



1. Project Data

Project ID P169274	Project Name SSSNP	
Country South Sudan	Practice Area(Lead) Social Protection & Jobs	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-D5790	Closing Date (Original) 30-Nov-2022	Total Project Cost (USD) 40,804,025.38
Bank Approval Date 28-Apr-2020	Closing Date (Actual) 31-Mar-2023	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	40,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	40,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	40,804,025.38	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Project's Development Objectives (PDO) as stated in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Loan Agreement(s) and Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) were "to provide temporary income opportunities to selected poor and vulnerable households and to strengthen safety net delivery tools in the Republic of South Sudan." (Financing Agreement Schedule 1, PAD para 23, ICR para 13).



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 was implemented in seven existing counties where the Bank's previous safety net project had been operational and in three new counties in the most conflict affected former opposition-held areas. Implementation took a phased approach and began in the seven existing counties. The selection of the new geographic locations was done using the targeting framework that was developed for the World Bank South Sudan portfolio.

Component 1: Labor Intensive Public Works "Plus"

(At appraisal US\$22.8 million, revised at restructuring to US\$15 million, actual amount disbursed by project closure US\$18.50 million)

This component included (a) cash transfers, including transfer fees, for beneficiary households participating in labor-intensive public works (LIPW) to meet immediate needs and sustain household assets (over a nine-month period totaling US\$360 per year); (b) equipment, materials, and skilled labor to ensure public works of reasonable quality; and (c) a "plus" approach, providing mandatory, complementary support to strengthen household capacity to more consciously use the cash received for the family's well-being (including financial skills messages, water, sanitation and hygiene awareness, early childhood development and nutrition messages). This component was the initial focus of the project as it not only supports households with temporary income but also rehabilitates community assets and provides complementary support for human capital development. However, at restructuring in April 2022, Component 1's allocation was decreased from US\$22.8 million to US\$15 million and Component 2's allocation was increased from US\$4 million to US\$11 million in response to COVID-19 restrictions in Juba, floods, and insecurity in select districts.

Component 2: Direct Income Support

(At appraisal US\$4.0 million, revised at restructuring to US\$11.0 million, actual amount disbursed by project closure US\$7.64 million)

This component of the project provided income support to labor-constrained households that were unable to participate in LIPW. Categories of eligible households includes: (a) households headed by females; (b) households headed by children; (c) households headed by the elderly; and (d) households headed by the chronically ill and/or the disabled. Households were encouraged, but not mandated, to participate in relevant complementary activities under the "plus" intervention.

Component 3: Strengthening Safety Net Delivery Tools and Project Management

(At appraisal US\$13.2 million, revised at restructuring to US\$14 million, actual amount disbursed by project closure US\$14.81 million)



This component included strengthening social safety net delivery tools through the following activities: (a) Functional Management Information Systems and biometric tools; (b) Robust payment mechanism with compliance assurances; (c) Enhanced Grievance Redress Mechanisms to address complaints, social risks, promote transparency, and accountability; (d) Project management under the difficult political situations in South Sudan.

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

Project Cost and Financing:

All project costs were covered by World Bank financing through the International Development Association (IDA -D5790), with no financing contribution expected or made by the Borrower. The project was initially appraised at US \$40 million and the actual cost was US \$40,804,025.

Dates:

Project approval took place on 28 April 2020 and the project became effective on 6 May 2020. The Midterm review took place in November 2021. The project was restructured on 22 April 2022 for:

i) component reallocation: Component 1 (LIPW "Plus") was decreased from US\$22.8 million to US\$15 million and Component 2 (Direct Income Support) was increased from US\$4 million to US\$11 million as due to COVID-19, flooding and localized insecurity LIPW requirements were waived in select counties such as Juba. Component 3 funding was increased by 6 percent, from US \$13.2 million to US \$14.0 million due to higher operational costs associated with COVID-19, security needs, and extending the project's end date.

ii) results framework revisions due to component reallocation (discussed in Section 4),

iii) change in closing date from 30 November 2022 to 31 March 2023

iv) change in implementation schedule

The Project closed on 31 March 2023.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The objectives were highly relevant to country context South Sudan's development indicators continue to be some of the lowest in the world. The country had a Human Capital Index of 0.3 at appraisal and at closure ranked last out of 191 countries with an index of 0.39. Poverty incidence increased from 66



percent in 2015 to 89.5 percent in 2019, and the poverty gap increased from 32 percent to 47 percent (ICR para 5). Poverty and vulnerability in South Sudan take on specific gender dimensions with female-headed households considered more vulnerable to poverty than male-headed households (PAD para 5). Despite the dire need for social safety nets there is little government financing of social sectors. Combined public expenditure on health, education and rural development constitute only about 7.4 percent of the national annual budget and basic service provision is supported almost solely by donors.

The objectives were highly relevant to government strategy. Social protection is an important part of the Government's strategy to fight poverty and promote resilience. The South Sudan Development Plan 2011–2016 first recognized the importance of developing a coherent social system 'to reduce risk, vulnerability, poverty and economic and social exclusions'. The PDOs were well aligned with South Sudan's National Social Protection Policy Framework which identified priorities and opportunities for strategic coordination and alignment among social protection interventions in the country; and committed 1 percent of the national budget for social protection services (ICR para 24). The National Development Strategy 2018–2021 prioritized creating enabling conditions for the return and integration of displaced South Sudanese. A reliable and predictable safety net contributed to this aim by supporting communities to improve their welfare, strengthen their resilience and thus create enabling conditions for the return of internally displaced people. Both the ICR and the PAD acknowledge that the Government's commitment to poverty reduction and strengthened resilience is compromised by the continued lack of adequate public financing of social sectors and reliance on donor financing of basic services. This jeopardizes the relevance and effectiveness of the policy commitments mentioned above.

The project's objectives were highly relevant to World Bank strategy at the time of project appraisal and at closing. This project built on the learnings of the previous World Bank supported Safety Net and Skills Development Project (P143915) in South Sudan. At appraisal the PDOs were well aligned with the World Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostics which emphasized the need for a strong social protection system to build confidence in Fragile, Conflict and Violent contexts (SCD, 2015) and the Country Engagement Note which was committed to providing income opportunities and bolstering the resilience and livelihood of poor and vulnerable populations (CEN, 2018). The PDOs remained well aligned with "Focus Area 3: Promote Resilience and Livelihood Opportunities" of the Country Engagement Note for South Sudan FY21-23. In particular Objective 3.1 which aims to expand and strengthen access to social protection and livelihoods. The project is well aligned with one of the strategic pillars of the Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (2020-2025) as it remains engaged despite the conflict and crisis situation in South Sudan in order to build resilience and contribute to human capital development. Further, the project is well aligned with the World Bank's Africa Regional Strategy (2018) which highlighted the need for innovative solutions, custom toolkits, and partnerships with the United Nations (UN) in fragile situations.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)



OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To provide temporary income opportunities to selected poor and vulnerable households.

Rationale

Theory of Change

The theory of change is technically sound. The project's theory of change held that providing temporary income opportunities through cash transfers for LIPW or Direct Income Support for labor constrained households alongside "plus" activities would plausibly smooth immediate consumption gaps and lead to beneficiaries making better decisions about how to use the cash transferred, which could plausibly result in a reduction in negative coping mechanisms and improved food availability, savings, climate change adaptation, sanitization and hygiene practices, nutrition and early childhood development practices. Cash transfers over a longer period than the previous Bank safety net project in the country, could allow households to plan better, save, and have more opportunities to engage in livelihoods activities, thus supporting enabling conditions for human capital development. LIPW would plausibly enhance community assets that support improved community welfare and natural resource management. According to the PAD (p. 40), the PDO-level outcome would be measured by the number of beneficiaries of social safety net programs, including female beneficiaries.

Outputs and Intermediate Results

The project achieved the following:

- 35,607 beneficiary households participated in LIPW "Plus" which almost achieved the revised target of 35,623 beneficiary households and did not meet the original target of 55,000 beneficiary households. This revised target was not fully met due to discrepancies between the project's initial estimates of an average household size of seven, as observed in the previous safety net project, relative to the actual average household size under this project which was 6.5 (ICR para 30).
- 77 percent of beneficiaries who received cash for performing LIPW were female which exceeded the target of 60 percent.
- 48.1 percent of beneficiaries who received cash for performing Labor Intensive Public Works were youth which exceeded the target of 25 percent.
- 4,187,592 workdays created which exceeded the revised target of 4,000,000 workdays and did not meet the original target of 6,000,000 workdays.
- 378 LIPW sub-projects were undertaken across 7 counties amounting to US\$ 12,864,428.10 in wage transfers. These sub-projects included agriculture-related activities which resulted in 2,390 acres of cultivated land that yielded 1,300 tons of produce, maintenance and rehabilitation of 572 km of community roads, general cleaning, drainage works, construction and renovation of community facilities, and agroforestry.
- 29,438 beneficiary households received Direct Income Support which exceeded the original target of 10,000 beneficiary households and the revised target of 29,377 beneficiary households.
- 99.1 percent of beneficiary households who received Direct Income Support complied with the project's targeting criteria.



- Direct Income Support was provided across all 10 counties, amounting to US\$ 10,622,372 in transfers. 80.1 percent of direct income support beneficiaries were women. For the counties of Juba, Pibor, and Torit, Direct Income Support was the sole program implemented due to COVID-19 risks in Juba and localized violence-related insecurity in the other two locations.
- Cash Plus activities were conducted in all counties except Juba (due to COVID-19 restrictions). These activities were based on in-depth training manuals, key messages and cue cards which were developed in response to key barriers identified by the project. A total of 978 master trainers (60.4 percent female) were trained to facilitate the rollout of in-depth Cash-Plus activities.
- The project delivered a total cash transfer amount of US\$ 23.486 million to 65,045 households.

Outcome

The intended outcome was almost fully achieved:

- The project delivered social safety net programs to 423,051 beneficiaries which almost achieved the target of 429,000 beneficiaries. This target was not fully met due to discrepancies between the average household size as mentioned above.
- 219,658 beneficiaries (52 percent) of the social safety net programs were female which exceeded the target of 214,000 female beneficiaries.

The ICR also reported achievements beyond the results framework:

- A behavioral interventions pilot activity conducted in the county of Bor to support beneficiaries' intended use of cash transfers yielded positive results, including a 6 percent increase in the incidence of spending toward priority items, and a 3 percent decrease in food insecurity.
- Monitoring data suggest an 18 percentage point reduction in households selling assets to purchase food and other necessities, a 14 percentage point reduction in households unable to meet basic needs, and a 26 percentage point increase in households saving and joining savings groups. Overall, 94.9 percent of households reported an increase in their standard of living over the course of the project. Nearly 86 percent of beneficiaries reported that the cash received through the project allowed them to purchase goods and services that they would have been unable to access otherwise. The project also observed a significant decrease in the use of negative coping strategies among beneficiary households including a 30 percentage point decline in reducing the consumption of healthy and nutritious foods among adults as a result of scarcity and poverty and a 31.9 percentage point decline in reducing the consumption of healthy and nutritious foods among children. Additionally, there was a 33 percentage point reduction in adults skipping meals within 30 days before the survey.
- However, there were delays in the payment of direct income support due to exchange rate issues during project implementation.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective



To Strengthen Safety Net Delivery Tools.

Rationale

Theory of Change

The project's theory of change held that investment in a functional Management Information System, biometric tools, a robust payment mechanism, an enhanced Grievance Reporting Mechanism to address complaints, robust gender-sensitive community engagement, capacity building of community and local government coordination and oversight structures would reasonably ensure on time cash transfers to beneficiaries, promote transparency, and accountability and improve beneficiary satisfaction. This would plausibly lead to the strengthening of the foundation of the national social protection system, enabling cost-efficient and effective delivery of social support and encourage a gradual move from humanitarian to development approaches. According to the PAD (p. 40), the intended outcomes were to be measured by the percentage of beneficiary payroll generated by the Management Information System, the percentage of payments from the Management Information system made using biometric authentication and percentage of complaints resolved through the Grievance Reporting Mechanism.

Outputs and Intermediate Results

The project achieved the following:

- 87.7 percent of cash transfers to beneficiary households were made on time which exceeded the target of 80 percent.
- 99.7 percent of beneficiary households were satisfied with the project which exceeded the target of 80 percent.
- 46.9 percent increased participation by women in community level governance and coordination structures which exceeded the target of 30 percent.

Outcome

The ICR highlighted achievements in and beyond the results framework to demonstrate that the project substantially achieved its objective to strengthen safety net delivery tools as evidenced by the following:

- 100 percent of the beneficiary payroll was generated by the management information system which exceeded the target of 80 percent. The management information system was further enhanced to include new modules necessary for the expansion of safety nets, security improvements and preparation for handover to government. Preparation for handover to the government was not included in the results framework, however, the ICR describes that preparation for handover included development of operational and technical manuals, drafting of the Terms of Reference for the newly recruited specialists, and weekly coordination meetings with the government.
- 100 percent of payments using biometric authentication which exceeded the target of 90 percent.
- 100 percent of complaints were resolved through the grievance resolution mechanism which exceeded the target of 80 percent. A total of 3,393 grievances were received over the project duration, 52 percent were from males while 48 percent were from females. Most of these grievances were related to payments i.e. absence during payments, requests for registration of alternates, death of primary beneficiaries and fingerprint failures. 7 grievances were related to GBV and were properly



addressed and closed. On average it took 4-5 days to resolve ordinary grievances in the field indicating the system's efficacy in addressing beneficiaries' concerns and ensuring their satisfaction.

- Despite a third-party implementation modality, government-led governance structures both at the national and local levels were developed and strengthened during implementation. At the national level, the National Technical Committee and National Advisory Committee were involved in all key decision making, while all administrative levels were engaged using a participatory Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping process to identify the vulnerable Payams (districts) and Bomas (villages) in all project locations. This community engagement process identified locations and beneficiaries that helped to obtain consensus amongst different stakeholders and reduced tensions between targeted and non-targeted communities.

Objective 2 is assessed as high given strong evidence of strengthened safety net delivery tools.

Rating
High

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The objective to provide temporary income opportunities to selected poor and vulnerable households was almost fully achieved, and the objective to strengthen Safety Net Delivery Tools was fully achieved. The aggregation of achievements is indicative of a Substantial overall efficacy rating. The ICR does not speak to attribution directly, nor is counterfactual data available. The output-orientated results framework (discussed further in M&E section 9) means that attribution of outputs to project activities is reasonably clear, the impact of this project has largely not been assessed.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

The full economic analysis at appraisal is not annexed and as such, critique of the methodology and underlying assumptions cannot be done. The ICR's economic analysis (ICR Annex 4) performs a labor intensity analysis on component one and a cost effectiveness analysis on components one and two.

Labor intensity refers to the proportion of the program's total budget that is transferred to the targeted beneficiaries in the form of wages for public works. A more labor-intensive approach may be more expensive but provides broader social protection and thus enhances the intended benefits of the social safety net program. At



appraisal labor intensity estimated was 0.64 which was comparable to the previous safety net project (0.67) and other projects in the region and globally, however, at post project analysis the estimated labor intensity of the public works program was slightly less at 0.58. This suggests higher administration, capital equipment and technical costs than expected at appraisal.

Cost effectiveness is defined in both analyses as the administration and program management costs to transfer one dollar to the beneficiaries and is also referred to as cost-transfer ratio. At appraisal (PAD para 76-78) the cost effectiveness is estimated at 0.38 for the LIPW "Plus" component and no cost effectiveness ratio is given for direct income support. The post project economic analysis estimated the cost effectiveness ratio for the LIPW "Plus" at \$0.77 and for the Direct Income Support at 0.66. This means that while both components are deemed cost-effective, the costs were higher than originally planned at appraisal.

The higher than expected operational costs are likely due to shocks such as severe flooding, insecurity and project implementation during COVID-19 which necessitated additional measures to be implemented to minimize risks and at the same time to achieve project results. The project team later added that "Plus" activities increased project costs relative to its predecessor project (ICR Review Preparation Interview with Project team 1 November 2023). Costs included in the post-project economic analysis include the proportional share of component three costs namely the project management costs for UNOPS (32.1 percent of the total project costs) and the costs for strengthening safety net tools. It is worth noting that costs such as those incurred for strengthening the Management Information Systems, biometrics and payment mechanisms all could have longer-term future benefits that extend beyond the project period and are not quantified by this analysis.

The additional income and livelihood opportunities created secondary impacts in the local communities which were described in the post-project economic assessment however, full-fledged economic analysis was not possible due to limitations in quantifying many of these benefits in monetary terms.

A 4-month project extension occurred due to a very challenging operational environment, including COVID-19, flooding, and insecurity.

The Borrower's ICR (ICR, Appendix 1) notes a gap in continuity between the predecessor project which ended in February 2019 and effectiveness of this project in May 2020. Cash transfers were also interrupted by rapid devaluation of the South Sudanese Pound so that the Bank and UNOPS could ensure that the project did not further devalue the currency and reduce the cash value the project was distributing.

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 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable



ICR Estimate	0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
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* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance of objectives is rated High, as project objectives were highly relevant to country context, government strategy, Bank strategy, and were appropriately situated within the Bank's ongoing engagement program in the country and broadly in Fragile, Conflict and Violent contexts. Efficacy is rated Substantial, as the project almost fully achieved its objectives. Efficiency is rated substantial as while both components are deemed cost-effective, the operational costs were higher than originally planned at appraisal.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Whilst the ICR rates the risk to development outcome as moderate, the evidence it provides suggests a high risk to the sustainability of development outcomes. The general political, security, macroeconomic, fiduciary, social, and institutional environment in South Sudan exhibits the typical risks of a FCV country. The low fiscal commitment to social sectors by the Government poses substantial risk to the success and sustainability of the development outcomes. Elite capture and discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, and other social factors, may result in mismanagement and leakages of funds and threaten the equitable distribution of safety nets to the poor and vulnerable. This is further compounded by regional insecurity.

Institutional strengthening may offer some mitigation. Throughout the project duration, comprehensive training initiatives were conducted for government users of the Management Information System. Training ranged from general functionality to specific modules like the Grievance Resolution Monitoring and identity document printing. Efforts were made to support the government in taking over the management information system, involving new hosting selection, drafting Terms of Reference for newly recruited specialists, and regular coordination meetings. However, Third party implementation "occasionally led to a situation where the government's role and authority became less clear and ambiguous" (ICR para 64) and may have thinned government institutional capacity for safety net implementation.

Further mitigation includes ongoing investment by the Bank in the social protection sector and the government's institutional capacity through the South Sudan Productive Safety Net for Socioeconomic Opportunities Project (P177663) approved by the World Bank Board in June 2022.



8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Project design was carefully appraised and undertaken in consultation with development partners, UN agencies, the Government and other Bank-funded projects to ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation and duplication. The project design was technically sound with the literature suggesting that cash transfers can play a key role in strengthening the resilience of the poor and vulnerable, while LIPW can enhance community assets that support improved community welfare. At design the emphasis was on LIPW with the Direct Income Support, which was a new intervention in the setting, kept small with scale-up planned based on results achieved and lessons learned. The inclusion of "plus" activities was to strengthen household capacity to more consciously use the cash received for the family's well-being and encourage longer term economic welfare and violence reduction. The project was built on the Bank's experience and lessons learned from earlier safety net projects in South Sudan and other FCV settings. Given that poverty and vulnerability in South Sudan take on specific gendered dimensions the Bank designed a gender sensitive project.

Risk assessment at appraisal was comprehensive, and considered the overall risk as high (PAD para 103-113), and mitigation was incorporated into the design. Two such mitigation measures, which were determined at portfolio level, included third party implementation and third-party monitoring. Careful selection of a third-party implementation agency was undertaken and the ICR includes a justification for the selection of UNOPs. By incorporating flexibility in design (e.g., the waiver of public works requirements if conditions warranted it), the project could swiftly respond to unpredictable factors such as COVID-19 outbreaks, floods, and security concerns.

Quality at entry was affected by an over a year's gap in continuity between the predecessor project which ended in February 2019 and this project which started in May 2020. Based on discussions with the project team, this delay may have meant that some local level committees and other structures needed revitalization and re-engagement.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Bank supervision met expectations for implementation. The project took a phased approach and began in the seven existing counties with expansion to new conflict affected former opposition areas based on selection using the targeting framework that was developed for the World Bank South Sudan portfolio. The project also adopted a flexible approach to cash transfer with temporary transfer of beneficiaries between components made possible due to the project's flexibility. Regular support was provided by the Bank's technical and fiduciary teams, with bi-weekly technical meetings to track implementation progress and to ensure maximum development impact, resulting in adjustments to the project. The Bank team collaborated closely with UNOPs, as well as key government counterparts.

The project mid-term review and subsequent restructuring were timely. The review recognized the significant progress and positive results achieved, along with satisfactory fiduciary and safeguards



arrangements (ICR para 88). However, the review also highlighted substantial challenges beyond the Bank's control, including flooding, localized insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic, and an exchange rate crisis in late 2020, which had impacted implementation and led to delays across all project counties. Consequently, a Level II project restructuring was initiated. Ongoing investment by the Bank in the social protection sector and the government's institutional capacity through a new operation will continue transition arrangements.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The project has an output-oriented Results Framework and indicators partly explained by the project's FCV setting. The theory of change was not fully clear in differentiating between intermediate and outcome levels as defined in the results framework.

Each of the indicators included in the results framework had a clear frequency, data source, target and baseline values. Further, gender sensitivity of the results framework can be seen through sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators dedicated to monitoring women's participation. The inclusion of beneficiary feedback monitoring throughout project implementation facilitated strong citizen engagement.

Accurate and timely data collection and reduced burden on field-level staff for monitoring and evaluation in remote, hard to access areas was facilitated through the project's adoption of innovative technologies such as Geographic Information System and real-time mobile data collection. In accordance with the World Bank South Sudan portfolio requirement for third-party monitoring, UNOPs contracted BRAC to provide independent operational reviews of project implementation, including verification of payments and results.

b. M&E Implementation

The Bank team provided implementation support during data collection exercises by reviewing data quality and helping UNOPS identify issues with data that required action at the field level. Data collection often proved challenging with unforeseen delays, security restrictions, limited access to project locations and data quality issues which impacted the ability to rapidly identify and address issues. A Beneficiary Registration Lessons Learnt Survey and at least two Post Distribution Monitoring exercises were carried out in all project locations, except for Juba and Pibor where waivers were granted due to interruptions in project activities. The project team also collaborated with the Bank's Geo-Enabling for Monitoring and Supervision team to support UNOPS staff by training and providing troubleshooting throughout



implementation. Bank staff supported data analysis and built capacity on data analysis methods. Regular monitoring and reporting of Environmental and Social Performance were conducted.

Third party monitoring confirmed adherence at all implementation levels to the procedures set out in the Project Operations Manual and identified strengths and weaknesses across eight out of ten locations through on-site checks and satisfaction surveys.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E data on performance and results progress were used to inform project management and decision making. Third party monitoring particularly contributed to implementation improvements with a tracker developed to log key issues and actions taken. The first third party monitoring identified low beneficiary awareness of grievance mechanisms. In response, UNOPS intensified messaging during community meetings, payments, and daily public works activities to increase awareness among beneficiaries about the available grievance mechanisms. Monitoring also observed that beneficiaries were claiming to have received less money than they were due, in response cash verification sections at payment points were implemented.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The overall safeguards rating during project implementation was satisfactory as per the operations portal. The Project was assigned an Environmental Assessment category “B” due to triggering the following Bank safeguard policies:

- OP 4.01- Environmental Assessment- to minimize the anticipated potential social and environmental impacts, an Environmental and Social Management Framework was prepared at appraisal.
- OP 4.04- Natural Habitat risk noted in the ICR but not included in the PAD due to LIPW.
- OP 4.09- Pest Management- as LIPW sub-projects related to small-scale food production might result in increased use of chemicals and fertilizers, with subsequent environmental and health risks.
- OP 4.10- Indigenous Peoples- triggered due to the high social risk of violent conflicts by ethnic groups. This was mitigated by early and active engagement.
- OP 4.11- Physical Cultural Resources- provides ‘chance find’ procedures to minimize the anticipated potential impacts on physical cultural resources and graveyards.
- OP 4.37- Safety of Dams- was triggered as the project may support the construction of small scale dykes, in mitigation the project only worked on very small water pans, which do not pose a significant risk.



UNOPS project management team included an environment and social safeguards specialist to spearhead the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Framework. They engaged stakeholders, identified needs, sensitized ministries, and reported outcomes. A screening template evaluated 463 sub-projects, with 378 implemented; the remaining projects were rejected due to environmental and social issues. Screening outcomes informed the Environmental and Social Management Plans for effective mitigation. For example: Water related public works activities were limited to the rehabilitation and improvement of the existing water delivery schemes and therefore were not likely to have potential impacts on the nearby surface and ground water sources. No sub-projects for new hand-dug wells were approved.

Implementation saw incidents like protests, conflicts, robberies, killings, and raids across locations. Notable social incidents include protests halting activities in Torit in April 2021, protests pausing Pibor's work in October 2021, and Pibor fights displacing people in May 2021. To prevent risks, locals were hired, except for expertise gaps. Shorter payment notifications and daytime activities reduced security risks. A trigger matrix developed by the World Bank guided suspensions, evacuations, and resumptions. Preventive measures countered social risks such as conflicts and GBV/sexual exploitation. Feedback channels ensured meaningful consultations with communities.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

The fiduciary management arrangements for the project were based on the Financial Management Framework Agreement to which UNOPS is a cosignatory. This allows a UN agency to use its own fiduciary management rules and procedures and recognizes the UN Single Audit Principle. In addition, UNOPS has a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with the Bank's Integrity Vice-Presidency with regard to cooperation on fraud and corruption investigation and information sharing.

The World Bank conducted a procurement capacity assessment of the UNOPS South Sudan country office at appraisal. The assessment revealed that while UNOPS has good in-house procurement capacity, there would be a staffing gap with the expected increase of workload under this project and there were general delays resulting from prolonged evaluation processes and delays in submitting procurement documents to contract review committees. As a result of this assessment UNOPS directly hired staff using UNOPS human resource procedures.

All fiduciary management covenants were met, including timely audits and interim reports. Audit reports consistently provided clean opinions without major findings. UNOPS submitted expenditure and financial reports via Client Connection. Audit reports for 2020 and 2021 were on time with unmodified opinions on fair financial statement presentation. No significant Fiduciary Managements issues emerged during implementation.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

While the ICR does not note any negative unintended consequences, the PAD acknowledges that participation in public works and other safety net schemes can contribute to increased empowerment and



reduced GBV, but the unintended negative consequence of shifting power dynamics is possibly increased stress and potential violence. Community sensitization was conducted to mitigate this. See the Gender section below for further details.

Positive unintended consequences highlighted by the ICR include the ongoing use of the management information system for new safety net projects and the positive environmental outcomes of the LIPW sub-projects. These are medium to long term outcomes intended by the project design rather than unintended consequences.

d. Other

Gender:

The project's design and implementation acknowledge that poverty and vulnerability in South Sudan take on specific gendered dimensions. Women have very limited or no access to livelihood or productive assets and little control over household income. Furthermore, women face higher levels of intimate partner violence and marginalization and early and forced marriage are manifestations of biased gender norms.

The project addressed these gender gaps to increase women’s empowerment by i) supporting women’s participation as wage workers with 77 percent of beneficiaries performing LIPW being female, ii) it contributed to a more equitable income distribution by ensuring that female beneficiaries are the direct recipient of the cash transfers, iii) efforts to ensure gender parity in the local structures established by the project contributed to improved agency of women.

The results framework measured gender-specific and gender-disaggregated data, ensuring that progress could be tracked and learnings implemented. The project was gender sensitive in its implementation and included activities such mobile childcare shelters and assigning light work.

A Gender Action Plan was developed to identify potential GBV risks throughout implementation and to propose mitigation measures. In response to the plan, several activities were carried out, including sensitizing beneficiaries on GBV through disseminating information about GBV focal points, reporting GBV incidents, available services and referral pathways.

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	This ICR Review rated both efficacy and efficiency as Substantial in view of moderate shortcomings.
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	



Quality of ICR --- Substantial

12. Lessons

Lessons drawn from the ICR, adapted by IEG:

- Incorporating flexible design and approaches is key to adapting to dynamic situations, particularly in FCV contexts. Temporary waivers of labor-intensive public work requirements ensured uninterrupted cash support for beneficiaries during critical times. By incorporating flexibility into both design and implementation, the project could swiftly respond to unpredictable factors such as COVID-19 outbreaks, floods, and security concerns.
- Operating in FCV contexts requires additional risk mitigation measures, resulting in higher operational cost. Factoring in such high operational cost with possibly longer implementation time frames is critical when implementing a project in these contexts.
- The third-party implementation modality can come at the expense of investments in capacity building and institutional strengthening if the project's objectives, design, and results framework do not address this issue.
- Establishing community-based structures, comprised of community representatives and beneficiaries, and engaging them in the decision-making process for LIPW sub-project development and selection can enhance project ownership and effectiveness.

13. Assessment Recommended?

Yes

Please Explain

It would be informative to evaluate projects undertaken in the South Sudan portfolio through government versus third party implementation and assess their relative efficacy and efficiency as well as their medium term impacts on shifting from humanitarian to development activities.

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR was clear and internally consistent. It was concise and presented a high quality of evidence and analysis including reporting achievements beyond the results framework. The ICR offers high quality lessons for design and implementation of projects in South Sudan and more broadly in Fragile, Conflict and Violent contexts. The ICR did not report the overall Safeguards rating or the Fiduciary Compliance rating. The ICR's theory of change was not fully clear in differentiating between intermediate and outcome levels as defined in the results framework.



a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial