Report Number: ICRR0023736

1. Project Data

Project ID	Project Name
P164603	Ghana Productive Safety Net Project
Country	**Practice Area(Lead)**
Ghana	Social Protection & Jobs

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Project Cost (USD)
IDA-63370,TF-B0469	31-Dec-2022	72,946,252.06
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
31-Oct-2018	31-Dec-2022	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	80,500,000.00	20,500,000.00
Revised Commitment	73,048,431.30	13,048,431.30
Actual	72,949,013.71	13,048,431.30

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
Diana Goldemberg	Salim J. Habayeb	Eduardo Fernandez Maldonado	IEGHC (Unit 2)

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, p. 11) and the Financing Agreement of December 31, 2018 (p. 5), the objectives of the project were to “support the Government to strengthen safety net systems that improve the productivity of the poor.” ‘Productivity’ in this PDO referred to improvements in the assets of the poor, which included both productive assets (such as livestock or tools or a household enterprise) and human capital (such as improved nutrition and educational outcomes), which would enable beneficiary households to better meet their immediate and future basic needs. The objectives were not revised during the restructurings.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

The project contained five components at appraisal, the first three supporting existing Social Protection (SP) programs, and the last two supporting the SP system:

Component 1: Productive Inclusion (PI) Program (appraisal: US$10 million; actual: US$5 million) to provide sustainable livelihoods to the extreme poor as an exit from receipt of cash transfers. Two PI sub-programs were supported: the Complementary Livelihood and Asset Support Scheme (CLASS), which provided beneficiaries with the opportunity to establish their micro-enterprises or enhance existing ones through skills training, provision of start-up grants, and mentoring; and the Linkages to Agricultural Support (LAS), which sought to improve agricultural productivity of extremely poor households by facilitating linkages to existing agricultural interventions.

Component 2: Labor Intensive Public Works (LIPW) Program (appraisal: US$28 million; actual: US$21 million) to provide seasonal jobs during the agricultural off-season in rehabilitating or maintaining community assets. Component subprojects include rehabilitation or maintenance of rural feeder and access roads; small earth dams and dugouts; and climate change mitigation interventions (afforestation).

Component 3: Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) (appraisal: US$163 million, out of which US$ 23 million from IDA and US$ 140 million from the Government of Ghana (GoG); actual: US$93 million, out of which US$ 27 million from IDA and US$ 66 million from GoG) to provide cash transfers to extreme poor households and to promote human capital investments, including accessing health care through membership in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The smaller-than-expected GoG contribution was compensated by: (i) lower funding needs in dollars due to sharp local currency depreciation during the projects' lifetime; (ii) additional IDA resources provided to LEAP under the follow-up project (GPSNP 2), which became effective in January 2022.

Component 4: Social Protection Systems Strengthening (appraisal: US$15 million; actual: US$11 million) was to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of safety net interventions. It included assistance for the Ghana National Household Registry (GNHR) in collecting household data for social protection targeting and rolling out electronic payment systems; designing and rolling out an SP grievance redress mechanism; providing technical assistance for developing an SP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and system.

Component 5: Project Management, Coordination, and Capacity Building (appraisal: US$7 million; actual: US$8 million) sought to finance project management, coordination, and capacity building through sub-components implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) and by the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development (MLGDRD).

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project cost. At appraisal in October 2018, the total project costs were estimated at US$ 220.5 million. In 2022, the estimated costs were revised to US$ 213.048 million. The actual disbursements at project closing were US$ 139.355 million.

Financing: The project was financed by a US$ 60 million IDA credit, of which US$ 59.9 million was disbursed. The British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) contributed US$ 13 million of a planned US$ 20.5 million, through a Trust Fund.

Borrower Contribution: The Borrower disbursed US$ 66.4 million, significantly less than the planned contribution of US$ 140 million. This difference is reflected entirely in Component 3 (LEAP).

Dates: The project was approved on October 31, 2018, and became effective on June 28, 2019. Its mid-term review was held on September 27, 2021. The project closed on its originally scheduled closing date of December 31, 2022. It underwent four restructurings:

- August 16, 2019: to amend the Financing Agreement to reflect the introduction of the FCDO financing through a trust fund.
- July 24, 2020: to reallocate funds between components in response to the negative economic impact of COVID-19 on beneficiaries and to revise the intermediate indicators accordingly.
- April 6, 2022: to reduce project financing from US$ 223 million to US$ 215.55 million as a result of a partial cancellation of FCDO funding and to mitigate the impact of this cancellation by reallocating IDA funds between components, as well as adjusting component costs due to inflationary impacts. It revised intermediate indicators accordingly.
- December 20, 2022: to correct an omission in the previous restructuring.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Despite Ghana’s remarkable progress in decreasing its national poverty levels from 52.7 percent in 1991 to 23.4 percent in 2016, at appraisal, the country had been experiencing an accelerating geographically-based socioeconomic gap. According to the ICR (p. 5), half of the country’s regions experienced worsening poverty rates between 2012 and 2016, when the poverty incidence ranged from 2.5 percent in the Greater Accra region to 71 percent in the Upper West region. Since the early 2000s, the Government has made a concerted effort to invest in social protection, establishing flagship safety net programs that have progressively expanded nationwide. Building on the 2007 National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), the Government launched in 2016 its National Social Protection Policy (NSPP), representing its vision of creating "an all-inclusive and socially-empowered society through the provision of sustainable mechanisms for the protection of persons living in situations of extreme poverty and related vulnerability and exclusion."

The objectives of the project supported the NSPP, including three of its flagship programs (LEAP, LIPW, and PI) and reforms to strengthen the transparency and objectivity of SP delivery. The project also provided the Bank the opportunity to build on gains made in the predecessor project, the Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP, FY10-18, P115247), and extended into a follow-up operation, the Ghana Productive Safety Net Project 2 (GPSNP 2, P175588, FY21-26). The objectives aligned with the Bank-supported Country Partnership Strategy (CPS, 2013-2018) at appraisal, which focused on "protecting the poor and vulnerable" under pillar III. They were also aligned with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF, 2022-2026) in place when the project closed, advocating for "improved household and community preparedness to shocks."

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To improve the productivity of the poor

Rationale

Rationale: The theory of change for this objective was clear. The project envisaged providing extremely poor households with LEAP cash transfers and LIPW seasonal employment, plus a graduation exit path for beneficiary households through the PI livelihoods training, cash grants to initiate micro-enterprises, and referrals to participate in agricultural projects. These activities were likely to lead to the intended outcome of improving the productivity of the poor, enabling beneficiaries to better meet their immediate and future basic needs, ultimately leading to reductions in extreme poverty and improvements in human capital.

Outputs:

Component 1: PI

- 20,085 beneficiaries under the PI program receiving a start-up grant under the CLASS sub-component, exceeding the revised target of 15,000 but below the original target of 25,000 beneficiaries. According to the ICR (p.15), the 40 percent reduction of the target for this intermediate indicator was commensurate with the 40 percent decrease in commitments to PI from US$10 million to US$6 million (Component 1) at the July 2020 restructuring, necessitated by the partial withdrawal of the FCDO trust fund.

- 20,351 beneficiaries under the PI program receiving entrepreneurship training under the CLASS sub-component, exceeding the revised target of 15,000 but below the original target of 25,000. As with the above indicator, the target was reduced due to the reduced funding to the PI component at restructuring.
- 43 percent of LEAP/LIPW beneficiaries in areas where Government-led agriculture projects operate referred to agricultural activities, exceeding the target of 30 percent.

Component 2: LIPW

- 34,579 beneficiaries of the LIPW program, out of which 21,658 are females. This exceeds the target of 30,000 beneficiaries, out of which 18,000 females.
- 86 percent of LIPW participants engaged for two consecutive years, exceeding the target of 65 percent, which means that more beneficiaries received higher wages, helping them weather the multiple crises over the project's duration.
- 100 percent of LIPW sub-projects had operations and maintenance plans at closing against a target of 85 percent.

Component 3: LEAP

- 1,641,321 beneficiaries of LEAP, which is above the original target of 1,540,000 but below the revised target of 1,820,000. There were 902,456 female beneficiaries, below the revised target of 1,104,000. Targets were revised upward in the July 2020 restructuring due to the increased allocation of IDA funds to the LEAP component. The smaller-than-expected borrower contribution to this component was compensated by: (i) lower funding needs in dollars due to sharp local currency depreciation during the projects' lifetime; (ii) additional IDA resources provided to LEAP under the follow-up project (GPSNP 2), which became effective in January 2022.
- 62 percent of LEAP beneficiaries were selected through the GNHR during the project's lifetime, below the target of 75 percent. The beneficiaries not targeted through GNHR are those who had been targeted by LEAP before GNHR's initiation, using categorical and Proxy Means Testing (PMT) targeting.
- 79 percent of LEAP beneficiaries enrolled in the National Health Insurance System (NHIS), below the target of 90 percent.

Outcomes:

- 96 percent of PI beneficiaries initiated or expanded a household enterprise, surpassing the target of 70 percent.
- GHS 1,079 (US$95 equivalent) average annual earnings of unskilled workers in LIPW, surpassing the target of GHS 600 (US$53 equivalent) partly due to a higher-than-expected share of LIPW participants engaging for two consecutive years. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female workers' wages.
- 98 percent of respondents to a performance evaluation of the LIPW reported that assets from the LIPW sub-projects improved their livelihoods, against a target of 70 percent. Livelihood improvements cited by respondents include (i) expansion of crop farming; (ii) strengthening of trade skills; (iii)

expansion of animal rearing; (iv) expansion of trading activities; and (v) facilitation of the creation of new income-generating activities.

Rating
High

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective
To strengthen safety net systems

Rationale
Rationale: The project's theory of change envisioned as activities: the GNHR collection of household data for SP targeting; rolling out electronic payment systems with bank accounts opened for beneficiaries; the implementation of a SP grievance redress system; and the establishment of a SP M&E framework. These activities and related outputs would plausibly contribute to strengthening the transparency and objectivity of safety net systems.

Outputs:

- 3 out of the ten regions in the country have data collected on poor households through the GNHR, below the target of 10 regions. Data collection for only one region was completed within the project implementation period, with two other regions having about 70 percent completion rate at project closing. As discussed in the Efficiency section of this ICRR, this delay was mostly due to leadership and staffing changes in the MoGCSP. According to the TTL (Jan 2024), data collection for five out of the ten regions in the country had been completed, and full completion was likely to be achieved in the medium-term given that it became the object of a Prior Action in a DPO approved in FY2024.
- 100 percent of PI, LIPW and LEAP beneficiaries have a bank account, achieving the target of 100 percent. Note: targeted beneficiaries do not have accounts until enrolled, when they receive E-zwich cards (mobile money).
- The SP grievance mechanism (Single Window Citizen Engagement Service) was established and functional.
- 94 percent of grievance cases were resolved within the stipulated timeframe, surpassing the target of 75 percent.
- SP M&E system established and functional.

Outcomes:

- 77 percent of new LEAP/LIPW beneficiaries who are identified as extremely poor according to targeting criteria, which is above the target of 70 percent. According to the ICR (p.16), it was not possible to monitor this indicator directly by matching newly enrolled beneficiaries with the GNHR, as originally intended, due to delays in GNHR data collection. Instead, the ICR examined alternative sources, including the 2016 LIPW impact evaluation and the Social Protection Public Expenditure Review (SP PER) estimates.

- 35 percent of LEAP/LIPW payments to beneficiaries were made on time, below the target of 75 percent. LEAP recorded 100 percent on-time payments in 2019; 49 percent in 2020; 83 percent in 2021; and 0 percent in 2022. According to the ICR (p.17), timely LEAP payments correspond to the timely release of funds by the Ministry of Finance, and delays reflected fiscal pressures due to COVID-19 and the subsequent macroeconomic crisis. For LIPW, the on-time rate was 12.2 percent, with untimeliness of payments due to reliance on manual processes to verify task completion (paper-based attendance tracking), which was transformed into an electronic system late during the project. Additionally, there was a delay in the procurement of the main payment service provider. According to the project team, the timeliness of payments had much improved after the project's closing, reaching 100% for LEAP payments after the approval of the recent IMF program (May 2023) and subsequent World Bank commitments. For the LIPW, once the gains from transitioning to an electronic system were realized, after project closure, the on-time rate doubled.

The achievement of this objective is rated borderline Substantial, due to evidence of progress on non-achieved outcomes beyond the project's closing.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale
Overall efficacy is rated Substantial due to High achievement of the first objective to improve the productivity of the poor, and Substantial achievement of the second objective to strengthen safety net systems.
The operation achieved the intended outcomes in 4 out of 5 PDO indicators, with the unmet outcome indicator being due to both administrative deficiencies and external circumstances (pressures on the fiscal budget due to COVID-19 and subsequent macroeconomic crises).

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Both the PAD and the ICR discuss the efficiency of the flagship programs LEAP/LIPW/PI separately and do not attempt to provide an economic analysis for the overall project. They use existing evidence from impact assessments showing that the programs improved key outcomes such as consumption, health, and nutrition of beneficiaries. LEAP's effectiveness at reducing inequality and poverty severity are, respectively, 69 and 33 percent of what a perfect transfer would achieve. The ICR notes (p.54) that “a combination of improved targeting and increased benefit levels is needed to improve LEAP’s effectiveness at addressing extreme poverty.” LIPW’s cost-effectiveness is estimated at 52 percent, which implies that the cost of transferring US$1 in net wage benefit to a poor participant is US$1.92 = 1/0.52, aligned with rates in comparable programs in Ethiopia (US$1.80) and Liberia (US$4.23). PI-CLASS’s operational unit cost per beneficiary reached was lower at project closing (US$233) than originally anticipated (US$300) (revised figures presented by TTL), though “efficiency gains did not come at a cost to beneficiaries” (ICR, p.53).

Efficiency gains from the project’s system strengthening component were anticipated at PAD (p.33) due to the data integration in the establishment of the GNHR and the introduction of electronic delivery systems to improve the transparency and accountability of programs. The ICR notes (p.55) several activities undertaken by the project to realize these efficiency gains, though not all had been concluded at project closing.

Over the project's lifetime, MoGCSP underwent four administrative changes in its ministerial leadership and several staffing changes, which delayed project implementation by two years, especially for the system-strengthening component and the completion of the GNHR (ICR p.25). Overall, prolonged administrative approvals and limited staffing also affected the PI and LIPW components implemented by the MLGDRD. The COVID-19 pandemic created other challenges, particularly losing project funding from the FCDO and delayed procurement activities. Counterpart financing was also challenging, particularly given the recessionary environment at the time of the project. The lack of prioritization in disbursement of national budget projections to LEAP required advocacy and consistent follow-ups and led to extensive delays in payments, which could be detrimental to achieving program impacts.

The efficiency of the project investment is rated Substantial based on cost-efficient project design, but with some implementation inefficiencies that moderately reduced overall project efficiency.

Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 ☐ Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance of objectives is rated High in view of full alignment with the country's context, its development plans, and the World Bank's CPS/CPF. Efficacy is rated Substantial, as development objectives were almost fully achieved, except for one objective that was partly achieved. Efficiency is rated Substantial, based on cost-efficient project design, but with some implementation inefficiencies that moderately reduced overall project efficiency. The aggregation of these findings is consistent with a Satisfactory outcome rating. This is indicative of essentially minor shortcomings in the project's overall preparation, implementation, and achievement.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

According to the ICR (p.31), the sustainability of achieved outcomes is moderately threatened by:

- **Limited government funds flow to social assistance programming.** The government has demonstrated its commitment to the social protection sector through past macroeconomic downturns. For example, the flagship cash transfer program – LEAP, established in 2008 with 1,000 households has expanded through multiple political transitions, reaching 350,000 households in 2022. Nevertheless, the GoG's contribution to LEAP was 70 percent of funds by 2019, depending on development partners to cover the financing gap, including IDA starting with GSOP in 2010, GPSNP through 2022, and GPSNP 2 and GPSNP 2 AF, which will run through 2025. The IMF Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement with Ghana and the forthcoming World Bank Development Policy Operation (DPO) for budget support include strengthening key social protection policies and legislations for sustainability as prior actions for receiving financing.
- **Erosion of purchasing power of program benefits.** With inflation at 43 percent at the time of the writing of the ICR and no institutionalized and regular mechanisms to adjust payment levels to inflation, the programs' benefits lose value as local prices rise. Under the follow-up operation, GPSNP 2, which became effective in January 2022, the Bank team has leveraged the IMF ECF arrangement with the GoG and DPO under design to support the government in revising benefit increases to align them with inflationary change.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project was strategically relevant, and drew on the lessons of its predecessor GSOP, in particular the need to coordinate the delivery of SP programs among different ministries. According to the ICR (p. 29) and PAD (p. 29), the Bank worked closely with the government and development partners during project preparation. At design, Ghana had a well-defined policy and institutional framework for SP coordination, with well-established decentralized structures for project implementation coordination at the sub-national level. The design of the project also considered previous analytical work supported by the Bank, and external impact and process evaluations of SP programs. The Bank team identified relevant risks at appraisal, such as substantial fiduciary risks, which the project sought to mitigate by investing in delivery systems to support scaling safety net programs, adopting an electronic payment system, and establishing a grievance redress mechanism (ICR, p.24). The major challenges to the project not identified nor mitigated at design - the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing deep macroeconomic crisis in the country – were factors outside of the government and Bank team control. Implementation and institutional arrangements were specified in detail in the PAD. M&E arrangements and the results framework were adequate (see Section 9a).

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Adequate supervision and implementation support were undertaken by the Bank task team in a challenging context of administrative changes and delayed approvals. Over the project's life, there were administrative delays at both MoGCSP and MLDGRD when funds were withdrawn from the Bank, and LEAP payment delays were further compounded by limited fiscal space for the Government. During implementation, the World Bank team worked closely with the ministries to review their approval systems and identify reductions in timeframes without reducing the quality of reviews.

According to the ICR (p. 25), the Bank task team worked closely with the government to mitigate impacts through advocacy and negotiations within the ministry and beyond, knowledge sharing, particularly concerning evidence of potential project results should the challenges be rectified, and increased technical support to mitigate further delays. One of the co-TTLs, based in the Country Office, remained responsible for the project from approval to closure, and the locally present fiduciary team provided continuous implementation support and fiduciary control.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

Objectives were clearly defined, and indicators adequately reflected the objectives. While no theory of change diagram was available at appraisal, the implied results chain was clear, and all indicators were measurable. The project itself supported (under Component 4) the development of management information systems for PI, LIPW, and LEAP, and relied on these as the primary sources of data for the outcome and intermediate indicators. This information was tracked at the national and local level. The operation also envisioned using quantitative surveys from third parties to assess progress on selected indicators.

b. M&E Implementation

The project's results framework was appropriately updated, with indicators refined and targets adjusted through restructurings. In addition to using the developed management information systems programs, the project relied on a series of studies conducted by third-party institutions, including a tracer study on beneficiaries of a predecessor PI pilot intervention; (ii) an impact evaluation study of CLASS; (iii) a LIPW gender study; (iv) a gender study on Ghana's Social Protection system; (v) a behavioral science study led by Ideas42 about PI-CLASS; (vi) a UNICEF-led mixed methods evaluation of LEAP and its linkage to UNICEF's Integrated Social Services; (vii) a LIPW Performance Evaluation, and (viii) an SP public expenditure review. The Bank team also required an M&E specialist to be recruited for each SP program under the project.

c. M&E Utilization

The ICR (p.28) reported that findings of an FCDO-led study on disability and gender inclusion in LEAP contributed to the issues identified for redress in the GBV Action Plan for the follow-up project (GPSNP 2) and the need to engage a Social Safeguards Specialist by the MoGCSP, which was required only of the MLGDRD under this project (GPSNP).

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was rated Environmental Assessment category "B" and triggered two safeguards policies: Environmental Assessment and Involuntary Resettlement. The project consequently developed and disclosed an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and integrated the provisions into the Project Operational Manual (POM). The ICR (p.28) suggests that the implementation of safeguards was facilitated by an effective structure instituted by the project at the national and sub-national levels and that the centralized electronic grievance redress system, SWCES, was fully functional to facilitate timely and coordinated grievance redress processes by all project components. At project closure, the SWCES recorded 94 percent of grievances resolved (against a target of 75 percent). During project implementation, all ISRs rated the overall Environmental and Social Safeguards performance, and both triggered safeguard policies as Satisfactory.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

According to the ICR (p.29), compliance with Financial Management arrangements was observed for project implementation at different levels. This included financial reporting, auditing, disbursements, and governance and oversight for both MLGDRD and MoGCSP. There were, however, a few instances of delayed submissions of IFRs and audits by both Ministries. FM performance was rated Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory throughout the project's ISRs.

Procurement processes were undertaken in accordance with the World Bank's regulations, and Procurement was rated Moderately Satisfactory in all ISRs. The ICR notes as challenges the large volume of procurement activities over a wide geographical spread and low technical capacity at the decentralized level, which required consistent hands-on support from the national office.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ICR reports (p.23) two positive unintended impacts of the project: (i) skills upgrading at the community level due to the extensive digitization of project implementation processes and (ii) promotion of social cohesion mostly due to the PI & LIPW components, which minimized north-south seasonal migration.

d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR (pages 32-35) offers insightful lessons, including (adapted by IEG):

- **Long-term investments in building systems can be crucial to achieving outcomes and facilitating response to shocks.** The project made vast investments in technology, and the digitization agenda required (i) having appropriate staff (both from the World Bank and the client), (ii) allocating substantial financing to purchasing and building hardware and software, including testing and reconfiguring, (iii) conducting training and re-trainings at both national and local levels, and (iv) gaining buy-in from policymakers to operationalize the technologies. These investments sometimes slowed down implementation and achievement of results during development, but even when not perfect, they were instrumental in supporting beneficiaries, as was evidenced during the COVID-19 relief response.

- **Procurement contracts that include terms that allow for price variations and other modifications in the event of unforeseen circumstances to avoid contract cancellation and re-initiation can safeguard against project delays.** The macroeconomic situation resulting from the COVID-19 aftershocks and high inflation and currency depreciation affected market predictability and pricing, leading to contract non-performance and procurement delays. The follow-on project (GPSNP 2) introduced price adjustment clauses in local currency procurement contracts.
- **While the provision of counterpart funding is commendable, the absence of measures to ensure that such funds are disbursed can derail the attainment of project outcomes.** Though this project anticipated a large government contribution for cash transfers at approval (representing approximately two-thirds of the total project costs), only half of the projected counterpart financing reached the program. One idea for future counterpart financing commitments is to include a ring-fencing mechanism to ensure that the allocations are actually disbursed on time to the program.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provided a strong, concise, and candid overview of project implementation and was outcome-driven. It brought data outside the formal results framework to bear on the assessment of outcomes. Furthermore, the ICR provided useful lessons learned. However, the ICR had minor shortcomings, such as internal inconsistencies (that were cleared up in conversations with the task team), and it provided limited information on financial management, procurement, and safeguard compliance and little information on quality at entry.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial