



**The World Bank**

Mauritania Agriculture Development and Innovation Support Project (P168847)

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# Project Information Document (PID)

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Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 14-Oct-2022 | Report No: PIDISDSA35043

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Mauritania	Project ID P168847	Project Name Mauritania Agriculture Development and Innovation Support Project	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 13-Oct-2022	Estimated Board Date 14-Nov-2022	Practice Area (Lead) Agriculture and Food
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministère des Affaires Economiques et de la Promotion des Secteurs Productifs	Implementing Agency Ministère de l'Agriculture	

## Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve land resource management and foster inclusive and sustainable commercial agriculture in selected areas of Mauritania.

## Components

Community-Driven Territorial Development and Preservation  
Inclusive Commercial Agriculture  
Project Management and Monitoring & Evaluation  
Contingency Emergency Response to Crisis (CERC)

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)****SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	50.00
Total Financing	50.00
of which IBRD/IDA	50.00
Financing Gap	0.00

**DETAILS**

**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	50.00
IDA Credit	50.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

**B. Introduction and Context****Country Context:**

1. **Mauritania is essentially a desert country, with vast expanses of pastoral land and only 0.5 percent of arable land.** The population is about 4.6 million (2020), and the density of 4 inhabitants per square kilometer makes it one of the least densely populated countries in the world. Further, more than half of Mauritians (53 percent) live in urban areas (2017). Rural life remains dominated by transhumance and semi-nomadic livestock raising while sedentary agriculture (both irrigated and dryland) is mainly concentrated along the Senegal River in the south and the south-eastern regions of the country. Natural resource wealth (mainly iron ore, crude oil, and natural gas) boosted Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita to US\$1,702 in 2010, up from US\$722 in 2005, lifting Mauritania into the ranks of Lower-Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).

2. **COVID-19 severely impacted the economy, leading to a growth contraction of 1.8 percent in 2020.** In 2021, growth recovered to 2.3 percent, fueled by a strong extractive sector and fewer containment measures. The annual average inflation increased from 2.4 percent in 2020 to 3.6 driven by food prices which contributed 2.9 percentage points to the index in 2021. The medium-term outlook is broadly favorable. Growth is projected to increase to 4.5 percent in 2022 as the government reaches its target to vaccinate 65 percent of the population by mid-2022 and the spread of the virus slows significantly. This is lower than the pre-pandemic level (5.8 percent) and the potential (5.5 percent). In per capita terms, growth will average 3.3 percent for 2022-24, as per pre-pandemic average (3.4 percent for 2016-2019). The outlook is subject to several risks including an emergence of new COVID-19 variants, sustained inflationary pressures, climatic hazards, delayed structural reforms, and regional insecurity.

3. **Although it has improved in recent years, Mauritania's business and regulatory environment remains difficult for the private sector.** Several challenges constrain the business environment, including heavy State involvement, lack of competition, mismanagement and rent seeking. Even when the economy has been increasingly deregulated over the last decade and the economic legal environment substantially



reformed, the strict regulation imposed by the Government through the licensing regime, creates a heavy burden for the private sector, particularly SMEs. Moreover, an oligopolistic market structure dominated by certain elites makes the market entry more difficult. In the agriculture sector, the lack of access to land owing to the failure to recognize land rights is also an important impediment. As a result, growth in private sector investment, although steady, has been slow in the recent years.

#### **Sectoral and Institutional Context:**

4. **The agriculture sector plays a key role in the economic development of Mauritania.** The sector generates about 25 percent of national GDP and provides employment to 51 percent of the population. The livestock subsector accounts for 75 percent of agriculture GDP and has been one of the most important drivers of the decline in poverty in the past years<sup>1</sup>. The sector has grown more slowly than the overall economy with average growth rates of 1.5 percent per year over the 2015-2019 period. As a result, the bottom 40 percent of Mauritarians remain predominantly rural livestock and agricultural producers.

5. **Mauritania has a huge but largely untapped agriculture potential predicated on its substantial land and water resource endowment.** However, a large fraction of the country's cultivable land is currently not exploited or under-exploited due to several factors such as inadequate land governance, lack of water, and inefficient practices and technologies. According to the MoA, there are around 530,000 ha of farmland that could be developed (with an irrigable area of about 135,000 ha under full or partial irrigation if (i) proper land use modalities are agreed with local communities currently benefiting from the land; (ii) irrigation water is provided; and (iii) productive technologies are introduced for large scale and/or intensive production.

6. **Limited attention has been paid to rainfed areas over the past decades.** Driven by a food security policy anchored to the principle of self-sufficiency, agriculture public spending in Mauritania has been, in its vast majority, oriented towards irrigated areas for rice production along the Senegal river valley as well as (to a lesser extent) the milk value chain. Meanwhile, Mauritanian drylands have benefited only from limited public spending, essentially in the form of hundreds of small and medium scale water management infrastructures.

7. **Due to several factors, productivity in the agriculture sector is low.** With production dispersed across vast areas, low population density and poorly articulated value chains, agricultural services delivery remains weak and uneven across Mauritania. Access to financial services is almost non-existent for most smallholders. In addition, the sector has barely benefitted from technological innovation, spanning from improved seeds to post-harvest technologies through improved agricultural practices. The National Center for Agronomic Research and Agricultural Development (CNRADA) has been starved of resources and no longer has a cadre of trained researchers. Consequently, research on drought resistant dryland crops is nearly nonexistent and the sector is highly impacted by climate change. The lack of research is compounded by weak institutions to deliver the knowledge on the ground. The provision of extension services also remains limited in scope, quality, and time (often linked to externally funded time-bound projects) and private advisory service providers are absent. The deconcentrated services of both MoA and the Ministry of Livestock (MoL) lack capacity and adequate resources, and, hence, the allocative efficiency and service provision gains anticipated from the decentralization process have not yet materialized.

8. **Vulnerability to climate change compounds Mauritania's agriculture development challenges.**

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Republic of Mauritania: "Turning Challenges into Opportunities for Ending Poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity", Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD), World Bank Group, 2017.



Mauritania is vulnerable to climate change due to its location along the Sahel, the desert climate of the Sahara, and its socioeconomic characteristics. While 75 percent of the country is part of the Sahara and largely uninhabited, 25 percent lies within the semi-arid Sahel. The Sahel is impacted by climate change through increased temperatures and related heat waves, and higher variability of precipitation. In addition, competing interests for land in a region with very high dependency of livelihoods on natural resources, population growth, poverty, complex governance structures and related conflicts add to the vulnerability of the region and its population.

**9. To address the challenges facing the agriculture sector, the Government of Mauritania has adopted a set of strategies in support of the sector.** The national Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP), the overarching Government strategy for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, is translated at sector level into the National Agricultural Development Program (PNDA) (2015-2025) and the National Livestock Development Program (PNDE) (2018-2025). The PNDA (2015-2025) puts emphasis on promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) as an integrated approach to managing landscapes to help adapt agricultural methods, livestock and crops to climate change while also increasing agricultural productivity. It also recognizes that water management and the maintenance of hydro-agricultural infrastructures is a very acute issue. Regarding food security and resilience, the National Food Security Strategy (SNSA, 2012) puts emphasis on the multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral nature of food security. With regard to improving landscapes and better harnessing water resources for agriculture, Mauritania is a member of the Sahel Irrigation Initiative and signed the Dakar Declaration through which the country has committed to scale up investments in water resources management.<sup>2</sup>

**10. These strategies are complemented by the Government's new vision for making better use of agricultural and pastoral lands.** Under this new vision, the objective is the rational development of land resources with a fourfold focus: (i) socio-political: the need to recognize traditional land rights with the view to reinforcing social cohesion and national unity; (ii) economic: with the aim of achieving greater food self-sufficiency through import substitution and generating additional foreign exchange through agricultural exports; (iii) technical: through the introduction of new more productive technologies and practices for rational exploitation of the land; and (iv) social: to permit all categories of the Mauritanian population, including the landless and vulnerable groups, to have access to land resources, hence reducing income disparities and alleviating rural poverty. The above vision is reflected in a strategy with two basic pillars: (a) the first pillar aims at supporting local community development with a focus on small agriculture, social investment, and poverty alleviation at the grassroots; and (b) the second pillar is based on the development of Agriculture Opportunity Growth Zones (ZOCAs)<sup>3</sup> through productive and intensive use of land by large scale farms in association with existing smallholders. These two pillars are expected to revive agriculture in selected areas of Mauritania, with the view to reducing the deficit of foodstuffs on the domestic market and generating export to niche markets, as well as preserving and sustaining environmental resources.

<sup>2</sup> The Sahel Irrigation Initiative was launched by six Sahelian countries coordinated by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), supported by the regional economic communities and the World Bank. It comes in the wake of the 2013 Dakar Forum on Irrigation in the Sahel, which ended with the adoption of a Declaration by the Governments of Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad and their partners. The Declaration recommended ensuring "that all hydro-agricultural developments be based on appropriate sectoral strategies, which are integrated in a value chain approach and based on a rational and sustainable use of available resources".

<sup>3</sup> By its French acronym: 'Zone d'Opportunité de Croissance Agricole' (ZOCA)



## C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

### Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

11. The PDO is to improve land resources management and foster inclusive and sustainable commercial agriculture in selected areas of Mauritania.

### Key Results

The PDO-level results indicators are:

- I. Land area under sustainable landscape management practices (number of hectares);
- II. (Number of farmers reached with agriculture assets or services (disaggregated by gender);
- III. (Increase in productivity of key targeted crops (disaggregated between rainfed and within the ZOCA areas) (metric tons per hectares); and
- IV. Direct project beneficiaries (number disaggregated by gender).

## D. Project Description

12. Along the twin pillars of the Government's new agricultural development strategy, the project has two distinct but complementary technical components: (i) Component 1 – Community-driven territorial development and preservation, focusing on restoring the productive capacity of the agriculture base and the resilience of people in selected SWSS; and (ii) Component 2 - Inclusive commercial agriculture, focusing on intensive large scale production under irrigated conditions in Agricultural Growth Opportunity Zones (ZOCAs). Component 3 consists of overall project management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities, and Component 4 is a zero-allocation Contingency Emergency Response to Crisis (CERC).
13. **Component 1 – Community-driven territorial development and preservation (US\$17.5 million)**. This component will enhance agriculture sustainability under changing climatic conditions and strengthen resilience of beneficiary rural households in selected rainfed areas of Mauritania. This will be achieved through a combination of climate-smart investments to: (i) rehabilitate and enhance the productivity of selected landscapes by rehabilitating small-scale water management infrastructures and investing in soil conservation and restoration as well as afforestation; (ii) support producers' to tap into the productive potential of the rehabilitated landscapes by promoting access to CSA technologies and services; and (iii) augmenting the economic base of rural households in the project area by supporting IGAs and facilitating entrepreneurial activities that enhance resilience. The planning and selection of investments will be climate-informed and rely strongly on a participatory planning process, conducted at the sub-watershed level, and which engages local communities to express their needs and priorities. The component will also strengthen the capacity of institutions involved to sustainably manage natural resources with a focus on the MoA and affiliated entities. It will include activities focused on the specific needs of women and youth.
14. **Component 2 – Inclusive commercial agriculture (US\$27.5 million)**. Component 2 will support the development of commercially oriented intensive agriculture production systems by large agribusiness investors and SMEs under PPPs established between the Government, the investors, and the local communities. Commercial orientation of agri-entrepreneurs will lead to increased income, a better ability to preserve assets in the face of shocks, and higher capacity to accumulate assets and smooth consumption during shocks, all of which enhance the resilience of producers and



actors long the agricultural value chain. Component 2 will support the development of two pilot ZOCAs on suitable potentially irrigable land sites.<sup>4</sup> The availability of land for the pilot ZOCA block(s) will be negotiated with local communities. Negotiations with communities and implementation of the PPP process underlying ZOCA deployment will be predicated on a go/ no-go sequence of steps involving all interested parties.

15. **Component 3 - Project management, monitoring and evaluation (US\$5.0 million).** This component will support the operations of the Project Management Unit (PMU) at central and regional (*wilaya*) levels. The component will finance (i) the equipment of the national and regional PMUs, including vehicles, office furniture and IT equipment, field tools, etc., and attendant running costs such as staff salaries and subsistence allowances, consultant fees, internal and external audits, etc., as well as all expenditures related to utilities and energy consumption; (ii) staff training (with focus on the Environmental and Social Management Framework – ESMF, MIS and Kobotool Box, financial management and procurement, as well as Grievance Management and Gender-Based Violence prevention measures). It will also finance the costs of project M&E activities, as well as the project sensitization and communication campaigns.
16. **Component 4 - Contingency emergency response component (US\$0.00).** The component will include a Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC), designed to provide swift response in the event of an eligible crisis or emergency, defined as '*an event that has caused, or is likely to imminently cause, a major adverse economic and/or social impact associated with natural or man-made crises or disasters.*' No allocation is made for this activity which will be funded as required from other components as the need arises through reallocation of proceeds.

#### Legal Operational Policies

##### Triggered?

Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	Yes
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

#### Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

17. **The project will be implemented under the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).** The project risk rating is Substantial for environmental, social and SEA/SH. Therefore, the overall Environmental and Social (E&S) Risk of the project is classified as Substantial. No irreversible impacts are expected to date and will be managed through strong mitigation measures.
18. **The main environmental risks and impacts identified in frameworks documents are related to:** (i) potential vegetation clearing of vegetation, (ii) labor and working conditions, including traffic safety and labor influx, (iii) nuisances like dust and noise, (iv) occupational health and safety issues related to civil works, including the risk of contamination risk from COVID-19; (v) community health and

<sup>4</sup> Project support to the ZOCA perimeter(s) is conceived as a pilot to later inform the rollout of the entire ZOCA program at national level to attract investors interested in developing large-scale land-based agro-industrial operations (blocks of 300-400 ha) and allow SMEs (5-20 ha/ average 10 ha) to develop intensive commercial agriculture alongside the large producers.



safety, (vi) solid and liquid waste management, including chemical materials and the risks associated with increased use of agrochemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.). However, most of the risks and impacts likely to be generated by the project activities will be site-specific, temporary, and manageable to acceptable levels by implementing proper mitigation measures and applying good construction industry best practices.

19. Key social risks are related to occupational health and safety, working conditions, (especially for prospective community workers) and grievance management for workers. Based on experiences in the agricultural sector, there is also a potential risk of the use of child labor. Other significant risks include possible temporary or permanent physical and economic displacement because of impacts from project activities, and the exclusion (if not properly monitored) of women and girls, returnees, and other vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, elders, and youth; stakeholder risks, especially in relation to adequately addressing cultural considerations and community concerns related to competing land uses and access to resources. These include concerns related to access to water and the recognition of customary land tenure and land uses, which can exacerbate conflict, as well as misgivings or mistrust among stakeholders who do not receive grants. In addition, as several activities that involve restoring/upgrading physical infrastructures have been identified, both skilled and unskilled laborers could be brought in, which heightens certain labor-related risks involving the health and safety of workers, fair wages, and working conditions, and the protection of women workers.
20. **Measures to mitigate risks and impacts have been set out in prepared documents:** the project Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) disclosed on June 9, 2022, a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), Labor management procedures (LMP) including workers GM, Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) including the project Grievance Mechanism (GM). The RPF, LMP and SEP were disclosed in the country on May 31, 2022. SEA/SH Prevention and Response Action Plan (included in ESMF) in line with the World Bank Good Practice Note on Addressing Sexual Exploitations and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) in Investment Project Financing. The Pest Management plan (PMP) prepared for the Irrigation Initiative Support Project (SIIP) P154482 has been updated to address potential risks and impacts related to use of agrochemicals. It will be approved and disclosed prior to the negotiations.
21. **A National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) will be established** and staffed with full time experts, including: an environmental specialist and a social development specialist. Furthermore, during implementation, consultants in the areas of SEA/SH, Occupational Health, and Safety (OHS) will be recruited as required to address these specific issues.

## E. Implementation

### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

22. **The MoE will have overall institutional project oversight whilst the MoA will be accountable for project day-to-day execution.** MoE will provide the overall strategic guidance to project implementation, through the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC will review and approve the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB), as well as the official progress reports, and make recommendations for adjustment. The PSC will be chaired by a high-level staff of MoE. The other



members of the PSC will include representatives of relevant MoE Departments<sup>5</sup>, and representatives of the MoA and Ministry of Livestock<sup>6</sup>, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization (MOID) the Ministry of Hydrology and Sanitation (MoHS), the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MoESD), the Ministry of Oil, Mining and Energy (MOME). as well as representatives of the federations of Agriculture and Livestock.

23. **A National PMU(N-PMU) will be established at MoA to take charge of the day-to-day project management.** The N-PMU will be established at the Office of the Secretary General of MoA<sup>7</sup>. The N-PMU will have responsibility for (i) fiduciary management, including the management of the project accounts and procurement activities; (ii) environmental and social safeguards compliance; (iii) project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities; and (iv) technical backstopping of implementation. It will act as the secretariat to the PSC. The N-PMU will have two technical sections, responsible for implementation of Components 1 and 2, and a separate one responsible for Component 3. Component 1 staff will report technically to the MoA while Component 2 staff will report technically to the MoE (PPP directorate) which will oversee the ZOCA development activities. The required technical assistance will be provided to strengthen MoE's technical services, including its PPP Directorate and the APIM to enable them to provide the specialized support required to implement the ZOCA program.
24. **At regional and community level, project strategic guidance will be vested with the Regional Development Committees (CRDs) and Commune Coordination Committees (CCCs).** The CRDs are chaired by the regional governors (*Walisi*). At the community level, the CCCs are chaired by the head of the department or prefect (*Hakem*). The key stakeholders will be tasked with ensuring *inter alia* that project planned activities are well articulated with the priorities as exhibited in the regional and commune's Local Development Plans (PDLs).

## B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

25. **M&E responsibilities.** The PMU will develop the project M&E procedures as part of the overall PIM. The specific M&E manual will: (i) identify M&E roles and responsibilities; (ii) provide common references for results framework indicators; (iii) define the characteristics of the project monitoring and tools; (iv) identify indicators to track progress (results chain); (v) define the purpose and type of specialized evaluations and studies; (vi) monitor complaints; (vii) collect best practices/ case stories; and (viii) provide a format for the project progress reports and the project completion report. The PMU has the overall responsibility for producing progress reports every semester, as well as for the

<sup>5</sup> Notably the Directorate of Public Private Partnerships (DGPPP) and the Agence de Promotion des Investissement en Mauritanie (APIM).

<sup>6</sup> Directorate of Strategies, Cooperation and Monitoring and Evaluation (DSCSE); Directorate of Statistics and Agropastoral Information Systems (DSSIA); Directorate of the Development of the Agricultural Subsectors and Extension Services (DDFCA); Directorate of the Development of Animal Sectors and Pastoralism (DDFAP); Directorate of Rural Planning (DAR); Directorate of Veterinary Services (DSV); National Center for Agricultural Research and Agricultural Development (CNRADA); National Office for Research and Development of Livestock (ONARDEP).

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of managing the PPA resources and activities, project management has been entrusted to the Bank-financed PARIIS' project PMU under PARIIS project.



MTR and the end of project final evaluation.

26. **Results Framework.** A rapid assessment was conducted to establish preliminary baseline values as well as project targets. A comprehensive baseline survey (household survey) is planned for the first year of the project which will be followed by a midterm evaluation in third year and a final evaluation in the fifth year. The baseline survey, mid-term impact evaluation, and final impact evaluation will be contracted to a consulting firm.
27. **Project performance evaluation.** Achievements and progress toward results will be measured at project inception, MTR, and end-project stage, based on information reflected in indicators of the results framework and additional ad-hoc indicators as may be required under the results chain. The data will be collected based on specific protocols for data collection per indicator, household surveys and potential other independent qualitative evaluations (such as evaluation of IGAs, beneficiary satisfaction, gender evaluations, qualitative study of extension services and adoption of technologies, technical audit of infrastructures, etc.). The qualitative evaluations will be agreed by the PSC at the outset of each fiscal year as needed to document specialized issues related to project implementation. The PMU will be responsible for the contracting and oversight of the consulting firms/ institutes/ specialized NGOs conducting the various evaluations.

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