



**The World Bank**

Nicaragua Hurricanes Eta and Iota Emergency Response Project (P175878)

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# Project Information Document (PID)

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Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 17-Dec-2020 | Report No: PIDA31028

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

Country Nicaragua	Project ID P175878	Project Name Nicaragua Hurricanes Eta and Iota Emergency Response Project	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Estimated Appraisal Date 10-Dec-2020	Estimated Board Date 28-Jan-2021	Practice Area (Lead) Urban, Resilience and Land
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Nicaragua	Implementing Agency Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (Ministerio de Hacienda y Credito Publico (MHCP), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	

## Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objective is to support Nicaragua's emergency response and restoration of services in critical social and economic sectors in the Project area.

## Components

Component 1: Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Resilient Reconstruction

Component 2: Livelihood Recovery

Component 3: External Audit, Verification, Monitoring and Evaluation

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.

Yes

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

Total Project Cost	60.00
Total Financing	60.00
of which IBRD/IDA	60.00
Financing Gap	0.00

**DETAILS****World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	60.00
IDA Credit	60.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

High

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

**B. Introduction and Context**

Country Context

1. **Between November 1 and 18, 2020, two consecutive hurricanes, Eta and Iota, hit and damaged Central America, with an impact magnitude comparable to 1998's Hurricane Mitch.** Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala have borne the brunt of the impact. Both storms developed slowly in the western Caribbean Sea and made landfall at nearly the same location south of Bilwi, Nicaragua, as Category 4 hurricanes (Iota having reached Category 5 few hours earlier), with catastrophic impacts on local populations, critical infrastructure, crops, and private assets from southern Mexico to northern Colombia. Over 7 million people are estimated to be directly affected, of whom over 500,000 were evacuated and 150,000 still in public shelters as of the end of November. In Nicaragua, around 3 million people were exposed to the devastating effects of the hurricanes, 160,597 were evacuated, 59,964 had to be placed in shelters and the lives of 21 people were lost. The most affected areas due to the hurricanes impact were North Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACCN), the Mining Triangle and the departments of Matagalpa, Jinotega, Nueva Segovia, Rivas and Carazo. Because both storms affected all Central American countries, the countries mobilized their response resources to face their own emergency; thus, regional support was limited.

2. **The Nicaragua Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) carried out in 2018 found the country's vulnerability to natural hazards as a key constraint to its development.** Nicaragua is highly vulnerable to major geophysical and hydro-meteorological events, including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and drought, a feature that threatens its economic stability and the safety and well-being of its population and can be exacerbated by the negative effects of climate change. Owing to its geological conformation, morphological structure, location in the Central American isthmus, hydrographic basins, and rainfall regime, and based on the economic, social, and cultural development of its population, Nicaragua is classified as one of the countries with the highest climate-



related risks and other disaster perils triggered by natural hazards. The INFORM Risk<sup>1</sup> database, which represents a global assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters, places Nicaragua in a high-risk group for earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and epidemics and in a medium-risk group for drought and hurricanes.<sup>2</sup> In terms of disaster-related damage in Nicaragua, between 1994 and 2013, hydro-meteorological disasters caused 160 deaths per year on the average and were associated with annual losses of US\$301.75 million (equivalent to a 1.71 percent loss per unit of its gross domestic product (GDP) annually).<sup>3</sup>

**3. The potential setbacks attributed to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis could bring about long-term negative effects on productivity, income growth, and social cohesion if not properly addressed.** The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected Nicaragua's economic situation and the health of its population. The pandemic, combined with the socioeconomic crisis that has already engendered a 10 percent drop in GDP in the last two years, has contributed to the further loss of jobs and an increase in poverty which, in turn, affect the basic indicators related to education, nutrition, and health. As of November 20, 2020, the World Health Organization has reported 4,629 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 159 deaths in Nicaragua. Although the Government has not officially implemented a government-imposed lockdown, the public and private sectors have responded to the pandemic by taking some protective measures, such as adopting flexible working arrangements, canceling events, and closing stores and restaurants. The effects of COVID-19 can worsen the situation of the people living in public shelters as a result of the two recent hurricanes, given that a substantial number of these people are expected to remain in the shelters over the next few months.

**4. Poverty in Nicaragua continues to have a spatial dimension, with the Central and Caribbean regions lagging other regions.** Most of Nicaragua's poor, in both absolute and relative terms, are concentrated in the rural areas of the Central and Caribbean regions. The Central region is periodically exposed to periods of drought. The Caribbean region is inhabited by a sizable proportion of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples (IPADs). They comprise 304 communities residing in 23 territories that represent 31.16 percent of the national territory. People experiencing extreme poverty, including Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants (IPs and ADs), are more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Nicaragua's IPs and ADs are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 due to extreme poverty, marginalization, and food insecurity, as well as their lack of adequate access to health services.<sup>5</sup> Although no recent census or household survey has been conducted for the indigenous population, the latest census from 2005 indicated that Nicaragua's self-identifying indigenous population represented 6 percent of the overall population (311,700 people).<sup>6</sup>

**5. Nicaraguan women, particularly those who live in rural areas, are more susceptible than men to disaster-related impacts due to a multitude of pre-existing inequalities and gender gaps in access to health, social protection, productive resources, economic opportunities, and voice and agency.** A 2018 survey that

<sup>1</sup> INFORM is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness and the European Commission available at <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index>

<sup>2</sup> INFORM. 2020. INFORM Risk (database). <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Results-and-data/moduleId/1782/id/386/controller/Admin/action/Results>

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. 2019. *Hydrometeorological and Climate Services Modernization Plan for Nicaragua*.

<https://www.gfdrr.org/en/publication/hydrometeorological-and-climate-services-modernisation-plan-nicaragua>

<sup>4</sup> World Bank; International Finance Corporation. 2017. *Nicaragua Paving the Way to Faster Growth and Inclusion: Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

<sup>5</sup> Academia de las Ciencias de Nicaragua. 2020. *COVID-19, el Caso de Nicaragua*.

[http://cienciasdenicaragua.org/images/noticias\\_pdf/LibroCOVID-19elcasodeNicaraguaACN2020.pdf](http://cienciasdenicaragua.org/images/noticias_pdf/LibroCOVID-19elcasodeNicaraguaACN2020.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> World Bank; International Finance Corporation. 2017. *Nicaragua Paving the Way to Faster Growth and Inclusion: Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.



included 5,866 rural women in Nicaragua found that 89 percent were food-insecure.<sup>7</sup> Only 18 percent of the rural women in Nicaragua own land.<sup>8</sup> In 2017, agricultural employment among females was estimated at only 9.2 percent compared with 44.9 percent among males.<sup>9</sup> With limited access to economic opportunities in rural areas, Nicaraguan women tend to hold unstable employment, are more likely to have informal work arrangements, and lack decent working conditions.<sup>10</sup> Although Nicaragua's male vulnerable population decreased from 44.6 percent in 2005 to 35 percent in 2017, the female vulnerable population slightly increased from 46.7 percent to 46.9 percent in the same period.<sup>11</sup> Thus, compared with men, Nicaraguan women are less likely to contribute to social insurance programs for themselves and generally have fewer safety nets in disaster situations. For example, only 55 percent of Nicaraguan women reported having emergency funds compared with 68 percent of men, according to the World Bank's latest Global Findex survey.<sup>12</sup>

### Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints

6. **The proposed US\$60 million Project aims to support Nicaragua's response and recovery needs.** Eta's effects on the Caribbean coast were exacerbated by Iota. While housing and infrastructure suffered major damage following Eta, the impacts in some departments were intensified by Iota. Critical sectors such as transportation, housing, health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and fisheries were greatly affected. Some forest and mangrove areas as well as coastal habitats suffered extensive damage.<sup>13</sup> The Government is conducting a preliminary damage assessment of the impacts of Eta and Iota. Preliminary estimates presented on November 26 indicate total damages and losses of US\$738.6 million, or approximately 6.2 percent of Nicaragua's GDP, with widespread effects across sectors. These impacts are particularly detrimental in regions with some of the highest incidences of poverty and malnutrition and lowest levels of education and health. Combined with the decrease in tourism revenues and remittances, the compound effects of COVID-19 (exacerbated by weak infrastructure and limited medical and financial resources), Eta, Iota, and the "cold phase" of the El Niño Southern Oscillation, known as "La Niña," are severely affecting Nicaragua. In addition, downward income mobility has become a concern because the largest economic group comprises Nicaraguans who are at risk of falling into poverty if hit by economic shocks (such as external macroeconomic effects or disasters from natural hazards). The preexisting conditions of vulnerability and social and economic fragility form an underlying context that has amplified the impacts of the hurricanes.

7. **Capacity needed to address the damage caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota was already stressed as a result of a particularly long and intense rainy season in Nicaragua and the COVID-19 crisis.** Addressing these

<sup>7</sup> Pérez, W., Contreras, M., Peña, R., Zelaya, E., Persson, L.-Å., & Källestål, C. 2018. Food Insecurity and Self-rated Health in Rural Nicaraguan Women of Reproductive Age: A Cross-sectional Study. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 17(1).

<sup>8</sup> Oxfam. 2011. "Rural Women Making Change in Nicaragua." <https://www.oxfam.ca/blog/rural-women-making-change-nicaragua-2011-09-28/>

<sup>9</sup> World Bank. 2018. *Gender Portal*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/nicaragua>

<sup>10</sup> ILO. 2019. ILOSTAT (database). Geneva: International Labour Organisation. [https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/wcnav\\_defaultSelection?\\_afrLoop=299799283218449&\\_afrWindowMode=0&\\_afrWindowId=null#!%40%40%3F\\_afrWindowId%3Dnull%26\\_afrLoop%3D299799283218449%26\\_afrWindowMode%3D0%26\\_adf.ctrl-state%3D1619aebs49\\_91](https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/wcnav_defaultSelection?_afrLoop=299799283218449&_afrWindowMode=0&_afrWindowId=null#!%40%40%3F_afrWindowId%3Dnull%26_afrLoop%3D299799283218449%26_afrWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3D1619aebs49_91)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank. 2018. Global Findex 2017 (database). [https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/#data\\_sec\\_focus](https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/#data_sec_focus)

<sup>13</sup> As of November 10, 2020, damages have been identified in 12 protected areas of the national system. They represent 24 percent of the protected areas in Nicaragua: 812,610.47 hectares affected, of which 67 percent is forest area. Preliminary reports present the damages in the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region Biological Reserve, the Miskitos Cays Reserve, the Bosawá Biosphere Reserve, and the Cerro Kilambé Nature Reserve.



multiple events has overstretched sectoral and local institutions as well as emergency preparedness and response systems. Due to the extensive damage and floods that followed the storms, the Government is likely to need to continue providing food, shelter, and relief supplies for the foreseeable future. In parallel, the Government will need to start the rehabilitation of the road network, bridges, intermunicipal land transportation, markets, and municipal docks as well as immediate interventions to restore the primary and secondary power lines, poles, lights, and water and sanitation systems. The compound effects of COVID-19, Eta, Iota, and la Niña will continue to increase the country's vulnerability (in particular for the Caribbean coast). This proposed emergency response Project is, therefore, critically necessary to support Nicaragua's emergency response and restoration of services in critical social and economic sectors.

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

**8. Nicaragua has taken important steps in the last decade to incorporate Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into its urban and sectoral development policies; it has also been implementing numerous policies for emergency and disaster response and disaster risk reduction.** Nicaragua's National System for Disaster Management and Prevention (SINAPRED), regulated by Law 337, was enacted in November 2000 and updated in 2014. It facilitated the creation of a comprehensive National Disaster Prevention and Attention Plan. With the public and private sectors' participation, SINAPRED is responsible for: (a) preventing and mitigating risks; (b) responding to emergencies; and (c) rehabilitating areas affected by disasters. This system is coordinated by the Executive Secretariat of SINAPRED (SE-SINAPRED), has an operative arm coordinated by the National Operative Committee, and has a technical/scientific arm coordinated by the Nicaraguan Institute for Territorial Studies (INETER). The regional, departmental, and municipal committees of the system are presided over by provincial governors and mayors. Through SINAPRED, Nicaragua has been a pioneer in instituting a policy and legal framework that facilitates a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to DRM.

**9. Nicaragua's DRM system includes participatory institutional structures which have proven an important element in responding to catastrophes.** The system includes a social structure (including the representation of IPs, ADs, and other minority ethnic communities) as well as an institutional structure (including all government institutions with common objectives and contingency plans). Permanent organization and management processes have been maintained to ensure that the population is prepared and better organized to face emergencies and disasters, including climate-induced shocks, such as floods or drought. The country conducts four large-scale exercises each year to evaluate and improve the quality of its plans.

**10. The Government is mobilizing funds to respond to the emergency and to fast track the country's recovery, but the financing gap remains significant.** At the time of writing, the Government had requested the activation of the Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) under the Nicaragua Property Rights Strengthening Project (P163531). The CERC (up to US\$11 million) is expected to complement the activities under this proposed emergency response Project. The Government has also received payouts from two of the catastrophe risk insurance policies purchased from the Central America and Caribbean Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company (CCrif SPC).<sup>14</sup> Eta triggered both the country's hurricane policy and its excess rainfall policy, resulting in a total payout of US\$10.7 million. Meanwhile, Iota triggered the hurricane policy,

<sup>14</sup> CCRIF SPC is a segregated portfolio company owned, operated, and registered in the Caribbean. It limits the financial impact of catastrophic hurricanes, earthquakes, and excess rainfall events on Caribbean and—since 2015—Central American governments by quickly providing short-term liquidity when a parametric insurance policy is triggered. Nicaragua financed the policy premiums with proceeds from the Nicaragua Catastrophe Risk Insurance Project (P149895).



resulting in a payout of US\$19.9 million. During the aftermath of Eta and Iota, the Government estimated the immediate emergency costs to amount to nearly US\$100 million. The Government has focused its emergency and response efforts on addressing the need for shelter and basic nutrition, anticipating expenditures for an extended period due to the heavy damage and the pervasive flooding of dwellings. Nonetheless, the Government anticipates a substantial financing gap in fulfilling the transitional recovery and reconstruction needs across sectors.

### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

11. The Project Development Objective is to support Nicaragua's emergency response and restoration of services in critical social and economic sectors in the project area.

Key Results

12. The key indicators for tracking progress toward the PDO are as follows:

- Affected population benefiting from the basic services restored in the sectors supported by the Project (disaggregated by gender and IPs ADs) (Number)
- Families benefitting from rehabilitated or rebuilt resilient housing in communities supported by the Project (disaggregated by gender and IPs ADs) (Number)
- Families participating in the Project with restored income (disaggregated by gender and IPs ADs) (Number)

### D. Project Description

13. **Project activities would focus on the Northern Caribbean region of the country, which represents one of the areas heavily affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota.** The Project's area has been mapped based on the compound impacts of the hurricanes. The Government and the World Bank may agree to expand the Project's area to implement activities to include additional affected departments where damages have a direct impact on transport connectivity and improved access to services in the RACCN and South Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACCS) targeted municipalities. The proposed Project would be implemented in three components as follows:

#### **Component 1: Recovery, rehabilitation, and resilient reconstruction**

##### **Sub-component 1.1: Emergency disaster recovery**

14. **The Government's emergency recovery from the impact of the hurricanes focuses on measures to alleviate and mitigate the impacts of both hurricanes on the affected population.** Continuity of basic services to the affected populations would enable their return to normal or safer situations. This subcomponent would finance expenditures for emergency disaster recovery of affected populations, including, *inter alia*, (a) repairing critical infrastructure and (b) taking measures to prevent expected outbreaks of malaria, dengue, or other infectious diseases.



### Sub-component 1.2: Rehabilitation and reconstruction of critical public infrastructure

15. **During disasters, the continued operation of critical public infrastructure is key to efficient response and recovery.** A significant number of roads, bridges, and public buildings were heavily damaged and/or destroyed after the passage of Eta and Iota. This subcomponent would finance the necessary engineering assessments, followed by the rehabilitation and reconstruction of critical public infrastructure in priority sectors. This component would also support any necessary measures to restore basic services and critical infrastructure usage. To ensure that, despite urgent needs, the operation supports investments that maximize climate co-benefits, investments under this subcomponent would be designed to be resistant to climate-induced events such as floods, storm surges, and landslides, for example, by using design standards that increase asset resilience to higher return period events and by enforcing building code legislation or updating its provisions, when necessary. Where relevant, selected investments would include appropriate energy efficiency measures.

16. **As reconstruction needs far exceed the financing available under this component, the Government will provide a prioritized public infrastructure list to be addressed under this activity, which will be subject to the World Bank's review and approval.** Prioritization would be based, *inter alia*, on participatory approaches with the affected populations and their representatives and adapted to the cultural needs and specific realities of the concerned groups, including, *inter alia*: (a) identifying damage and criticality levels to ensure that the structures made most vulnerable by Eta and Iota are prioritized to support life safety; (b) emphasizing sectoral relevance to focus investments on sector outcome objectives and service delivery needs; (c) prioritizing the repair and rehabilitation of partially damaged infrastructure as opposed to new construction in order to ensure the efficiency of investment with limited public funds; and (d) ensuring that climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as environmental and social risks and opportunities are duly considered.

### Sub-component 1.3: Reconstruction of resilient housing and community-level social infrastructure

17. **The resilient recovery of housing and community-level social infrastructure for those affected by both hurricanes is one of the priority-needs for overall recovery after the events.** This subcomponent would finance studies, analyses, and works related to the safe and culturally relevant reconstruction of affected housing and community-level social infrastructure. Housing reconstruction would consider the specific and differentiated needs of the population, traditional designs, the application of standards, and current and future safety conditions. In addition, in the context of COVID-19, the Project would finance the design of temporary housing that reduces the time spent by the population in shelters or temporary housing conditions. The works under this subcomponent would be complemented by functional upgrades and climate-resistant designs, including energy efficiency features where relevant, enforcing building code legislation to increase asset resilience to climate-related risks. This component would also support any necessary measures to restore basic services and the usage of housing units and community-level social infrastructure.

18. **The prioritization process for this subcomponent would include participatory approaches involving the affected populations and their representatives,** which would be adapted to the cultural needs and realities of specific groups. As such, this subcomponent would be critical in strengthening links between communities and local and central governments for an inclusive and resilient recovery response. The Project would encourage contractors to utilize local labor to the greatest extent possible, and emphasis would be placed on ensuring the participation of women.



## Component 2: Livelihood recovery

19. **This component would restore and potentially improve the socioeconomic conditions of the affected population in the Project area.** This component would finance: (a) the reassessment and expansion of Local Innovation Development Plans (LIDPs); and (b) using a positive list, the provision of equipment and supplies. LIDPs support formal and informal groups of beneficiaries (e.g., cooperatives, producer associations) that play an important role in restoring livelihoods in a participatory and transparent manner. The Government would carry out a prioritization process based on participatory approaches with affected populations and their representatives, which would be adapted to the specificities and cultural realities of the groups. This component would emphasize the restoration of livelihoods of communities and families engaged in artisanal fisheries, subsistence agriculture, small livestock and agro-industrial ventures, as well as other activities that directly contribute to the food security of affected communities.

20. **This component would be based on the World Bank-funded Project entitled Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast of Food Security (P148809).** Under that Project, participatory approaches and a coordination mechanism for the development and implementation of LIDPs were established. Based on these efforts, existing LIDPs would be reassessed to identify opportunities to restore livelihoods and incomes disrupted by Eta and Iota. This component also aims to contribute to the objectives of the “Plan of Action for Women in Artisanal Fishing in Nicaragua” by restoring and improving the income of organized women in artisanal fishing affected by the hurricanes in the Project area.

## Component 3: External Audit, Verification, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

21. **This component would finance:** (a) the external audit of the Project; and (b) the M&E of the Project, including, among others, the development of baselines, a final evaluation, a rapid impact assessments, technical audits, and independent inspection agents.

### 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

## E. Implementation

### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

22. **The Government of Nicaragua (GoN) would be responsible for overall project implementation, while United Nations Office for Project Support (UNOPS) would act as the implementation agent by assuming**



**responsibility for the procurement of works, goods, and services; financial management; and implementation of environmental and social (E&S) Standards.** Due to the extensive impact of two hurricanes and the need to speed up recovery to ensure the wellbeing of the population, the GoN would hire UNOPS as an implementing agent for the proposed Project to complement the country's recovery, rehabilitation, and efforts. UNOPS has strong project management capacity, robust engineering capacity, a track record of working closely with the Government, demonstrated experience in collaborating with the World Bank, and a good understanding of the World Bank's requirements related to procurement and fiduciary management.

**23. The PMU within the Directorate for the Coordination of Programs and Projects of the Ministry of Finance (*Ministerio de Hacienda y Credito Publico, MHCP*) would be responsible for managing the contract with UNOPS and providing implementation oversight.** The MHCP, through the PMU, would be responsible for ensuring that UNOPS meets its obligations, while UNOPS would be responsible for fiduciary compliance and compliance with E&S Standards. Credit proceeds would be disbursed from the World Bank directly to the UNOPS Designated Account. Based on progress and the financial reports that UNOPS submits to the MHCP, the latter will be responsible for documenting to the World Bank the advances made to the UNOPS Designated Account.

## CONTACT POINT

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**APPROVAL**

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**Approved By**

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