

# Evaluation Brief: Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau has faced institutional fragility and protracted political crisis since its independence. This highly volatile context has significantly limited human development results, with no conducive environment for long-term planning and slow or postponed implementation of reforms, strategies and policies.

The UNDP country programme for 2016-2020 outlined three main priorities in the areas of governance and rule of law, inclusive economic growth, and biodiversity and disaster risk reduction. This ensured alignment with the Government's Terra Ranka 2015-2025 Operational Plan. Over the country programme period, the country office successfully mobilised non-core resources from vertical and pooled funds from the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

## Methodology

The evaluation methodology is structured around the following overarching questions:

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
3. What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP performance and, eventually, the sustainability of results?

**FIGURE 1: Total 2016-2018 programme expenditure by outcome (million US\$)**



Source: Atlas/PowerBI, April 2019

**FIGURE 2: Distribution of total 2016-2018 programme expenditure by fund source**



Source: Atlas/PowerBI, April 2019

## Findings and conclusions

For over nine years, the UNDP programme in Guinea-Bissau contributed to the operationalisation of centres for access to justice (CAJ) for the most vulnerable across the country. It expanded the protected areas

system and established an institutional framework for their management. The credibility and support of UNDP were considered fundamental to mobilise resources and effectively manage a donor basket fund for the organisation of the 2018 national elections. The country office also provided continuous investment in

capacity building and institutional strengthening of the judiciary system to improve service delivery and the rule of law.

However, UNDP was not able to adapt its projects and strategy to the context of protracted political instability and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau. This affected the relevance of its programmatic offer in the country and the sustainability of its initiatives. Its approaches and investments were not based on sound context- and conflict- analyses and risk assessments. In this context, oversight of the country office programme by the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) did not prove to be appropriate to support an effective response and adequate adaptation of the programme to the needs of the population.

UNDP did not pay adequate attention to poverty reduction and economic growth initiatives through an integrated sustainable development approach, an

area which lacked coherent strategy and sufficient investment. In the area of climate and disaster resilience, UNDP support was fragmented, with limited results.

UNDP had low capacity and commitment to mainstream gender, youth and human rights in its programme, and did not focus on promoting transformation to address the root causes of inequality. The country office did not engage strategically to raise awareness of human rights and gender issues for alternative dispute resolution methodologies with traditional justice actors at local level.

The UNDP country office faced significant challenges to attract and retain talent, generating inefficiencies, overburdening and limited synergy across thematic areas and units and resulting in projects being implemented largely in isolation. The country office did not establish an effective results-based management system across the programme portfolio.

## Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1.** UNDP must ensure that its new country programme document (CPD) and initiatives in Guinea-Bissau are based on sound risk and conflict analysis. This will enable improved and more realistic entry points for programming, more effective and sustainable results and timely adaptation to the fragile context. It will require a better balance between upstream and downstream initiatives and between short-term responsiveness to government requests and long-term development objectives, until a more stable political environment is in place.
- **RECOMMENDATION 2.** UNDP should review its approach to programming through the lens of a complex systems approach and co-evolutionary processes. This requires an adaptive management approach to build long-term capabilities, moving the focus from form to function and from imitation to effective innovation, through an iterative process of localised solutions before scale-up.
- **RECOMMENDATION 3.** UNDP should prioritise efforts for poverty reduction and employment creation through an integrated sustainable development approach to ensure that the next programme responds adequately to the most critical needs of the population in alignment with the UNDP mandate.
- **RECOMMENDATION 4.** Country office senior management should promote a coherent and integrated programme approach and ensure that evaluation recommendations are implemented, lessons are incorporated into the programme and projects, and concrete steps are taken to ensure sustainability before completing projects and terminating assistance.
- **RECOMMENDATION 5.** RBA should help UNDP Guinea-Bissau to review its human resources and financial structures, to increase its capacity to adequately respond to the needs and challenges of the country. RBA should progressively shift its demand-driven, financial delivery-focused approach to one of continuous and systematic programmatic oversight to identify and respond to strategic guidance and support needs.
- **RECOMMENDATION 6.** UNDP Guinea-Bissau should seek to systematically mainstream gender, youth and human rights into its programming. This requires designing and investing in pilots to create opportunities for women and youth to more actively and effectively participate in economic life, and identifying approaches to effectively promote behaviour change, including on masculinity and cultural norms.