



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P146474	<b>Project Name</b> Stepping Up Skills Project	
<b>Country</b> Guinea	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Education	
<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> IDA-H9850	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b> 30-Dec-2020	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 17,276,508.78
<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 30-Sep-2014	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 30-Dec-2022	
	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>
Original Commitment	20,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	20,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	17,276,508.78	0.00

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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (p. vi) and the Financing Agreement of October 6, 2014 (p. 4) the objective of the project was “to boost the employability and employment outcomes of Guinean youth in targeted skills programs”.

During the 2019 restructuring the scope of the project was reduced. Therefore, this review applies a split rating.



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

Yes

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

Yes

**Date of Board Approval**

10-Jun-2019

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**

Yes

**d. Components**

The project included three components:

**Component 1: Fund for Skills and Employability (appraisal estimate US\$13.0 million, actual US\$8.45 million):** The Fund was to finance new two- to three-year professional training programs adhering to international certifications and delivered through a Public Private Partnership (PPP). It was to: a) contribute to reforms by incentivizing and supporting innovative approaches to improve skills, employability, and employment; and b) create opportunities to design and test new training program models with a view to improving quality and relevance.

The Competitive Fund was to be open to trainers, groups of trainers, departments, training institutions organized in consortiums with the private sector, large enterprises, and groups of enterprises.

**Component 2: Education-to-Employment Program (appraisal estimate US\$4.0 million, actual US\$6.18 million):** The Education to Employment (E2E) Program was to provide unemployed graduates a career pathway to professional opportunities through coaching and mentoring support for business start-ups/entrepreneurship, firm-based opportunities (internships, trainings and jobs), or short-term professional training through incentive-based PPP contracts. The E2E was to focus on high-growth sectors that were to be employment-intensive. Key sectors being targeted were mining, agro-business, ICT, finance and banking, manufacturing, and hospitality. The E2E's Performance Based Vouchers (PBV) agreements were to be for service providers such as firms, training centers, and entrepreneurs with the aim to promote job placement and firm-based insertion after training. PBVs were to be offered through three tracks: i) Track 1: Business start-up and entrepreneurship that was to provide selected candidates with coaching and mentoring support for business start-ups/entrepreneurship; ii) Track 2: firm-based opportunities (training, internships, jobs) aimed at supporting jobseekers in gaining credentials for quicker integration into the labor market; and iii) Track 3: Short-term professional training (one to 12 months).

**Component 3: Institutional Support and Regulatory Framework (appraisal estimate US\$3.0 million, actual US\$2.65 million):** This component was to allocate resources directly to training institutions and introduce more spending flexibility. The Competitive Fund was to foster a paradigm shift in institutional management and governance. The component was to finance the following activities: i) technical and logistical support to the Inter-ministerial Commission for the revision of the regulatory framework consistent with current administrative, fiscal, and human resource reforms; ii) technical and logistical support for



setting up and operationalizing a national quality assurance and accreditation agency for higher and vocational education; iii) technical support for strengthening the information system of the higher education Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, as well as their respective Ministries; iv) technical and logistical support for the establishment and operationalization of a youth observatory; and v) technical assistance to develop and implement a plan of priority training areas.

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

**Project cost:** The project was estimated to cost US\$20.0 million. The actual cost was US\$17.27 million.

**Financing:** The project was financed by an International Development Agency (IDA) credit in the amount of US\$20.0 million of which US\$17.27 million was disbursed.

**Borrower contribution:** It was not planned for the Borrower to make any contribution.

**Dates:** The project was restructured twice:

- On June 10, 2019, the project was restructured to: i) extend the project closing date by 12 months from December 30, 2020 to December 30, 2021 to allow for the completion of project activities which had been delayed due to a slow start of project implementation (poor performance of head of technical secretariat, complex project design, and the use of new mechanisms for collaboration such as Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)); ii) revise certain targets, including PDO indicator targets, and project activities as a result of significant currency fluctuations between the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) and the US Dollar (reducing project funds from US\$20.0 million to US\$18.2 million); and to iii) modify the Results Framework to add indicators that would better capture progress and achievements over time.
- On December 23, 2021, the project was restructured to: i) extend the closing date by 12 months from December 30, 2021 to December 30, 2022 to allow for the completion of project activities which had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and ii) revise the costs and reallocate between disbursement categories.

The project was approved on September 30, 2014, and became effective on March 31, 2015. The project closed on December 30, 2022, 24 months after its original closing date.

### **3. Relevance of Objectives**

#### **Rationale**

**Country and sector context.** According to the PAD (p. 2), at the time of project appraisal, Guinea was among the poorest countries in the world. Unemployment was highest among Technical Education and Professional Training (TVET) and Higher Education graduates. Only one-third of the most educated Guinean youth found jobs within six months of graduation; more than 40 percent of TVET and higher education graduates searched for employment for over a year. There was a mismatch of skills due to an oversupply of youth pursuing programs in the humanities and a lack of practical training opportunities



generally. Training institutions and employers had little interaction, and youth were not aware of job openings unless they had informal connections. Furthermore, total enrollment and output of graduates at the tertiary level was low compared to the regional and global averages. Even though enrollment at tertiary levels had increased tenfold in ten years, with the gross enrollment rate (GER) in tertiary education at eight percent, it was far below the world average of 25 percent and did not respond to the specific skills needs of the labor market.

The PAD (p. 8) stated that quality and relevance were a source of concern for policymakers, because most qualifications were not oriented toward technical trades. Even though the trend was changing, secondary education was largely geared towards the Humanities and TVET was seen as a second class option for the most part intended for early school leavers. Furthermore, there was a gender divide. In 2012, girls made up only one-fourth of students enrolled in higher education, though about 40 percent of high school students were girls.

Labor market intermediaries were in the early stages of development and needed capacity strengthening. The public employment service agency, the Agence Guinéenne pour la Promotion de l'Emploi (AGUIPE) was funded primarily by the Government budget and mandated to connect supply and demand. However, there was no formal labor market 'observatory' in Guinea, leading to a lack of systematic, reliable, and economy wide labor market data that would allow for evidence-based decision making.

**Alignment with the government strategy.** In order to address these challenges, the government developed the Skills Development Strategy (2013-2020) which aimed to: i) promote relevant short-term skills programs; ii) strengthen systems and governance; and iii) improve the success rate and employability of students.

**Alignment with the World Bank strategy.** The objective of the project was also in line with pillar 3 of the World Bank's most recent Country Partnership Framework (FY18-23) which aimed to maximize access to job opportunities, especially for young people through reforming the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. Furthermore, the objective of the project was in line with pillar 1 of the World Bank's Africa strategy which aims to increase competitiveness and employment.

The objective of the project was pitched at an appropriate level to address these critical development problems. Overall, the relevance of objective is rated High.

## Rating

High

## 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

### OBJECTIVE 1

#### Objective

To boost the employability outcomes of Guinean youth in targeted skills programs



## Rationale

The project used the International Labor Organization's (ILO's) definition for "Employability": Skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labor market at different periods of the life cycle.

**Theory of Change:** The project's theory of change stated that project inputs/activities such as establishing a competitive fund to award sub-grants for the creation of two- to three-year professional training programs that are to be organized together with the private sector, large enterprises, and groups of enterprises were to result in several outputs. These outputs were to include candidates having received coaching and mentoring which could lead to business start-ups and/or entrepreneurship opportunities. Alternatively, the support would lead to firm-based opportunities (internships, trainings, and jobs), or short-term professional training through incentive-based PPP contracts. These outputs were to result in the outcome of boosting the employability outcomes of Guinean youth in targeted programs.

The theory of change was sound and logical, though it is difficult to differentiate between the options for business entry and salaried work versus independent opportunities. These require different skills and expectations and thus would benefit from alternative pathways.

## Outputs:

- The governance structure of the Competitive Fund was established, achieving the target of setting up the governance structure.
- 17 PPP project proposals were endorsed by the Competitive Fund, not achieving the original target of 25 proposals.
- Three financing partners contributed to the Competitive Fund in 2022, achieving the target of three partners.
- The percentage of training institutions (those benefitting from subgrants under the Competitive Fund) complying with the legal acts increased from zero in 2014 to 63 percent in 2022, not achieving the target of 88 percent.
- The percentage of training institutions with an information system adhering to the new master plan increased from zero in 2014 to 50 percent in 2022, achieving the target of 50 percent.
- The percentage of training institutions conducting tracer studies of their graduates increased from zero in 2014 to 94 percent in 2022, exceeding the target of 50 percent.

## Intermediate Outcomes:

- The percentage of students completing professional degrees fostering market relevant skills developed through the Competitive Fund increased from zero in 2014 to 77 percent in 2022, not achieving the target of 80 percent. Both, the PAD and the ICR did not define "market relevant skills" and the ICR did not provide any evidence on the extent to which the courses were transformed to make them more relevant to the market.
- The number of programs accredited by the new National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency increased from zero programs in 2014 to 128 programs in 2022, exceeding the target of eight



programs. This indicator is not meaningful for measuring the project's achievement towards the PDO since it is not formulated on the outcome level and lacks a direct link to "employability boosted".

The project was not able to deliver all outputs as planned and was not able to achieve the intermediate outcome for students completing professional degrees fostering market relevant skills. Also, the selected PDO indicators were not formulated on the outcome level and lacked a direct link to the PDO, making an assessment of the achievement of the PDO challenging. Given the limited evidence that the selected two PDO indicators provided, additional PDO indicators would have been needed to measure the project's achievement towards "employability". Overall, the achievement under this objective was Modest.

### **Rating**

Modest

## **OBJECTIVE 1 REVISION 1**

### **Revised Objective**

The objective remained the same.

### **Revised Rationale**

The theory of change remained the same when the scope of the project was reduced.

### **Outputs:**

- 17 PPP project proposals were endorsed by the Fund, exceeding the revised target of 15 proposals.
- The percentage of students completing a one-year professional degree developed through the Competitive Fund and fostering market relevant skills increased from 70 percent in 2019 to 82.1 percent in 2022, slightly exceeding the target of 80 percent. This indicator was added during the 2019 restructuring.
- The percentage of students completing a two-year professional degree developed through the Competitive Fund and fostering market relevant skills was 59 percent in 2022, not achieving the target of 80 percent. This indicator was added during the 2019 restructuring.
- The percentage of students completing a three-year professional degree developed through the Competitive Fund and fostering market relevant skills increased from zero in 2019 to 36 percent in 2022, not achieving the target of 80 percent.

### **Intermediate Outcome:**

- The number of students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning increased from 6,343 students in 2020 to 13,808 in 2022, exceeding the target of 13,200 students. This indicator was added during the 2019 restructuring. The number of female students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning increased from 1,900 females in 2020 to 3,960 females in 2022, achieving the target of 3,960 females.
- The percentage of students completing professional degrees fostering market relevant skills developed through the Competitive Fund increased from zero in 2014 to 77 percent in 2022, not achieving the target of 80 percent. This was unchanged from the pre-restructuring period.



- The number of programs accredited by the new National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency increased from zero programs in 2014 to 128 programs in 2022, exceeding the target of eight programs. This target remained unchanged from the pre-restructuring period.

While the project was able to exceed the target of students benefitting from direct interventions to enhance learning, no new indicator to measure “employability” was added during the restructuring. Therefore, there continued to be a lack of evidence to allow for an assessment of the project’s achievement towards the objective. Therefore, achievement of this objective remained Modest after the restructuring.

### Revised Rating

Modest

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Objective

To boost employment outcomes of Guinean youth in targeted skills programs

### Rationale

The project used the International Labor Organization’s (ILO’s) definition for “employment”: A person above a specified age who during a specified brief period, either one week or one day, were in the following categories: paid employment or self-employment.

**Theory of Change:** The project’s theory of change stated that project inputs/activities such as supporting performance-based private public partnership (PPP) contracts through performance-based vouchers (PBVs) for unemployed graduates would lead to professional opportunities in training, internships, jobs or self-employment. In addition, these supporting activities would be complemented by a selection mechanism and the provision of funding for PBVs which were to result in several outputs such as viable employment opportunities for targeted youth.

The theory of change was sound and logical.

### Outputs:

- Four employer satisfaction surveys were completed, achieving the original target of four surveys.
- The percentage of targeted unemployed youth (including current graduates, as well as youth ‘trapped’ outside of labor market due to prolonged unemployment) certified increased from zero in 2014 to 90.60 percent in 2022, exceeding the target of 80 percent.
- The target of an impact evaluation of the E2E programs was only partially achieved due to delays.

### Outcomes:

- 70 percent of those trained in relevant disciplines were employed 12 months after, achieving the original target of 70 percent.



- The percentage of employers satisfied with trainees and placing was 69 percent in 2022, exceeding the original target of 50 percent. However, this indicates that 31 percent of employers were not satisfied, which was still a high percentage.

The project was able to achieve both outcome targets in terms of employers' satisfaction with trainees and youth trained in relevant disciplines being employed 12 months after. However, the selected outcome indicators were weak, and the project provided limited evidence to demonstrate its achievement towards this PDO. Overall, the achievement of this objective was Substantial but only marginally so.

### **Rating**

Substantial

## **OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1**

### **Revised Objective**

The objective remained the same.

### **Revised Rationale**

The scope of this objective was not modified during the restructuring.

### **Revised Rating**

Substantial

## **OVERALL EFFICACY**

### **Rationale**

The achievement under the original scope of objective 1 was Modest and the achievement under objective 2 was Substantial. Overall, the efficacy rating was Substantial with moderate shortcomings.

### **Overall Efficacy Rating**

Substantial

## **OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1**



### **Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale**

The achievement under the revised scope of objective 1 was Modest and the achievement under objective 2 was Substantial. Overall, the efficacy rating was Substantial with moderate shortcomings.

### **Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating**

Substantial

## **5. Efficiency**

### **Economic efficiency:**

Both the PAD and the ICR conducted a traditional economic analysis.

The PAD (p. 91) conducted a cost benefit analysis. The benefits of the project were both quantifiable and non-quantifiable. The quantifiable part accounted for 85 percent of the total project costs. Component 1 (Skills and Employability), and component 2 (Education-to-Employment (E2E Program)) were quantifiable benefits and component 3 (Institutional Support and Regulatory Framework) was non-quantifiable. Applying a discount rate of 15 percent to reflect recent lending rates, the analysis calculated a Net Present Value (NPV) of US\$13.07 million, and an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 23.8 percent. Overall, the analysis calculated that for every US\$1 spent, the return was to be US\$1.17. This analysis indicated that the project was a worthwhile investment.

The ICR updated the analysis conducted at appraisal applying a discount rate of 11.5 percent to reflect recent lending rates. The analysis calculated a NPV of US\$11.78 million and an IRR of 13.7 percent. The benefit-cost ratio was calculated at 1.07. This analysis indicated that the project was a marginally worthwhile investment.

According to the Bank team (November 27, 2023) the results were lower at completion due to the lower discount rate applied in the economic analysis at completion and significant exchange rate losses throughout project implementation which negatively impacted the project's present value of incremental benefits.

### **Operational efficiency:**

The project experienced several implementation delays because of coordination challenges related to the project's complex design such as the involvement in different components of several entities, the complex operation of the Competitive Fund, lack of institutional capacity, elections, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the project's closing date had to be extended twice by a total of 24 months and there were a range of on-going and entrenched factors that prevented the project from delivering in a timely and efficient manner.

Thus, the overall project's efficiency was Modest.

### **Efficiency Rating**

Modest



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:

	<b>Rate Available?</b>	<b>Point value (%)</b>	<b>*Coverage/Scope (%)</b>
Appraisal	✓	23.80	85.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	13.70	85.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

## 6. Outcome

<i>Rating Dimension</i>	<b>Before 2019 restructuring</b>	<b>After 2019 restructuring</b>
<b>Relevance of the Objective</b>	High	High
<b>Efficacy</b>		
Objective 1: To boost the employability of Guinean youth in targeted skills programs	Modest	Modest
Objective 2: To boost the employment outcomes of Guinean youth in targeted skills programs	Substantial	Substantial
<b>Efficiency</b>	Modest	Modest
<b>Outcome Rating</b>	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory
<b>Outcome Rating Value</b>	4	4
<b>Amount Disbursed (US\$ million)</b>	9.26	8.02
<b>Disbursement (%)</b>	53.5%	46.5%
<b>Weight Value</b>	2.14	1.86
<b>Total weights</b>	2.14+ 1.86 = 4	
<b>Overall Outcome Rating</b>	Moderately Satisfactory	

Under the original scope of the project, relevance of the objective was High, achievement of the first objective was Modest while achievement under the second objective was Substantial. Efficiency was Modest, resulting in an outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory before the reduction of the project's scope.

Under the revised scope of the project, relevance of the objective was High, achievement of the first objective was Modest and achievement of the second objective was Substantial. Efficiency was Modest resulting in an outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory.



Since the outcome ratings both before and after the reduction of project scope was Moderately Satisfactory, the overall outcome rating is Moderately Satisfactory.

**a. Outcome Rating**  
Moderately Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

The project's risks to development outcomes can be classified into the following categories:

**Political:** According to the ICR (para. 72) the continuing political tension and conflicts within Guinea might negatively impact the sustainability of project outcomes.

**Government commitment:** According to the Bank team (November 27, 2023), the government remains highly committed to the project's development objectives. Both, the Ministry of Youth, and the Ministry of TVET will continue to finance short-term training programs. In addition, a budget line item has been created within the national budget to ensure that the Competitive Fund established under the project will remain active and continue to finance sub-subprojects. Moreover, the government continues to provide technical and financial support to internal Quality Assurance Units housed within all of the tertiary institutions which received technical/financial support from the project.

**Financing:** The government created a budget line item in the national budget to ensure the Competitive Fund established under the project remains active. Though these resources have been granted, additional financial and technical resources will need to be secured in order to scale-up these highly relevant short-term training programs across the country. There is also a new World Bank project in the pipeline which will promote girls' secondary education and to prepare them for the transition to work (financing amount US\$100 million). Though how much this aligns to the intentions of this project is difficult to forecast.

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

**a. Quality-at-Entry**

According to the PAD (para. 60) the project design was built on lessons learned from similar World Bank projects in this area. Key lessons learned included: i) reforms are a long-term process, and targeted initiatives in parallel are critical for much-needed results in the short and medium terms; ii) specific incentive structures, such as a competitive fund, can induce an attitude shift among stakeholders and induce market-oriented thinking; iii) private sector federations and associations are an effective way for reaching SMEs and corporations; iv) demand-driven training is essentially competency-based and linked to job profiles; and v) PPPs can lead to pragmatic wins, even if small in nature. However, given Guinea's limited capacity not all lessons learned can be applied equally.

The World Bank team identified relevant risks such as implementation capacity, governance, design, program and donor, delivery monitoring and sustainability as well as exogenous risk as Substantial.



Mitigation measures included: i) involving the private sector as partners at all stages; ii) creating a Strategic Orientation Committee composed of government and private sector representatives; iii) establishing an autonomous Executive Secretariat to manage the project; iv) establishing strong governance mechanisms to govern the Competitive Fund; v) creating an Interministerial Commission to coordinate reforms; and v) providing extensive TA for all project stakeholders. Not all mitigation measures were sufficient such as for the weak implementation capacity and fragile governance resulting in implementation delays. Furthermore, the project design was overly ambitious and complex including three ministries (Ministry of Youth and Employment, Ministry of Technical and Vocational Training, and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research) responsible for the implementation of the components. The project also failed to identify the risk of high turnover among senior management in the three ministries. Additionally, it was unable to foresee that the project coordinating officer lacked the authority to enforce decisions and manage the implementation of the Fund. These issues resulted in implementation delays.

The project's Results Framework was mostly appropriate (see section 9a for more details), though a number of indicators did not give a true indication of progress against the project's objective.

### **Quality-at-Entry Rating** Moderately Satisfactory

#### **b. Quality of supervision**

According to the ICR (para. 70) the World Bank team conducted supervision missions on a bi-annual basis. The World Bank team continuously interacted with all three ministries, the Strategic Orientation Committee (COS), Public Employment Service Agency (AGUIPE), the Executive Secretariat and other relevant government entities. The World Bank also conducted bi-monthly informal technical meetings to assess the project's implementation progress. The ICR (para. 58) pointed out that during the initial phase of implementation, the project faced issues related to communication and coordination within the implementing ministry. It also highlighted that the project coordinating officer lacked the authority to enforce decisions, and the complexity of project design compounded by the involvement of staff from different ministries exacerbated the challenges. These were all shortcomings requiring specific corrective action. The World Bank team addressed these issues by conducting meetings with different component managers to provide updates in order to improve communication and coordination. Also, when it became clear that the Competitive Fund activities were not progressing, the World Bank team provided technical assistance. To further address all these issues, the World Bank team restructured the project in 2019 and then again in 2021 to address challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating** Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating** Moderately Satisfactory



## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The objective of the project was clearly specified. The theory of change and how key activities and outputs were to result in the intended outcome was sound and were reflected in some form in the Results Framework which included a large number of PDO and intermediate outcome indicators encompassing all outcomes of the PDO statement. Furthermore, the intermediate outcome indicators were adequate to capture the contribution of the project's components and outputs towards achieving the objective.

However, several of the PDO indicators were formulated on the output level such as PDO indicator 1 (Students completing professional degrees fostering relevant skills developed through the Competitive Fund) or PDO indicator 2 (Programs accredited by the new National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency). In addition, where there were baselines, these did not always provide a sufficient counterfactual or even a reasonable comparator to what would have occurred if the project had not been delivered. While it is difficult to adequately track aspects of 'employability', closer linkages between the targeted youth and their subsequent opportunities and which components worked would have made the linkages clearer.

The Executive Secretariat was to be responsible for coordinating and overseeing all M&E activities under the project.

### **b. M&E Implementation**

According to the ICR (para. 62) project implementation reports were produced on time and the Results Framework was updated on a regular basis. M&E was consistently rated Satisfactory in the Implementation Status Reports. In June 2019, the Results Framework was revised to add indicators that better captured progress and achievements over time as well as modify certain targets and project activities as a result of significant currency fluctuations. However, limitations in the framework persisted.

Furthermore, the ICR (para. 62) stated that the project conducted five employer satisfaction surveys and partially completed the Education to Employment (E2E) impact evaluation (the 2017 baseline and the 2020 mid-line surveys were completed but have provided little information on outcomes). According to the World Bank team (November 27, 2023) data were found reliable and of good quality. Furthermore, the World Bank team stated that the M&E functions and processes are likely to be sustained during the post-project period. The M&E system was not exclusively designed to report on the outputs and outcomes realized under the project, but rather to establish a robust M&E system within participating tertiary institutions and TVET centers—a system which would subsequently be used to periodically collect, analyze, and report on data collected from these entities.

### **c. M&E Utilization**

According to the World Bank team (November 27, 2023) M&E data were used to inform decision making such as the decision to restructure the project twice. Though it is clear that the project still struggled to adequately track and report on the factors that ultimately determined youth employment opportunities.



## **M&E Quality Rating**

Substantial

### **10. Other Issues**

#### **a. Safeguards**

The project was classified as category B and triggered the World Bank's safeguard policy OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment) due to any possible negative environmental impact related to the subprojects under component 1 that had yet to be defined. According to the ICR (para. 65) since it was difficult to know what the possible impacts would be and defining mitigation measures, the project prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), which provided an environmental and social screening process for future activities and defined standard methods and procedures as well as institutional arrangements for screening, reviewing, and approving as well as implementing and monitoring specific environmental and social management plans. In June 2018, the project's safeguard compliance was downgraded from Moderately Satisfactory to Moderately Unsatisfactory due to the project secretariat not having recruited an environmental and social specialist as required. By November 2018, the project had hired two specialists and the safeguard rating was upgraded to Moderately Satisfactory and remained so until project closure due to delays in submitting safeguard reports.

#### **b. Fiduciary Compliance**

##### **Financial Management:**

According to the ICR (para. 67) the Executive Secretariat was responsible for the project's financial management. Interim Financial Reports (IFRs) were submitted on time and of acceptable quality, the auditor's opinions were unqualified, and recommendations by the external auditor and the World Bank were implemented effectively. Also, the Executive Secretariat prepared annual financial statements. The World Bank team provided capacity development workshops for the financial management staff of the secretariat in key areas such as assessing risks, identifying mitigation measures, as well as financial management reporting. When the project closed, the financial management rating was Moderately Satisfactory.

##### **Procurement:**

According to the ICR (para. 68) the World Bank procurement staff build procurement capacity at the Executive Secretariat at the beginning of project implementation and provided continuous support throughout implementation. The secretariat had adequate staff responsible for the project's procurement activities. The project did not encounter any major procurement related delays and its procurement performance was consistently rated Satisfactory throughout implementation.

#### **c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)**



NA

d. Other

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**11. Ratings**

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

**12. Lessons**

The ICR provided several lessons (p. 35) which have been adapted by IEG:

- **Complex implementation arrangements require a sound communication strategy to ensure smooth implementation.** This project experienced implementation delays due to its complex design that involved three ministries and a high turnover at senior management and components' including crossover functions that involved different ministerial departments.
- **Strengthening the link between skills development and the industry allows for ensuring labor market relevance of trainees.** In this project the Competitive Fund and the short-term training programs under the E2E programs were directly linked to the demands of the labor market. Also, the training programs were developed with inputs from the industry/enterprises to ensure relevance. However, gaining a better understanding of how to track this alignment is essential for effectively implementing this approach.
- **Communicating and marketing the value of technical and vocational education to targeted youths and the public might positively impact the demand for such skills development interventions.** This project developed a communication and marketing strategy to inform the public of the competitive fund, internships as well as available certifications which allowed to attract targeted youth.

**13. Assessment Recommended?**

No



## **14. Comments on Quality of ICR**

The ICR provided an adequate overview of project preparation and implementation, was internally consistent, and included an appropriate economic analysis. Also, the lessons learned were useful and can be applied to future projects in this area. However, the ICR lacked conciseness (substantially exceeding the recommended length) and would have benefitted from providing more details in critical areas. For example, the ICR did not state if M&E data were used to inform decision making and which different type of risks the outcomes of the project might face. Overall, the quality of the ICR is rated Substantial.

### **a. Quality of ICR Rating**

Substantial