



THE FUTURE WE SEE TODAY!

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ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area	LDC	Least Developed Countries
AIFO	Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau	LMIS	Logistics Management Information System
BCEAO	<i>Banco Central dos Estados da Africa Ocidental</i> (Central Bank of West African States)	MCH	Mother and Child Healthcare
CECOME	<i>Central de Compras e Vendas de Medicamentos Essenciais</i> (Central Procurement and Sales of Essential Medicines)	MINSA	<i>Ministério de Saúde Pública</i> (Ministry of Public Health)
CETIC	Technical Center of Information and Communications	NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
CME	Cell of Electoral Monitoring	NFIS	National Financial Inclusion Strategy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019	NIN	National Identification Number
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	PNLP	Programa Nacional de Luta Contra o Paludismo (National Malaria Control Programme)
DGSCPMT	<i>Direcção-Geral de Saúde Comunitária e Promoção da Medicina Tradicional</i> (Directorate-General for Community Health and Promotion of Traditional Medicine)	PNLS	<i>Plano Nacional de Luta contra a SIDA</i> (National AIDS Plan)
DHIS2	Digital Health Information System	PNLT	<i>Programa Nacional de Luta Contra a Lepra e Tuberculose</i> (National Programme to Combat Leprosy and Tuberculosis)
DRS	<i>Direcção Regional de Saúde</i> (Regional Directorate of Health)	PSB	<i>Projecto e Saúde de Bandim</i> (Bandim Project and Health)
DSDTNT	<i>Direcção-Geral de Doenças Transmissíveis e Não-Transmissíveis</i> (Directorate-General for Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases)	RTM	Real-Time Monitoring
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	SCRM	Sectoral Corruption Risk Management
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	SIDS	Small Island Developing State
GCF	Green Climate Fund	SIGDAJ	Justice Data Management Information System
GCRM	Global Corruption Risk Management	SILC	Statistics of Income and Living Conditions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SIVE/PAV	<i>Serviços de Imunização e Vigilância Epidemiológica</i> (Immunization and Epidemiological Surveillance Services)
IMF	International Monetary Fund	SNLS	<i>Secretariado Nacional de Luta Contra SIDA</i> (National AIDS Secretariat)
INASA	<i>Instituto Nacional de Saúde Pública</i> (National Institute of Public Health)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
INE	National Institute of Statistics	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
		WHO	World Health Organization
		YSB	Youth Sounding Board

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Annual Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Guinea-Bissau for the year 2021—2022. As the world faces increasingly complex challenges, this Annual Report serves as a testimony to our collective efforts in advancing human development and fostering a sustainable future for all.

In the face of global uncertainties, the year of 2022 has been a transformative period for the UNDP office in Guinea-Bissau. We have witnessed the urgent need to reevaluate our approaches and accelerate our actions to address the pressing issues which we are confronted with. From the sequels of the COVID-19 pandemic to the deepening climate crisis, from persistent inequalities to the displacement of communities. Through this Annual Report, we aim to provide a comprehensive account of the UNDP's achievements, challenges, and the impacts of our work. We showcase the stories of individuals and communities whose lives have been positively transformed by our interventions. It is a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and the unwavering dedication of our staff, partners, and stakeholders across the country.

As we reflect on the progress made, we recognize the critical role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in guiding our actions. By aligning our efforts with the SDGs, we have been able to create tangible impact in the areas of poverty eradication, inclusive governance, sustainable economic growth, climate action, gender equality, and many others. We have worked hand in hand with the Government, civil society organizations, and the private sector to drive meaningful change at both national and local levels.

UNDP has also embraced innovation and harnessed the potential of new technologies to amplify our impact. We have leveraged digital solutions and data analytics to enhance our development interventions and ensure the efficient delivery of services. Furthermore, we have prioritized building resilient societies that can withstand shocks, adapt to change, and thrive in the face of adversity.

However, our journey towards sustainable development is far from over. The challenges we face require steadfast commitment, renewed partnerships, and bold actions. As we forge ahead, the UNDP remains dedicated to leaving no one behind and to empowering the most vulnerable among us. We will continue to advocate for human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Together, we can build a future that is more equitable, inclusive, and resilient.

I would like to express my gratitude to all our partners, donors, and supporters for their unwavering commitment to our shared vision. I also extend my deepest appreciation to the dedicated UNDP Guinea-Bissau team, whose relentless efforts make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands around the country. Your passion, expertise, and dedication are the driving force behind our collective achievements.

In closing, I invite you to delve into this Annual Report and discover the stories of challenges, transformations, inclusivity, resilience, and progress. Let us use this Annual Report as a source of inspiration, guiding us towards a world where every individual has the opportunity to flourish and thrive. Together, we can shape a sustainable future for ourselves and for generations to come.

José Levy, Resident Representative, a.i.

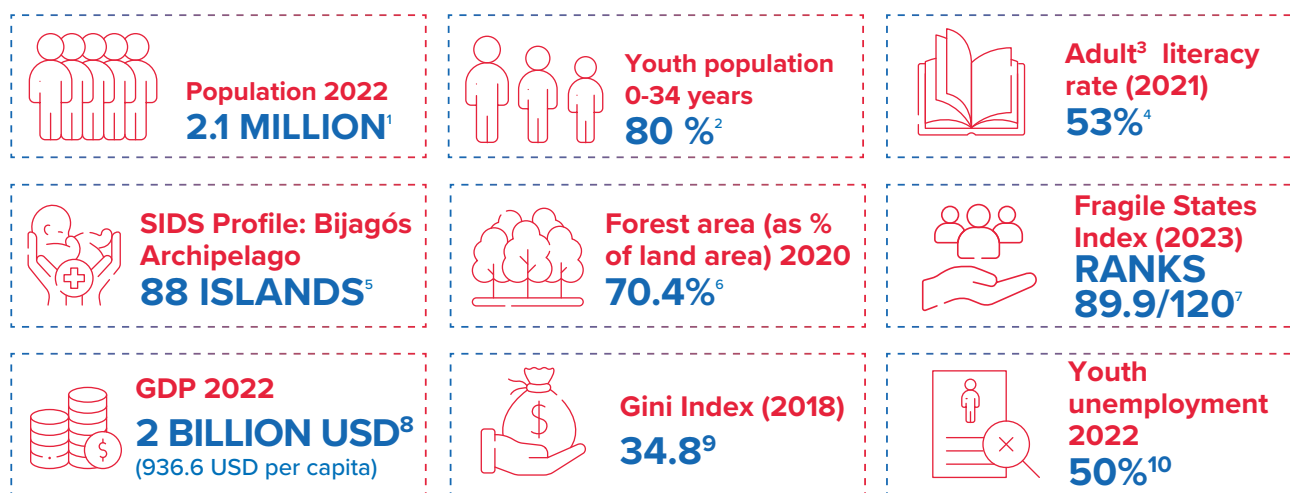


Map of Guinea-Bissau where UNDP operates



Guinea Bissau is part of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)

GUINEA-BISSAU AT A GLANCE



Source: Indicators from the Human Development Index (2021)¹¹

1 THE WORLD BANK. (2023). Sub-Saharan Africa Macro Poverty Outlook. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f2fc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf>.

2 IOM. Guinea-Bissau. <https://rodakar.iom.int/guinea-bissau>

3 Population aged 15 and above.

4 THE WORLD BANK. (2022). Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above) – Guinea-Bissau. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=GW-DK&view=chart>

5 UNFPA. (2023). World Population Dashboard, Guinea-Bissau. <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/GW>.

6 THE WORLD BANK. (2020). Forest area (% of land area) – Guinea-Bissau. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.FRST.ZS?locations=GW>.

7 FRAGILE STATES INDEX FFP. (2023). Country Dashboard. <https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/>.

8 THE WORLD BANK. (2023). Sub-Saharan Africa Macro Poverty Outlook. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f2fc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf>

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 UNDP. (2022). Human Development Report 2021/2022. https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf

THE FUTURE WE SEE TODAY IS... CHALLENGING

Since independence in 1974, Guinea-Bissau has struggled with democratic governance and institutional resilience, due to ongoing power conflicts among the political and military elites, which has resulted in violence and political instability. In 2020, the country has experienced another significant political crisis involving disagreements over the outcome of the 2019 presidential elections and the installation of a new presidential initiative government. A military-led effort that attempted a political takeover in February 2022, was denounced by the African Union and ECOWAS. The political crisis is still being fueled by enduring political disputes resulting from uneven and disproportionate political system consolidation and different constitutional interpretations.

The growth of the private sector has been seriously impacted by this protracted political conflict. Employment is precarious and concentrated in low-productivity positions, particularly for women. The private sector is distinguished by a small internal market, a high level of informality, a lack of operational capability and formal registration, poor value-added, and a strong reliance on the cashew nut harvest, as well as by low levels of domestic and foreign direct investment. These trends, which include the lack of scale economies, of acquired business and manufacturing knowledge, and constrained corporate growth potential, have major consequences for the design of development projects.

The nation's sociodemographic status has negatively decreased as a result of institutional weakness, placing it 177th on the Human Development Index. Additionally, malaria is the 8th leading cause of morbidity and a continuing danger to public health in Guinea-Bissau. Considering that 69 percent of people live in poverty and 33 percent are living in extreme poverty, the high expense of medical care increases the demand for traditional healers and self-medication. The

COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, exposed the many weaknesses of public service delivery and institutional structures. The economy's overall vulnerability has been overextended and is failing in many ways across the full spectrum. Particularly, the government's capacity to protect its population has been severely hampered by the lack of adequate social protection programs and the depletion of public finances.

Since Guinea-Bissau is a core member of the LDC-SIDS group, it is inherently very sensitive to the effects of climate change, which are projected to affect low-lying paddy rice farms, as





well as coastal erosion, coastal floods, inland flooding, and saltwater intrusion. The main causes of vulnerability to the effects of climate change are physical exposure and reliance on agriculture. Around 90 percent of all exports of goods are raw cashew nuts, which exposes the domestic economy to external variables, including fuel and shipping constraints, weak global demand, and significant price volatility.

In recent years, Guinea-Bissau has been subject to a number of outside forces that have exacerbated its vulnerabilities. Examples include the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing

Russian-Ukrainian war, which has disrupted trade and driven up the cost of food and fuel. These mitigating factors have made it clear that the country's resilience needs to be increased through investments in national infrastructure and community-led solutions.

UNDP Strategic Plan – 3x6x3 framework

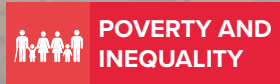
Accelerating **structural transformation, leaving no-one behind, and building resilience** are the three pillars that guide UNDP's work in Guinea-Bissau. With the aim to strengthen national capacities, good governance, and institutional development in areas such as education, health, and economic growth, UNDP works under six signature solutions.

Through its three enablers, UNDP is able to find and create connections. Building resilience to overcome challenges and create a stronger future is enhanced by UNDP's **strategic innovation**. This generates ideas that can help advance Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, **digitalisation** provides the country with technological resources to improve access to various services and opportunities while facilitating data management. **Development financing** serves as a crucial tool to promote business growth and entrepreneurship, contributing to the country's overall economic development. With these tools at UNDP's disposal, the organization can create a brighter tomorrow for Guinea-Bissau.





UNDP places significant emphasis on achieving structural transformation through its signature solutions, to ensure that every Bissau-Guinean benefits.



THE FUTURE

WE SEE TODAY IS...

TRANSFORMATIVE

Guinea-Bissau has embarked upon a remarkable journey of transformation. Amidst numerous economic, social, and political challenges, the country is striving to overcome its struggles and forge a path toward sustainable development, social inclusion, and economic prosperity.

In this pursuit, UNDP has played a crucial role as a dedicated partner, working hand in hand with Guinea-Bissau to unlock its full potential. Through comprehensive programs, innovative initiatives, and collaborative efforts, the organization is addressing the challenges faced by the country, empowering its people and institutions to drive positive change.

Recognizing that development, peace, security and human rights are interlinked, UNDP has been working with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in strengthening governance and promoting sustainable development to fostering inclusive growth and peacebuilding. A transformed Guinea-Bissau will attract foreign investment, create employment opportunities, and foster regional cooperation. Therefore, investing in Guinea Bissau's transformation is crucial for a better future for the country and its people.



2.1

UNDP'S TRANSFORMATIVE EFFORTS IN GUINEA-BISSAU

To further strengthen the country's sustainable development and resilience, UNDP is currently in the process of implementing a **portfolio-based strategy** to its programmatic response, which allows it to effectively address fundamental problems and produce long-lasting solutions. This approach diverges from conventional project execution, which focuses on identifying and addressing specific challenges without considering root causes. It is no longer realistic to assume linear correlations between project activities and results due to the variety of external factors and constantly evolving environment.

A comprehensive and deliberate strategy of structural transformation must be implemented in Guinea-Bissau. This involves identifying and addressing the root causes of economic, social, and environmental challenges, including institutional and policy barriers. The process requires **collaboration between all stakeholders**, including government, civil society, and the private sector. Through integrating this approach, the focus shifts from short-term individual solutions to holistic and systemic changes that will achieve sustainable improvements, and positively impact institutions and citizens alike.

Despite development challenges, UNDP envisions a promising future for Guinea-Bissau, with its abundant resources, strategic location, and the potential to become a thriving economic hub, while benefiting from the right policies and cooperation to unlock its full potential as an economic powerhouse and a beacon of progress in West Africa.

To put this programmatic transformation into practice, UNDP Guinea-Bissau acknowledges the importance of **continuous institutional learning** to better understand the context and adapt its interventions in accordance with the priorities and needs of the country. This is achieved through **experimentation and piloting**. This methodology attempts

to design, test, learn, and scale (where applicable) a suite of complementary interventions capable of transforming complex systems. This can only be achieved, not only based on the technical rigor that a portfolio entails but also through the involvement of all communities and its people; taking into account their experiences, and local contexts. Only in this way can this portfolio approach be aligned with the desired goal for Guinea-Bissau: **a promising future capable of overcoming challenges and taking advantage of the potential that the country has to offer.**



UNDP solutions linked to the structural transformation in Guinea-Bissau

Accelerator Lab

This experimental approach is materialized with the support of the **Accelerator Lab** which seeks to provide innovative solutions to complex development challenges. The Lab presents itself as a way of approaching the challenge of accelerating learning toward the human development goal by visualizing, connecting, and testing ideas.

“

UNDP Guinea-Bissau’s Accelerator Lab is proof that experimentation, learning from communities, and exploring alternative futures creates new value in development. We’ve showcased their work in global forums including the recent Least Developed Country +5 event in Doha, Qatar, and other global fora.

—Gina Lucarelli



Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy is also a pivotal institutional structure, as it aims to ensure the active and inclusive participation of different actors to empower them to become agents of change. This is achieved through the creation of a network of leaders, such as community leaders, political parties, civil society organizations, NGOs, youth, women, parliamentarians, and traditional and religious leaders, who can collaborate for Guinea-Bissau’s development and long-term stability. To participate in this transformative initiative, organizations like CSOs, the Ministry of Health, and youth-led associations can submit a letter to the UNDP, expressing their interest and requesting further information, while also proposing potential candidates for the training. This approach allows interested entities to join the Leadership Academy and reap its benefits.

This Academy appears in the context of political-institutional instability, with the goal to enhance Guinea-Bissau’s human capital by implementing practical training initiatives that adopt innovative and multi-sectoral approaches. These actions prioritize ethics, dialogue promotion, and catalyzing civic and political participation, with a strong focus on creating leaders and cross-sectoral change agents who possess awareness, proactivity, and entrepreneurial skills, driving transformative change across various domains of society. With the support of the National School of Administration (ENA), the Pedro Pires Institute, the Accountability Lab, the Getulio Vargas Foundation, and UNDP:

- ▶ **14** trainings held
- ▶ **For 259** members of political parties and civil society organizations
- ▶ **33%** of which were women
- ▶ **Thematic:** Leadership and Personal Development; Leadership and Integrity; Leadership and Public Service; Public administration values, and stages of a leader’s decision-making process

LESSON LEARNED

Agents of change possess a catalyzing influence in effecting structural changes, underscoring the importance of equipping them with the requisite tools to empower their ability to drive transformation within the country.

UNDP Guinea-Bissau envisioned the use of the **Na Nô Mon** platform, which as the Creole name indicates, it is *'in our hands'* to find solutions to problems presented by providing the necessary tools and information for citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes, access information, and voice their opinions on various issues.

Being the first of its kind in Guinea-Bissau, this platform showcases the interventions of UNDP and other organizations, facilitates training for women and youth in the country, provides credible data to students and civil society organizations, and becomes the stage for issues related to social, cultural, and environmental reality in Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, it offers online community discussion spaces to enhance the involvement of civil society in fostering an environment conducive to the autonomy of public and private entities within the country.

However, aspects such as the low level of education of the Bissau-Guinean people or the high cost of the internet, compromise to some extent, the main objective of the platform. Nevertheless, thanks to the visibility that the Na Nô Mon platform has provided to some initiatives developed in the country, additional funding was later provided to them.

LESSON LEARNED

To ensure project success, it is crucial to engage civil society organizations and the government, fostering effective communication and consistent support. Emphasizing the value of co-creating solutions, a portfolio-based approach and design thinking methodologies prove essential. Additionally, the development of innovative ideas becomes instrumental in strengthening and modernizing public institutions in Guinea-Bissau.



2.2

GUINEA-BISSAU'S JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

2.2.1 REVOLUTIONIZING PUBLIC SERVICES

Recognizing that development, peace, security, and protection of human rights are interlinked, UNDP has been working with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in promoting inclusive governance, sustaining peace, establishing

meaningful political dialogue, empowering and engaging agents of change, and supporting political system reforms to create an enabling environment for long-lasting stability and sustainable development.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

Regarding legislative processes, UNDP has worked with the National Assembly to improve their capacity to support democratic governance and provide the necessary assistance to the deputies to pass laws that fully account for and respect human rights.

- ▶ For the first time, in 2022, the National Assembly examined particular State Budget headings before approving them. To complete this work, UNDP trained actors from the Assembly, the Court of Auditors, and the Ministry of Finance, who collaborated together.
- ▶ These capacity-building exercises targeting governmental institutions enabled civil servants to better understand and apply a new **citizen-oriented perspective** across different services provided.

In 2022, the Government established **two inter-ministerial work groups**, which received training on how to report to the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies. Specialized committees were created, namely on **Parliamentary Ethics** to rule on ethical issues.

To optimize communication, UNDP has dynamized the Parliament website, called '*Gabinete do Cidadão*' (Citizen's Office), allowing interaction with citizens. An application was also developed which will allow the broadcasting of National Assembly debates on the internet.

In order to promote institutional transparency, accountability, and state legitimacy, UNDP also supported the training of auditors and verifiers in the areas of financial audit and numerical statements to provide the technicians of the Guinea-Bissau Court of Auditors with the necessary tools to analyze management accounts and conduct audits.

In addition, UNDP supported the creation of the Court of Auditors' website, with the disclosure of all the documentation of the audits carried out, for greater transparency.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE JUSTICE SECTOR

UNDP has provided technical assistance, in terms of training and capacity building, to various law enforcement agencies, such as the Judiciary Police, Public Order Police, and National Guard. UNDP has also been supporting Guinea-Bissau in strengthening the response of institutions to crime by providing quality services to the population and dignifying the working conditions of police officers. Some infrastructures were rehabilitated, such as the Bafatá prison, and others were built, such as the Model Police Station of Gabú and the border posts of Cambaju and Dungal.

The inauguration of the Model Police Station of Gabú favors the community police strategy, which aims to strengthen the intervention capacity of police officers, promote proximity, and help build bridges of trust between the population and those who protect them.

The Cambaju and Dungal border posts were designed with gender sensitivity in mind, ensuring that the needs and concerns of women travelers are taken into account. This represents a change of perspective in the provision of services to the population and in promoting the means to fight crime, including human trafficking, especially regarding women and children.



15 members

of Civil Society Organizations also received training.



35 police officers

of the Public Order Police (POP) working at the Model Police Station of Gabú have been specifically trained to provide quality services to the population, especially in dealing with cases of gender-based violence and protecting women and girls in general.



ENABLER STRATEGIC INNOVATION

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

One effective approach to improving access to public services, particularly in the legal domain, is through the deliberate development of user-friendly legal products, services, and systems. This can be achieved by employing the principles and practical techniques of **legal design**. This design aims to make the law more approachable, accessible, and understandable for all, by applying design principles and user-centered approaches.

Furthermore, **decentralization** and **local governance** strengthening in Guinea-Bissau bring justice services closer to rural populations, fostering access, consensus-building, and civic engagement. UNDP, through the Accelerator Lab and its design thinking methodology, supported the development of the House of Justice prototype, to be replicated in districts throughout the country, particularly in underserved regions. The House of Justice consolidates in one single space various justice services, including sectoral courts, the Center for Access to Justice providing legal support and conflict resolution, and the Civil Registry and Notary's Office.



Gabú's House of Justice

In Gabú's House of Justice, UNDP extended its support towards the renovation of the Notary Office, prioritizing a citizen-centric approach. To effectively improve public service delivery, UNDP conducted a survey to understand the main priorities and challenges as reported by citizens and public officials alike.

The users of the House of Justice in Gabú find it very helpful, but with room for improvement. Only 33 percent of the users are women and, surprisingly, there is 88 percent literacy among users, indicating that illiterate individuals are not seeking the service.

Through careful analysis of the gathered insights, several areas for potential improvement were identified. These include the necessity of implementing clear signage within the building and at

reception desks, establishing a transparent price list for services, and providing training for staff members to enhance their customer service skills. Moreover, this analysis aids in identifying instances of corruption, enabling timely interventions to mitigate the risk of extortion and enhance transparency in service provision, including the disclosure of corresponding prices.



Only 33% of users

of the House of Justice in Gabú are women



88% of users

are literate

However, after conducting a behavioral study, UNDP realized that the majority of users of the Gabú House of Justice reside in urban areas within a radius of 7 km, so it was necessary to

find and implement a mobile solution (**Mobile Justice**) that allows access to the inhabitants who live more than 7 km away, which keeps with UNDP's vision of "leaving no-one behind".

LESSON LEARNED

UNDP has secured additional funding to construct a House of Justice in Buba, taking into account the lessons learned from the Gabú project.

In Buba, there is already a functioning Court House, which serves as a valuable lesson: to design the (new) Houses of Justice where there is already solid infrastructure in place and where people are already working. Doing this will ensure that the new infrastructure will be active and operational. A collaborative and open-minded approach that fosters co-ownership results in system-level outcomes. It is important to involve communities and members directly in the project development process, which will in turn establish an organic methodology.



ACCESS TO HEALTH

UNDP in Guinea-Bissau is focused on accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda through improved health service, in terms of quality delivery and equitable access, especially by targeting pregnant women and children under 5 years old across all regions.

Regarding the health sector transformation, UNDP has supported Guinea-Bissau in preparing, responding, and recovering since the early stages of the pandemic along with other public health concerns such as endemic malaria.

This has been done through the implementation of the UNDP improved health service delivery by:



Providing health equipment and other medical supplies.



Building a medical warehouse to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Public Health, to **store and distribute quality medicines** to final beneficiaries, in line with **international standards and best practices**.



Managing the COVID-19 Call Center in collaboration with NGO VIDA, **intensifying case tracing efforts** through digital applications that helped improve the epidemiological response. Allowing to significantly improve the **mapping, tracking, prevention, and treatment** of COVID-19 cases.



ENABLER STRATEGIC INNOVATION

The fear of going to health services and exposing oneself to contamination, in addition to the travel restrictions and physical distance imposed by WHO, impacted the flow of patients who preferred to go to traditional healers. Furthermore, given the poor condition of the country's road network and the fact that over 60 percent of the population lives more than 5 km from health facilities, UNDP and WHO supported the Ministry of Health to develop a strategic plan for telemedicine, improving access to high-quality medical care, while lowering transportation costs and other costs associated with the demand for medical services for those living in outlying areas.

To improve public service delivery, in 2022, UNDP supported 150 health facilities through the provision of life-saving medical equipment, diagnostics, and medicine to protect health workers and improve healthcare quality.

In addition, there were also numerous delays in the supply of medicines, ambulances, medical equipment, and hospital consumables, due to poor management and the poor state of the roads, which caused both delays in deliveries and high transport costs. UNDP supported the Government in the procurement of medical supplies, which enabled better use of resources and avoided overlaps with other donors. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the critical role of public service delivery in times of crisis and beyond.



DIGITALISATION FOR A CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY



ENABLER STRATEGIC INNOVATION

UNDP continued its efforts towards digital transformation as a key enabler to strengthen the public health sector in monitoring, financing, including the all-important supply chain. UNDP has developed **DHIS2**, a Digital Health Information System tracking tool, supported by the Global Fund, for collecting health data, with a focus on malaria and COVID-19.

UNDP helped manage the COVID-19 Call Center, which relied on digital applications, improving case tracing efforts, which helped to enhance the epidemiological response by reducing the time taken to detect cases and isolate them to avoid high infection rates. The use of the DHIS2 software, with the support of Oslo University, helped to improve efficiency in detection and care at the point of contact.

All the data collected in the field were transmitted via tablets, and the DHIS2 platform is used to monitor, evaluate, and improve procedures.

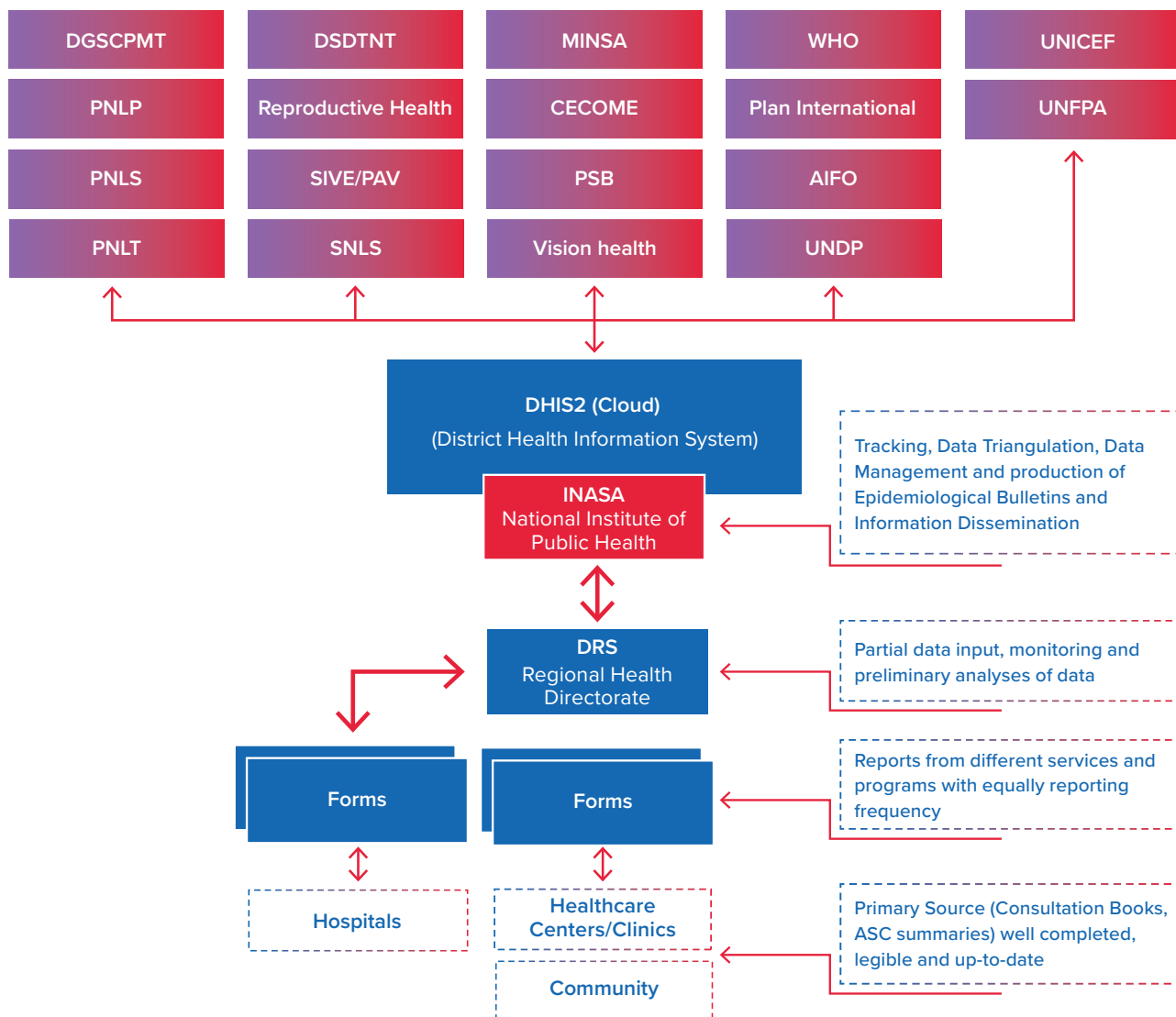
Real-Time Monitoring, supported by UNDP seeks to frequently use the DHIS2 platform for the health information and surveillance system compiled in its database, and

which is coordinated by the National Institute of Public Health (INASA). The implementation of Real-Time Monitoring better enables regions and healthcare areas to report malaria and epidemiological surveillance data, regularly, and most importantly, in real-time. From 2021 to 2022, all health facilities reporting malaria data received electronic devices (tablet) after receiving the necessary training.

How DHIS2 can help?

- ▶ **A DHIS2 national map shows an increase in reported cases of a virus.** Health workers are sent to the remote village at the center of the outbreak. With DHIS2, the emergency professional can record how many families/individuals are affected by the disease. When the internet is available, the data is sent to the DHIS2 central database. At the Ministry of Health, the emergency coordinator can monitor the outbreak response, using their DHIS2 dashboard and decide what actions are needed.
- ▶ **The Government has planned a national immunisation campaign.** At every community health center, thousands of vaccines were administered and registered on an electronic device (tablet). The regional health manager can find out, from the office, how many vaccines have been administered in each community and the immunisation rate of the region. At the Ministry of Health, DHIS2 dashboards measure the progress of the campaign and highlight any areas of concern that need to be addressed.

Digital Health Information System (DHIS2)



The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice have teamed up in synergy to adapt the DHIS2 platform to link information between the two ministries. This will allow children registered by the Ministry of Justice to also have their full record of vaccinations documented on the database.

To establish a dependable public health system, it is imperative to combat corruption. To achieve this, the Government needs to meticulously document supplier information and closely monitor medicine usage. UNDP supports the strengthening of the supply chain to ensure the continuous availability of essential medicines and other health products at distribution points through the implementation of a Logistics Management Information System (LMIS). The system improves the availability of quality health products and prevents stock-outs and overstocking of medicines and other health products. This ensures equitable distribution of medication in health centers, avoiding deviations and inappropriate use.

It is worth noting, by **establishing a culture of transparency, accountability, and excellence**, citizens can have confidence that their government is working in their best interests and acting ethically and responsibly toward the country's population.

This can be achieved through:



Implementing open government policies



Ensuring access to information



Holding public officials accountable

These three priorities will only be achievable through UNDP's Islands of Integrity. They are essential in promoting this required excellence in public service delivery, working as a self-reinforcing approach. This allows to identify individuals and groups within organizations of civil society (CSOs) and the Government, who exhibit ethical behavior and consistently demonstrate a commitment to improving public services.

Using this approach will help to reduce the frequency of corrupt practices, while strengthening state legitimacy and

the social contract between the Government and its citizens. To this end, UNDP has fostered **partnership-building and capacity development** for government officials, CSOs, journalists, and other stakeholders.

UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022–2025, aligned with the 2030 Agenda, prioritizes digital transformation as a key strategy to advance development goals and protect human rights.



ENABLER DIGITALISATION

To expedite the transformation towards Islands of Integrity, UNDP is actively integrating digital solutions to prevent misreporting, enhance transparency, and improve tracking of funds. By leveraging the power of **digitalisation**, UNDP aims to strengthen accountability mechanisms and ensure accurate reporting of data. This digital approach will promote a sense of citizenship and increase people's trust in the State.

Digital transformation has played an important role in improving the delivery of public health services, namely through improved access to information. The Government of Guinea-Bissau, with the support of UNDP, has been able to increase the level of accessibility to information made available to the public and the Government, and thus, improve the delivery of public services.

With the use of new technologies, UNDP is supporting the decentralization of the public service to reach the most distant and difficult locations in the country, facilitating a better use of resources and citizens' access. The digitalisation of the judicial processes allows **justice services** to become more accessible to the public. Combining digitalisation with the work of the House of Justice and Mobile Justice, the judicial system will be further strengthened, and justice will be much closer and more accessible to the wider population.

- ▶ Digitalisation covered the services of Centers for Access to Justice, Regional Courts and Civil and Notary Registration, which greatly helped **to reduce the distance between the population and the justice services, and the production of reliable data and statistics.**
- ▶ UNDP's Accelerator Lab in Guinea-Bissau tested an **innovative digital solution, the SIGDAJ** – Justice Data Management Information System, which consisted of a database updated from paper-based information, enabling cross-referencing of information to guide planning by the Ministry of Justice.
- ▶ **Training and digital devices** were provided to the staff members, who were also part of the digitalisation process **to ensure continuity.**



ENABLER STRATEGIC INNOVATION

UNDP supported the Ministry of Finance in installing the IMF's blockchain tool for its employees' salary transactions, in which information is kept in existing blocks, which through a computerized process validates the transactions and does not allow fortuitous interventions – in an effort to combat corruption in administrative processes.

LESSON LEARNED

The digitalisation of judicial processes has led to increased accessibility and effectiveness of justice services. Improving the digital capabilities of staff streamlines the operations of the justice system and delivers efficient services to the public. The introduction of the justice portal offers the convenience of online criminal record requests in real-time.

DOCUMENTING AND ARCHIVING



ENABLER DIGITALISATION

The digitalization and preservation of Guinea-Bissau's documentary heritage not only safeguard the national memory but also promote long-term peace and social cohesion. Through volunteer support, the entire collection of the National Institute for Studies and Research National Public Library is being digitized, making the archives accessible online worldwide. In collaboration with UNDP, a cooperation agreement was signed in 2021 between the National Library and the Nô Pintcha Journal to digitize the newspaper's archives since 1975, ensuring the preservation of 46 years of Guinea-Bissau's history. This partnership strengthens the media, consolidates peace, and guarantees future generations access to their historical records.



Through this initiative, supported by UNDP as well as the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, preserving Guinea-Bissau's collective memory and documentary heritage is fundamental to promoting sustainable peace and stability in the country.

The development of a knowledge database contributes to an **evidence-based policymaking**. This allows decision-makers to understand the root causes of various challenges, such as corruption, poverty, poor education, and health outcomes. It

also allows them to use data and statistics to make informed decisions that have a tangible impact on the country.

UNDP has undertaken several initiatives to strengthen the capacity of government institutions in Guinea-Bissau in data collection, analysis, and utilization for decision-making. A notable initiative is the Capacity-building Program for data management at the National Institute of Statistics (INE). The Program aims to equip INE professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective data management and reporting.

“

Safeguarding memory is fundamental to building the State of Guinea-Bissau. When we talk about memory, we are talking about everything that is [a] document, history, and memory. The State cannot be built without memory. We cannot promote social dialogue, democracy, and social cohesion without the preservation of memory.”

—**Iaguba Djalo**, Director of the National Historical Archive at the National Public Library

LESSON LEARNED

To overcome development challenges and foster a prosperous and equitable society that meets the needs of all citizens, Guinea-Bissau must prioritize evidence-based policymaking, underpinned by robust coordination among various sectoral actors. By establishing a coherent approach and promoting a shared understanding of objectives, the country can effectively determine what needs to be accomplished and establish clear metrics to measure progress toward those goals. This emphasis on coordination and evidence-based policymaking forms the foundation for informed decision-making, enabling Guinea-Bissau to address its development priorities and drive positive change in a comprehensive and impactful manner.

2.2.2 UNLOCKING ECONOMIC GROWTH

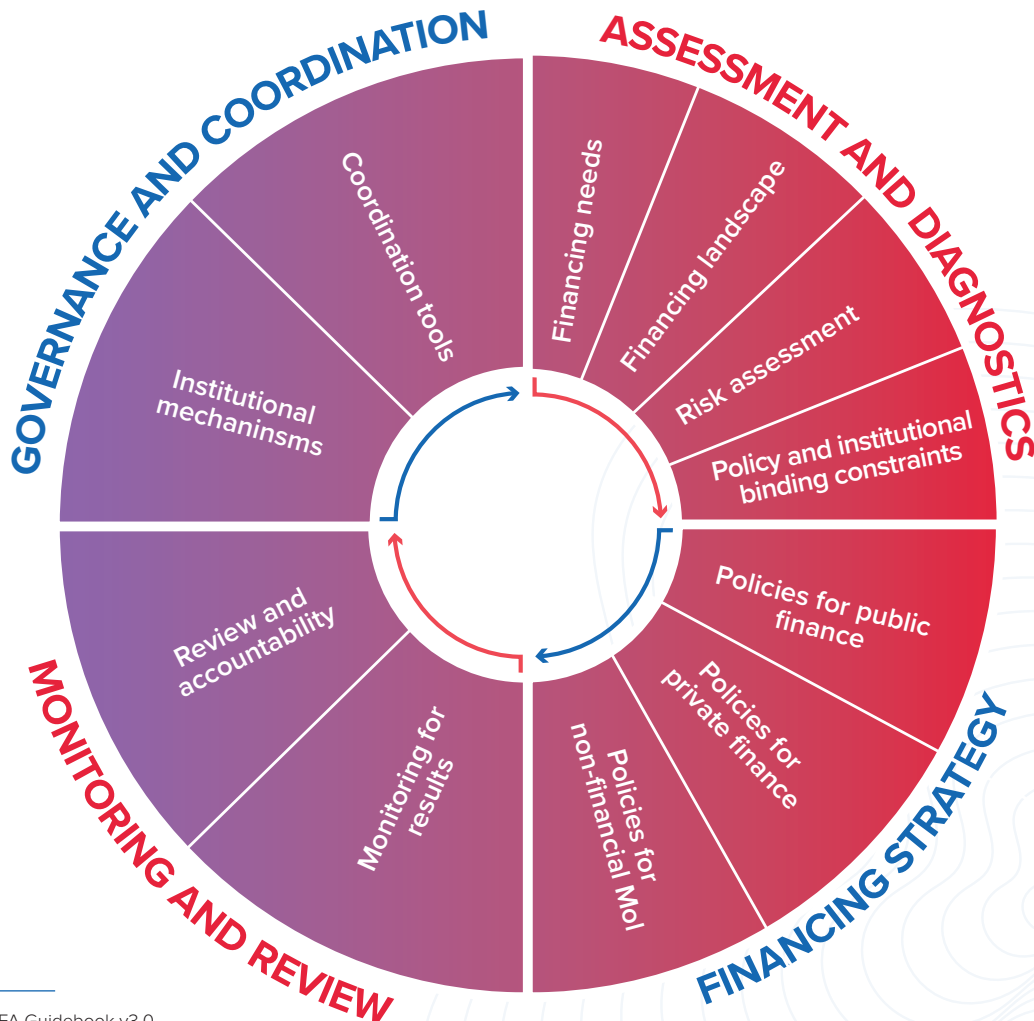


ENABLER DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

Following the diagnosis of Guinea-Bissau’s needs and potential, the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) defines how the national strategy will be funded and implemented, drawing on both public and private sources of funding. Through this process, UNDP is assisting the Vice-Prime Minister Office of Guinea-Bissau to improve the mobilization of domestic and international public and private financing to achieve national priorities. The findings of this assessment will help to identify and design public policies and reforms tailored to Guinea-Bissau’s specific financing needs. By identifying the most effective ways to mobilize financial resources and deploy them efficiently, the **Integrated National Financing Framework** will help unlock the potential for sustainable development and economic growth in Guinea-Bissau.



Four building blocks of the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)¹²



12 Source: DFA Guidebook v3.0

The Integrated National Financing Framework is comprised of four building blocks, which represent a critical component in developing national capacity to strategically plan, mobilize, and manage the domestic and foreign financing required for sustainable development outcomes.

The Framework provides a strategic plan for the allocation of financial resources, ensuring efficient utilization and allocation of funds to priority areas, such as entrepreneurship.

Through a series of initiatives, UNDP is working to **strengthen investment and entrepreneurship** in Guinea-Bissau. These initiatives aim to endorse long-term resilient growth and autonomy between the economic actors, and open up Guinea-Bissau to future investment and an entrepreneurial spirit, which can be seen through the event mentioned directly below.

► **Bissau Rising Investment Forum 2022**

Guinea-Bissau hosted the first Bissau Rising Investment Forum in November 2022, which brought together stakeholders, investors, company owners, and government authorities. Participants had the opportunity to debate the challenges to the sustainable growth of the country's private sector and society.

In 2023, there will be a series of Sectorial Forums focusing on the current challenges, best practices and solutions regarding creative industries, eco solutions (energy and waste management), and the blue economy and tourism. These events will gather key stakeholders in the national context as well as international investors and speakers, and will be an entry door for investors to learn more about investment opportunities in Guinea-Bissau. This will give the opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs to network with them. At the end of 2023, the second edition of the Bissau Rising Investment Forum will take place. UNDP will focus on the handover process to national ownership among the private sector and government actors.

► **Innovation Hub**

A country's growth is highly influenced by its entrepreneurial ecosystem since it is an incubator for innovation and private-sector development. The need to enable an entrepreneurial ecosystem, where entrepreneurs and innovators can share experiences, knowledge, and connect with investors, led to the establishment of the **Innovation Hub** in Guinea-Bissau. The Hub's activities focus on providing business and innovation skills, through workshops and seminars and promoting networking opportunities, fostering collaboration within the private sector, and enhancing knowledge management for evidence-based policy and regulation. Additionally, the Innovation Hub will offer a physical space in central Bissau, serving as a vibrant hub for entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds to work, engage in events, and connect with others. This space will also facilitate forums and events presenting an opportunity for Guinea-Bissau to attract investors and share government information, policies, campaigns, and studies.

In 2023, UNDP Guinea-Bissau aims to draft a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) strategy to help companies attract funding and will continue working on the establishment of the Innovation Hub in Bissau, which will serve as both a physical and digital space for aspiring entrepreneurs to meet and interact with potential investors.

Exploiting UNDP's expertise and partnerships to create an enabling environment for businesses to operate and thrive in Guinea-Bissau, UNDP is also supporting the development of innovative financing mechanisms, such as microcredit and savings mechanisms, and providing training and capacity building for entrepreneurs to access finance through institutions and markets. This important step allows the promotion of innovation, creativity, and youth-led entrepreneurship in Guinea-Bissau, where youth unemployment is high, and access to financing and support for budding entrepreneurs is extremely limited at present.



“

We changed the way we work completely; we have developed a business plan and gained innovative marketing skills and also learned how to crowdfund, all of which have significantly improved our business.”

—Iero Candé, founder of CETIC

The Accelerator Lab has partnered with Radio Jovem to launch an **entrepreneurship competition** aimed at engaging young entrepreneurs in the country. The competition received 71 applications, 25 percent of which were women applicants, and it aimed at developing ideas in various sectors and providing opportunities for young people to turn their ideas into reality and viable businesses. During this initiative, the Accelerator Lab provided mentorship and training to the contest winners.

Founded in 2018, the Technical Center of Information and Communications (CETIC) offers computer courses to youth and professionals in the Bafatá Region. With the assistance of UNDP, the Center won a monetary reward of 1.5 million XOF,¹³ which was used to help extend the Center to Bissau and Gabú, hire four new staff members, and add 250 new students to the register.

2.2.3 UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF SIDS CHARACTERISTICS

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Guinea-Bissau is susceptible to climate change effects, with agriculture, water, and the coastal area being particularly at high risk from climate-related events. However, by unleashing the potential inherent in the characteristics of a SIDS, Guinea-Bissau can pave the way for transformative change. Embracing the unique attributes of being a SIDS nation, such as its coastal resources, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, Guinea-Bissau can harness these strengths to drive forward sustainable development.

UNDP is collaborating with the Government of Guinea-Bissau to harness the untapped potential of the country's blue and green sectors. This partnership aims to develop evidence-based policies that will support the creation of the National Blue Economy Strategy and enhance biodiversity resilience, by establishing strong connections between infrastructure development and key sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and energy. Additionally, the initiative prioritizes biodiversity preservation, climate change mitigation, and addressing environmental challenges. Leveraging the country's abundant biodiversity, the aim is to drive economic development, reduce poverty, and contribute to global environmental goals.

Through effective management and conservation of coastal ecosystems, the country can create new economic opportunities, and enhance resilience against climate change impacts. Embracing the inherent potential of SIDS characteristics can thus contribute to the transformative development of Guinea-Bissau, fostering a sustainable and prosperous future for the country and its people.





UNDP prioritizes reaching all Bissau-Guineans through its signature solutions, to ensure that no one is left behind.



**POVERTY AND
INEQUALITY**



**GENDER
EQUALITY**



RESILIENCE

THE FUTURE WE

SEE TODAY IS...

INCLUSIVE

To ensure a successful shift towards sustainable development, it is crucial to have inclusive civic participation and accessibility to public services. This aligns with the portfolio approach, which leverages not just national-level involvement but also individual participation and engagement. When easy access to services and community involvement within the process is promoted, sustainable development becomes a natural and effective transition.

The adoption of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Human Rights and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, coupled with the recent revision of the Constitution through a new Bill addressing gender equality issues and improving state structures, marks a significant step towards inclusive civic participation and accessibility to public services. This comprehensive approach emphasizes the importance of promoting and protecting general human rights as well as the rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring a successful shift towards sustainable development and fostering community engagement.

Enabling transformative change agents is essential for the realization of impactful social transformations. These individuals exhibit passion and commitment and possess valuable attributes like resilience and determination, making them catalysts for positive change. Embracing a development approach centered on democratic governance and peacekeeping, UNDP endeavors to empower and foster interconnectedness among agents of change within institutions and society, with a particular focus on women, youth, and individuals facing the risk of marginalization.

However, societal inequalities continue to persist, especially through gender-based barriers including unequal access to land and financial services for women. Another important challenge is the poor education system which is inaccessible to most youth and does not provide an adequate competency framework to prepare students for the labor market, hence further exasperating youth unemployment.

3.1

CALLING ACTION FROM AGENTS OF CHANGE

YOUTH SOUNDING BOARD

In 2022, UNDP established the [Youth Sounding Board](#) (YSB), a platform that provides young people the opportunity to contribute to the programmatic priorities of UNDP while highlighting key challenges from the social, economic, and environmental spheres, based on their own experiences. As such, the YSB promotes youth engagement and active participation in the implementation, review, and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Some challenges have been identified during the creation and operationalization of the YSB, namely the difficulty to engage more people and the fact that the initiative does not represent a legalized organization, which prevents them from directly implementing their own initiatives. As such, it is important to continue advocating for the involvement of young people in decision-making processes and to explore new ways to support their ability towards making a positive change in Guinea-Bissau.



LESSON LEARNED

The YSB has emerged as a vital framework that extends beyond UNDP, encompassing various stakeholders who actively seek the input of young people and recognizing the value of their contributions. This shift signifies a move towards a more inclusive and collaborative approach through which young people are empowered to take an active role in shaping their future and contribute to decision-making processes.

“

Today we are not alone, not only financially, but also creatively, because the UNDP allows us to bring the dilemmas and join with them to create certain solutions, and, at the same time, they walk with us to monitor how it is being done. I live with them, and UNDP lives with the people of Guinea-Bissau.

—**Nailde Lopes**, unemployed medical doctor, member of YSB

GIRL MOVE INITIATIVE

Another significant youth mobilization initiative is the Leadership Academy, which provides valuable capacity-building opportunities, networking platforms, and spaces for informed debates with diverse stakeholders. This initiative plays a crucial role in fostering integrity and innovation within the public sector and beyond, contributing to the establishment of transformative and collaborative spaces.

The **Girl Move initiative**, which emerged as a result of the Leadership Academy, signifies a proactive response to the challenges faced by young women in Guinea-Bissau, aiming to ensure their active participation in public life. Although measures like the Approval Quota Law for women's political participation exists, it is crucial not to exclude them from public discussions and policy-making, as it is vital for the nation's development. To address this issue, the **initiative** was implemented by the National School of Administration (ENA) and Leadership Academy, supported by UNDP and the Peacebuilding Fund. The program provided leadership and empowerment training to young female graduates, with

11 participants from three academic institutions. The training focused on gender equality; fostering their leadership skills has inspired them to establish the **Girls Leaders in Defense of the Environment**, an environmentally conscious organization.

“

We came out of the program to let our active talents, focused on working as an environmentally friendly organization. We must confess that before in a normal dynamic, we didn't have a gender lens and much less the capacity for reflection that makes us see that there are Guinean women leaders who can inspire us.”

—Girls Leaders in Defense of the Environment

WOMEN IN CIVIC SPACES

In the realm of Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction, UNDP actively supports local revenue-generating activities, in Gabú, Cacheu, and Quinara, especially for women, in areas such as horticulture production, poultry farming, sale of local products, among others. Through a comprehensive mapping exercise to assesses the context, needs, and capacities of local actors, climate risks in the 17 beneficiary communities were identified, across the three regions. Also, a participatory community-based planning methodology was implemented. The objective is to develop a practical plan to enhance community resilience and define strategies that help facilitate women's effective participation in civic spaces, as they have the main responsibilities for managing agriculture production, and who because of this responsibility, are the most affected by climate change impacts.



Map of Guinea-Bissau showing the location of the highest risk areas



The mapping enabled the implementation of training activities for women’s civil society organizations, local authorities, rural women, and across social media on themes such as the importance of women in the decision-making space, climate

change, land law, conflict management, and mediation, dialogue between civil society and local authorities, strategies and priorities for the mitigation of climate insecurity risks.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES



ENABLER STRATEGIC INNOVATION

Implemented in partnership with the University of Cambridge and supported by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, the innovative peacebuilding methodology, “**Peace behind a Veil of Ignorance**” employed by UNDP in Guinea-Bissau, aimed to observe the impact of increased social bonds on reducing tensions, increasing social cohesion and trust between parties in conflict, by promoting the peaceful coexistence between local communities divided by land disputes.

Through the process of fostering unity and empowering individuals, *community dialogues* emerged as a valuable approach in a context highly vulnerable to climate-related risks and inter- and intra-community conflicts. These dialogues provided a space for open discussions and the formulation of community-led solutions. Active participation in these dialogues not only empowered individuals but also fostered a sense of ownership over the solutions, promoting social cohesion and resilience within the communities affected.

LESSON LEARNED

Promoting an environment where communities have the opportunity to express their grievances and deep-seated emotions proves instrumental in fostering mutual understanding of their challenges and vulnerabilities that they face. This increased interaction and contact between communities enables the identification of shared aspirations and strategies for improvement, thereby serving as a pathway towards conflict reduction, and even resolution.

3.2

MAXIMIZING PUBLIC SERVICE

QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Maximizing public services in Guinea-Bissau, from legal to social realms, holds immense significance for the country's development and the well-being of its citizens. An efficient and effective legal system ensures access to justice for all, safeguarding individual rights and promoting a fair and equitable society. Strengthening legal institutions, such as courts and law enforcement agencies, helps uphold the rule of law and maintain social order.

As part of its efforts to enhance the relationship between the population and law enforcement, UNDP collaborates closely with the Ministry of the Interior, to strengthen the capacity of police officers and foster better proximity, which the aim is to ultimately establish trust-building measures between all parties. This shift in perspective redefines service delivery by prioritizing the needs and concerns of the population.

One key approach employed is community policing, which transcends a reactive approach and embraces a proactive problem-solving methodology. This collaborative approach encourages police officers and citizens to work together in addressing local community-level issues, including crime and public disorder. When citizens are allowed to set priorities and are engaged with a view to improve the overall quality of life within their respective areas, community policing enables a collective effort toward enhancing community safety and well-being.

In parallel, investing in robust social services is crucial to improving the quality of life for Bissau-Guineans. In this

sense, social protection is also key to promoting economic and social inclusion, addressing vulnerabilities, reducing poverty and inequality, and favoring investment in human economic development. In Guinea-Bissau, many public and private sector workers do not have access to social security or any kind of social protection scheme, which leaves them unprotected, vulnerable, and more susceptible to inequality.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and intensified structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities, underscoring the imperative to enhance social protection programs to address access and coverage gaps.

In order to limit the impact of COVID19 and strengthen healthcare and social protection, UNDP was able to reach over 65,000 vulnerable girls, boys, women, and men from early 2021 to October 2022.



46% of the population received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine by March 2023





ENABLER DIGITALISATION

To enhance national surveillance mechanisms for COVID-19, UNDP set-up a digital platform, DHSI2, which allows the collection and storage of relevant health data. As a result, health authorities have access to accurate and quality data, which enables them to pinpoint infection hotspots and to help reduce contamination rates. Another important digital solution to healthcare assistance was the set-up of the COVID-19 Call Center. In fact, the COVID-19 Call Center became the main point of contact, pointing to the need for a 24/7 emergency helpline in Guinea-Bissau. People were also calling for other emergency health issues, requests for ambulances, police, fire brigade, and people lost at sea, among others. Taking into account these factors, UNDP is liaising with the Ministry of Health to repurpose the Call Center into a permanent emergency helpline.



UNDP has also been actively working on fighting malaria in Guinea-Bissau, through the Global Fund grants, working closely with the National Malaria Program and the Ministry of Health, to reduce malaria-related morbidity and mortality in the country. The aim is to achieve the national ownership and sustainability efforts to ensure that the Government is able to take over and provide continuity of healthcare services for the country's population.

Furthermore, UNDP seeks to improve the delivery and access to health services, with a special focus on pregnant women and children under 5 years, while also ensuring services for diagnostic purposes and treatment for the rest of the population in public and private facilities, as well as in the communities in more remote areas, with the support of community health workers.

It is crucial to address potential complications such as infections, HIV, or malaria.

However, in Guinea-Bissau the majority of the population (60 percent) live in rural areas more than 5 km away from the nearest health centers. Health services are concentrated mainly in urban areas, leaving rural communities isolated, especially those communities in the Bijagós archipelago.

“

If women come for pre-natal consultations, they can have general tests and ultrasound scans and their diseases are treated.

—Awa Camara, Head midwife at the Maternity Service of the Bairro Militar Health Center

To further strengthen equitable access to healthcare, in 2022, UNDP supported **150 health facilities** across the country through the provision of life-saving medical equipment, diagnostics, and medicine to protect health workers and improve healthcare quality. The distribution of software and electronic devices (tablets) improved the health information system as it enabled disease surveillance. This also effected the reduction of the impact of malaria-related disease and mortality figures, and strengthened the overall healthcare system, making it more sustainable and resilient.

The positive effect was that the number of suspected malaria cases receiving a parasitological test at public health facilities increased by 23 percent.

“

Sometimes they are infected with malaria but have no symptoms and only find out when they do the routine tests in the prenatal visits. So, it is important that they come and that they always take preventive drugs.”

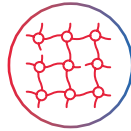
—Dr Cadidjato Baldé





80,598 women attended free antenatal consultation

Intermittent preventive treatment during pregnancy helped protect pregnant women, who received at least three or more doses, avoiding the harmful complications of malaria.



89,078 insecticide nets were distributed to pregnant women and to children under 5

The total population also benefits from preventive protection through the universal distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets every three years.



Preventive malaria medication coverage was at a high rate of 92% through seasonal malaria chemoprevention in children aged 3–59 months in 2022

The four preventive doses were administered at one-month intervals, by community health workers on a door-to-door basis, during the rainy season, when malaria transmission is at its highest.

“

This has an impact because we are seeing those cases among children under five are drastically reduced.

—Dr José Ernesto Nante, Coordinator of the National Malaria Control Program.

Due to traditional beliefs, many people in rural communities still prefer to visit traditional healers, who may also be easier to access than healthcare centers, especially due to poor road conditions, particularly exacerbated during the rainy season.

In collaboration with the NOVAFRICA University of Lisbon, the initiative “Belief systems and health behaviors in Guinea-Bissau” aims to change this trend and combat the country’s high rates of maternal (**667/100,000**) and infant (**77/1,000**) deaths, by raising community awareness about the importance of attending healthcare facilities, with a focus on pregnant women and women with children under the age of 5.

“

The project comes exactly to work against the lack of information, to bring information to those people who have little information. People are isolated and don’t know the importance of hospitals and health centers, which are always the last options for them, so, this awareness campaign will help to change that by highlighting the importance of health facilities and professional care.”

—Zinha Marna,

Nurse participating in the project



“

It is good to work with the healers because people in small villages trust them more than the health centers. Often people cannot afford to go to the health center, and this motivates them to stay with the healers.”

—Samanta Gomes, Nurse

Modern and traditional medicine coexist in this initiative, and nurses and traditional healers collaborate to make the sensitizations as effective as possible. António Cá is one of six traditional healers involved in the initiative that works together with the hospitals. He usually operates in the Biombo region, in a village with many people who come for treatment of various illnesses. The objective of his participation is “to save lives, especially those of pregnant women, those who have just given birth and their babies.”

Antonio Cá accompanied Samanta Gomes, a nurse who confirms the importance of the traditional healers as one of the options for those people reluctant to attend to healthcare facilities, but who are now being educated by the healers, as agents of change, about the benefits of healthcare facilities.



LESSON LEARNED

Guinea-Bissau has demonstrated that traditional healers can be essential in improving access to healthcare, by serving as agents of change, transforming people’s health-seeking behavior. Integrating traditional medicine into a well-functioning, people-centered healthcare system that balances curative services with preventive care is a desirable global step for Guinea-Bissau.

“

It is very important that people go to the hospital because we healers don’t have competent machines to detect illnesses inside the body or material to identify possible problems of fetuses and babies. It is very important that we collaborate with the health facilities to help the patients.

—Beto Pedro, Traditional healer

Through a coordinated response with other UN sister agencies, UNDP is contributing to the design of the national social protection policy and strategy, to formalize social protection rights and obligations and to support the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, UNDP is also supporting the creation of an online repository to make information on social protection available to the entire community and facilitate coordination between the different actors working in the sector.

A microinsurance component has already been implemented, enabling women in the São Domingos region to have free access to healthcare through a product that covers their medical expenses, transport, and medicines, in exchange for the payment of a premium. UNDP intends to further explore the viability of microinsurance and to attract private companies working with microinsurance in other African countries, thereby fostering South-South cooperation.

LEGAL IDENTITY FOR ALL

To further improve public service delivery and citizen-based monitoring, UNDP has also actively worked on the realization of the right to **legal identity**, as stated in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Article 6). Currently, low registration rates remain a challenge in Guinea-Bissau and prevent citizens from becoming active members of society as they do not have the opportunity to enter the labor market or access the social protection system.

The absence of legal identity also affects the possibility of accessing basic utility services such as electricity, water and telephone, hence further perpetuating vulnerability for those people without these services.

Only 46% of children were registered in 2019, and there is no data indicating the number of registrations for the total population in the country.¹⁴



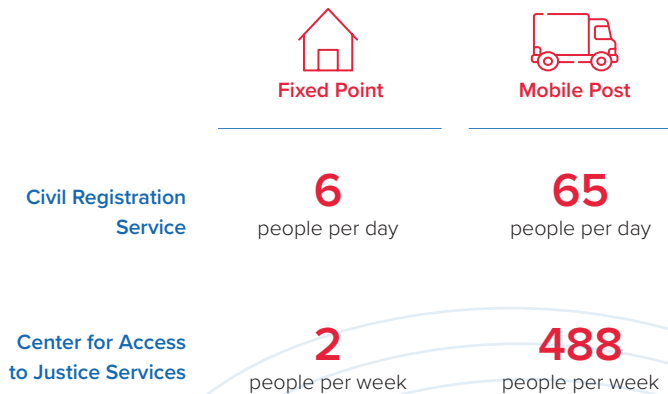
ENABLER STRATEGIC INNOVATION

Mobile Justice was an innovative solution developed and tested by the UNDP Accelerator Lab, with the potential to decrease the distance between the most vulnerable population and basic justice services. With an adapted minibus, UNDP traveled to the most remote villages of the country to provide Legal Aid, Civil Registry, and Human Rights awareness dialogues. This solution allowed to break down barriers and bring justice closer to the population living in out-of-the-way places.

Fatumata's family

Fatumata has three children, Mamudo, Sona, and Sara, who are not registered and only have vaccination cards from the hospital. Fatumata rarely leaves Sinchamsama, where she lives, due to a lack of financial means. The Mobile Justice van visited Sinchamsama and the Center for Access to Justice informed Fatumata that she could register her children there. Fatumata did not even know that she could register her children under 7 years old for free, using only her electoral card and their vaccination cards. Through Mobile Justice, Fatumata gave Mamudo, Sona, and Sara an identity and opened up their future for better opportunities.

Average Attendance to Public Services



14 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) reports.

With the results obtained, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights requested to scale up the test to other regions beyond Gabú, which was jointly coordinated between UNDP and UNICEF. The mission resulted in the following:



11-Day Mission: Key Stats



7 regions
27 remote
villages visited



7 staff members
needed per region



1656
people registered



1315 people
with access to
legal aid

In just 11 days, Mobile Justice was able to travel around the country and provide legal aid and civil registration services to nearly 3,000 people. The registration was made possible by using new software that allows the Ministry of Justice to

develop a database for the Civil Registry. UNDP supported the Ministry of Justice in improving the software and creating an online form where data can be registered instead of making entries in written form in regular paper books.

CIVIL REGISTRY BIOMETRICS



ENABLER DIGITALISATION

A functional **civil registration system** is essential to enable the Government to plan efficiently for its resources and devise the appropriate strategy to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is, therefore, essential to register all vital events in a person's life, namely birth, marriage/divorce, the birth of children/adoption, and deaths.

The Ministries of Justice and Health are making efforts to cooperate with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the National Institute of Statistics to have essential statistics made available. The registration of vital events covers all segments of the population, and includes nationals and refugees, and all geographic areas within the country.

Together with its partners, UNDP Guinea-Bissau is helping the National Civil Registration Authority to review policies to integrate Internally Displaced Persons and the stateless population, so that people without legal documentation acquire a National Identification Number (NIN). This is also expected to have positive implications for public institutions as it will allow them to improve citizen-oriented services as

well as oversight and control functions such as regarding tax revenues, the allocation of benefits, and law enforcement and security measures.

The ID program has been developed to prevent fraud and counterfeiting and feature new levels of security. The new ID card is biometric and includes a fingerprint identification system to reduce potential fraud, eliminate duplicate identities, and accurately verify the identity of cardholders. However, applicants must prove their identity through their birth certificate. The data are encrypted, and a digital photograph and fingerprints are captured. The information is stored in a central database.

In 2020, UNDP, through the multi-partner supported 2018/2019 electoral cycle project, delivered 400 kits to the Government of Guinea-Bissau to ensure an advanced biometric registration (RB) system. Benefiting from the delivery of the RB kits, the project aims to support the Government of Guinea-Bissau in creating an integrated identity system as a foundational identity register for all others. The electoral register, and other functional identification registers, can both be based on and contribute to this register, eliminating duplication of resources and maximizing citizens' access to identification documents.

By using advanced biometric technology and processes, the project aims to ensure the issuance of a high-quality ID card that can serve not only for identity purposes, but also for all

other government and financial interactions, including voting. This will not only contribute to ensuring a transparent and effective electoral cycle and a fair democratic process, but will also contribute to the achievement of SDG Target 16.9 on the provision of legal identity for all. This will also contribute to a significant impact in relation to other SDGs, namely poverty reduction (Goal 1), decent work and economic growth (Goal 8,) and reducing inequality (Goal 10).



By the end of 2022, more than **400,000 voters have been successfully registered**

GUINEA-BISSAU'S ELECTORAL PROCESS

Concerned by these democratic advances and setbacks in Guinea-Bissau, which has already had 13 elections held – between presidential and legislative – civil society organizations began more structured monitoring of elections, creating a Cell of Electoral Monitoring (CME). UNDP helped to ensure transparency and fairness in the course of the Electoral Act and increase the civic participation of citizens in the consolidation of the rule of law, and democratic stability in Guinea-Bissau.

A commitment was established among participants to hold free, fair, inclusive, and transparent parliamentary elections that contribute to a firm pledge to peace, stability, and the enactment of reforms. UNDP supports a strong and independent press, by providing logistical support that encourages transparent, impartial, and inclusive coverage of all electoral activities, which helps fight misinformation and reduces hate speech.



LESSON LEARNED

The resolution of Guinea-Bissau's problems must involve an inclusive approach, between political decision-makers, the international community, and civil society, to bring citizens closer to the political process, greater commitment to justice, uncompromising defense of common interests, and national reconciliation, based on the principles of liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3.3

FOSTERING FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The economic development scenario is starting to change in Guinea-Bissau; important steps are being taken to reduce poverty rates and foster financial inclusion for the country's population.

To improve the business environment and private sector growth, UNDP is focusing on one of its priorities: ensuring inclusive access to finance through tailored financial solutions that are accessible and meet the needs of vulnerable citizens.



In 2018, 47.7% of the population was classed as poor, and 13.2% lived in extreme poverty



The COVID-19 pandemic increased poverty from 63.8 to 66.2% between 2019 and 2020¹⁵



ENABLER DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

In collaboration with the Central Bank (BCEAO) and the Ministry of Finance, UNDP developed the **National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS)** which was approved in 2022. The document intends to promote financial literacy, investment in the microfinance sector, and access to affordable, high-quality financial services. The development of this strategy was based on an analysis developed by UNDP and its partners, including a demand and supply analysis and regulatory framework analysis. An important perspective of this national strategy is that it also recognizes the need to prioritize SMEs and vulnerable groups namely rural populations, especially women and youth.

One of the initiatives developed by UNDP, through the Na Nô Mon Platform and the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP), with the help of the Association for Sustainable Development, helped the women sellers of Buba to restart their economic activities after the COVID-19 pandemic by giving them training on savings and investment behavior to promote sustainable and profitable businesses. Savings accounts were also created for each participant to ensure that they put into practice what they learned through the training received.

“

It is obvious that we need more money to invest more, but the essential thing is to invest in courses and training because only in this way will we be able to better control the flow and volume of our business, but above all our expenses

—**Maria Sábado da Costa**, Savings program beneficiary

¹⁵ World Bank (2021). Poverty & Equity Brief Africa – Western & Central – Guinea-Bissau. https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/AM2020/Global_POVEQ_GNB.pdf.

MICROCREDIT & SAVINGS MECHANISMS

Access to **microcredit and savings mechanisms** can be a game-changer for households and businesses in Guinea-Bissau. Bank penetration in the country is low due to poor infrastructure and high borrowing costs, making it difficult for individuals and businesses to obtain financial support. Recognizing this, UNDP collaborated with the Central Bank (BCEAO) and the Microfinance Promoting Agency to develop a recovery plan for microfinance institutions. The initial evaluation revealed that none of the six existing microfinance agencies in the country were financially viable or adequately resourced to operate as a microfinance institution. It became very clear to UNDP that a comprehensive approach to building microfinance in Guinea-Bissau was needed, which involved establishing fundamental financial infrastructure and seeking support from international financial institutions and development agencies to infuse capital into the market. This analysis contributed to a better understanding of the

country needs, promoting a tailored approach, and giving the policymakers evidence for adjusting policies and regulations that express the country's reality.

In December 2022, UNDP implemented a pilot initiative focused on microfinance and microinsurance in five localities within the Suzana administrative region. This initiative incorporated a financial inclusion and social protection component which specifically empowers women by providing training in microfinance and implementing the Statistics of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) methodology to establish savings groups in various villages. Through a combination of these efforts, UNDP seeks to promote financial autonomy, empower women, and contribute to economic development in Guinea-Bissau.

UNDP 3X6 social protection scheme also contributed to improve the livelihoods of the population in Guinea-Bissau.

Using UNDP 3x6 social protection scheme

300 people
were pulled out of
multidimensional poverty

179 women
were trained and given the resources to develop
their businesses and manage their finances

296 new
businesses were
developed

The initiative had a two-fold purpose to (i) allocate small financial grants to help people pursue their business ventures with a focus on the blue and green economy sectors in the Plubá neighborhood of Bissau; and (ii) promote access to skills and finance to ensure the adequate use of the grants. The scheme focused primarily on women, that represented 60 percent of the 300 beneficiaries, and youth. The scheme also included a school rehabilitation and the provision of necessary equipment.

“

We saw that it is difficult to find nationally packaged salt, so I started working on this idea. I buy the salt from female salt producers in Farim, in the Oio region.”

—**Mamadú Bá**, 31 years old, 3X6 social protection scheme beneficiary

LESSON LEARNED

This approach views its participants as active partners in their value generation and socio-economic recovery, allowing them to generate immediate income, inject resources into the local economy, and provide opportunities to diversify livelihoods. This approach also focused on microenterprises and SMEs, as they have significant potential for job creation opportunities.

Three main needs were identified when choosing public work interventions – market, school, and waste. These were decided in a participatory way with community input. Although multi-stakeholder involvement delayed the implementation, it resulted in stronger initiative continuity since it promoted commitment and interest from the community. The 3x6 initiative will be expanded to foster similar innovative business ideas in Bafatá, Bijagos/Bolama, Cacheu, and Gabú, to continue improving youth and women's living and income conditions.



UNDP enhances the resilience of the Bissau-Guinean people through its signature solutions, by empowering individuals and communities to adapt to shocks and recover from emergencies.





THE FUTURE

WE SEE TODAY IS...

RESILIENT

Due to national development challenges coupled with external factors further hampering political stability and economic growth, it is fundamental to strengthen the country's resilience and adaptability.

To foster resilience in Guinea-Bissau, it is crucial to prioritize investments in high-quality public services and sustainable economic development. This entails strengthening institutions and enhancing state legitimacy to prevent the emergence of illicit economies and restore citizen trust.

Additionally, the sustainable utilization of natural resources is vital to harness the country's rich natural heritage, generate employment opportunities, and foster income growth. Given its heavy reliance on agriculture and its classification as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), building resilience to climate change becomes an imperative requirement for ensuring a stable and prosperous future for Guinea-Bissau.

4.1

UNFOLDING INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

COMBATting CORRUPTION, ILLICIT ECONOMY, AND TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

To increase the effectiveness of institutions in **preventing and fighting corruption** and to promote awareness, commitment, and political leadership in the fight against corruption, UNDP launched a training programme in 2022, aimed at strengthening the capacity of State agencies to use UNDP's Global Corruption Risk Management (GCRM) methodology.

This training is aimed at the public sector, CSOs and non-state actors. This methodology uses the SCRM – Sectoral Corruption Risk Management as a framework for addressing corruption and supports the identification, analysis, and effective response to corruption risks in healthcare programs and systems. Following on from this, a training workshop on how to respond to corruption risks in healthcare programs and systems was organized in Bissau on 5, 6, and 7 October 2022.

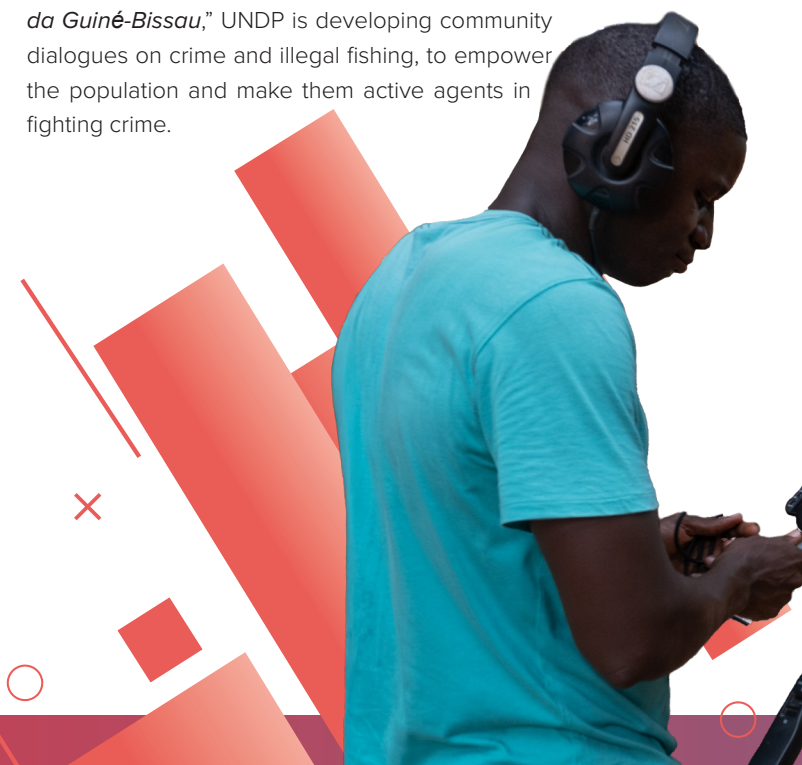
As a result of this workshop, an anti-corruption network with civil society organizations was created, and called “*Integridade da Guiné-Bissau*” (“Integrity of Guinea-Bissau”).

Illicit economies, drug trafficking, and organized crime are major problems in contemporary society in Guinea-Bissau. Illicit economies can flourish in conflict situations and where the rule of law is weakest, it can, in turn, prolong or fuel conflicts. Organized crime inflicts incalculable harm to a country's economy, holding back its growth and negatively affecting its long-term development.

These issues contribute heavily to political instability, weakened institutions, and undermined economic growth. Guinea-Bissau has become a major transit point for drug trafficking from South America to Europe, leading to a rise in drug-related violence and increased poverty. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach to strengthen governance, enhance law enforcement capacities, and promote social and economic development.

UNDP supported local CSOs to develop a network against illicit economies, in partnership with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). This Civil Society Observatory of Illicit Economies allows to actively engage with civil society platforms, namely the *Espaço de Concertação* (“Concertation Space”) and the *Movimento da Sociedade Civil* (“Civil Society Movement”), and continuously promotes initiatives to support the fight against illicit markets, based on the needs identified by local partners, such as community resilience dialogues with heterogeneous representatives of local communities, to discuss the synergies and impact of the main illicit markets. This bottom-up civil approach is not only based on policy change but also on empowering other non-state actors to make changes at the community level, thereby enabling the rule of law in the country to be better streamlined.

For instance, in collaboration with the national NGO “*Amigos da Guiné-Bissau*,” UNDP is developing community dialogues on crime and illegal fishing, to empower the population and make them active agents in fighting crime.



The media also plays an important role in peacebuilding and in the fight against corruption and organized crime. To strengthen independent media, UNDP provides technical support to journalists reporting on issues related to illicit economies. Through the Media Innovation Consortium in Guinea-Bissau (CMICS), UNDP protects and supports journalists investigating illicit markets, raising awareness of criminal issues, and acting as a “watchdog” for governance and democracy. The network of journalists reporting on illicit markets and economies (REJOMEI) engages young journalists, enhancing their investigative journalism skills to cover these issues in a more impartial and transparent manner. Despite some challenges such as attacks on journalists and limited freedom of expression, a well-trained media can contribute to accountability, transparency, and reducing corruption within the country. UNDP works alongside human rights defenders to promote an open civic space as well as upholding the rule of law throughout society.

LESSON LEARNED

The effectiveness of combating illicit economies is evident through the powerful combination of a bottom-up civil approach and top-down policy improvements and legislation approach. In this regard, partnerships between international organizations like UNDP and GI-TOC, alongside local civil society groups, play a pivotal role. When local groups are actively involved and empowered, valuable insights and solutions to complex issues can be obtained from their perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, this collaborative approach facilitates capacity-building initiatives, such as enhancing the capabilities of police forces, and ensuring a comprehensive and multifaceted response to illicit economies.

ACCOUNTABILITY LAB

Empowering and engaging young agents of change is also crucial in driving innovative projects focused on accountability and transparency in Guinea-Bissau. Their ability to create sustainable and effective tools for transformation is essential, as they hold the key to advancing these values in society. By supporting their participation and leadership, UNDP can ensure that these projects are both impactful and long-lasting, leading to a more accountable and transparent future for all.

It is in this context that UNDP’s first partnership with the **Accountability Lab** in Guinea-Bissau emerges through the Incubator Lab, which supports 10 creative and entrepreneurial Bissau-Guineans, who seek to inspire accountability in their communities.

Accountpreneurs participating in the program have the unique opportunity to connect with peers globally, gaining insights and sharing ideas, which they can then put into practice in the communities they live in. The program allows participants to collaborate, develop skills, and network with others. Additionally, program organizers keep participants

informed of upcoming events, providing opportunities for continued learning and growth within the cohort. Besides the support provided in mentoring and training, the partnership of UNDP with the Incubator Lab also exposes and disseminates the creation of young entrepreneurs in the media sector.

The training program had a significant impact on improving the knowledge and skills of participants in accountability and social accountability interventions. Some participants were not familiar with these concepts, and they were exposed to new perspectives, which helped expand their understanding. Overall, the training program has improved participants’ knowledge and skills in this area, which will undoubtedly benefit their work in the future.

The theme for the 2022 Incubator Lab applicants was “Global Challenges, Local Solutions”, with a focus on participation, inclusion, digital governance, and environmental accountability. Young people are the future of Guinea-Bissau, and fostering their adaptive capacity and climate resilience is crucial in ensuring its sustainable development.



4.2

NURTURING ADAPTABILITY

STRENGTHENING THE ADAPTIVE CAPACITY TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

As climate change poses a significant threat to Guinea-Bissau's infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and food security, it is important to empower people, including vulnerable groups, through training, education, and access to technology, in order to successfully overcome these challenges through community-led initiatives.

Due to its geographic and natural characteristics, Guinea-Bissau is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Mitigating the effects of climate change, being prepared, and **strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience** are of the utmost importance to guarantee well-being and ensure appropriate living conditions for the country's population.

Guinea-Bissau has strengthened its climate commitment with the support of UNDP Climate Promise Initiative, by updating its **Nationally Determined Contribution** (NDC).

To promote collaboration and ensure that all actors could give feedback on the NDC update, collaboration of the Ministry of Environment and Biodiversity, the national focal point for the UNFCCC, and the people in charge of the NDC revision and implementation coordination at the national level were consulted. This process involved all the key sectoral partners, such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, the Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The country has now, for the first time, an NDC aligned to the standards of the Paris Agreement, to ensure the quality of the mitigation scenarios.

The lack of available data is one of the main challenges that Guinea-Bissau is still facing today. To monitor, report, and verify the implementation of the NDC, there is a need to strengthen data collection and analysis targeting, at least, for the key sectors by developing a quality database that is robust and secure.

The Climate Promise also intends to improve the national capacities with a roadmap for the implementation of the NDC in the next three years. The roadmap will consider the main technical, institutional, and financial capacity-building needs that must be put in place to implement and monitor the updated NDC.

Around 25 staff from key government sectors, such as Environment, Energy, Natural Resources, Local Administration, Public Works, and Fisheries, have participated in two training workshops to strengthen technical capacities and build competencies in Climate Adaptation and Mitigation mechanisms.



Supporting Guinea-Bissau's development and strengthening its resilience to climate change will require significant investment that far exceeds the country's resources, and which is estimated at approximately USD 6,666 million over the 2021–2030 period. Gaining international support is essential to be able to achieve the objectives of the NDC. The funding required to support the achievement of the conditional mitigation contribution is estimated to be around USD 531 million.

Although Guinea-Bissau is working to strengthen its climate commitment, climate change adaptation, planning and implementation are still in the early stages of development. To help improve the governance of environmental and natural resources, the Ministry of Environment has partnered with UNDP and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to approve the **National Adaptation Planning Initiative**.

UNDP and GCF aim to give Guinea-Bissau the capacities and resources to set up a National Adaptation Planning mechanism that will function as an umbrella framework for all processes and initiatives for climate change adaptations. The main challenge that this project is facing is the involvement of government counterparts and other stakeholders. To overcome this, UNDP is working on three important studies that will increase knowledge of the social and

environmental challenges, in vulnerable coastal areas, and propose adaptation, mitigation measures, and governance frameworks to develop specific public policies.

To increase the resilience of coastal communities' livelihoods and economic activities to climate change-induced risks, UNDP and the Guinea-Bissau Government are promoting biodiversity resilience along the coast of Guinea-Bissau.

By engaging in community dialogues, UNDP was able to gain valuable insights into the needs of the population. This information helped to effectively plan and implement activities aimed at promoting biodiversity resilience, including an increase in horticulture production, the development of a horticulture field, the closure of a river to allow rice production, and the construction of a 20.5 km road from Buba Tumbo to Tebe and Nhassane Balanta.

During the implementation of the initiative, UNDP and the Ministry of Agriculture and Biodiversity counted on two local agents of change: Fanta Ture and her husband, Mussa Indjai, local farmers who have always been deeply connected to the land. They grew up in a small village near Buba, Gan Ture, which is inside the delimitation of the Natural Park Lagoas de Cufada, located between the Buba and Corubal Rivers. With 890 km², it is the largest wetlands reserve in Guinea-Bissau.

Promoting Sustainable Farming Practices

Fanta and Mussa have long understood the significance of preserving nature's delicate equilibrium. They depend on agriculture for their income and have been advocating for sustainable farming practices in their community. Recognizing their efforts, they were invited to join an initiative aimed at amplifying their impact.

One crucial and contentious action was the closure of a river and building mechanisms to control water flow, preventing floods and droughts, thus benefiting rice production and the environment. They were also aware that rebuilding the dam would restore the ecosystem, improve rice production, and be better prepared to adapt to climate change. Farmers experienced higher yields and quality of their crops, and the initiative introduced resilient rice varieties to improve food security.

Additionally, the construction of a road connecting Fanta and Mussa, and the Gan Ture community village to Buba enhanced the distribution of horticultural products, while also benefiting pregnant women who could now travel to the hospital much quicker than before the improvement to the road network, which in turn, greatly reduces the incidences of childbirth complications at home.



To guarantee the continuity of the initiative and its sustainability, the local association has a revolving fund where they set aside part of the profits from selling the horticulture products and use it to implement the activities.

The household incomes of the community are higher from the horticulture products than the ones achieved from rice production. Fanta can now have her own money, which makes her more empowered. She now discusses the family needs together and is seen as an equal partner. Their marriage became better, and their community is now more cohesive.

Although this initiative has brought an impactful result, some challenges still need to be addressed to improve the community's livelihoods and well-being. The water access is still a handicap, even though there are two water taps and a reservoir with a water pump inside the horticulture field.

LESSON LEARNED

This case highlights the importance of community collaboration in resolving environmental issues. Policymakers can draw lessons from this and consider involving and engaging local communities in decision-making processes for environmental issues, ensuring that economic development and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive to the few, but available to all.

PROMOTING BETTER ACCESS TO MODERN ENERGY SERVICES

Promoting better access to modern energy services is directly related to climate change as it can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It also allows stimulation of economic growth and development, reducing the vulnerability of communities to the impacts of climate change.

Guinea-Bissau is facing numerous challenges in its electricity sector, with one of Africa's lowest electrification rates and highest electricity service costs. The service quality and quantity are structurally deficient due to outdated production methods, intermittent electricity production, and high dependence on imported oil in the context of limited financial resources.

Although the estimated electrification rate stands at 11.5 percent, it does not accurately reflect the disparities between Bissau (29 percent) and other major cities (with an average of only 4 percent), as well as rural areas (1 percent in 2019).

To mitigate these challenges, UNDP is supporting Guinea-Bissau to promote investment and sustainable business models in both solar mini-grids and low-carbon bioenergy technologies. This will strengthen and further build up and enable a

political, institutional, and administrative environment for the management of solar mini-grids, particularly in rural forested areas. It will also enable an environment to secure, supply, and stimulate demand for energy-efficient stoves using firewood/charcoal as its source fuel.

The Women's Economic, Social, and Environmental Empowerment initiative, carried out by the N'DABAPLO (Nô Protegi) organization, aims to empower women by providing income-generating opportunities and improving fish conservation by constructing a solar-powered ice factory. This initiative, funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Program UNDP, is also contributing to strengthening the capacity of fishermen, and to the reduction of CO₂ emissions.



4.3

EMBRACING THE POTENTIAL OF THE BLUE ECONOMY

BLUE ECONOMY POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The blue economy paradigm is a relatively new concept, as defined by the World Bank, emphasizing the sustainable utilization of ocean resources to foster economic growth, improve livelihoods, and generate employment opportunities while safeguarding the health of marine ecosystems. However, activities associated with the blue economy, such as fisheries, agriculture, transportation, and tourism, have long been prevalent in Guinea-Bissau.

In 2022, a notable transformation took place, characterized by heightened awareness and understanding of the blue economy concept among stakeholders at the community and national levels. Through sensitization programs, training initiatives, and technical workshops of the government, the citizens of Guinea-Bissau recognized the importance of the blue economy in enhancing their well-being and fostering sustainable development.

This increased awareness and knowledge regarding the blue economy have instigated behavioral changes that contribute to the growth of a sector with immense potential in Guinea-Bissau. At the national level, a well-structured and comprehensive blue economy strategy has been formulated.

The development of the National Blue Economy Strategy and its corresponding Investment Plan has been a collaborative effort involving a diverse group of stakeholders and an interdisciplinary approach. Numerous dialogues and meetings were conducted, engaging 155 participants from different societal spheres¹⁶. These discussions aimed to address the country's challenges and identify strategies for unlocking its blue economy opportunities, while also considering the specific characteristics of Guinea-Bissau as a SIDS.

The strategy's scope spans from 2023 to 2030 and revolves around five pillars:



Sectorial Integration and Financing



Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources



Blue Tourism



Coastal Agriculture and Nature-Based Solutions



Infrastructure-Transport-Energy

¹⁶ Government, civil society, academia, international partners, and the private sector.

The National Blue Economy Strategy will drive structural interventions to transform the country's economy, while also identifying opportunities to strengthen regional ties and investments. This may include aligning the strategy with broader regional initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Africa Blue Economy Strategy. The Investment Plan seeks to leverage public and private funding sources, including the government and commercial banks, and aims to promote innovative financial mechanisms such as "blue bonds."

Cross-cutting issues such as maritime transport, governance, and financing will guide the actions of all stakeholders involved in the blue economy, including the private sector. The National Blue Economy Strategy aims to ensure that industrial activity follows the recommendations and national regulatory legislation to ensure profitability, competitiveness, and sustainable development.



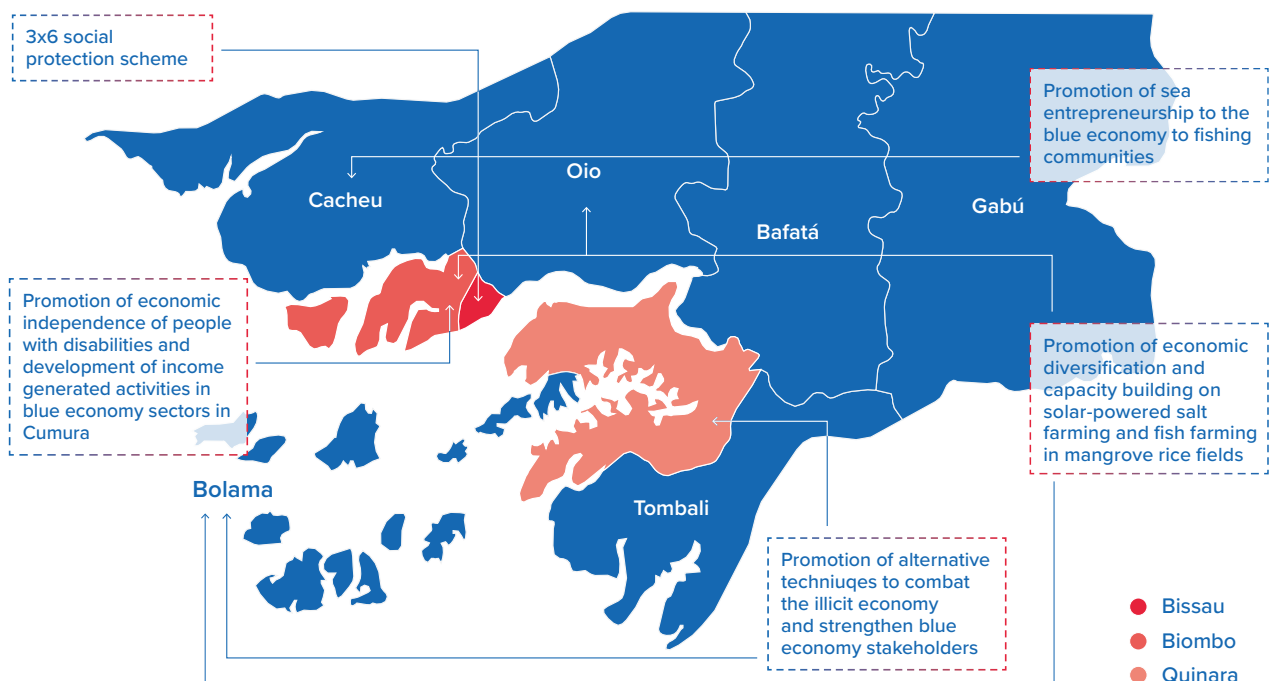
STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

For the coastal communities of Guinea-Bissau, the sea is everything. They have managed to identify key elements to preserve the ocean ecosystem that favors its regeneration and ensure that it does not cease to be a source of food, sustenance, and natural habitat for the species and plant forms living in the ocean. The sustainable management of the sea and coastal areas contributes to the well-being

of these communities and also to the country's green and inclusive growth.

To **strengthen Guinea-Bissau's economic diversity** based on blue economy opportunities for entrepreneurship, UNDP supported the private sector's development in this area across five regions of Guinea-Bissau:

Map of Guinea-Bissau



Many of these initiatives looked beyond financial aid to vulnerable people, as they also supported training on traditional fishing processing and smoking techniques, entrepreneurship, and business development. Albertina Domingues, the president of the No Djunta Mon, No Tarbadja Cooperative, one of the 29 associations of people involved in fish collection and trade, has been developing activities in the Djolmete community since 2001, and brings together 60 people with different occupations linked to the sea. As explained by Albertina: “Before, we didn’t know what the blue economy was,” she admits, “but now we know how it can make our lives easier and help our development.”

Social shops are one of the many actions being developed under this initiative. Access to fishing in the Orango National Park, in Bolama-Bijagós, is difficult for local fishermen.

“

Only the inhabitants of the islands that make up the park, can fish there and attempting to do so can lead to fines of between 500,000 and 750,000 CFA francs. There are plenty of fish, but you can’t use any kind of net either. The nylon nets that are allowed are not available on the Bissau-Guinean market and must be brought in from Senegal.

—**Sisaltina Ié**, treasurer of the Association of Women Vendors

This is leading to an increase in illegal fishing and fish trafficking, damaging the interests of small fishermen and the women who sell their catches. Through social shops, fishermen can buy authorized fishnets. Furthermore, UNDP has applied the good practices identified in the Illicit Economy Civil Society Observatory, which are being implemented in the Cacheu region.

The initiative also considers the empowerment of vulnerable people, including women, disabled people, and youth. As examples of this empowerment, in the

communities of Culucunda and Cuboi, 248 women who produce salt have participated in basic account training to improve their skills and boost their businesses. Also, in the Biombo region, 12 micro-enterprises that are linked to the blue economy and managed by people with disabilities or by people with disabled dependents in their care are also being supported by the initiative.

Nonetheless, significant challenges must also be considered such as the low literacy level in rural communities and especially for women since only 40 percent are literate,¹⁷ which impedes any other training activities such as in financial literacy.

Blue Tourism is an excellent opportunity for Guinea-Bissau to promote their country and generate income, while stimulating its blue economy potential and preserving the country’s fragile ecosystem. On this basis, UNDP is working to establish a Blue Tourism Business Incubator in the Bijagós archipelago.

The **Blue Tourism Business Incubator** aims to develop tourism, but will also work within other areas, such as the economy, waste management, and agriculture. The Incubator will focus on coordinating tourism activities with local actors and training and supporting women entrepreneurship in tourism. This initiative is still in the initial phase; UNDP is starting a tourism market assessment to understand what is already being done and what the country’s necessities are, so they can be integrated into the Incubator.

LESSON LEARNED

UNDP’s support for the blue economy in Guinea-Bissau has highlighted the importance of the development and management of ocean resources. Collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector is crucial for the successful implementation of blue economy strategies. Capacity building and training programs are necessary for creating opportunities for local communities and for promoting inclusive growth, especially in rural areas where people are more vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Overall, the blue economy can provide economic, social, and environmental benefits, if managed sustainably and inclusively.

¹⁷ The World Bank (2022). Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above) - Guinea-Bissau. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.FE.ZS?locations=GW>.

THE FUTURE WE SEE TODAY IS... **PROMISING**

Reflecting on UNDP's work, it has been a process of trial and error, of learning from both successes and shortcomings. It is important to never forget that UNDP's efforts today will pave the way for a brighter tomorrow.

UNDP has made tremendous progress in areas such as governance, social inclusion, health and socioeconomic development, and it continues to be committed to collaborating with the government and other stakeholders to accomplish long-term change. However, there is still a long way to go. UNDP's unwavering dedication has not only improved the lives of countless families but has set the country's development on a positive trajectory.

With hard work and determination, the people of Guinea-Bissau have begun to turn things around; to believe that change is possible – for all. There are new opportunities for economic growth. Investments in infrastructure and agricultural development have sparked new hope. The future of Guinea-Bissau is promising, and together with the Bissau-Guinean people, UNDP is now writing a new story. A story of progress, prosperity, and a better tomorrow.

UNDP is, therefore, a crucial partner in Guinea-Bissau's development, and its activities will continue to benefit the country for many years to come, which will undoubtedly benefit Bissau-Guineans today, and the future generations to come. Through a variety of projects and initiatives,





the organization believes it can make important contributions to the country's social and economic development. Central to UNDP's approach is prioritizing the needs and aspirations of different groups within the population, such as women, youth, and vulnerable communities, being served by any intervention, service, system, or product. Additionally, UNDP strives to include communities in the organization's efforts to ensure success for the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Despite the existent challenges, they are not deemed insurmountable, and UNDP's efforts persistently target progress while integrating the valuable insights it has acquired. UNDP maintains a steadfast commitment to embracing forthcoming collaborations and adaptations as UNDP endeavor to advance the organization's undertakings. Recognizing that this is an iterative journey necessitating time, UNDP's overarching objective remains to facilitate Guinea-Bissau in realizing its maximum capabilities and potential.

The organization acknowledges that there will be successes and failures along the way, and UNDP are eager to learn from them all. UNDP looks forward to many more stories of success and growth. Together, UNDP can create a better future for Guinea-Bissau and for all those who call it home.

PARTNERSHIP

Institutional partnerships are crucial for the future of Guinea-Bissau as they can bring together resources, expertise, and strategies to address the country's challenges. Partnerships can help promote transparency, accountability, and good governance practices, which in turn can help create an enabling environment for development initiatives to thrive. Overall, partnerships are instrumental in building a brighter future for Guinea-Bissau and its people.

At UNDP, we value our partnerships and want our partners to feel they are part of our journey. Together with our diverse set of partners, we are ready to tackle the multidimensional nature of development challenges. We achieve this by co-creating partner platforms on different issues affecting human development. Our approach to partnerships is founded on finding innovative solutions to development in a fragile environment where everything seems to be a priority.

The practice of inviting national and international partners to think about development in Guinea-Bissau has helped all parties learn so much from one another. With the intent of co-creating pilots and possible pathways, the relationship between UNDP and its partners has changed to create a gradually emerging network of institutions and people that want to push for the opportunities we see together.

New partnerships have been possible thanks to our new approach – from new non-resident bilateral partners such as Japan or Switzerland, to NGOs including the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Impact Hub, and Accountability Lab, to alliances with start-up ecosystems and renowned universities across three continents.

We also developed our first communication strategy that specifically aims at energizing our partnership network approach, while emphasizing thought leadership for its development, creating a learning community in the office, and spearheading our adoption of a consistent systems and portfolio approach, including with our partners.

Partners:

ADPP
AIFO
AIGB Câmara da Indústria
Autoridade de Avaliação Ambiental Competente
Bissau City Council
BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt
Câmara de Comércio, Indústria, Agricultura e Serviços
Djassi Africa
ENGIM
EU – European Union
Fábrica de Startups Brasil
Instituto da Biodiversidade e Áreas Protegidas
InnovaLab
KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Lusófona University
Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration
Minister of Environment and Biodiversity
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Fisheries
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities
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