I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of Africa’s most rapidly growing economies, but it remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Since 2010 economic growth has exceeded the average for Sub-Saharan Africa by 2 percentage points. Real GDP growth has averaged more than 7 percent from 2010-2012 and is projected to reach 7.3 percent between 2013-15. Yet, the country ranks last on the Human Development Index in 2013. Seventy-one percent of the population lives on less than US$1.25 per day. Poverty is gender biased: 28 percent of women have never gone to school, compared to 14 percent for men, women's participation in the workforce is at 55 percent compared to 85 percent for men. Almost half (43 percent) of children under 5 years are chronically malnourished. At 2.8 percent per year, the DRC has one of the highest population growth rates in
A long period of conflicts and mismanagement has severely weakened the country’s institutions. Despite recent progress, improving public sector capacity and efficiency is one of the key challenges. Even some of the basic systems building blocks – such as a recent population and household census, a functioning civil registry, comprehensive inventories of physical infrastructure and robust human resource management systems – do not exist. These system weaknesses pose a risk to the sustainability of gains achieved so far.

Sectoral and Institutional Context
Despite improvements in some human development indicators, considerable challenges remain. DRC is not on track to achieve any of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Current social protection programs, including safety nets, have low coverage, are fragmented and inefficient, and do not meet the needs of the poor and most vulnerable. The education system has seen some improvements, but access and quality are still major challenges and the system is managed using incomplete and very slow moving information. The health system has achieved some good service delivery results in areas where donor financing has been available, but the coverage and quality of interventions remain insufficient and the systems weak.

DRC does not have an effective system of data collection and management to enable decisions that are timely and data-driven, which is the foundation for increasing efficiency in the social sectors. There are no robust information systems in the sectors that manage services for human development yet these are essential for improving the efficiency of investments in physical infrastructure (new constructions and repairs/maintenance), in human resources and in materials such as textbooks and pharmaceutical products. None of the Ministries targeted by this proposed project has a reliable system to manage its physical infrastructure. The Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education has created a special account with US$100 million in government resources for the construction of new schools, but it has no reliable information system to guide the prioritization of these investments. Both the education and health sectors have program management information systems (SIGE and SNIS, respectively), but these are still largely centralized at the national level, they rely on paper-based processes, produce data too slowly to contribute to decision-making and provide none of the feedback to lower levels in the systems that is critical to effective service delivery. Both Ministries have recognized the need to upgrade (e.g. using modern information technologies such as cell phones and tablets) and decentralize the systems and have developed costed plans for that purpose. Both Ministries have also expressed an interest in obtaining additional survey-based information on service delivery.

Relationship to CAS
The third pillar of the FY13-FY16 CAS aims to increase access to social services and raise human development, with a focus on strengthening governance and service delivery systems, while supporting the delivery of services to the population. Four objectives are identified: i) increased access to clean water and sanitation; ii) improved access to health services in targeted areas; iii) improved access to basic education in targeted areas; iv) strengthened social protection. In particular, the CAS includes a HD Service Delivery Technical Assistance Program, which is this proposed project.

In addition to linking to the HD operations in the CAS, the project will also complement other IDA-financed projects, notably the Catalytic Project to Strengthen the National Statistical Institute that
will co-finance the national census, and the Public Financial Management and Accountability Project.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)
The proposed project development objective is to increase the availability of data for decision making for human development and to strengthen systems for essential medicines.

The higher level objective to which this technical assistance project would contribute is to increase the efficiency of investments in the education, health and social protection systems in order to improve human development outcomes. Improvements in efficiency, in turn, may lead to increases in overall investment in the social sectors. This higher level objective will be achieved by working in two related and parallel steps: i) across sectors on reinforcing information systems; and ii) addressing sector-specific systems constraints. The first sector-specific constraint, which will be addressed by this project, is to strengthen the systems for supply and quality assurance of essential medicines. This sector-specific constraint was selected because of its high potential positive impact on the DRC’s population, especially the poor, and its close linkage to larger Bank investments in the health sector. Other sector-specific constraints could be addressed once additional financing becomes available, either from IDA or from development partners.

The proposed project development objective is to increase the availability of data for decision making for human development and to strengthen systems for essential medicines.

The direct beneficiaries of this project will be the decision-makers and staff of the Ministries of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education; Public Health; Social Affairs; and Labor, Employment and Social Insurance, through the technical assistance and related support they would receive to strengthen the systems which enable them to deliver services more efficiently and effectively. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the users of the services provided by the four Ministries.

Key Results (From PCN)
Achievement of the PDO will be measured by the following Key Performance Indicators:

- Availability of web-based dashboard information to guide investments in infrastructure for participating Ministries in targeted areas
- Annual report produced by the education program information system (SIGE) available at national level and in select provinces to inform annual sector reviews
- Annual report produced by the health program information system (HMIS) available at national level and in select provinces to inform annual sector reviews
- Proportion of medicines approved following a documented process
- Knowledge products developed and disseminated to guide strategies and decision making

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description
Component 1: Information Systems

The overall objective of this component is to enable data-driven decision making, leading to more
efficient use of resources and improved human development outcomes. The targeted Ministries currently have very limited reliable data on which to base decisions and thus the investments are of less than optimal efficiency. The project will address that situation in the following four ways:

- GIS-based information management system for infrastructure
- Education program information management system
- Health information management system (HMIS)
- Service Delivery Indicators surveys

Component 2: Systems for Safe Essential Medicines

The overall objective of this component is to enhance the capacity of the system that provides safe and effective essential medicines. While a well-designed national system for delivery of pharmaceutical products exists on paper in the country, it is not operating at its full intended scope or as efficiently as it could. Support is required both to reinforce the supply chain to public sector health facilities as well as the regulatory role of the government to control the quality of essential medicines in the market.

Component 3: Analytical Products for Systems Strengthening/ Project Management

The overall objective of this component is three-fold: i) to ensure that targeted Ministries have access to high quality analytical products to inform decision-making and systems development; ii) to enable DRC to learn from and share its lessons with the global community, particularly from/with other fragile and conflict-affected states; and iii) to ensure good coordination and management of the project. There are currently limited specialized analytical skills in the Ministries and thus a lack of analytical products to inform policies and guide decisions. While project management units have been set up by Ministerial decree they will require additional support.

This project will finance the following two areas:

- Analytical products for systems strengthening
- Project monitoring and management

### IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

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V. Financing (in USD Million)

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