Public Disclosure Authorized

Report Number: ICRR0023113

1. Project Data

Project ID	Project Name
P145861	Skills Development and Youth Employment
Country	**Practice Area(Lead)**
Mali	Education

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Project Cost (USD)
IDA-55130,IDA-H9710	30-Jun-2020	56,637,141.58
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
27-Jun-2014	31-Dec-2021	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	63,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	63,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	56,637,141.58	0.00

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The objective of the project was to support education and training for employability and private-sector led job opportunities for youth in the Republic of Mali (Financing Agreement dated July 25, 2014, p. 6).

One associated outcome target related to the entrepreneurship program was moderately reduced during implementation to allow the consideration of “team applications” for business plan competition instead of only “individual applications." This procedural improvement was unrelated to project scope or ambition. The

original target was substantially met, and the revised target was met. Therefore, the application of a split evaluation would serve no purpose in this case.

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

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
No

d. Components

1. Education and Training for Employability (Appraisal: US$29.2; Actual: US$32.5 million). The component would support formal education and training for in-school youth and non-formal training for out-of-school youth to improve their skills for employability by strengthening technical and vocational education and non-formal short-term skills development programs.

1.1 Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The sub-component would strengthen specific public institutions and competitively selected private institutions in key priority sectors, with the development of partnerships, training of trainers, curricula, and training programs targeting youth 15 to 24 years old who were enrolled in formal public and private technical and vocational institutions at the secondary and tertiary levels. Main activities would include:

- Support to public sector TVET institutions: This would include public sector education and training institutions and a non-formal vocational institution related to each of the priority areas of agro-industry, construction, and mining sectors, with a focus on a reform package that prioritizes curricula, management, human resources, and physical rehabilitation. Activities would include the elaboration and application of competency-based approach curricula, standards, partnership framework with the productive sector, and performance framework with public and private providers related to measurable outcomes, design of entrepreneurship modules, training of trainers, and selected rehabilitation work and upgrading of classrooms and equipment.

- Support to private sector TVET institutions through the provision of competitively selected grants to expand and improve technical and vocational programs.

- Support to Ecole Normale de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel (ENETP), as ENETP had a key responsibility in quality assurance of curricula and teacher training modules. Support would aim at building ENETP capacity with the acquisition of teaching equipment, training of trainers, and the establishment of partnerships with similar regional or global institutions.

1.2 Strengthening Skills Development for Out-of-School Youth through dual apprenticeship and short-term decentralized skills training programs tailored to the needs of two distinct categories of urban and rural out-of-school youth. The sub-component would target young people 15 to 24 years old with primary to lower secondary education who were living in urban areas, as well as youth ages 15 to 29 with less than lower secondary education or no prior education living in peri-urban and rural areas, while also ensuring broad

participation of females. Youth exiting from these programs would also have the opportunity to receive additional entrepreneurship training, start-up funds, and easier access to credit as outlined in Component 2.

The dual apprenticeship programs in urban localities would be combined with formal training to confer cognitive and technical skills. Apprenticeships would include 80 percent of time in the workplace and 20 percent of time in training at an accredited private training center.

The decentralized skills training program would use a modular training program of the Ministry of National Entrepreneurship, Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) to train out-of-school youth with flexible modalities both on and off the workplace and to prepare them for integration in the local labor market in agriculture, livestock, construction, and other key sectors, with a focus on youth who had very limited or no education in peri-urban and rural areas, including post-conflict areas where the program had the potential to help in reintegrating youth at risk. The most motivated youth would then be able to participate in the entrepreneurship program supported by Component 2.

2. Private Sector-Led Job Creation for Youth (Appraisal: US$25.1 million; Actual: US$20.4 million). The component would support private sector led job creation to improve job opportunities for youth through two key strategies: (i) entrepreneurship for youth; and (ii) development and strengthening of established micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

2.1 Supporting Entrepreneurship for Youth. This sub-component would support entrepreneurship development through two programs adapted for youth, ages 21-35 years, with different education and training levels:

- The entrepreneurship program for youth *with limited education* would support youth with lower levels of formal technical education or non-formal education and training to start their own micro-enterprises through a combination of seed funding and training.

- The entrepreneurship program for youth *with at least upper secondary education* would support youth with at least upper secondary education who had the potential for creating somewhat larger enterprises in the informal and formal sector. The program would combine training, coaching, and technical and financial support.

2.2 Supporting Established Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for Job Creation. The sub-component would support selected SMEs (in existence for more than five years) with plans to scale up by facilitating access to markets and credit, and to ad-hoc specialized managerial, business, and technical expertise. The sub-component would provide matching grants to support high-potential local SMEs to improve their productivity, production processes, processing, and/or marketing, by facilitating their access to finance, value chain development, specific skills, sound business plans, and partnerships with good practice investors. To address credit constraints, an Auto Revolving Fund for Employment (FARE) would also guarantee loans to help alleviate credit constraints for new and established MSMEs.

3. Institutional Strengthening and Project Management (Appraisal: US$8.7 million; Actual US$11.2 million). The component would support the provision of works, goods, consultant and non-consultant

services, training, and operating costs for: (a) developing an employment information system, including capacity building for a labor market observatory; (b) developing a skills certification and employment promotion framework, including updating of relevant legal frameworks and policy documents, and promoting multi-sector consultation frameworks; (c) institutional strengthening of relevant technical departments of employment and vocational training, secondary education, industry and investments, and executing agencies; and (d) activities of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) for project coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and fiduciary compliance.

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

Cost and financing: At appraisal, the project cost was estimated at US$63 million, consisting of an International Development Association (IDA) Credit of US$36.1 million equivalent and an IDA Grant of US$26.9 million. In addition, the Borrower intended to contribute an amount equivalent to about US$1.9 million, under which World Bank procurement guidelines would not be applied, to finance the salary of the Project Coordinator and supplemental operating costs related to project piloting (PAD, p. 18). The actual cost was US$56.6 million. US$/SDR exchange rate fluctuations contributed to the difference between original and actual costs.

Dates: The project was approved on June 27, 2014 and became effective on November 24, 2014. The original closing date was planned for June 30, 2020. A Mid-Term Review was carried out in March 2018. A level-2 restructuring on September 13, 2019 extended the project closing date by 12 months from June 30, 2020 to June 30, 2021, reallocated funds between disbursement categories, and revised the results framework. On June 18, 2021, a second level-2 restructuring further extended the closing June by six months to December 31, 2021, at which date the project closed.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Development objectives were responsive to deeply rooted employability challenges facing Malian youth, further aggravated by the 2012 socio-political crisis in the country. More than 70 percent of youth between ages 15 and 24 had very limited qualifications and skills for employability. The majority of these youth were employed in generally low productivity/quality jobs in the informal agriculture and service sectors, and 20 percent were unemployed or inactive (PAD, p. 2). Education outcomes were poor, pointing to a skills mismatch with current and future labor market needs (ICR, p. 6). The completion rate of primary education was only 48 percent, and only one-third of school-age students were enrolled in upper secondary education.

At appraisal, objectives were aligned with the World Bank's Interim Strategy Note for the period FY 2014-2015, in particular with its two pillars on: (i) protecting human capital and building resilience; and (ii) preparing the conditions for economic recovery for Mali that focused on long-term economic growth, building human capital and resilience to shocks, and boosting economic competitiveness by addressing skill gaps (ICR, p. 17). Objectives were also aligned with the country's policy framework for skills and employment, including the 2011 national youth employment policy, the 2011 legal framework for the

promotion of the private sector, and the 2009 national policy on technical and vocational education and training.

During implementation, objectives continued to be relevant to government plans. The 2015 National Employment Policy, which defined the strategic context that underpinned all national and multilateral initiatives for creating jobs, aimed at addressing three main challenges: (i) structural inadequacy of decent job opportunities; (ii) poor level of human capital and reduced employability; and (iii) lack of adequate information on the labor market. In 2019, Mali adopted the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development (2019-2023), which aims at promoting inclusive growth and the development of human capital by encouraging the creation of value and jobs while giving priority to diversifying the economy and developing agricultural value chains through increased industrial processing of local products.

Prior to project closing in 2021, objectives remained fully relevant to the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the period FY2016-2019, specifically to CPF Objective 3.1: Develop Human Capital under Focus Area 3 on Building Resilience, where the CPF highlighted the fact that skill programs would contribute to creating more employment opportunities for youth. Related CPF indicators and supplementary progress milestones were intertwined with those of the project, including for out-of-school youth enrollment in dual apprenticeship programs, and for out-of-school youth employment or self-employment within one year of training completion.

The above referenced CPF for the period 2016-2019 was the most recent partnership framework available at project closing on December 31, 2021. The preparation of a Country Engagement Note was initiated but was postponed in view of the volatile country situation. According to Task Team clarifications of September 19, 2022, an Engagement Note for FY2023-2024 is currently under preparation.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

Support education and training for employability for youth

Rationale

Note on the objective statement: Since the term “support” raised some ambiguity in terms of intended outcomes, these were inferred from the project description in the Financing Agreement (pp. 6-7) where the term "strengthening” was used, from the PAD’s description, and from the ICR’s theory of change (p. 9) where all outcomes related to education and training for employability and private-sector led job opportunities for youth were to be measured by “increases” in key associated outcome indicators. Hence the project intended

to achieve a quantitative increase, augmentation, or scale up in the stated PDO elements. This was also confirmed by the Task Team on September 19, 2022.

The overall project strategy encompassed a two-pronged approach to develop skills for Malian youth and to promote job creation. First, skills development would focus on both the formal and non-formal education and training sectors, with emphasis on supporting more relevant and efficient technical tracks, revamping the apprenticeship program, and creating new and more relevant opportunities for short-term skills development for out of school youth. Second, job creation would target the private sector by supporting would-be entrepreneurs and emerging or established SMEs with potential for job creation.

The theory of change for Objective 1 held that support to: (i) public sector institutions in value chain priority areas for competency-based curriculum development, management and human resources capacity development, and facilities rehabilitation; (ii) private institutions with provision of grants for upgrading curricula, training of staff, and equipment; (iii) ENETP for quality assurance in curricula and teacher training modules; (iv) dual apprenticeships programs with training for youth and master apprentices; and (v) decentralized and flexible short-term training for out-of-school youth, would result in an increased number of youths enrolled in TVET institutions; increased number of private TVET institutions strengthened; increased number of out-of-school youth enrolled in dual apprenticeship programs; and increased number of out-of-school youth enrolled in skills training programs.

The above results would plausibly contribute to augment education and training that promote employability, measured by graduation, completion, and employment rates.

Outputs and intermediate results

The project provided support to five selected public institutions in the rehabilitation of facilities; provision of educational equipment, materials, and tools; human resources development; and competency-based curricula.

The project developed 21 new technical and professional competency-based training programs and eight vocational training programs. According to the ICR (p. 47), these training programs are currently being offered in all public TVET institutions beyond the five target institutions. The new programs contributed to the diversification of training pathways and to strengthening the link between training and the labor market. They included (i) agri-food processing such as milk processing, cereal processing, and oilseed product processing; (ii) construction aspects such as site management, elevator installation and repairs, painting, and electricity; and (iii) leather programs such as tannery, leather goods, and manufacturing.

The project provided support to nine private institutions that were competitively selected through the provision of grants for upgrading curricula, training of staff, and provision of equipment. According to the ICR, these nine institutions are now ranked among the best private TVET institutions in the country, resulting in their enhanced status and contributing to regional partnerships with Benin, Morocco, and Tunisia in the fields of agricultural training, livestock and agricultural processing, and solar energy (ICR, p. 20).

Youth enrolled in the public TVET institutions supported by the project in the three priority sectors increased from a baseline of 2,100 in 2014 to 3,680 youths in 2021, exceeding the target of 3,300 youths.

Out-of-school youth enrolled in dual apprenticeship programs under the project reached 4,858 youth, exceeding the target of 4,500 youths, out of whom 32.7 percent were females, exceeding the target of 30 percent.

Out-of-school youth enrolled in the skills training program under the project reached 23,718 youths, exceeding the target of 20,000 youths, out of whom 30 percent were females, short of the target of 40 percent female youths. According to the ICR, female participation remained challenging mostly due to cultural norms and the fact that women are less inclined to enroll in training in the areas of construction, fish farming, or industry, as they remain concentrated in a few sub-sectors such as hair dressing, agriculture processing, and soap making, among others.

A total of 1,540 trainers were trained on improving sessions, preparation, leading sessions, and evaluating learning. 136 trainers benefited from advanced training programs, and eight trainers obtained qualifying diplomas of "Brevet de Technicien Supérieur."

The project improved ENETP capacity to support TVET, including through (i) equipping three workshops and laboratories to support education and training in mechanics, hydraulics, and electronics; and (ii) pedagogical training of 36 teachers in competency-based training. ENETP established links with the Ecole Normale Supérieur d'Enseignement Technique de Rabat in Morocco to continue improving its capacities.

The number of student beneficiaries was 46,735 students, exceeding the target of 37,000 students, out of whom 14,532 students were females, exceeding the target of 13,320 female students.

As noted under Component I (section 2d), decentralized and flexible training arrangements facilitated training progress and its reach. Decentralized short-term training helped in being closer to where families lived, thus also contributing to the alleviation of some barriers to women's participation (ICR, p. 26).

Outcomes

Youth graduating with a Certificate of Professional Aptitude (CAP level: 2-year program) in public TVET institutions supported by the project reached 76.3 percent, exceeding the target of 50 percent. However, no results could be measured for youth graduating with the Technical Degree or Brevet de Technicien (BT level: 4-year program) because the first enrollments took place only in 2019. Delayed enrollment in the BT program was related to the construction of facilities and equipment installation. Nevertheless, at the time of the ICR, 1,142 youths were enrolled in BT programs. Graduation results were not available prior to the submission of the ICR.

The proportion of out-of-school youth who completed the skills training program was 100 percent, exceeding the target of 90 percent, out of whom 31 percent were females, exceeding the target of 30 percent.

The proportion of out-of-school youth who completed the short-term skills training program employed or self-employed within one year of completion reached 83.7 percent, exceeding the target of 70 percent.

The proportion of out-of-school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs reached 84.6 percent, exceeding the target of 80 percent, out of whom 35.4 percent were females, exceeding the target of 30 percent.

The proportion of out-of-school youth who completed dual apprenticeship programs and who were employed or self-employed within one year of completion reached 75.1 percent, attaining the target of 75 percent.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2
Objective
Support private sector led job opportunities for youth

Rationale
The **theory of change** held that (i) promoting youth entrepreneurship and the creation of micro-enterprises by providing seed grants, loan guarantees, business plans, and mentoring; and (ii) supporting established SMEs for job creation by providing matching grants and loan guarantees, would result in increased numbers of non-graduate youth with simplified project plans, and graduate youth with business plans. These outputs would plausibly contribute to increasing private sector-led job opportunities, measured by increased numbers of enterprises created or scaled up for job creation.

Outputs and intermediate results

The number of youths with completed simplified project plans under the entrepreneurship program for non-graduates reached 6,500 youths, attaining the target.

The number of youths with completed business plans under the entrepreneurship program for graduates reached 1,020 youths, exceeding the target of 1,000 youths.

The project supported the development and functioning of a labor market observatory: “National Observatory of Employment and Training" (ONEF). In December 2013, during project preparation, the government issued an ordinance to establish the observatory. The project equipped the observatory, including with computers, software, and communication technologies, financed staff training, and supported its activities and surveys. Beginning in 2017, ONEF started conducting surveys, such as beneficiary surveys of the short-term skills training, dual apprenticeship program, and entrepreneurship program for youth with limited education. In 2018, it conducted a “value chain” survey to identify job-creating sectors and their value chains. In 2019, it conducted a beneficiary survey of the youth that received support to develop income-generating activities/businesses with a focus on: (i) characteristics of microenterprises; (ii) progress of economic activity of enterprises; (iii) survival of enterprises; and (iv) level of satisfaction of beneficiaries. It also conducted a study on the dual apprenticeship program to assess the satisfaction of youth with the training received. In

2020, ONEF carried out a survey of the dual apprenticeship program to measure the levels and conditions of insertion. Importantly, the studies provided an opportunity to link between the economy and employment, specifically to understand: (i) training and employment needs; and (ii) how best to adapt training to those needs. According to the ICR (p. 23), the surveys helped in creating a feedback loop to continuously improve training and relevance of TVET.

Outcomes

Outcomes were reflected by the augmentation of entrepreneur youths who created or consolidated enterprises and by additional jobs that were further created in cascade by these enterprises.

Enterprises created or consolidated by the project's entrepreneurship program aggregated at 4,931 enterprises in 2021, exceeding the target of 3,500 enterprises. The proportion of females involved in creating or consolidating these enterprises was 50 percent, meeting the target. The total of 4,931 enterprises included the following (ICR, p. 22, and Task Team clarifications):

- Enterprises that were created or consolidated by non-graduate youth reached 4,415 enterprises, exceeding the target of 3,000 enterprises. In addition, these enterprises also created 7,945 jobs. The enterprise survival rate after two years was 82.8 percent (ICR, p. 22).
- Enterprises created or consolidated by graduate youth reached 401 enterprises, short of the original target of 500, but attaining the revised target of 400 enterprises, under which graduate beneficiaries also created 565 additional jobs. The selection process evolved over time: initially, it was led by public sector officials, and subsequently by members of the private sector, indicative of a growing public-private partnership.
- 95 well-established enterprises benefitted from matching grants to scale-up their activities, and 20 other enterprises were strengthened through partnerships.

The number of established and high-potential enterprises in existence for more than five years that were scaled up reached 144 enterprises in December 2021, exceeding the target of 130 enterprises. These scaled-up enterprises created 540 new jobs.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale
The two objectives to support education and training for employability and private sector-led job opportunities for youth were almost fully achieved. The project made substantial advances in enhancing training, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship that promoted employment and self-employment. The project also

built the capacities of the labor market observatory to conduct the necessary studies and surveys that allowed further understanding of labor market needs and relevance of training. Overall efficacy is rated substantial.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

At appraisal, the economic analysis considered main benefits in terms of increased employability and earning capacity of trained youth. It made reasonable assumptions, including on rates of graduation, drop-outs, and employability. Using a discount rate of 4 percent, the project's net present value (NPV) was estimated at US$706.9 million, with an internal rate of return (IRR) of 31 percent over 25 years, indicating that benefits would substantially exceed investment costs.

The ex-post analysis confirmed the likelihood of substantial returns. Using assumptions similar to those made at appraisal, the economic analysis used the lower bound of the present discounted value of benefits for the overall project. The corresponding NPV was estimated to be US$81.5 million with an associated IRR of 15.2 percent.

Implementation aspects were adequate overall, and there were no shortcomings in fiduciary compliance (see section 10). Implementation progress was rated moderately satisfactory throughout most of the implementation period (ICR, p. 30). The project faced initial delays in the procurement of civil works and TVET equipment and some coordination challenges among various agencies, which were subsequently overcome and facilitated by the adherence of the PCU and Ministry of National Entrepreneurship, Employment and Vocational Training (MEFP) to monthly follow-up meetings with various actors and by the provision of additional technical assistance.

In 2020, there were interruptions and travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A coup d'état on August 18, 2020 triggered the World Bank's OP 7.30 with temporary cessation of project financing beyond minimal levels. When the OP 7.30 evaluation process was completed three months later, disbursements resumed in November 9, 2020. According to the ICR (p. 26), the subsequent pace of implementation was swift, and by project closing in December 2021, the vast majority of project envisaged outputs were achieved.

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	✓	31.00	100.00 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	15.20	100.00 ☐ 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 consistency with government programs and the Country Partnership Framework. Efficacy is rated substantial, as objectives were almost fully met. Efficiency is rated substantial in view of high expected returns, but with some shortcomings in implementation aspects that moderately reduced efficiency. The overall outcome is rated satisfactory, indicative of essentially minor shortcomings in the operation's achievement of its objectives, in its efficiency, and in its relevance.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The overarching risk to sustaining development outcomes is related to continued political tension and conflict within the country. At the same time, project activities have been institutionalized, and the original capacity risks were mitigated by institutional strengthening at various levels. Training programs developed under the project are currently being offered in all public TVET institutions (ICR, p. 19). Also, the National Observatory of Employment and Training has developed strong capacity to conduct labor market and employer surveys to better monitor employment issues and to produce data that are being used to develop employment strategies, improve training, and further understand links with the job market. It is likely that overall improved capacities will contribute to sustaining project-related approaches and development outcomes.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Overview: Overall, implementation arrangements were well prepared, including for institutional aspects, fiduciary compliance, safeguards, and M&E aspects (ICR, p. 31).

Project design had multi-sectoral characteristics associated with TVET. MEFP had primary responsibility for leading and coordinating the project. It was supported by a PCU and a multi-sectoral Project Implementation Steering Committee (PAD, p. 21). Implementation arrangements and fiduciary responsibilities were adequately defined among agencies. The Ministry of Trade and Industry would have

a co-leadership role in the entrepreneurship program, and the Directorate for Technical and Professional Education would co-lead in TVET. The National Directorate for Higher Education would be involved in teacher training aspects. The Fund for the Support of Vocational Training and Apprenticeship would assist in implementing the dual apprenticeship program in coordination with the Federation of Craftsmen and other industrial associations in the country. The entrepreneurship program for non-graduates would be implemented by the Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment in coordination with FARE. The entrepreneurship program for graduates would be implemented by a private institution to be competitively selected in coordination with FARE.

Lessons learned from national and international experience reflected in the design included adopting an inclusive and participatory approach, using realistic indicators, involving employers, fostering entrepreneurship, and balancing short-term and long-term needs for institutional strengthening (PAD, pp. 19-20).

Overall implementation arrangements were well prepared, including for institutional, fiduciary, and M&E arrangements. Key risks and appropriate mitigation measures were identified during preparation, including risks of tensions among stakeholders in a multi-sectoral operation. The project was to be implemented in a volatile political and social environment and with limitations in overall institutional capacities. Mitigation measures included (ICR, p. 30): (i) elaboration of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all implementing entities in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM); (i) signing of Memoranda of Understanding with executing agencies with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities; (iii) assigning a focal point to be appointed by each ministry to facilitate coordination between ministries and the PCU; (iv) clarifying financial management procedures in the PIM, customization of accounting software for the project, and recruitment of external consultants to carry out quarterly internal control reviews and physical verifications; and (iv) recruitment of procurement specialists, inclusion of detailed procurement guidelines in the PIM, and arranging for extensive training of staff involved in procurement.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Supervision and implementation support missions were undertaken regularly on a semi-annual basis. Missions included specialists in education, fiduciary aspects, and safeguards. The Task Team was reportedly pro-active in providing support to the government and in addressing arising challenges. According to the ICR (p. 30), the team's performance was further reinforced by effective engagement of the PCU, MEFP, and implementing units, complemented by technical assistance. The team's monitoring and reporting on financial management, procurement, and safeguards compliance were regular, and the team assisted country counterparts to further build capacity in these areas. The team adequately reported on project progress and arising issues in aides-memoire, back-to-office reports, and Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs). To facilitate coordination among different stakeholders, the team initiated the organization of monthly follow-up meetings between the PCU, MEFP, and representatives of implementing

bodies. The team facilitated project restructuring and extension of the closing date to allow completion of planned activities and to allow the institutionalization of main project interventions.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design
As noted in section 4, the main thrust of the objective statement on education and training for employability and private sector-led job opportunities for youth was clear, but the use of the term “support” raised some ambiguity in terms of intended outcomes. These were inferred from the Financing Agreement, the PAD, and the theory of change as a quantitative increase in the stated PDO elements, as also confirmed by the Task Team interview.

In this context, the design had a clear and logical results chain linking activities, outputs, intermediate results, and outcomes. The results framework was robust. Data would be collected from routine reporting and surveys, supplemented by a labor market observatory that would be made operational under the project to provide additional information on labor market trends, insertion results, and feedback from employers (PAD, p. 22). The project design also aimed at improving the education management information (EMIS) system within MEFP to assist in managing the TVET sub-sector.

b. M&E Implementation
Implementation proceeded as planned throughout the implementation period. Indicators were adequately tracked, and the results framework was regularly updated in a timely manner.

The National Observatory of Employment and Training conducted all envisioned studies. An inventory of SMEs was completed. EMIS systems were developed, and staff were trained in their utilization, including staff of the National Directorate for Vocational Training, Department of Finance, Human Resources Department, and the National Directorate of Secondary Education (ICR, p. 31).

c. M&E Utilization
M&E findings were used for regular project monitoring and were shared with stakeholders. EMIS is being used to monitor enrollment in TVET institutions and vocational training centers (ICR, p. 32).

Importantly, ONEF, Mali's labor market observatory, was fully institutionalized and continues to carry out monitoring and evaluation of TVET (ICR, p. 31).

The observatory strengthened the links between training and employment needs of the market. The high quality of work of the observatory was well regarded within the region and, according to the ICR (p. 23), ONEF is now chairing the African Network of Observatories for Employment and Vocational Training.

M&E provided robust and reliable evidence on outcome achievements. Apart from minor shortcomings, the M&E system's design, implementation, and utilization were more than sufficient to assess the achievement of objectives and to test the links in the results chain.

M&E Quality Rating

High

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Overview: The Overall Safeguard Rating was moderately satisfactory throughout implementation.

The project was classified under Environmental Category B, as it triggered safeguard policy BP 4.10 in view of potential risks related to classroom construction. An Environmental and Social Management Framework was prepared and disclosed. Local actors were effectively engaged in the implementation of environmental and social safeguards measures. Safeguards were consistently monitored during project implementation, and findings were reported in the ISRs. Compliance performance was consistently rated as moderately satisfactory.

Although there were no direct investments in known heritage areas, the safeguard policy on Physical Cultural Resources OP/ BP 4.11 was triggered, as covered cultural resources may potentially be dug up during civil works. Also, a chance find procedure was inserted as a clause in enterprise contracts (ISDS, May 12, 2014, p. 6). No information was provided by the ICR on potential findings during the implementation period.

Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12 was also triggered. Although no type of land take or loss of economic assets was expected, some SMEs may require land space, and a Resettlement Policy Framework was prepared to ensure that preventive measures were in place in case any resettlement occurs (ISDS May 12, 2014, pp. 5-6). The ICR (p. 32) noted that compensation for economic loss was made for a few persons affected by construction activities. Vulnerable groups were also identified and received support from the project.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Both financial management and procurement performance ratings alternated between moderately satisfactory and satisfactory during the implementation period, including under regular procurement performance rating assessment missions (PRAMS) conducted by the World Bank's procurement team. Throughout implementation, the PCU was adequately organized, and its procurement personnel had the necessary skills with clearly defined responsibilities (ICR, p. 33). Further capacity development workshops for both financial management and procurement were conducted by the World Bank's financial management specialists for PCU staff. The PCU also conducted regular meetings with the Project Steering Committee. Interim financial reports were submitted in a timely manner and were of acceptable quality. Audits were unqualified (ICR, p. 33).

The PCU migrated to the World Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) in 2018. Procurement plans were updated and submitted regularly. The final PRAMS assessment of September 2021 showed that: (i) the PCU was knowledgeable of the procurement rules and was organized to adhere to the fundamental principles of procurement, value for money, and accountability; (ii) procurement plans were realistic and aligned with the officially approved budget; (iii) the target market was generally stable and did not suffer from supply chain risks; and (iv) the risks of fraud and corruption were low, and there were no restrictions on opening up competition in the market.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None reported.

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	High	M&E provided robust evidence on the achievement of outcomes. Apart from minor shortcomings, the M&E system's design, implementation, and utilization were more than sufficient to assess the achievement of objectives and to test the links in the results chain. M&E contributed to increased

			understanding of training relevance to market needs for employment. The capacities of the labor market observatory that were developed under the project and the high quality of its M&E work were harnessed at the regional level, as the observatory is now chairing the African Network of Observatories for Employment and Vocational Training.
Quality of ICR	---	High	

12. Lessons

The ICR (pp. 34-350 identified several important lessons, including the following lessons partially re-stated by IEG:

Skills development interventions can be remarkably successful in fragile settings when the design includes decentralized and flexible short-term training that can reach the maximum number of young people in rural areas. The project accommodated the country's immediate needs of providing employment for unemployed and underemployed youth in rural areas by providing skills training in a decentralized manner with certification upon completion and with opportunities for apprenticeships. Flexible skills training arrangements helped in accommodating the life situations of young rural beneficiaries. Decentralized short-term training provided training closer to where families live and has likely contributed to alleviating some of the barriers to the participation of young women.

In value chain domains, effective selection of beneficiaries, entrepreneurship training, and the provision of seed funds are critical for new entrepreneurs to begin and sustain their businesses. The project provided entrepreneurship training that included the preparation of business plans as well as seed funds for beneficiaries selected to start Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. This lesson also generated a recommendation to organize continuing education and training with mentoring and technical support to enhance continued viability of new Small and Medium Enterprises.

The creation of an effective labor market observatory facilitates the monitoring of labor market supply and demand. The project supported the establishment of a labor market observatory that provided valuable information to government, training institutions, and businesses for improving TVET operations.

Dual apprenticeship programs can be an effective approach to fostering job market integration and/or self-employment. Under the project, dual apprenticeship programs in urban localities (combining formal training to confer cognitive and technical skills for one-third of the time and apprenticeship for two-thirds of the time) were found to be effective. Associated apprenticeship

reforms also resulted in system improvements, including flexibility and duration, equitable access, and strengthening partnerships with the participation of professional organizations.

Strong private sector engagement is essential for promoting the relevance of skills training programs. The project placed considerable emphasis on engaging the private sector through private sector-led job creation strategies to improve employment opportunities for youth. In doing so, the project supported entrepreneurship programs for youth, scaled up established enterprises, and strengthened private TVET institutions to expand and improve their technical and vocational programs. The project included business leaders within the TVET governance structures. This engagement helped to instill private sector confidence in the training programs.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provided a thorough and complete overview of the project experience. It was results-oriented. Its narrative was accurate and aligned to development objectives. The narrative supported the ICR ratings. The ICR had a well-established theory of change with clear and logical links between activities, outputs, intermediate results, and outcomes. The evidence provided was robust. The ICR's analysis was well focused and candid. The ICR was especially strong in analyzing efficacy and contextual aspects. It offered multiple specific lessons that were directly derived from project experience. These should be useful for similar future TVET operations in fragile settings. The ICR was internally consistent and followed guidelines. Apart from being lengthy, the overall quality of the ICR was high.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

High