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Report No: PAD4428

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT

ON A

PROPOSED LOAN

IN THE AMOUNT OF EURO 56.2 MILLION (US\$68.5 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

TO THE

GABONESE REPUBLIC

FOR A

DIGITAL GABON PROJECT

June 15, 2021

Digital Development Global Practice
Governance Global Practice
Western and Central Africa Region

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective May 31, 2021)

Currency Unit = EURO

US\$1 = EURO 0.820

FISCAL YEAR

January 1 - December 31

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABIS	Automatic Biometric Identification System
AfDB	African Development Bank
ANINF	National Agency for Digital Infrastructure and Frequencies (<i>Agence Nationale des Infrastructures Numériques et des Fréquences</i>)
ARCEP	Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Postal Service (<i>Autorité de Régulation des Communications Électroniques et des Postes du Gabon</i>)
ARMP	Regulatory Agency for Public Procurement (<i>Agence de Régulation des Marchés Publics</i>)
CAB	Central African Backbone
CAB4	Central African Backbone Phase 4, Gabon
CE	Citizen Engagement
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (<i>Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale</i>)
CERC	Contingent Emergency Response Component
CIF	Common Interoperability Framework
CNAM-GS	National Health Insurance and Social Security Fund (<i>Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie et de Garantie Sociale</i>)
CNEC	National Civil Registration Center (<i>Centre National de l'État Civil</i>)
CNPDCP	National Commission for the Protection of Personal Data (<i>Commission Nationale pour la Protection des Données à Caractère Personnel</i>)
CNTIPPEE	National Commission for Works of Public Interest for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Employment (<i>Commission Nationale des Travaux d'Intérêt Public pour la Promotion de l'Entreprenariat et de l'Emploi</i>)
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CR	Civil Registry/Civil Registration
DA	Designated Account
DE4A	Digital Economy for Africa
EGDI	e-Government Index
e-GP	e-Government Procurement
EHSGs	Environment, Social, Health and Security Guidelines
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESSs	Environmental and Social Standards
FM	Financial Management
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Economically-vulnerable Gabonese (<i>Gabonais Economiquement Faibles</i>)
GoG	Government of Gabon
GPN	General Procurement Notice
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
HR	Human Resources

HRMIS	Human Resources Management Information System
IBOGA	Official Biometric Identification in Gabon (<i>Identification Biométrique Officielle au Gabon</i>)
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
ID	Identity
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFR	Interim Financial Report
IoP	Interoperability Platform
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPC	Infection, Prevention and Control
IPF	Investment Project Financing
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
IPs	Indigenous Persons
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
KYC	Know Your Customer
LMP	Labor Management Procedure
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAPS	Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems
MCDE	Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy (<i>Ministère de la Communication ,et de l'Economie Numérique</i>)
NIP	Personal Identification Number (<i>Numéro d'identité personnel</i>)
NIPA	Korean National IT Industry and Promotion Agency
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PAT	Accelerated Transformation Plan for Development (<i>Plan d'accélération de la transformation</i>)
PFM	Public Finance Management
PDO	Project Development Objective
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PPC	Public Procurement Code
PPE	Personal Protective equipment
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PPSD	Project Procurement Strategy for Development
PSGE	Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (<i>Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent</i>)
QCBS	Qualifications and Cost Based Selection
RAS	Reimbursable Advisory Services
RBPP	Biometric Registry of Physical Persons (<i>Registre Biométrique des Personnes Physiques</i>)
RFP	Request for Proposals
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SCD	Systematic Country Diagnostic

SMP	Stakeholder Management Plan
SMS	Short Message Service
SOC	Security Operations Center
SPN	Specific Procurement Notice
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSAHUTLC	Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities
STEP	Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement
TA	Technical Assistance
TORs	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
UIC	Universal Identity Credential
UN	United Nations
UNDB	United Nations Development Business
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WIMAX	Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access
XAF	Central African CFA Franc (<i>Franc CFA</i>)

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DATASHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

Country(ies)	Project Name	
Gabon	Digital Gabon Project	
Project ID	Financing Instrument	Environmental and Social Risk Classification
P175987	Investment Project Financing	Substantial

Financing & Implementation Modalities

<input type="checkbox"/> Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)
<input type="checkbox"/> Series of Projects (SOP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragile State(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Small State(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Intermediaries (FI)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragile within a non-fragile Country
<input type="checkbox"/> Project-Based Guarantee	<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict
<input type="checkbox"/> Deferred Drawdown	<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to Natural or Man-made Disaster
<input type="checkbox"/> Alternate Procurement Arrangements (APA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on Enhanced Implementation Support (HEIS)

Expected Approval Date	Expected Closing Date
30-Jun-2021	30-Jun-2026

Bank/IFC Collaboration

No

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To enhance adoption of select digitalized public services and increase the number of persons with a legal identity credential that facilitates their access to services.

Components

Component Name	Cost (US\$, millions)
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Enabling environment for accelerated digital transformation	20.00
Modernizing legal ID systems	24.50
Digital transformation of public administration and select services	17.00
Citizen engagement, implementation support, and M&E	7.00
Contingent Emergency Response	0.00

Organizations

Borrower:	Gabonese Republic
Implementing Agency:	Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	68.50
Total Financing	68.50
of which IBRD/IDA	68.50
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	68.50
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Expected Disbursements (in US\$, Millions)

WB Fiscal Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Annual	0.00	6.00	10.00	18.00	20.00	14.50
Cumulative	0.00	6.00	16.00	34.00	54.00	68.50

INSTITUTIONAL DATA

Practice Area (Lead)

Digital Development

Contributing Practice Areas

Governance

Climate Change and Disaster Screening

This operation has been screened for short and long-term climate change and disaster risks

SYSTEMATIC OPERATIONS RISK-RATING TOOL (SORT)

Risk Category	Rating
1. Political and Governance	● Moderate
2. Macroeconomic	● Moderate
3. Sector Strategies and Policies	● Moderate
4. Technical Design of Project or Program	● Moderate
5. Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	● Substantial
6. Fiduciary	● Substantial
7. Environment and Social	● Substantial
8. Stakeholders	● Moderate
9. Other	● Substantial
10. Overall	● Moderate

COMPLIANCE

Policy

Does the project depart from the CPF in content or in other significant respects?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Does the project require any waivers of Bank policies?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Environmental and Social Standards Relevance Given its Context at the Time of Appraisal

E & S Standards	Relevance
Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant
Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management	Relevant
Community Health and Safety	Relevant
Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	Not Currently Relevant
Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Relevant
Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

NOTE: For further information regarding the World Bank's due diligence assessment of the Project's potential environmental and social risks and impacts, please refer to the Project's Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS).

Legal Covenants

Sections and Description

Section IV.1 of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: The Borrower shall ensure that the RBPP System is established, and thereafter implemented in conformity in all material respects with the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development and the Project's Pillars of Inclusion.

Sections and Description

Section IV.2 of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: The Borrower shall ensure that the collection, use and processing (including transfers to third parties) of any personal data collected under the Project shall be done in accordance with the national law on Personal Data Protection (Law No.009/2011 dated September 25, 2011), as the same may be amended, ensuring legitimate, appropriate, and proportionate treatment of such data.

Sections and Description

Section IV.3 of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: In conformity with the aforementioned national law on Personal

Data Protection, the Borrower shall: (a) devise a robust set of controlled, data access mechanisms to ensure that only data necessary to the intended purpose can be queried, and only by authorized entities; and (b) shall not allow for the integration of the databases of Project-supported identification systems (i.e., RBPP System, CR System, and National ID card System); and shall assure sufficient institutional control and oversight to that effect.

Sections and Description

Section IV.4 of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: The Borrower shall maintain, at all times during Project implementation, the CNEC, with mandate, staffing and resources satisfactory to the Bank.

Sections and Description

Section I.B.2(a) of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: The Borrower shall not later than three (3) months after the Effective Date, recruit, and thereafter maintain throughout the Project implementation period, an internal auditor for the Project with experience, qualifications and on terms of reference acceptable to the Bank.

Sections and Description

Section I.B.2(b) of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: The Borrower shall not later than three (3) months after the Effective Date, install and thereafter maintain throughout the Project implementation period, an accounting software for the Project acceptable to the Bank.

Sections and Description

Section I.B.2(c) of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: The Borrower shall, not later than six (6) months after the Effective Date recruit, and thereafter maintain throughout the Project implementation period, an external auditor for the Project with experience, qualifications and on terms of reference acceptable to the Bank

Conditions

Type Disbursement	Financing source IBRD/IDA	Description Section III.B.a of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: No withdrawal shall be made for payments made prior to the Signature Date.
Type Disbursement	Financing source IBRD/IDA	Description Section III.B.b of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: No withdrawal shall be made for payments made under Category (3) of the Loan Agreement, unless and until the CNEC has been established in a manner acceptable to the Bank.
Type Disbursement	Financing source IBRD/IDA	Description Section III.B.c of Schedule 2 to the Legal Agreement: No withdrawal shall be made for Emergency Expenditures under Category 4 of the Loan Agreement, unless and until all of the following conditions have been met in respect of said expenditures: (a) the Borrower has determined that an Eligible Crisis or Emergency has occurred, and has furnished to the Bank a request to withdraw Loan amounts



		under Category 4; (b) the Bank has agreed with such determination, accepted said request and notified the Borrower thereof; and (c) the Borrower has adopted the CERC Manual and Emergency Action Plan, in form and substance acceptable to the Bank.
Type Effectiveness	Financing source IBRD/IDA	Description Article IV.01(a) of the Legal Agreement: The Project Implementation Unit (“PIU”) has been established in accordance with the provisions of Section I.B.1 of Schedule 2 to this Agreement.
Type Effectiveness	Financing source IBRD/IDA	Description Article IV.01(b) of the Legal Agreement: The Project Implementation Manual (“PIM”) has been prepared and adopted in accordance with Section I.C of Schedule 2 to of the Loan Agreement.

I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A. Country Context

- Gabon is a small and highly urbanized central African country with overall low population density and a youthful demographic profile.** Located along the Atlantic coast in Central Africa, the Gabonese Republic is bordered by the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea. The country has an area of 270,000 km² and an estimated population of 2.1 million. At eight inhabitants per km², the country is one of the least dense yet one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The oil boom after large oil fields were discovered in the early 1970s accelerated rural-urban migration, with the urbanization rate reaching 89 percent in 2017 — the highest rate in SSA. Over half of Gabonese live in the capital, Libreville, in Port-Gentil, and to a lesser extent in Franceville. The population is relatively young—more than 40 percent are under the age of 15—and is growing. The youthful population is an asset for the country's development, but the benefits will only materialize if the economy can absorb them productively.¹
- While standing out in SSA for its high income and rich natural resources, the country underperforms on most human development and living conditions dimensions.** Gabon is one of the few countries in SSA with upper middle-income status, owing its prosperity to its rich and diverse endowment of natural resources. It boasts the second largest economy in the Central African Economic and Monetary Union (*Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale*, CEMAC). Topping its wealth of nonrenewable resources are petroleum, manganese, and to a lesser extent uranium, iron ore, diamonds, and gold. Although Gabon ranks 85th out of 189 countries in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, according to 2019 World Bank estimates, it ranked 119th out of 189 countries in the 2020 Human Development Index and 125th out of 174 in the 2020 Human Capital Index.
- Weak governance has been a major challenge to sustainable economic growth and the equal distribution of the country's wealth.** Gabon ranked in the third most corrupt group of countries (129th of 180) in the 2020 Transparency International Report, and in the lowest 20 percent in terms of government effectiveness and regulatory quality in the 2019 World Governance Indicators. Although inequality, measured by the Gini index, is at a moderate level of 38, wide geographic disparities in poverty and large social inequalities undermine prospects for shared prosperity and sustainability of poverty reduction. Rural-urban gaps in access to basic services are significantly higher than the average for middle-income countries. The unequal distribution of wealth has steadily eroded the social contract and exacerbated negative public perceptions of governance.² The Government of Gabon (GoG) has demonstrated its determination to fight corruption through investigations and arrests and creation of the Ministry of Good Governance and Anti-Corruption; but the frequent government turnover is slowing critical reforms and may compromise its commitment to pro-growth and pro-poor policy changes.
- Available data indicates that gender equality remains a real challenge in Gabon.** According to the 2017 household budget survey,³ 24 percent of women aged 15 years and older had no education at all and 21 percent of those who had some education did not go beyond primary school, compared with, respectively, 20 and 15 percent of men.

¹ This demographic factor puts the education system and the labor market under pressure with a need to absorb 150,000 more young people by 2025. Source: Gabon's transformation acceleration plan (2021-2023).

² World Bank, Systematic Country Diagnostic, June 2020.

³ Household Budget Survey, "Enquete Gabonaise pour le Suivi et l'Evaluation de la Pauvreté" (EGEP), 2017.

Women participate in the labor market at a lower rate than men (43 percent for women versus 60 percent for men)⁴ and in lower profile jobs such as household worker (62 percent of women compared to 46 percent of men).⁵ Gender gaps also exist in access to proof of legal identity (ID), with 71 percent of men having the legacy national ID card versus just 64 percent of women⁶ as well as in financial inclusion, with 38 percent of men owning a bank account versus 30 percent of women.⁷ Women, Business and the Law 2020 also reveals several inequalities in the legal framework. For example, many women cannot choose where to live, apply for a passport, own property, work in the same industries or jobs, or be head of the household in the same way as men.⁸ Women face several barriers to full participation in the digital sphere, including cultural norms, gender roles, biases, and stereotypes, which often dissuade and even prevent women from accessing the internet, gaining digital literacy, and participating in the digital economy or society.

5. **The COVID-19 crisis pushed Gabon into recession in 2020 and has exacerbated existing social challenges, with a significant impact on the most vulnerable.** Evidence suggests that after growing at 3.9 percent in 2019 real GDP contracted by 1.9 percent in 2020 mainly due to the decline in oil production and the weakness in the service sector. Unanticipated public expenditures combined with lower tax revenues are expected to lead to a fiscal deficit of 3.5 percent of GDP in 2020. Debt levels have reached historical highs, estimated at almost 75 percent of GDP in December 2020. Amid exceptional uncertainty on the turnaround in the pandemic despite hopes from recent vaccine approvals, Gabon's economy is projected to grow 1.5 percent in 2021 and 2.5 percent in 2022. The poverty rate is estimated at 33.8 percent in 2020, up from 32.3 in 2019. Rural areas are the most affected, with 70 percent of households reporting income loss. Marginalized groups – low-income groups; illiterate persons; persons living with disabilities; and undocumented people – which usually have difficulties accessing the selected services and making their voices heard are also likely affected. COVID-19 is likely to exacerbate gender inequalities as well - some of which the project attempts to address. First, with women traditionally bearing the responsibility for child and elderly care, the need to care for sick relatives as well as children staying home from school may lead to increased poverty. Second, the lack of identification limits women's ability to claim social protection entitlements (particularly important at this time) independently. Third, access to education for girls has been a challenge —with quarantines and social distancing under COVID-19, barriers to enrollment are likely to increase, especially under the current national ID system, which can require traveling to one's birthplace to obtain a birth certificate as a prerequisite for enrollment. In addition, as in many other countries, quarantines are leading to a rise in domestic violence and mental issues that have severe consequences on families, disproportionately affecting women. Urgent actions are needed in the COVID-19 context to better protect and support women.
6. **Due to climate change, Gabon is highly exposed to natural hazards such as floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures.** The country, which is 88 percent covered by rainforest, has a uniquely rich ecosystem extensive endowments of fertile land, water courses, and fisheries. However, flooding is a high hazard for Gabon; life-threatening river floods are expected to occur at least once in the next 10 years. The country is also at risk of sea-level rise, which could lead to coastal area flooding and may impact coastal cities as well as oil extraction operations. Agriculture, forestry, health, tourism, energy, and water resources are all identified as the most vulnerable sectors to these impacts. Agriculture is particularly vulnerable to climate change but also to public service delivery disruption, since it is highly weather and inputs dependent and employs over 50 percent of the population. Gabon is among the

⁴ WDI Indicators. 2018 figures.

⁵ World Bank, Gabon: Systematic Country Diagnostic, June 2020.

⁶ ID4D—Global Findex, 2017.

⁷ Global Findex, 2017.

⁸ World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2020. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/gabon/2020>



few countries in SSA that have demonstrated commitment to protect forests and biodiversity, curb carbon emissions, and address climate risks. However, the country's emergency preparedness and resilience to climate change require strengthening, especially in relation to the protection of the most vulnerable populations.⁹ The digitalization of governmental operations and the increased use of digital technologies and services has a potential to improve the country's resilience to climate change through (i) developing early warning systems; (ii) delivering emergency response and post-disaster information to communities affected by climate change; and (iii) strengthening education and public awareness of climate change and enhance citizens' resilience to expected impacts.

7. **Digital transformation has been identified as a priority for the diversification of the economy and placed at the center of the country's economic and social transformation for the past decade.** The Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (*Plan Stratégique Gabon Émergent*, PSGE), which was adopted by the GoG in 2009, sets an ambitious reform plan that aims to turn the country into a center of excellence in services and a pioneer of the digital revolution by 2025. More recently, the Accelerated Transformation Plan for development (*Plan d'Accélération de la Transformation*, PAT), released by the Government in January 2021, builds on PSGE as well as other existing strategic plans (e.g. Economic Recovery Plan, post COVID-19 recovery plan) to set an ambitious economic reform agenda for 2021-2023. The PAT strategy aims to turn the country into a modernized and diversified economy, supported by high-quality public services. This economic development program aims to build a competitive, resilient, inclusive, and diversified economy with digital development being prioritized as one of the engines of growth and societal transformation.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

8. **The GoG's ambition for high-quality public services using digital solutions is building on considerable progress in high speed broadband digital infrastructure.** The Central African Backbone Phase 4 (CAB4) project (P122776), launched in 2012 and closed in October 2020, largely contributed to the massive take-up of broadband Internet services in a competitive telecommunications market¹⁰. According to the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Postal Service (*Autorité de régulation des Communications Electroniques et des Postes*, ARCEP) (Q2 2020), there were 1.919 million Internet subscribers as of June 2020.¹¹ The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) findings indicate that 62 percent of the population was using the Internet as of January 2020, compared to 51.4 percent worldwide and 28.6 percent in Africa.¹² The country has one million Internet users and around three million mobile phone subscriptions.¹³ The use of social networks is high compared to other countries in the region, with a penetration rate of 34 percent and around 750,000 active accounts.¹⁴ Mobile money, leveraging on the mobile networks, is used by 44 percent of Gabonese, above the African average.¹⁵
9. **Although the GoG has prioritized the modernization of public services through digitalization, investments in e-government have had limited impact on the uptake and the effectiveness of service delivery.** The PAT 21-23 identifies digitizing the economy as one of the 12 national development priorities and positions e-government as a

⁹ <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/gabon/vulnerability>

¹⁰ The CAB4 project Implementation Completion Report (P122776): <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P122776>

¹¹ ARCEP: <https://www.arcep.ga/documents/Internet2020-2.pdf> A service penetration is above 100 percent due to the multi-SIM effect

¹² ITU: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

¹³ Ibid.

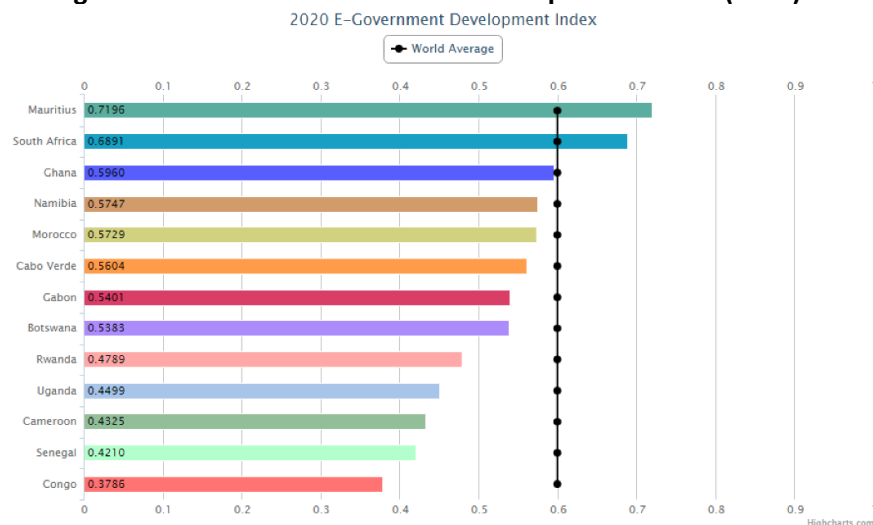
¹⁴ Hootsuite Digital Report, 2020.

¹⁵ World Bank Global Findex data, 2017 & GSMA Mobile Money Deployment Tracker.



central element in broader public-sector reform.¹⁶ Digitizing and connecting public services are key e-government¹⁷ objectives, with an ambition to implement more than 10 transactional and integrated e-services by 2023. Significant investments in digital infrastructure have helped Gabon make some progress in e-government development, demonstrating higher than SSA average scores in the United Nations (UN) E-Government Index (EGDI) 2020: 113 out of 193 countries,¹⁸ moving up 16 spots since 2016. However, the country is still below the world average and lags behind regional averages in the provision of online services and e-participation (See Figure 1). In 2015, the National Agency for Digital Infrastructure and Frequencies (*Agence Nationale des Infrastructures Numériques et des Fréquences*, ANINF)¹⁹ developed an e-government strategy and a master plan to modernize public administration. However, the implementation progress has been slow. Apart from government online portals and such administrative support systems as mailing management, only five transactional Government-to-Consumer e-services have been implemented, including an e-Tax platform, an e-Visa system, driving license registration, and business registration²⁰. Although all the major central and local government institutions have an online presence, they still provide few digitized services, making it difficult for individuals and businesses to find and access the services they need, which results in slow uptake. Gabon has only one e-participation platform, the Gabonese Administration Information Center "CIAG" ("call center"), introduced by ANINF in 2015 for providing information on administrative procedures in different sectors. However, the call center has not been operational since 2017. The ongoing World Bank-financed eGabon project (P132824), launched in 2016, supports the strengthening of the National Health Information System using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the development of a local digital innovation ecosystem.

Figure 1: UN E-Government and E-Participation Indices (EGDI) 2020



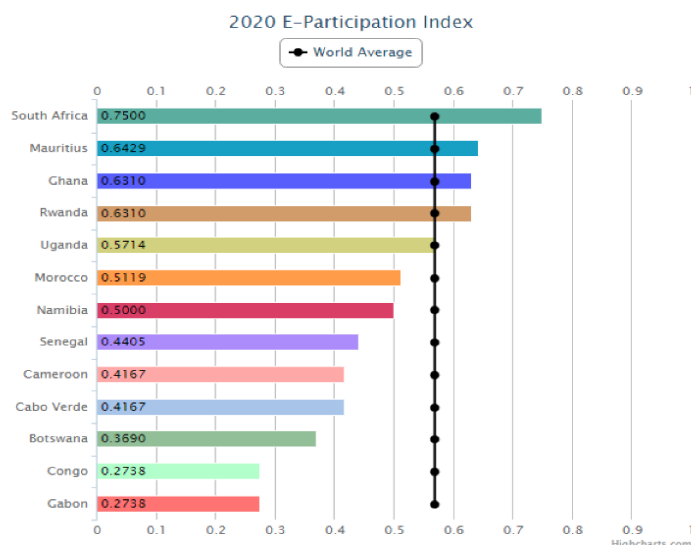
¹⁶ Gabon Transformation Accélération Plan (2021-23)

¹⁷ Project #30 on e-Government: *Plan d'Accélération de la Transformation 2021-2023*, Republic of Gabon

¹⁸ UN EGDI 2020: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Country-Information/id/62-Gabon/dataYear/2020>

¹⁹ Assisted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Korea National IT Industry and Promotion Agency (NIPA)

²⁰ PAT 2021-23: <http://aninf.ga/portfolio-items/e-tax/>; <https://evisa.dgdi.ga/>



Source: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data-Center>

10. **Digital transformation initiatives in public service delivery cover multiple institutions and require strengthened coordination.** The Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy (*Ministère de la Communication et de l'Economie Numérique*, MCDE) is supervising the digital sector. The Ministry defines the sectoral strategies and policies, while several agencies and institutions under its leadership are responsible for their execution, primarily the ANINF. ANINF is responsible for the coherent and coordinated implementation of the national strategy for digital development and e-government – in addition to other responsibilities, such as the development of public digital infrastructures, the monitoring of radio-frequency spectrum and the management of several digital services. Individual line ministries and local governments, with support of ANINF, are responsible for sectoral digital initiatives. An inter-ministerial committee under the Prime Minister's office – with the MCDE being 1st Vice-Chair – has been created on February 3, 2021²¹ to coordinate all initiatives to digitize public administration. To achieve the vision of an effective and efficient e-governance with the focus on interconnectivity and social inclusion, as articulated in the PAT, it will be necessary to build coordinated efforts among different Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and with the participation of the private sector, to provide faster, efficient and user-friendly services, and rationalize the administrative processes.
11. **Despite recent progress on the legal and regulatory framework of the digital sector, some reforms have been significantly delayed and many challenges remain to be addressed to establish a strong trust environment for online transactions and clear data protection policies.** Online public services deployment relies on the regulatory frameworks governing their use. Issues, including delays, taking place in the legal process cause implementation risks at operational level and could even be amplified when it comes to integration of cross-cutting public e-services through an interoperability platform. National public key infrastructure, cybersecurity arrangements, and reforms to enable digitalization of the legal ID ecosystem, including birth registration, are all critical enablers of e-government and the digital sector in general, but investments in these will require further legislation. Separate laws for electronic transactions and cybersecurity were enacted in 2018 through an extra-legislative process (as “*ordonnances*”), but they were ultimately overturned by the Constitutional Court for procedural reasons. The GoG is currently in the process of redrafting and re-enacting these two laws in order to ensure an adequate legal framework for ongoing digital government reforms. In addition, while Gabon has a general data protection law in force since 2011 that

21 Le Comité Interministériel, Arrêté n°00061/PM du 03 février 2021



provides adequate legal safeguards for personal data, lack of capacity of the independent data protection authority, National Commission for the Protection of Personal Data (*Commission Nationale pour la Protection des Données à Caractère Personnel*, CNPDCP), is currently hampering its enforcement. The personal data protection law was followed by amendments in 2013 to cover issues related to newer technologies such as biometrics. An additional amendment to bring the data protection framework in line with emerging international norms are currently underway, with a new draft law set to be sent to parliament this year. While the CNPDCP has been fully operationalized, it currently lacks the capacity to fully carry out its mandate, and the degree to which its deliberations are read, respected and incorporated into digital government operations remains limited. As a result, certain gaps in the regulatory framework needed to enforce the data protection law persist. In particular, key policies, procedures and guidelines remaining to be articulated to provide adequate safeguards for processing of personal data.²² In addition, significant institutional uncertainties persist, leaving the institutional arrangements underpinning the digital sector unclear, thus weakening the enabling environment that would underpin planned digital transformation efforts, including of the legal ID landscape.

12. **COVID-19 has exacerbated the necessity for a sound cybersecurity regulatory environment and “secure by design” public platforms, as prerequisites to delivering e-services.** The pandemic has significantly increased the dependency on digital platforms and connectivity, while cybercrime has shifted from individuals and small businesses to major corporations, governments and critical infrastructure.²³ Gabon has already been a target of major cyber-attacks in the past years.²⁴ Thousands of fraudulent access attempts to the Gabonese state information systems are blocked each week.²⁵ Gabon’s cybersecurity preparedness level is at the nascent stage, with the country ranked 100th out of 175 in the most recent ITU Global Cybersecurity Index.²⁶ Institutional arrangements for cybersecurity are unclear: while there is consensus that ANINF would have a key role in maintaining and operationalizing national cybersecurity infrastructure, this has yet to be adequately formalized as well as responsibilities of other government entities. Missing key regulations that would ensure security of networks as well as unclear cybersecurity governance are hampering the needed investment in enhancing the cyber resilience of Gabon’s critical national information infrastructure and essential services and the deployment of national cyber operational security centers for threat monitoring and incident response. The GoG should strive for a quick adoption of appropriate legislation and undertake decisive measures to strengthen its regulatory and institutional framework and to carry out the reforms as introduced in ANINF’s institutional strategy.²⁷
13. **At present, the GoG does not have access to adequate data hosting capacity to enable the full implementation of scaled-up digitalized public services as articulated in the PAT vision.** While ANINF has a designated site used as a data center for government data, due to budgetary shortfalls, the site lacks the required equipment and trained personnel to support the e-government objectives of the PAT. The World Bank-financed eGabon project is currently supporting capacity building, including training and definition of operations procedures along with datacenter audits,

²² World Bank Group (WBG), Digital Economy Assessment in Gabon, June 2019 (unpublished).

²³ Interpol (2020), “Cybercrime: COVID-19 Impact,” Lyon, France: Interpol.

<https://www.interpol.int/en/content/download/15526/file/COVID-19%20Cybercrime%20Analysis%20Report-%20August%202020.pdf>

²⁴ For example, in 2018, the country fell victim to an anonymous attack, which lasted 72 hours and resulted in the disruption of more than 50 percent of government websites. Digital Business Africa, January 2020. Source: <https://www.digitalbusiness.africa/gabon-lagence-nationale-du-numerique-veut-premurer-la-population-sur-les-risques-de-la-cybercriminalite/>

²⁵ Mission February 2021 interviews with ANINF

²⁶ ITU, 2018. *Global Cybersecurity Index 2018*. Available at: https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/str/D-STR-GCI.01-2018-PDF-E.pdf

²⁷ ANINF has taken the lead in outlining a strategy for building the required capacity, including undertaking a series of feasibility studies with support from the AfDB to prepare a project to implement a Computer Emergency Response Team, SOC and other threat-monitoring platforms. This study is still ongoing, and the WBG mission was not able to consult its results.



for ANINF to enable secure hosting of data related to the health sector. A national strategy for data hosting has not yet been articulated by the GoG. Despite multiple feasibility studies on this matter, carried out in recent years, conclusions have been inconsistent and sometimes contradictory. The GoG has yet to make such strategic decisions as institutional arrangements, the role of the private sector, the financing model, the role of cloud architectures, and data governance arrangements, including data sovereignty.

14. **GoG has identified a number of priorities to progress on a more integrated approach to establishing digital public platforms and contribute to better uptake of transactional and integrated e-services.** The 2019 diagnostic of Gabon's digital economy, conducted as part of the Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) initiative, recommended advancing the development of interconnected digital public platforms to accelerate digital transformation. The introduction of integrated digital public platforms can help improve efficiency and quality of public services for individuals and businesses, as well as governance and accountability. In follow-up discussions with the World Bank on the 2019 DE4A country diagnostics and based on the PAT direction, the following focus areas of support have been identified: reforms to legal ID systems, facilitating interoperability of public digital platforms, reinforcing cybersecurity capacity, as well as improvements to specific government services using digital technologies, including to social protection systems, civil service resource management, and public procurement.
15. **Digital transformation in the public sector in Gabon, in particular of expanding access to legal IDs, would also support development of the financial sector and promote financial inclusion.** Due to anti-money-laundering measures and Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements, opening an account at a bank, mobile money operator, or other financial institution requires being able to prove one's identity. In the most recent Findex survey, 14.5 percent of people in Gabon reported not opening a financial account due to a lack of necessary documentation.²⁸ The lack of regulatory provisions for tiered or risk-based KYC for low-value accounts, which in other jurisdictions can help financially include the poor, as well as the lack of a financial inclusion strategy in Gabon, exacerbates the problem and increases the relevance of verifiable ID credentials. Reducing the time and administrative costs of authenticating identity enables financial institutions to lower their costs and offer services to many more people. Partly as a consequence of these barriers, there is a low level of digitization of government payments. Currently, only 10.3 percent of adults receiving government payments, but this could be improved given the potential represented by civil servants, students, and retirees. The digital transformation of the Gabonese administration will significantly reduce operating cost and limit the capacity for fraud and corruption. These issues are crucial in Gabon in a context of distrust with regard to public officials.²⁹

Legal ID ecosystem

16. **People that lack proof of their legal identity face barriers to accessing critical services and exercising political and economic rights.** Robust, inclusive, and responsible legal ID systems³⁰ can be transformative for the poorest and most vulnerable by enabling access to basic health care, education, and social safety nets; facilitating financial inclusion; and fostering the empowerment of women and girls. "Providing legal identity for all, including birth registration," by

²⁸ WBG Findex data, 2017

²⁹ WBG, Digital Economy Assessment in Gabon, June 2019 (unpublished).

³⁰ Legal identity has been defined in the *Principles of Identification for Sustainable Development*: "Legal identification systems provide recognition before the law and proof of legal identity. The name and nature of legal identification systems varies under national law, but typically includes CR systems, national identification systems, population registries, and other foundational identification systems."

Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development: Toward the Digital Age – Second Edition (English). Washington, D.C.: WBG. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/213581486378184357/Principles-on-Identification-for-Sustainable-Development-Toward-the-Digital-Age-Second-Edition>



2030 was adopted as target 16.9 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the ability to uniquely identify individuals and reliably authenticate their identity is also a key enabler of progress toward many other Sustainable Development Goals.³¹ At a systemic level, robust legal ID systems are essential to countries' economic development, security, governance, and efficient delivery of services—enabling them to accelerate progress toward an inclusive digital economy. Digitalizing legal ID systems can generate significant benefits across the public and private sectors by increasing accountability (chiefly through the reduction of fraud, leakages, and waste) as well as driving innovation in service delivery (through the use of mobile or digital payments, for instance).³² Moreover, such systems, in particular civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems, can generate reliable and continuous data for policy makers to measure development progress and identify areas needing additional investment.³³

17. **The GoG has identified the reform of its existing legal ID systems as a key prerequisite for the various e-government initiatives to provide equal access to public services for the population.** Over the past two decades, the GoG has struggled to provide its population with legal ID credentials that would facilitate access to services. The principal existing source of legal ID data in Gabon is the civil registry (CR), which contains birth records. Birth registration in Gabon has relatively high coverage, with over 90 percent of new births registered compared to the SSA average of 43 percent.³⁴ However, since the CR is entirely paper-based in its current form, it is not possible to build digital links between it and other ID systems, limiting its functionality and ability to underpin and expand access to other legal ID credentials that can be used to access services. The national ID card system has been plagued with setbacks. Before 2011, the national ID card was vulnerable to fraud and contained many duplicates. A 2011 reform to address these weaknesses by collecting biometric data for use in deduplication ended abruptly in 2014 due to a contract dispute with a vendor. Since 2014, the GoG has been entirely locked out of its own national ID card system, with citizens' data inaccessible on the vendor's servers. Additional details of the current legal ID landscape in Gabon can be found in Figure 2.

³¹ UN (2015). "Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to transform our world." Available from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

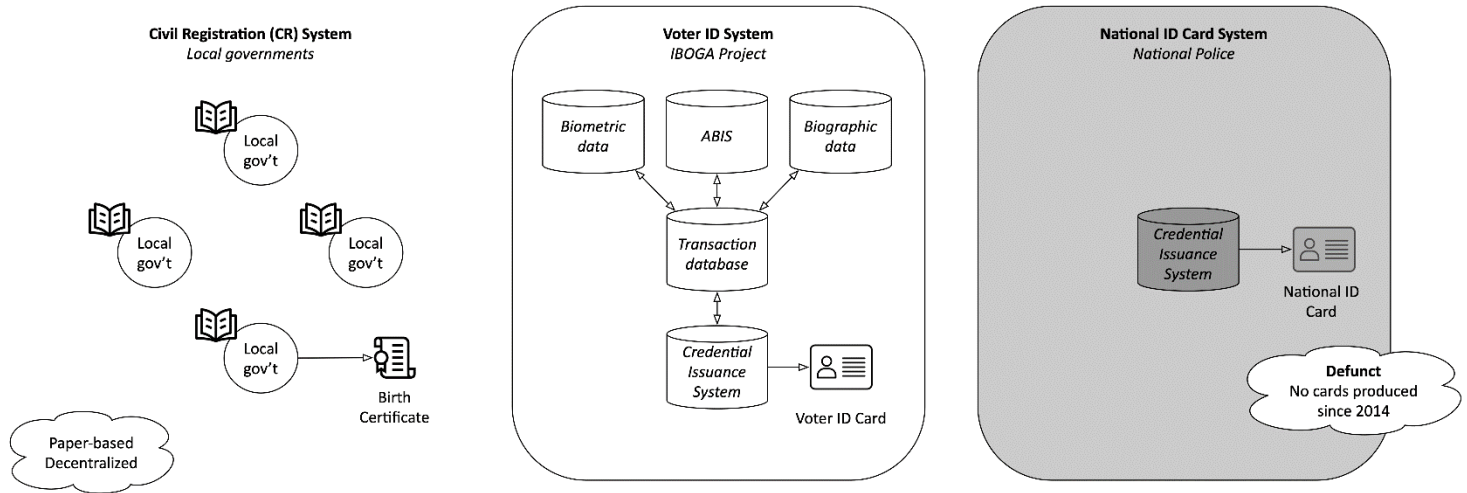
³² Julia Michal Clark (2018), "Public Sector Savings and Revenue from Identification Systems: Opportunities and Constraints," Washington, D.C.: WBG. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/745871522848339938/Public-Sector-Savings-and-Revenue-from-Identification-Systems-Opportunities-and-Constraints>

³³ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2019), "Birth Registration for Every Child by 2030: Are we on track?" <https://www.unicef.org/media/62981/file/Birth-registration-for-every-child-by-2030.pdf>

³⁴ Direction Générale de la Statistique of Gabon and ICF International (2013), *Enquête Démographique et de Santé du Gabon 2012*, Calverton, Maryland, and Libreville, Gabon: Direction Générale de la Statistique of Gabon and ICF International.



Figure 2: Legal ID Systems in Gabon: Current State



18. The GoG launched the Official Biometric Identification in Gabon (*Identification Biométrique Officielle au Gabon, IBOGA*) project in 2012 to reboot the national ID system but technical, financial and legal issues have thus far prevented the project from being fully implemented. Led by the Ministry of Interior in collaboration with ANINF, the IBOGA project was established to carry out a comprehensive reform of the legal ID landscape in Gabon, with the aim of modernizing and digitalizing national ID, CR, as well as voter ID. The IBOGA project began in 2012 with the creation of a biometric voter ID system, with the intention of later migrating that data to seed a new biometric population registry system as a second step, creating the basis for a new digitalized legal ID ecosystem and in the process replacing the legacy national ID card system entirely. The IBOGA project began with a series of mass voter registration campaigns spread over multiple elections; to date, IBOGA voter registration has produced approximately 690,000 unique records, or 52 percent of the over-18 adult population of Gabon today.³⁵ Progress toward the other two components of the IBOGA project – CR and ID reform – has been hampered to date due to budgetary constraints.
19. In addition to the voter ID component that has been carried out, the IBOGA project includes plans for comprehensive reforms to the Gabonese legal ID landscape to address weaknesses in current systems by expanding coverage and inclusiveness while simultaneously improving functionality and technical robustness. In the proposed reform, the backbone of the legal ID ecosystem would be a newly created Biometric Registry of Physical Persons (*Registre Biométrique des Personnes Physiques, RBPP*). The RBPP would be designed to be maximally inclusive, to issue and manage a unique personal identification number, called the *Numéro d'Identité Personnel (NIP)*, to the people of Gabon. The NIP, a 14-character identifier which is indexed by the holder's birthday but discloses no other personal information (such as gender or birthplace), would be issued to all persons in Gabon, irrespective of their nationality or legal status, as well as Gabonese citizens residing abroad. The uniqueness of each person's NIP would be established using automated biometric deduplication, relying on fingerprint images processed through an automatic biometric identification system (ABIS). This newly created RBPP system, originally seeded with legacy data from the IBOGA voter registry, would be interoperable with two other legal ID systems: a newly created centralized and digitalized CR, which handles birth records, as well as a new national ID system to manage the revamped national ID card. While these three legal ID systems (RBPP, CR, and national ID card) and the data they contain would be

³⁵ Population Estimates and Projections, WBG. It should be noted that voting is not mandatory in Gabon.



logically and architecturally separate – with different eligible populations and distinct but complementary purposes – they would nonetheless share some common infrastructure and be managed by the same entity to improve coordination and improve efficiency. This entity, to be called the National Civil Registration Center (*Centre national de l'État civil*, CNEC) would be the logical continuation of the IBOGA project, giving it an institutional foundation. Since the initial seed data for the RBPP – which covers only voters, and which notably includes no minors – would be incomplete, coverage would need to be expanded through additional registration campaigns in order to ensure the inclusion of the entire population in the RBPP, in particular non-citizens and those who were too young or otherwise ineligible to vote in the last election.

20. **The legal reforms needed to enable the planned reforms to the legal ID landscape are ongoing.** While a new ID law creating the NIP was promulgated in December 2020,³⁶ complementary legislation to enable digitalization of the CR system and clarify institutional arrangements for the legal ID reforms is still pending. The recently enacted NIP law provides an initial basis for the creation of a new biometric population registry, to be called the RBPP, issuing a NIP to all, regardless of legal status, thereby fostering universal access to governmental services while providing a secure means of authenticating the identity of NIP holders. While this law is adequate to allow the proposed reforms to implement the NIP, additional legal reforms are needed to allow digitalization of the CR, thereby ensuring an ongoing data collection mechanism feeding into the RBPP and assuring its sustainability. Gabon's CR system is currently governed by the Civil Code, whose provisions would need to be adapted to enable digitization. The reforms required to allow digitalization of the CR system has been envisaged in a draft law currently being considered by government, but which has yet to be put to vote by parliament. This draft CR law includes reforms to facilitate digitalization of all core CR processes including registration of vital events, issuance of certified copies, and archiving of vital records. Further, a clear distinction between the NIP database and the reformed CR database is yet to be articulated clearly on the legal, institutional, and technical levels, and would be an important element to clarify in upcoming legal reforms, as the RBPP and CR systems would need to be kept distinct in order to assure data protection and facilitate optimal functionality and inclusivity of both. Finally, the institutional mandates of the various actors in Gabon's legal ID ecosystem could be further clarified, be it for the CNEC, the entity that will manage the NIP and CR systems, or for the authorities in charge of the security of underlying systems and networks (such as ANINF and ARCEP).

Interoperability of public digital platforms

21. **In the past few years, Gabon has launched several initiatives with moderate success to ensure connectivity of administrations and provision of digital applications to civil servants and citizens.** Several projects between public administrations were launched including the operationalization of the Gabonese Administration Network (*Réseau de l'Administration Gabonaise*),³⁷ the GAB-IX Internet Exchange Point,³⁸ and the Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WIMAX) Administrative Network.³⁹ The GoG has introduced five applications for civil servants⁴⁰

³⁶ *Loi n°027/2020 du 24 décembre 2020 relative au numéro d'identification personnel*. Journal Officiel de la République Gabonaise. No 97, January 1, 2021.

³⁷ Secure network allowing the interconnection of the various administrations of the nine provinces of Gabon and the exchange of information and documents thanks to the installation of optical fibers and microwave links.

³⁸ Network infrastructure that allows multiple networks to be connected to exchange "peering" Internet traffic. gabix.ga was officially inaugurated in 2014.

³⁹ A high-speed wireless Internet access network using WIMAX technology that interconnects administrative and public sites, as well as an internal telephone network allowing government officials to communicate with each other free of charge.

⁴⁰ e-service general direction of public accounts and treasury, single reference file (payroll system), Bondecasse.ga (investment scheme for civil servants), civil service system integrating payroll and human resources management, and electronic government messaging system



and digitized some administrative back-office functions (public financial management and human resource management). However, these services have had a low rate of use. For example, only 16 percent of civil servants use electronic messaging systems developed and made available to them.⁴¹ According to the PAT strategy, strengthening interoperability within the public sector is one of key prerequisites to a successful implementation of the e-government strategic objectives. The PAT highlights health sector information systems (supported by the World Bank-financed eGabon project) as well as unique digital ID registries for individuals and businesses as key interoperability initiatives which need to be implemented.

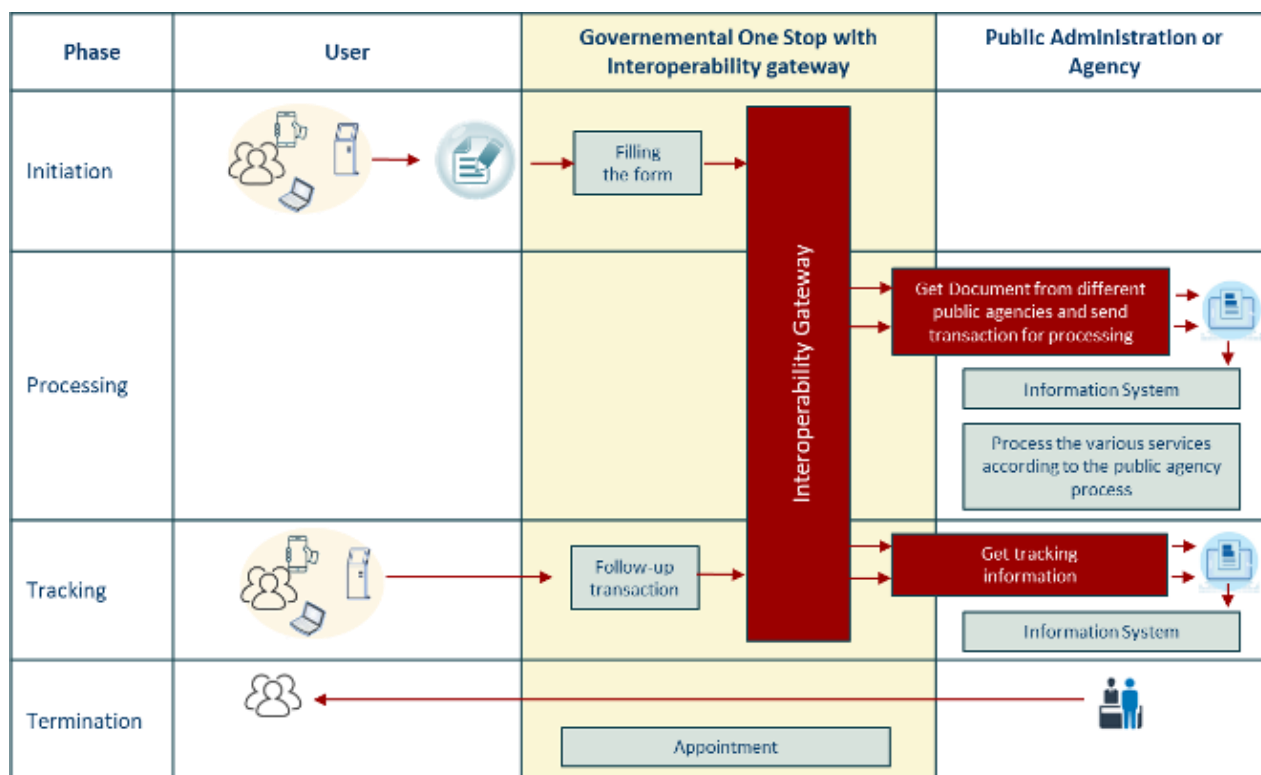
22. **The lack of an integrated government platform to unite “back-office”⁴² systems and interoperability between governmental applications is one of the major bottlenecks to the modernization of public services.** Today, each e-service developed is under an isolated sectoral system. To the extent to which data is exchanged between agencies, it is done using disparate and uncoordinated methods, leading to errors, inefficiencies and privacy risks that could be reduced through secure interoperability. An integrated approach could help to address ICT capacity and resource constraints that are common in line agencies. These include issues related to management, cost and utilization of multiple datacenters and systems; challenges in integration, interoperability, data, and information exchange between internal and external systems; high-risk critical systems and infrastructure from a cybersecurity perspective; and the need for sufficient technical and strategic ICT management capacity. Secure interoperability between government applications and databases (see Figure 3), coupled with adequate protection for personal data and privacy, and a one-stop-shop access point has the potential to ensure a user-friendly access to different public services, reduced fraud, improved efficiency of public expenditures, and improve quality of services. Several benchmark studies demonstrate that the most advanced countries in terms of openness and effectiveness of public sector effectively deploy digital administration.⁴³

⁴¹ McKinsey/ANINF study for Gabon’s transformation acceleration plan (2021-2023), 2020

⁴² Back-office systems support processes used by civil servants that help keep government functions running, including FM and human resource management system.

⁴³ The 2020 ranking of the 193 UN Member States in terms of digital government – capturing the scope and quality of online services, status of telecommunication infrastructure and existing human capacity – is led by Denmark (1st), Sweden (6th), USA (8th), Netherlands (9th), and Singapore (10th). IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2020 is led by Singapore (1st), Denmark (2nd), Netherlands (4th), Sweden (6th) and USA (10th).

Figure 3: E-services integration through secure Interoperability Platform



Social Protection Beneficiary Registry

23. **The main registry of social protection beneficiaries that currently exists in Gabon contains a significant number of duplicates, creating challenges for the authentication of the identity of beneficiaries.** The National Health Insurance and Social Security Fund (*Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie et de Garantie Sociale*, CNAM-GS) manages, under supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, a biometric beneficiary registry that contains approximately one million records⁴⁴ of eligible beneficiaries of various social protection programs in Gabon (46 percent of the total population), principally the national health insurance scheme. Children and non-Gabonese citizens are eligible for enrollment into the CNAM-GS registry. While the CNAM-GS registry is the largest single database of individuals in all of Gabon, it is widely considered to contain a significant number of duplicate records. The exact number of duplicates is, however, unknown, since the biometric data that are collected during beneficiary enrollment were never used for deduplication for both technical and budgetary reasons.⁴⁵ CNAM-GS also maintains a list of economically vulnerable Gabonese (*Gabonais Economiquement Faibles*, GEF), which concerns a subset of their beneficiary registry. The GEF list has been used in the past for the purposes of targeting social-assistance programs. There are, however, concerns about the robustness of the GEF list, including the existence of duplicate or fraudulent records as well as recognition that GEF eligibility criteria have not been clearly defined and or adequately verified, leading to inclusion of a larger share of the population than considered desirable for the purposes of targeting social-assistance programs. To

⁴⁴ Source: World Bank mission interviews with CNAM-GS representatives.

⁴⁵ The CNAM-GS registry does not feature automatic biometric deduplication functionality (ABIS), which was not included in the enrollment system for budgetary reasons. The biometric data captured during the CNAM-GS registration includes four fingerprint (thumb and index) and a facial image.



address some of these weaknesses, the Ministry of Social Affairs and CNAM-GS are collaborating in an ongoing effort to reboot the GEF targeting system, with support from the World Bank.⁴⁶ These efforts include the development of a new targeting methodology and its implementation through household surveys, with the aim of increasing the relevance of the GEF list for targeting and lay the foundations of a future national social registry.

24. **The sectoral strategies prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the CNAM-GS both entail building links to legal ID systems to improve the efficiency and quality of social protection and health service delivery in Gabon.** The ability to link administrative databases using unique identifiers through an interoperability platform that adequately protects personal data has been an important factor in allowing countries to target social assistance and respond quickly and effectively to economic shocks, including pandemic response. Adding this capability will improve the ability of GoG to target relief efforts and complement other ongoing targeting reforms. Additionally, identifying each beneficiary of social protection programs using his or her NIP will help eliminate duplicate records, reduce potential sources of leakages, and benefit fraud. Moreover, authenticating social protection beneficiaries' identity digitally using authentication services based on the NIP, especially at the point of service delivery, would help improve the quality and accessibility of the services, while further reducing financial leakages. Facilitating interoperability between the registry of social protection beneficiaries and other government registries would also improve GoG's capacity for pandemic response, improving ability to target its COVID-19 response measures and ensure that social assistance goes to the intended recipients, as well as facilitating health insurance reimbursements and subsidies, including for delivery of vaccines.

Civil Service Human Resource Management

25. **Digitalization of the Human Resources (HR) management processes will contribute to improving efficiency in the planning and allocation of civil servants.** The World Bank's Reimbursable Advisory Service, RAS (P163632) supported the GoG with the implementation of the civil service reform to build a more efficient and performance-focused public administration. The World Bank support included the design of a new Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS), which has not yet been implemented. More support is needed to deepen the reforms, which also includes the implementation of the HRMIS. The new HRMIS will help operationalize strategic staffing plans in line with the results-based budgeting reform undertaken by the Government. Streamlining of processes will increase efficiency and transparency of HR management through the standardization of HR processes. Furthermore, the system will be interoperable with the RBPP and will thus help avoid recurrent problems of payment discrepancies while allowing for simpler and more effective control and verification of the government payroll system. Interoperability with the new RBPP and thereby the broader legal ID ecosystem will, in particular, enable the improvement of the management of public servants – the public sector being the largest employer in the country.⁴⁷ According to the GoG, the inefficient HR and payroll management in the public sector with multiple records within the Government has been a major bottleneck and constantly introduced irregularities such as ghost workers, double payments for one person or payment for those who passed away or retired. It has also been a major source of concern about the growing public sector and the wage bill that accounted for 10 percent of GDP in 2019.⁴⁸ Addressing these issues through digital technologies is possible by creating an integrated HRMIS, made highly efficient thanks to embedded interoperability supported by streamlined processes and necessary change management.

⁴⁶ Gabon Statistical Development Project (P157473)

⁴⁷ Public sector represents 56 percent of formal sector jobs in Gabon and 28 percent of total jobs, vs. 21 percent on average in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Source: Economics Dashboard, ILOStat, World Bank (2019).

⁴⁸ International Monetary Fund (IMF) Article IV Consultation Report, December 2019



Public procurement

26. **The digitization of public procurement processes represents an opportunity to increase the transparency and efficiency in the use of public resources.** Public procurement is a fundamental, crucial component of poverty reduction, and sustainable development. It serves as a significant policy instrument, which GoG can use to propel changes in public service delivery, create fiscal space and jobs, and stimulate private sector growth. A well-performing public procurement system should increase citizens confidence in government and private sector competitiveness, especially by leveling the playing field for small- and medium-sized businesses. A new Public Procurement Code (*Code des Marchés Publics*, PPC) was adopted in the country in 2018. A digitization plan was not included. However, a recent evaluation⁴⁹ by the World Bank suggests deficiencies in the current procurement system. First, the legal framework, including the secondary legislation and regulations remain incomplete for a full implementation of the PPC, and implementation texts and tools such as guidelines, processes and standard documents are yet to be developed. In addition, information about public procurement, including the awarded contracts, complaints and their settlement, annual statistics, and procurement plans, is scarcely available in public. As a result of these deficiencies, over 80 percent of public contracts are single-source-based despite the PPC stipulating the competitive process as a standard method. Reforming and digitizing the procurement systems through an e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system compared to manual paper-based procurement would improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the use of public resources. Effective public procurement and contract implementation are the prerequisite for effective delivery of essential public services particularly during emergencies such as of COVID-19 or natural disasters. Furthermore, any improvement in the public procurement system is likely to have a significant economic effect and create a favorable environment for businesses to operate. The Government is committed to the adoption of e-GP as part of its PAT 21-23 program.

C. Relevance to Higher Level Objectives

27. **The proposed project is well aligned with the upcoming World Bank Group (WBG) Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Gabon, currently under preparation, and advances key Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) policy priorities.** Building on the findings of the June 2020 SCD (Report No. 150048-GA), a new CPF is currently under preparation. The new CPF is expected to feature continued support for the digital transformation of Gabon's economy to ensure a more equitable society, as well as the digital transformation of government to ensure business continuity and the timely provision of public services to citizens and businesses, which is especially vital amidst the COVID-19 crisis. The proposed project will also advance the following SCD policy priorities: (i) reduce economic inequality through universal provision of essential public services; (ii) pursue investments in the digital sector to increase the momentum of digital connectivity (through soft infrastructure developing public platforms); (iii) improve the capacity and economic opportunities of women and reduce gender gaps; and (iv) improve fiscal stability and economic governance. By supporting increased coverage of legal ID systems and provision of other social e-services to the population, the project also aligns with the WBG's twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity in a sustainable manner. The project is also aligned with the WBG's COVID-19 Crisis Response Approach Paper,⁵⁰ contributing to Pillar 4 (Strengthening Policies, Institutions and Investments for Rebuilding Better). Annex 2 provides an overview of the COVID-19-related adjustments to the WBG's country program.

⁴⁹ Gabon MAPS assessment of the public procurement system, June 2019

⁵⁰ See WBG. 2020. Saving Lives, Scaling-up Impact and Getting Back on Track: WBG COVID-19 Crisis Response Approach Paper, available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/136631594937150795/pdf/World-Bank-Group-COVID-19-Crisis-Response-Approach-Paper-Saving-Lives-Scaling-up-Impact-and-Getting-Back-on-Track.pdf>

28. While the project is focused on digital government in the first instance, the foundational platforms will also support the development of the digital economy overall by increasing trust in private-sector service offerings. The legal ID systems as well as cybersecurity and interoperability platforms will directly facilitate the development and expansion of access to various private-sector services, in particular in the financial and telecommunications sectors.
29. **The proposed project will contribute to two of the four pillars of the WBG Gender Strategy (FY16-23).** The project will specifically improve human development outcomes and enhance women's voice and agency by bridging gender gaps in boosting their participation in digital spaces. The proposed operation is reinforcing women's access to public administrative services and ensuring equal representation of female beneficiaries throughout the project, particularly under Components 2 and 3. Furthermore, the project will contribute to improving Citizen Engagement (CE) by enhancing public services delivery through a whole-of-government digital government platform. In the design of a one-stop-shop government portal and the user interface of the platform, special consideration will be given to usage by women and vulnerable populations.
30. **Finally, the project also aims to enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change and lessen its impacts on the vulnerable population in alignment with the WBG Climate Action Plan 2020-2025.** Component 3 will help improve the country's resilience to climate change through developing early warning systems and delivering emergency response and post-disaster information to communities affected by climate change. While procuring hardware and software for Sub-component 1.2 and Component 3, best available technology to maximize energy efficiency will be considered to address climate change. Some of the climate co-benefits will be direct (climate disaster and emergency-related information push to the public), and some indirect (increased data and digital capabilities and e-government services).

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Development Objective (PDO)

PDO Statement

31. The PDO is to enhance adoption of select digitalized public services and increase the number of persons with a legal identity credential that facilitates their access to services.

PDO Level Indicators

(1) Enhance adoption of select digitalized public services

- Successful digital transactions initiated by individuals in the framework of public service delivery (number)
Of which female (number)
- Government entities actively and securely exchanging data on the government interoperability platform (number)

(2) Increase the number of persons with a legal identity credential that facilitates their access to services

- Population 16+ with a NIP (percentage)
- NIP holders 16+ who are female (percentage)
- Ratio of rural NIP coverage to overall NIP coverage for persons 16+ (number)
- Social protection beneficiary records associated with a unique legal ID credential (number)

Of which female (number)

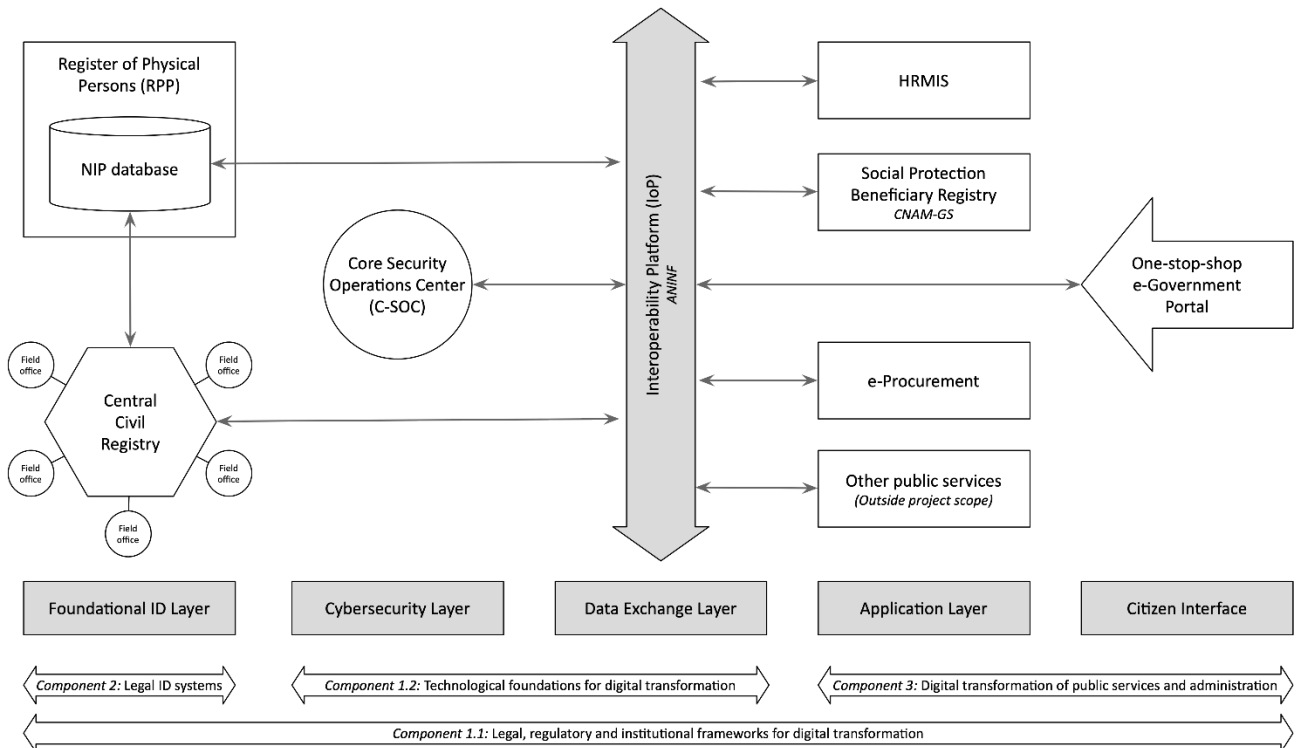
B. Project Components

32. **The Digital Gabon Project proposes four integrated and mutually reinforcing components.** Component 1 (Enabling environment for accelerated digital transformation) will establish the foundational enabling environment for digital government, including putting in place requisite secure technological platforms as well as supporting necessary legal and regulatory reforms. Component 2 (Modernizing legal ID systems) will establish modern and robust legal ID systems to provide all persons in Gabon, including children and non-citizens, with unique ID credentials that facilitate access to services. Component 3 (Digital transformation of public administration and select services) will aim at improving access to public services by supporting social protection use cases and strengthening public administration with the focus on procurement and civil service management. Component 4 (Citizen Engagement, Implementation support, and monitoring and evaluation [M&E]) will finance project management, communication, and M&E. Table 1 summarizes the component structure with cost allocation by sub-component. Figure 4 details the overall e-government architecture following the project interventions.

Table 1: Project Components and Costs

Components		US\$ m
Component 1	Enabling environment for accelerated digital transformation	20.0
Sub-component 1.1	Strengthening the strategic, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks for digital transformation	3.5
Sub-component 1.2	Strengthening the technological foundations for digital transformation	16.5
Component 2	Modernizing legal ID systems	24.5
Sub-component 2.1	Creation of a robust and inclusive digital population registry	14.0
Sub-component 2.2	Digitalization of the civil registration system, including birth registration	10.5
Component 3	Digital transformation of public administration and select services	17.0
Sub-component 3.1	Establishing a one-stop-shop portal for public e-services	3.5
Sub-component 3.2	Improving efficiency of social protection and health service delivery	4.0
Sub-component 3.3	Improving selected public administration functions through digitalization: e-Procurement System and Human Resource Management Information System	9.5
Component 4	Citizen engagement, implementation support, and M&E	7.0
Component 5	Contingent emergency response	0.0
Total		68.5

Figure 4: Proposed e-government target architecture after project interventions



Component 1: Enabling environment for accelerated digital transformation (US\$20.0 million)

33. This component aims at establishing an enabling environment for the adoption of digitized services. In order for digitized public services to be used safely and securely by the population, the infrastructure and platforms implementing them must be trusted. Trust in ICT revolves around “assurance” and confidence that people, data, entities, information, or processes will function or behave in expected ways. The attributes of trusted systems include technical aspects, such as guarantees of confidentiality and integrity of data, but also legal, procedural, and organizational measures that together establish the trustworthiness of ICT systems.⁵¹ All reforms to the enabling environment financed under this component will be carried out integrating regular feedback from consultations of citizens and other key stakeholders as part of the CE measures implemented under Component 4.

- **Sub-component 1.1 - Strengthening the strategic, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks for digital transformation (indicative amount US\$3.5 million).**

34. **The objective of this subcomponent is to establish adequate legal and regulatory enabling environment for digital government.** The project will provide technical assistance (TA) for a complete review of the legal and regulatory framework of digital government as well as subsequent revisions of primary and secondary legislations as required. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that sufficient guarantees and safeguards are in place—notably in the areas of nondiscrimination, data protection, information security, and inclusiveness, including in terms of gender equality. To this end, the activities under this subcomponent will follow a consultative methodology assuring that the

⁵¹ ITU-T (2017), “Trust in ICT.” <https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-TRUST-2017>



needs of users, citizens and other stakeholders are taken into account, such as integrating feedback from regular consultations carried out under Component 4. This sub-component will also support the GoG with TA to analyze its EGD ranking and identifying opportunities to progress regarding key foundational elements of effectiveness (i.e., digital infrastructure, organizational capacity, digital skills, and citizen-centric public services).

35. **The CNPDCP will be supported to fulfill more effectively its institutional mandate to supervise the application of the data protection regime.** Specific activities to be financed would include: (i) TA to support reinforcement of the regulatory framework for data protection to clarify policies and procedures and provide for adequate application of the general data protection regime; (ii) capacity building for the CNPDCP in the form of TA, training and acquisition of IT equipment to improve enforcement capacity; (iii) TA for a review and revision of the current data protection law to improve alignment with emerging international norms; and (iv) international learning and knowledge exchanges on good practices for data protection.
36. **A comprehensive reform of the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for robust, digitalized legal ID systems will be financed to fully enable the GoG's digitalization agenda and ensure sustainability of the reforms.** Specific activities to be financed would include TA to support: (i) revision of the legal framework for CR to enable digitalization of the processes for registration of vital acts and production of birth certificates as well as secure centralized archiving of vital records; (ii) regulatory reforms to deploy digital ID authentication to facilitate access to services for the population, tailored to priority sectoral use cases and implementing best practices for data protection; (iii) review and revision of the institutional framework for implementing legal ID systems to enable planned reforms, including digitalization; and (iv) consultative development of an implementation roadmap for reforms to the legal ID landscape, including roles and responsibilities for various institutional actors in the RBPP and CR systems, including local governments and health sector, ensuring technical feasibility, fiscal sustainability and inclusiveness of reforms.
37. **The sub-component will support the GoG's efforts to define and adopt a general national interoperability framework to regulate the secure exchange of public data within the administration, assuring compliance with data protection legislation.** The project will develop and adopt a common interoperability framework (CIF) to govern secure data exchange, to be implemented by the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy (MCDE) with implementation support from ANINF. Applying to all State ministries, departments, and agencies, CIF will be considered as a reference framework for the entire Gabonese administration listing compliance rules for the use of norms, standards governing the development of public administration information systems. The project will finance TA for (i) the definition and the implementation of the CIF, defining norms and standards ensuring organizational, semantic and technical interoperability, and including the necessary organizational upgrades and the eventual administrative procedures simplification; (ii) the development of government arrangements for CIF, including the development and execution of a National Strategy of Interoperability, the legal text to define and regulate the authorized use of the interoperability platform, particularly the adequate legal text related to the CIF application and generalization, and also policies and procedures for the accreditation and onboarding of interoperability platforms users; and (iii) consultation with key stakeholders, including potential users, during the design process to integrate feedback and adapt the targeted platform to priority use cases. CIF will also ensure that the principles and technical specifications that are put in place will guarantee individual and businesses privacy when they interact with public administrations in an environment of trust and in full compliance with relevant regulations (such as on information security, privacy and data protection).
38. **This subcomponent will support the GoG to define and implement cybersecurity measures that protect the investments in the legal ID systems as well as other e-government initiatives.** Given the need to fully institutionalize



cybersecurity within the overall e-government framework, this sub-component will include TA to (i) identify gaps in primary and secondary cybersecurity national legal and regulatory frameworks and draft revisions, as may be required, to enable clear definition of cybersecurity governance in the country and provide a path to implement the cyber security framework; and (ii) prepare a proposed plan for scaling up Gabon's cybersecurity preparedness, with emphasis on national critical infrastructure protection plan, measures for national collaboration confronting cyberthreats and initiatives to build the country human capacity and cybersecurity resilience, including compliance with international norms and standards as well as a sustainable financing model.

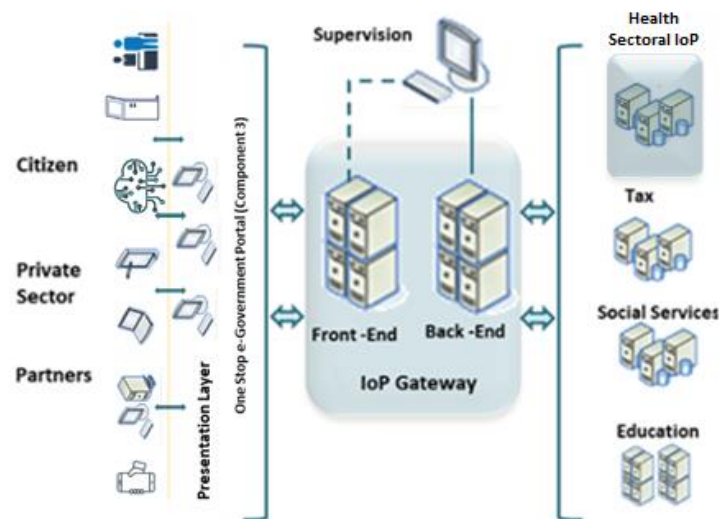
- **Sub-component 1.2 – Strengthening the technological foundations for digital transformation (indicative amount US\$16 million).**

39. **This sub-component will support investments in digital infrastructure as well as strengthening of the Government's technical capacity to efficiently and securely implement digitized public services.** The objective under this sub-component is to implement government shared backend services, including (i) an interoperability platform for secure data exchange within government services and systems; (ii) strengthening capacity for cybersecurity and data protection; and (iii) reinforcing secure hosting capacity within government. While procuring hardware and software, best available technology to maximize energy efficiency will be considered to address climate change.
40. **This sub-component will first implement a government-scale interoperability platform (IoP) to facilitate secure and multichannel access to public services.** The IoP will allow authorized government entities to exchange data in order to set up a single virtual and safe window for all public e-services, and hence to improve the delivery of digitalized public services to individuals and businesses (see Figure 5). It will also facilitate the connection of public-sector service providers to the RBPP system for identity verification purposes. The IoP will be based on the standards which ensure the necessary openness, compatibility with the wider choice of technological products, and multiplatform interoperability while bringing together the main functions (identity management, authentication and authorization, messaging) in a single hub available to all consumers / providers of public e-services. This sub-component will finance (i) the definition of the IoP technical architecture, including all its different layers: End-user Interface, e-Government Applications, Interoperability Gateway (in charge of services integration and secure data exchanges), Data and Services Repositories and Registries, and including full integration with the one-stop shop Governmental Portal financed under Sub-component 3.1 (see Component 3 description below); (ii) the development and implementation of the IoP, including the acquisition of software and infrastructure layers composing the technical architecture, added to the necessary efforts related to enhancement of the Governmental Data quality, the virtualization capacities, and the Public IT systems Departments technical equipment; and (iii) capacity building and change management for IoP implementers and users. Such Interoperability platforms handle necessary security requirements to ensure personal data privacy and protection, among others: strong identity check, exchanged data encryption, and logging and archiving all electronic transactions, allowing thus legal, immutable and indelible audit trails. For additional information on the IoP see Figure 5.
41. **The interoperability platform financed under this sub-component will go beyond mere technical connectivity to ensure a holistic approach to secure data exchange that adequately protects users' data.** This includes focus on three complementary areas: (i) organizational, allowing the harmonization of draft-agreement models between entities relative to access to information; (ii) semantic, verifying the precise meanings of information exchanged between applications; and (iii) technical, dealing with problems of connections between services and computer systems, via the standardization of data systems, collection, exchange, treatment, information security and communication. This IoP financed as part of this sub-component will fully implement the CIF governance framework



financed in Component 1.1. It will follow Service Orientated Architecture principles, supporting a fast and cost-effective integration with existing ICT systems and helping ensuring maintainability. The IoP will also implement CIF security policies by ensuring technical capacity for authentication, confidentiality, integrity, and traceability of exchanges between governmental systems. Privacy safeguards will be included to ensure that users can control who has access to their data and how it is used. Moreover, by using audit trails retracing data exchanges through an interoperability gateway, suspicious behaviors and activities on personal or sensitive data and unauthorized use can be detected, in collaboration with the C-SOC and relevant cybersecurity actors, and effectively addressed and sanctioned.

Figure 5: IoP Global Architecture



42. **The sub-component will design and implement cybersecurity capabilities to protect digitalized legal ID systems as well as other e-government initiatives in addition to building overall government cybersecurity capacity.** This sub-component will include the design of the required cybersecurity operational architecture for the protection of legal ID systems and government e-services in concert with the competent authority designated in the cybersecurity legislation. The architecture could include security center deployment, prevention measures to be taken, standards and technical solutions to be applied and supporting capacity building activities. A reinforcement of these basic cybersecurity prevention, response and mitigation capabilities of the envisioned SOC and more training activities should provide adequate level of protection and could significantly mitigate the risk. Specifically, the sub-component will finance (i) TA to design a cybersecurity architecture to protect core e-government systems financed under the project, including security standards and requirements; (ii) TA to operationalize core features of the cybersecurity architecture, including a dedicated security operation center with core capabilities, or Core SOC (C-SOC) to monitor and response to cyber threats; (iii) capacity building and training of staff involved in implementation and compliance of the cybersecurity framework, from relevant ministries and agencies, such as MCDE and ANINF, including initial operations and subsequent knowledge transfer for the C-SOC; (iv) the acquisition of relevant ICT equipment as per the required operational C-SOC architecture to allow operation for the project period; and (v) non-ICT equipment and refurbishment of existing facility to allow C-SOC operationalization.
43. **The sub-component will reinforce data hosting capacity at ANINF to allow secure deployment of the digital platforms financed under the Project, while also building the foundations for a national cloud strategy in parallel.** Specific activities to be financed to reinforce data hosting capacity at ANINF include: (i) ICT equipment, training and

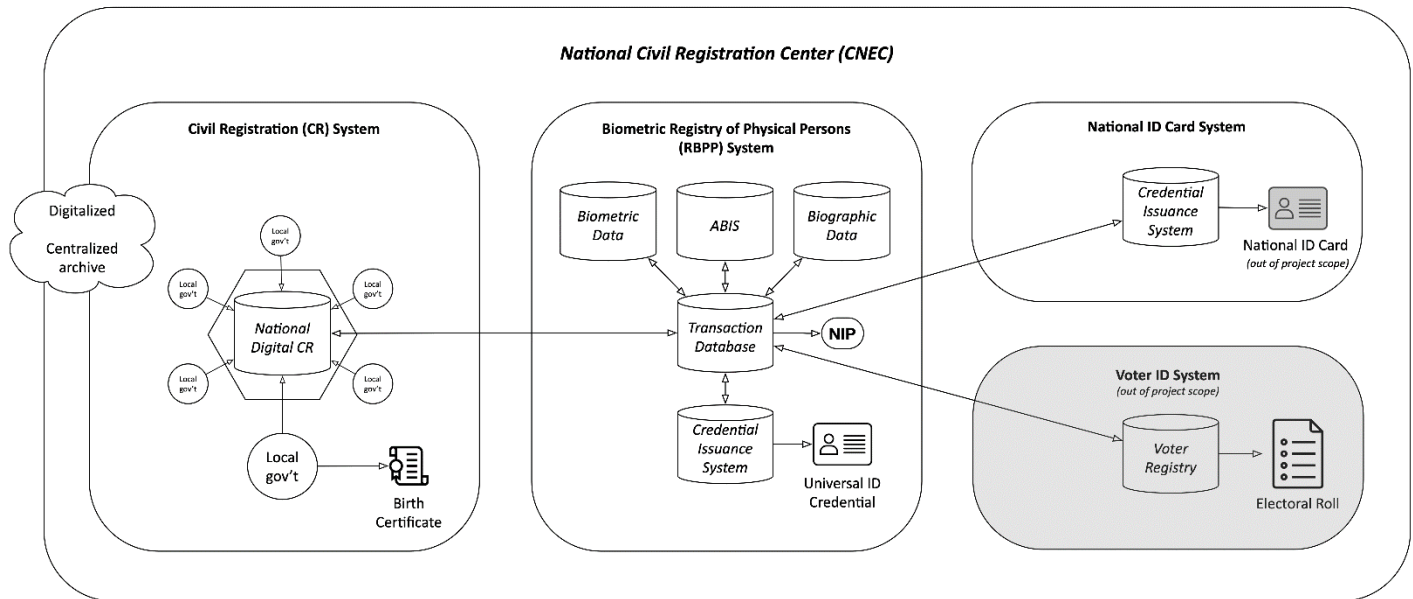


TA to reinforcing the data hosting environment at the existing ANINF data center to build their capacity to securely and reliably host the digital platforms financed by the project, including facility upgrades – to electricity, power, cooling, and security systems – while employing green technology solutions; (ii) TA to ANINF to strengthen the policy framework governing data center operations, including elaboration of a robust business continuity plan; (iii) training for ANINF to improve capacity to securely host public data; (iv) repatriation of management of .ga top level domains to Gabonese territory and expansion of .ga domain name services; and (v) an audit of the security of the ANINF data center using internationally recognized security standards. Specific activities related to building the foundations for a national cloud strategy, to complement the above investments in ANINF data hosting capacity, working toward a comprehensive strategy for hosting public data, include: (vi) TA to elaborate a national cloud hosting strategy and data governance framework, reconciling and extending the findings of the various existing feasibility studies on data hosting, in order to articulate a sustainable financing model, clarify institutional arrangements including the role of the private sector, and define data governance arrangements, with the objective of determining the best financing and governance modes, including potential involvement of the private sector under a Maximizing Finance for Development/ Private Capital Mobilization approach.

Component 2: Modernizing legal ID systems (US\$24.5 million)

44. **This component aims at establishing modern, robust, digitalized legal ID systems to provide all persons in Gabon with unique, inclusive legal ID credentials that protect personal data and facilitate access to services.** The legal ID systems to be financed include: (i) a maximally inclusive RBPP to uniquely identify all persons in Gabon, including citizens and non-citizens, and manage the NIP; (ii) a digitalized CR system to register, manage and archive vital records (such as birth and death records), including both a centralized CR database as well as a module for registration in local government offices; and (iii) an upgraded national ID system, to manage production of the national ID card for Gabonese citizens. While the databases underlying these three legal ID systems would be technically, logically and architecturally separate due to their distinct purposes and eligible populations and in order to best protect personal data, they will share some common underlying infrastructure and be governed by the same entity (CNEC) to facilitate coordination. This architecture allows for the NIP to be linked to the birth record (for those whose birth is registered in Gabon), while also permitting undocumented persons, non-citizens, and others whose births may not be registered in Gabon to enjoy the full benefit of having a NIP. To ensure that all persons with a NIP also receive a physical credential that allows them to access services by facilitating digital ID authentication functionality tailored to relevant use cases, the project will finance the production and distribution of a low-cost, universal physical ID credential (UIC) to all NIP holders. In order to ensure interoperability between the RBPP and the next-generation national ID card system, whose eligibility would be limited to Gabonese nationals, the card-personalization systems for the new national ID card, with cost-cutting features to promote cost-efficiency, could be financed under this component; for reasons of financial sustainability, however, the purchase of and actual production of national ID cards themselves would not be eligible. The low-cost UIC will be distributed to all NIP holders free of charge as part of the project. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that sufficient guardrails are in place—notably in the areas of nondiscrimination, data protection, integration of gender equality and information security. Procurement of ICT systems financed under this component will follow global best practices on technology neutrality, modular architecture, open standards, and open source, as may be appropriate, to ensure the financial sustainability and maintainability of the systems. All reforms to the three legal ID systems financed under this component will be carried out integrating regular feedback from consultations with beneficiaries and other key stakeholders as part of the CE measures implemented under Component 4.

Figure 6: Legal ID systems in Gabon: Proposed Project Design



45. **Inclusiveness will be ensured in the implementation of legal ID systems, including through adherence to a clearly defined set of principles.** The legal ID systems financed by the project will implement the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development, which codify good practice standards for ID systems globally; these principles are detailed in Figure 6. The marginalized groups that will receive particular attention include inter alia women and gender minorities, undocumented persons, the elderly, children, rural populations, manual laborers, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, displacement affected populations, and illiterate populations.
46. **The project will also ensure that the legal ID systems supported give all persons in Gabon the benefit of having a legal ID, and that children in particular are able to build their legal identity.** Legal ID credentials play an essential role in integrating individuals into society, and, for children, help to protect them from, *inter alia*, child marriage and trafficking, as well as ensuring that they benefit from all of their legal rights more generally, including being able to access basic rights and services.⁵² For this reason, the mass enrollment campaigns for the NIP will target adults and children alike and communications campaigns will encourage parents to bring their children for registration. Additionally, digitalizing the birth registration process and making CR and RBPP systems interoperable, including for the purpose of issuing the NIP as part of birth registration, will, over time, ensure that all children and adults alike have a legal ID. However, since, in the short term, not all families may see the relevance of the NIP, and because today's children will still have been registered using the legacy paper-based systems, some children may only be registered at 16 years of age when they become eligible for a national ID card.
47. **To ensure that particular attention is paid to the inclusion of marginalized groups that have historically been excluded from legal ID systems in the Gabonese context, the NIP as issued by the RBPP financed under this sub-component will be designed to adhere to the following four Pillars of Inclusion:**

⁵² UNICEF (2019), "Birth Registration for Every Child by 2030: Are we on track?"
<https://data.unicef.org/resources/birth-registration-for-every-child-by-2030/>



- (1) The NIP shall be accessible to all persons in Gabon, regardless of their origin, citizenship, residency, or legal status, as well as to all Gabonese citizens who reside abroad;
- (2) No person eligible for enrollment shall be prevented from obtaining a NIP due to an inability to produce a physical document to prove their identity during registration, and accordingly, alternative non-documentary means of asserting one's identity will be developed and be available as an option during enrollment;
- (3) No person eligible for enrollment shall be prevented from obtaining a NIP due to an inability to provide the required biographic or biometric data; and
- (4) Identity authentication services based on the NIP and RBPP shall be equally accessible to all NIP holders and done without discrimination.

Figure 6: Principles of Identification for Sustainable Development



Source: ID4D World Bank

48. **The project will also integrate a gender lens to ensure equal access to identification.** Identification enables access to a range of important services and rights. For example, IDs facilitate access to health and social protection services, financial services—which could help to close the 8-percentage-point gender gap in financial account ownership, and also help to address the gender digital divide in access to mobile phones and SIM cards. Furthermore, documentation helps women to claim legal rights, including land ownership; participation in political processes; and taking up of leadership roles. Therefore, the project will aim to assess where these gender disparities are redressed through the use of sex-disaggregated data, and explore other factors as well, such as location, income, disability and other variables that might drive exclusion, both through the project M&E activities and also through studies on the specific barriers to ID enrollment and usage faced by women, carried out in Sub-component 2.1 also through studies on the specific barriers to ID enrollment and usage faced by women and other marginalized groups, as detailed in Component 2.1. To ensure meaningful inclusion, the project will explore a range of measures, such as targeted outreach measures to women to alleviate constraints to physical mobility; the use of female enrollment agents; and liaising through local women's groups to ensure that women are reached for enrollment; and the development of



non-documentary identity proofing processes ensuring undocumented persons, who are majority female, a path to enroll for an ID for the first time.

49. **The legal ID systems financed under this component will implement global good practices for privacy by design and will be secure by default, ensuring adequate protection of personal data.** In particular, full compliance with the cybersecurity and data protection frameworks financed under Component 1 will be ensured.

- **Sub-component 2.1 – Creation of a robust and inclusive digital ID system to manage the NIP and issuance of a unique ID credential to all (indicative amount US\$14 million).**

50. **This sub-component will support the creation and implementation of a robust and inclusive RBPP system to manage the NIP and issue a unique ID credential to all and facilitate access to public services.** The activities to be financed will include *inter alia* (i) the development and implementation of the RBPP system to manage the NIP, including modules for enrollment, deduplication, NIP issuance, UIC production, and lifecycle identity management; (ii) a study to assess the feasibility of initially populating the NIP registry with data through migration of legacy voter records and, to the extent feasible, implementation of the data migration based on study results; (iii) the definition and implementation of business processes for NIP enrollment in line with the project principles of inclusion; (iv) a mass enrollment campaign to expand of coverage of the RBPP, with specific attention paid to the inclusion of marginalized groups, including undocumented persons and those who may be ineligible for a national ID card; (v) production and distribution of a UIC to all NIP holders regardless of nationality, residency, or legal status; (vi) the development of authentication services based on the NIP to facilitate access to services for the population as well as enable the functioning of digital government, with focus on both public and private sector use cases; (vii) development and implementation of a new national ID card production and distribution system, interoperable with the RBPP system, for personalizing national ID cards for Gabonese citizens; (viii) providing TA and training to relevant staff of the CNEC, the ANINF and other relevant institutions implementing the RBPP, aimed at supporting institutional reforms enabling the implementation of the legal ID reforms; and (vii) development and implementation of a card-personalization system for national ID cards, interoperable with the RBPP system, for producing national ID cards for Gabonese citizens; and (viii) support for implementing institutional reforms, including change management and capacity building, supporting the implementation of the RBPP, including for the newly created CNEC.

51. **The sub-component will finance specific activities to mitigate social risks surrounding the RBPP rollout by promoting inclusion and CE.** To ensure that the Principles of Identification for Sustainable Development and the project Pillars of Inclusion are fully mainstreamed into the design of the legal ID systems and that the needs of marginalized groups are accounted for, this component will also finance additional measures to complement the CE outreach financed under Component 4, including: (i) studies to identify barriers to access and successful use of ID enrollment and authentication by the project's target populations, including marginalized groups, with the aim of maximizing coverage and inclusion; and (ii) definition and implementation of non-documentary identity proofing processes to allow a pathway to enrollment for those unable to provide documentary evidence of their identity, such as a birth certificate.

- **Sub-component 2.2 – Digitalization of the CR system, including birth registration (indicative amount US\$10.5 million).**

52. **This sub-component will develop and implement a fully digitalized CR system to register, manage and archive vital records, such as birth records.** The system will include both a centralized CR database as well as modules for



continuous data collection for use in local CR points, such as local government officers and health centers. CR will be interoperable with the RBPP in order to assure uniqueness and facilitate NIP issuance from birth. Specific activities to be financed will include, *inter alia*: (i) the development and implementation of a digitalized CR system, interoperable with the RBPP, including a centralized database as well as a registration and document-delivery module for use in local registration offices; (ii) cartography of existing CR archives and feasibility study for digitalization; (iii) initial population of the CR database through the digitization of legacy paper CR records identified as suitable for digitization in the feasibility study; (iv) the definition and implementation of business processes for the continuous digitalized registration of vital acts at the local level, including roles for local governments and health centers, and including the digitalized issuance of birth certificates; (v) study to define a strategic roadmap for implementation of the CR reforms to ensure technical feasibility and financial sustainability while determining implementation arrangements and defining the roles and responsibilities the various actors, including the CNEC, local governments, and health centers; (vi) capacity building, including training, goods and small works, to implement the proposed organizational reforms for CR; and (vii) communication and change management.

Component 3: Digital Transformation of Public Administration and Select Services (US\$17.0 million)

53. This component aims at transforming selected public services to improve their efficiency using digital solutions under a user-centric approach. The project will support (i) select user-centric public services, as well as (ii) elements of core-government systems improving government efficiency. Digital services supported under this component will be designed with the focus on accessibility and will be developed integrating feedback from consultations and approach testing by users, both on end-user side and on the side of government officials and public servants. All reforms to public service platforms financed under this component will be carried out integrating regular feedback from consultations of citizens and other key stakeholders as part of the CE measures implemented under Component 4. The best available technology to maximize energy efficiency will be considered to help address climate change. It includes the following three sub-components.

Sub-component 3.1 – Establishing a one-stop-shop portal for public e-services (indicative amount US\$3.5 million)

54. This sub-component will support the development of a one-stop shop informational and transactional portal to facilitate access by individuals and businesses to public services and their interaction with the government. The “one-stop-shop portal” will be designed as a unique access point to all government information and services, including those supported under this project, as well as already digitized public services. The portal will include a citizen participation platform and will be developed using a life events methodology.⁵³ Existing e-participation services such as the call center (*Centre d’Information de l’Administration Gabonaise*) will be assessed and integrated into the portal if feasible. A multi-channel access approach will be applied – not only through web-based e-services, but also using other technologies such as voice, texts and USSD⁵⁴ solutions and through free digital access points in public sites – to allow accessibility for the maximum number users, some of which may have no or basic access to technology and required digital skills. The portal will also integrate with the RBPP and NIP to ensure that beneficiaries of digital services are able to security authenticate their identity at the point of service delivery. The approach should:

⁵³ A life events methodology is an approach to public service delivery which puts the user at the center in designing public administration processes. “Life events” (such as having a baby, opening a business, and preparing for retirement) map the user “journey” to access a given service. It identifies the needs and bottlenecks from the user perspective, and then seeks to find solutions to the challenges in the service delivery chain. The user is consulted during implementation to ensure the design is optimized based on the feedback.

⁵⁴ Unstructured supplementary service data.



- (i) improve access to public services through various channels and to up-to-date official information back to the public (such as administrative procedures, real-time updates in case of public health and other emergencies, etc.);
- (ii) provide a channel for service users to provide feedback, report grievances, and interact with the government on specific services;
- (iii) assist the government officials/public servants in handling the service users feedback; and
- (iv) facilitate the government's pandemic management response.

55. **The prioritization of services to be included in the portal will be done through the development of a catalogue of most used and highest impact services for individuals and those that would benefit from the use of the NIP for identifying and authenticating beneficiaries.** The prioritization exercise will also be based on the Government's strategic priorities under the 2021-2023 PAT, the upcoming results of the actions plans and recommendations currently being developed by the Task Force on Structuring Investments in Digital Infrastructures,⁵⁵ as well as previous studies (e.g., 2017 NIPA, 2019 AfDB under the Central African Backbone project). These activities will be identified and developed by ANINF in partnership with relevant sector agencies and include CE to validate their usefulness and usability. Specific areas to be financed include: (i) the design and implementation of the multi-channel one-stop shop (portal and other access channels) and the acquisition of relevant ICT equipment, as well as TA for (ii) the identification and integration of key services into the one-stop shop portal including capacity building of ANINF, communications and outreach plans for update of services; (iii) building norms, standards and guidelines for streamlining and reengineering of processes both in analog and digital version for the identified services to be integrated in the portal; (iv) capacity building and strengthening of government officials / public servants for an effective portal governance and the application of "life-events" service design and delivery principles; and (v) making necessary adjustments to the legal framework to ensure the co-operation with other agencies so that the one-stop shop can maximize its potential net benefit to society. The sub-component will also support and finance (vi) a pilot of setting up a few digital access points for e-services by citizens who have low to no access to technology or required digital skills, in peri-urban and rural areas. Vulnerable groups will be targeted, including women and gender minorities, undocumented persons, the elderly, children, rural populations, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, displacement affected populations, and illiterate populations. These digital access points will be located in public sites (such as administrative buildings or post office network) with assisted access to a range of e-services. User satisfaction and feedback will be assessed throughout the implementation of the portal using tools such as user experience research, and a variety of tools such as robocalls and web- and Short Message Service (SMS)-based surveys, some of which will be built into the portal experience itself. To enhance trust with the population, the portal will implement various transparency initiatives to ensure diffusion of this data, which may include public dashboards of service data (e.g. numbers/locations served, services delivered) and report data on customer satisfaction with the portal.

- **Sub-component 3.2 – Improving efficiency of the social protection service delivery (indicative amount US\$4.0 million)**

56. **This sub-component will improve delivery of social protection services in Gabon by improving the robustness of the registry of social protection beneficiaries and deploying digital ID authentication in the context of social protection service delivery.** Given the need to improve the delivery of social protection programs, such as future social safety net initiatives or the current health insurance program, including as part of the GoG's COVID-19 response, the project will facilitate the cleaning of the registry of social protection beneficiaries, managed by CNAM-GS under supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, as well as its linkage to the broader digital government. The

⁵⁵ Gabon, Decree no.00078/PM relating to the organization and functioning of the Task Force on structuring of investments in digital infrastructures.



project activities will be implemented such that no current social protection beneficiary will be removed from the beneficiary registry based on automatic deduplication alone, without additional verification to ensure that legitimate beneficiaries are not removed by mistake. The activities financed under this sub-component will concern the entire CNAM-GS beneficiary registry, including not only the GEF list but also beneficiaries of other programs, such as subsidized health insurance. These activities will be complementary to other ongoing initiatives to reform the targeting system for the GEF: while this sub-component will focus on removing duplicate beneficiary records, complementary initiatives to collect new data to be used for the purposes of targeting social programs and building a social registry are out of scope of this project.

57. **The sub-component will strengthen the delivery of the Borrower's social protection by improving the existing CNAM-GS beneficiary registry and its integration to the interoperability platform.** Specific areas to be financed include: (i) a feasibility study on the deduplication of the social protection beneficiary database managed by CNAM-GS; (ii) TA for the identification of potential duplicate records in the social protection beneficiary registry using the RBPP; (iii) field data collection activities to reconcile potential duplicate records without excluding legitimate social protection beneficiaries; (iv) TA for ensuring ongoing uniqueness by associating records of beneficiaries of social protection and health insurance programs with corresponding RBPP records; (v) TA to strengthen social protection delivery systems by enabling authenticating of beneficiaries' identity, including definition of business processes, based on user-centric design principles to allow ongoing digital ID authentication; and (vi) TA for integrating the registry of social protection beneficiaries to the interoperability platform and the broader digital government.

- **Sub-component 3.3 – Improving selected public administration functions through digitalization: e-Procurement System and HRMIS (indicative amount US\$10 million).**

58. **This subcomponent will aim at improving the Government's efficiency in managing its own resources.** It will focus on strengthening procurement systems and human resources management. It will also include a national M&E platform for tracking externally financed projects implemented by the government.

59. **This sub-component will support the modernization and transparency of the public procurement system through the use of electronic public procurement, one of the priorities articulated in the PAT 21-23 program.** The project will support the Digitization of Public Procurement through the design and implementation of an e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system integrating the principles of open contracting including all steps of procurement from planning to delivery and linked with government payment systems. Activities to be supported under this sub-component include: (i) TA, institutional capacity building, and training to strengthen the capacity of procurement entities including the General Directorate of Public Procurement (*Direction Générale des Marchés Publics*), the Regulatory Agency for Public Procurement (*Autorité de Régulation des Marchés Publics*, ARMP) and contracting authorities in line ministries; (ii) TA for the revision and adoption of the regulatory framework supporting the implementation and progressive adoption of e-GP systems; (iii) design, development and roll-out of a transactional electronic procurement system based on efficiency and transparency, drawing from open-contracting principles and including each step of procurement procedures and functions; (iv) connecting e-GP with the IoP (funded under Sub-component 1.2) and with government budget management, accounting and payment systems; (v) governmental and corporate change management and capacity building supporting the roll-out of e-procurement system; (vi) TA to define a strategy and framework to strengthen the capacity of the Government to efficiently procure digital services and infrastructure; (vii) capacity building supporting the roll-out of e-GP system by shifting gradually from traditional paper-based procurement practices to international standards through digitization of system; and (viii) TA to help develop and deliver sector-tailored training programs to strengthen the Government's capacity to design new

procurement policies and to develop appropriate implementation tools for electronically conducted tenders of different type and value and procure digital services and infrastructure. The e-GP will contribute to efficiency and transparency of government functions as well as a more competitive economy, including higher participation of SMEs in the national public procurement market. The e-GP will contribute to efficiency and transparency of government functions and procurement as well as improve participation of firms to public procurement due to more transparent opportunities. This proposed e-procurement should bring an enormous shift in the procurement practices, the public procurement entities and the bidding community, and will contribute to a stronger public procurement policy development.

60. **This sub-component will also improve the efficiency of human resource management to help strengthen public-sector performance and service delivery.** The project will build on recent civil service reform supported by the World Bank's Reimbursable Advisory Service (P163632), as well as recent initiatives by the GoG to define the management framework of human resources. Current initiatives undertaken by the government include the finalization of the biometric census of civil servants, the preparation of the Interministerial Directory of Gabonese State Jobs (RIMEG: *Répertoire Interministériel des Métiers de l'Etat Gabonais*) and the Organic Framework of the Civil Service, which are human resources management tool intended to provide information on job classification, competency framework, target recruitments adapted to needs, and standardize job descriptions and language common to the various administrations. This sub-component will support the following activities: (i) TA for the simplification and standardization of core HR processes and regulations; (ii) design, development and consolidation of HRMIS modules based on the defined HR management framework;⁵⁶ (iii) deduplication of the database of civil servants and interoperability with the RBPP (funded under Component 2) and overall government systems, including link with the payroll management system; (iv) provision of an authentication technology to support systematic verification of physical presence of civil servants for priority services; (v) the acquisition of services and equipment for the digitization of paper-based HR records to be integrated into the HRMIS; and (vi) TA to conduct change management and capacity building to support the roll-out of the new modules. Some of the core functions and processes that will be targeted for integration in the new modules of the HRMIS include (i) strategic workforce planning module that includes the new job classification and competency framework; (ii) hiring, staff mobility and redeployment; (iii) talent management and performance; and (iv) administrative status of staff.⁵⁷
61. **The subcomponent will also support a national M&E platform for tracking externally financed projects implemented by government, allowing effective decision making while increasing government transparency and accountability to citizens.** Implemented by the external financing unit (Cellule FINEX) of the Minister of Economy and Recovery (*Ministère de l'Economie et de la Relance*), this monitoring platform will include internal dashboards aggregating management information on project implementation progress as well as financial information, for use by government decision makers. The platform will also include a public-facing dashboard accessible through the portal to make key data accessible to the public, allowing accountability of project financing and building trust with citizens amidst rising levels of public debt. In particular, this module will be integrated with the M&E system of the Digital Gabon project as well as other World Bank-financed lending operations, and will complement project- and program-level M&E systems, strengthening portfolio-management capacity of GoG.

Component 4: Citizen engagement, implementation support and M&E (US\$7.0 million)

⁵⁶ For further, see technical note on the implementation of an integrated human resources management information system, developed as part of the Gabon RAS HRM project.

⁵⁷ For further, see technical note on the implementation of an integrated human resources management information system, developed as part of the Gabon RAS HRM project.



62. **This component will support the establishment of a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to provide overall project coordination and implementation support.** The roles of the PIU will include implementation planning, technical supervision, fiduciary (financial management [FM] and procurement), environmental and social safeguards implementation, and M&E for all project activities, including the provision of training, operating costs, and goods and services for the required purpose. The PIU will also manage the project's grievance redress mechanism and CE activities. The support for communication and M&E will be particularly strengthened. The communication and outreach strategy and its implementation, as well as M&E, will be critical for this digital project, because the latter involves fundamental changes in public administration and the way the Government delivers services and engages with users/citizens. In addition to full-time staff in the PIU and focal points within government to help coordinate implementation, the PIU will be supported by an external project management consultancy to provide TA for, *inter alia*, support for procurement, including the evaluation of complex technical and financial proposals from vendors. While each component has funding for information and change management for its specific area, the overall communication and information dissemination campaign will be managed through Component 4. Specific activities to be financed to promote the PIU functioning will include: (i) staffing of essential project implementation staff for the PIU, including dedicated FM, procurement, and environmental and social safeguards specialists; (ii) ongoing TA for technical and project management support, including for procurement, for the duration of the project implementation period; (iii) equipment to support project supervision; (iv) development and implementation of a national-scale communications strategy to support project implementation; (v) development and implementation of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for all project components, including integration with project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM); (vi) acquisition of needed financial capacity and systems, including accounting tools and auditors; and (vii) preparation of the Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) Manual and Emergency Action Plan.
63. **Although specific CE activities applicable to specific project activities are fully mainstreamed into Components 2 and 3, support will be made available under Component 4 for general outreach activities that cut across all project components.** Specific activities to be financed include: (i) the development and implementation of a comprehensive GRM to collect and respond to issues encountered by beneficiaries, system users, other system stakeholders, as well as the general population, including links between the GRM and M&E systems in order to improve project monitoring data; (ii) the development of a comprehensive CE strategy and national consultation mechanism to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including beneficiaries and marginalized groups, are consulted about the project design and implementation on at least an annual basis and the feedback from those consultations is fed back into the implementation plan and design of project-financed systems; (iii) user research to identify barriers to access and successful use of systems by marginalized groups, including indigenous populations, to inform the design and implementation of project-financed systems. In order to foster transparency, annual consultations will be followed by a publicly disclosed report on findings of the consultations as well as actions taken as a result of the previous year's consultation. A comprehensive summary of all CE activities financed under the various project components can be found in the dedicated section below; and (iv) implementation of the project Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response (US\$0 million from IBRD)

64. **Following an eligible crisis or emergency, the Borrower may request the World Bank to re-allocate project funds to support emergency response and reconstruction.** A CERC has an initial zero value but may be financed during the project to allow for agile response to emerging emergency events. Adding the component during project preparation, albeit with zero funding, provides for the flexibility to respond to crises, as they arise. If the CERC were to be triggered,



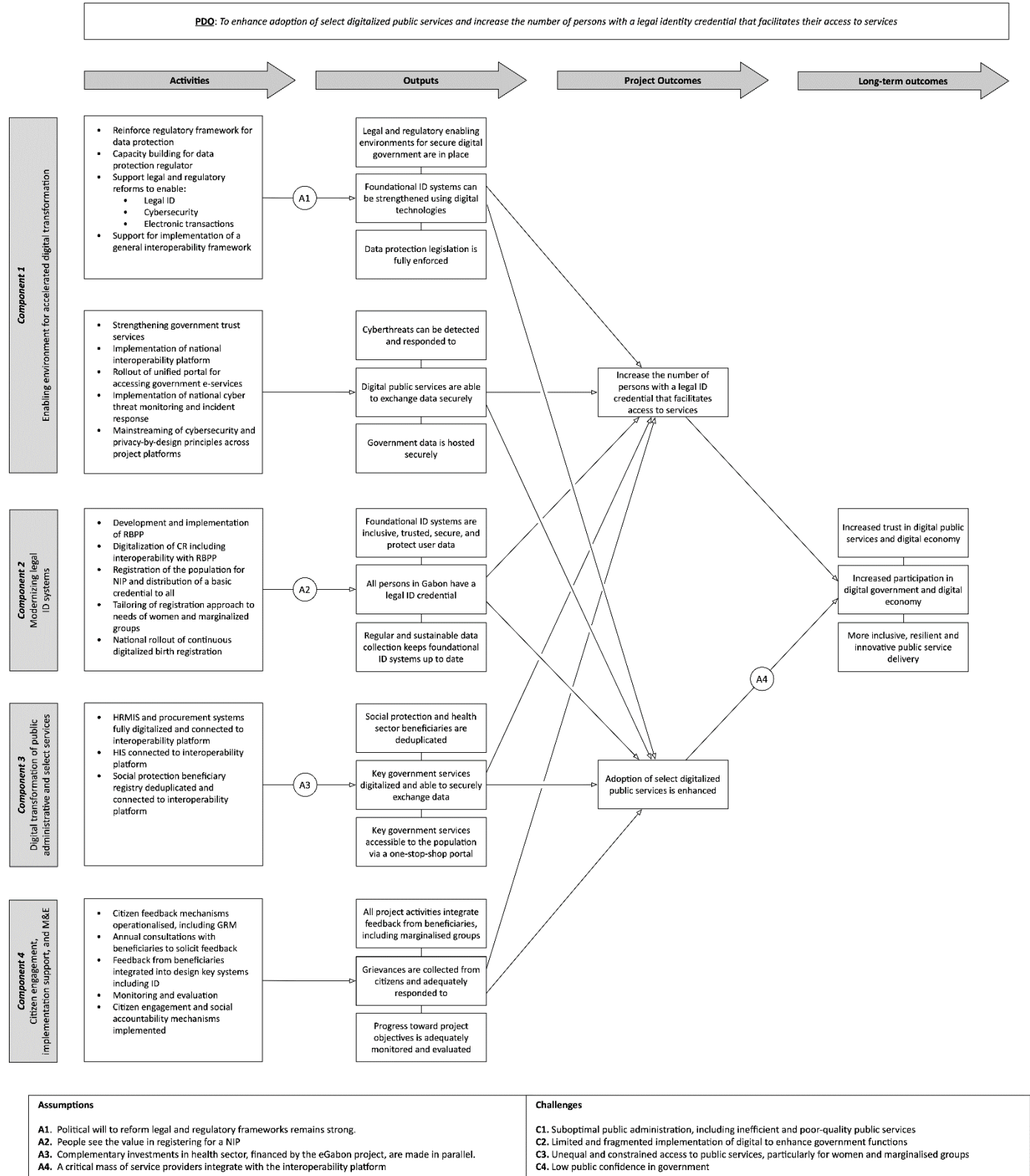
at the request of the Borrower, simplified procurement procedures shall apply during the emergency for civil works and goods purchase related to emergency response and recovery. This component would draw from the uncommitted loan resources under the project from other project components to cover the emergency response. The current project management structure will remain the same for implementation of the CERC activities.

C. Project Beneficiaries

65. **The project is intended to benefit all Gabonese citizens and residents, covering Government, businesses and individuals through improvement in the affordability, availability and quality of service delivery.** It is necessary that the 1.2 million beneficiaries of all digital services supported by the project be identified reliably, and that any personal data collected or processed during service provision be sufficiently protected and appropriate data protection and privacy safeguards be in place. This will be achieved through: (i) the reinforcement of the legal and regulatory framework that underpins e-government; (ii) the creation of a government interoperability platform that is supported by strong cybersecurity and data protection; and (iii) the development of a robust legal ID ecosystem to provide all persons in Gabon with unique and government-recognized ID credentials that facilitate their access services. The proposed operation has identified strategic opportunities to narrow gender gaps (see Components 2 and 4 for details). The project has been screened for climate change and disaster risks as well as for climate co-benefits.
66. **The following beneficiaries will be targeted through the project:**
- The entire population of Gabon (individuals or businesses) who will benefit from improved access to services provided via a one-stop-shop portal (and other channels) as well as the modernized and enhanced services under Components 2 and 3 (legal ID systems, CNAM-GS, and e-Procurement System) as well as linkages with eGabon (Health Information System).
 - Women and girls, who will benefit from a provision of legal IDs to gain better access to public services, including social protection and education. The project is particularly focused on mitigating gender inequalities, exacerbated even more by COVID-19.
 - Marginalized groups who usually have difficulties accessing the selected services and making their voices heard in service delivery. The marginalized groups that will receive particular attention include *inter alia* women and gender minorities, undocumented persons, the elderly, children, rural populations, manual laborers, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, displacement affected populations, and illiterate populations.
 - The government agencies involved in the project (including line Ministries, civil servants at national level and regional level in the administrations) that will benefit from improved government systems and processes.



D. Results Chain





E. Rationale for World Bank Involvement and Role of Partners

67. **The project builds on previous World Bank accomplishments in the digital sector and benefits from a long-term engagement in the country.** For the past decade, World Bank has been supporting the GoG with digitizing its economy to achieve economic transformation and more equitable society and is recognized as a lead development agency in the country in ICT and overall digital transformation agenda. World Bank-financed investment and development policy projects as well as analytical work (including the most recent comprehensive DE4A diagnostics) have helped contribute to a massive uptake of broadband Internet services, the development of a competitive telecommunications market, the emergence of digital startups and transformative services, the digitalization of select public services, and the GoG vision for country's digital transformation, most recently articulated in the PAT 21-23. The World Bank brings a deep knowledge of the ICT sector and the digital economy agenda in Gabon as well as global expertise in similar digital transformation projects in other countries (Albania, Argentina, Cape Verde, Moldova, Tunisia, and Uruguay), which informs World Bank engagements in the country and can be shared via peer-to-peer learning. Finally, the World Bank has developed substantial in-house technical expertise, analytics, and operational guidance specific to the rollout of robust, sustainable, and inclusive legal ID systems through the ID4D Initiative. This expertise stems from a careful evaluation of lessons learned from numerous international case studies, as well as the regular convening of subject matter experts on critical focus areas such as technical standards, costs, and technologies.
68. **Legal ID systems, which underpin access to key services and rights for the population, are public goods and should be financed using public funds.** While private financing can be leveraged effectively for specific components of legal ID systems, financing the entire system using private financing comes with a variety of risks. A private business case for universal ID coverage often does not exist. Efforts to finance legal ID systems in Africa using private financing through public-private partnerships (PPPs) have often based the business case around selling often-expensive ID cards to individual citizens and residents. These persons, especially marginalized populations, may struggle to afford these cards and may also not fully benefit from any advanced features that may be vendor-driven and not fully justified by context-specific use cases. Further, longer-term objectives of these systems, including continuous enrollment mechanisms and long-term sustainability, may be undermined by private financing if these objectives are outside of the scope of the applicable business model.
69. **The project aligns well with existing WBG engagements as well as relevant donor initiatives.** The ongoing eGabon project (P132824), launched in 2016, focused on improving the timeliness and availability of information to support health service delivery and management, which will contribute to improving Gabon's human development outcomes. The proposed Digital Gabon project will scale up the digital transformation of the government beyond the health sector and build on lessons learned of eGabon. The operation will also complement the ongoing work of development partners and will ensure close coordination with ongoing and planned investments in this field. A review of donor interventions was undertaken in the preparation of this operation. Most recent feasibility studies on various aspects of e-government and digital economy in Gabon, conducted by partners such as African Development Bank (AfDB), have been considered in the project design. There is an ongoing effort to coordinate with the European Commission, UN partners like UNICEF, the AfDB and others, the scope and timing of digital investments in the country.



F. Lessons Learned and Reflected in the Project Design

70. **This project draws on lessons learned from other World Bank digital projects and the wealth of analytical work on digital economy under the DE4A Initiative.** Broad global experience of the World Bank in ICT/digital project design and implementation indicates that project success is primarily contingent on strong country's commitment to reforms. The proposed operation has been developed to scale up the eGabon project (P132824), which offers important lessons for project implementation. Though the implementation has made significant progress and tangible results and has steadily moved to the achievement of the PDO, the eGabon project has encountered challenges in its implementation:

- **For public sector digital transformation to be successful, it requires building a whole-of-government approach aiming at integrating government services to improve efficiency and reduce transaction costs for the government and citizens.** Such approach requires that government services are not developed in silo mirroring government entities, but rather in a coordinated way based on shared standards and registries allowing for interoperability of systems. Inefficient coordination within and between main implementing agencies may impede on the successful implementation of an integrated government approach of digital transformation. The project will strengthen the role of ANINF toward an e-government unit that will ensure that government agencies and ministries are adhering to overall government digital standards for interoperability.
- **Weak technical capacity of the implementing agencies for digitization of public service, with significant delays to process technical documents and poor management of consultants and vendors.** An international firm with knowledge of World Bank policies and procedures has been recruited to support the project team on all technical and operational project aspects and knowledge transfer, replacing the initial accompanying expert, as capacity building efforts proved insufficient in the past. The strengthened institutional arrangement will contribute to a stricter respect of the implementation schedule. Knowledge-sharing and dissemination of best practices between components will be encouraged.
- **Limited operational capacity of the implementing agencies and difficulty applying procurement rules and guidelines.** The project teams are progressively acquiring capacities to adequately follow the guidelines and to anticipate operational issues, yet the use of an established PIU to support the project units did not produce the expected results in terms of fiduciary efficiency. In the new proposed institutional arrangements, the fiduciary team will be embedded into the project coordination unit. The procurement specialist at the PIU has also been replaced, and the World Bank's procurement team is committed to providing timely support to this new fiduciary team on a regular basis.

71. **Technical design.** Based on World Bank international experience and lessons, the project's design aims to address several factors which prevent public e-services from having greater impact in terms of both expanding services delivery, access, efficacy and innovation:

- **Unclear leadership for the implementation of the e-government strategy and collaboration within the government:** Gabon has developed a clear vision and strategy for e-government but lacks a coherent approach for its implementation. Currently, there is no formal institutional mechanism to oversee, lead, and coordinate the implementation of the strategy. Political will and leadership are essential to develop the strategic reform vision with an integrated approach, implement the project that requires major changes in the workflow and relationship with citizens. Projects adopting a whole of government approach to digitization such as Albania's Citizen Centric Service Delivery project and Moldova's Modernizing Government Services project have shown the importance of high-level leadership to drive reforms and enable inter-ministerial coordination. The Prime Minister has identified e-government, including e-services and e-procurement, as key



priorities for the economic development of Gabon. The Prime Minister's Office continues to have a role on the inter-ministerial committee on e-government, and this leadership and commitment will benefit the project by facilitating the necessary policy and implementation coordination across government agencies and stakeholders.

- **Weak use of shared systems and services.** Despite the rollout of shared digital infrastructure, platforms and services, many ministries, departments, and agencies continue to apply siloed approach to data management, adversely affecting both cost-efficiency and the quality of services delivered to end-users, contributing to fragmentation and weak interoperability. For example, many online services launched are often served by dedicated information management systems and hosted on ministry databases, obliging citizens to reproduce personal information for each service/transaction. Considerable work is thus still required to consolidate and/or integrate systems, cloud services, databases to support movement towards a more “whole-of-government” approach to e-services.
- **Limited depth and breadth of digitization.** Key sectors are yet to fully benefit from the efficiency and accessibility gains afforded by greater digitization. While a handful of digital solutions have been introduced in sectors such as governance (e-visa and e-tax) and health, much more could be done to apply digitally enabled and data-driven solutions in other key strategic sectors.
- **Digital skills gaps in the civil service.** Capacity gaps in government prevent wider adoption of digital tools and systems in the public sector, particularly the application of emerging technology that could revolutionize public service planning, emergency response, and service delivery. Highly specialized skills are also needed in areas such as cyber security. Lessons from Uruguay show that promoting ongoing training can bridge technical and administrative capacity gaps that can be a major obstacle to e-government implementation. Lessons from past projects show that continuous training along with awareness activities were crucial to achieving project outcomes.⁵⁸ The project includes capacity building and outreach activities across components, and a robust communications and outreach plan to project management activities.
- **Security of digital transactions.** Ensuring the security of online transactions and safety of users will be key to supporting further expansion of e-services and end-to-end digitalization. Notably, the recent spread of COVID-19, has demonstrated an acute need to deliver services and safety nets payments digitally. This requires the ability to authenticate users without physical presence, ensuring the security of transactions done digitally, while safeguarding personal data. Digital Gabon project will lay the groundwork for the introduction of a ‘next generation’ digital ID system that enables seamless identity verification and online authentication services.
- **Low user uptake:** Gaps in basic digital skills and limited internet usage, could explain potential low usage figures of e-services on the shared government services platform during project implementation. The project could explore the possibility to conduct a feasibility study on using the existing post office network as digital access points for e-services for poor, vulnerable, disabled or otherwise disconnected citizens to participate and obtain e-services. Many countries such as Albania, Argentina, Brazil, India, Kenya, Moldova, Rwanda, Singapore and others have implemented assisted access points and kiosks for the public to access e-services based on a one-stop shop model. Lessons from India show that these one-stop shop models can significantly increase access to services. Under the Citizen Access to Responsive Services Project in India, services were provided to over six million beneficiaries across the life of the project. Further, using existing post office networks for OSS centers have been implemented across different countries such as Costa Rica, Malawi, and Portugal.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ World Bank, 2020. GovTech Launch Report.

⁵⁹ Agarwal, S., Pfeil, H., & Schott, B. L. (2017b). *Recent developments and key considerations impacting the operations of One-Stop Shops for citizens. A summary of major trends and a design guide for Citizen Service Centers*. Washington, DC: World Bank



- **Weak application of user-centric design.** Increasing adoption of digital services on the public sector side will require greater attention to factors that enhance the user-experience and make services more attractive and accessible, particularly to groups more prone to exclusion. This includes adopting a more user-centric approach to e-service design and prioritizing the digitization of services that are more likely to boost uptake, based on user-feedback. There is also a need to ensure full end-to-end digitization. Evidence suggests that a requirement for physical presence at any stage of service delivery or the transaction chain will dramatically reduce adoption and the perceived added value of that digital service since the user will still need to make a physical trip to complete the process.
- **Limited private-sector innovation.** There is an opportunity to increase innovation in services provision and delivery, by intentionally crowding in and enabling private-sector innovation in e-service delivery, through increased access to open data that allows firms to create new services based on rich datasets, and by developing digital platforms as public goods (such as digital ID). This would equally be conducive for encouraging more digital entrepreneurship.
- **Mitigating the data protection and privacy risks of interoperability.** Global experience shows that interoperability does not have to come at the expense of an individual's privacy if interoperability platforms are well designed and the regulatory framework provides adequate data governance and protection. To ensure this, it is essential to proactively carry out consultations across a wide range of stakeholders on the relationship between interoperability and data privacy. It is also necessary to ensure that all interoperability initiatives at any level (dedicated infrastructure, applications, data sharing, and integrated e-services) are use-case driven – with data only being shared when there is a clear need for it – and designed based respect for privacy and include appropriate mitigation measures to privacy risks. The majority of successful governmental systems interoperability initiatives are founded on strong interoperability governance eliminating obstacles preventing integration of services or sharing information between public administrations – including cultural, legislative, and technical – as well as being based on a common interoperability framework, defining norms and standards ensuring organizational, semantic and technical interoperability.

72. **Good practices for legal ID systems.** This project draws on lessons learned from other ID projects and the wealth of analytical and global convening work on identification by the World Bank's ID4D Initiative:

- Legal ID should be accessible to all persons in a country, regardless of nationality or legal status, and should provide identification based only on a minimal set of attributes (for example, name, gender, and date of birth), rather than attempt to serve as proof of eligibility for services or programs (for example, by collecting data on income and disability). A legal ID system that attempts to centrally collect and manage all data needed to determine eligibility for multiple public services (for example, for health, education, and social protection) can be detrimental to privacy and data protection and would require an onerous and lengthy registration process, which poses a barrier to achieving universal coverage. Instead, different services and sectors can leverage the legal ID system for authentication and verification of basic personal data and collect additional data, as needed, to fulfill their particular mandate or purpose. Legal ID systems to strive to be as inclusive as possible, in order to provide access to proof of legal identity to all, while leaving decisions about who may access a given service to the service providers themselves.
- Digital ID systems such as the RBPP should enable unique identification from birth to death, with strong links to a robust CR system. Being able to uniquely identify a person, often enabled by biometric technology, helps minimize fraud and leakages in service delivery by facilitating the elimination of duplicate and ghost beneficiaries. Authentication (1:1 matching to a registered identity) at the time of service delivery, including for government-to-persons payments, can curb benefit fraud, such as double dipping, and diversion of benefits to ineligible individuals.



- Care needs to be taken when using biometric data for identification and authentication. Since biometric data cannot be revoked if compromised, special care needs to be taken that it is adequately protected at all times. Furthermore, extracting the full potential of biometric data for identification (deduplication) and authentication requires the use of costly ABIS systems. When such ABIS systems cannot be employed for budgetary reasons, then capturing biometric data provides little to no value to the ID system, as can be seen in the CNAM-GS example. Since multiplying the number of biometric ID in a country increases privacy risks while duplicating investments, it is considered good practice to minimize the number of databases which use biometric deduplication. A single credential that has been deduplicated using biometrics, such as the NIP, or a derivative (token) of such a credential, can be recorded other identity database as a means of assuring their uniqueness without the need for additional biometric data collection. Such an approach maximizes value for money while optimizing personal data protection for the ID landscape as a whole.
- The most significant costs associated with ID systems often arise from the issuance of expensive cards, especially with integrated chips (so-called “smart cards”). In the African context, historically such smart cards have often been issued without clear use cases in mind for their specific functionalities, and financial sustainability has been undermined when cost have been passed on to individual citizens and cardholders, many of whom would have been better able to afford a more cost-effective document. Previous efforts by CNAM-GS to issue smart cards to all beneficiaries have been hampered by the low cost-efficacy of such solutions, in particular for pro-poor use cases such as social assistance and subsidized health insurance.
- There is a need to ensure that the rollout of legal ID systems, including digital ID authentication functionality, is driven by concrete use cases. Grounding ID system design in specific use cases, allowing the system to serve the population by breaking down barriers to access of key services and rights, as well as render these more efficient, is essential to drive uptake of ID credentials and ensure the relevance of the system to a country’s needs and development goals.
- ID systems should be designed using a technology- and vendor-neutral approach. While Gabon learned this lesson the hard way, as the Government has been locked out of its own national ID card database since 2014 due to a dispute with a vendor, this is part of a global phenomenon, especially acute in Africa, of vendor and technology lock-in posing a threat to the sustainability of ID investments. In order to mitigate these risks, best practices for ICT system design (e.g. modular architecture, open standards, and open source), procurement (e.g. technology neutrality) and contracting (intellectual property of key aspects, including user data) is essential.

III. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

73. **Overall implementation will be supported by a PIU housed within the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy (MCDE).** This PIU will be headed by a project coordinator who will be responsible for day-to-day management of the project. The PIU will be responsible for administrative aspects of the project including FM, procurement, and project monitoring and reporting. As MCDE has some experience implementing World Bank projects, this PIU will be staffed with experts (FM, procurement, safeguards, and M&E) who have proven experience with World Bank procedures, and experts with others skills as necessary to support the project (e.g. gender, service automation, and service based IT architecture). While the new PIU is being established, the PIU of the ongoing eGabon project will be in charge of the development of the Digital Gabon Project Implementation Manual (PIM) which will include processes and procedures for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the project, ensuring

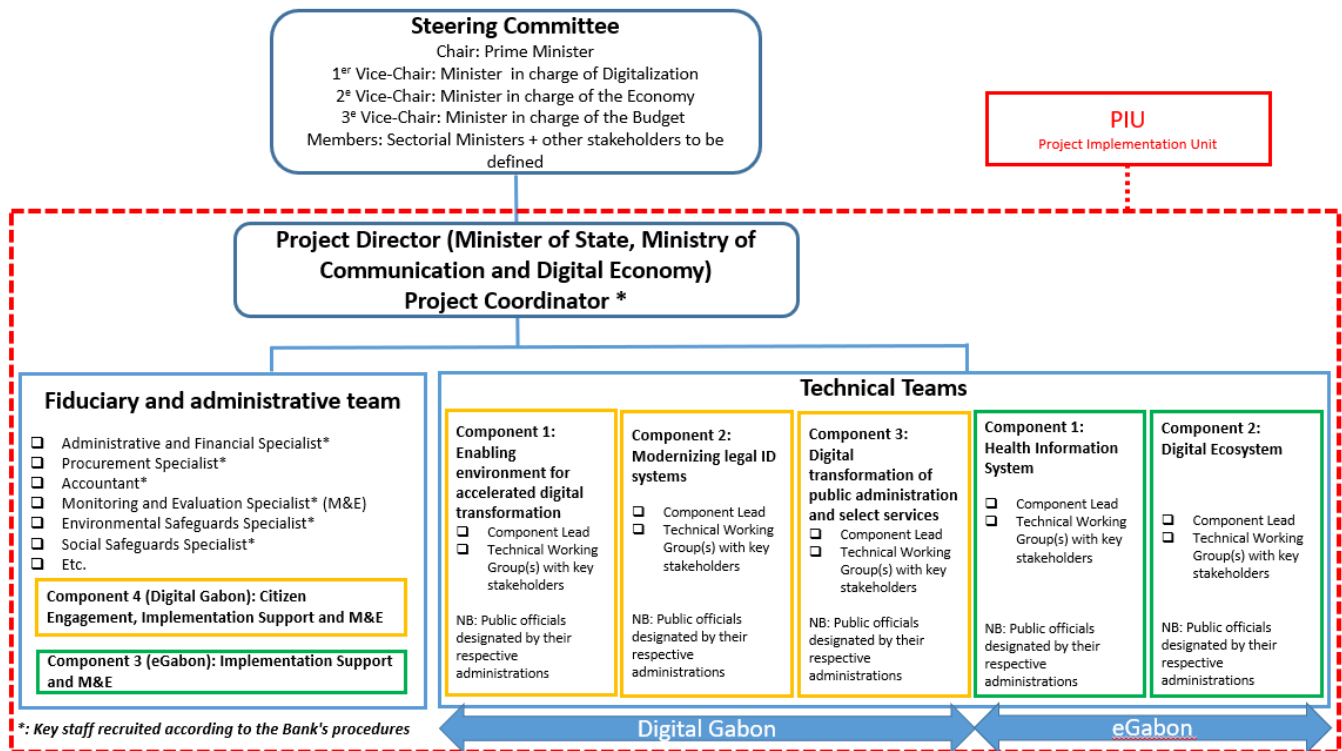


compliance with the World Bank Policies, including financial procedures, as well as implementing GRM. A CERC manual will also be developed as a separate section of the PIM. The eGabon PIU will also ensure training of staff for the new PIU until the new PIU is set up and fully operational.

- 74. The proposed project implementation arrangements reflect the coordination and engagement of various agencies involved in the design and delivery of project activities.** The contemplated implementation arrangements (see Figure 7) will be under the leadership of the Prime Minister. In the proposed arrangements, a steering committee – whose role is oversight, decision-making, and coordination – will be led by the Prime Minister’s Office and the Minister of MCEN, as President and Vice President of the steering committee, respectively. An existing inter-ministerial committee under the Prime Minister’s office, created on February 3, 2021, to coordinate all initiatives to digitize public administration (*Le Comité Interministériel, Arrêté n°00061/PM* of February 3, 2021) will provide this strategic and technical oversight to the project. This arrangement will ensure ownership of the project at the highest levels of the Government, as well as coherence and coordination within governmental agencies across the entire digital development agenda. With the help of component coordinators/ sectoral leads, the higher ministerial committee will oversight the Technical Working Groups (TWG) (such as those for interoperability, legal ID, and other front-end/back-end services). The steering committee and TWGs will act as coordination platforms and provide necessary guidance on transformation strategy, policy and vision.
- 75. Lessons learned from the eGabon project will be considered in the design of implementation arrangements.** The Mid-Term Review for the eGabon project revealed significant coordination challenges and delays in the project’s implementation as a result of a fragmented implementation mechanism (two steering committees, two technical teams, and a shared PIU, National Commission for Works of Public Interest for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Employment [*Commission Nationale des Travaux d’Intérêt Public pour la Promotion de l’Entrepreneuriat et de l’Emploi, CN-TIPPEE*], for fiduciary support) and recommended to regroup the technical and fiduciary teams under the leadership of a project coordinator. The fiduciary role of CN-TIPPEE will now be assumed by the new PIU. Working under and in collaboration with the PIU, there will be a component lead who will also be in charge of coordinating TWG for each area of implementation of the project (such as e-government platform and portal TWG and legal ID TWG). Each TWG in turn will be led by the responsible ministry(es)/institutions and have a responsibility in implementing component activities in their respective area at the technical level.
- 76. In this arrangement, the ANINF will have a cross-cutting role to implement the project and ensure coherence and consistency among the different components of the project.** ANINF has been playing a central role in developing the different e-services within the government and coordinating the implementation of the e-government master plan. Under the supervision of the MCDE, the ANINF will ensure technical coordination among the different components and provide technical support to the development of activities and TWG under the supervision of MCDE.



Figure 7: Project Implementation Arrangements



B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

77. **The proposed results framework with actionable monitoring arrangements is presented below.** The MCDE PIU will be responsible for progress monitoring and reporting to WBG. The PIU will be responsible for the collection of the data measuring the progress of the indicators related to its respective activities. The monitoring and evaluation plan will be outlined in the PIM, with technological requirements for data tracking mechanism (e.g. integrated with the interoperability platform). The World Bank will conduct regular implementation support missions to assist the Government in tracking progress toward the achievement of the PDOs and key results.

C. Sustainability

78. **The advancement of e-government is a top priority of MCDE, and it has undertaken significant work to forward the e-government agenda.** Given the activities represent key aspects of the entities' agendas and have been identified as areas for World Bank collaboration, commitment is expected to be maintained beyond the life of the project. Further, in the face of COVID-19, ensuring remote access to government administrative services such as through an online portal, ensuring continuity of learning, and expanding connectivity will yield improvements that will benefit the citizens of Gabon long after COVID-19.

79. **Institutional capacity and coordination challenges within and across sectoral ministries could affect sustainability,**



hence the strong emphasis on building collaborative leadership and change management capacities. The resistance from some stakeholders to aspects of digitization presents a risk. Risk mitigation measures are outlined in the risk section. Reforms are also expected to generate tangible benefits for citizens, which would strengthen reform constituencies. Moreover, the emphasis on transparency and feedback is expected to provide a mechanism for external stakeholders to voice their concerns and preferences and exert pressure to prevent backtracking on key reforms.

80. **Sustainability of the activities will be increased through several mechanisms.** This includes: (i) supporting the development of sustainable business models and plans for solutions provided under the three components; (ii) ensuring that there are dedicated state budget lines assigned to the key solutions and that there is mobilization of public resources to sustain and expand the activities; and (iii) providing value-for-money and efficient solutions to help reduce prices.
81. **The project will also open opportunities to engage with citizens and improve the Government's accountability.** The scarcity of public services and the difficulty in accessing them have created inequities that have deeply affected the Gabonese society. There is a critical need to strengthen public institutions and make them more accountable and inclusive in order to enhance the capacity of the administration to deliver high-quality services and restore public confidence in the Government. The e-government will open opportunities to connect and engage with citizens and businesses through the introduction of a feedback mechanism for public services, improving not only service delivery outcomes, but also governance and accountability, and providing evidence-based information for future planning. In addition, these opportunities will increase the private sector's trust and willingness to participate in the e-government agenda and engage in the digital economy ecosystem.

IV. PROJECT APPRAISAL SUMMARY

A. Technical and Economic Analysis

Technical Analysis

84. **The technical design of the project's legal ID component is based on an extensive Technical Assessment.** The Technical Assessment reviewed the technical aspects of the identification landscape in Gabon to pinpoint bottlenecks in the existing ID ecosystem. The preparation of this Assessment was based on extensive in-country consultations with the Government and identity stakeholders, desk research, and technical missions over a one-year period in 2018 and 2019. Apart from the legacy national ID card system, the CR system, the IBOGA project, the Assessment studied selected other programs serving the functional ID needs of government agencies. Various ID services offered by government ministries and agencies were reviewed, including their coverage and inclusiveness, use of demographic and biometric data, and technology infrastructure. The Assessment also looked at the present status of these various ID programs and the possibilities of migrating legacy data from these ID systems into the new RBPP and centralized CR. All the existing systems were evaluated against international technical standards⁶⁰ related to ID, data protection, inclusiveness, and information security. The recommendations made in the Assessment directly informed the design of the project and are in line with the needs of GoG.

⁶⁰ See the World Bank ID4D's Catalog of Technical Standards for Digital Identification Systems available at <http://id4d.worldbank.org/technical-standards>



Economic Analysis

82. **Benefits of the investments to establish a digitalized legal ID ecosystem are expected to be substantial.** Benefits come through nine main channels: (i) time and travel costs savings incurred by people seeking services; (ii) reduced administrative costs; (iii) reduced costs from malicious cyber incidents; (iv) reduced inclusion errors in social protection services and improved inclusiveness; (v) reduced losses from fraud and corruption; (vi) expanded access to services for people; (vii) expanded access to services for businesses; (viii) increased tax revenue; and (ix) reduced costs arising from natural disasters, pandemics, and other emergencies. Currently existing data do not allow for calculation of net present values or internal rates of return for these categories of benefits for the eGabon project. Therefore, this economic analysis draws on the cost-benefit analyses prepared for World Bank-financed projects that include interventions similar to the ones contemplated by the project, where possible. Other benefits are described qualitatively. Details of the benefits for each category are below.
83. **Reduced time and travel costs for people seeking services.** The creation of an inclusive legal ID infrastructure, issuance of a legal ID to all, digitalization of CR, and establishment of a one-stop portal for public e-services will reduce substantially the time and travel costs of people seeking government services. Currently, people must travel to various offices to get information, apply for, and collect documents they need to access services. For example, to register for the CNAM-GS people must present an original birth certificate (or a judgment replacing his birth certificate) and other documents depending on their individual circumstance, such as a copy of a pension certificate, a copy of a marriage certificate, or a certificate of nationality. As these documents are paper-based and come from different offices, people now spend considerable time and money travelling from office to office to collect the required documents. They must also travel to pick up their Gabonese Insured Person card, when issued. People must also travel to present documents to register a child in school, access health services, open a bank account and the like.⁶¹ A recent identity management operation in Madagascar projected an internal rate of return of 31 percent for investments that allowed reductions in time and travel costs.⁶² Simplified and digitalized business registration processes will also save time and travel costs of people seeking to register a business.
84. **Reduced administrative costs.** Creating, managing, and using IDs is labor intensive when done in a paper-based system, and involves high transaction costs for the government.⁶³ Significant staff time is required to process paper-based applications and to validate and update paper-based records. This can involve phone calls and sometimes physical travel to other agencies to verify residency or citizenship, manually searching for records, and even visual fingerprint matching. In addition to time and labor, these manual processes can require non-trivial outlays for expenses such as printing and photocopying, postage, and the rental or purchase of buildings large enough to store millions of records.
85. **By supporting an interoperability platform** linking the (i) CR services; (ii) social protection services; and (iii) health services and by digitizing the records allowing for electronic means of tracking applications, processing payments, and other administrative tasks, the project is expected to significantly reduce administrative costs. Studies from other

⁶¹ Experience from similar projects in other countries show that investments in ICT technology and systems reduces the time and travel costs of users by 25–90 percent, according to a World Bank Program Profile on administrative simplification and service delivery. “Cutting red tape for Business and Citizen Services,” World Bank, Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment, 2018.

⁶² World Bank. Madagascar Digital Governance and ID Management Project, Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Number PAD3789, September 4, 2020.

⁶³ “Public Sector Savings and Revenue from Identification Systems: Opportunities and Constraints.” Identification for Development. WBG, 2018.

countries show that administrative costs can fall by 25 to 90 percent.⁶⁴

86. **Establishing a shared service center will also reduce administrative costs.** This will allow elimination of the unnecessary duplication of IT systems, data, and processes; reduce overheads; and increase efficiency by providing human resources to participating government entities. In addition, the government is expected to save on operations and maintenance costs each year by relying on a centralized shared digital infrastructure, rather than having digital systems in individual government entities. Studies carried out in other countries demonstrate that sharing back-office services reduces administrative costs by an average of 15 percent, and savings can be as high as 45 percent.⁶⁵
87. **Reduced costs from cybersecurity incidents.** Malicious cybersecurity incidents cost governments, firms, and individuals billions of dollars per year. Cybersecurity incidents include (i) attempts, either failed or successful, to gain unauthorized access to a system or its data; (ii) distributed denial-of-service attacks; and (iii) unauthorized changes to system hardware, firmware, or software. They also involve data breaches which are defined as the movement or disclosure of sensitive information to a party, usually outside the organization, that is not authorized to have or see the information. A study has estimated that malicious cybersecurity incidents cost the United States economy between US\$57 billion and US\$109 billion in 2016, which represents between 0.31 percent and 0.58 percent of that year's GDP.⁶⁶ By supporting the design and implementation of cybersecurity capabilities in Gabon, the project will assist in reducing the costs of cybersecurity incidents such as the cyber-attack on October 28, 2018 where over 70 government and other official sites of institutions were attacked and rendered inaccessible for hours.⁶⁷
88. **Reduced inclusion errors in social protection services and improved inclusiveness.** In Gabon, the CNAM-GS registry of beneficiaries is thought to contain a significant number of duplicate records. Funds are likely wasted by providing payments to people more than once. Experience from other countries shows that such errors typically represent 5 percent or more of the total value of benefits delivered.⁶⁸ By ensuring that all people have a verifiable unique identity and by providing authentication services to the CNAM-GS, the project will reduce inclusion errors, freeing funds for other uses. Projects in other countries demonstrate that measures to authenticate beneficiaries can reduce errors of inclusion by 35 to 100 percent.⁶⁹ Pakistan saved about US\$248 million providing cash transfers to households affected by severe flooding in 2010 through use of a unique ID that found 40 percent of the initial 2.7 million applications to be ineligible or were duplicate family members.⁷⁰ The returns on the investment would be even higher if the GoG introduces social assistance programs in the future. The ability to link administrative databases using unique identifiers has been an important factor in allowing countries to respond quickly and effectively with transfers during emergencies, such as a pandemic.
89. **Reduced losses from fraud and corruption.** In paper-based ID systems, the risk of loss from fraud and corruption is significant, as people often register under various names for benefits, and government officials divert funds from the intended beneficiaries of programs aimed at the poor.⁷¹ Studies from other countries show that civil service payrolls

⁶⁴ "Cutting red tape for Business and Citizen Services," World Bank, Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment, 2018.

⁶⁵ Deloitte Development, 2019 Global Shared Services Survey Report.

⁶⁶ United States Council of Economic Advisors. "The Cost of Malicious Cyber Activity to the U.S. Economy." February 2018.

⁶⁷ <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/654931/politique/gabon-des-sites-officiels-attaques-par-des-hackers/>

⁶⁸ World Bank. Mexico National Digital Identity System to Facilitate Inclusion, PAD, report number PAD4044. Forthcoming.

⁶⁹ World Bank. Mexico National Digital Identity System to Facilitate Inclusion, PAD, report number PAD4044. Forthcoming.

⁷⁰ "Public Sector Savings and Revenue from Identification Systems: Opportunities and Constraints." Identification for Development. WBG, 2018.

⁷¹ "Public Sector Savings and Revenue from Identification Systems: Opportunities and Constraints." Identification for Development. WBG, 2018.



and pension systems often contain many ghost workers and pensioners for whom someone collects a pay check or a pension. Moreover, paper-based systems of identity authentication and cash payments offer opportunities for funds to be diverted through theft or through corruption by officials or service providers. Establishing a strong identification system linked to human resources management information system can help address these issues with potentially large savings for the government. In addition, creating a more transparent procurement system through support for e-procurement will reduce opportunities for fraud and corruption, and increase value for money in procurement.

90. **Expanded access to services for people.** With the ability to reliably prove their legal identity through digital technologies, citizens can gain easier secure access to basic services (opening a bank account, accessing social protection, healthcare, education, and others), strengthened capacity to exercise rights (for example, voting), and access to new economic opportunities (for example, formal employment, property rights, and trade in digital products and services). Expanded access in services is expected to be especially beneficial to women, as they are much less likely than men to have a birth certificate or national ID, and therefore are currently unable to access services at the same level. Access to expanded services has significant benefits for individuals and the economy and society as a whole. For example, people accessing health services report improved health and well-being and higher productivity. Moreover, user satisfaction with accessing services is expected to rise and citizen's trust to the government is expected to increase, due both to greater access to services and access to improved services arising from citizen feedback.
91. **Having access to a unique verifiable ID can promote financial inclusion.** Having in place a foundational ID system can facilitate access to the financial and banking systems. Banks and other service providers, such as microfinance institutions and mobile phone providers, can quickly and inexpensively KYC requirements when customers' identities are ensured. Reducing the time and administrative costs of verifying identity enables financial institutions to lower their costs and offer services to many more people.⁷²
92. **Providing all women in Gabon with a unique and verifiable digital ID could facilitate women's empowerment.** A unique ID can ensure that cash transfers are directly reaching eligible female beneficiaries rather than their husbands. A proof of identity is also critical for securing equitable access to and control over economic resources such as land, property, and inheritance, which is critical for supporting women's livelihoods and economic opportunities. A unique ID will also enable women to open a financial account. The 2017 Findex survey found that that only 57 percent of women in Gabon had a financial account in 2017 compared with 64 percent of men. Having a unique ID can foster women's full participation in economic and social life.⁷³
93. **Expanded access to services for businesses.** Businesses will be able to reduce their costs of obtaining information, registering a business, accessing land records, paying taxes, and the like. This is likely to facilitate trade, promote investment, and spur innovation. This in turn is expected to lead to greater productivity of firms and of the economy as a whole.
94. **Reduced costs arising from natural disasters, pandemics, and other emergencies.** The project's support to connect service providers to the RBPP for ID authentication purposes will enable the government to more rapidly reach people affected by a natural disasters, pandemics, or other emergencies. Timely warnings of an impending storm will enable people to move to safe areas. Rapidly reaching people trapped by a natural disaster will save lives and prevent injuries. The existence of the RBPP, as part of a broader digital legal ID ecosystem, will also help people re-establish

⁷² World Bank. West Africa Unique Identification for Regional Integration and Inclusion, PAD, report number PAD2480, May 9, 2018.

⁷³ World Bank. Nigeria Digital Identification for Development Project, PAD, report number PAD3089, January 30, 2020.



their ID on the basis of the biometric and biographic data underpinning the system, which could be especially valuable should they lose their physical credentials in the disaster. Quickly reaching people locked down to prevent the spread of a virulent infectious diseases with financial assistance and information on how to stay safe will save lives and promote well-being.

B. Fiduciary

(i) Financial Management

95. **The new PIU established under the MCDE will be responsible for overall coordination and implementation of the project, including financial management aspects.** Specifically, the PIU will: (i) ensure that funds are used for the purposes for which they were intended in an efficient and economical manner; (ii) correctly and completely record all transactions and balances related to the project; (iii) prepare the project's financial reports in an accurate, reliable and timely manner; (iv) secure the project's assets; and (v) ensure that the project will be subject to auditing arrangements acceptable to the World Bank. In order for the PIU to fulfill these requirements, an experienced FM officer and an accountant will be recruited on time to ensure they are on board before effectiveness.
96. **An FM assessment was conducted at MCDE and concluded that the FM overall residual risk is deemed Substantial.** The FM assessment was performed in accordance with the World Bank Policy and Directive for Investment Project Financing (IPF), the World Bank Guidance on FM in World Bank IPF Operations issued on February 28, 2017, the guiding principles in risk assessment issued in April 2020. In so doing, the team went beyond the Borrowers' knowledge of the World Bank's fiduciary rules to focus more on lessons learned considering their track record in implementing previous World Bank financed operations similar operations. The proposed mitigation measures aim to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of the identified risks. The assessment concluded that the FM overall residual risk is Substantial, mainly because the implementation of the project will include various technical groups from ministries other than the PIU, in addition to the weak experience of the PIU in implementing fiduciary aspects of projects financed by the World Bank, regarding notably budget elaboration and monitoring, accounting systems, plan and keeping, and financial reporting.
97. **In order to build the FM capacity and system for the PIU to be fully operational, several measures will be considered by the project effectiveness.** These measures are (i) the creation of the new PIU under the MCDE, with the recruitment and onboarding of experienced FM officer and Accountant; and (ii) the elaboration and adoption of the project implementation manual (PIM), including the FM procedures manual. Additional measures that are expected to be completed after the project becomes effective include: (i) the acquisition and installation of an appropriate accounting software, parameterized to handle accounting and reporting needs under the project: three months after effectiveness; (ii) the recruitment of an internal auditor to conduct ex post reviews of the project transactions and procedures, and to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed in a satisfactorily manner within three months after effectiveness; and (iii) the recruitment of an external auditor to conduct an annual financial audit of the financial statements of the project, and a review of the internal control system: six months after effectiveness.

(ii) Procurement

98. **The project will follow the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers dated November 2020.** The project will be subject to the World Bank's Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects

Financed by IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants, dated October 15, 2006 and revised in January 2011 and as of July 1, 2016. The project will use the Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) to plan, record and track procurement transactions.

99. **A comprehensive draft of the Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD) has been developed and finalized.** The procurement plan for the first 18 months has been also developed based on the PPCS. The summary of the PPCS is incorporated in Annex 1.
100. **The project management and coordination unit will be staffed with an experienced senior procurement officer and a procurement assistant, preferably with familiarity with the World Bank's procurement policies and procedures.** Component 4 also includes financing for ongoing TA for technical and project management support to the PIU, including for procurement, for the duration of the project implementation period. As heavy workload is foreseen for the procurement unit, an additional procurement professional could be recruited when the need arises. Additionally, the project would benefit from the Hands-on Expanded Implementation Support (HEIS) to better manage high value and high risks contracts and avoid delays and uncertainty around the procurement processes.
101. **The overall procurement risk is Substantial.** The major risks to procurement are TWG's limited knowledge of procurement regulations and limited capacity to provide sound technical inputs while dealing with terms of reference (TORs), technical specifications, and evaluations. Risks will be mitigated by training procurement and other counterpart staff who are involved in Procurement Regulations prior to the project's effectiveness, and continuous hands-on support through procurement steps on the use of the World Bank's New Procurement Framework.

C. Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

D. Environmental and Social

102. **All processes regarding the preparation, consultation and disclosure of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and corresponding E&S documents and assessments were completed to the satisfaction of the Bank.** Stakeholder consultations were carried out virtually, including a general consultation meeting on October 2021 with various stakeholders. The Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), Labor Management Procedures (LMP), Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), and Indigenous People Policy Framework (IPPF) were disclosed in the country, following the national disclosure procedure, on May 5, 2021 and on the World Bank website on April 23, 2021.

(I) Environmental Safeguards

103. **Overall, the activities funded by the project are expected to have limited environmental impacts.** The project's activities are not expected to directly generate irreversible negative risks or negative impacts on the environment. Therefore, the environmental risk is considered Moderate. The main environmental risks identified concern: (i) the risk of inappropriate management of electronic and electric waste or e-waste including handling, transport and



disposal (indeed, informal disposal of waste is pointed out and includes burning or melting and dumps in combination with municipal solid waste). (ii) absence of an e-waste management facilities. (iii) the risk of not having an appropriate service provider for the management of e-waste or electronic waste that will come from the acquisition of IT and digital equipment; (iv) the risk of not taking into account environmental and social specifications in the procurement of goods and supplies; (v) the ability of the PIU to meet the environmental and social framework (ESF) requirements in terms of safeguard instrument preparation such as the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), the Labor Management Procedures (LMP), the Indigenous People Policy Framework (IPPF), the SEP; (vi) the small works planned within the framework of this project and the installation of digital equipment could also generate; (vii) temporally nuisance related to dust, air and noise emission due to demolition and small construction but on a very limited scale; (viii) risks associated with installing IT equipment (access, electrical risks, high temperature in server rooms etc.); and (ix) occupational and road traffic risks related to demolition/construction/rehabilitation of opening/closing of trenches and repair activities.

104. **On the other hand, the project is expected to have potential positive environmental impacts.** The project also aims to enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change and lessen its impacts on the vulnerable population (e.g., climate disaster and emergency-related information push to the public, increased data and digital capabilities, and e-government services). The project will also generate employment for local populations and municipalities, create development of economic activities around the work sites, and generate business opportunities for economic operators (catering, supply of materials and equipment to Contractors/PIU, etc.).

105. **The project is subjected to the WBG General Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines.**

(II) Social Safeguards

106. **The Social Risk Rating is substantial.** Project's activities may generate risks related to the following aspects: (i) Inclusion, (ii) labor and working conditions, (iii) the risk of data breach and sharing personal information, (iv) citizen participation in the design and implementation of digital government (risk of not engaging citizens in the design and implementation of the digital government project); and (v) building and cementing the trust of citizens will be a difficult task. To mitigate social risks, a Social Risk Assessment with a specific focus on the ID system was conducted and provides a concrete action plan to mitigate possible risks.

107. **The Digital Gabon project activities will have strong positive social impacts by providing access of many Gabonese nationals and non-nationals to legal IDs and CNAM-GS social protection beneficiary registry. However, several social risks have been identified.** There is a risk of potential exclusion of women and other vulnerable groups from the legal ID systems and digitized services, of beneficiaries from the social protection beneficiary registry during the linking exercise with the NIP, and of civil servants during the implementation of the HRMIS to weed out ghost workers and duplicates. Social risks include the (i) exclusion of vulnerable groups, including IPs, rural populations and persons with disabilities, amongst others; (ii) workers' exploitation, including SEA and SH, (iii) the improper use or sharing of personal data which could lead to social stigmatization or discrimination of certain marginalized groups (e.g. gender minorities); (iv) sexual and gender based violence, discrimination or child labor; (v) the legal ID systems supported by the project could potential lead to personal data being compromised or to the unauthorized use of a person's identity; and (vi) due to the complexity of the proposed project and its high social impact, a risk of not adequately engaging citizens in the design and implementation of the digital government project, despite extensive CE measures included at all stages of the project design.



108. **The other main social risk is associated with the legal ID reform.** Historically, some ID systems have been inaccessible to certain individuals or population groups because of onerous enrollment procedures, which required registrants to pay high fees and present additional documents, such as birth certificates, to obtain an ID. The practice of linking issuance of IDs to citizenship or legal status has also led to negative impacts upon marginalized groups due to exclusionary or ambiguous nationality laws and their application. Building and cementing the trust of citizens will be a difficult task. In fact, over 95 percent of the population believes that government officials are involved in corruption and over 80 percent believe that the level of corruption has increased overtime. Critical ESSs are summarized below. The full list of applicable ESSs can be found in the ESCP.
109. **ESS2 – Labor and Working Conditions** standard will focus on ensuring adherence to ESS2 requirements including: (i) ensuring working conditions and management of workers; (ii) protecting the workforce; (iii) establishing and operationalizing a workers' GRM; (iv) ensuring compliance with ESH requirements; and (v) ensuring contracted workers are protected. ESS2 covers workers involved in the project in the following categories: direct workers, contracted workers and primary suppliers. At this stage of the project, community workers within the meaning of ESS2 are not envisaged. Therefore, the LMP is focused on direct workers, contracted workers and primary suppliers. The GRM will be available for all direct and contracted workers on all project-related matters, including terms and conditions of employment; non-discrimination and equal opportunity; workers' organizations/unions; child labor; forced labor; harassment (sexual or not); and other workplace complaints.
110. **ESS7 – Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African.** The project will be implemented in some areas where Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local communities (SSAHUTLC). To ensure that SSAHUTLC have access to project benefits, the GoG will ensure they are fully informed, consulted and involved during project design and implementation. An IPPF was prepared, consulted upon and disclosed on April 26, 2021 on the World Bank website and on May 5, 2021 in country. The IPPF sets out participation principles for IPs and provides orientation regarding activities to be specifically conducted for them and guidance on consultations when preparing specific Indigenous Peoples Plan.
111. **The project will closely monitor GBV and SH and intimidation risks.** Measures to address these challenges include: (i) a requirement that the Borrower includes clauses on workers' conditions and management, child protection, and GBV prevention in all contracts; (ii) provision of TA and training to the borrower and awareness raising on GBV among all contractors and workers; (iii) the setup of an accessible and accountable GRM to ensure that any incident related to workers and GBV will be addressed in an effective manner with sufficient social sensibility. The GBV/SEA/SH action plan will be developed based on the inputs from the GBV screening.
112. **To ensure that environmental and social risks related to the project are well identified and mitigated, a GRM will be available for all direct and contracted workers on all project-related matters.** This will include terms and conditions of employment; non-discrimination and equal opportunity; workers' organizations/unions; child labor; forced labor; harassment (sexual or not); and other behavioral complaints. The following measures will be implemented:
- Effective and inclusive participation of all stakeholders including vulnerable people, rural women, IPs of Gabon, and people with total or partial physical disabilities will be provided throughout issues of universal access to the project's service including legal ID;
 - Non-discrimination, the protection of personal data during identification and authentication operations, gender equality, and information security and communication during implementation of the various project



activities;

- Ensure that children or adults who do not have official documents such as birth certificates are eligible to receive a legal identity in Gabon;
- Labor conditions of project's workers and operators (service delivering and contractors) will be closely scrutinized to avoid workers' exploitation (including SEA and SH within the workplace or by project workers towards community members), discrimination or child labor;
- Codes of Conduct will be required and will contain labor-related clauses and preventive measures that intend to prevent GBV as well as manage risks from labor influx.

E. Citizen Engagement

113. **The Digital Gabon project integrates a multidimension approach to CE to ensure that feedback from beneficiaries is adequately collected, responded to, and fed back into the project design at all stages of project implementation.** These approaches to CE include: (i) a project GRM to collect and respond to grievances related to project activities; (ii) citizen satisfaction surveys and feedback mechanisms built in to and accompanying the one-stop-shop portal; (iii) public consultations with beneficiaries and civil society, including publicly disclosed action plans and progress reports tracking how feedback from previous consultations rounds has been integrated into project implementation; (iv) participatory planning exercises, linked to consultations, to generate a diagnosis of the existing situation and develop appropriate strategies to solve jointly identified problems; and (v) user research to engage with beneficiary communities and identify their special needs.

114. **The Digital Gabon project is expected to reinforce CE by ensuring that related mechanisms in place are inclusive:** to implement the GRM, which will allow beneficiaries to submit any complaint about project activities, by ensuring that (i) the project has CE indicators, which will track user satisfaction and feedback on services supported by the project; (ii) that grievances are addressed and responded to systematically and in a timely fashion; and (iii) the project will reinforce and implement the GRM to strengthen project governance by improving accountability and allowing course correction during implementation based on feedback from citizens.

115. **The project will support regular communications and consultation with the general public to increase understanding of the project and the use of public services.** Meaningful consultations can improve the design, implementation, and sustainability of the project. They provide an avenue for receiving and acting on input relevant to project design and implementation, give voice to the needs of marginalized groups, improve project risk management, and increase transparency and public understanding. Public consultations and information will be organized throughout project implementation, as well as participatory planning and monitoring. The project will ensure that all consultations/initiatives are accessible and promote equal participation, opportunities and resources for people who seem to be excluded from the mainstream of the society. Feedback received from consultations and studies will inform the design of mass enrollment campaigns and continuous data registration mechanisms to ensure universal coverage of legal ID systems. The project will invest in stakeholder outreach, communications, social accountability, and other CE mechanisms.

116. **The project will finance specific activities linked to the inclusion of marginalized groups.** These activities, financed variously under Components 2, 3 and 4, include: (i) user research and consultations, including stakeholders and marginalized groups to collect background information on the design and implementation of legal ID systems; (ii) studies to identify barriers to access and successful use of ID for enrollment and authentication of the project's target populations, including marginalized groups, with the aim of maximizing coverage and inclusion; and (iii) the



definition of non-documentary enrollment processes to allow for a pathway of enrollment to those unable to show documentary evidence of their identity, such as a birth certificate.

117. **The project will also strengthen women's participation in economic life through faster and more efficient public services for individuals and businesses, and reforms to systems to provide a legal ID credential to all.** It will contribute to reinforcing IPs access to public services and economic opportunities, through improved access to legal identity and CR services under Component 2.

V. GRIEVANCE REDRESS SERVICES

118. **Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank-supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS).** The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the World Bank's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of World Bank non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and World Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate GRS, please visit http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service_. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit www.inspectionpanel.org

VI. KEY RISKS

119. **The overall risk is rated Moderate.** There are several risks for the PDO achievement of this project. Primary risks arise from the: (i) high risks of social exclusion; (ii) suboptimal institutional capacity for implementation, and (iii) COVID-19 pandemic. Mitigation measures will be implemented throughout the project to limit the impact of these risks.
120. **Political and Governance risks are rated Moderate.** Due to the multi-sectoral nature of the project, success of the proposed legal, regulatory, and institutional reforms, as well as the implementation of e-government require high-level political commitment, a shared vision, and extensive coordination and collaboration among all counterpart agencies. Although the PAT 2021-2023 provides a cohesive strategic vision for digital transformation, this political alignment could be undermined moving forward by the recent political instability in Gabon, where political reshuffles have been near-constant over the past few years. In such a political environment, there is a risk of high turn-over of stakeholders at the executive level which may lead to changing priorities and weakened ownership in the proposed project interventions. The following mitigation measures are proposed: (i) drawing on lessons learned from eGabon and CAB4, which highlighted the need for a strong and high-level stewardship of the project to carry forward the mandate across different agencies and sectors,⁷⁴ a steering committee at prime ministerial level will direct the project; and (ii) World Bank will partner with international organizations, local communities and municipalities, regional organizations, and diplomatic communities to ensure broad support in the proposed project within the

⁷⁴ CAB4 project (P122776) is led by a Project Director in the Presidency office, which proved an efficient and stable structure to coordinate works between the various bodies involved within the digital sector over time.



country and maintain pressure of government to implement reforms and assure sustainability of their results. When factoring these mitigations measures, the residual risk decreases to Moderate.

121. **Sector strategy and policy risks are rated Moderate.** The overall government strategy for e-government, articulated in the PAT 2021-23, provides clear policy directions. However, a number of project investments are dependent on upstream legal and regulatory reforms for successful and sustainable implementation, including components related to CR, cybersecurity, and interoperability. Two types of potential risks have been identified: (i) areas where revisions to the legal framework may be required to permit the lawful implementation the project components as designed; and (ii) gaps, weaknesses, and other issues where legal reforms are warranted to strengthen the enabling environment and promote the successful implementation and sustainability of these investments. The legal reforms in Sub-component 1.1, once implemented, will mitigate these legal risks, but delays in the implementation of legal reforms could negatively impact the ability to implement Sub-component 1.2 and Component 2. If no legal reform for CR is carried out, it could result in the RBPP being implemented without full interoperability with the CR system, potentially perpetuating the fragmentation of the legal ID landscape, and threatening the RBPP's long term sustainability by depriving it of a key data collection mechanism. Furthermore, the absence of legal reforms to the enabling environment for e-transactions and cybersecurity could negatively impact the investments in cybersecurity capacity, as well as the security of the data exchanged using the interoperability platform. As a mitigation measure, the project will provide TA with the articulation and implementation of these reforms as well as peer-to-peer learning opportunities for the client from countries where these reforms have succeeded to make a stronger case for the necessity to implement. Upcoming CPF dialogue between the Government and the World Bank will allow further solidification of these priorities. However, the residual risk of these reforms not being implemented is Moderate.
122. **Technical design of project risk is rated Moderate.** To create building blocks of e-government and to establish an integrated cohesive whole-of-government approach to public administration and delivery of digital services, the project brings many sectors and complex interventions into a single operation. Establishing interoperability, identity management, and cybersecurity foundations as well as digitizing several services and government functions requires technological maturity in project administration, including skilled resources, which is currently limited in the country. The project necessitates establishing required standards and protocols while selecting various technologies and implementing complex systems across multiple stakeholders some of which have limited understanding and experience in complex digital initiatives. Concerning legal ID, there are risks that legacy data that may be migrated in the new legal ID systems – including the IBOGA voter ID registry and the paper-based CR system – will not be of sufficient quality or standard to migrate effectively to new systems, which could increase cost associated with re-collecting this data. Similarly, there is a risk that the feasibility of digitizing legacy paper CR records will be low, which will have a negative impact on the completeness of the digitalized CR and thereby increase reliance on the RBPP as well as legacy paper-based CR records for legal ID needs. Decisions made under the project will set a long-term direction for e-government in the country and hence require a pragmatic approach to the current state, strong understanding of global trends, and superior execution. To ensure financial sustainability of complex ICT systems, it is important to follow best practices in procurement and contracting to avoid technology and vendor lock-in. To mitigate these risks, the project will: (i) apply best architecture practices (including modular approaches) to limit technology-lock-in; systems and technology specifications will be carefully developed in line with international standards and using open standards whenever possible to enable market-based competition and innovation and open-source software where appropriate; (ii) focus on the application of standard shared architectures and technologies to avoid lack of highly specialized resources in the future and to lower investment and maintenance costs; and (iii) include significant TA for implementation by bringing in the required specialized expertise to help with



informed choices and ongoing training is embedded in each of the project activities. With these mitigation measures in place, the residual risk is Moderate.

123. **Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability risk is rated Substantial.** Weak institutional capacity could impact project implementation, as evidenced by the eGabon project challenges. Although the proposed project scope responds to strong demand from many government bodies to better leverage digital technologies, the ability of these entities to effectively implement this digital transformation thoroughly remains unproven. The experience in the eGabon project with respect to the digitalization of the health sector shows that technical capacities can be quite limited and task complexity easily underestimated, leading to improper staffing of project teams, significant implementation delays, and non-budgeted spending in support resources. To mitigate these risks: (i) as the project implementation advances, corrective measures (e.g. change in staffing of project teams, reorganization of project tasks, modification of activities, and project restructuring) will be enforced through the steering committee as soon as the project performance suggests a need to do so; and (ii) the project also allocates a significant budget to technical support, training, communication, and change management, fully mainstreaming these into all of the main activities. However, even with these mitigation measures in place, the residual risk is Substantial.
124. **Fiduciary risk is rated Substantial,** due to the current weaknesses surrounding the internal control systems, limited knowledge of procurement regulations, and the limited capacity of technical counterparts to provide sound technical inputs while drafting TORs and technical specifications, as well as during the evaluation process. In addition, as the fiduciary management is expected to be consolidated under the PIU in the MCDE, these risks may further increase. To mitigate these risks: (i) the project's operations manual will be developed to ensure proper internal control systems; (ii) frequent fiduciary implementation support missions will be conducted; and (iii) enhanced implementation support by the World Bank will be provided, including that financed by the WBG ID4D Initiative⁷⁵ for the activities related to legal ID reform, and will also include training of all counterparts involved in the project on Procurement Regulations prior to the project's effectiveness. However, even with these mitigation measures in place, the residual risk is Substantial.
125. **Environmental and Social risks are rated Substantial.** Environmental risks are moderate, but social risks are substantial. The main social risks can be associated with ID reform. Historically, some ID systems have been inaccessible to certain individuals or population groups because of onerous enrollment procedures, requiring registrants to pay high fees and present additional documents, such as birth certificates, to obtain an ID. The practice of linking the issuance of IDs to the determination of citizenship or legal status has also led to importunately negative impacts upon marginalized groups due to exclusionary or ambiguous nationality laws and their application. As part of the project's preparation, social risk analysis with a specific focus on ID system was conducted, and it provided a concrete action plan to mitigate possible risks. Under this project, the ID system will be accessible to all persons in Gabon, regardless of nationality or legal status, documentary requirements for enrollment will be eliminated, and registration and the issuance of basic ID credentials will be free of charge to minimize exclusion risks. An inclusive and transparent communication plan, powerful public awareness campaigns through social media, tailored outreach strategies toward local communities, continuous stakeholder engagement, and a robust GRM will further help manage social risks. However, even with these mitigation measures in place, the residual risk is Substantial.
126. **Macro-economic and stakeholder risks are Moderate.** In recent years, Gabon's government revenues have been affected by the decline in oil prices. The COVID-19 crisis deepened the imbalances due to weak external demand and reduced economic activity. The combination of this factors has deteriorated growth prospects while put pressure on

⁷⁵ ID4D Accelerating Impact Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) (P171592)



public debt and public finances. However, even with limited resources the Government has expressed a strong commitment through the PAT to the public administration reforms supported through the project. The macro-economic risk is moderate for the project. The project, being multi-sectoral, will engage multiple stakeholders. There is a risk of exclusion, miscommunication, and misinterpretation. The project institutional arrangements are designed to facilitate collaboration and ensure transparency and good communication for multiple ministries and agencies. An inclusive and transparent communication plan, powerful public awareness campaigns through social media, tailored outreach strategies toward different stakeholder groups and a robust grievance redress mechanism will help manage stakeholder risks. The residual risk for both macro-economic and stakeholder risks is moderate.

127. **The other risks, particularly COVID-19 related risks, are rated Substantial.** The COVID-19 pandemic has deteriorated growth prospects and worsened external and fiscal positions while putting pressure on public debt and public finances. The limited availability of resources has shifted the Government's priority areas, and risks causing a loss of momentum on reforms in areas perceived as less urgent. The pandemic has hit the most vulnerable people hard, becoming a major threat to social and economic development. The project was designed considering such reality and risks and focuses on strengthening the foundational capacities of the Government to provide faster, easier and more efficient public services to the most vulnerable, as well as equal opportunities to the people of Gabon. During implementation, the project will take a flexible approach to adapt to the rapidly evolving situation, with significant implementation support from the World Bank. Main potential difficulties on the implementation front relate to restrictions on gatherings, meetings and travel, which can be mitigated to a certain extent with digital technologies that are relatively well-developed and widely available in Gabon. Other impacts include the recruitment, onboarding and work of international staff and consultants, and they will be mitigated in a similar fashion. However, given the uncertainty around the duration of the pandemic and its longer-term prospects, the residual risk is Substantial.



VII. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND MONITORING MONITORING

Results Framework COUNTRY: Gabon Digital Gabon Project

Project Development Objectives(s)

To enhance adoption of select digitalized public services and increase the number of persons with a legal identity credential that facilitates their access to services.

Project Development Objective Indicators

Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
Enhance adoption of select digitalized public services							
Successful digital transactions initiated by individuals in the framework of public service delivery (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	50,000.00	100,000.00
Of which female (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	8,000.00	20,000.00	50,000.00
Government entities actively and securely exchanging data on the government interoperability platform (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Increase the number of persons with a legal ID credential that facilitates access to services							
Population 16+ with a NIP (Percentage)		0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	90.00



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
NIP holders 16+ who are female (Percentage)		0.00	0.00	0.00	40.00	45.00	50.00
Ratio of rural-to-overall NIP coverage rates for persons 16+ (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.33	0.66	1.00
Social protection beneficiary records associated with a unique legal ID credential (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	150,000.00	500,000.00
Of which female (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	75,000.00	250,000.00

Intermediate Results Indicators by Components

Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
Component 1: Enabling environment for accelerated digital transformation							
Policy framework needed to enforce data protection legislation is implemented (Yes/No)		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implementation of an adequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework for digitalized civil registration (Yes/No)		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implementation of an adequate legal, regulatory and		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
institutional framework for cybersecurity (Yes/No)							
Implementation of an adequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework for electronic transactions (Yes/No)		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implementation of a common interoperability framework governing secure data exchange within government (Yes/No)		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implementation of government-wide interoperability platform with adequate safeguards for personal data (Yes/No)		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Security operations center for core government functions (C-SOC) is operational (Yes/No)		No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Component 2: Modernizing legal ID systems							
Deployment of a national-scale RBPP identification system to issue and manage the NIP for all persons in Gabon including adequate safeguards for personal data (Yes/No)		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Administrative departments with at least one civil registration office digitally registering vital acts (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	10.00	15.00
Component 3: Digital transformation of public administration and select services							



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
Procurement contracts awarded through e-Procurement system (Percentage)		0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	25.00	40.00
Citizen feedback mechanism for digital government services operational (Yes/No)		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Share of users satisfied with digital government services (Percentage)		0.00	0.00	0.00	30.00	50.00	70.00
Share of female users satisfied with digital government services (Percentage)		0.00	0.00	0.00	30.00	50.00	70.00
HRMIS implementation progress (Text)		Work on HRMIS not yet begun.	Human resource management business process review carried out, including decentralization of HR management to line ministries.	Revised business processes translated into functional requirements.	Core HRMIS modules developed, and HRMIS integrated to the budget payroll management system.	HRMIS audit completed.	HRMIS fully functional.
Component 4: Citizen engagement, implementation support and M&E							
Annual consultations with citizens, users of digital government platforms, and civil society to solicit feedback and report on actions taken to address feedback since previous consultations (Number)		0.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
Individuals trained in digital skills, cybersecurity awareness,		0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	2,500.00	5,000.00



Indicator Name	PBC	Baseline	Intermediate Targets				End Target
			1	2	3	4	
or usage of digital government services (Number)							
Of which female (Number)		0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	1,250.00	2,500.00
Grievances responded to and/or resolved within the stipulated service standards for response times (Percentage)		0.00	0.00	60.00	70.00	80.00	90.00

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan: PDO Indicators					
Indicator Name	Definition/Description	Frequency	Datasource	Methodology for Data Collection	Responsibility for Data Collection
Successful digital transactions initiated by individuals in the framework of public service delivery	Cumulative count of the total number of digital transactions initiated by individual beneficiaries in the framework of delivery of population-facing government services, conditional on the digital transaction being completely successfully. Only those services receiving support from the project will be counted.	Annual	Administrative data	Aggregation of reports from project-financed digital service platforms	PIU



Of which female	Cumulative count of the number of digital transactions initiated by female beneficiaries in the framework of delivery of population-facing government services, conditional on the digital transaction being completely successfully. Only those services receiving support from the project will be counted.	Annual	Administrative data	Aggregation of reports from project-financed digital service platforms	PIU
Government entities actively and securely exchanging data on the government interoperability platform	Total number of government ministries, departments, and agencies connected to the secure interoperability platform, in compliance with technical and regulatory provisions of the interoperability framework, and integrating data exchange with another government entity into their operations.	Annual	Administrative data	Project implementation reports	PIU
Population 16+ with a NIP	Numerator: Cumulative number of individuals issued a NIP based on successful national-level deduplication of biometric and biographic data of international quality standard.	Quarterly	RBPP administrative data UN Population Division population	RBPP reports UN Population Division population projections	PIU



	Denominator: Total population of Gabon 16+ as per UN Population Division projections.		projections		
NIP holders 16+ who are female	Numerator: Cumulative number of women issued a NIP based on successful national-level deduplication of biometric and biographic data of international quality standard. Denominator: Total cumulative number of individuals issued a NIP.	Quarterly	RBPP administrative data	RBPP reports	PIU
Ratio of rural-to-overall NIP coverage rates for persons 16+	Ratio of the rural 16+ NIP coverage rate, in percentage terms, to overall 16+ NIP coverage rate in percentage terms. Overall NIP coverage is defined as in the parent indicator. Rural NIP coverage is defined as follows. Numerator (for rural coverage rate): Cumulative number of individuals 16+ enrolled or residing in rural areas issued a NIP based on successful national-level deduplication of biometric and biographic data of	Quarterly	RBPP administrative data	RBPP reports	PIU



	international quality standard. Denominator (for rural coverage rate): Total rural population of Gabon 16+ as per UN Population Division projections. Rural areas will be defined according to standard national definitions in use by the national statistical office (DGSEE).				
Social protection beneficiary records associated with a unique legal ID credential	Total cumulative number of CNAM-GS social protection beneficiary records evaluated for uniqueness and associated with a unique legal identity credential such as the NIP.	Annual	Administrative data	Project implementation reports	PIU
Of which female	Total cumulative number of CNAM-GS social protection beneficiary records for female beneficiaries evaluated for uniqueness and associated with a unique foundational identity credential such as the NIP.	Annual	Administrative data	Project implementation reports	PIU



Monitoring & Evaluation Plan: Intermediate Results Indicators

Indicator Name	Definition/Description	Frequency	Datasource	Methodology for Data Collection	Responsibility for Data Collection
Policy framework needed to enforce data protection legislation is implemented	Policies, procedures, and guidelines needed to fully implement and enforce data protection legislation are published and in force.	Annual	Relevant official publications, including government websites	Review of relevant official publications in project implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Implementation of an adequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework for digitalized civil registration	Legal and regulatory framework governing civil registration is revised to fully enable digitalized registration and centralized archiving of vital acts and all necessary revisions are duly enacted and in force.	Annual	Relevant official publications, including government websites	Review of relevant official publications in project implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Implementation of an adequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework for cybersecurity	Laws and implementing decrees needed to adequately govern cybersecurity are duly enacted and in force.	Annual	Relevant official publications, including government websites	Review of relevant official publications in project implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Implementation of an adequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework for electronic transactions	Laws and implementing decrees needed to adequately govern electronic transactions are duly enacted and in force.	Annual	Relevant official publications, including government websites	Review of relevant official publications in project implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU



Implementation of a common interoperability framework governing secure data exchange within government	Publication of relevant policies, procedures, standards, and governance arrangements for the interoperability platform, including provisions for adequate protection for personal data.	Annual	Relevant official publications, including government websites	Review of relevant official publications in project implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Implementation of government-wide interoperability platform with adequate safeguards for personal data	Deployment of the technical platform facilitating database interoperability and secure data exchange between government entities, ready for use by interested government entities, and providing adequate technical safeguards for protection of personal data.	Annual	Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Security operations center for core government functions (C-SOC) is operational	Dedicated security operation center with core capabilities to monitor and response to cyber threats for core government systems supported by the project is operational, providing basic cybersecurity prevention, response, and mitigation capabilities.	Annual	Administrative data	Project implementation reports	PIU



Deployment of a national-scale RBPP identification system to issue and manage the NIP for all persons in Gabon including adequate safeguards for personal data	All technical systems enabling real-time or near-real-time NIP generation based on field data collection are developed, tested, and deployed, and such systems provide adequate security and protection of personal data of enrollees and conform with the Principles for Identification for Sustainable Development as well as the project Pillars of Inclusion.	Annual	Testing reports Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Administrative departments with at least one civil registration office digitally registering vital acts	Number of administrative departments in which at least one civil registration office is digitally registering vital acts, such as live births, in a fully digitalized process that results in the birth record being stored in the centralized civil registry database.	Annual	Digital CR system reports Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Procurement contracts awarded through e-Procurement system	Numerator: Value of government goods, works and services contracts awarded using the e-GP system end-to-end in one year. Denominator: Total value of	Annual	e-Procurement System reports Government administrative data	Aggregation of relevant administrative data in Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU



	government goods, works and services contracts awarded in one year.		ARMP		
Citizen feedback mechanism for digital government services operational	Feedback mechanism for collecting feedback from citizens and other users of digital government services and disclosing this feedback to the public is operational and relevant aspects are accessible on the one-stop-shop portal.	Annual	Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Share of users satisfied with digital government services	Numerator: Number of users of digitalized government services supported by this project providing feedback and expressive at least moderate satisfaction with said services. Denominator: Total number of users of digitalized government services supported by this project providing feedback. Indicator is not cumulative and should be calculated based on feedback recorded in the preceding year of implementation.	Annual	Citizen feedback mechanism M&E survey data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Share of female users satisfied with digital government services	Numerator: Number of female users of digitalized	Annual	Citizen feedback	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU



	<p>government services supported by this project providing feedback and expressive at least moderate satisfaction with said services</p> <p>Denominator: Total number of female users of digitalized government services supported by this project providing feedback</p> <p>Indicator is not cumulative and should be calculated based on feedback recorded in the preceding year of implementation</p>		<p>mechanism M&E survey data</p>		
HRMIS implementation progress	<p>HRMIS implementation progress from process review, business process revision, definition of functional requirements to the development and deployment of HRMIS including integration with payroll management systems.</p>	Annual	PIU	Project implementation reports	PIU
Annual consultations with citizens, users of digital government platforms, and civil society to solicit feedback and report on actions taken to address feedback since previous consultations	<p>Annual consultations in the form of workshops, research, or similar outreach to stakeholders of project-supported platforms –</p>	Annual	Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU



	including public sector decision makers, public sector end users, civil society organizations, beneficiaries and members of the population at large, including representation of a wide variety of marginalized groups – which solicit feedback from said stakeholders on the design and implementation of project-supported activities and report on action taken as a result of prior consultations. Reports should be publicly disclosed. Targets and not cumulative and should be reassessed on a yearly basis.				
Individuals trained in digital skills, cybersecurity awareness, or usage of digital government services	Total cumulative number of individuals trained in digital skills, cybersecurity awareness, or usage of digital government services	Annual	Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Of which female	Total cumulative number of female individuals trained in digital skills, cybersecurity awareness, or usage of digital government services.	Annual	Administrative data	Implementation reports submitted by PIU	PIU
Grievances responded to and/or resolved within the stipulated service standards for	Numerator: Cumulative number of grievances	Quarterly	Grievance Redress	GRM reports Administrative data	PIU



response times	responded to and/or resolved within the stipulated service standards for response time. Denominator: Cumulative total number of grievances received. Service standards including response times will be defined in the Project Implementation Manual.		Mechanism		
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ANNEX 1: Implementation Arrangements and Support Plan

COUNTRY: Gabon
Digital Gabon Project

Project Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

1. The MCDE will be the main overseeing and implementing body of the project and will coordinate the implementation of the project. The Project Steering Committee is a high-level governing entity of the project; it is led by the Prime Minister's Office and the Minister of MCDE, as President and Vice President of the steering committee, respectively. The higher ministerial committee will oversight the TWG (such as those for interoperability platform, legal ID, HRMIS, and eProcurement).

Financial Management assessment

2. An FM assessment was conducted at MCDE. Said assessment was performed in accordance with the Bank Policy and Directive for IPF, the World Bank Guidance on FM in World Bank IPF Operations issued on February 28, 2017, the guiding principles in risk assessment issued in April 2020. In so doing, the team went beyond the Borrowers' knowledge of the World Bank's fiduciary rules to focus more on lessons learned considering their track record in implementing previous World Bank-financed similar operations. The proposed mitigation measures aim to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of the identified risks.
3. The assessment concluded that the FM overall residual risk is deemed **Substantial**, mainly because the implementation of the project will include various technical groups from ministries other than the Implementing Entity (MCDE), in addition to the weak experience of the MCDE in implementing fiduciary aspects of projects financed by the World Bank, regarding notably budget elaboration and monitoring, accounting systems, plan and keeping, and financial reporting. As a result, the fiduciary aspects of the proposed project will be managed by a PIU to be set up under the MCDE. In order to build the FM capacity and system for the PIU to be fully operational and mitigate related risks, the measures included in the action plan below will be implemented.

FM Risk Assessment and Mitigation measures

Risk factors/Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigating Measures Incorporated into the Project Design	Residual Risk Rating
INHERENT RISK			
Country level: Despite being a pioneer of the CEMAC Public Finance Management (PFM) directives, Gabon has not yet had concrete results in terms of budgeting and resources allocation.	H	A thorough support to the PFM reform agenda is needed and might come with a global governance operation which content is still being discussed.	H



Risk factors/Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigating Measures Incorporated into the Project Design	Residual Risk Rating
<p>Entity level</p> <p>MCDE, the implementing entity, has not gained sufficient experience in managing World Bank-funded operations (budget elaboration and monitoring processes, accounting systems and procedures, and financial reporting); this could jeopardize project readiness for implementation.</p> <p>The proposed institutional arrangements (technical working groups from various ministries under the PIU and the oversight of the steering committee under the Prime Minister) may result in some governance and reporting issues (e.g., delays in elaboration of budgets, justification of advances, reporting, and duplication of expenses) that could delay the project implementation.</p>	H	<p>The World Bank is supporting the MCDE in the preparation process and helps it going through all the World Bank financed operations requirements.</p> <p>A PIU will be created within MCDE before effectiveness, and will be staffed with competent and experienced fiduciary team.</p> <p>An internal control system will be built to address coordination issues consistent with an implementation manual that will clearly define roles and responsibilities and provide clarity on the reporting lines.</p>	S
<p>Project level:</p> <p>The project involves many stakeholders either as beneficiaries or service providers, the coordination of which may put at risk its sound implementation. This is exacerbated by the innovative nature of its digitization-oriented activities.</p>	S	<p>An implementation manual will describe the project implementation arrangements compliant with the nature of the project. It will define roles and interactions between various parties. That manual will include the administrative and financial procedures for the project, describing the procedures for any specific activities regarding FM requirements. In addition, the World Bank will ensure continuing tailored capacity building and support to the client during the implementation period.</p>	S
<p>Overall Inherent Risk:</p>	H		S



Risk factors/Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigating Measures Incorporated into the Project Design	Residual Risk Rating
CONTROL RISK			
Budgeting It might be difficult for the project to respect deadlines for submitting acceptable budgets for World Bank approval, due to delays in obtaining adequate information from counterpart or all the parties. Delays in adoption and approval of budgets could lead to deviation from intended budget execution for some components, or even to activities planned and budgeted but completely not executed (not disbursed).	H	The procedures' manual will provide a clear timeline and responsibilities for budget preparation, consolidation, and monitoring. All the parties involved in the project execution will be clearly briefed/trained on the budget preparation and execution requirements, and to ensure ownership for an appropriate implementation.	S
Accounting Arrangements for the establishment of the PIU have been made but need to become operational with FM Staff. Also, the accounting software needs to be installed. Consequently, the project may experience delays in the recording of the financial information and the analysis of the financial information.	H	Before effectiveness, FM staff will be recruited based on TORs acceptable to the World Bank. An appropriate accounting software will be purchased, configured, and parameterized to fit the project accounting needs.	S
Internal Controls Internal control systems to put in place may not be appropriate for the project, as it implies many various different parties from different ministries, and the PIU under MDCE should coordinate various TWG; that organization might lack appropriate segregation of duties and a clear description of roles.	S	The PIM will be elaborated before effectiveness. In addition, the Project's Procedures Manual (Administration, Finance and Accounting) will be part of the PIM and will include a clear description of the system for internal controls, including the roles and responsibilities of actors.	M
Funds Flow As the PIU is under the MCDE and the government has decided to open the project's account in the central bank, there is a risk that the project funds	S	One Designated Account (DA) will be opened in the central bank. An assessment of feasibility of operating with the central bank will be performed and required implications	S



Risk factors/Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigating Measures Incorporated into the Project Design	Residual Risk Rating
are being diverted and used for non-project purposes e.g. funds may be mistakenly advanced to finance counterpart expenditure.		will be tailored. Procedures for its management and control will be established and described in the procedures' manual.	
Financial Reporting Delays in the submission of agreed IFRs and annual Project financial statements as the accounting software is not yet parameterized to accommodate accounting and reporting needs under the project	S	The accounting software will be purchased and parameterized for the project's accounting purposes, to ensure timely recording of financial information as well as timely production of in-year and annual financial statements. The reporting scheme will be clearly defined in the manual.	S
Auditing The project's financial statements might not be audited as there is not an auditor recruited for the project. In addition, the current health crisis measures that promote social distancing could make it difficult for the auditor to perform its mandate and deliver its reports on time.	S	An external auditor will be recruited in line with ToR acceptable to the World Bank. The auditor's ability to perform audit procedures remotely will be assessed and if possible, he will provide any limitation scope resulting from that, and the Financial Management Specialist (FMS) will appreciate their impact on the audit opinion and decide if it is necessary to request a waiver instead.	M
Governance and Accountability: Possibility of corrupt practices including bribes, abuse of administrative and political positions, mis-procurement, and misuse of funds and so on, are a critical issue.	S	Robust FM arrangements (including a comprehensive annual audit of project accounts, World Bank FM implementation support including review of transactions and asset verification) designed to mitigate the fiduciary risks in addition to the project's internal control systems that will be strengthened and aligned to the emergency nature of the operation (including the recruitment of the internal auditor).	S
Overall Control Risk:	S		S
Overall FM Risk:	H		S

H= High; S = Substantial; and M = Moderate

- The FM risk is High and the FM residual risk is deemed Substantial considering the mitigating measures.

Table 2: FM Action Plan

Mitigating measures	Time-frame	Responsible body
1) Create a new PIU and recruit an FM specialist, and an Accountant based on ToRs acceptable to the World Bank	Before effectiveness	MCDE
2) Elaborate the PIM including the FM procedures manual	Before effectiveness	MCDE
3) Purchase, customize and parameterize the accounting software, to handle accounting and reporting needs under the project	No later than three months after effectiveness	PIU
4) Recruit an internal auditor to conduct ex-post reviews of the project transactions and procedures and to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed in a satisfactory manner	No later than three months after effectiveness	PIU
5) Recruit an external auditor to conduct annual financial audit of the financial statements of the project along with the review of the internal control system	No later than six months after effectiveness	PIU

1- FM and Disbursement Arrangements

5. **Staffing.** The PIU will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of FM activities and will be staffed with a qualified FM team comprised of an FM officer and an accountant. The team will be supported by an internal auditor. The team will ensure the transmission of financial data, archiving of financial data, and additional controls to be implemented in order to ensure accuracy and completeness of the project financial data. This also includes ensuring that every transaction is duly authorized and properly recorded and that assets are safeguarded.
6. **Budgeting.** Overall responsibility for preparing an annual work plan and related budget will lie with the PIU. The different steps of budget elaboration and management (preparation, revision, adoption, and execution) will be detailed in the FM section of the PIM. The annual work plan and budget will be prepared annually for approval by the Project Steering Committee and submitted to the World Bank for approval (No Objection) early enough to have them approved and included in the national finance law. A budget execution report will be included in the reporting scheme to enable the monitoring of the project implementation.
7. **Accounting Policies and Procedures.** The PIU's FM team will assume the overall responsibility for maintaining accounts associated with project's activities and ensuring that annual financial statements are produced in a timely manner, and in accordance with accounting standards that are in effect in Gabon.⁷⁶ This will be ensured through the purchase and customization of the accounting software used for the World Bank-financed projects in Gabon, that will be parameterized accordingly. The software might be capable of keeping records of the project financial activities and generate financial statements that are in line with the project reporting requirements. The software might be able to also record procurement transactions and keep track of the project assets.

⁷⁶ The Accounting principles set out by L'Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires–OHADA.

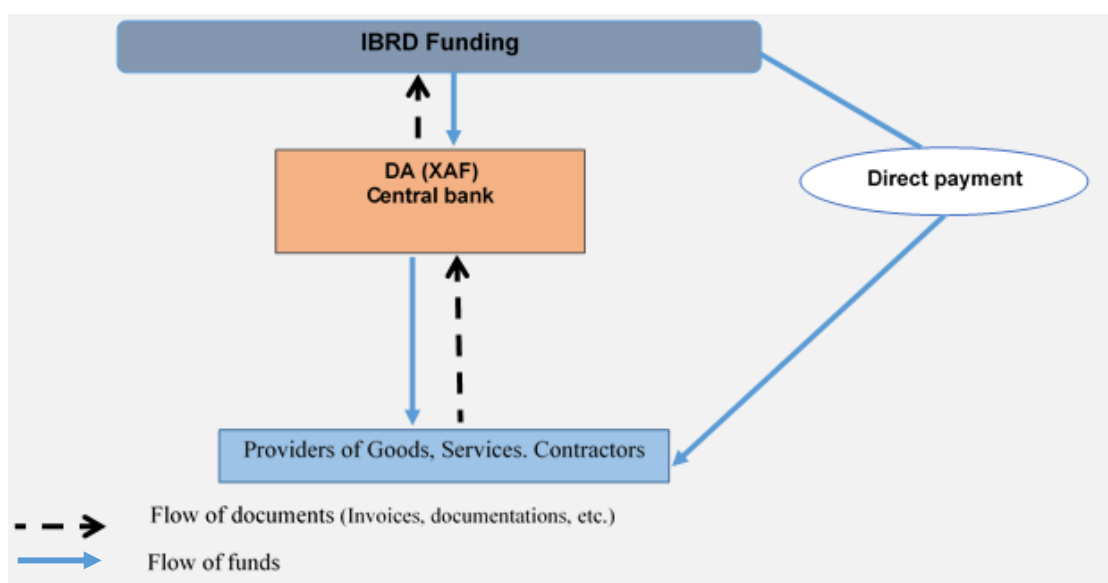


8. **Internal Control and Internal Auditing.** Administrative, financial, and accounting procedures will be specified in the Procedures Manual (Administration, Finance and Account). The manual will include a clear description of initiation and approval processes, and the designation of duties and responsibilities. The FM procedures' manual for eGabon will be customized to reflect the specificities of the project. The PIU will make use of the computerized accounting system to capture all project-related transactions. FM officers will be responsible for maintaining all controls to ensure: (i) that the project funds are used only for the purposes they were intended in an efficient and economical way; (ii) the preparation of regular, accurate, reliable, and timely financial reports; and (iii) that the project's assets are adequately safeguarded.
9. **To sustain the capacity building initiatives for the project team, the World Bank Finance and Loan Department and FM units will provide training to the project FM team on disbursement and FM procedures.** All of these measures will aim to further enhance the project's internal control system.
10. **Considering the complex nature of the project, and to ensure the integrity of the internal control environment and associated systems throughout the life of the project, an internal auditor will be recruited.** The internal auditor will conduct ex-post reviews of project's transactions executed in support of the project's activities. In addition, the Internal Auditor will be required to conduct a periodic review of the continuing adequacy of the internal control environment in general and report on its state to project management and the steering committee. Internal audit reports will be produced quarterly, or within a shorter period, depending on the risk matrix and its associated audit plan, both of which must be elaborated during the first month of the internal auditor's assignment.
11. **Financial Reporting and Monitoring.** Interim financial reports (IFRs) will be generated using the computerized FM system. They will be prepared and submitted to the World Bank within 45 days of the end of each calendar quarter. The content of the IFR will typically include: (i) the sources and uses of funds by the classification of project expenditures (detailed by components and activities); (ii) a comparison of budgeted and actual Project expenditure (commitment and disbursement) by date and for the quarter; (iii) a statement on the use of funds by component or activity; (iv) the DA activity; and (v) a physical progress report on project implementation. The format of the IFR has been included in the Disbursement Letter. At the end of each fiscal year, the project will prepare annual financial statements that will be subject to external audit.
12. **External Auditing.** The annual financial statements prepared by the PIU as well as the internal control system will be subject to an annual audit by a reputable and independent auditing firm based on ToR satisfactory to the World Bank.
13. **The scope of the audit will be tailored to the project's specific risks in accordance with World Bank requirements and will be agreed upon with the Government.** In particular, the independent auditor will audit the use of all funds flowing from the DA to beneficiaries. The project will comply with the World Bank's access to information and disclosure policies by making all disclosable audit reports (opinion report only) promptly available to the public after receiving them. The project's external auditor will be hired within four months of project effectiveness. A single audit opinion, in compliance with International Standards on Auditing, will be issued and will cover all project receipts, payments, and accounts. The audited financial statements, along with the auditor's report and management letter (incorporating management's comments), covering any identified internal control and accounting system weaknesses, will be submitted to the World Bank within six months of the end of each financial year.
14. **Funds Flow and Disbursement Arrangements.** The Borrower has requested, during negotiations, to open one DA in

XAF in the central bank. That option has not initially been considered by the World Bank during the FM assessment.

15. It has been agreed that the DA would be opened in the central bank subject to the fact that the central bank commits to: (i) ensure that project's funds transferred in that account will be used only to finance the project's activities as stipulated in the loan agreement; (ii) proceed to no advance, prefinancing or direct payment from the DA, to another account or beneficiary that has nothing to do with the project's activities; (iii) maintain during the project's life, a capacity to pay from the DA, the project's suppliers, consultants and other creditors in the deadlines as stated in the project procedures' manual; (iv) make available to the project's team, at least on a monthly basis, the account's bank statements for the purposes of reporting and preparation of withdrawal applications; and (v) provide the project's fiduciary team when requested, with any useful information on the account's movements.
16. Without prejudice to the aspects listed above, the Borrower will provide the World Bank with the conclusions of their consultations with the central bank on the opening of the DA. The World Bank will assess that option and its implications in terms of flow of funds, cash management and financial reporting, in order to ensure efficient and smooth project implementation; appropriate recommendations will then be formulated.
17. Specific actions and procedures regarding the DA will be specified in the project procedures' manual.
18. The DA will receive an initial deposit equivalent to the fixed ceiling amount disclosed in the DFIL and will be replenished regularly through monthly Withdrawal Applications. Direct payments will be made to service providers if needed as per disbursement letter. The Withdrawal Applications to replenish the DA will be signed by signatories appointed by the government. SOE-based disbursement will be used as method of disbursement for the project.

Figure 8: Disbursement Channel



19. The following table specify categories of eligible expenditures.



Table 3: Eligible Expenditures

Category	Amount of the Loan Allocated (expressed in EUR)	Percentage of Expenditures to be financed (inclusive of Taxes)
(1) Consulting services and operating costs for the project	16,259,500	100%
(2) Goods, works, non-consulting services, and training for Parts 1, 3 and 4 of the project	29,100,000	100%
(3) Goods, works, non-consulting services, and training for Part 2 of the project	10,700,000	100%
(4) Emergency expenditures for Part 5 of the project	0	100%
(5) Front-end fee	140,500	Amount payable pursuant to Section 2.03 of this Agreement in accordance with Section 2.07 (b) of the General Conditions
(6) Interest Rate Cap or Interest Rate Collar premium	0	Amount due pursuant to Section 4.05 (c) of the General Conditions
Total Amount	56,200,000	

20. Implementation Support Plan for FM. FM implementation support will be made available depending on intensity and frequency in line with a risk-based approach. An initial implementation support mission will be undertaken three months following project effectiveness. Thereafter, implementation support missions will be scheduled using the risk-based approach model, and will include the following activities: (i) monitoring of FM arrangements during the implementation support process at intervals determined by the risk rating assigned to the overall FM Assessment at entry, and subsequently during implementation (included in the implementation status and results report); (ii) integrated fiduciary review of key contracts; (iii) review of the IFRs; (iv) review of the audit reports and management letters from the external auditors and follow-up on material accountability issues by engaging with the task team leader, client, and/or auditors; the quality of the audit (internal and external) will also be monitored closely to ensure that it covers all relevant aspects and to ensure confidence with regard to the appropriate use of funds by recipients; (v) on the ground implementation support; and (vi) assistance to build or maintain appropriate FM capacity and efficient systems of internal control.

21. Conclusions of the FM Assessment. The overall FM residual risk at preparation is considered Substantial. The proposed FM arrangements for this project are considered adequate and meet the World Bank's minimum fiduciary



requirements.

Procurement

22. **Procurement for the project will be carried out in accordance with “The World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers”, dated November 2020.** The project is subject to the World Bank’s Anti-Corruption Guidelines: “Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects Financed by IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants”, dated October 15, 2006 and revised in January 2011 and as of July 1, 2016. Procurement activities for the project will be carried out by the MCDE.
23. **The procuring entity as well as Bidders, and Service Providers, i.e., Suppliers, Contractors, and Consultants shall observe the highest standard of ethics** during the procurement and execution of contracts financed under the project in accordance with paragraph 3.32 and Annex IV of the Procurement Regulations.
24. **The Borrower shall prepare and submit to the WBG a General Procurement Notice (GPN) and the World Bank will arrange for publication of the GPN in United Nations Development Business (UNDB) online and on the World Bank’s external website.** The Borrower may also publish it in at least one national newspaper.
25. **The STEP system will be used to prepare clear and update the Procurement Plans for procurement transactions.** This textual part, along with the PP tables in STEP, constitute the PP for the project.
26. **The Borrower shall publish the Specific Procurement Notices (SPN) for all goods, works, and non-consulting services and the Requests for Expressions of Interest on their free-access websites, if available, and in at least one newspaper of national circulation in the Borrower’s country, and in the official gazette.** For open international procurement selection of consultants using an international shortlist, the Borrower shall also publish the SPN in UNDB online and, if possible, in an international newspaper of wide circulation; and the WBG shall arrange for the simultaneous publication of the SPN on its external website.
27. **The WBG’s standard procurement documents will be used for all contracts that are subject to international and national competitive procurement** in accordance with paragraph 5.3 & 5.5 of the Procurement Regulations. This shall be specified in the Procurement Plan tables in STEP.
28. **The recruitment of civil servants as individual consultants or as part of the team of consulting firms will abide by the provisions of paragraph 3.23 (d) of the Procurement Regulations.**
29. **Procurement Assessment:** A assessment of the MCDE has been conducted in March 2021 to evaluate the adequacy of procurement arrangements under the proposed project. The assessment revealed ed that the MCDE has limited experience in the WBG procedures. Given (i) the restructuring of the e-Gabon project that shall take place and be hosted by MCDE; and (ii) the World Bank-financed e-Gabon project dispose staff who is currently executing the procurement, the proposed project will then be benefitted from this in-situ expertise. In addition, an initial capacity period of six months is envisioned to assure a smooth management handover. Additionally, intensive training modules will be quickly delivered to strengthen the procurement specialists and technical experts’ knowledge on the World Bank Procurement Regulations and on contract management.
30. **Institutional Arrangements for Procurement:** The MCDE is the government entity responsible for implementing the



project. The MCDE is ultimately accountable for meeting the project objectives, and providing oversight, monitoring and evaluation of project activities with the support of the coordinating unit. It is also responsible for providing the overall management of the project and guidance to sectorial ministries stakeholders and technical units that will be in charge of implementing project activities within their functional missions. External service providers (consultants, non-governmental, Service Providers, UN agencies, and TFPs) will be sought to accompany the sectoral ministries in the implementation of activities for which the needed expertise is lacking within the ministries.

31. **Procurement Risk Rating.** The overall procurement risk is **Substantial** due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and the change in management which will need necessary adjustments to reflect the suitable governance for the delivery of public services. The risk can be reduced to a residual rating of moderate upon consideration of successful implementation of the mitigation measures.
32. **Procurement Risks and Mitigation Measures.** To strengthen the new procurement unit, avoid noncompliance with the procurement framework and promote efficiency during the procurement execution, the following mitigating measures will be put in place: (i) the recruitment of qualified procurement staff and technical experts to be part of the PIU; (ii) the elaboration of the PIM for the proposed project that the procurement section will specify in detail roles and responsibilities of the involved entities in the procurement execution; and (iii) training workshops for the designated procurement officials handling procurement and technical staff responsible for project components/subcomponents to familiarize themselves with the World Bank procedures related to procurement implementation and contract management.
33. **Operational costs** financed by the proposed project would be incremental expenditures, including office supplies, vehicle operation and maintenance cost, communication costs, rental expenditures, utilities expenditures, consumables, transport and accommodation, per diem, supervision costs, and salaries of locally contracted support staff. Such services' needs will be procured using the procurement procedures specified in the PIM accepted and approved by the WBG.
34. **Training:** refers to the reasonable costs required for the participation of personnel involved in training activities, workshops and study tours under the project which have been approved by the Association in writing on annual basis, including: (i) travel, hotel, and subsistence costs for training, workshop and study tour participants provided that such allowances are paid directly to the eligible recipient using the banking system; and (ii) costs associated with rental of training and workshop facilities, preparation and reproduction of training and workshop materials, costs of academic degree studies, and other costs directly related to training course, workshop or study tour preparation and implementation; but excluding salaries of civil servants and sitting allowances and honorarium of any other nature. This revised definition of training will be applicable only for the proposed project.
35. **Filing and record keeping.** The PIM will set out the detailed procedures for maintaining and providing readily available access to project procurement records, in compliance with the Loan Agreement. The Implementing Agency will assign one person responsible for maintaining the records. The logbook of the contracts with unique numbering system shall be maintained. The signed contracts as in the logbook shall be reflected in the commitment control system of the Borrower's accounting system or books of accounts as commitments whose payments should be updated with reference made to the payment voucher. This will put in place a complete record system whereby the contracts and related payments can be corroborated.
36. **Procurement Methods and Thresholds.** Thresholds for procurement methods and prior review are shown below:



Table 4: Thresholds for Procurement and Prior Review

Expenditure Category	World Bank Prior Review or as Indicated in the PP
1. Works	All contracts estimated at US\$10,000,000 and above
2. Goods and Non-Consulting Services	All contracts estimated at US\$2,000,000 and above
3. Consulting Services	All TORs
	All contracts for Firms estimated at US\$100,000 and above
	All contracts for Individual Consultants estimated at US\$300,000 and above

37. **PPSD executive summary.** The PPSD has been prepared by the MCDE during the project preparation and is summarized in the following paragraphs.
38. **Market Analysis:** of the ICT market was conducted. With digital transformation being the key foundation and enabler for the 21st century economy, future growth prospects are high due to the rising population of people consuming and creating content through various online channels. The ICT market is very dynamic and growing very fast in terms of capacity, product/service offerings, and their associated costs. At the same, the implementation of the Digital Gabon project may be complex and lengthy. In this context, prior to inviting a group of vendors to participate in the consultations, the Borrower needs to define a minimum number of requirements for the desired systems and services. After that, the Borrower will be better positioned to proceed with a public procurement action for the purchase of the most suitable e-governments systems and public e-services packages. Open international advertisement will be the preferred approach for the development of back-office digital systems (such as interoperability platform, legal ID systems, etc.) and public e-services as well as infrastructure upgrades (such as ANINF data hosting) to achieve the value-for-money and fit-for-purpose results. The Borrower will also organize all the planned procurement activities to ensure that the project can be completed in a timely manner and within the available budget. However, communicating and consulting with reputable bidders, suppliers, and consultants will be important in attracting foreign competition.
39. **Preferred arrangement for the proposed project:**
- Development of digital infrastructure and its maintenance will be done via attracting and fostering the participation of big reputable international firms through international competition to provide turnkey solutions using Request for Proposals (RFP) (33 percent).
 - Goods, Commodities IT equipment acquisition including hardware and software licenses will be done through international consulting and reputable digital suppliers, public e-services and applications development, integration and connectivity packages through a suite non-consulting services rendered by reputable digital e-service providers (42 percent).
 - TA packages for the development of public e-services & legal and regulatory frameworks, specifications & functionalities; recruitment for the PIU staffing and project management; owner's engineering hiring to assist and augment technical and Management stakeholder's capability will be done using the RFP document for Qualifications and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) with open international advertisement of request Expression of Interests for the short list of qualified firms in ICT sector projects and contract management capabilities (19 percent).
 - Low value/low risk but important contracts will also be financed, including tailored capacity building and change management packages for public employees involved in the digitizing processes, different stakeholders and citizens, consultancy packages for the project management and governance.



40. **The total contracting packages represent 94 percent of the total budget of the proposed project.** The project will benefit from the HEIS to achieve high rate of success of the high value and high risks contracts and avoid delays and uncertainty of the procurement processes.

41. **Key Procurement under the project** is shown in the table below:

Table 5: Key procurement of the proposed project

Description		Method	World Bank Review	Approach	Budget (US\$ K)	Remark
1 Works						
	Digital platform for public administration e-services and applications				8,000	Multiple
1.1	Interoperability infrastructure	Turnkey solutions/ RFP	Prior	Open-Int	3,250	Multiple
	Electronic Procurement Platform				3,000	Multiple
	Government data Centers Platform				2,000	Multiple
1.2	Rehabilitation works of point of presences to house, public e-Services, and applications platforms	RFB/RFQ	Post		5,500	Multiple
	Sub-total (1)				21,750	
2 Goods, Commodities, IT equipment acquisition, Installation & Services						
2.1	Vehicles and office supplies packages	RFB/RFQ	Post	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat	2,465	Multiple
2.2	IT Equipment and software licenses acquisition for public e-services, application, and connectivity	RFP/RFB	Prior	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat	7,400	Multiple
2.3	Public applications and e-services development and Integration packages	NCS	Prior	Open-Int Limited-Int	16,370	Multiple
	Sub-total (2)				26,235	
3 Consulting Services						
3.1	Consultancy packages for defining public e-services, applications, legal frameworks, specifications, and functionalities	CQS QCBS ICS	Prior	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat	7,000	Multiple



	Description	Method	World Bank Review	Approach	Budget (US\$ K)	Remark
3.2	Consultancy packages for elaboration of strategy and action plans for the construction of digital Platform, deployment operation of back-office, public e-services, and e-procurement modules	SCQ QCBS ICS SSS	Prior/Post	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat Direct	700	Multiple
3.3	Batch Recruitment for the PIU staffing and project Management	ICS/SSS	Prior/Post	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat Direct	2,000	Multiple
3.4	Owner's engineering on Digital sectors to assist and augment technical and management stakeholder's capability	QCBS/SSS	Prior	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat Direct	1,800	Multiple
3.5	Communication campaign packages to inform on public e-services available for direct stakeholders and citizens	SCQ QCBS SSS	Prior/Post	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat Direct	1,735	Multiple
3.6	Consultancy for Audits, Gender Based Violence, Monitoring and Evaluation	SCQ/QCBS	Post/Prior	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat Direct	1,950	Multiple
Sub-total (3)					15,185	
4 Training and Change Management						
4.1	Training, capacity building and change management workshops, seminars for public employees involved in the digitizing processes, direct stakeholders, and citizens	Training NCS	Post/Prior	Open-Int Limited-Int Open-Nat Limited-Nat Direct	3,470	Multiple
Sub-total (4)					3,470	
SUB-TOTAL (investment)					66,640	97%
5 Operating cost and other investment available packages					1,860	
SUB-TOTAL (operating)					1,860	3%
TOTAL (proposed project)					68,500	100 %



Abbreviations:

Nat : National

RFB: Request for Bids;

NCS: Non-consulting services

QCBS: Quality and Cost Based Selection

Int : International

RFP: Request for Proposals.

SSS: Sole Source Selection

SCQ: Selection Based on Consultant's Qualifications

Prior/Post : à Priori/à Postérieur

RFQ: Request for Quotations

ICS: Individual Consultant Selection

42. **Procurement execution:** The large-scale digital transformation including in the proposed project entail a high level of uncertainty and complexity and are affected by varying degrees of change in scale and depth.
43. **Selecting appropriate strategies and suitable TA are key for the project outcomes.** Given the rapid digitizing of large public services, automation of the public procurement processes, which are driving infrastructure demand and the ICT market, the proposed project, through TA aim at addressing main issues such as the lack of methodology, unknown processes, products and technology, the need to reduce complexity and improve quality of public services assure strong leadership to manage interdependencies when in need, and clear communication with stakeholders and citizens.
44. **Increasing local procurement is key to ensuring smooth and rapid project implementation.** The procurement process needs to move swiftly for the digital transformation of the public administration. Considering the PIU under MCDE is newly established and the complexity of the project, the World Bank will provide procurement training on World Bank procedure and STEP. Additionally, the World Bank will lend the HEIS to provide reinforced assistance to the PIU to carry out these activities, as provided under the New Procurement Framework. Building procurement capacity shall ensure that World Bank procedures are followed to avoid any potential claims with issues from bidders, which could lead to significant delays.
45. **Training and Change Management are essential to establish a smooth swift during the digital transformation.** Beyond investments into the digital infrastructure, the proposed project needs to systematically support and address weak change management, country's culture, and human behavior. This will create a positive organizational mindset for employee adoption and usage of the new public e-services and increase human capital, digital literacy, knowledge, and skills.
46. **Procurement Plan for the project.** Based on the analysis of the PPSD, a comprehensive draft of the Procurement Plan had been prepared to take in account all planned activities and packages. In accordance with paragraph 5.9 of the Procurement Regulations, the World Bank's STEP system will be used to prepare, clear, and update PPs and conduct all procurement transactions for the proposed project. This text and the detailed procurement tables in STEP shall constitute the Procurement Plan for the proposed project. The following conditions apply to all procurement activities in the Procurement Plan. The other elements of the Procurement Plan, as required under paragraph 4.4 of the Procurement Regulations, are set forth in STEP.



ANNEX 2: Country Program Adjustment Responding to COVID-19

COUNTRY: Gabon Digital Gabon Project

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Gabon and government response

1. **Since mid-March 2020 when the first case of COVID-19 was registered in Gabon, there have been 24,591 officially reported cases and 154 deaths as of June 4, 2021.** All provinces have reported cases, but most cases concentrated in Libreville. With this steady increase in the number of cases in this second wave of the pandemic, hospitals are slowly becoming overwhelmed, counting 90 hospitalizations and 27 patients in Intensive Care Unit (ICU). In addition to the early response plan on March 16, 2020, in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), to cover the immediate health-related needs from the COVID-19 pandemic and given the second wave of the pandemic which has proven to be more contagious and virulent, government has elaboration its vaccination strategy and is ready for its roll-out. The Government also took a number of actions with respect to COVID-19 prevention, case detection and care, including the closure of borders; a ban on passenger flights; the closure of all restaurants, hotels and all entertaining structures, schools; and a two-week lockdown in Libreville and its suburbs. Schools were closed on March 14, 2020, after the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed on March 12, 2020. However, examination centers re-opened under very strict preventive measure in July 2020 to enable students sit for their end of course exams. To remedy the impact of school closures and maintain some form of continuous learning, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization via its “Train My Generation - Gabon 5000” project in Gabon, assisted the Government in developing distance-learning solutions for examination classes students. Thanks to this collaboration, the Gabonese Ministry of National Education launched, on April 14, 2020, a first online course program for examination-class students and plans to extend this program to primary, secondary, and technical education. Schools reopened for the academic year 2020/2021 on November 9, 2020, after almost eight months of closure.
2. **Because of the lockdown and the resulting sharp reduction in incomes, many households have faced difficulties in accessing critical supplies like food, power and water.** Employment is concentrated in the service sector which is largely informal. Self-employed and informal workers are highly vulnerable to income loss and unlikely to receive labor protections, resulting in high levels of poverty and vulnerability. Social protection is already underfinanced and the projected reduction in government revenues, due to economic recession and decline in oil revenues, might worsen the situation. Despite the gradual economic recovery expected in 2021 and 2022, the share of households living on less than US\$5.5/day is projected to decline only marginally, with the poverty rate expected to remain around 32.0 percent by 2022. The lack of resources in public primary health facilities and poor road networks further constrain access to quality healthcare in rural areas.
3. **The COVID-19 outbreak has worsened Gabon’s short-term economic outlook.** With an oil price assumption of US\$42 per barrel, economic activity in Gabon is now projected to contract by 2.4 percent in 2020, compared to a contraction of 0.4 percent anticipated in June and against an expansion of 3.4 percent expected before the pandemic. The fiscal position is expected to turn into a deficit of 5.4 percent of GDP in 2020, against a pre-COVID-19 crisis anticipated surplus of 1.3 percent of GDP. Likewise, the current account deficit is projected to widen to 7.6 percent of GDP (compared to a pre-COVID-19 crisis anticipated deficit of 2.0 percent of GDP). Market perception indicators for Gabon have, however, have improved since April 2020 as evidenced by reduced Emerging Market Bond Index spreads and an upgrade to a positive ratings outlook by Moody’s. These projections are affected by significant uncertainty and may be updated based on new conditions in the global oil market.



WBG support for responding to the crisis

4. **The WBG response to COVID-19 includes emergency financing, policy advice, and technical assistance through activities of projects in its active portfolio but also its lending portfolio.** A US\$9 million emergency health project - Gabon COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Project (SPRP) (P173927) - was approved under the Fast Track Facility in early-May 2020. The Access to Basic Services in Rural Areas Project (P144135) has also been restructured to introduce a CERC component which freed up resources (approximately US\$3 million) to finance WASH activities in schools and public places. In addition, funds from the ongoing Gabon Statistical Development Project (P157473) have been used to conduct a household phone survey to track the impacts of COVID-19 in Gabon. In response to a request from the government for the financing of its vaccination plan, the bank is preparing an Additional financing to the Covid-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Project of US\$10 million.
5. **This response to the pandemic addresses the four pillars of the WBG's COVID-19 Approach Paper in the following ways:**
 - (1) **Pillar I – To save lives:** Support to Gabon accounted for almost one third of the joint effort from Donors in support of the national response plan. Under the Fast Track COVID-19 Facility (FTCF), the US\$9 million COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Project (P173927) was approved in May 2020, to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by COVID-19 and strengthen national systems for public health preparedness in Gabon. It has already disbursed 68 percent of project funds, related to the main procurement operation with WHO to purchase COVID-19 response supplies. It is anticipated that support under Pillar 1 will increase, as Gabon has indicated its willingness to access, plan for and implement COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, which could be supported through an additional financing to the COVID-19 project (P176464: Gabon COVID-19 Additional Financing), which is planned for delivery in June 2021.
 - (2) **Pillar II – To protect the poor and vulnerable:** An Infection Prevention and Control Project (Water, Hygiene, Sanitation (IPC-WASH) in public Healthcare facilities and in highly overcrowded public places in the context of COVID-19 pandemic) was elaborated. The activity is executed under the Access to Basic Service in Rural Areas and Capacity Building project (P144135) through a CERC component which was put in place to set aside US\$3 million project funds for WASH. Its objective is to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 through IPC and WASH interventions in public health facilities, schools and at community level in Libreville. In particular, 20 public health facilities have been targeted and 757 schools, including primary and secondary schools and examination centers. Gabon COVID-19 Additional Financing (P176464), which is planned for delivery in June 2021 of US\$10 million will finance a vaccination plan which for now targets 20 percent of the people most vulnerable to the pandemic.
 - (3) **Pillar III – To save livelihoods, preserve jobs, and ensure more sustainable business growth and job creation:** The US\$30 million Support to Economic Diversification Project (P174723) is under preparation and planned to be delivered in FY22. The objective of the project is to support economic diversification in Gabon through policy reforms, facilitating access to finance and skills building to SMEs, implementing PPPs, and conducting strategic interventions in sectors that can help Gabon diversify its exports. Key project beneficiaries are public institutions and private sector operators, both domestic and foreign.
 - (4) **Pillar IV – To strengthen policies, institutions and investments for resilient, inclusive, and sustainable growth:** Through its Statistical Development Project (P157473) the World Bank carried out a rapid phone survey to assess the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and the strict containment measures implemented by the Government to limit the spread of the outbreak. This survey was done on household and firms.



6. An ASA, Pandemic Preparedness & Human Capital TA (P175260) is also being carried out for delivery in FY22, to support Gabon with both strategic and just-in-time TA to help deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and pandemic preparedness more generally, with a focus on Human Capital issues, especially in the areas of social protection and health.

Selectivity, Complementarity, Partnerships

7. Portfolio adjustments and new lending have been discussed with the authorities and shared with the other development partners for complementarity. There is close coordination with the WHO, UNICEF, French Development Agency, EU, AfDB, and IMF.