (replaced during the restructuring);
- The sector ministries' investment budget is aligned with PNIASA's priorities;
- The sector ministries' operating expenses are increased (replaced during the restructuring);
- Staff from the sector ministries, the Chamber of Agriculture and other affiliated entities benefiting from project training
- Agricultural producers benefiting from the project detailed pre-project studies undertaken as part of the irrigation and Feeder Roads Development Schemes (dropped at restructuring).

However, as mentioned in the previous section, these indicators to define and measure the achievement of the objective were quite weak. Despite an explanation sent to IEG of the PDO indicators by the Bank's project team it was not clear how an indicator such as "*The sector ministries' budget execution is improved" would strengthen the* capacity of selected sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the PNIASA.

Another indicator focused on whether "The sector ministries operating expenses are increased" was similarly an ineffective measure of the capacity of selected sector institutions to implement the PNIASA. In addition, no indicators were designed to measure the intended outcomes of improved program quality and improved sector institutions, as stated in the TOC.

Outputs

- The institutional diagnostic of the sectoral ministries (Ministries of Agriculture (MA), Livestock and Animal Production (MEPA), Fisheries and Aquaculture (MPA), and Environment, Waters and Forests (MEEFs)) and the chamber of agriculture was completed;
- The legal codes in the 4 ministries and the chamber of agriculture were updated;
- Eight Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks for each of the 4 sectoral ministries were produced over two years as well as two for the whole sector for each of the two years;
- The Agriculture Orientation Law (LOA) was adopted;
- The Annual Work Plans and Budgets were annually produced;
- 4 codes were updated: (i) livestock code; (ii) pastoral code; (iii) aquaculture code; and (iv) environment code;
- 73 herders' organizations were established;
- 2,720 staff were trained (exceeding the target of 1,500 staff);
- Master Plan and detailed plans (APDs) for irrigated areas prepared;
- The master plan for the feeder roads scheme was updated including detailed design plans for 1100 km;
- Livestock range-land master plan prepared;
- Detailed studies for irrigation areas for 6,000 ha as targeted;
- Detailed studies for feeder road for 1,100 km, exceeding the target of 1,000 km.

- 22 studies, 2 sector analysis, 2 sector review, 7 policy document and 3 master plan studies were prepared.

Outcomes

Based on the original indicators, the achievements are as follows:

- **Improvement of the sector ministries' budget execution**: A review done in 2016 found that the budget execution had regressed, and the target was not achieved (the target was 85 % of budget execution rate, and the rate at completion was 79 %). While the project was expected to have influenced government decisions and timing of budget allocations, during the mid-term review it was concluded that this goal was too ambitious and beyond the influence of the project. Based on ~~that~~ this, the PDO indicator was replaced during the restructuring in 2018. However, this realization was quite late during implementation and it was not clear from the ICR why these changes were not implemented early on. The Bank project team subsequently advised IEG that the discussion and the decision to proceed with a revision of the PDO indicators was taken at the MTR in June 2017, but the approval process took very long time.
- **Increase of operating expenses for the sector ministries:** The target was 10 % and achievement at project closing was 8.8 %. This indicator was dropped as the project team found that the sector ministries' operating expenses and their increase were found to be driven by political consideration and government priorities and could not be influenced by project activities. As mentioned above, this revision was quite late during implementation, but it was also a poor measure of strengthened capacity of agriculture sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the PNIASA
- **Staff from the sector ministries (**Ministries of Agriculture (MA), Livestock and Animal Production (MEPA), Fisheries and Aquaculture (MPA), and Environment, Waters and Forests (MEEFs))**, the Chamber of Agriculture and other affiliated entities benefiting from project training (20% female)**. The number of direct beneficiaries (2,720) substantially exceeded the end target of 1,500. The project made a concerted effort to target female trainees and substantially exceeded it by reaching 181 % of targeted number of female beneficiaries but there was no evidence in the ICR of any assessment of the impact of this training on the capacity of the sector ministries to support the effective implementation of the PNIASA.
- A**gricultural producers benefiting from the project Detailed Pre-Project Studies undertaken as part of the Irrigation and Feeder roads Development Schemes (% female)**. This indicator was dropped, as the intervention was limited to financing only the analytical studies while producers benefiting from the pre-project studies would only benefit if there were future investments.

Due to insufficient evidence regarding achievement of the original objective the efficacy of the achievement of this objective is rated modest.

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the Recipient's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan, but with the amendment of some indicators.

Revised Rationale

Theory of Change

The outputs and outcomes for this objective are the same as before the project's restructuring in 2018. However, two indicators were replaced by a new indicator; one indicator was dropped, and one indicator was reformulated. After the restructuring the following PDO indicators were monitored:

1.“Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for each ministry produced”. This indicator was put in place to replace the indicator on improved budget execution and increased operating expenses for sector Ministries. MTEF was prepared for all the four ministries on a rolling basis for three years, thus it was achieved. The Bank's project team in comments to IEG stated that " … The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) strengthened the capacity of sectoral ministries with a dashboard that would provide them: (i) the review and adoption of sectoral programs and the definition of priorities (indicative amount of resources and expenditure); (ii) multi-annual results-based budgeting (concepts and tools) setting indicative sub-sector ceilings taking into account the objectives to be achieved; (iii) results-based management (RBM); (iv) planning and monitoring of financial and technical execution through simulations and construction of scenarios, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and principle of transparency and accountability. …. Adopting MTEF required a paradigm change to shift from the logic of budgeting based on what is available to the budgeting of results-based management logic (program budget). Past allocations have been based more on availability rather than evidence-based planning. The introduction of the MTEF required institutional change behavior with intensive capacity building targeting not only sectoral ministries staff but also the central ministries (finance, planning and budget) which control the planning, budgeting and allocation process.”

2.“The sector ministries' investment budget is aligned with PNIASA's priorities”. The target was 60% and the budgets were aligned by 99% at closing.

3. “Number of staff benefiting-direct beneficiaries (% women)”. At closing there were 2,720 direct beneficiaries of training events and 20 % of which were women. The project exceeded the target of 1,500 beneficiaries and reached the target of 20 % women beneficiaries. The project did not measure the results of the training events, i.e. whether the staff was utilizing/ implementing the taught subjects. However, the Bank project team subsequently stated to IEG that: “As a result of the comprehensive capacity building program provided by the Project, the sectoral ministries were able to produce MTEFs for 2018-2020, 2019-2021, set up a computerized monitoring system of the PNIASAN, produce Annual Work and Budget Plan, standard monitoring reports for projects and programs, etc. These are results that the sectoral and central ministries are currently using, and the knowledge built has been transferred to other ministries as the production and utilization of MTEF have been adopted by the ministry of planning as model for budget planning. The four sectoral ministries are ahead of the competition”.

IEG acknowledges that MTEF is valuable to planning and a logical structure into the budgeting process. If the improved MTEFs are followed they could improve budget execution going forward; but there is no available evidence for this yet. Nevertheless, based on the Bank project team's arguments, IEG concludes that the project has substantially strengthened the capacity of selected sector institutions to support the effective implementation of the Recipient's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan after restructuring, but only marginally so.

Revised Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Due to lack of evidence regarding the impact of this project on the effective implementation on PNIASA before restructuring, the project's efficacy before restructuring is rated modest. After restructuring the project contributed to improvements in the budget planning process through the intensive training of staff and the preparation of higher quality medium-term expenditure frameworks for agricultural ministries as well as developing analytical studies to support implementation of PNIASA. The key outcome indicators measuring budget execution and increased operational expenditures for sector ministries were replaced during the restructuring in 2018. The revised PDO indicator (medium-term expenditure framework) was, according to the Bank project team, an important outcome of institutional capacity building in the four ministries and a step towards capturing the institutional behavior change on budgeting to support the effective implementation of PNIASA. Based on the strong assertions of the Bank's project team with respect to the improved quality and relevance of the MTEFs for the effective implementation of PNIASA, IEG has rated the project's overall efficacy as substantial, but only marginally so.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

No cost benefit analysis was undertaken at appraisal or at closing, as the nature of the project's activities being capacity building, did not allow the quantification of the monetary value of benefits. The ICR (page 13) reported that the efficiency of project execution was achieved by using national technical service providers whenever possible. Where international TA was used, it was based on well-defined activities and indicators for monitoring results and the emphasis was on gradual government ownership of improved institutional capacity. Also, recruitment of an independent evaluator of the TA provider allowed a continuous assessment of performance of all TA aspects for quality control, as well as efficient implementation of the project.

While the ICR (page 13) stated that the project delivered many outputs (22 studies, two sector analyses, seven policy documents, three master plans and 2,720 people were trained), no comparison of unit costs of outputs or training events from similar projects in the country or outside were provided. The project team subsequently provided unit cost comparisons for training events and preparation of feeder road design reports. Accordingly, the actual costs per beneficiary for this project were found to be lower than two comparator Bank-funded projects. Compared with the Economy Governance Technical Building Capacity Project (ECTAB) training sessions cost US$574 per beneficiary compared with training on MTEF per beneficiary of US$284. The per beneficiary cost comparison for technical study on feeder roads did not make sense. However, comparing the total cost of the study, this project's cost was lower than that for the National Rural Infrastructure Project (PNIR II) ((US$300,000 vs. US$546,000).

Although the procurement of contracts associated with the implementation of this project took longer than expected the project closing date was extended for six months only to complete the planned activities. One main reason for delays was that the early years of the project implementation were hampered by the Ebola crisis which hit Guinea hard and all the contracts were put on hold as travel to the country was severely limited. Administrative or operational delays were mainly before the MTR, and after the MTR, implementation speed picked up and activities were completed efficiently.

Based on the additional information provided by the Bank project team, the efficiency of the project is rated substantial.

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		0	0 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 ☐ Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

Original Project Outcome: This review rates the project's objective as substantially relevant to the strategies of the World Bank and the Government both at appraisal and at closing, with a caveat that the PDO was not clearly articulated and defined through appropriate, plausible PDO indicators, measuring the institutional level behavior change and capacity building improvements as a result of project interventions. The project's efficacy in achieving the development objective is rated as modest due to lack of evidence. The efficiency is rated substantial as a result of additional information on unit cost comparison quantifying project's efficiency. Based on these three sub-ratings, the project's overall outcome is rated moderately unsatisfactory.

Revised Project Outcome: The project's objective was not revised but outcome indicators and targets were revised. The objective is substantially relevant to the strategies of the World Bank and the Government both at appraisal and at closing. The project's efficacy in achieving the development objective is rated as marginally substantial due to additional information provided by the Bank's project team on the function and relevance of the outcome indicator (medium-term expenditure framework) as an institutional behavior change outcome designed to replace the two PDO original indicators to measure the achievement of the PDO. As a result of additional information also provided by the project team on unit cost comparisons indicating project's efficiency, the efficiency of the project as a whole is rated substantial. Based on these three sub-ratings, the project's overall outcome after restructuring is rated satisfactory.

Overall Project Outcome: According to ICR guidelines, the combined outcome rating of a restructured project is weighted according to the proportion of the credit that was disbursed before and after the restructuring.During project implementation, 60 % of the credit was disbursed before the restructuring and 40 % was after the restructuring, so applying these weights the overall Outcome is rated as Moderately Satisfactory.

([MU rating (3*0.60) = 1.8] + [S rating (5*0.4) =1.99] = 3.79; MS)

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The following institutional risks could hinder the sustainability of the project's development outcomes:

The institutional structure developed under the project needs to be sustained via additional efforts. There is a risk that current achievements and activities may not be maintained if additional efforts are not undertaken to further train and support existing staff, train new staff, disseminate knowledge about the system throughout the ministries to broaden its ownership beyond those directly involved so far. In addition, the Government needs to allocate the necessary financial and human resources to maintain the newly created capacity. Particularly, the workforce in the sectoral ministries is aging with more than half reaching retirement age in the next five years. The institutional sustainability depends on the on the rate at which new recruitment will be made and trained to uphold the desired capacity.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project design drew upon key lessons from previous interventions by the World Bank and other donors. The key lesson learnt was that institutional capacity building activities would be more effectively performed via selection of a highly competent TA team together with arrangements for independent evaluation of the work performed by the consultants. Implementation arrangements were also built on an inclusive process, with numerous stakeholder consultations and institutional analyses; which facilitated ownership by the beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The results framework had shortcomings at the design stage: the formulation of the PDO and PDO level indicators showed weaknesses, the ICR noted (para 21) that some indicators were beyond the control or influence of the project, thus three indicators had to be dropped and also targets that were ambitious had to be adjusted later on.

The project faced many risks and in general measures to mitigate those risks were identified properly with the exception of the political risk. The major risks identified at appraisal were related to weak human and institutional capacity of stakeholders. The effective deployment of the TA resources and strong emphasis on training activities, during project implementation, were the key factors which were planned to reduce these risks. However, the project did not consider and mitigate against the political risk of a probable lack of appetite by government agencies to improve budget execution.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of supervision
The ICR noted that (para. 49) before the Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted in June 2017, the project was rated moderately unsatisfactory for progress towards the development objective (DO) and moderately satisfactory for implementation progress (IP) mainly due to delays in implementation. The first restructuring was approved on March 22, 2018 just 10 months before the original closing date of January 2019 and the second restructuring in October 2018 four month before the original closing date. The first restructuring revised the Results Framework; however, this was quite late in the project's implementation.

Once the international assistance team was in place, supervision and implementation support intensified, by agreeing with the project team on a series of deliverables with clearly defined deadlines and close monitoring of the project's indicators' progress (ICR, para 61). After the MTR until project closing, project implementation steadily improved and the bulk of the project activities such as the implementation and timely completion of the six main contracts was implemented during the last two years and disbursements improved substantially from 33 percent at MTR to 98 percent at closing. Subsequent Implementation Support Missions have rated progress towards achievement of the PDO and implementation progress as satisfactory.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design
The M&E system was designed with some PDO level indicators which were unrealistic as they were beyond the project's control of the project and/or their achievement was not directly attributable to the

project. The PDO Indicator 1 (“The sector ministries’ budget execution is improved”), and the PDO Indicator 2 (“The sector ministries’ operating expenses are increased”) and Core Indicator 2 for (“Agricultural producers benefiting from the project”) were beyond the control of the project. In addition, the targets for the detailed Pre-Project Studies undertaken as part of the Irrigation and Rural Roads Development Schemes were reduced at the MTR.

b. M&E Implementation

As a result of the mid-term review conducted in May 2017, the Government and the Bank agreed to change three of the five PDO indicators to make them more attributable to project activities. Accordingly, three of five indicators PDO indicators were either reformulated or dropped to make the indicators more measurable, attributable and owned by the project. One new indicator was added to replace two indicators that were being discontinued and another was reformulated to resize the number of direct beneficiaries. This important change was formalized in March 2018 with a restructuring, just 10 months before the original closing date of January 2019. This was indeed very late in the project.

At the program level, the project funded the establishment of an M&E system to monitor the implementation of PNIASA by building capacity in each of the four Development Strategy Offices (BSD) in each of the four sectoral ministries. All the staff involved in the M&E system in the four ministries were trained and can fulfill their tasks.

c. M&E Utilization

Information generated by the M&E system allowed the updating of the strategic and operational planning, monitoring and evaluation framework for the National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan. In addition, new technologies were used to communicate project results effectively to different groups of stakeholders to keep them informed about project progress and their role.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

At appraisal, the project was categorized as Category B, in terms of environmental and social safeguards Triggering three safeguards: Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01), Pest Management (OP 4.09) and Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12).

The ICR (page 19) noted that as part of the capacity strengthening of the sectoral ministries, a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) for the agricultural sector was prepared and validated in May 2017. The SESA provided an overall assessment of the framework, direction and resources, as well as specific guidance documents, needed for the implementation of these master plans and studies. This would in turn facilitate the detailed assessment and mitigation of specific potential impacts of PNIASA activities, since the master plans and studies are meant to be analytical work in support of key PNIASA programs. The ToRs of the said SESA were cleared by the National Environmental Assessment Bureau (BGEEE) and the Bank and disclosed at the World Bank InfoShop on March 2014. The project prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for the Guinea Commercial Agriculture Project due for Board approval in FY20.

Pest Management (OP 4.09). This policy was triggered to ensure availability of pest mitigation measures when the irrigation developments are made following studies financed by the project. The ToRs for a Pest Management Plan (PMP) were cleared by the National Environmental Assessment Bureau and the Bank, and disclosed at the World Bank InfoShop on April 17, 2014, prior to the project appraisal. A standalone pest management plan was prepared in March 2018. The ICR (page 19) noted that a Pest and Pesticides Management Plan (PPMP) was also prepared for the Guinea Commercial Agriculture Project.

Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12). The social safeguard issues of the proposed project were associated with Component 2 in the sense that master plans and studies had the potential to lead to socially adverse impacts. Also, there is the potential need for land acquisition when the Government starts developing irrigation perimeters and road networks. The SESA will provide guidance to address potential environmental risks and social impacts linked to land administration when the master plans are implemented. However, the social risk rating was low throughout the project lifetime. It was noted that there was no land acquisition issues or physical and economic displacement during project implementation. The PCU was responsible for safeguards, and grievance redress mechanisms. The project implemented coordinated communication channels for different stakeholders and citizen engagement as the project design included deliberate measures and avenues for ensuring broader stakeholder consultations at institutional and community levels. The safeguards specialist participated regularly in supervision mission and provided inputs for the ISRs (ICR, para 58).

The ICR (page 19) noted that a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) was also prepared by this project for the Guinea Commercial Agriculture Project (due for Board approval in FY20).

The ICR rated the environmental and social safeguards compliance as Satisfactory (para, 57).

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management (FM). The ICR (page 19) noted that the PIU was staffed by financial and procurement specialists. FM and procurement assessments were conducted by the World Bank specialists. Audit reports and interim financial reports from the various executing agencies were received. The ICR did not mention the results of the audit reports. The project team subsequently informed IEG that: "The final audit of the project accounts was submitted on October 7, 2019 and was clean with an unqualified opinion stating that the financial statements and project designated accounts fairly reflect the client's financial results and financial position". Following the mid-term review and the action plan put in place to strengthen project FM arrangements, significant improvements were noted. The ICR (page 19) reported that Fiduciary compliance overall is rated as moderately satisfactory.

Procurement. Annual procurement plans were prepared and regularly reviewed during project implementation support missions. However, there were delays in procuring six key contracts. The process (from initial preparation of the ToRs to contract signature) was expected to last between 6 and 14 months and eventually lasted between 12 and 18 months. The project team subsequently informed IEG that the delays were mainly due to the Ebola crisis which hit the country hard delaying travels and putting on hold the contracts. The country was Ebola free in 2017. However, the main consequence was that some activities were concentrated and occurred during the very last year of the project implementation, benefitting stakeholders only partly.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

No unintended issues were reported.

d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Project outcome was rated MU before restructuring due to lack of evidence on efficacy and S after the restructuring based on the revised indicators, and efficiency of the project rated S, resulting in an overall outcome rating of MS.
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Modest	The M&E framework was weak as PDO indicators had to be revised significantly.
Quality of ICR	---	Modest	Outcome level evidence was missing and a split rating wasn't done although results framework was substantially revised.

12. Lessons

The ICR provided several lessons. The most important one follows with some modification of language:

In the context of low institutional capacity environments, a stand-alone capacity building project can be very important to support the government to implement sector-wide programs and reforms. The project supported the improvement of agriculture sector knowledge and increase the government capacity to plan and mobilize funding in the sector. The project also served as the basis for increased investments in the sector and helped structure and gradually ramp up the World Bank’s engagement in the agriculture sector in Guinea.

The ICR Review formulated the following lesson:

For institutional capacity building projects, a relevant Results Framework with clear definition of institutional capacity building outcomes and relevant outcome level indicators to measure the objective and linking project activities (training events and studies) to expected outcomes in a realistic manner are key to adequately monitor the results of a project. The project’s theory of change should be very clear from the beginning and the behavior change that can be achieved by the project activities need to be specified and appropriate and realistic indicators to measure these results should be designed. This was not the case under the project. The project’s outcome indicators were not relevant to measure the PDO, as they were beyond the control and influence of the project. The revised indicators did not resolve this issue as well. Thus, the project could not display the projects’ results and achievements.

13. Assessment Recommended?

Yes

Please Explain

An assessment is recommended to investigate the extent to which the enhanced quality of ministry MTEFs was sustained and the impact of this project on strengthening the capacity of sector institutions to support the effective implementation of Guinea's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (PNIASA).

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The report was concise and in general followed the guidelines, but it lacked outcome level evidence that was subsequently supplemented by the project team. The weaknesses in terms of evidence were the following: (i) The ICR did not provide sufficient information on the relevance and function of the revised PDO indicator as a key element of institutional capacity building objective the project was trying to achieve. (ii) The efficiency analysis could have provided some unit cost comparison (by product or activity) to provide better evidence on the efficiency of the project; iii) Results of external audit reports under fiduciary were not provided. (iv) In addition, although the results framework was significantly revised, the ICR did not apply a split rating.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Modest