

PRESS RELEASE | SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

World Bank Board Approves Action Plan Following Inspection Panel Investigation of the Togo: West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Project and Its Additional Financing



WASHINGTON, September 14, 2023 – The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors on September 12, 2023, approved a Management Action Plan, which responds to an independent Inspection Panel investigation of the Togo: West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Project. The Panel’s investigation followed a Request for Inspection filed on August 4, 2021, initially by two community members and subsequently by another 28, living in the project area in the coast of Togo.

The West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Program is a regional project that strengthens the resilience of coastal communities and areas in nine countries—Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, and Togo – all of which are affected by severe coastal erosion. It combines engineering solutions, nature-based approaches, and community engagement programs. Development partners such as France, Netherlands, the Nordic Development Fund, Japan, and Spain provided finance and technical assistance. In Togo alone the coastal protection efforts that cover the span of 19 km have so far

reduced the exposure to coastal erosion and flooding for about 50,000 people (or 9,850 households) and 27,000 ha of natural habitat in the coastal zone has been restored. Social sub-projects have benefitted 625 people (including 200 women), and 1,050 full time jobs have been created.

The Project is financed through US\$ 467 million IDA credits and grants, US\$20 million Global Environment Facility grants, and US\$ 5 million PROBLUE grant. The Project works with regional institutions such as the West African Economic and Monetary Union.

The Request for Inspection raised concerns about impacts from two sub-projects covering two different sections of the 56 km Togo coast - the Combined Works area and the Emergency Works sites. The Combined Works involves the construction of new structures and the rehabilitation of existing structures, mainly groynes and beach replenishment to protect the coastal livelihoods starting from Agbodrafo (Togo) and continuing east to the Benin border. The Emergency Works aims to provide a temporary protection against coastal erosion until new funds are mobilized, and consist of locally produced concrete pipe walls in six sites in five villages to the west of Agbodrafo.

The heart of the Panel's investigation deals with concerns of the artisanal fishing communities in both the Combined and Emergency Works. The Panel found that the Project's insufficient understanding of artisanal fishing and its specificities, its value chain and the different demographics reliant on it caused many of the concerns raised in the Request. This lack of adequate understanding meant that the Project could not identify the full nature of the impact, and therefore did not have appropriate mitigation measures to address these impacts on the different groups.

Management has agreed with the Government of Togo and consulted with the affected communities on an Action Plan, which the Board approved. The Action Plan details how the Bank will work together with the Government of Togo and the communities to address the Panel's findings. The Government of Togo has confirmed its commitment to implement the Action Plan while the World Bank will support and monitor its implementation.

“At the core of this case, are the intertwined challenges of poverty and climate change. The Panel recognize the importance of this project to Togo and to the communities living on the Togo coast. While it is probable that without this project, coastal erosion is likely to happen at a faster rate, this case is a lesson that any climate project should also look at the impacts of its interventions on communities, livelihood, and the social consequences. Specifically in this case, on the communities dependent on artisanal fishing and their associated value chain,” said **Inspection Panel Chair Ramanie Kunanayagam**.

The Board recognized the importance of the Project to Togo and the significant development benefits it delivers to the country, especially vulnerable coastal communities. It stressed the need to learn from the implementation challenges. Executive Directors specifically welcomed the action taken by Bank Management and the Government of Togo to address issues of concern before the Board meeting.

“The West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Program has already protected thousands of vulnerable households in Togo; the investigation has pointed out some implementation challenges from which we need to learn,” said **Ousmane Diagana, World Bank Vice President for Western and Central Africa**. *“Without coastal protection measures such as the ones supported by the project, the coastline would rapidly erode and with it, the livelihood of entire coastal communities. The Bank and the development partners have embraced the reality of climate change and coastal degradation through this program, and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to implement the Action Plan and scale up the Program for the benefit of communities.”*

Management will report annually to the Board on the progress in implementing the Action Plan.

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For a full copy of the Inspection Panel Report and Management Report and Recommendation, please visit: <https://www.inspectionpanel.org>

Contacts:

For more information on the World Bank's work in Togo, visit

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/togo>

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PRESS RELEASE NO: 2024/016/OPCS

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