



The World Bank

Cote d'Ivoire Rural Land Tenure Management Strengthening Project (P179338)

Program Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 06-Dec-2022 | Report No:

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Program Data**

Country Côte d'Ivoire	Project ID P179338	Parent Project ID (if any)	Program Name Côte d'Ivoire Rural Land Tenure Management Strengthening Program
Region WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 24-Apr-2023	Estimated Board Date 13-Nov-2023	Does this operation have an IPF component? No
Financing Instrument Program-for-Results Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	Implementing Agency Agence Foncière Rurale	Practice Area (Lead) Urban, Resilience and Land

Proposed Program Development Objective(s)

The Program Development Objectives are to strengthen the National Rural Land Tenure Program (PNSFR) delivery systems, increase land registration efficiency, and increase land administration capacity.

COST & FINANCING**SUMMARY (USD Millions)**

Government program Cost	458.75
Total Operation Cost	210.00
Total Program Cost	210.00
Total Financing	210.00
Financing Gap	0.00

FINANCING (USD Millions)

Total World Bank Group Financing	200.00
World Bank Lending	200.00
Total Government Contribution	10.00



Concept Review Decision

The review did authorize the preparation to continue

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Since 2012, Côte d'Ivoire has been one of the fastest growing economies in SSA, displaying robust macroeconomic performance on the back of regained political stability. Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 8.2 percent per year (5.7 percent in per capita terms) over 2012–19. Growth has been supported by political stability after over a decade of political crisis, improvements in the business climate, and ambitious public investments. Although the country is yet to recover the ground lost since the 1980s, fast growth led to a 50 percent increase in real income per capita level since 2012.

Economic growth is expected to remain strong in the medium term on the back of increased private consumption and investment, but the favorable recovery outlook is subject to downside risks. After slowing to 2 percent in 2020, real GDP growth is estimated to have recovered to 6.2 percent in 2021 thanks to strong pre-COVID-19 fundamentals, low dependence on remittances and tourism, and a swift government response to the pandemic. GDP growth is projected to average 6.5 percent over 2022-25. Insecurity and political instability in neighboring countries could destabilize the northern part of the country and create fiscal pressures due to increased needs in security spending. Conversely, the socio-political climate has improved following the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2020 and 2021 and should be consolidated with the pursuit of national reconciliation efforts. The recent measures of reconciliation between president Ouattara and former president Gbagbo confirm an encouraging trend towards appeasement of the political situation.

The 2022 Poverty Assessment reveals significant spatial disparities. Between 2015-19, progress toward poverty reduction was uneven across the country, with poverty incidence declining by 6.9 percentage points (from 31.6 to 24.7) in urban areas while remaining high and decreasing by only 1.7 percentage points (from 56.4 to 54.7) in rural areas. Beyond the urban-rural divide, poverty reduction has been uneven across regions. Poverty declined rapidly along the eastern border with Ghana, while living conditions have significantly worsened along the western border with Liberia and Guinea. Moreover, while poverty incidence is higher in the north of the country, 40 percent of the population in extreme poverty lives in the Western regions. In some areas, particularly those where cash crop production (cocoa, rubber, and palm oil) is prevalent, living conditions actually worsened over the 2015-19 period.

The new National Development Plan (PND) 2021-25 paves the way for deepening structural reforms with a view to strengthening the resilience of the economy by making growth more inclusive, diversified, sustainable and more resilient to external shocks. The PND focuses on the structural transformation of the economy, development of human capital and job promotion, development of the private sector and investments, strengthening of inclusion, balanced regional development, preservation of the environment and fighting against climate change, strengthening of governance and modernization of the State and cultural transformation. To achieve the country's growth ambitions, the private sector will have to become the primary engine of development. This will require removing constraints to private sector growth, including a poor investment climate, cumbersome administrative procedures, and limited access to land, infrastructure, and finance.

At the same time, Côte d'Ivoire is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As the country is experiencing higher temperatures, droughts, floods, sea level rise and coastal erosion, with major impacts on economic activities and food



security, its development path is inherently linked to climate change. Côte d'Ivoire has one of the highest rates of deforestation worldwide. Between 1960 and 2020, forest cover was dramatically reduced, from 12 to 2.97 M ha, which is equivalent to a 25% decrease in tree cover and more than 1.71 Gt of CO₂e emissions. Timber resources are collapsing to such an extent that Côte d'Ivoire must increase timber imports to meet its growing needs. Furthermore, the current system of Forest Exploitation Perimeters (Périmètres d'Exploitation Forestière, PEF) encourages deforestation, since it excludes farmers from any gain associated with the value of the wood. To address these challenges, in May 2022, during the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification 15th Conference of Parties, the government announced a major program (Abidjan Legacy Program) to achieve 20% of forest recovery, increase agricultural productivity through mechanization and soil restoration, and make value chains more sustainable. The country has also made progress in climate-related policy and has set ambitious targets in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC, 2022). In the NDC, the government has committed to several climate adaptation and mitigation measures, including improving crop diversification and production techniques, and promoting techniques for enhancing soil fertility and conservation.

Sectoral (or multi-sectoral) and Institutional Context of the Program

The latest Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) (May 2022, Report No. 169415-CI) highlighted land reform as one of two prerequisites (along with governance) for supporting the country's recovery from the conflict and the transition toward peace and stability. There has been some progress on these areas, but fragilities remain. Asymmetric access to land and other assets continues to divide the population and contribute to persistent inequality, reflected in geographical disparities. Land is a key constraint to private sector-led growth (including for both small and large farms) and to natural capital preservation and social cohesion.

The lack of well-defined customary rural land rights and increasing competition over land due to population growth and migration contribute to land conflicts and constrain investment and sustainable development. The lack of tenure security – especially for migrant farmers, who are the primary tree crop growers – reduces farmers' incentives to make long-term investments, including in replacing aging cocoa and rubber trees and (re)introducing trees on their farms. In the absence of secure customary property rights and clear forest boundaries, it is difficult to identify which parcels are eligible for certification, and farmers have an incentive to clear new forest areas to physically demonstrate their rights. This undermines efforts to combat deforestation, preserve natural capital, and increase traceability in global supply chains.

Recognizing the need to secure rural land rights, in 1998 the Government enacted a new Rural Land Law (Law No. 98-750 of December 23, 1998) that provides for legal recognition and registration of customary land rights. The law originally aimed to transform customary land ownership rights into formally recognized and registered rights across 23 million hectares (ha) of rural lands within ten years.

The implementation of the Rural Land Law has been complicated by migrants' differential access to land titles as stipulated by the law, complex and costly registration procedures, and unclear institutional jurisdictions. The 1998 Rural Land Law was developed to clarify and formally register customary rural land rights to reduce land conflicts and secure access to land. However, the land certification process (envisioned as a precursor to land titling) is complex (requiring more than 20 steps and an unnecessarily high level of accuracy) and, as a result, very costly compared to other countries in the region with more fit-for-purpose land registration procedures (roughly US\$ 20/hectare (ha) vs. e.g., \$12/ha in Rwanda; \$14/ha in Uganda). Since the law does not allow non-Ivoirians to access land titles, its implementation has also been limited by the reluctance of many non-Ivoirian farmers to participate in the community-based land rights adjudication process, which requires the consent of all neighbors to confirm customary land ownership rights. Moreover, there was no specific provision to formally recognize the land use rights of migrant farmers. Rural, urban, and forest lands and rights of way for roads are also governed by different laws and ministries, requiring coordination across multiple ministries to finally (at the



end of the field registration operation) confirm the validity of customary land rights and the eligibility of each land parcel for certification, since only lands located within the Rural Tenure Domain can be certified. However, the boundaries of the Rural Tenure Domain are not mapped or demarcated, making it difficult to identify *ex ante* the lands eligible for certification, and there is no centralized GIS database of all rural property rights, including classified and declassified forests, existing land titles, and rights of way for infrastructure. Moreover, registration was conducted using an exclusively sporadic (on demand) approach, rather than a more efficient and inclusive systematic approach covering all parcels in a given area. As a result, from 1998 to 2018, only about 5,600 land certificates were delivered to customary landowners out of an estimated 1.5 million customarily held parcels.

To address these constraints, in 2016 the Government established the Rural Land Agency (Agence Foncière Rurale – AFOR) to supervise all rural land registration operations under a streamlined and simplified National Rural Land Tenure Security Program (Programme National de Sécurisation du Foncier Rural – PNSFR) and adopted a Rural Land Policy (in 2017) outlining its vision for sectoral reforms. Since 2018, with support from the donors' community including the \$50 million World Bank-financed Land Policy Improvement and Implementation Project (Projet d'Amélioration et de Mise en Œuvre de la Politique Foncière Rurale – PAMOFOR), the Government has enacted regulatory reforms and established the infrastructure, institutions, and capacity needed to significantly scale-up land registration through the nascent PNSFR. These include the development of strong capacity among AFOR headquarters and decentralized staff; the installation of new Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS) and connection of existing CORS to the national geodetic network; the operationalization of a new digital land information system (Système d'Information Foncière Rurale – SIFOR); and the piloting of new systematic land registration procedures that streamline the process, introduce formal land use contracts for landholders not eligible for land certificates, and encourage husbands to transfer land that is then registered in the wife's name. The government has developed a concept note for scaling up the PNSFR nationwide and has also drafted regulations to extend the validity of land certificates from three to ten years, as called for by the Rural Land Policy, and to simplify the certification procedures, but they remain under review.

The impact of these reforms is clearly visible in the doubling of the Land Certificates (Certificats Fonciers – CFs) issued in the past two years compared to the total issued over the previous twenty years. Only 5,671 land certificates had been issued from 1998 to 2018 out of an estimated 1.5 million rural plots (0.37 percent), 80 percent of which were delivered through externally-financed development projects. The pilot phase of PAMOFOR-financed land registration activities demonstrated: (i) strong landholder demand (with 20,300 requests for CFs, well above the pilot phase target of 16,000) and (ii) the value of using a large-scale, systematic registration approach that covers all parcels in a village at once, which has dramatically increased the efficiency of field operations. As a result, the Rural Land Agency has registered 14,500 additional parcels in the two last years, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. While this is still a small fraction of all the estimated rural land parcels nationwide, the process has not only clarified farmers' customary land use and ownership rights, thereby, reducing land conflicts and contributing to social cohesion, but also demonstrated the importance of clearly demarcating classified forest boundaries to support forest cover monitoring and traceability in cocoa and other key agricultural value chains. Crucially, the project has been instrumental in terms of piloting innovative tools, modern geodetic infrastructure, and the use of systematic and more inclusive registration approaches—all pre-requisites for achieving large-scale rural land registration. The project has so far successfully piloted new systematic land registration procedures in six regions, completed the first surveys benefitting from the new CORS stations, and operationalized the new digital land information system (SIFOR). Despite this progress, Côte d'Ivoire still has one of the costliest customary land certification processes in the region (still well over US\$ 200/parcel), resulting from the still-complex registration procedures, which require meter-level accuracy in anticipation of land titling, *ex-poste* validation of parcels' eligibility for land certification (location within the unmapped Rural Tenure Domain), paper-based (manual) documentation and a cumbersome manual chain of controls. At the current delivery rate, it would take 130 years to deliver 1.5 million CF. Women's access to land also remains constrained by their lower levels of legal awareness and conservative customary



norms that preclude women from owning land independently of male relatives, even though there are no legal restrictions (see paragraph 39). The PNSFR aims to strengthen women's land rights through land registration, and the PAMOFOR project has successfully implemented several interventions to strengthen women's customary land rights. These include a gender pilot to encourage customary marriage formalization and enable husbands to voluntarily transfer land to their wives prior to land certification. Overall, PAMOFOR has delivered 22 percent of CFs to female landowners.

The Government is requesting additional World Bank support to scale up the PNSFR program, codify and scale up the innovations already piloted, and test new procedural reforms, including to reduce costs and to strengthen women's rights and customary forest rights as a strong contribution to the fight against climate change. To respond to the high levels of landholder demand and momentum built through the PAMOFOR pilot land registration operation, the Government plans to scale up the PNSFR to 15 out of 31 regions with support from the World Bank, other development partners, and its own resources. The Government is committed to further increase the efficiency and inclusivity of the land registration procedures, including by identifying eligible parcels within the Rural Tenure Domain ex ante vs. ex post, fully digitizing the land registration process, scaling up interventions to strengthen women's land rights, and implementing more awareness raising on the newly introduced formal land use contracts to increase their uptake. Expanding the PNSFR to new regions will also require introducing additional innovations, including to secure pastoral rights of way and customary tree and forest rights to incentivize conservation and reforestation. Scaling up the PNSFR is both timely and necessary to support the Government's development ambitions, including to promote sustainable commercial agriculture, reforestation, sustainable and inclusive private sector-led development, and social cohesion, including in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

The proposed Program is aligned with and supports the achievement of the high-level goals of the World Bank Group (WBG) Western and Central Africa Region (AFW) Priorities for 2021-2025. Specifically, the proposed Program will contribute to the attainment of outcomes under High-Level Goal 1 (Rebuild trust between citizens and state), High-Level Goal 3 (Strengthen human capital and empower women), and High-Level Goal 4 (Ramp up climate resilience), including a key Activity (Reduce Land Degradation) under this fourth high-level goal. Strengthening inclusive service delivery is a first step toward rebuilding trust and the proposed project will directly contribute to an increase in the efficiency and inclusivity of the land registration procedures. Moreover, the proposed Program will contribute to scaling up the innovations already piloted during PAMOFOR, leading to a reduction in costs for land registration operations and to strengthening women's rights and customary forest rights as a strong contribution to the fight against climate change. In full alignment with High-Level Goals 1 and 3, the proposed Program will support the more inclusive community awareness campaigns (to build trust and avoid elite capture) and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms piloted by PAMOFOR that build on existing customary and social institutions to resolve any disputes that might arise. Furthermore, in support of achieving the outcomes under High-Level Goal 4, the proposed Program helps to clarify farmers' customary land use and ownership rights and emphasizes the importance of clearly demarcating private forest boundaries to support forest cover monitoring and traceability in cocoa and other key agricultural value chains and contribute to improved natural capital management.

Relationship to CAS/CPF

The proposed Program is aligned with the draft World Bank Group (WBG) Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY23-27 (December 2022). Significantly, the proposed Program will be the primary operation contributing to the achievement of outcomes under Objective 7 (Improve access to secured land) under High Level Outcome 3 (Promote private investment for economic transformation) once the current PAMOFOR project closes in September, 2023. This Objective is being carried over from the previous CPF (then Strategic Objective 4: Formalize and enhance access to land for business and agriculture) in recognition of the continued importance of land reforms. As noted in the SCD, implementing reforms to clarify and secure land rights remains critical to the country's transition toward peace and stability and to its ambition to



accelerate sustainable private sector-led growth. Formalizing and enhancing access to land for people and business is a priority and key to stability, reduction in fragility, and development. The SCD also acknowledges that accelerating land rights reforms will be key to promoting more sustainable agriculture and natural resource management, with positive effects also on social cohesion, investment, and productivity.

The Government considers tenure security a prerequisite for the modernization of the agriculture and forestry sectors, and the proposed Program will support the achievement of Côte d'Ivoire's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Registered land rights and informed land transactions are an incentive for both smallholders and private investors and a key prerequisite for shared growth. Land rights formalization is crucial for the gradual implementation of a documented land market that provides confidence to stakeholders and facilitates reliable business transactions. The country's NDC includes decoupling agricultural production and deforestation through the promotion of intensive agricultural practices that have a reduced impact on the environment, improving cropping schedules and production techniques, and promoting techniques for enhancing soil fertility and soil conservation, with the ultimate goal of increasing natural capital. In line with its 2019 Forestry Strategy, the Government also recently established standards for the sustainable production of cocoa, which include requirements to restrict deforestation and climate change, but enforcement of these standards is complicated by the lack of clearly demarcated forest boundaries and limited registration of rural farmlands. A documented and transparent land market will be more conducive to overall investment, traceability, and increased productivity. The Government therefore plans to scale up pilot efforts by PAMOFOR, the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, and the Federation of Professional Agricultural Organizations of Rubber Producers to demarcate private forests and register rural parcels at the agriculture-forest frontier through the proposed Program.

Rationale for Bank Engagement and Choice of Financing Instrument

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C. Program Development Objective(s) (PDO) and PDO Level Results Indicators

Program Development Objective(s)

The Program Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen the National Rural Land Tenure Program (PNSFR) delivery systems, increase land registration efficiency, and increase land administration capacity.

PDO Level Results Indicators

The proposed PDO level results indicators are presented below in Table 1.¹

Table 1. Proposed PDO level indicators

PDO level result	PDO level indicators *Indicates proposed DLI
Strengthened PNSFR delivery systems	1. Proportion of AFOR sub-prefectoral offices using the SIFOR*
Increased land registration efficiency	2. Average US\$ per Land Certificate (<i>Certificat Foncier, CF</i>) delivered* 3. Proportion of CF applications resulting in a signed CF* (disaggregated by gender of the landowner) 4. Proportion of existing land use contracts formalized* (disaggregated by gender of the land user)
Increased land administration capacity	5. Proportion of PNSFR-financed graduates employed in the land sector (disaggregated by gender of the graduate)

D. Program Description

PforR Program Boundary

Government program. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire's (GoCI) overarching program is the PNSFR for the period of 2023-2030. The Government program is the country's national land registration program that aims to operationalize the Rural Land Policy and is structured around three Pillars (Figure 2): (i) strengthen rural land administration institutions; (ii) scale up delivery of land tenure documents; and (iii) prepare for the future through training.

PforR scope. The proposed PRESFOR PforR Program will support the implementation of the Government program and, specifically, a geographic subset of the country's regions (15 of 31) and most activities under the three pillars of the program. Table 2 summarizes the differences between the scope of the PforR Program and the PNSFR program, and Figure 3 highlights the 15 regions that would be targeted by the PforR Program.

¹ Since there are no existing data on the number of land certificates or contracts likely to be requested within the Program area, it is not possible to estimate a target number of CFs/contracts to be delivered by the Program. Moreover, the Program aims to ensure the Government has the resources and tools necessary to efficiently deliver documents in response to all applications. Hence, the proposed PDO indicators focus on the proportion of applications that result in land document delivery.

**Table 2. Government PNSFR program and PRESFOR PforR supported by the World Bank**

	Government program	Program supported by the PforR (PRESFOR PforR)	Reasons for non-alignment
Duration	2023-2032	2024-2029	
Geographic Coverage	Entire country	15 regions (out of 31)	Priority engagement for the World Bank in source regions for sustainable value chains (cocoa, rubber, cashew) to reduce natural capital loss/restore forests, conflict-affected regions, and economically lagging regions
Results Areas	Pillar 1 "Strengthen rural land administration institutions"	RA1: Strengthen PNSFR Delivery Systems	Partial alignment with Pillar 1: World Bank support will not be provided for classified forest demarcation
	Pillar 2 "Scale up the delivery of land tenure documents"	RA2: Support PNSFR Implementation at Scale	Partial alignment with Pillar 2: World Bank support will not be provided for land titling, since non-Ivoirian nationals are ineligible for titles under the Rural Land Law and since the cumbersome titling procedures remain unaffordable for the vast majority of Ivorian citizen while the formal land certificate provides a sufficient level of security
	Pillar 3 "Prepare for the future through training"	RA3: Strengthen Land Administration Capacity	Full alignment with Pillar 3
Overall Financing	US\$459 million	US\$210 million (including \$10 million counterpart financing)	The difference would be covered ² by the Government and other donors, e.g., AFD, EU, and World Cocoa Foundation members

²The expected resources will be committed over time.



Figure 3. Map of PNSFR Regions Highlighting the Regions Supported under the PforR Program (orange)

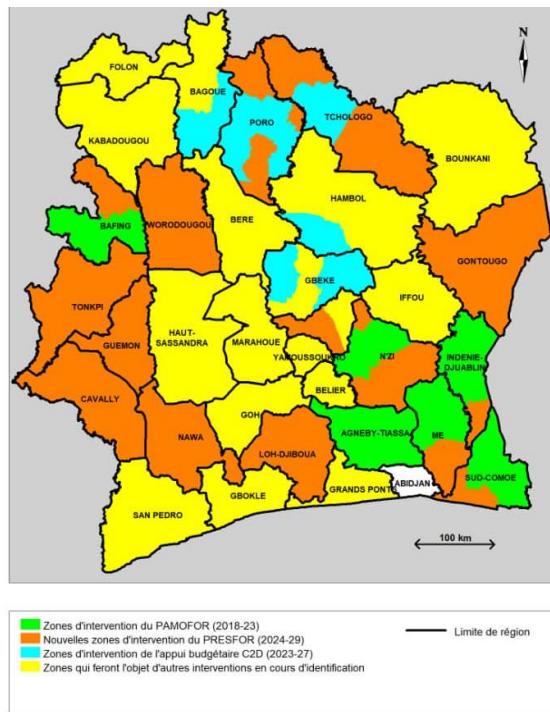
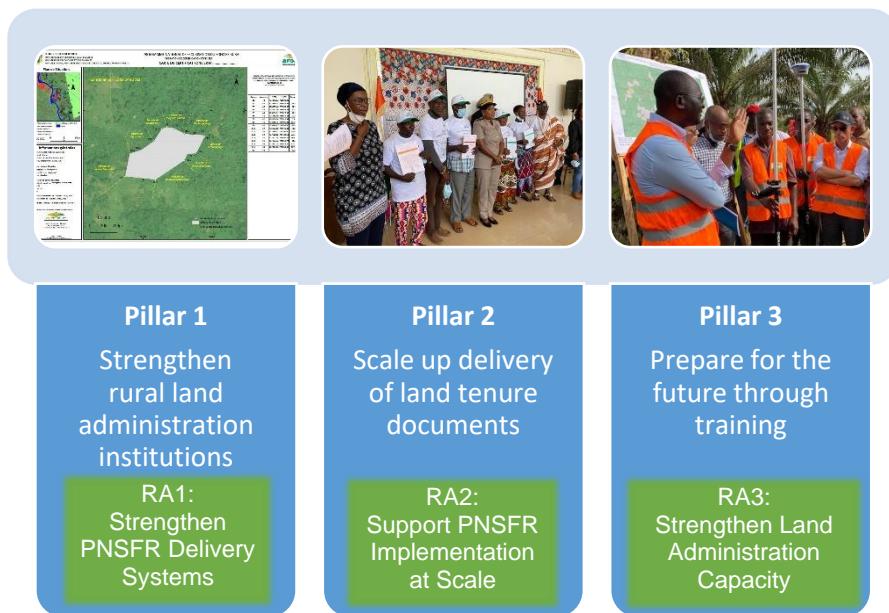


Figure 2. Government PNSFR and PRESFOR PforR (green boxes)



Program Results Areas. The Program will support the following three RAs to contribute to the outcomes of the Government program (RA1 and RA3 are designed to support effective RA2 implementation at scale):



a. **RA1: Strengthen PNSFR Delivery Systems.** Under this RA, support will incentivize the following:

- i) Full staffing of the PNSFR program
- ii) Procurement and mobilization of digital technologies, and
- iii) Establishment of decentralized AFOR offices to support on-going land administration (transaction registration).

b. **RA2: Support PNSFR Implementation at Scale.** Under this RA, support will be provided for:

- i) Large-scale systematic land use and ownership rights registration and
- ii) Piloting, evaluating, and scaling up low-cost, digitized land registration innovations.

c. **RA3: Strengthen Land Administration Capacity.** Under this RA, support will be provided for:

- i) Technical and financial assistance for the development and delivery of graduate, vocational, and on-the-job gender-sensitive training on land administration for village level and central land sector professionals.

A preliminary list of Disbursement Linked-Indicators (DLIs) was developed jointly with GoCI counterparts as part of the Theory of Change based on existing knowledge of key constraints in the three RAs. The initial list of proposed DLIs is presented in Figure 1 and Table 1 above (PDO indicators with an * denote potential DLIs). The DLI list will be further prioritized and refined during preparation in line with the results of the Program assessments and narrowed down to provide adequate incentives for achievement of priority results and improvements under the Program. The composite DLIs will have separate measurable annual Disbursement Linked Results (DLR) targets and will include gender disaggregation where relevant to track the closure of gender gaps in the land sector.

E. Initial Environmental and Social Screening

Environmental and social impacts of the Program. A desk review of the proposed Program suggests that the activities as currently described should not pose any significant threats or cause adverse environmental and social impacts. The risk at the concept stage is rated at Moderate to Substantial based on the inclusive land registration procedures introduced by PAMOFOR, which are expected to be scaled up by the proposed operation, and given AFOR's demonstrated capacity to successfully avoid and mitigate environmental and social risks. The rating will be further refined pending more details about the exact scope of the Program and based on the outcomes of the Environmental and Social Systems Assessment. The activities will need to be further refined (in terms of scale, location, etc.) so that associated environmental and social impacts can be adequately assessed and rated for residual risk. That said, particular attention will continue to be paid to raising the awareness of all stakeholders on the rights eligible for registration and to facilitating dialogues between tenant farmers and customary landowners to resolve any differences in understanding and ensure the registration of customary land transfers reflects their existing agreements. The Program will exclude all activities that pose a risk of potentially significant and irreversible adverse impacts on the environment or affected people. Excluded financing would include investment activities that are high risk.

The proposed Program will contribute to the reduction of deforestation in private forests and reforestation because of the registration of the private (individual and group) rights to trees. Possession of a legal land rights document (whether a CF or a formal land use contract) will also increase the tree regeneration and planting in the rural areas by farmers who will now be the legal owner of those trees according to the forest regulation.



The World Bank

Cote d'Ivoire Rural Land Tenure Management Strengthening Project (P179338)

Environmental and Social Systems Assessment (ESSA). The ESSA will assess against the requirements of OP/BP 9.0, the relevant systems of the GoCI and the capacity of AFOR and the key partners in rural land management and in environmental and social risk management. Any gaps or areas of improvement in these systems will be addressed in a mutually agreed Program Action Plan. Examining the systems and capacity would include a review of the management of similar projects, in particular the PAMOFOR project.

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