Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 12/09/2019 | Report No: ESRSC01001
## BASIC INFORMATION

### A. Basic Project Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Parent Project ID (if any)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>P171125</td>
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**Project Name**

Mauritania Social Safety Net System Project II

**Practice Area (Lead)**

Social Protection & Jobs

**Financing Instrument**

Investment Project Financing

**Estimated Appraisal Date**

1/6/2020

**Estimated Board Date**

2/26/2020

**Borrower(s)**

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

**Implementing Agency(ies)**

Tadamoun Agency

### Proposed Development Objective(s)

To strengthen the nationwide adaptive social safety net system and to improve access to targeted social transfers for poor and vulnerable households, including for refugees and host communities.

### Financing (in USD Million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
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### B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

### C. Summary Description of Proposed Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]

The proposed project will support the strengthening and extension of the social safety net system in Mauritania in order to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. It will build on the outcomes of the previous Mauritania Social Safety Net System Project (P150430) which began implementation in September 2015 and which has put in place: (i) the Social Registry, which provides any government program with an effective and transparent mechanism to target poor and vulnerable households, (ii) the National Social Transfer Program, Tekavoul, which is currently supporting 30,000 households in extreme poverty through cash transfers and social promotion activities; and (iii) the Shock Responsive Social Safety Net Program, Almaouna, which is supporting several thousand food-insecure households annually during the lean season.
The proposed project is framed around four components. Component 1 will aim to improve the efficiency of the Government’s social programs (including, but not limited to Tekavoul and Almouana) by updating the social registry and promoting its usage. This component will be implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, which currently oversees the Social Registry. Component 2 will focus on enhancing the socio-economic inclusion of poor households by strengthening and extending the Social Transfer Program, Tekavoul, supporting an adequate re-certification and exit strategy for former Tekavoul beneficiaries and facilitating their inclusion in the Civil Registry. This component will be implemented by the Tadamoun Agency. Component 3 will strengthen the shock-responsive system by further developing the early warning system, the Almaouna program and the shock-responsive financing strategy. This component will be implemented by the Food Security office (CSA). Component 4 will support the coordination and management of the project.

Furthermore, the proposed project will allow for the inclusion within the SSN of poor and vulnerable households in the refugee and host communities of the Hodh Chargui region. The priority will be to enroll the poorest households within the regular governmental safety net system, including the Social Registry, Tekavoul, and Almaouna programs. The proposed SSN project will be part of an overall program financed by the IDA 18 Refugee Sub-Window (RSW) for Mauritania. The core objective of the RSW program in Mauritania is to strengthen the capacity of the Government to provide access to basic services and infrastructure to the refugee population and host communities in the targeted areas. Apart from supporting the proposed project, the RSW funds will also support (i) the expansion of the on-going Health Support System Project (P156165, INAYA) in the Hodh Chargui (US$ 15 million from RSW, to be approved by November 2019); and (ii) the provision of water supply, sanitation and urban services for host community and refugees populations through the Water and Sanitation Project (P167328, US$ 10 million from RSW, to be approved in December 2019) and the Decentralization and Urban Development project (P169332, US$ 20 million from RSW, to be approved in February 2020).

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1. Project location(s) and salient characteristics relevant to the ES assessment [geographic, environmental, social]
The proposed project is being implemented throughout the entire country. The Social Registry will cover all districts in Mauritania. As a national program, the Social Transfer program, Tekavoul, will eventually cover all 100,000 estimated extreme poor households in every district. The shock-responsive safety net program, Almaouna, will be implemented annually in the areas most affected by food insecurity, as determined by the Mauritania Early Warning System. The project will support the extension of Tekavoul in the Hodh Chargui region, including to eligible refugees. This includes the Mbera refugee camp, which hosts approximately 58,000 Malian refugees that have fled the neighboring conflict. The district housing refugees already struggles with the impacts of drought and scarce resources, prior to the arrival of refugees.

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

During the previous SSN project, the WB team provided extensive and continuous technical support to strengthen the institutional capacity of the relevant implementing agencies (Tadamoun Agency, the Food Security Office, and the
Social Registry Directorate). These agencies demonstrated satisfactory capacity during the previous SSN project. However, as the safety net system is nascent and fragile in Mauritania, it will be necessary to continue with the provision of a strong package of TA over the course of this new operation. Moreover, sustainability will remain a challenge for two reasons: (i) fiscal space is limited for additional financing for the safety net system; and (ii) the ownership of the Adaptive Social Protection shock-responsive system is still relatively low. This is in stark contrast to the government ownership of the Tekavoul program and the social registry, which is strong.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Environmental Risk Rating

The project components are expected to have limited to no impact on the environment. Since the project does not have activities that will generate any adverse impacts or risks on human population and environment, the project is classified as Low risk from environmental perspective and as defined under the Bank’s ESF.

Social Risk Rating

The implementation of the project activities could entail some possible social risks, for example: i) the exclusion and discrimination of certain categories of people, such as vulnerable refugees, including in the access to basic social services as education, health, etc.; ii) weak communication; iii) low integration of certain stakeholders (civil society, municipal authorities, press); iv) labor conditions; v) GBV and SEA. While these issues could occur, they are not expected to happen on a large scale, not are they expected to be significant because of the design of the project. The project has been specifically designed to be inclusive of vulnerable groups, including the refugees.

The social risk rating is, at this stage, classified as substantial. During the preparation of safeguards documents, if there is other additional information, the rating may change.

It will be important to assess the functionality and the efficiency of the existing grievance redress mechanism (GRM) for the current SSN project, to ensure that it can be used for the proposed project or if not, to bring the required corrective activities.

Measures to mitigate gender-based violence (GBV) will also be taken into account, both as part of the overall project and, more specifically, in the GRM. To promote ownership, the project will have to put in place strong communication and civic engagement to receive feedback from beneficiaries, especially women and refugees.

B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

B.1. General Assessment

ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:
The project will not support any rehabilitation/renovation of infrastructure. There will therefore be no adverse risks and impacts from works on the environment. The screening has concluded that the client does not need to prepare an environmental management plan to mitigate potential environmental impacts arising out of proposed project. From a social perspective, the Project is expected to have a positive social impacts on the poorest households and refugee communities. However, the challenge of protecting and empowering refugees and improving the resilience of host populations could include social risks during the implementation such as the exclusion and discrimination of certain categories of people, like vulnerable refugees, weak communication, low integration of certain actors (civil society, local authorities, press), labor conditions, Gender Based Violence (GBV)/Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). Host populations are also affected by difficult living conditions due to the pressure of refugees and their livestock on the natural resources of the host area (water, grazing, wood) causing conflicts. As the major project activities will concern cash transfers, social inclusion will be well defined. To this end, the project will prepare a social management plan. The functionality and efficiency of the existing GRM for the current SSN project will be assessed to ensure that it can be effective, including through a strong participatory and inclusive plan of social communication. The Project will have to recruit sufficient social mobilization staff (experts and facilitators), strengthen the human and logistical resources of GRM team, operationalize the complaints management system and optimize the deadlines for grievance redress actions. This system should be complemented by the establishment of tools to anticipate and manage GBV/SEA, building on some of the established practices in the M’bera camp by UNHCR.

Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:
Mauritania’s Environmental and Social Framework will not be applied in part or in whole for this project.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure
A Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Plan (SEIDP) will be prepared and disclosed. This plan will addresses specific risks identified by stakeholders, including the exclusion of refugees and vulnerable groups in target areas, security risks affecting delivery of cash transfers etc.. It will be updated, as and when necessary. Key stakeholders would include national and local government representatives, local communities, refugees and host community representatives including youth and women organizations, beneficiaries of the SSN project, religious authorities and other members of civil society. Key concerns would be related to the exclusion and discrimination, including in the access to social transfers for the refugee population and host communities in the targeted areas, protection against GBV (vulnerable communities such as women, children and disabilities) group governance arrangements, job opportunities for host community and refugees. The objective is to establish a systematic approach for stakeholder engagement, maintain a constructive relationship with stakeholders, take into account their views, promote and provide a means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life-cycle, and ensure that appropriate project information is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible and appropriate manner. Application of ESS10 stakeholder engagement and disclosure of information is a central part of the Mauritania SSN Project that will be closely monitored through a simple SEIDP, as part of the overall ESF Management Framework. The SEIDP will outline the characteristics and interests of the relevant stakeholder groups, as well as methods for engagement throughout the life of the project. A project level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be set up and build on the one put in place for the on-going SSN project, with a strong participatory and inclusive plan of social communication.
B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Project.

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

The project could involve direct workers (some 10 technical consultants) and civil servants. For the direct workers, the LMP will provide measures to address the terms and conditions of employment, nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for employment, worker’s organizations, restrictions on child and forced labor, and occupational health and safety requirements. The civil servants would be governed by the civil service code, which forbids child and forced labor; the LMP may include OHS measures in case they are not in the civil servants’ existing contracts. The LMP will also include measures to ensure GBV/SEA risks are addressed. The country already has its national laws and regulations related to labor. However, following project effectiveness, an operational GRM will be formally established based on the existing one to ensure that the working conditions comply with these laws and regulations and also with the WB Standards. Complaints received and resolved will be reviewed during the implementation support missions.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS have been screened and it has been determined that they are not relevant, given the Project’s current design.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

Any community health and safety concerns will be incorporated into project social management plan, including measures to address GBV/SEA risks.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The project will screen out any possible need of land acquisition or potential restriction of access. If, for any reason, land acquisition is required then the relevance of this Standard will be reviewed accordingly.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS have been screened and determined to be not currently relevant given the Project’s current context and timing. Relevance of this ESS will be further assessed during Project preparation as part of the ESA process.
ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities
There are no Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities in the project area.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage
Not relevant at this stage, as the project is not expected to finance cash transfers which may have environmental and social impacts specific on cultural heritage. There are no civil works or other activities with cultural heritage impacts associated with the cash transfer activities.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries
The project is not designed as an FI operation. However, the relevance of this ESS will be further assessed during Project preparation as part of the ESA process.

B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks
Governance risks on how the national implementing institutions will take into account the appropriate integration of the refugees into host communities, especially for vulnerable peoples. Other risks could be related to working conditions, health, GBV and security of persons involved in the implementation of the project activities in the project area.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways
No

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas
No

III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE

A. Is a common approach being considered?
No

Financing Partners
none known at this time

B. Proposed Measures, Actions and Timing (Borrower’s commitments)
Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:
Actions to be completed prior to Bank Appraisal:
(a) Preparation of the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) with measures for addressing the environmental, social and labor risks identified in the project.
(b) A Social Management Plan will address all the identified social risks and impacts, including contextual risks, conflict, refugees, GBV/SEA and vulnerable groups;

(c) Preparation of a draft Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Plan (SEIDP). Elaborate the stakeholder engagement plan and information disclosure as part of the Borrower's Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (with a focus on measures addressing governance risks on how the national implementing institutions will take account the integration of the refugees to community, especially for vulnerable peoples, working conditions, health, gender based violence security of persons involved in the implementation of the project activities in the project area, etc.) ;

(d) Labor Management Procedures (LMP).

Possible issues to be addressed in the Borrower Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP):

The Environmental and Social Commitment Plan is expected to address: (i) a Labor Management Procedure developed to guide all World Bank projects in Mauritania; (ii) a Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Plan (SEIDP); and (iii) reference to the social management plan, including measures for GBV/SEA.

C. Timing
Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS 09-Dec-2019

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Borrower/Client/Recipients
Borrower: Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Implementing Agency(ies)
Implementing Agency: Tadamoun Agency

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VI. APPROVAL
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Safeguards Advisor ESSA Hanneke Van Tilburg (SAESSA) Cleared on 09-Dec-2019 at 10:13:34 EST