Report Number: ICRR0023349

1. Operation Information

Operation ID	Operation Name
P174110	Cote D'Ivoire COVID-19 Emergency DPO
Country	**Practice Area (Lead)**
Cote d'Ivoire	Macroeconomics, Trade and Investment

Non-Programmatic DPF

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Financing (USD)
IDA-68310	31-Dec-2021	300,345,840.00
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
16-Feb-2021	31-Dec-2021	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Co-financing (USD)
Original Commitment	300,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	300,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	300,345,840.00	0.00

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2. Program Objectives and Pillars/Policy Areas

a. Objectives

The Cote D'Ivoire COVID-19 Emergency Response and Recovery Development Policy Financing operation (Cote D'Ivoire COVID-19 Emergency DPO) was a single-tranche standalone credit “designed to support the Government in the response to the pandemic” (ICR, para. 1). The Program Development Objectives (PDOs) were to: “(i) strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response; and (ii) promote sustained economic recovery” (ICR, para 1; PD, para. 4.2.1).

b. Pillars/Policy Areas

The Program Document (PD) and Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) structured the program around two pillars.

Pillar 1, to strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response, involved prior actions (PAs) “to support poor and vulnerable households affected by COVID-19” through cash transfers (PA 1) and electricity consumption subsidies (PA2), along with measures to ensure effective management, implementation, and oversight (PA 3).

Pillar 2, to promote sustained economic recovery, sought to “lay the foundations for a sustained recovery of the private sector while ensuring that public resources dedicated to supporting these efforts are managed transparently” (PD, para. 4.1.1) through measures to streamline the importation of medical equipment (PA 4), support access to finance (especially for small- and medium-scale enterprises [SMEs]) through credit guarantee and land titling (PAs 5 and 6), and enhance debt transparency and administration through monthly reporting (PA 7).

c. Comments on Program Cost, Financing and Dates

The IDA credit of EUR 253.2 million (US$ 300 million equivalent) was a single-tranche operation based on seven prior actions. It was approved on February 16, 2021, with US$ 300,345,840 fully disbursed by the intended closing date of December 31, 2021.

3. Relevance of Design

a. Relevance of Objectives

Before the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Côte d’Ivoire had a strong record of economic growth (nearly 8.2 percent per year over 2012-19) and sound macroeconomic policies, enabling it to meet the convergence criteria of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) (ICR, para. 3). Poverty had declined from 44.4 percent in 2015 to 39.4 percent in 2018 (ICR, para. 5). However, “the pandemic led to a sharp economic downturn in 2020”: GDP per capita fell by 0.6 percent, and poverty increased to 43 percent (ICR, paras. 7-8). This severely impacted the budget and debt situation. Domestic resource mobilization capacity was already limited (ICR, para. 4). World Bank support was warranted to help finance “a large-scale emergency response plan worth 1.5 percent of GDP” (ICR, para. 9). The plan included substantial financial relief to poor and vulnerable households, funds for enterprises (small, large and state), and “measures to ensure transparency and accountability” (ICR, para. 9).

The objectives were appropriate to minimize the negative impact on Côte d’Ivoire’s long-term strategic commitment to poverty reduction and private sector-led development (PPAR for First, Second, and Third Poverty Reduction Support Credits [PRSCs]). Following disbursements in 2020 from an arrangement under the IMF's Rapid Credit Facility/Rapid Financing Instrument and previously planned World Bank development policy financing, “the government requested further World Bank support to bridge the financing gap and prevent the country from falling into an economic, social and health crisis” and “to reinforce the nascent structural economic change by promoting private sector led-growth despite the crisis” (ICR, paras. 10-11).

While broadly aligned with the country’s 2016-20 National Development Plan (NDP), to cope with the pandemic situation, the economic response package made some relevant modifications to cushion the poverty impact and prepare for a return to growth. These included “well-targeted direct cash transfers and in-kind support [that] have helped save lives, preserve savings, and build up resilience to the shock while preventing those households from sliding into (deeper) poverty” and “lightening fiscal pressure, and providing emergency access to finance” to enterprises (PD, para. 3.3).

The operation was relevant to preserving and carrying forward the progress of the Poverty Reduction Support DPOs (2016-18), whose lessons included “the importance of (i) fostering inclusive growth and better social services delivery; (ii) sound and transparent fiscal management good practices; and (iii) balancing well the Government’s capacity to rapidly implement key reforms in the context of the current pressure and urgency of a crisis” (ICR, para. 60; PPAR). In particular, PAs supported key priorities of the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for FYs 16-19 in the areas of social cohesion, private sector-led growth, and public financial management (PFM) (ICR, para. 13). The electricity subsidies to households under the social tariff indirectly complemented the IDA-supported debt restructuring of the energy sector (CI-Energies-P164145; ICR, paras. 13 and 27).

Table 1. Objectives and Prior Actions (PAs) for Cote D'Ivoire COVID-19 Emergency DPO

Objective 1: Strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response
PA 1: To support poor and vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 with a strengthened social protection system that quickly and reliably targets and ensures adequate coverage, the Recipient has adopted an interministerial *arrêté*, and the Solidarity Fund Management Committee has published an implementation plan/methodology of said *arrêté* that prioritizes cash transfers to eligible households over other types of transfers, defines the principles of the methodology for identifying and prioritizing eligible households, and a mechanism for registering beneficiary households in the Single Social Register.
PA 2: To protect poor households affected by COVID-19, the Recipient has financed, through a budget subsidy for a period of two months, the electricity consumption of the most vulnerable households subscribing to the social tariff.
PA 3: To ensure appropriate traceability, efficiency, transparency and control in the management of the COVID-19 special funds, the Recipient has adopted inter-ministerial *arrêtés* defining for each emergency fund: (i) mechanisms for managing cash flow and the flow of funds in Resources and Uses; (ii) simplified disbursement procedures; (iii) mechanisms for accounting for operations and publication of periodic reports; and (iv) provisions for internal control and audit.
PA 4:* To facilitate access to medical equipment in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and to alleviate the tax burden on companies, the Recipient has adopted circulars to approve for a period of three months: (i) an exemption from payment of VAT and customs duties on products used in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19; (ii) a simplification of customs procedures for the importation of logistical materials, medicines, and medical devices; (iii) an extension of the deadlines for the declaration and payment of taxes and duties by companies; and (iv) the simplification of the procedure for reimbursement of VAT credits.
Objective 2: Promote sustained economic recovery

PA 5: To mitigate immediate and medium-term liquidity challenges faced by SMEs, the Recipient's Council of Ministers adopted a decree on July 8, 2020 creating a Credit Guarantee Fund for SMEs that adheres to international good practices.
PA 6: To simplify the land titling process, improve land tenure security, and facilitate economic recovery through access to financing, the Recipient has adopted an inter-ministerial *arrêté* defining how to generate, manage, and apply the Unique Land Identifier (IDUF) in order to institute a unique identification number to be assigned to every plot of land regardless of its legal nature.
PA 7: To improve debt transparency and administration, the Recipient has: (i) published on the MEF website a post-COVID-19 2020 annual debt plan consistent with its medium-term debt strategy; and (ii) adopted inter-ministerial *arrêtés* committing it to publish monthly reports on the operations of the four Emergency Funds, including a breakdown of beneficiary companies on the MEF website.

Source: ICR, Table 7.

*Note: While PA4 appears as a prior action in Pillar 2 (promoting sustained economic recovery) in the Program Document, and as discussed in section 3b, the nature of the actions relates more closely to the objectives of Pillar 1 (strengthening the COVID-19 emergency response)

b. Relevance of Prior Actions

Rationale

The prior actions were reasonably limited in number (seven PAs with a total of 14 sub-actions) and scope, as appropriate for an operation with an 18-month time horizon between decision review and closing. The actions carried through on objectives and measures of previous operations. However, some sub-actions did not correspond to the PDO under which the PA was listed. Although the PD didn't present an explicit theory of change, the measures generally aimed at cushioning the negative impacts of the pandemic and the associated economic downturn. While the actions related to enhancing access to finance (credit guarantee fund and land titling) were meaningful steps, the World Bank could have better articulated the rest of the results chain to indicate the future steps and support that would be needed to actually achieve the intended results and objective[GC1] [WS2] . Measures to improve debt transparency addressed generic more than country-specific problems.

Objective 1: Strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response

PA 1 (*interministerial* arrêté *and implementation plan that prioritizes cash transfers to eligible households, defines the principles of the methodology, and a mechanism for registering beneficiary households in the Single Social Register*) directly addressed the negative impact of the pandemic on the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable by expanding the safety net, based on a theory of change that prioritizes targeted cash transfers for immediate relief while building the social register to strengthen the social protection system (as stated in the ICR, para. 43, though not in the PD). The PA included measures to define the methodology (including targeting) and a monitoring mechanism, representing an implicit results chain. Rating: Satisfactory.

PA 2 (*budget subsidy for a period of two months for the electricity consumption of the most vulnerable households subscribing to the social tariff)* directly addressed a critical expenditure that many poor households [cw1] could not afford in the wake of Covid shut-downs while simultaneously minimizing associated financial difficulties for the energy sector. Vulnerable households were defined as those "subscribing to the basic electricity tariff for less than 100 kWh consumption per month" (PD, para. 4.2.10). The expected impact on households and the electricity company was direct and clear. Rating: Satisfactory.

PA 3 (*interministerial* arrêté *for each emergency fund defining: i. mechanisms for managing cash flows and the flow of funds in resources and uses; ii. simplified disbursement procedures; iii. mechanisms for accounting for operations and publication of periodic reports; and iv. provisions for internal control and audit)* was well designed "to ensure appropriate traceability, efficiency, transparency, and control in the management of the COVID-19 special funds" that the government had set up as part of its emergency response program. It was relevant to implementing PFM directives under WAEMU and the strategic framework for PFM reform initiated under the PRSC DPO series (PPAR, p. 50). The World Bank considered these measures important to "pave the way for effective ex-post audits" and "ensure that the funds meet their targets" (ICR, para. 28). Rating: Satisfactory.

PA 4 (*to facilitate access to medical equipment in response to the COVID-19 crisis and to alleviate the tax burden on companies, the Recipient has adopted circulars to approve for a period of three months: i. an exemption from payment of VAT and customs duties on products used in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19; ii. a simplification of customs procedures for the importation of logistical materials, medicines, and medical devices; iii. an extension of the deadlines for the declaration and payment of taxes and duties by companies; and iv. the simplification of the procedure for reimbursement of VAT credits*) was considered critical for the rapid implementation of the health response to Covid-19 by relieving constraints on the importation of needed medical equipment, as well as providing relief to companies that were adversely affected by the economic downturn. Hence IEG has placed it under PDO1 rather than PDO2 (as in the PD and ICR); clearer separation of actions by objective is preferable. Complex and lengthy customs procedures tended to slow the delivery of essential medical equipment and constituted an undue burden on businesses. These constraints were addressed directly through measures to exempt critical imports and facilitate liquidity to businesses (through VAT reimbursements), which would also contribute to PDO2. Rating: Satisfactory.

Objective 2: Promote sustained economic recovery

PA 5 (*the Council of Ministers adopted a decree on July 8, 2020, creating a Credit Guarantee Fund for SMEs that adheres to international good practices*) was intended to address access to finance by SMEs, which "was perceived as one of the top four barriers to private sector led-growth" (according to a survey for the 2020 Country Private Sector Diagnostic; ICR, para. 31). However, the ICR (para. 32) observes that the Fund was inappropriately located in the SME Ministry, whereas other neighboring countries (e.g., Senegal, Mali, Niger, Guinea) typically locate such agencies in the ministry in charge of finance. While the TTL has stated that "the Ministry of SMEs would have relied on the recommendations of the Phoenix strategy for the implementation of the Guarantee Fund," it is questionable whether a consultant's report would be sufficient for a ministry lacking relevant financial experience to deal with the range of issues that would arise in establishing and implementing a financial agency. Furthermore, it served only solvent, creditworthy businesses, so did not address firms that were near closure due to the pandemic or were established after 2018. Although the time required to operationalize a new guarantee fund limited the likely contribution of this action to PDO1, a partial guarantee fund is a desirable component of improving the institutional framework for access to finance. Rating: Moderately Satisfactory.

PA 6 (*the Recipient has adopted an inter-ministerial* arrêté *defining how to generate, manage, and apply the Unique Land Identifier [IDUF] in order to institute a unique identification number to be assigned to every plot of land regardless of its legal nature*) was critical to simplify the land titling process as an important step toward the intended results of improving land tenure security and facilitating collateral that borrowers could use to access finance. The *arrêté* addressed the constraint of cumbersome procedures needed to obtain a permanent concession certificate by setting forth "the new characteristics, management system, and operational procedures" to link "spatial and textual data from the land registry office" to the IDUF, with the expected results of "reducing the processing time to obtain land property titles, the number of land disputes…and issues such as multiple files for the same plot" (PD, para. 4.2.33). While these results would only be realizable over time, the PA focused on what could be manageable within a limited time frame as a step in the desired direction. Rating: Satisfactory.

PA 7 (*the Recipient has: i. published on the MEF website a post-COVID-19 2020 annual debt plan consistent with its medium-term debt strategy; and ii. adopted inter-ministerial* arrêtés *committing it to publish monthly reports on the operations of the four Emergency Funds, including a breakdown of beneficiary companies on the MEF website*) was aimed at improving debt transparency and management, consistent with measures under the PRSC DPOs and other operations in support of the long-term objective of improving PFM and meeting WAEMU guidelines. While the PD (para. 2.2.6) stated that "CIV's debt management practices have improved in recent years," it also identified some weaknesses (para.4.2.36): "ABP have never been published, and there are frequent deviations;" and "debt documents, including emergency-related execution reports or ABPs are frequently not published." Sub-action (i) mainly aimed to continue on-going measures to improve long-term debt transparency and debt management. Sub-action (ii) to ensure adequate oversight of the emergency funds was related more to PDO1. Rating: Moderately Satisfactory.

Rating

Satisfactory

4. Relevance of Results Indicators

Rationale

The DPO used eight results indicators (RIs) to track the impact of the eight PAs in making progress toward the objectives. The RIs were relevant to the proposed actions but, in some cases, were insufficient to capture the achievement of the intended results of those actions. As noted by the ICR (para. 35), "some prior actions could have benefited from a refinement or breakdown of the result indicators to reflect better the achievements" (ICR, para. 35), because not all of the 14 sub-actions supported results that were captured by the eight RIs. Given the short time frame of the operation, the RIs tended to focus on implementing specific actions rather than achieving the ultimate intended outcomes. The PD did not explicitly articulate results chains leading to outcomes, although the impact was direct for those actions involving subsidies. The baseline was nil in most cases, with data generally available.

Table 2: Results indicators by Objective and PAs; baseline and target values; status and achievement

Results indicator (RI)	**Asso-ciated PAs**	**RI Rele-vance**	**Baseline** (2019)	**Target** (2021)	**Actual** (2021)	**Actual as % of targeted change**	**RI Achieve-ment rating**

					2022		
Objective 1: Strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response							
RI 1: Number of household beneficiaries from the Solidarity Emergency Fund (including women, female-headed households and climate-vulnerable households).*	PA 1	S	0	200,000	(331,055) 431,930*	216%	H
RI 2: Number of households of women and female-headed household beneficiaries from the Solidarity Emergency Fund.	PA 1	S	0	90,000 (refined)	(108,000) 179,145	199%	H
RI 3: Number of households temporarily benefiting from a budget subsidy to their electricity bill at the social tariff.	PA 2	MS	0	1,052,749 (revised from 1,600,000)	(1,052,749)	100%	H
RI 4: Number of audit reports prepared for the four Emergency Funds	PA 3	S	0	4	(5)	125%	H
RI 5: Average VAT refund payment period for businesses (including - medical)	PA4	MS	30 days	15	(60) 21	60% of the targeted reduction	M
Objective 2: Promote sustained economic recovery							
RI 6: Number of guarantees to SMEs granted by the PCG Fund.	PA5	MS	0	100	(0) 34	34%	M
RI 7: Average time to obtain land titles (number of days)	PA 6	MU	160	90	(160) 120	57% of targeted reduction	M
RI 8: Number of reports on the four Emergency Funds published on the MEF website, including the list of firms benefiting from the emergency fund.	PA7	MS	0	6	27	450%	H

*RI 2 is listed in the ICR as a sub-indicator for the women and female-headed households targeted by PA 1. The PD (para. 4.2.5) also targeted 10,000 climate-vulnerable households, but the data did not permit separating them, and the ICR omitted the implicit sub-indicator.

Objective 1: Strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response

RI 1 (*number of household beneficiaries from the Solidarity Emergency Fund, including 10,000 female and climate-vulnerable households*) and RI 2 (*number of households of women and female-headed household beneficiaries from the Solidarity Emergency Fund*) were adequate to measure the objective of alleviating the financial impact of the pandemic on poor and vulnerable households, especially women. However, it did not capture the adequacy of the benefit, and the government could not identify climate-vulnerable households using the available data. Ratings: RI 1 Moderately Satisfactory; RI 2 Satisfactory.

RI 3 (the *number of households temporarily benefiting from a budget subsidy to their electricity bill at the social tariff*) was adequate to measure the objective of relieving poor households from the burden of paying for electricity for two months (and the additional result of cushioning the financial impact on the electricity company), although it did not measure the extent to which the value of the subsidy cushioned the budgets of the poor and was sufficient to contribute to the objective. The initial target was arbitrarily set "higher than the total number of affected households recorded by the Ministry of Energy at that time," and the World Bank revised it to the actual number once this was available (ICR, para. 41). Rating: Moderately Satisfactory.

RI 4 (*number of audit reports prepared for the four Emergency Funds*) tracked whether measures under PA4 were implemented, as a step toward the objective of effective financial management of the emergency response and hence the objective of strengthening the institutional framework. The target of one report for each fund was appropriate for the time period of the operation, although it did not capture budget performance of the adequacy of the content of such reports. Rating: Satisfactory.

RI 5 (*average VAT refund payment period for businesses, including medical*) was reasonable to measure the impact of the PA's exemptions and simplifications for VAT and customs duties on timing, though it did not capture the extent to which firms' liquidity improved as a result. This indicator broadly covered all VAT refunds, although the associated PA focused only on medical and health-related imports. Hence it was more appropriate to measuring the extent of improvement in firms' liquidity in support of sustained recovery than the availability of medical and related equipment, which was the focus of several sub-actions under PA4. Rating: Moderately Satisfactory.

Objective 2: Promote sustained economic recovery

RI 6 (*number of guarantees to SMEs granted by the PCG Fund*) was a direct indicator of the implementation of PA 5 but not of progress toward an intermediate objective of increased access to finance by SMEs, since issuing a guarantee enables but does not necessarily result in a loan. The target of 100 was clear, but did not take into account the time frame needed to establish and implement a new fund (especially by a ministry that lacked experience in this area). Rating: Moderately satisfactory.

RI 7 (*average time to obtain land titles*) was relevant to implementing PA6 and the objective of sustaining economic recovery by reducing the cost and time for new investment. Still, the results chain to achieving the desired result of increased access to finance by enterprises for such investment was lengthy and not articulated. While the implementation of the IDUF could facilitate faster issuance of land titles, a complementary indicator could usefully have tracked the extent to which titles led to increased (as well as faster) lending to enterprises in support of investment for sustained growth. Given the limited time frame, the indicator did not fully consider "the complexity of the land issue in Côte d'Ivoire" (ICR, para. 41) and the link to increased finance becoming available. The ICR team reported difficulty verifying the data (ICR, para. 39). Rating: Moderately unsatisfactory.

RI 8 (*number of reports on the four Emergency Funds published on the MEF website, including the list of firms benefiting from the emergency fund*) was appropriate for effective monitoring and oversight of the emergency program. Although directly relevant to the sub-objective stated in the PD (p. 33) of improving debt management and transparency, it was thereby only indirectly related to the operation's objective of sustainable economic recovery (presumably on the basis that transparency would help ensure continued funding). The PA, and hence the RI, could usefully have specified listing the amounts given as well as the names of beneficiary firms. The data was readily available. Rating: Moderately satisfactory.

Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

5. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

Strengthen the COVID-19 emergency response

Rationale

Four RI targets were relevant and fully achieved or exceeded by the close of the operation, with the associated actions satisfactory and considered successful in achieving the objective of targeted short-term relief to poor and vulnerable households. One RI target related to the time for VAT refund payments was only modestly achieved.

The direct cash transfer approach proved highly effective in quickly reaching double or more the targeted number of both total households (RI 1) and women plus female-headed households (RI 2), although the impact on those affected by climate change was not captured. "A significant share of the beneficiaries comprised employees who lost their jobs" (ICR, para. 43), who otherwise would likely have fallen into poverty. Furthermore, the action supported institution-building to enhance the safety net by establishing "a clear mechanism for their identification and accounting in the single social register" (ICR, para. 43).

The government alleviated budgetary stress on the poorest households through the two-month electricity consumption subsidy for the more than one million households already qualified for the social tariff (RI 3). This action also helped alleviate financial stress on the electricity company.

Audits of the four emergency funds that the government had established as part of its Covid-19 emergency response plan were successfully carried out and "pinpointed and helped remedy weaknesses in the system and the initial operations" (ICR, para.44). Besides the audits carried out by the Inspectorate General of Finance, an audit firm selected through a public bidding process did an additional audit, and further audits of the 2021 operations were underway as of the ICR.

The time for a VAT refund payment (RI 5) worsened considerably during 2021 (from 30 to 60 days) due to a surge in total requests covering all imports (although imports of medical equipment may have benefited from the exemption, the indicator did not separate them). Nevertheless, the government took actions under the

Sustainable Development Finance Policy to implement an automated mechanism, which helped to achieve 60 percent of the targeted reduction by the time of the ICR in 2022 (ICR, para. 47).

Rating

Satisfactory

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

Promote sustained economic recovery

Rationale

Two RIs were relevant to the objectives, but the land title indicator was moderately unsatisfactory in terms of relevance. One of the two relevant RIs (the reporting indicator) under Objective 2 made substantial progress toward their target by the closing date, while the other only made modest progress. The indicators focused on initial steps to lay the groundwork to facilitate access of enterprises to finance; there were no indicators as to whether subsequent outcomes on the (implicit) results chain toward economic recovery were being achieved, and it was difficult to attribute subsequent progress to the DPO.

“The partial guarantee fund for SMEs [RI 6] was not operational in 2021 due to unmet necessary requirements…[and] the lack of expertise in the management of such a financial instrument by the SME ministry…as well as banking conditions” and stringent eligibility criteria (ICR, para. 48). Furthermore, restructuring of the agency stalled disbursement of its capital funds from the Bank and IFC. Although 34 SMEs had received guarantees by the time of the ICR, the ICR presented no evidence as to whether this contributed to actual financing that would support the objective of investment for sustained economic recovery.

There was no progress on the time to obtain land titles (RI 7) during the period of the operation “because of lack of transparency, lack of appropriate governance, poor communication, and coordination” and lack of financial resources for implementation (ICR, para. 50). Technical support from the IFC helped to yield modest progress by the time of the ICR, and further implementation is to be supported by the Competitive Value Chains for Employment and Economic Transformation Project. Nevertheless, how effectively this would contribute to the objective of sustained economic recovery remains unclear.

The regular publication of reports on the four emergency funds (RI 8) was a positive step toward sustaining the practice of publishing monthly operational reports “within 45 days of the end of that month since 2020,” indicating that the government has maintained and institutionalized this transparent aspect of debt administration.

Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)
Rationale

Objective 1 is rated Satisfactory, and Objective 2 is Moderately Satisfactory (due to improvement over the unsatisfactory achievement as of the closing date). Overall achievement is rounded upward to Satisfactory, with five targets fully met or exceeded and three with modest achievement as of the ICR review.

Overall Efficacy Rating
Satisfactory

6. Outcome

Rationale

The relevance of prior actions and efficacy are both rated Satisfactory.

a. Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Slow economic recovery from pandemic shut-downs could undermine the effectiveness of the short-term subsidies of the COVID-19 Emergency DPO in preventing people from falling (deeper) into poverty. Fortunately, “the Ivorian economy continues to show signs of resilience to the pandemic and a sustained recovery in 2021” (IMF Press Release No. 25/22). The cash transfers and electricity subsidies were time-bound stop-gap measures, but slow recovery could generate political pressure to extend them in ways that could not fiscally be sustained. Maintaining economic recovery, including improving domestic resource mobilization, is the focus of ongoing IMF and World Bank support for Côte d’Ivoire.

Economic shocks represent a continuing threat to sustained economic recovery. These could include rising inflation, debt distress, and future pandemics. The COVID-19 Emergency DPO made some important steps toward strengthening Côte d’Ivoire’s safety net, but its “social protection architecture lacks a clear strategy for providing beneficiaries with a path out of poverty” (ICR, para. 66). Current efforts to implement the single social register, national ID and IDUF are steps toward strengthening social safety nets and institutionalizing positive steps initiated under the COVID-19 Emergency DPO. Likewise, the Competitive Value Chains for Jobs and Economic Transformation Project includes a contingency emergency response component to help cope with natural disasters and emergencies. The ICR (para. 65) notes that “continued efforts to improve health capacity and crisis management mechanisms, access to universal health coverage, and quality of services will be essential.”

Failure to follow through on measures initiated or supported under the emergency response (e.g., single social register, IDUF) would compromise the effectiveness of the operation in paving the way toward the resumption of sustained growth. To carry forward the reforms and institution-building, the World Bank is preparing a new Investment for Growth DPF series, “aiming at (1) strengthening the foundations for private and public investment; (2) improving the quality of investment in human capital; and (3) promoting sustainable investment in face of climate change” (ICR, para. 74).

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Bank Performance – Design

Rationale

The design of the operation explicitly drew on prior experience and lessons, as well as consultations with key development partners. The PD identified major risks, and the operation itself was an important mitigating measure.

Lessons from prior experience

The design and selection of reforms explicitly drew on “lessons from the previous DPF series[cw1] , including the importance of (i) fostering inclusive growth and better social services delivery; (ii) sound and transparent fiscal management good practices; and (iii) balancing well the Government’s capacity to implement key reforms rapidly” (PD, para. 4.1.2). PAs “were designed to leverage the progress achieved in previous operations” (ibid.). The World Bank designed short-term relief measures along the lines of its coronavirus (COVID-19) approach paper “Saving Lives, Increasing Impact, and Getting Back on Track” and other World Bank policy notes relating to the pandemic (ICR, para. 13 and Table 7). Other analytical underpinnings included IMF technical reports and blog, and the WBG’s extended FY 16-19 CPF, 2020 CPSD and the 2015 *Principes applicables aux mécanismes publics de garantie de crédit dédiés aux PME* (ICR, para. 13 and Table 7).

Results chain

The chain (“theory of change”) linking actions to results was generally implicit rather than laid out. For short-term transfers and subsidies, the result of alleviating financial stress was direct and immediate and did not require a chain of intermediate steps. But for measures intended to lay the groundwork for increased access to finance by enterprises, an explicit results chain specifying the further steps needed to realize the desired outcome would have been useful.

Risk identification and mitigation

The PD (section 6) identified substantial risks in several areas: political, governance, macroeconomic and social. The Bank intended the COVID-19 emergency program (supported by the DPO) to mitigate these risks through prompt measures to deal with the pandemic and its effects on the economy and society. The Bank intended domestic dialogue under the Prime Minister and monitoring in collaboration with development partners to help mitigate and deal with these risks (PD, para. 6.2). The operation included measures for transparency and monitoring to help mitigate risks involved in debt management.

Stakeholder consultation and coordination with Development Partners

While the urgent nature of the emergency response forestalled substantial prior consultation on the design of the operation, the PD (para. 6.4) asserted that “CIV has permanent fully consultative processes with the public sector, the private sector, civil society, and development partners.” The IFC was directly involved in the preparation of the operation. The IMF was “involved in continuous discussions throughout the year on the overall size and structure of the crisis response package” (ICR, para. 61). Furthermore, “the country developed its health sector response in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the leading development partners in the health sector” (ICR, para. 61).

Rating

Satisfactory

b. Bank Performance – Implementation

Rationale

Monitoring

The RIs were generally adequate to monitor the implementation of this short-term operation. However, there was no explicit monitoring of whether the institution-building actions led to the intended results (e.g., increased access to finance by SMEs).

Adaptation

As a single operation rather than a series, there was little opportunity for observing weaknesses and adapting accordingly. Nonetheless, there was sufficient response to institutional problems implementing the partial credit guarantee fund and the unique land identifier that the World Bank addressed the failure to achieve any progress during the period of the operation in time to realize partial progress by the time of the ICR.

Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

c. Overall Bank Performance

Rationale

Design is rated Satisfactory and implementation Moderately Satisfactory. The overall rating is weighted toward the former because the design is the most critical aspect of a one-year operation, and there is little scope for adjustment during the implementation

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. Other Impacts

a. Social and Poverty

It is too early for evidence to be available on anticipated social and poverty impacts.

b. Environmental

Environmental implications were negligible, and it is too early for evidence to be available.

c. Gender

The operation targeted women and female-headed households for emergency cash transfers and substantially exceeded the target. The project also promoted the implementation of a single social register. Still, the ICR presented no evidence of whether that is having longer-term positive effects on the inclusion of women in safety nets.

d. Other

N.a.

10. Quality of ICR

Rationale

The ICR provides a coherent narrative of the operation's context, rationale, design, and results. It reviews Côte d’Ivoire’s successful pre-pandemic track record, the negative impacts of the crisis, and the government’s emergency plan to address it as justification for the Bank’s support. In the absence of an explicit results chain, it attempts to articulate an implicit theory of change in some cases (paras. 43 and 46). Reviewing the PAs and

RIs indicates where there was scope for improvement (e.g., paras. 32, 37, and 38). The ICR team based the assessment on a thorough review of the available data, which the ICR team tried to verify (paras. 39-40). It attempted to draw relevant lessons regarding measures to prepare for and cope with crises (paras. 69-73). The presentation is clear and conforms to the guidelines.

a. Rating

High

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreement/Comments
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	The ICR weighted non-achievement of two targets as of completion (2021), whereas the ICRR uses subsequent 2022 data to yield Modest achievement for those two targets, and rounds the Efficacy rating upward, with five targets fully met or exceeded and three with modest achievement as of the ICR review.
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Relevance of Results Indicators	---	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR	---	High	

12. Lessons

Cash transfers and subsidies can be highly effective in preserving gains in poverty reduction by cushioning the effects of a crisis on the poor and vulnerable. The government reached more than the targeted beneficiaries with cash transfers and electricity subsidies. However, this requires adequate social safety net mechanisms before crises. The emergency response's success was largely due to “the development of social safety net projects and the successful management of the Ebola outbreak before COVID-19” (ICR, para. 69).

Likewise, **effective crisis management depends on creating adequate policy space during non-crisis times** (ICR, para. 69). Côte d’Ivoire’s sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies before the pandemic enabled “significant deployment of fiscal policy during the crisis while preserving the overall sustainability of the economy,” as well as warranting quick response by development partners to urgent needs for emergency funding. Prior relationships between the World Bank and certain counterpart agencies may have helped explain why some actions proved more effective than others [awaiting further information from TTL].

Institution-building measures under an emergency program require a clear results chain laying out subsequent steps to promote a return to sustained growth effectively. While the DPO appropriately took advantage of the crisis to support reforms that could lead to longer-term positive impacts, the intended outcome was too remote from these “inputs” to be able to attribute success in the absence of a clear series of steps to achieve the results. While RIs for an emergency response operation have to focus on the short-term implementation of limited policy actions, it would be useful also to suggest indicators that could subsequently be used to assess whether further intermediate steps and intended results were being achieved.

13. Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) Recommended?

No