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Report No: PIDIAF0128

Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 05-Feb-2025

**BASIC DATA****A. Product Information****Main: Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion project (P175043)**

Operation ID	Product/Financing Instrument
P175043	Investment Project Financing (IPF)
Beneficiary Country/Countries	Geographical Identifier
Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo	Western and Central Africa

Practice Area (Lead)

Social Sustainability and Inclusion

Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency
Republic of Benin, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Togo	General Secretariat of the Presidency (Benin), Ministry of Local Government Decentralisation and Rural Development (Ghana), National Community Development Support Agency (ANADEB) (Togo), Prime Minister's Office (Côte d'Ivoire)

Additional Financing Request 2

Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
05-Feb-2025	28-Feb-2025

Development Objective

Current Development Objective (Approved as part of Additional Financing package on 23-May-2024)

to improve regional collaboration and the socioeconomic and climate resilience of border-zone communities in the target northern regions of the Gulf of Guinea countries exposed to conflict and climate risks.

Components

1. Investing in Community Resiliency and Inclusion
2. Building foundation and capacity for inclusive and resilient communities
3. Regional Coordination Platform and Dialogue
4. Project Management
5. Contingent Emergency Response Component

COSTS & FINANCING (US\$, Millions)

**SUMMARY**

	Last Approved	Proposed	
		Addition	Total
Total Operation Cost	473.00	33.00	506.00
Total Financing	473.00	33.00	506.00
Of which IBRD/IDA	473.00	33.00	506.00

FINANCING DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing	Last Approved	Additional Financing	Total
International Development Association (IDA)	473.00	33.00	506.00
IDA Credit	150.00	0.00	150.00
IDA Credit	45.00	18.20	63.20
IDA Credit	43.00	0.00	43.00
IDA Credit	150.00	0.00	150.00
IDA Grant	40.00	0.00	40.00
IDA Grant	45.00	14.80	59.80

IDA Resources

	Credit	Grant	SML	Guarantee	Total
Benin	18.20	14.80	0.00	0.00	33.00
National Performance-Based Allocations (PBA)	3.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.40
Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR)	14.80	14.80	0.00	0.00	29.60
Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cote d'Ivoire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



National Performance-Based Allocations (PBA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ghana	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
National Performance-Based Allocations (PBA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Togo	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
National Performance-Based Allocations (PBA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	18.20	14.80	0.00	0.00	33.00

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

- Insecurity spillovers from the Sahel are posing an immediate fragility risk to Benin and causing a forced displacement crisis.** The northern and border regions are already affected by cross-border criminality and illicit trafficking. These areas lie within a larger zone of marginalized regions spanning Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, and Niger, where state presence is limited. Consequently, they have become a new frontline in the conflict with armed groups operating in West Africa and the wider Sahel, resulting in a severe forced displacement crisis. As of December 2024, data from the UNHCR Operational Portal indicates that there are currently 27,890 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Benin, the majority of whom



are from Burkina Faso, Togo and Niger.¹ Most refugees reside alongside host communities in rural areas of four departments in northern Benin – Alibori, Atakora, Borgou and Donga. Refugee arrivals from Burkina Faso are expected to continue as the regional security crisis increases and spills over into coastal countries along the Gulf of Guinea. The communes of Matéri and Kérou in Atakora, and Karimama and Banikoara in Alibori, which are adjacent to neighboring countries, have experienced cross-border attacks from non-state armed groups. These incidents have led to school closures and population movements towards the south of the affected areas. New arrivals of refugees have deepened the economic, social, and environmental pressures on already precarious conditions faced by local households and host communities.

2. **Climate change is a major threat multiplier to Benin, further limiting access to natural resources and fueling inter-communal tensions.** Northern Benin is particularly susceptible to climatic shocks, including droughts, floods, and extreme heat.² Climate change projections indicate a high likelihood of increased intensity and frequency of these hazards in future decades.³ The average temperature is expected to rise, with more frequent extreme heat. Future dry and wet seasons in northern Benin are projected to become more extreme, with more droughts and a higher risk of floods.⁴ These climate impacts significantly affect the high percentage of smallholder farmers dependent on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralists, whose livelihoods and household food security rely on agricultural output and the abundance of grazing crops. Progressive desertification, soil degradation, and scarcity of natural resources have also changed the transhumance routes, further exacerbating local tensions. Combined with strong demographic growth, these risks can aggravate existing inter-communal, religious, and intergenerational tensions in the north. They can also lead to increasingly conflict-ridden relations between farmers and pastoralists due to rising competition for scarce resources. The inflow of refugees and displaced persons, especially pastoralists, adds to the pressure on host communities and erodes mechanisms for negotiating access and adjudicating disputes between communities.
3. **Both refugee and host communities are thus facing significant development challenges.** Although the number of refugees in Benin remains manageable, their presence adds pressure at the local level on several sources of fragility, notably access to farming land as well as, lack of investment in infrastructure, transport connectivity, and basic services. The Sahel conflict has disrupted the intra-regional and cross-border markets that support the local economy in the country's peripheries, and climate change and drought have negatively impacted agricultural productivity. Between March and May 2023, an estimated 547,422 Beninese across the country faced crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or 4), and 1,870,025 were experiencing food security stress.⁵ Poverty differentials with the south have further deepened, with levels in the north above the national average of 36.2 percent. In the departments of Atakora and Alibori, which host the largest number of refugees from neighboring countries, 53.1 percent and 44.7 percent, respectively, of the population lives in poverty.⁶ An increase in violent conflicts has been attributed to poor management of natural resources, particularly land and water, as both pastoralists and farmers compete for access to shrinking arable and grazing areas. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have struggled to overcome uncertainties over individual land use and ownership and unclear legal frameworks. These trends

¹ According to the UNHCR Operational Data Portal, which can be accessed at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ben>.

² World Bank, "Think Hazard: Benin."

³ World Bank, "Climate Change Knowledge Portal: Benin."

⁴ World Bank, "Country Climate and Development Report: Benin", 2023.

⁵ WFP Benin Country Strategic Plan 2024-2027 <https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document>

⁶ Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie, 2022.



have further constrained employment opportunities for the rural population as agriculture and the informal sector are the main components of the local economy.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

4. **The strategic focus of the Government-led response to the cross-border impact of the Sahel situation includes greater emphasis on prevention and resilience, with the COSO project playing a significant role.** The immediate operational response to the deteriorating situation in the Sahel region has concentrated on strengthened security measures and increased military presence along the northern frontiers. This response was necessitated by cross-border attacks by non-state armed groups against several communes, which led to school closures and population displacement southwards. In February 2024, the Government prepared a five-year strategic program (2024-2029) known as the Prevention and Resilience Program (PREP). This program aims to adopt a stronger prevention approach through enhanced development interventions, including COSO. The PREP focuses on increasing investments and services across three inter-related pillars: (i) strengthening social cohesion and basic services, (ii) food security and livelihoods and (iii) land reform. The purpose of the PREP is to strengthen the state's capacities to support the resilience of local communities confronted by fragility and conflict. The first pillar is directly relevant to addressing refugee displacement and resolving issues related to social cohesion and the medium to long-term socio-economic integration of displaced populations into host communities.⁷

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Original Development Objective

to improve regional collaboration and the socioeconomic and climate resilience of border-zone communities in the target northern regions of the Gulf of Guinea countries exposed to conflict and climate risks.

Current Development Objective

to improve regional collaboration and the socioeconomic and climate resilience of border-zone communities in the target northern regions of the Gulf of Guinea countries exposed to conflict and climate risks.

Proposed New Development Objective

D. Project Description

5. **The AF will support the same components as the original project, ensuring that both refugees and host communities benefit from all interventions.** The AF will enhance the existing intervention by refining certain sub-components and updating the Community Driven Development (CDD) process to better address the needs of refugee and host communities.
6. **Component 1: Investing in community resiliency and inclusion (US\$22.4 million).** This component will facilitate the expansion of investments and activities in areas with both refugee and host communities through an integrated

⁷ Programme de Résilience et de Prévention (PREP), Ministry of Finance and Economy, February 2024



approach aimed at enhancing social cohesion and resilience to climate risks. The needs prioritization and subproject selection process will be adapted to ensure that investments address the specific needs of refugee populations while also supporting host communities. For newly targeted arrondissements, two cycles of investments will be supported to reinforce gains in social cohesion and local development planning.

7. ***Sub-component 1.1: Community investments for strengthening local resilience and inclusion (US\$15.68 million – 70 percent of Component 1).*** This sub-component will scale up local-level investments to provide access to basic services for both refugee and host communities and will continue to focus on climate-resilient socio-economic infrastructures such as multi-purpose water facilities, school buildings, health centers, and electricity structures. These investments will address the needs of refugee populations while supporting host communities that may experience strain on public infrastructures due to increased population and climatic risks. Investments will be screened for their contributions to climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation, including addressing intertwined climate vulnerability and social cohesion risks (such as land competition due to water scarcity). This will be a criterion for subproject prioritization and selection. All selected investments will be assessed for climate and disaster vulnerability and built to climate-resilient technical standards to ensure they withstand future climatic shocks. Selected investments will also be adaptive to strengthen the climate resilience of supported communities against current and future climate risks.
8. ***Sub-component 1.2: Strategic economic investments for climate-resilient economic development (US\$3.36 million – 15 percent of Component 1).*** Under this sub-component, the AF will expand climate-adaptive economic investments to support the livelihoods of refugee and host communities. Given the high vulnerability of local livelihoods to climate risks, this sub-component will support communities in adopting more sustainable and climate-resilient livelihood strategies to adapt to climate change. This sub-component will continue to focus on investments in economic infrastructures and income generating activities that involve refugees in an integrated manner with host communities. This will be achieved by either grouping together refugee and host community members into common economic interest groups and providing them with the same inputs when possible, or by supporting refugee and host community livelihood groups separately to account for their differentiated needs and opportunities. Special emphasis will be placed on women and youth, who bear substantial responsibility for household livelihoods and represent a significant portion of the refugee population.
9. ***Sub-component 1.3: Youth engagement and social cohesion activities (US\$3.36 million – 15 percent of Component 1).*** This sub-component will finance social cohesion activities and community service opportunities for refugee and host community youth. The selected subprojects are intended to provide immediate income opportunities, while promoting youth as positive contributing members of society. The investments selected by youth will be based on a menu of subprojects requiring high percentages of unskilled labor and responding to public service demand and climate risks, such as road maintenance to manage more frequent and intense flooding, building local housing for refugees, rehabilitation of public buildings, upgrading drainage system, environmental rehabilitation, maintenance of public places and trash collection. These subprojects would finance payment of stipends for the youth and a limited amount to cover inputs, on-the job training, and administrative costs incurred by communities in the implementation of the subprojects.
10. ***Component 2: Building foundation and capacity for inclusive and resilient communities (US\$2.8 million).*** For needs identification and subproject prioritization and selection, COSO employs a CDD approach that enables the active participation and representation of vulnerable marginalized groups such as women, youth, and ethnic minorities in a bottom-up planning process. Capacity building and training on climate risks and sustainability of community investments,



especially participatory climate risk assessment and climate risk screening in local development planning and prioritization, will continue to be a key focus of this component. Activities under this component will be adjusted to maximize the meaningful inclusion of refugee populations in the CDD process, thereby mitigating any tensions that could arise between refugee and host communities and instead strengthening social cohesion between them.

11. **Component 3: Regional Coordination Platform and Dialogue (US\$0.56 million).** Under the AF, COSO will continue to make strides on digital innovations. It will continue to collect data on social cohesion but will strengthen the ability to do so through the CDD App and develop collaborations with local research partners to set up a system for systematic data analysis. Under the AF, this analytical effort will focus on the challenges that refugee and host communities face, which can also inform recommendations for policy and sector reforms related to refugees. Work on the Local Development Portal (LDP), a public tool which operates as a repository for the real time collection, classification, and financing of local development plans and priorities, will scale-up under the AF with special consideration to the priorities of host communities and refugees, including the coordination of inputs and investments from other government agencies as well as external partners.
12. **Component 4: Project Management (US\$2.24 million).** The existing Project Implementation Unit (PIU) for the original project will be responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the activities to be financed under the AF to ensure rapid implementation and seamless coordination and to minimize overhead cost. The financing added to this component will cover the incremental costs related to oversight of AF resources for financial management, procurement, safeguards, supervision, and monitoring the indicators and Results Framework. It will also support the establishment of a new regional office in Kandi to ensure closer coordination of field activities and support the establishment of a coordination office for CNAR in the north. The component will also cover capacity building and technical assistance activities to strengthen the capacity of CNAR to support the national policy on refugees and host communities. Building on evidence that aid-sharing can help improve attitudes towards displaced communities,²⁷ the project will also ensure that the topic of refugee inclusion is included in the communications strategy, ensuring that there is clear communication on how the response to displacement allows for greater investments in local infrastructures, benefitting both refugee and host populations.
13. **Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC).** In the event that the CERC is triggered, WHR funds reallocated to the CERC would only be used to benefit refugees and host communities as per WHR guidelines.

Legal Operational Policies

Policies	Triggered?
	Current
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	Yes
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts



The project currently covers four departments (Alibori, Atakora, Borgou and Donga) in border areas. The AF will focus on Alibori and Atakora departments and support the expansion of the project in the communes of Materi, Banikoara, Tanguiéta, Natitingou and Toucounouna. Targeting will continue to be adjusted and refined based on updated assessments as refugee flows continue. The AF will therefore expand project activities to both new geographical areas that were not covered under the parent project due to limited financing, as well as enable more rounds of investments for Components 1 and 2 in areas currently targeted, which can therefore take into account and cater to the needs of both refugee and host communities. The environmental and social risks are expected to be the same as initially identified for the parent project. However, in addition to the risks already identified, there are some key specific risks that have been identified during implementation of the parent project that are likely to be relevant for the AF: (i) lack of regular use of HSE by local construction companies; (ii) use of underage apprentices by local construction companies; (iii) excessive motorcycle accidents; and (iv) land donations not fully documented especially initially. The E&S documents have been updated to improve the mitigation measures required to address these specific issues for both the parent project and the AF. In addition, special attention will also be paid to discrimination and exclusion of IDP and refugee population who are new beneficiaries and stakeholders under the AF and also their exposition to SEA/SH potential risks. The PIU has a social and gender specialist, an environmental specialist, and E&S assistants who are based in the field. They have been implementing the E&S documentation, improving construction company performance regarding particularly HSE, adequately implementing screening and providing good reports, monitoring the use of underage apprentices, and collecting and resolving grievances via the GRM. These good practices established in the parent project will continue throughout the AF project.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

14. **National level.** Under the original project, the National Steering Committee, which provides overall project oversight and strategic direction, will continue to be chaired by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and composed of representatives of various ministries and agencies. The agency responsible for implementation of project activities will continue to be the Technical Secretariat for the Coordination of the Social Cohesion Project (Secréteriat Technique à Coordination du Projet de Cohésion Sociale (SETCO). The PIU of the original project will retain the overall responsibility for coordination, supervision, fiduciary oversight, and environmental and social safeguards compliance, as well as for monitoring and evaluating AF supported activities. In addition, the AF will also incorporate partnerships with CNRA and the National Agency for Social Protection (Agence Nationale De Protection Sociale, ANPS) for the implementation of certain activities.
15. **Regional level.** The magnitude and scope of the scale-up of the AF can be easily accommodated in the context of the ongoing project, relying on the implementing agency's existing capacity and the decentralized implementation arrangements. In addition to the regional offices and established presence in the communities of the implementing agency which will enable quick setup and rollout, the project will establish an additional northern regional office in Kandi to cover the Alibori department. The project would continue to rely on the Communal Development Support Fund (Fonds d'Appui au Développement des Communes, FADeC) to channel resources to communes assigned to the target arrondissements, with inter-village investments managed by communes and village investments by Village Development Associations. The project has established a clear facilitation structure and training curriculum by which to train and guide facilitators, and these will be updated to ensure that the AF design changes related to



refugee inclusion are incorporated. This includes updates to the project's digital tools, such as the CDD app, which not only helps to guide facilitators through all the steps of the CDD process, from mobilization through subproject implementation, but also enables the project to monitor these steps in all intervention villages, troubleshooting and ensuring quality control at both regional and central levels. The PIU has also developed standard subproject technical documents to facilitate procurement in line with sector standards, which enable subprojects to proceed more quickly to implementation.

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